

**GRAND PALAIS IMMERSIF**  
GRANDPALAIS-IMMERSIF.FR #ETERNELMUCHA

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PARIS 12<sup>E</sup>  
MÉTRO BASTILLE

**22 MARS – 5 NOVEMBRE 2023**

# ETERNEL MUCHA



**Grand Palais Immersif**  
**110 rue de Lyon, 75012, Paris**  
**Metro: Bastille**

**From 22 March to 05 November 2023**  
**Mondays from 12 to 7 pm**  
**Wednesday to Sunday from 10 am to 7 pm**  
**Late opening on Fridays until 9 pm**  
**Closed on Tuesdays**

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# THE EXHIBITION

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# EXHIBITION MAP

❶ INTRODUCTION

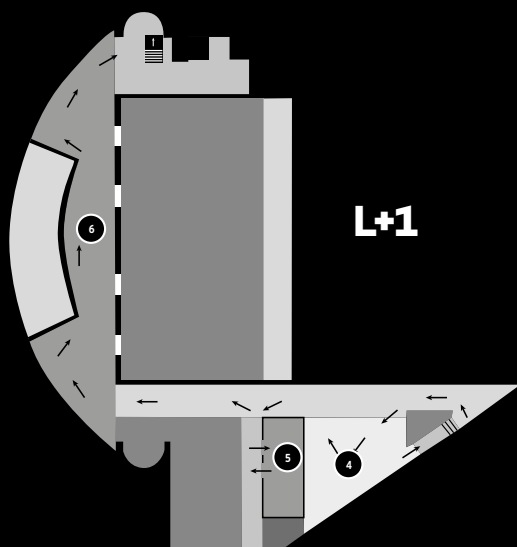
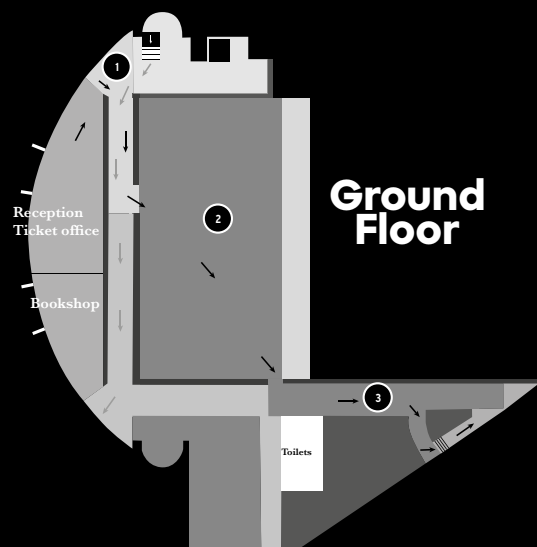
❷ MUCHA: ICONS / 1900 / UTOPIAS

❸ *LE PATER*

❹ MUCHA'S INSPIRATIONS

❺ MUCHA'S STUDIO

❻ MUCHA THE INFLUENCER



# INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the 20th century, with the advent of advertising, cities changed their faces and were covered with posters. In the space of a few years, Alphonse Mucha, born in Moravia (later Czechoslovakia), became the most sought-after poster artist, and one of the most influential decorative artists in Europe.

Mucha's style, characterised by the image of graceful women enhanced by multiple decorative motifs, became one of the main sources of inspiration for Art Nouveau.

His visual language reaches out to the general public by conveying ideas that are understandable by all, whether they be advertising messages at the beginning of his career, or pacifist and humanist ideas at the end of his life.

Today, the power of his graphic inventions continues to inspire new generations of artists around the world.

# 1. MUCHA: ICONS / 1900 / UTOPIAS

## Icons

His style is instantly recognizable. With his capacity for hard work, he invented posters that immediately won over the public.

Alphonse Mucha was born in 1860 in Moravia, a Slavic province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After beginning his career as a theater designer, he received a two years artistic training in Munich. At the end of 1894, as he worked as an illustrator in Paris, he was fortunate enough to design the poster of the *Gismonda* show featuring renowned actress Sarah Bernhardt : this launched his career. Mucha quickly developed an original graphic language based on elegant curves, flowers, plants and other natural and symbolic elements, but above all slender, idealized female figures with long flowing hair.

## 1900

In 1899, Mucha poured his efforts into the event that would eclipse all others: the Universal Exhibition of 1900. Emissaries of the emperor François-Joseph invited him to decorate the pavilion of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mucha rented a hangar, parading

models that he photographed before incorporating them into immense frescoes that recount prehistoric times, the arrival of the Slavs, the coexistence of religions, and legends. These decorations prefigured the monumental cycle of the *Slav Epic*. «On the dawn of this new century, I thought assiduously about how I could be useful to my people.»

## Utopias

Comprising a series of twenty paintings, the *Slav Epic* retraces the key episodes in the history of this people. In it, Mucha expresses his utopian vision of the world: an ideal that is both nationalist and humanist, whose ultimate goal is to bring peace and unite peoples through mutual understanding. The result of a long reflection in his workshop in Czechoslovakia, the *Slav Epic* can be seen as a way of claiming respect for one's identity, but also for cultural differences. In this quest for the spiritual union of humanity, Mucha considered the Slavs as a family, and monumental painting as a home.

## 2. LE PATER (OUR FATHER)

To devote an entire book to the Christian prayer *Pater noster* (Our Father in heaven) may seem surprising from an artist known for his women portrayed with untied hair and in languid poses.

This editorial initiative must be placed in the context of a time when almost everyone knew this prayer by heart. At the time, Mucha himself was very involved in the spiritualist movement, theosophy and freemasonry. With their tremendous expressive power, teeming with detail, the 21 paintings that make up the Our Father form a spiritual guide for the new era.

## 3. MUCHA'S INSPIRATIONS

In this room, the so-called «Mucha women» come to life. Embodied by actresses dressed in costumes based on Mucha's works: *Gismonda*, *Lorenzaccio*, characters played by Sarah Bernhardt, and the symbolic figures *Reverie* and *Autumn* descend the staircase before our eyes as in a "Mucha parade".

The vivid decorations allow us to discover a whole range of motifs inspired by the various styles and cultures which Mucha drew on: Celtic, Egyptian, Greek and Islamic worlds... Popular crafts of Eastern Europe, Byzantine mosaic, Baroque décor and Japanese prints are also present.

In the Paris of the Belle Époque, Mucha developed an *international style* and gave the poster its artistic credentials.



# 4. MUCHA'S STUDIO

We can better understand Mucha's unparalleled inventiveness if we consider the work he did in his studio, and the documents which he left behind concerning certain works: the *Madonna of the Lilies*, *Maude Adams as Joan of Arc* as well as three paintings taken from the *Slav Epic*. The artist also made extensive use of photography, whether of spontaneous happenings or carefully staged scenes, intended for the subsequent painted work. He used all techniques: pencil, charcoal, watercolor, oil, pastel, ink... Here we can fully grasp the path of Mucha's thinking and his creative process. A surprise also awaits visitors who can listen to their sensations.

## THE OLFACTORY WORLD

Imagine the scent of the parquet floor, the shelves and polished furniture, the turpentine – every painter's ally –, the gouache and ink, the sketch paper and the books, the armchair fabrics and the dust on the upholstery.

A silver censer hangs in the room. Incense was Mucha's favourite scent. It took him back to Moravia, to the churches where he sang as a child.

In the studio, the familiar old scents of his childhood home and of artist's tools intermingled with the sacred aroma of incense.

# 5. MUCHA

## THE INFLUENCER

In 1963, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London organized a major Mucha retrospective, followed by two other exhibitions in the same city.

A quarter of a century had passed since Mucha's death in Prague. His memory had faded, and the works produced in his country were trapped behind the Iron Curtain.

Thanks to the cultural effervescence of the 1960s, from Swinging London to Flower Power, and the London exhibitions, Mucha's work came back to the art scene with a vengeance. Art Nouveau was an inexhaustible source of inspiration for young illustrators of the counter-culture. Meanwhile, psychedelic rock was a perfect match for the endless curves of Mucha's style, which echoed the paranormal worlds conjured up by the music. Record sleeves and concert posters literally flourished. Hippie graphic designers seemed to spread the word to comic book and manga artists, who in turn drew on the Slavic master's compositions. Mucha was and is now part of the popular culture. His unmistakable style, all too often imitated, can be instantly recognized in the credits of TV series, in street murals, in Instagram posts or even tattoos inspired by the artist.

# MUCHA IN SCENT

## Flowers

Mucha and flowers: an obvious and instant association. Flowers were omnipresent in Mucha's life and work. This world of flower-women, replete with curves and scrolls, is a perfumer's dream.

Flowers form halos or crowns around women's heads. White lilies, a symbol of purity, were Mucha's favourite flowers. He was also fond of daisies and poppies.

The entrance to his Paris studio on rue du Val de Grâce was surrounded by roses, clematis, asters and rhododendrons. The artist's feminine, floral world is illustrated by this fragrance, a tribute to the flowers so beloved by Mucha.

## Moravia

Mucha was a lover of nature right from his childhood in Moravia.

He would bring bunches of wild flowers back from his walks, with dog roses, primroses, daisies, sweet peas and violets.

He was in awe of Czech baroque and religious buildings. He was a chorister in church and enjoyed Byzantine and Gregorian chant.

Incense was his favourite scent.

This fragrance recreates the contrast between these two facets of the artist's childhood – outdoor life and the spiritual life of the church.

## Sarah Bernhardt

Mucha met Sarah Bernhardt in 1894. The artist had proposed a poster for *Gismonda*. When Sarah Bernhardt saw the piece, she cried: “Oh! It is beautiful! From now on, you will work for me, by my side. I love you already.” It was the start of a story of friendship and loyalty.

I have imagined the scent of this legendary actress. In 1900, Jacques Guerlain dedicated *Voilà pourquoi j’aimais Rosine* to her.

The fragrance presented is a recreation of this floral-oriental accord with violet and camellia, Sarah Bernhardt’s favourite flowers.

Citrusy top notes of bergamot and lemon, floral middle notes of iris, violet, rose, camellia and jasmine and an aromatic hint of lavender, base notes of vanilla and tonka bean with an unexpected note of smoked tea, lapsang souchong.

The fragrances have been created by Marie-Caroline Symard, Perfumer at TechnicoFlor, in partnership with Grand Palais Immersif



This exhibition is coproduced by Grand Palais Immersif (a subsidiary of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux – Grand Palais) in partnership with the Mucha Foundation.

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### **Chief curator**

Tomoko Sato, curator of the Mucha Foundation, Prague.

### **Exhibition design**

ATTA – Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects

### **Graphic design**

Chevalvert

### **Lighting design**

Atelier Audibert

### **Audiovisual and multimedia design**

Artisans d'idées - Lundi 8

### **Audiovisual production and implementation, multimedia development**

Artisans d'idées - Mardi 8

### **Production of the Arcane space**

Fortiche Production © Riot Games

### **Production of the olfactory experience**

TechnicoFlor

### **Musical and sound experience**

Production by Studio Radio France; composition by Benoît de Villeneuve and Benjamin Morando

### **Spatialisation, immersive sound mixing:**

Frédéric Changenet

# AROUND THE EXHIBITION

## ENCOUNTERS

Studio Bastille (Opéra Bastille), 6.30 pm

Free upon reservation: [grandpalais-immersif.fr](http://grandpalais-immersif.fr)

**Wednesday 29 March**

**Alphonse Mucha – The Art Nouveau poster artist**

Screening of the documentary by Roman Vavra, 2020,  
1 hr 35 min (original version with French subtitles)

*The film is introduced by Markéta Houdoskava,  
founder of the CZECH-IN Film Festival of Czech  
and Slovak cinema in Paris.*

Using archive documents, correspondence and  
previously unseen writing from the 1930s, the film  
draws on Mucha's memoirs and reveals a little-known  
aspect of the artist's life.

**Wednesday 5 April**

**Mucha in the USA**

*Lecture by Véronique Vienne, designer, artistic director  
in the United States, teacher and essayist*

Art Nouveau posters would go on to inspire an entire  
generation of young hippie musicians on a quest for  
“psychedelic” motifs. This lecture aims to explore how  
Mucha's seductive sirens came to symbolise  
the acoustic raptures of Californian rock bands.

**Wednesday 31 May**  
**When Mucha met Sarah**

*Lecture by Stéphanie Cantarutti, Chief Curator, Head of 19th Century Painting at the Petit Palais, curator of the exhibition “Sarah Bernhardt”*

The actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) shrewdly surrounded herself with a host of artists who were fascinated by her strong personality. The lecture will explore how the images of “La Divine” created by Mucha also shaped those of a woman of whom many others dreamed.

**Wednesday 11 October**  
**Mucha and Japan: from Japonism to manga**

*Lecture by Brigitte Koyama-Richard, Professor Emeritus at Musashi University and the author of numerous publications on Japanese art*

Alphonse Mucha is still one of Japan's most popular artists. This lecture will explore the works of Japanese artists influenced by Mucha, from the late 19th century to manga.

# EVENTS

**Wednesdays 22 March, 19 April, 24 May,  
21 June from 4 pm to 8.30 pm**

## **Tattoo: the 10th art?**

*This event is organised as part of the 2023 Printemps du Dessin*

From one century to the next, from one aesthetic or practice to another, the tattoo artist Sm Bousille revisits Mucha's *Le Pater* live. Visitors can watch him work live during these 4 Wednesday sessions.

**Wednesday 7 June from 6.30 pm**

## **Special evening event**

*Dance event with Maxime Thomas, dancer at the Opéra de Paris and choreographer*

The Mucha style, one full of movement, is ideal for the art of dance. In the great exhibition hall, to a score by Villeneuve and Morando, Maxime Thomas captures the language invented by Mucha and brings it to life. At the end of the performance, those who wish can also join in the dance!



# DIGITAL

## THE MOBILE APPICATION

Find all the content and information on the exhibition on the Grand Palais mobile app!

Available on the AppStore and on Google Play:  
[tinyurl.com/appligrandpalais](https://tinyurl.com/appligrandpalais)

## GRANDPALAIS-IMMERSIF.FR

Plan or prolong your visit and read the latest news on the exhibition *Eternal Mucha*, as well as all the information on the venue and its touring exhibitions.

## ON THE GRAND PALAIS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Find all the videos linked to the exhibition.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyAiVPzrW\\_o5PuNI6UH3JNg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyAiVPzrW_o5PuNI6UH3JNg)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Trailers, interviews with curators, videos, key dates, quizzes and more.

Follow us on social media and share your visit

**#EternalMucha #GrandPalaisImmersif**



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# PUBLICATIONS

## EXHIBITION ALBUM

28 x 43 cm, 24 pages, 54 illustrations, €6

*Editions Réunion des musées nationaux – Grand Palais*

In keeping with the exhibition, the album places a particular emphasis on Mucha's heritage. From the pacifist "Flower Power" movement of the Sixties to Japanese manga, superheroes, street artists and even tattoo art, a host of creators have followed in his footsteps. The album is interspersed with interviews with contemporary artists such as Bob Masse, Joe Quesada, Akiko Hatsu, Yoshitaka Amano, El Mac and one of the founders of the *Arcane* series, demonstrating Mucha's significant influence and modernity, through new unique and diverse art forms.

**PASS**

SÉSAME  
E S C A L E S

## THE ART OF SURPRISE

With the Sésame Stops Pass, go from Paris to all over France, with plenty of discoveries and surprises! For one year, enjoy unlimited priority admission to *Eternal Mucha* and *Street Art* at Grand Palais Immersif; *Léon Monet. Brother of the artist and collector* and *Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso*. Inventing a language at the Musée du Luxembourg. You can also discover the exhibitions and collections of 15 national museums all around France, including the Musée de Cluny – Musée National du Moyen Âge in central Paris.

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