

Press Release

## 2 x 100 Best Posters at the MAK

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| <b>Opening</b>          | Tuesday, 29 November 2011, 7 p.m.                                       |
| <b>Exhibition Venue</b> | MAK Exhibition Hall<br>Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna                        |
| <b>Exhibition Term</b>  | 30 November 2011 – 15 January 2012                                      |
| <b>Opening Hours</b>    | Tue MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–12 midnight<br>Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed |

The MAK presents two contrasting looks at international graphic design in the exhibition *2 x 100 Best Posters at the MAK*. For the sixth time, the MAK will be exhibiting the latest batch of winning projects from the competition *100 Best Posters* (with this year's showing entitled *100 Best Posters 10. Germany Austria Switzerland*), an initiative which has been exploring the most up-to-the-minute tendencies in communication design since 1966. Parallel to this presentation, the exhibition *100 Best International Posters from the MAK Collection* will offer a look at the approximately 110-year history of the museum's own collection of posters. Some of the items selected will be making their first-ever appearance in Austria as part of an exhibition.

### ***100 Best Posters 10. Germany Austria Switzerland***

“Don't use a poster to write a novel, because nobody out there on the street wants to get cold feet while reading it,” is how Ernst Growald, head of the Kunstanstalt Hollerbaum & Schmidt printing house in Berlin, brought one of the maxims of poster design to the point 101 years ago. Once again, the results of the competition *100 Best Posters 10. Germany Austria Switzerland*—an important indicator of present-day poster design trends which welcomed competitors beyond Germany's borders for the tenth time this year—will surprise visitors with illustrative examples both extravagant and humorous.

This competition, the entrants of which read like a who's who of the graphic design scene in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, serves to highlight current creative tendencies while also representing a cross-section of contemporary poster design. A large number of the award-winning posters are based on purely graphic and typographical solutions; at the same time, photography sees less use than was previously the case. Also conspicuous is a technical detail: nearly half of the winning posters are elaborately silkscreened.

From over 1,600 works by 500 graphic designers and agencies, an international jury consisting of Elvira Barriga (D), Erich Brechbühl (CH), Andrew and Jeffrey Goldstein (D), Claude Kuhn (jury chair, CH) and Peter

Klinger (A) selected one hundred individual posters and poster series for recognition: 53 are from Germany, 45 from Switzerland and two from Austria.

Among the competition's Austrian entrants, awards were won by Nina Wilsmann, who produced a series of detailed cityscapes (of Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna and Wasserburg) which facilitate one's orientation within each city, and to the agency Büro X Design, which produced a series of seasonal posters for Vienna's Museumsquarter. Both ideas humorously adapt their motifs to communicate the idea of the city as a space for experiences and as an urban cultural site that whets one's appetite for more.

The exhibition design, with outsized rows of metal rings that can be read as paying homage to Bauhaus artist Oskar Schlemmer (1888–1943) and the "Hoop Dance" from his *Triadisches Ballett* [Triadic Ballet] of 1922, was realized by L2M3 Kommunikationsdesign in cooperation with büro münzing designer+architekten bda (both from Stuttgart).

The exhibition will be accompanied by a yearbook (likewise designed by L2M3) containing images of all the award-winning posters along with the special thematic contribution "A New Look at the Old Medium of the Photography Poster" by Rolf Sachsse (D). The book is published by Verlag Hermann Schmidt (Mainz) and will be available at the MAK Design Shop (€ 34.80).

### ***100 Best International Posters from the MAK Collection***

Parallel to the exhibition *100 Best Posters 10. Germany Austria Switzerland*, the historical retrospective showing *100 Best International Posters from the MAK Collection* will offer an experimental treatment of the theme. The MAK owns an important collection of posters encompassing over 15,000 domestic and international examples; these were originally compiled at the outset of the 20th century as a collection of models for both students and arts-and-crafts professionals. The collection is international in scope and provides a comprehensive overview of the genre.

The impetus for this collection's international orientation came not least from Jean Louis Sponcel (1858–1930), author of the 1897 publication *Das Moderne Plakat* [The Modern Poster]. One of the issues which Sponcel addressed therein was the fact that poster design in Germany and Austria-Hungary lagged far behind that of Belgium, France and England. Austria-Hungary's Ministry of Trade eventually reacted by purchasing a collection of 48 Belgian, French and Italian posters on display at the French Pavilion at the 1900 Paris World's Fair in the name of the Imperial and Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (today's MAK).

From that point onward, the MAK proceeded to compile an outstanding collection including key works of international poster art. The exhibition *100 Best International Posters from the MAK Collection* will feature examples by

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Jules Chéret, Henri Cassiers, Adolf Hohenstein, Alfons Maria Mucha and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec to document the development of the artist's poster from the Belle Époque and the art deco-style to the innovative ideas of the so-called commercial graphic designers of the 1920s and 1930s and on to the occupational profile assumed by graphic designers of the present day.

One of the exhibition's oldest examples—and an early document of the reception of Japanese aesthetics in the United States—is the poster designed by Arthur Wesley Dow in 1895 for the showing *Japanese Color Prints. First Complete Historical Exhibition*, which took place in New York. The present exhibition will also include the 1897 image *Die rote Bulldogge mit gesprengten Ketten* [The Red Bulldog with Broken Chains] designed by Thomas Theodor Heine for the magazine *Simplicissimus*, a true icon of design and a documentation of the attempts to resist Wilhelmine-Era censorship.

Part of the exhibition is also dedicated to early *Sachplakate* or “object posters” reduced to their basic messages—including examples by Lucian Bernhard, Hans Busch and Gino von Finetti—which strongly influenced early-1920s Austrian graphic design.

Further highlights are posters by Heinz Fuchs and Cesar Klein as examples of the German political expressionism of the November Group of 1918, as well as posters abstracted to basic geometric forms done by Russian Constructivist artists such as the Stenberg brothers and the Rosta Windows group.

An important contribution to the genre of the photographic poster is represented by the posters by artists from the Deutscher Werkbund [German Work Federation], with their experimental montages of typography and photography. Works by Willi Baumeister and Karl Schwab are joined by a 1914 poster for the Deutscher Werkbund exhibition in Cologne by Peter Behrens, who also designed the revolutionary corporate identity used by the company AEG beginning in 1907.

Examples of posters from Italian and German fascism, posters from France, Switzerland and the US, Polish posters strongly influenced by op art and Surrealism, and finally important artists' posters from the 1970s and '80s will round out this comprehensive presentation.

The exhibition of the competition *100 Best Posters 10* at the MAK offers more than just a forum for the poster genre, which must repeatedly struggle to prove its artistic legitimacy. In recent years, this exhibition has also given occasion for collection's expansion, with the addition of internationally recognized graphic design works by artists including Erich Brechbühl, Niklaus Troxler, Stephan Bundi and Fons Hickmann.

Press Data Sheet

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| <b>Curator</b>          | Peter Klinger, MAK Library and Works on Paper Collection  |
| <b>Publication</b>      | <i>100 Beste Plakate 10. Deutschland Österreich Schweiz</i> , [100 Best Posters 10. Germany Austria Switzerland], 217 pages, Verlag Hermann Schmidt, Mainz 2011, € 34.80. Available at the MAK Design Shop. |
| <b>MAK Admission</b>    | € 9.90 with MAK guide / € 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50  |
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