

**Bowdoin College Museum of Art Presents Two Special Fall Exhibitions  
Focusing on Soviet Art in the Early Twentieth Century**

*Exhibitions Highlight Soviet Propaganda Posters from Between the World Wars  
And Provide Insight into the Practice of Soviet Photojournalist Dmitri Baltermants*

**Brunswick, Maine, August 17, 2017**—Opening this September 23, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA) will present two special exhibitions that explore aspects of Soviet art and illuminate art, life, and culture in Russia following the 1917 revolution. Ranging from *Constructing Revolution: Soviet Propaganda Posters from between the World Wars*, which presents propaganda posters produced in the wake of the Russian Revolution, to *Dmitri Baltermants: Documenting and Staging a Soviet Reality*, which explores the work of a photojournalist depicting World War II and its aftermath in the USSR, Bowdoin’s fall exhibitions explore both the promise of utopian idealism and the devastation of war in an era of extreme political upheaval.

“Coinciding with the centennial of the 1917 Russian Revolution, we are thrilled to present two exhibitions that leverage the depth of knowledge of our curatorial team at the Museum as well as the expertise of faculty and students at Bowdoin to explore the effects of this momentous event on Soviet art and life in the proceeding years,” noted BCMA Co-Director Anne Goodyear. “The Soviet posters exhibition provides a great opportunity to see outstanding examples of these works, which have remained iconic for their unique graphic design. These are beautifully complemented by the exhibition of Dimitri Baltermants’ photographs, which depict a grimmer facet of life in Russia during and after World War II,” continued Frank Goodyear, co-director, BCMA.

Bringing together more than 70 Soviet-era posters from the private collection of Svetlana and Eric Silverman, class of 1985, *Constructing Revolution: Soviet Propaganda Posters from between the World War*, showcases the variety of poster genres and methods, and features prominent artists of different aesthetic movements, particularly avant-garde photomontage. The exhibition charts the formative decades of the USSR and provides a glimpse into the interdependency of Soviet art and ideology, reflecting the turbulent and ultimately tragic history of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s. Posters supplied a new iconography, converting Bolshevik aspirations into readily accessible, public art. These works can be considered both as representations and distortions of the events of 1917 and after, and as projections of

the hopes and aspirations of the revolutionary generation. Following its presentation at Bowdoin, this exhibition will travel to the Wolfsonian–Florida International University in Miami Florida

On view concurrently is *Dmitri Baltermants: Documenting and Staging a Soviet Reality*, featuring more than two dozen works by Soviet photojournalist Dmitri Baltermants (1912–1990). Despite acclaim for his humanizing, often dramatic photographs World War II and its aftermath, due to Stalinist censorship, many of his most famous photographs would not become well known until the 1960s under the new reform-minded administration of Nikita Khrushchev. Although his images were marketed as an eyewitness account of combat and an objective portrayal of life in the USSR, Baltermants altered many of his negatives to fit into the Soviet ideology championed by the regime. Looking retrospectively on his career, he commented, “In my time I was the leader of staged photography. I made some truly grandiose stagings.” Straddling the line between fact and fiction, his photographs served as an important form of state propaganda and reveal much about Soviet hopes and challenges at mid-century. The exhibition is curated by Bowdoin student Johna Cook, class of 2019.

These exhibitions will be presented alongside *The Ivory Mirror: The Art of Mortality in Renaissance Europe* which examines the visual culture of mortality and morality in early Renaissance Europe, (on view through November 26) as well as *Barkley Hendricks: “Let’s Make Some History”*, which presents five rarely seen canvases from Hendricks’s Philadelphia years (on view through October 29).

### **Fall Programming Highlights**

The BCMA will mount a robust series of public programs in coordination with the fall exhibitions, including lectures by leading artists and scholars, gallery conversations, and film screenings. Soviet Poster programming highlights include:

- ***A Revolution in Images: Poster Art and the Socialist Imagination in Early Soviet Russia***  
September 24, 2017 | 2:00 p.m. | Kresge Auditorium, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College  
Page Herrlinger, associate professor of history, Bowdoin College, delivers the opening lecture for *Constructing Revolution: Soviet Propaganda Posters from between the World Wars*.
- ***How an Uprising Became a Revolution***  
November 30, 2017 | 4:30 p.m. | Kresge Auditorium, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College  
Semion Lyandres, professor of history, University of Notre Dame, discusses the first Russian Revolution that occurred in February 1917.

For a complete list of events and program highlights related to the full schedule of fall exhibitions, please visit the [museum’s website](#).

## **About the Bowdoin College Museum of Art**

The collections of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art are among the most comprehensive of any college museum in the United States. Collecting commenced over 200 years ago with a major gift from the College's founder James Bowdoin III and his family that included Gilbert Stuart's magnificent portraits of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

The Museum is housed in the landmark Walker Art Building, designed in 1894 by Charles Follen McKim. Located on the historic quadrangle of Bowdoin College, the building is graced by murals by John La Farge, Kenyon Cox, Elihu Vedder, and Abbott Thayer. A \$20.8-million renovation and expansion in 2007 provided a stunning setting for objects as diverse as monumental Assyrian reliefs from Nimrud, Iraq; European old master paintings; and works by American modernists. The Museum is the centerpiece of Bowdoin's vibrant arts and culture community and offers a wealth of academic and educational programs. The Museum is also a prominent summer venue for major exhibitions such as *Edward Hopper's Maine* (2011); *William Wegman: Hello Nature* (2012); *Maurice Prendergast: By the Sea* (2013); *Richard Tuttle: A Print Retrospective* (2014); *Night Vision: Nocturnes in American Art, 1860 – 1960* (2015); and *This Is a Portrait If I Say So: Identity in American Art, 1912 to Today* (2016), and *The Ivory Mirror: The Art of Mortality in Renaissance Europe* (2017).

Fully accessible, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art is open to the public free of charge from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Saturday; 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

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