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Denver Art Museum to Showcase Movie Posters in *Rebranded: Polish Film Posters for the American Western* *Exhibition explores unique interpretations of Western films by Polish poster artists*

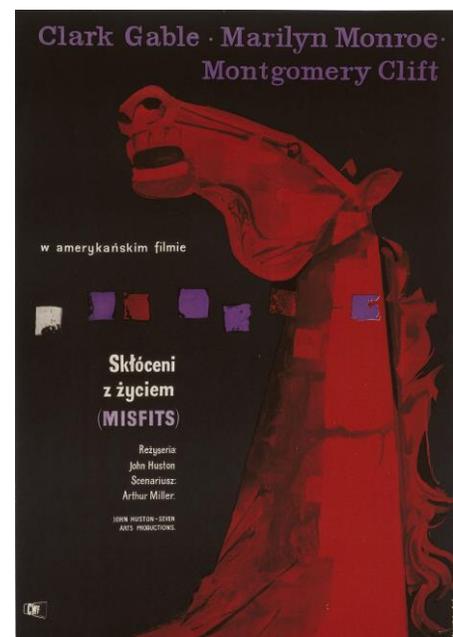
(Denver, Colo.) – December 5, 2013 – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) invites visitors to explore how Polish poster artists captured the essence of the American West through their conceptual works of art in *Rebranded: Polish Film Posters for the American Western*. On view February 16 through June 1, 2014, *Rebranded* presents movie posters created during Poland’s communist-era that remain virtually unknown to the American public.

Drawn entirely from the Autry National Center of the American West, *Rebranded* features 28 original posters by some of the most recognizable Polish artists, including Jerzy Filsak, Wiktor Górka and Waldemar Świerzy that reflect the experimental spirit of the famed “Polish Poster School.”

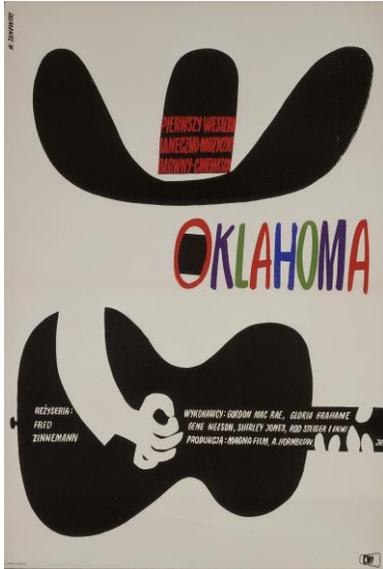
“For more than three decades, the Polish graphic film poster was one of the country’s highest art forms,” said Darrin Alfred, associate curator of architecture, design and graphics at the DAM. “The poster became a source of great national pride in Poland and its role in the cultural life of the nation is unique. These works were one of the few forms of individual artistic expression in the nation under Communism.”

In *Rebranded*, Polish artists interpret such Hollywood classics as *El Dorado*, *The Missouri Breaks*, *Shane*, *The Misfits*, *Tom Horn* and *Oklahoma!* In the United States, the marketing of these films was studio-driven, often overtly glamorous and centered on images of the movie’s stars. Polish artists unveiled a new arsenal of interpretations, from coded political meaning through visual metaphor to the subversion of iconic Western imagery.

A notable example is Jerzy Jaworowski’s poster *Skłóceni z życiem* for the 1961 film *The Misfits*, starring Clark Gable and Marilyn Monroe. Jaworowski produced an unsettling and expressive image of a horse—an animal of extraordinary importance in Western legends and a beloved symbol of freedom. With this lone creature Jaworowski depicts a memorable scene from the film in which a round up for wild mustangs takes place.



Jerzy Jaworowski, *Skłóceni z życiem*, 1962. Polish poster for the American film *The Misfits* (1961). Lithograph. Courtesy of the Autry National Center, Los Angeles, 97.73.2.



Witold Janowski, *Oklahoma*, 1964. Polish poster for the American film *Oklahoma!* (1955). Lithograph. Courtesy of the Austry National Center, Los Angeles. 96.48.6.

“Universally recognized symbols of the Western—horse, six-shooter, the cowboy, Stetson, saddle—were used to convey violence as a negative force,” Alfred said. “Unlike many other art forms, Polish film posters did not fall within the censor’s domain because they were not expected to pose a threat. Polish graphic artists had greater opportunity for self-expression, created more personal images and pioneered individual styles and techniques.”

With expressive impact these posters would catch the eye, offering a concise and often ingenious summary of each film. Witold Janowski’s poster for the musical *Oklahoma!* depicts a faceless cowboy wearing a large hat and holding a guitar. The initial “O” in the title *Oklahoma* forms a singing mouth and lips. The film’s credits act as guitar strings. The image is an excellent graphic representation of the nature of the film. Like paintings, these works served as outlets for individual artistic expression.

Throughout *Rebranded*, visitors will recognize the names of some of Hollywood’s legendary heroes, such as John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Clint Eastwood and Kirk Douglas. In the poster for the film *El Dorado*, Jerzy Filsak graphically portrays Sheriff J. P. Harrah, a once respected but now drunken lawman played by Robert

Mitchum, as an oversized cowboy wearing a hat that is crowned with a bottle of whiskey and cradling a crutch as it were a rifle.

Rebranded is located in the Gates Family Gallery of Western Art and included in general museum admission.

Film Screening

Freedom on the Fence will be screened March 12, 2014, in Sharp Auditorium with the film’s co-director, Andrea Marks. *Freedom on the Fence* is a 40-minute documentary about the history of Polish posters and their significance to the social, political and cultural life of Poland. The film examines the period from WWII through the fall of Communism, and captures the paradox of how this unique art form flourished within a communist regime. Andrea Marks will be joined by Jack Hanley, a Boulder-based writer, lecturer and film critic, for a post-screening Q&A. The screening is free and open to the public. Seating is limited. Doors open at 6 p.m., film starts at 6:30 p.m.

Rebranded: Polish Film Posters for the American Western is supported by the generous donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine*, CBS4 and *The Denver Post*.

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Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Denver metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.