



# **The Art Nouveau Style Book of Alphonse Mucha (Dover Fine Art, History of Art)**

*Alphonse Mucha*

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To the general public, Alphonse Maria Mucha (1860–1939) is perhaps best known for his posters of Sarah Bernhardt and magnificent decorative panels such as "The Seasons" — works that continue to grow in popularity and value as the resurgence of interest in Art Nouveau increases. Among graphic artists and commercial designers, Mucha is praised for the innovative style books that pioneered the use of Art Nouveau in commercial packaging, design, and ornament.

The most important of these style books was *Documents Décoratifs*, published in 1901 at the height of Mucha's fame as the high priest of the Art Nouveau movement. While the artist's fame rests largely on his posters, it is in the smaller works of the style books, or design portfolios, that the refinement of his technique can best be appreciated. The present volume, carefully reproduced from an extremely rare and valuable set of originals, contains all 72 plates of the *Documents Décoratifs* portfolio. Included are designs for jewelry, wallpaper, stained glass, furniture, and tableware; figure and botanical studies; and a selection of Mucha's famous panneaux décoratifs. Eighteen of the plates are in full color, while the remaining 54 are reproduced in two or more color tones.

In addition to numerous innovative designs for practical and decorative objects, the elegant draftsmanship and meticulous execution that characterized all of Mucha's work is evident in studies of languorous nudes, portrait sketches, delicately rendered plant and animal motifs, exquisite modeling of drapery and cloth, and the flowing, fantastic forms created as experiments in pure design. In the Foreword by Gabriel Mourey, specially translated for this edition, Mucha's own philosophy of art, and the relation of the *Documents* to the rest of his work, receive an appreciative and informative discussion.

Hitherto available only in scattered sources, or in the libraries of wealthy collectors, the complete *Documents Décoratifs* is now available in this inexpensive one-volume edition. Lovers of Mucha's work, admirers of Art Nouveau, and the application of that style to the decorative arts, will want to own this fine royalty-free collection by one of the greatest masters of the technique.

"[*Documents Décoratifs* is] . . . an encyclopedic source for Mucha's style in every branch of decorative and applied art and one of the few books on design where even individual plates are sought after by collectors."

— Marina Henderson, *The Graphic Style of Alphonse Mucha*

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