

## **ALPHONSE MUCHA (1860-1939)**

<http://www.muchafoundation.org/timeline>

**Alphonse Maria Mucha** was born on 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1860 in Ivančice, Moravia (the present Czech Republic). He was a **Czech Art Nouveau painter and decorative designer**. He produced many paintings, advertisements, postcards, and, packaging designs. In 1879, became a painter of theatrical scenery in Vienna, Austria when a fire destroyed his employer's business in 1881, he returned to Moravia.

**Count Karl Khuen of Mikulov** hired Mucha to decorate his Castle with murals, and also agreed to sponsor **Mucha's Art training at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts**. Mucha moved to Paris in 1887, and continued his studies at **Académie Julian and Académie Colarossi**. In addition to his studies, he was producing magazine and advertising illustrations.

In 1895, Mucha designed a lithograph poster for a play featuring **Sarah Bernhardt, the most famous actress in Paris**. The poster attracted lots of attention. **Actress Sarah Bernhardt** was so satisfied with the success of this first poster that **she began a six-year contract with Mucha** - who produced posters for her plays. Mucha's work was also shown at the **1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris**. His Art Nouveau style was often copied.

Mucha produced paintings, posters, designs for packagings, stamps, banknotes, advertisements, and book illustrations, as well as designs for jewellery, carpets, wallpaper, and theatre sets in what was termed initially "The Mucha Style" but is now known as Art Nouveau (French for "new art").

Mucha's design works frequently featured beautiful women in flowing, robes, surrounded by lush flowers which sometimes formed halos behind their heads. Flowers and nature were the basis for many of his design ideas He often used pale pastel colour schemes.

In 1939, at the start of World War 2 Mucha was arrested by invading German troops in Czechoslovakia. Mucha became ill with pneumonia and later died in the Czech capital city Prague on 14 July 1939.

Interest in Mucha's distinctive style experienced a strong revival during the 1960s with a general interest in Art Nouveau. Recently, Japanese Manga artist **Naoko Takeuchi** released a series of official posters depicting five of the main characters from her manga series **Sailor Moon** mimicking Mucha's style.