

“Siudmak and His Dune”

/Curatorial text/

The novel *Dune*, written by American science fiction author Frank Herbert (1920-1986), was published in 1965 and immediately acclaimed by readers and critics. The success of the novel inspired Herbert to create the *Dune Chronicles* series, and during his lifetime, five more parts followed. After his death, the series was continued by his son Brian Herbert and Kevin Anderson, who published fourteen more parts between 1999 and 2016. The series, honored with numerous awards and sold in record numbers, has inspired film directors and game developers.

The history of the novel's film adaptations began in the early 1970s when producer Arthur P. Jacobs purchased the rights to adapt the book. After his sudden death, the rights were sold, and the direction was assigned to Alejandro Jodorowsky. The cast of the film, which was being prepared on an unprecedented scale, was to include Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) and Mick Jagger, and the now legendary Pink Floyd group was to be responsible for the soundtrack. Hans Rudolf Giger (1940-2014) and Jean Giraud (1938-2012), known as *Moebius*, were engaged as set designers. However, due to financial constraints, the project was not realized at the time. It wasn't until another producer, Dino De Laurentiis (1919-2010), finally brought the first *Dune* adaptation to life. Although Ridley Scott was initially set to direct, David Lynch ultimately took on the role, with the film premiering in December 1984. Plans to continue the series under Lynch's direction never materialized.

Several decades later, Canadian director and screenwriter Denis Villeneuve took on the task of adapting *Dune*. As a teenager, he vividly remembered the distinctive cover of *Dune* illustrated by Siudmak's 1982 painting *Messiah*. Reproductions of the artist's works—as one of the co-creators of the science fiction genre in France—were featured for thirty-five years on the covers of science fiction books published by Pocket. Villeneuve's film premiered at the Venice International Film Festival in 2021, with the second part having been released in February 2024. Another installment is planned for 2026. The first part received multiple awards, including six Oscars out of ten nominations, as well as a Golden Globe.

The exhibition in the Gdynia City Museum, which accompanies the 49th Polish Film Festival, presents rarely seen cover artworks and drawings by Wojciech Siudmak, which celebrate the *Dune Chronicles* series reissued in 2007 by REBIS Publishing House. The exhibition also features Siudmak's bronze sculptures inspired by the world of the novel: *Metamorphosis*, *Guardian of the Desert*, and the premiere unveiling of *Asteroid* during the exhibition's opening.

We wish you an inspiring journey into the worlds of Wojciech Siudmak and His Dune!

Curators:

dr Anna Śliwa

Dominik Zieliński

*Nobody has yet managed to open the door to the future,
but Wojciech Siudmak is already peering through,
observing with fascination the divine beings living in a world,
where neither time nor space is constrained
by the fundamental laws of nature.*

Denis Villeneuve, director

BIO

Wojciech Siudmak was born on October 10, 1942, in Wieluń, Poland. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Since 1966, he has lived and worked in France. Siudmak is one of the most renowned Polish artists, with his works widely distributed around the world, illustrating books, appearing on album covers, and featured on film posters, artistic events, and prestigious occasions. For three following years, he created the poster for the Cannes Film Festival. In addition to painting, sculpture, and drawing, he designs jewelry, scenography, and even furniture and architecture. He is regarded as a leading figure in the so-called "fantastic realism" movement. Siudmak has received numerous awards, including the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland and the Grand Gold Medal of the Academy of Art-Sciences-Letters. His work has inspired figures such as Federico Fellini and George Lucas, and currently Denis Villeneuve, the Oscar-winning director of *Dune*. Siudmak is also the creator of the World Peace Project, symbolized by the sculpture *Eternal Love*. His works have been showcased in over a hundred exhibitions in Poland and abroad, and are held in private collections around the world.