

THE KRAKOW ART NOUVEAU POSTER

Abstract: The National Museum in Krakow has a biggest collection of Polish Art Nouveau poster. The artistic poster phenomena began in Poland very early, in 1894. The greatest Polish artists, such as: Stanislaw Wyspianski, Wojciech Weiss, Teodor Axentowicz and many others designed the numerous posters connected with the artistic life of the city. The poster exhibitions started since 1898. Untill the end of the First World War Krakow and Lvov were the main centers of the Polish art of printing and poster. The author presents the artistic position of Krakow, its greatest artists, the tendencies and influences that were popular in that time.

Key words: Art Nouveau, Poster, Krakow, Fin de siècle, Print, Lithography

The National Museum in Krakow came been known for its outstanding collection of late-19th-century and early-20th-century art. Its holdings of painting and sculpture of that age rank among the best in Poland. Less known are works that belong to other artistic domains such as graphic design, textile design and the decorative arts.

In the mid-19th century, Western Europe came up with the concept of renewing art and adapting it to the new needs that emerged in the times of the industrial revolution. The doctrines formulated by John Ruskin and William Morris have been analysed and presented many times¹. Around 1890, a new style exploded, referred to in more different ways than any other style in the history of art. On the Polish ground, theoretical deliberations were rare. Listed among the manifestos are Cyprian Kamil Norwid's *Promethidion*, Stanislaw Witkiewicz's essays on the national style and Stanislaw Przybyszewski's *Confiteor*. The tide of renewal reached Poland in no time. The principal centre of art was Krakow, with its School of Fine Arts, the exclusive „Sztuka“ Association of Polish Artists, the Polish Applied Arts Society, the Museum of Technology and Industry, and the Krakow

Workshops. Called *Secesja* in Poland, the style made the curved, wavy line, flat, contour-enclosed patches, asymmetry, unusual proportions, and nature-inspired motifs its hallmarks, and had an exceptionally large number of names: *Art Nouveau* in France², *Jugendstil* in Germany, *Sezessionsstil* in Austria, *Stile Floreale* in Italy, and *Modernismo* in Spain.

In the early days of the new century, new tendencies emerged expressionism and modernism, which at the very outset challenged the premises of the uncontrollable Art Nouveau style³.

Defining the phenomena enclosed within the dates 1890-1919 poses a considerable problem. The chosen term is *Art Nouveau* probably the most international and wide. The term *Fin de siècle* is imprecise and inaccurate, especially in the context of the timeframe and another French term, *La Belle Époque*, which refers to the beginning of the 20th century. The Polish terms *Secesja* or *Young Poland* have different and imprecise connotations in specialist literature. Derived from the Austrian *Sezessionsstil*, the name *Secesja* suggests Austrian roots, while *Young Poland*⁴ is associated with the neo-Romantic vein in the art of that epoch and does not define very smartly the directions in the decorative arts.

Conservative circles accustomed to Academism in art were very reluctant to accept the new tendencies and spoke very disparagingly of their values, both aesthetic and ethical. „It was no secret that the building would be in the *Secesja* style,

²Wallis, M., op. cit., p. 14. Some other names sound quite amusing today: the French *style de bouche de Metro* (the entrance-to-the-Underground style), *style nouille* (the noodle style), *style patisserie* (the confectionery style), *style tenia* (the taenia style), or *style epinard* (the spinach style). Or the Flemish *paling stijl* (the eel style); the German *Belgischer Bandwurm* (the Belgian taenia style), *Belgischer Schnörkelstil* (the Belgian curlicue style), *Moderne Strumpfbandlinien* (the modern garter line), or *Gereizter Regenwurm* (the irritated earthworm style).

³„How to classify that art in which a gamin's hand and the trembling hand of a sex maniac join dangerously, and which seems to be a result of premature alcoholism working hand in hand with senile licentiousness,” wrote Josephin Peladan, quoted after M. Wallis, „Przemiany w pogladach na secesje“ in: *Sztuka okolo 1900. Materiały Sesji Historyków Sztuki*, Warsaw 1969, p. 10.

⁴While T. Dobrowolski writes: „...The art of Young Poland is Janus-faced: one face is turned away from reality and looks into the creative self, something typical of an introverted disposition, and the other – turned towards people and the nation, and preoccupied with the country's past and present.” (Dobrowolski, T., *Sztuka Młodej Polski*, Warszawa 1963, pp. 8–9), the term „Young Poland fabric“ or „Young Poland lamp“ is not used.

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¹Huml, I., *Polska sztuka stosowana XX wieku*, Warszawa 1978; Mieczyslaw Wallis, *Secesja*, Warsaw 1984.



1. Wojciech Vajs (1875–1950), „Sztuka”– X izložba, 1906
1. Wojciech Weiss (1875–1950), „Sztuka” – 10th Exhibition, 1906



2. Jan Bulas (1878–1917), *Koncert simfonijskog orkestra*, 1910
2. Jan Bulas (1878–1917), *The Orchestra of Harmony's Symphony Concert*, 1910

and the very name testified to felony: he who built in the *Secesja* style had to be – by definition – a socialist, anarchist, atheist, apostate; not a Pole nor nursed by a Polish mother⁵. A pamphlet by the Krakow painter Ludomir Benedyktowicz entitled *The Provenance of „Secesja“ in Painting and Sculpture – Its Flowers and Fruit in Our Garden* put it clearly that *Secesja* was the daughter of Caricature and Japanese Contour „... wriggling like a horse leech or halter hurled on a dog's neck by a catcher“. And along similar lines: „I dread to think ... what human race will in time be born by Polish mothers who, with every step they take, look up to the monstrous forms of the masterpieces created in that spirit“⁶.

The art of the period under discussion, including applied art, definitely looked on negatively in the ante-bellum and until the end of the 1960s. As the pendulum swings back and forth, so the negative approach changed into a lasting

fashion. Some of the positive outcomes were scientific studies of the fine arts, belles-lettres and ideology of the time. The iconosphere of that art was identified as predilection for the elements (water and fire), plants (lilies, irises, cyclamens, chestnut flowers and orchids), animals (peacocks, swans, butterflies and dragonflies), and fantasy creatures (Pegasus, chimeras, unicorns and sirens). Emphasising the symbolic significance of life, maternity, eroticism and death, the iconography defined that iconosphere.

„It was in Galicia⁷, particularly in Krakow, that the art of Young Poland started budding. Warsaw, with its strong positivist traditions, did not respond to the frequent eccentricities of neo-Romanticism and symbolism approvingly. Galicia was an odd land, neglected in every respect. Illiteracy, dwarfed industry and the conservative *Stanczyk* bloc holding power on the one hand, and a Polish educational system (the

⁵Irzykowski, K., *Paluba. Sny Marii Dunin*, Lvov, 1903.

⁶Wallis, M., *Przemiany w poglądach na secesje*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁷The Southeastern part of Poland, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th century until 1918.



3. Kazimjež Sičulski (1879–1942), *Kolektivna izložba poljske arhitekture, skulpture i slikarstva*, Lavov 1910

3. Kazimierz Sichulski (1879–1942), *General Polish Exhibition of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting*, Lvov 1910

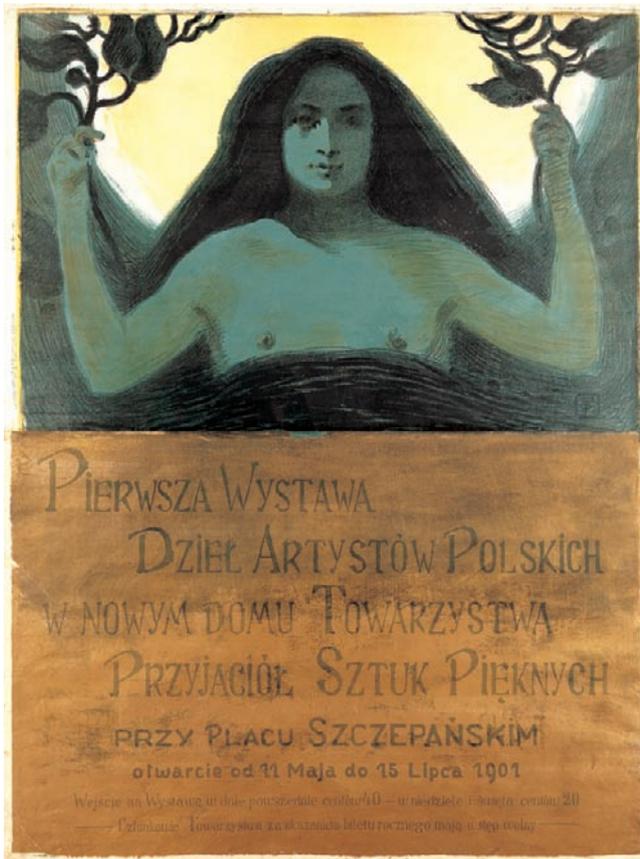
lands under Russian and Prussian empires had their educational system) and two Polish Universities in Krakow and Lvov on the other, provided a nearly optimum environment in which the new art could flourish⁸.

Note that in the latter half of the 19th century, Krakow mayors ran efficient programmes for the accelerated modernisation of the city. In 1866, the authorities of the Austrian occupant restored municipal self-government, and elections for the City Council took place. When he nominated to be Mayor, Professor Jozef Dietl devised a bold plan for the city's development and modernisation. A variety of economic, community and cultural initiatives were undertaken that helped Krakow, an inarguably provincial city, become a significant and modern investment centre, rich in academic and artistic circles, with a flourishing intellectual life. The Jagiellonian University, the State School of Industry (which superseded the former Institute of Technology and Industry

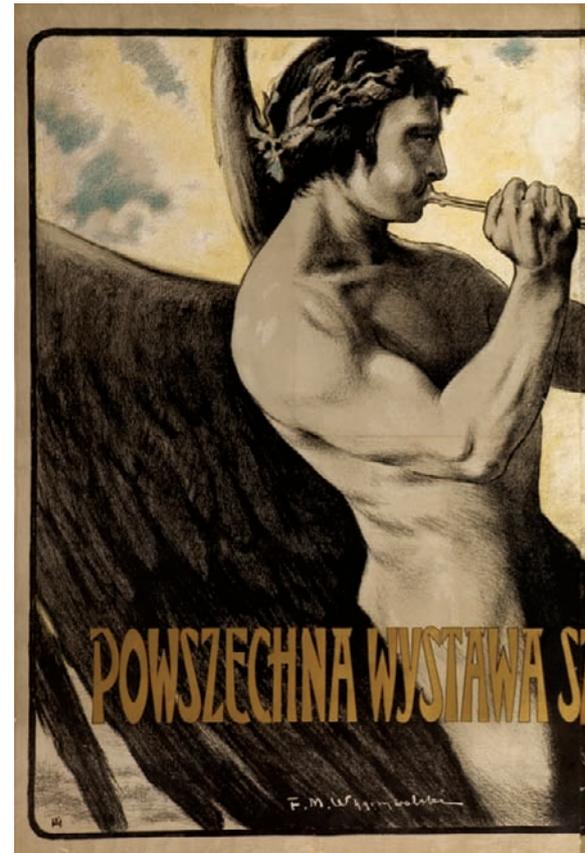
in 1885), and the Academy of Arts and Sciences (which evolved from the Krakow Society of Sciences in 1873), continued their activities incessantly. They created a network of secondary and vocational schools. In 1873, headed by painter Jan Matejko and subsequently Julian Falat, the School of Fine Arts became an independent institution and educated generations of the most celebrated Polish artists. In 1879, it moved to a new building at what is now Matejko Square, and in 1900 received the status of Academy of Fine Arts. Another educational project was Adrian Baraniecki's courses for young men and women, and the women's lectures soon transformed into the Adrian Baraniecki Women's Courses in Higher Education. It was not until 1894 when was allowed to women to attend university lectures as „visitors“. Sculptor Teofila Certowicz set up first art school for women in 1897, where Włodzimierz Tetmajer taught painting classes.

In 1910, Krakow was fifth-rate among the cities of the Austrian Monarchy, overshadowed only by Vienna,

⁸Dobrowolski, S., *Sztuka Młodej Polski*, Warszawa 1963, p. 7.



4. Stanislaw Fabijanski (1865–1947), *Prva izložba radova poljskih umetnika*, 1901
4. Stanislaw Fabijanski (1865–1947), *First Exhibition of Works by Polish Artists*, 1901



5. Feliks Vigživalski (1875–1944), *Kolektivna umetnička izložba u Lavovu*, 1894
5. Feliks Wygrzywalski (1875–1944), *General Art Exhibition in Lvov*, 1894

Trieste, Prague and Lvov. This successful period continued until World War I. In 1914, 109 regular publications had issued regularly in Krakow, among them seven dailies, five satirical magazines, and six literary and art magazines. Krakow boasted thirty-eight educational and scientific societies, and twenty-one artists' associations. The most important of these was the „Sztuka“, Association of Polish Artists founded in 1897 (headed by Jozef Chelmonski, with Jan Stanislawski, Teodor Axentowicz and Jozef Mehoffer as its board members) (Ill. 6). „Sztuka“ was an elite union of artists that staged exhibitions in Warsaw, Vilnius, Vienna and even St. Louis, USA. The other one, the Polish Applied Arts Association founded in 1901 on the initiative of Jerzy Warchalowski and drawing primarily on the experiences of Stanislaw Witkiewicz and Stanislaw Wyspianski. Then, the Fine Arts Society, active from 1854, from 1901 a freehold tenant of its seat – the Palace of the Arts⁹ and the Krakow

Workshops – an association established in 1913, which brought together not only artists but also craftsmen. The Polish Applied Arts Association published the periodical *Materiały PSS*. Its first exhibition in 1902 was organised into three sections: historical (Korzec and Cmielow porcelain, Polish glass and silverware, Polish sashes), folk (models of country cabins and folk dress), and one named „Contemporary Endeavours“, which surveyed new decorative arts. Other important events were the Book Exhibition in 1904, which featured Polish art, a retrospective of works by William Morris and Walter Crane, as well as Japanese art from the collection of Feliks Jasienski, accompanied by a poster and a catalogue. And the Exhibition¹⁰ of Modern Textiles and Ceramics, where on display were works representing the Joint-Stock Society for Tapestries and Fabrics in Lancut, the Buczacz Kilim Factory, the National Lacemaking School, the

⁹Maczynski designed the Society's building and Malczewski decorated the facades with an allegoric frieze.

¹⁰Book art owes its development to artists such as Bukowski, Mehoffer, Procajłowicz and Lenart.



6. Teodor Aksentovič (1859–1938), *II izložba Društva poljskih umetnika "Sztuka"*, 1898

6. Teodor Axentowicz (1859–1938), *2nd Exhibition of the Society of Polish Artists "Sztuka"*, 1898

Porcelain Factory in Cmielow, the Krakow Stained-Glass Workshop and many other craft centres.

The most influential art magazine was the *Zycie* weekly, founded in 1897, whose editors-in-chief were Ludwik Szczepanski, Ignacy Sewer-Maciejowski and finally the writer and theoretician of Modernism, Stanislaw Przybyszewski. In 1899, Przybyszewski published his manifesto *Confiteor*¹¹ and argued for the cult of the „naked soul“, which meant the bare erotic instinct and the social tolerance and acceptance for it. Alongside Polish art, the magazine popularised the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, Stephane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine, which Edward Munch and Gustav Vigeland illustrated. The artistic director of the magazine was Stanislaw Wyspianski¹². Although it came out for three years only, the weekly had an

immense impact on the theory of art. *Zycie* was also, where Artur Gorski brought the term *Young Poland* into common use.

Wilhelm Feldman championed different ideas in the *Krytyka* monthly published in Krakow in 1896–1897 and again in 1899–1914. He advocated the neo-Romantic model of political involvement and a positivist regard for social issues.

While the former municipal theatre (now called the „Stary“) served but as a concert hall,¹³ the City Theatre, which in 1893 moved to a new seat designed by the architect Jan Zawiejski,¹⁴ continued to be active, just like other smaller theatres and literary stages. The acting profession was of a very high standard, best exemplified by the worldwide career

¹¹ „Art is a revelation of the soul in all its conditions; it trails the soul along all its paths, looks with it out into the future and into the universe, delves into it with the primeval power of existence, and reaches out for rainbow summits. Art has no purpose: it is a purpose in itself because it reflects the absolute – the soul“. – Excerpt from Przybyszewski's *Confiteor*.

¹² „Zycie“ published Wyspianski's dramas *Warszawianka* and *Klatwa* as well.

¹³Tadeusz Stryjenski and Franciszek Maczynski remodelled the building of the Stary Theatre in 1906 and Jozef Gardecki decorated it with a frieze designed. Trojanowski (the larger restaurant room), Wojtyczka (the smaller restaurant room), Czajkowski (the buffet room) and Dabrowa-Dabrowski (the office rooms) designed the interiors.

¹⁴In a trial proof of his 1902 poster Szczyglinski showed the façade of the new building. The bust of playwright Aleksander Fredro in front of the theatre building is still a featureless outline of the future sculpture.

of the Polish actor Helena Modrzejewska, who debuted in Krakow in 1865 in Fredro's *Revenge*.

The city was famous for its attractive nightlife. Initially, people would meet in Ferdynand Turlinski's café Paon¹⁵ at Szpitalna St. On 7 October 1905, the Zielony Balonik [Green Balloon] cabaret launched at Jan Michalik's Lvov Patisserie opened in 1895 in Florianska St¹⁶. It was a popular haunt of the city's artistic bohemia (Stanislaw Wyspianski, Jozef Mehoffer, Kazimierz Sichulski, Stanislaw Kuczborski, Karol Frycz, Witold Wojtkiewicz and Stanislaw Rzecki) with whom the Academia mingled willingly.

It was said of the humour of the Zielony Balonik that scathing joke, ridicule and satire reigned supreme, myths were debunked, and Grundyism and petit-bourgeois prigs and philistines were derided, the sacred was desecrated and pseudo-patriotic clichés and sentimental exaltation were laid bare. The cabaret was famous for its New Year's Eve shows featuring caricature puppets. Invitations to the cabaret, made in the form of colour lithographs, became artistic memorabilia of the age and its customs. Drawing combined with text in an unrestrained, flippant manner, full of humour and – at times – gentle perversion. Stanislaw Rzecki, Karol Frycz, Alfons Karpinski and Kazimierz Sichulski made many of such invitations. In 1909, Kazimierz Sichulski's compositions *Mad Cabaret* and *Last Judgement* and scenes painted by Witold Wojtkiewicz dominated in its design.

In 1907, the first cinema in Krakow was opened, called Cyrk Edisona [Edison's Circus], and it was joined by another two in 1912 – the Wanda and the Uciecha.

As in the rest of Europe, sport came into fashion. The most popular were cycle races, skiing competitions and football matches. In 1906, two sporting societies founded, Wisla and Cracovia. The varied offer of entertainment reflected in posters and announcements to the residents of the city.¹⁷

Good economic forecasts triggered off trade events: shows, fairs, exhibitions and exposes. In Krakow's Jordan Park,¹⁸ the Architecture and Garden Show was organised in 1912, for which Jozef Czajkowski designed a special pavilion¹⁹. The growing wealth of the townspeople became evident in the popularity of spas, resorts and therapeutic springs. Travelling

to summer resorts helped create a fashion for interest in ethnography and folk art. The charms of Krynica, Zakopane, Szczawnica, Niemirow, Iwonicz Zdroj and Swoszowice were widely advertised.

This overview would not be complete without mentioning the culture of Krakow's Jewish minority at that time. Two posters by anonymous artists and printed at Jozef Fischer's printing house advertise the Jewish magazines *Juedische Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Der Tag*, and Artur Markowicz's 1912 work bills the exhibition *Bezalel* devoted to the Academy of Art and Design of the same name in Jerusalem.

The idealistic need for beautiful objects of everyday use gave rise to publications that demanded artistic treatment of billboards, administrative announcements, press advertisements and shop signs. At the same time 'street art' grew in significance, with the poster as its key vehicle. A number of societies emerged to promote this idea, „L'Union pour l'action morale in Paris“ or „the Cercle d'art appliqué à la rue in Brussels“, which sought to make art democratic. In France, posters distributed as inserts in monthlies for use as wall decorations in the homes of not-so-well-to-do citizens²⁰. New printing technologies facilitated the printing of posters together with matching advertising notices, postcards and invitations. This new way of thinking about graphic design reached Poland in the 1890s. In Krakow, Jan Wdowiszewski, the then director of the City Museum of Technology and Industry first discussed the issue from the perspective of art theory. Artists, who boldly penetrated areas, which it had not befitted an artist to enter before, took the new practice. Calendars, coupons, restaurant (or even dairy bar) menus and leaflets advertising retailers or workshops began to be artistically designed. Even the envelopes for invitations to the Zielony Balonik decorated with the same motif as the invitation.

Polish artists' frequent trips to Paris triggered changes in the perception of the role of graphic design. The magazine *La Revue Blanche*, founded in 1891, and Grasset's exhibition in 1894 doubtless influenced Stanislaw Wyspianski's oeuvre. William Morris had by then designed his own font modelled on a 15th-century Venetian typeface

¹⁵The NMC has in its collections a 6-metre-long canvas *Paon* with caricatures and pamphlets by the regulars of the venue: Stanislaw Wyspianski, Witold Wojtkiewicz and Jozef Mehoffer among others.

¹⁶Franciszek Maczynski designed the larger room in 1911. Karol Frycz designed the windows, doors, fireplace, furniture, candelabums and lamps, Kazimierz Sichulski designed the murals and the stained-glass work by Karol Frycz and Henryk Uziemblo.

¹⁷T. Boy Zelenski even wrote a footballer's song:

“Footballers arrived in Krakow / to shoot their legs in one another's faces; / Keckemet of Debrecen / The Atetikai team / Starts a fight with Cracovia...”

¹⁸The avenue leading to the exhibition, decorated with potted oleanders, hence its present name Oleandry Street.

¹⁹Apart from exhibition pavilions, viewers could see model houses decorated according to designs by Tichy, Frycz, Trojanowski and others. The interiors were not uniform in terms of style: Secession styles blended with reminiscences of historical styles and folk art motifs.

²⁰This habit started to be popular with the Alphonse Mucha's posters designed for Sarah Bernard.

and his books printed on paper produced from his proprietary recipe. James McNeill Whistler experimented with page and column composition and with proportions of black and white. They treated books like artworks for their sensitivity to the beauty of books and print. They even found descriptions of art books with a sophisticated and tasteful design in belles-lettres. For example, in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the hero „...procured from Paris no less than nine large-paper copies of the first edition, and had them bound in different colours, so that they might suit his various moods and the changing fancies of a nature.“ Huysmann, when sketching a portrait of Des Esseintes in *A Rebours*, described in detail his work on rare books, printed them with a carefully, selected and composed typeface on custom-made paper and bound in suitable sophisticated fabrics and leathers. Baudelaire's works were printed for him in a single copy on „...Japanese paper, exquisitely thin, spongy and soft... whose milk-white was tinted in a barely discernible manner with an imperceptible shade of pink, bound in admirable, genuine sow leather – sought out amongst thousands, flesh-coloured, grainy and decorated with an embossed black lace-like ornament... In this simple but unique form, the book made a much more profound impression on him than usually.“²¹

The origins of Polish poster art date back to 1898, when the first International Poster Exhibition was organised at the National Museum in Krakow by Jan Wdowiszewski²², who was an ardent advocate of this art domain, a person with a perfect intuition for artistic novelties. He compiled a collection of posters, studied related literature, and appreciated the significance of the economic rationale for modern advertising, including posters. The catalogue *Art in Posters: Purpose, Beginnings, Techniques and Artistic Rules of the Modern Poster* accompanied the exhibition. The showpieces of that first exhibition were the core of the holding of the Museum of Technology and Industry, which included posters by artists such as Jules Cheret, Henry de Toulouse-Lautrec, Georges Meunier, Eugène Carrière, Alfons Maria Mucha, Thomas Heine and many more. In 1904, the same showrooms of the National Museum housed the Printing Exhibition, which included a sizeable poster section and was organised by the Polish Applied Arts Society. Polish posters drawn from that collection have been on display several times

at review shows. From 1966 to 1993: *From Young Poland to Our Days* in Warsaw (1966), *Posters from the Collections of the Main Library of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow* (1972), *Polish Art Nouveau Prints and Posters* (1979) in Prague, *The Centennial of Polish Poster Art* in Krakow (1993) and *Art Nouveau*. In addition, posters have been display at *Les affiches de Cracovie* in Mons, Belgium, as part of the Europalia 2001 festival. The latter was on view at the „Zamek“ Cultural Centre in Poznan in 2003, and – in the same year – at the Castle of the Pomeranian Princes in Szczecin. At last, the National Museum in Krakow presented the exhibition called *Fin de siècle in Krakow* in 2006 together with the catalogue.

Over a hundred years ago, the public began to perceive the poster as an artistic visual medium rather than only a text advertisement with a vignette, headpiece or other ornament. Posters are a dual vehicle of cultural values: alongside their stylistic and formal qualities, they document events of all sorts: cultural, artistic, social and commercial. They present a broad panorama of contemporary life in Krakow and the region, recorded consistently in the technique of colour lithography, occasionally alternated with colour linocut.

The origins of poster art are associated with Henry de Toulouse Lautrec's *Moulin Rouge* (1891). That lithograph launched a series of thirty-one works illustrating the nocturnal life of Paris cabarets. The first Polish artistic poster dates back to 1894 (Ill. 5). The author was Feliks Wyrzywalski, who studied art in Krakow, at the Academy of Arts in Vienna, and in Paris. The poster billed the General Art Exhibition in Lvov, and was stylistically akin to the expressive linearism of Art Nouveau: a confident hand drew it, but the motif of a herald blowing a bugle still evoked the expressive means employed by the academic art of the second half of the 19th century.

It has believed, Henry de Toulouse-Lautrec's poster has its Polish counterpart in the design made in 1899 by Stanislaw Wyspianski for Maurice Maeterlinck's *Interior* and for Stanislaw Przybyszewski's lecture that preceded the play (Ill. 10). Janina Wieckowska-Nazar wrote about the poster: „...An ascetic colour lithography juxtaposing pallid blacks, yellowed whites and sophisticated celadon greens that intensify the mood and climate of that play.“ Critics usually emphasise that the poster refrained from illustrativeness and narration. In addition, they avoided the notorious decorativeness of the *Secesja* style by not encumbering the work with ornament. Wyspianski departed from the traditional typographic layout in favour of new artistic

²¹Wiercinska, J., 'Zdobnictwo ksiązkowe lat dziewięćdziesiątych XIX wieku', in: *Sztuka około 1900, op. cit.*, pp. 226–227

²²The museum was founded in 1872 on the initiative of Baraniecki. Stryjenski, partnered by Czajkowski, designed the building, which built in 1912–1914 in Smolensk St. For more informations look in Beiersdorf, Z., 'Muzeum Techniczno-Przemysłowe w Krakowie', in: *Rocznik Krakowski*, Vol. LVII, 1991, pp. 129–164



7. Karol Frič (1877–1963), *Melpomenin portfolio*, 1904

7. Karol Frycz (1877–1963), *Melpomene's Portfolio*, 1904

experiments and solutions. This was an artist of all-round talent and broad interests.²³ His media were in the main pastel painting²⁴, stained-glass designs, wall painting and interior furnishings (kilims, banisters, furniture, etc.). He was a reformer of book art: he designed fonts, typographic layouts, covers and vignettes. A distinct area of his artistic work was literature and theatre. He wrote poetry but most noted for his plays, which now form the core of the classic repertoire of Polish theatre. He staged his plays personally, and designed the costumes, sets and choreography. He was a diligent worker: the enormous artistic legacy he left after a thirty-seven-year-long life never ceases to be lively and very popular. The poster on view is the only one designed by Wyspianski,

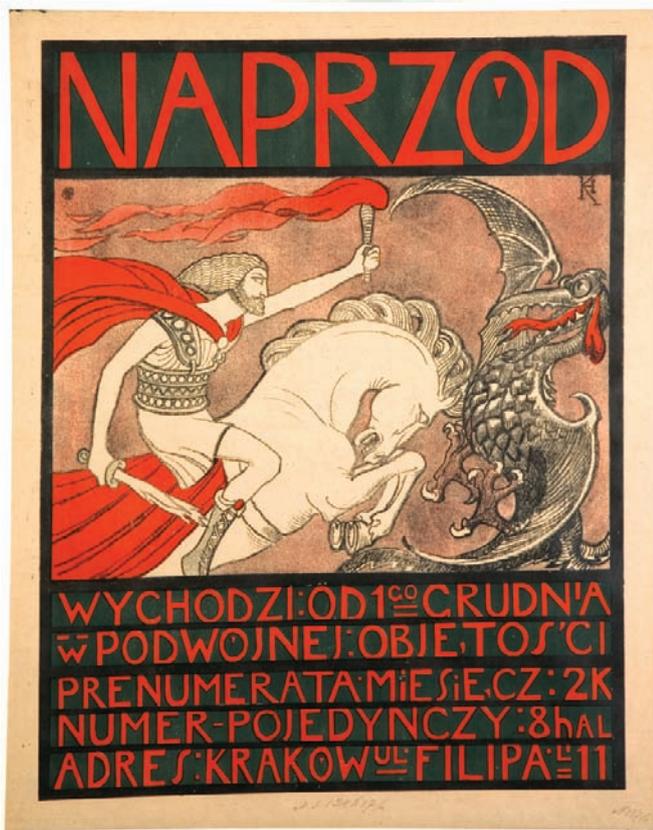
²³In 1904, Wyspianski designed the layout of the anniversary exhibition of the „Sztuka“ Association mounted at the Fine Arts Society. Three sets produced for Wyspianski's drama *Boleslaus the Bold* divided the show space in the central room (Common Room). A frieze with a geranium motif ran across the walls and repeated in the portière. The same year the artist designed the interior of the Medical Society House in Krakow. Sometime later, he designed the interior for Tadeusz Zelenski and his wife Zofia Parenska's home.

²⁴He did not paint with oil colors because of his allergy.

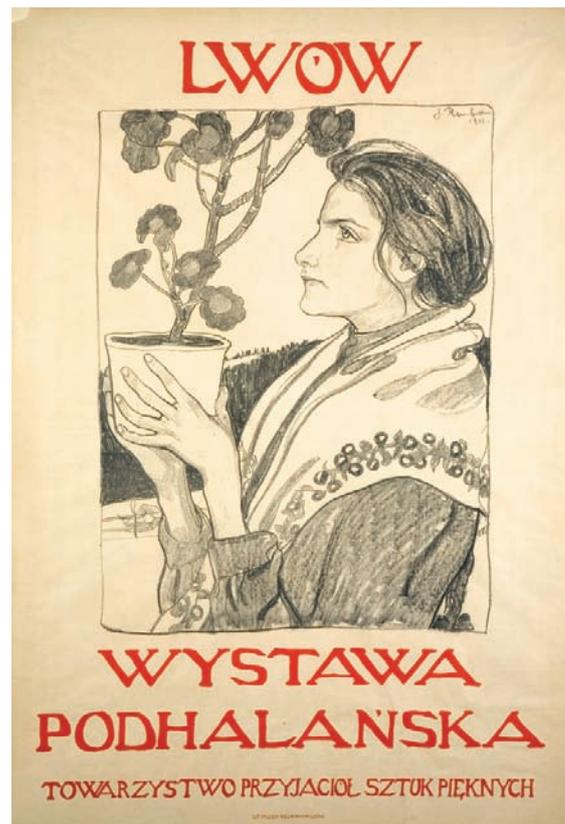
but it holds nevertheless a prominent place in the history of this genre.

The „Sztuka“, Association of Polish Artists was active from 1897 to 1950, its prime falling in the years 1897–1914. The artistic level of the exhibitions the Association organised in Poland and abroad was very high. Being among the exhibiting circle was an honour and a privilege. Typically, for the art of that age, most of the showpieces permeated with symbolic and emotional values, pessimism, melancholy and contemplation of transience. Folk art was another source of inspiration for theme and form.

A poster that deserves mention is Wojciech Weiss's work for the „Sztuka“ Association: „Sztuka“, *The Tenth Exhibition* (1907) (Ill. 1). Prints of that work made on a variety of papers, including on thin marbled paper with an attractively veined texture. Compared with much earlier work by the same artist, *Banquet at the Sokol Hall* (1898), this poster shows how far the artist had come from lithography hand-tinted with watercolour and temperas reminiscent of the



8. Henrik Kunzek (1870–1928), “Naprzod” je dvobroj, 1910
 8. Henryk Kunzek (1870–1928), “Naprzod” has the Double Volume, 1910



9. Jan Rembowski (1879–1923), *Podhalska izložba, Društvo prijatelja umetnosti*, 1911
 9. Jan Rembowski (1879–1923), *The Podhale Exhibition. The Society of Friends of Fine Arts*, 1911

Parisian *La Belle Époque* to synthesis and expression. Weiss was a leading Polish painter of that age. The central themes of his painting were existential and ultimate problems such as death, love or birth. The painting of Weiss followed mainstream symbolism and decadence with elements of expressionism. The poster *Banquet in the Sokol Hall* is stylistically akin to Stanislaw Kamocki's *Artists' Ball at the Saski Hotel* (1900).

There are two more posters created in 1898: Apolinary Kotowicz's *Sleeping Knights. The City Theatre in Krakow*, an epigone of academic painting, and a poster advertising Aureliusz Pruszyński's Lithography Workshop in Krakow, a company of great tradition and significance, which specialised in artistic lithography. It was in that shop that the majority of posters on view at the present exhibition were printed.

The oldest poster for a commercial event created in 1897. Antoni Procajłowicz designed a bill for the Exhibition of Red Cattle in Krakow. He produced it by pasting two sheets of

paper together: the title section has not survived, the only extant part being the sheet with an image of a magnificent cow in a decorative frame. The artist applied an ordinary illustrative concept of striking simplicity.

The 20th century begins with Stanislaw Ignacy Fabijanski's poster *First Exhibition of Works by Polish Artists in the New Building of the Fine Arts Society* (1901) (Ill. 4). Similar to it is the poster by Jozef Czajkowski *Sixth Exhibition Of the „Sztuka“ Association of Polish Artists* (1901).

The year 1904 brought a poster that was a forerunner of modernism: Karol Frycz's *Melpomene's Portfolio* (Ill. 7), which advertised a series of caricatures of Polish drama actors.²⁵ Compared to the earlier posters, the letter work had changed remarkably. The previous hand-written or free,

²⁵ Artists associated with the Zielony Balonik cabaret came up with the idea of creating a graphic portfolio (which they called *Melpomene's Portfolio*) of images of leading Krakow actors. The Portfolio was printed free of charge at Pruszyński's Lithography Workshop in 1904. The most recognisable lithographs are those of Sulima as Rachela in Wyspiński's *Wedding*, and Mrozowska as Psyche in Zulawski's *Eros and Psyche* and as Anastazja, the eponymous character of a play by Eliza Orzeszkowa.

decorative letters were replaced with hard-stroke, ordered letters resembling the Greek alphabet. Font styles evoking Greek vase painting were expressive and emanated energy. A figure dressed in an antique costume fills the composition with a powerful patch, forming an ornament in soft, graceful line, which echoes Japanese art and the Viennese *Sezession*. The artist supervised the printing of the poster himself. He chose dark-grey, rough paper which, when printed with black ink, produced a two-colour composition and an interesting texture.

Frycz was active in several domains: painting, printmaking, and the applied arts. Like Jan Bukowski, Witold Wojtkiewicz or Anna Gramatyka-Ostrowska, Frycz designed calendars. A considerable selection of them has survived at the National Museum in Krakow. They are exciting examples of lithographic compositions applied in functional design. So are the rare specimens of coupons of varied nominal values issued by Krakow coffee shops. They were in circulation in Krakow during World War 1st, and used interchangeably in a range of coffee shops and restaurants. Even Kapusta's Hygienic Dairy, a diner that existed until the 1970s at the corner of St. Anny and Jagiellonska streets, issued such coupons. Another example of functional graphic design was bookplates created by the same graphic artists in Krakow.

Henryk Kunzek, too, imbued his posters with expressionistic elements. He marked the poster *Naprzod Comes out on December 1st* by its archaic, antique-like stylisation of drawing (Ill. 8).

Another poster that conveys intense expressiveness and energy is Jan Bulas's *Symphonic Concert by the Orchiestra Harmonia* (1905) (Ill. 2). No less charged with emotion is Leopold Gottlieb's composition *Sztuka* (an art monthly) (1904).

The poster *Fourth Artists' Gala* by Wladyslaw Skoczylas's Japanese motif is. Japanese motifs are also present in Karol Frycz's posters: *Your Best Choice is the Tea with the Tower from Szarski*, and *Cigarette Tubes from M. Paschalski*.

The other group are posters inspired by folk art. Returning to the rootstocks of folk art was one of the most popular trends of that age, founded on the underlying aesthetic concepts of the Polish poet and thinker Cyprian Norwid (*Promethidion*), and aiming to create a national art derived from folk culture. A unique artistic realisation of that concept was the Zakopane style originated by Stanislaw Witkiewicz. In other art domains, folk motifs gave wide publicity by the Polish Applied Arts Society, whose members included painters, designers, thespians, interior designers, etc.



The folk fashion in painting often boiled down to copying vernacular themes and motifs. Examples are: Karol Frycz's *The Peasant School Society* (1905) and *Krakow Confectioners Are Organising a Sweet Dance* (1907), inspired by traditional folk paper cutouts, or Kazimierz Brzozowski's *Domestic Products Expo and Fair in Zakopane* (1905) with a motif of coloured begonias against a golden backdrop. Another splendid example is a poster created by the outstanding painter Jozef Mehoffer, *The Universal Exhibition of Polish Art in Lvov* (1910), featuring a girl in folk costume in the foreground. European audiences knew Mehoffer from his productions outside Poland. He designed the stained-glass windows for St. Nicholas Cathedral in Fribourg, Switzerland, a superb Secessionist complex that exerted an enormous impact on the religious art of a host of other artists.

For better communication with the public, artists used familiar themes drawn from folk art, native vegetation,



10. Stanislaw Wyspianski (1869–1907), *Interior*, 1898

10. Stanislav Vispjanski (1869–1907), *Enterijer*, 1898

historical architecture or old prints. In their naïve, not infrequently sentimental, form these themes were grafted onto the canvas of popular Art Nouveau instrumentation. An example is Jan Bukowski's poster *The Gardening Show in Krakow* (1904) and *The First Exhibition of Polish Sacral Art* (1911).²⁶ Bukowski was a continuator of Stanislaw Wyspianski's traditions in printing and book art. In his work, he gave more prominence to composition than formal ornament. He acknowledged the aesthetic values of symmetrical arrangements only, which differentiated him sharply from the majority of the artists of the age, who looked on asymmetry as a mainstay of creative freedom and natural feeling. While accepting certain forms of modernism, he leaned towards historical styles, evident in the Renaissance

²⁶Maszkowski created another poster advertising this exhibition. Three sections – contemporary, retrospective and foreign prints – made up this show. Fourteen artists and twenty-one publishers displayed in the contemporary section. Awards went to Wyspianski, Bukowski, the *Chimera* magazine and the Jagiellonian University Printing House.

cartouches, Gothic typeface and similar decorations in his works. Unique are his polychromes in the Jesuit Church in Krakow, a chapel in St. Mary's Church and a church in Skrzyszow near Tarnow.

The artists Edward Trojanowski, Eugeniusz Dabrowa-Dabrowski and Jozef Czajkowski shared a similar understanding of folk values and historicising archaism. Apart from graphic design, they were also preoccupied with decorative painting, interior design, industrial design, mosaics, stained glass and wall painting. Sometimes, a poster was a second-hand rendering of an existing work of art. For his poster *First Exhibition of Independent Artists* (1911) Dabrowski borrowed his own peacock motif used already in the frieze in Noworolski's coffee shop in Krakow. Czajkowski's poster *First Exhibition of the Polish Applied Arts Society* (1902)²⁷ utilises a motif of people in folk costume, while the central feature of his exhibition *Architecture and Interiors in Garden Surrounds* (1912) is the Polish manor house designed by the artists for that exhibition.

Equally traditional are posters by Henryk Uziemblo, a gifted painter and designer of modernist interiors and murals, who rendered great services after World War I by organising the Department of Graphic Arts at the Public School of the Art Industry, the first school in Poland that taught poster design. He monitored the development of this genre worldwide and collected any information on the subject that he could be holding. Three of his posters, *Liberum Veto* (1903), *Liberum Veto* (1904) and *Old Krakow* (1905), employ an arsenal of eclectic means of expression, their composition is perfectly balanced and the letterwork extremely careful. Uziemblo created the first Krakow poster advertising a cinema *The „Uciecha“ Light Theatre* (1912). In fact, Uziemblo designed the interior of the cinema itself.

An interesting artist was Kazimierz Sichulski, the student of Stanislaw Wyspianski and Jozef Mehoffer, deeply fascinated with Hutzul ethnic art (the East Carpathian region). The posters are outright evidence: *Naprzod! The Central Organ of the Polish Social Democratic Party* (1905), *Fifteenth Exhibition of „Sztuka“* (1911) and *The Wyspianski Night* (1908). On the seventh anniversary of the opening night of Wyspianski's national drama *The Wedding*, and less than half a year after the playwright's death, a commemorative night was organised. Sichulski's poster presented a Slavic warrior blowing a golden horn, a symbol of national hopes of independence. The poster, inspired by Viennese *Sezession* murals was *Universal Exhibition of Architecture, Sculpture and*

²⁷Czajkowski won the competition for a poster for this exhibition. This was the first poster competition ever held in Poland.

Painting (1910) (Ill.3). The theatrical approach to composition and sophisticated but vivid colours show how skilfully he searched for, and applied, an array of artistic tools to achieve a variety of purposes. Sichulski was author, noted for his intellectual agility, inquisitiveness, desire for change, and versatility. As he reached the age of maturity, these traits predisposed him for fast and spectacular work, sometimes verging on skin-deep treatment. Critics heavily lambasted the resulting eclecticism. Known in wide circles as a talented caricaturist²⁸, the artist fought for recognition of his monumental painting.

Another representative of that trend was Jan Rembowski, a writer, journalist, poet and painter fascinated with the art of the Podhale region (Ill.9). For him simplicity and archaism were proofs of genuine and honest expression. The composition of his poster „*Podhale*“ *Exhibition of the Fine Arts Society* (1911) is best illustrated such crude simplicity.

The closing showpieces of the age are posters whose style foreshadows Art Deco. Among them is a poster designed most probably by Edmund Bartłomiejczyk, an artist of a younger generation, entitled *First Gala of the Academic Union of Esperantists* (1911). He also designed banknotes, postage stamps and advertising prints. Bartłomiejczyk was one of the most acclaimed graphic designers of the period 1918–1939. The poster on view features letterwork, which still looks traditional; the dark silhouettes of the trees evoke motifs from Jan Stanislawski's paintings, yet the geometrising shapes of the stars and the centrifugal rays herald the art of the antebellum. Two other posters that anticipate the advent of Art Deco tentatively attributed to Witold Jurgielewicz, who signed his works „*Gordon*“, *Hades – Funny and Useless Things* and *Wilma Toilet Soap*. They are distinct for their geometrised forms and pastel colours.

There is a considerable group of posters, especially commercial, that cannot attribute to specific artists. Often made to order to bolster the artist's finances, their main purpose was to please the paying merchant or entrepreneur. Although their artistic level was quite mediocre, they reflect the climate of those times very well. The most numerous are advertisements for cigarette tubes, beer of various brands and household furnishings. There are a few that advertised

cleaning supplies, stationery, building materials, gardening services, clothes warehouses – even a doll clinic in Lvov. Decorative typefaces, satirical presentation of the subject, and ornamental drawing combined into compositions of old-fashioned charm. They provide a wealth of information on Krakow's shops and firms and as such are an excellent source for exploring the history of the city. Two of the posters advertise the city's two most important trading companies, which had outlets in the Main Square: Juliusz Grosse's (*Tam-Tam – the Best Ceylon Tea*) and Marcin Szarski's (*The Tea with the Hand: Your Best Choice*), designed by Frycz.

Thanks to the Polish Applied Arts Society, the book and printing industry, considered an important area of creative work, reached the highest level of workmanship and editorial culture. An overt sign of this was the aforementioned exhibition of printing art in 1904, where about 400 works were on display representing book and graphic design: book covers, illustrations, typographic layouts, printed forms, bookplates, catalogues, labels, calendars, postcards, vignettes, letterheads, and – obviously – posters. Another room displayed foreign prints, among them Japanese woodcuts by Hokusai and Hiroshige²⁹, works by Beardsley and Crane, as well as the magazines *Art et Decoration*, *The Studio*, *Pan*, *Ver Sacrum*, *Dekorative Kunst* and *Mir Iskusstva*.

Poland was replete with talent and a regress in poster art and graphic design in Krakow after World War Ist followed the turn of the centuries. When Poland regained its independence in 1918, the centre of the arts moved to Warsaw. Two artists working in Krakow, Edmund Bartłomiejczyk and Zygmunt Kaminski began teaching drawing classes at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw Polytechnic.

Decorative arts followed the trail: the *Lad Cooperative*³⁰ founded in Warsaw took the lead in this area.

Contemporary graphic design and graphic arts have their roots in the Krakow milieu.³¹ At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, other cities such as Warsaw or Poznan bred no community of graphic artists designing posters or functional objects with equally masterly skill. The achievements of Krakow in textile design and decorative arts testify to the city's leading role at that time.

²⁹Feliks Jasienski showed his collection of Japanese art in Krakow as early as 1906.

³⁰Krakow artists Jastrzebowski, Stryjenski, Tichy and Czajkowski founded the „Lad“ Cooperative of Artists and Craftsmen in 1926.

³¹Dobrowolski, T., *Sztuka Młodej Polski*, op. cit., p. 374: “Krakow became the main centre of the decorative arts, and any description of its artistic industry should be considered a *pars pro toto*”.

²⁸The National Museum in Krakow has in its collections a series of pastel caricatures relating to the Zielony Balonik cabaret.

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МАГДАЛЕНА ЧУБИНСКА*

ART NOUVEAU ПЛАКАТИ У КРАКОВУ

Резиме

Краковски градоначелници спроводили су ефикасне програме убрзане модернизације града у другој половини XIX века. Аустријске окупационе власти су 1866. г. обновили градску самоуправу и одржани су избори за Градско веће. Бројне економске, комуналне и културне иницијативе претвориле су Краков, до тада потпуно провинцијски град, у значајан и модеран инвестициони центар са развијеним академским и уметничким круговима. Јагелонски универзитет, Државна индустријска школа и Академија наука и уметности делују без прекида. Од 1873. г. Школа лепих уметности делује као независна институција под управом сликара Јана Матејка, а касније Јулијана Фалата, да би 1900. г. добила статус Академије лепих уметности. Године 1910. Краков постаје пети град по значају у Аустријском царству, испред њега су само Беч, Трст, Праг и Лавов. У Кракову је 1914. године излазило сто девет редовних публикација, укључујући седам дневних листова, пет сатиричних магазина и шест књижевних и уметничких часописа. Краков се могао похвалити са тридесет осам образовних и научних друштава и са двадесет и једним уметничким удружењем. Најзначајнији су «Штука» (Sztuka) Удружење пољских уметника, основано 1897. г., Удружење пољских примењених уметника и Друштво лепих уметности које делује од 1854. године. Удружење пољских примењених уметника објављује периодични часопис (*Материалу*

PSS). Најутицајнији уметнички часопис био је недељник (*Zucije*) основан 1897.

Уметност плаката у Пољској започиње 1898. г. када је Јан Вдовишевски (Jan Wdowiszewski), ватрени заступник овог облика уметности, организовао Прву међународну изложбу плаката у краковском Народном музеју.

Најбољи пољски уметнички плакат направио је Станислав Виспјањски (Stanislaw Wuspiański) 1899. г за *Ентеријер* Мориса Метерлинка (Maurice Maeterlinck). Користио је пастелно сликарство, нацрте за витраже, зидно сликарство, а бавио се и опремом ентеријера. Реформисао је уметничко обликовање књиге: стварао је нове типове слова, типографска решења, креирао корице и виџете. Посебно место у његовом уметничком делу имају књижевност и позориште. Писао је поезију, али је остао запамћен по позоришним комадима који и данас спадају у класични репертоар пољског театра. Сам је режирао своје драме, правио нацрте за костиме, сценографију и кореографију.

Кад је о плакатима реч, јављају се две тенденције, Једна је резултат утицаја експресионизма. Типична је за Војхеа Вајса (Wojciech Weiss), водећег пољског сликара који је правио плакате за Удружење «Штука». Други пример је Карол Фрич (Karol Frucz) и његови плакати (на пример, плакат за *Мелпоменин портфолио* којим су оглашаване серије карикатура пољских драмских уметника).

*Магдалена Чубинска, историчар уметности, Народни музеј Краков