

Rafał Olbinski – bio



Born in Kielce, Poland in 1945, Rafał Olbinski studied architecture before dedicating himself to painting and design. He graduated from the Architectural Department of Warsaw Politechnical School.

In 1982 he immigrated to the US, where he soon established himself as a prominent painter, illustrator and designer. In 1985, he began teaching at the School of Visual Arts in New York.

For his artistic achievements, he has received more than 150 awards including Gold and Silver Medals from the Society of Illustrators in New York and Los Angeles, and The Big Crit 2000 award by Critique Magazine in San Francisco. In 1994 he was awarded the International Oscar for the World's Most Memorable Poster, The Prix Savignac, in Paris.

The President of the Republic of Poland awarded Olbinski the highest award in the field of arts, the gold medal, "Gloria Artist".

Rafał with Mayor Giuliani

In the same year he received the Creative Review Award for the Best of British Illustration in London. In 1995 a jury led by Mayor Rudolf Giuliani chose his poster as the official New York City Capital of the World Poster.

In the following year he won the Steven Dohanos Award for the best painting in the Annual Member Exhibition of the Society of Illustrators. In July 2002 the City of Fondi, Italy awarded him Divina Giulia for his contribution to contemporary art.

In 1996 he was commissioned by the U.S. Information Agency to design a poster celebrating the 25th Earth Day anniversary and commissioned again in 2004 to create the Earth Day NY poster. From 2002 through 2010, a selection of Olbinski paintings was included in the Grand Space projection in grand Central Terminal, as a highlight of the Earth Day Celebration in New York. The other artists featured in the show are Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol.

In 2001, the Willy-Brandt House in Berlin presented the works of Rafał Olbinski in a one-man retrospective exhibition entitled Art at the Turn of the Century.

In 2002 his set design debut for the Opera Company of Philadelphia's performance of Mozart's Don Giovanni was highly acclaimed by critics in the New York Times and the Philadelphia Inquirer. The New York Times remarks that if you don't know his name, "Odds are you know his paintings."

In the same year the "Art with Moral Purpose" at the Goethe Institute in Hamburg exhibited paintings and posters by Olbinski.

He is well known as an internationally acclaimed designer of opera house posters and for designing the covers of hundreds of magazines, from Time to Newsweek to The New Yorker. Commissioned by Allegro Music, he has completed over 100 album covers for their Opera D'Oro Series.

Olbinski was commissioned to create several paintings illustrating articles and essays on moral values, which appeared in seven consecutive issues of the German magazine Stern. This led to a traveling exhibition of these

paintings, the first hosted by the wife of the President of Germany, Eva Louise Koeh.

In 2008 Olbinski had a one-man exhibition titled "Olbinski – Photokina Expo" for Hewlett Packard (Cologne, Germany). In 2009 he had an important museum exhibition at the Jule Collins Smith Museum entitled "New Dreams of Old Values". He has completed many large murals for installations in public space in Europe.

With a reputation that spans the globe, Olbinski is involved in projects on nearly every continent. In Poland, he completed three public murals that were unveiled in Spring 2007; In Bangkok, he juried the 2006 International Film Festival; In Germany, an exhibition of his work is currently traveling across the country. In 2011 he was chosen to design the curtain for the important new opera house being constructed in Poland.

Olbinski's lush images are layered with complex psychology. He does not paint the landscape of scientific reality, but rather maps the interiors of the mind. Like Dali and Magritte before him, Olbinski's work has a poetic resonance – he depicts the mind as a theater of dreams, with new attractions around every corner.

"I believe that every artist falls in love with his work," Olbinski says, "especially when you paint women." Well known for his luxurious depictions of women, Olbinski's nudes are both classical and controversial. He explores the mysterious aura of women who, although aloof, beckon to the viewer. A master of technique, he often draws on the works of Goya and Botticelli for inspiration.

As in Goya's time, the female form has the power to incite controversy. Recent disputes erupted over Olbinski's image of a bare-breasted mermaid, designed for the 2006 Miss World contest in Poland. As a concession to Polish officials, Olbinski painted a scarf across the mermaid's breast.

Poetic humor is a quality rarely found in the fine arts, says Andre Parinud, President of the International Arts Salon in Paris. Rafal Olbinski has this gift. He wants to show us that our imagination is a magical world, which we are recreating forever. He draws us into a different universe, and forces us to use our eyes to participate in a marvelous world which is the true dimension of dreams.

PRESS RECOGNITION

Olbinski works have been featured in international magazines including: Print (New York), Novum (Munich), Graphis (Zurich), Communication World (San Francisco), Idea (Tokyo), Art Magazine in America (New York), Communication Art (Palo Alto), How (Cincinnati), The World & I (Washington, D.C.), High Quality (Munich) and Universe des Artes (Paris), Stern Magazine, Germany, Der Spiegel Magazine and many others.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

"Rafal Olbinski's art is an extraordinary testament to integrity, spirit and adventure. Technically masterful, emotionally complete, his is one of the brilliant visions today in any art form."

Richard Burgin

Founder and Editor of the award-winning literary journal Boulevard

"Rafal Olbinski proves that although as a medium it may have one foot in the past, its other is firmly placed in the present, if not the future."

Steve Heller

A Senior Art Director of The New York Times

"May it be fine art, poster or illustration, through contradiction, absurdity and the banal, truth resides. This is where Rafal Olbinski's contributions are realized. He explores the hidden properties of his subject matter which results in poetic compositions that encompass a great stillness. It is this very experience which nourishes. It is no accident that the power of his imagery touches most everyone. By not being restricted exclusively to gallery exhibitions, Rafal's work has impacted throughout the world. His posters and paintings are a testament to raising the consciousness of a world starved for new impressions."

Richard Wilde

Chairman, Graphic Design and Advertising, School of Visual Arts, New York

"For most artists, developing their technique through constant daily exercise, study and training will bring about mastery to a certain level, but it is impossible for an artist of ordinary talent to keep going on using creative motifs in the work all of the time. However, in Olbinski's case, I cannot help but be astonished by his brimming creative power and equally high level of technique."

Minoru Takita

Editorial Director of Idea Magazine, Tokyo

"Olbinski is a painter-poet who presents the image of our world while producing broader reflections. One has to be a poet to speak with humor and without grandiloquence about the seriousness of certain phenomena in our society."

Anne-Julie Belmont

Universe Des Arts, Paris

"Poetry in color, Olbinski's paintings are expansive, eerily peaceful; there solitude encounters the unexpected-the absurd that is meaningful. Sadness edged by seeming contradictions resolves into a haven of paradox. But the

artist will not let himself be categorized, insisting on having the last laugh. And when Olbinski's humor erupts, it shatters the night sky like a bolt of lightning."

Frank Fox

From the cover story of 'The World & I', the publication of the Washington Times

COLLECTIONS, COMMISSIONS, AWARDS & EXHIBITIONS

A partial list of his work are included in the collections of: The Carnegie Foundation, New York City; The Modern Art Museum, Toyama, Japan; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel; Suntory Museum in Osaka, Japan, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Lathi, Finland; National Museum, Warsaw, Poland; The Library of Congress Deutsche Bank, Frankfurt, Germany; Equitable Capital Corporation, New York City; Holiday Inn World Wide Corporation, New York City; Searle Collection, Chicago, IL; National Arts Club, New York City; Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC; Suntory Museum, Osaka, Japan; Continental Corporation, USA; Browne & Company Corporation, USA, Ernst and Young, Germany, Alfa Wassermann Inc., USA,

A Partial list of commissions include works for: AT&T, CBS, RCA, IBM, American Airlines, New York City Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Stern Magazine, Der Spiegel Magazine, Time Magazine, Newsweek, Atlantic Monthly, Smithsonian, New York Times Magazine, New York Times, Art in America, Business Week, US News And World Report, Idea Magazine, Boulevard Literary Quarterly, Novum Magazine, Graphis Magazine, Print Magazine, The World & I, International Business, Playboy, Design Magazine, Fortune, Omni.

A partial list of his awards include: Society of Illustrators, Art Directors Club of New York, Best of British Illustration, Prix Savignac (UNESCO), Worlds Most Memorable Poster Competition, Patrick Nagel Award, Studio Magazine, Human Rights Institute, Multiple Gold and Silver Awards from The Society of Illustrators

EXHIBITIONS (Partial List)

- * Historical Museum, Wroclaw, Poland
- * Nahan Galleries, New York
- * Jack Gallery, Monterey
- * Columbia Museum of Art, Focus Gallery, Columbia, S. Carolina
- * Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle
- * Jack Gallery, Las Vegas
- * Gallery 444, San Francisco
- * Jacob Javitz Center, Platinum Section, International Art Expo, New York
- * S2 Art Gallery, Chicago, iEuropean Visionary: Art for the Senses
- * Swiss Exchange, Zurich, Switzerland
- * Rempex Auction House, Warsaw, Poland
- * Elliott Gallery, New Orleans
- * Patinae Showroom, Stamford, CT
- * International Art Expo, New York
- * Willie Brandt House, Berlin, Germany
- * City Museum, Lotz, Poland
- * Culture and Science Palace, Warsaw, Poland
- * National Arts Club, New York
- * The Gallery at Lincoln Center, New York, iVisions of Opera
- * Entertainment Galleries, Las Vegas, iOlbinski and the Opera
- * Gallery 444, San Francisco
- * International Art Expo, New York
- * National Museum, Kielce, Poland
- * Galerie Van der Straeten, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- * Frankfurt Book Fair, Frankfurt, Germany
- * Instituto Cultural de Providencia, Santiago, Chile
- * Museum Miedzii, Legnica, Poland
- * Closson Gallery, Cincinnati
- * Polaski Museum, Warsaw, Poland
- * National Arts Club, New York
- * Alberta College of Art, Calgary, Canada
- * Nahan Galleries, Tokyo
- * Valor Arte, Caracas, Venezuela
- * Unesco, Paris, France
- * Nahan Galleries, New Orleans
- * Nine Arts Gallery, Belgium
- * Nihon Garu Gallery, Nagoya, Japan
- * Andre Zarre Gallery, New York