

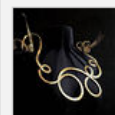
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT | DECEMBER 11, 2008, 8:30 P.M. ET

Berlin Art

In 1930, a Paris-based Polish illustrator and graphic artist named Arthur Szyk (1894-1951) embarked on a series of paintings commemorating the life and times of George Washington.

Unlike American illustrators of the period, whose lush realism still owed much to pre-World War I art nouveau, or French art-deco illustrators, Szyk looked all the way back to the Middle Ages. His vision of Colonial America -- by turns grotesque, comedic and heroic -- recalled the late-Gothic woodcuts of Cranach and the vivid colors of medieval illuminated manuscripts.

After World War II broke out, Szyk and his wife, then living in London, made their way to the U.S., and within a few years Szyk had become one of America's best-known commercial illustrators and cartoonists, regularly contributing covers to magazines like Time and Collier's, and to a range of Jewish-themed publications.



Tokyo/Prof. Rinjito Sodei

'Anti-Christ' (1942), by Arthur Szyk, on show in Berlin.

Jewish liturgical decoration. Several of his wartime illustrations transcend their era, most notably his 1942 depiction of Adolf Hitler as the anti-Christ, featuring an eerie, monumental bust of Hitler, with glass eyes and pasted-on hair.

Used a few years later as a magazine cover, the image lives on as a potent reminder of Nazi crimes, with Hitler as the ghost that will never go away.

— J.S. Marcus

Until Jan. 4

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All but forgotten for decades, Szyk has been rediscovered in a number of recent exhibitions in the U.S., and now the German Historical Museum has mounted a retrospective of his work, "Arthur Szyk: Drawing Against National Socialism and Terror."

It was as a Zionist and an anti-Fascist that Szyk left his mark as an artist. A 1946 drawing comparing the Mayflower with an illegal ship smuggling Jewish refugees into British-occupied Palestine is a virtuoso piece, combining realistic depictions of ships with

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