

# PUHONNY EXHIBITION

## FORTY YEARS OF COMMERCIAL ART IN BADEN-BADEN

At the instance of the Baden Department of the Ministry for National Enlightenment and Propaganda, the permanent art exhibition in Baden-Baden has organized an exhibition providing a survey of forty years of the commercial art of the Baden-Baden painter and graphic Ivo Puhonny. (We published a detailed appreciation of the work of this artist in our issue for June, 1936, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.) The abundant material, which is well selected and carefully arranged, is convincing evidence of the work of this well-known artist who may be said to be one of the pioneers of applied graphic art in Germany. But besides this, the exhibition also reveals what is still more important, for it provides an unusually full survey of the tasks of advertising art as a whole and of the versatility, opinions and attitude required of the commercial artist. However much the range of his tasks may be determined by the tasks of the moment, such a show permits of following with equal clearness the adaptability of the means of expression, the struggle to retain the personal note, and the expression and remoulding of the artistic side to suit the purpose in question. The development in this sense which can be followed in Puhonny's work

also provides much information regarding the progress made by commercial art in terms of both time and style. Compared with other examples on other occasions, there is, for example, here also clear evidence of the co-ordination of the tactical courses adopted in order to render commercial art more and more expressly and definitely an independent art of representation as far as possible. The conflicting claims of adaptation to the tasks presented and of the struggle to express the artist's creative style provides the driving force for this development. Thus in Puhonny's work too there are certain clear traces of the artist's early sketches which had nothing to do with advertising but which, however, reveal the real artist who grasps the essential point and whose work, in occasional details, is already characteristic of the work of a whole generation, culminating in his later well-balanced and harmonious compositions. This remarkable exhibition demonstrates the many stages which are equally attractive as the creation of a genuine artist and as documentary evidence of the history of a cultural period (for instance the posters of the Baden-Baden masked balls for a period of 35 years).

Franz H. Staerk



Photo: Ed. v. Pagenhardt, Baden-Baden