

# JOSEF WITTLICH

POP ICONS - MARCH 14 > APRIL 20, 2025

Galerie Ritsch-Fisch



[contact@ritschfisch.com](mailto:contact@ritschfisch.com)

[www.ritschfisch.com](http://www.ritschfisch.com)

+ 33 6 23 67 88 56

The Ritsch-Fisch Gallery is dedicating an exhibition to the female figures of Josef Wittlich. Hieratic figures, fixed gazes, silhouettes with uncompromising frontality—Wittlich constructs a gallery of paintings where popular iconography intertwines with the nostalgia of a bygone golden age. His heroines, drawn from post-war magazines of a rebuilding era, bear the trappings of a time yearning for splendor, evoking memories of empresses, Hollywood stars, and feminine archetypes magnified by color and ornamentation.



A worker in a ceramics factory, Josef Wittlich painted on the margins of his job, without academic training or any intent to integrate into the official art world. Born in Germany in 1903, he developed an iconography where collective memory engages with figures of prestige and everyday imagery.

His works, created on humble materials like cardboard or wrapping paper, draw on the visual codes of chromolithographs and printed reproductions. Whether depicting monarchs, military leaders, or actresses, he establishes an aesthetic defined by bold colors and pronounced stylization. Recognized late in his life, Wittlich eluded traditional categories. Neither naïve nor academic, he forged a distinctive visual language, transforming popular references into a repertoire of icons that are both familiar and reimagined.

## WITTLICH AND POP ART

Without explicit intent, Josef Wittlich aligns with Pop Art through his use of media imagery and the frontal representation of figures. Like Richard Hamilton, Warhol or Lichtenstein, he draws from mass-distributed visuals—posters, magazines—but without irony or subversion. While Pop Art questions consumer society, Wittlich exalts his subjects with an instinctive approach, devoid of critical distance.

The female figures he paints—empresses from another era, film stars, or anonymous women transformed—echo Warhol's iconic portraits but with a self-taught sensitivity. His bold palette and flat areas of color recall the aesthetics of screen printing, while the repetition of motifs gives his work a spontaneous serial effect. Yet Wittlich does not play with the codes of commodification; he absorbs and transcribes them into a language where the image retains its full evocative power.

**Josef WITTLICH**  
Pop Icons

March 14  
—  
April 20

6 rue des charpentiers  
67000 Strasbourg - France