

TEXTILES AND CLOTHING IN KRAKOW FROM FIN DE SIÈCLE

Abstract: Krakow at the end of the 19th century provided the ideal condition for the development of independent spiritual and artistic views and behavior. With such strong foundations, the atmosphere of the city had to influence all areas of life, including fashion. The artists, especially under the influence of the folk culture, designed many of the creation.

At the beginning of the last century, Krakow artists developed a new conception for designing kilims.

Key words: Textile, clothing, Krakow, National Museum, naked soul, C. K. Norwid, S. Witkiewicz, Zakopane, secession, H. Modrzejewska

Krakow is a city of singular significance in the history of Polish art. Its damp climate gave rise to frequent fogs and mists, which evoked an aura of mystery, while the works of art accumulated here over the ages nurtured a sense of beauty and inspired the imagination. These circumstances combined to create contexts conducive to creative activity, and the end of the 19th century in particular was a remarkable period in this remarkable city. It was a period during which Krakow enjoyed the full spectrum of civil liberties, which was particularly significant in the light of the national persecutions experienced in the other Partitions (territory of Poland has divided between: Russia, Austria and Germany). It was in Krakow in 1890: the ceremonial funeral of Adam Mickiewicz, Polish national poet, whose body was brought back from Paris. In 1891 its citizens were able to hold official celebrations of the centenary of the signing of the 3rd May Constitution (first in Europe), and three years later they marked the hundredth anniversary of Tadeusz Kościuszko's insurrection. Such guarantees of freedom, then, provided the ideal conditions for the development of independent spiritual and artistic views and behaviour.

This was also the reason why many artists chose to live and work in Krakow. All brands of spiritual and intellectual activity blossomed here. For example in 1898,

Stanisław Przybyszewski famous ideologist of the fin de siècle came here, and together with his Danish wife, Dagny propagated the cult of the "naked soul". Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, who was a translator of French literary classics and at the same time, in his capacity as a physician and social activist, supported the feminist struggle for a reform of social conventions joined them. The painters and writers – Stanisław Wyspiański, Kazimierz Tetmajer and Lucjan Rydel – fraternised with the peasants from the countryside around Krakow and enlivened their work with the colours they found in the village of Bronowice. In 1896, Turliński's coffee shop Pod Pawiem [The Peacock] opened its doors on Szpitalna Street and soon became the first regular haunt of Krakow's literary bohemia. In the previous year, Jan Apolinary Michalik had opened a coffee house on Floriańska Street that as Jama Michalikowa was become known as the home of the literary cabaret Zielony Balonik [The Green Balloon], for which Boy-Żeleński began in 1906 to pen his unrivalled works of piquant social satire. At the same time, two of Poland's greatest painters were still working in Krakow: Jan Matejko and Henryk Siemieradzki, whose curtain first rose in the Słowacki Theatre in 1894.

With such strong foundations, the atmosphere of the city had to influence all areas of life, including fashion, even though many women clothed themselves from Parisian fashion houses, the most famous of which were Louvre, Au Printemps, Galeries Lafayette, Samaritaine and Au bon marché. By the 1890s, the earlier strong colour contrasts had given way to deeper and more delicate tones, and use of fabrics of different colours and shades in the same dress had become more infrequent. Taste and style were moving towards making outfits more practical and functional in appearance. This was partly an expression of the gradual process of female emancipation and the access of women to many areas of life hitherto considered the preserve of men. At the same time, tastes were also moving back towards referring in fluidity of line to medieval dress. At the end of the century, it was this current that was the foundation for inspiration in dress design.

At the turn of the century in Krakow, painters began to have their say regarding the female figure and women's dress. The task they set themselves in this area was to design clothes that possessed artistic qualities and so to bring fashion in line with the age and its style. This was not a new idea: it was an issue addressed by the creators of the Art Nouveau style, whose progenitors in the West were Henry van de Velde and Alfred Mohrbutter. Henry van de Velde believed that clothing should be a work of art; he felt that women's clothes should vary depending on the occasion, and in his theoretical treatises, he divided women's outfits into "at home" dresses, those were worn in public and gala attire. So women bought walking dresses, garden dresses, street dresses, ball dresses, evening dresses, morning dresses, day dresses, visiting dresses and so on. In Paris this current was represented by the New Fashion League, whose members advocated the importance of freeing fashion from the influence of professional tailors. Prior to this, in the early years of the 20th century, there was a move towards propagating the theory that was signalled a continuation of the trends by the words of the priest Heinz Kneip advocating a dress reform and the wearing of loose dresses that did not emphasise the waist. These trends provided the inspiration for the "reform dress", which was loose and was not gathered at the waist. Women at the turn of the century were still slaves to fashion. The fashion dictators of the day ruled that they should have voluptuous curves and a disproportionately slim waist, and viewed in profile should resemble the letter "S", like an insect. To achieve this effect the bust was worn low, and its line was accented with an often-large jabot, which was associated with the wasp waist. Women dressed in this fashion wore large hats with masses of feathers, bows, birds and flowers, with a long, draped veil. The final touches placed with Art Nouveau-style painted ornaments on the dress, and often feathers for decoration, which together with the extension of the dress behind in the form of a train, was also reminiscent of a peacock. A fine example of this style is a dress made in around 1900 in Lvov by the studio of A. C. Senarska, worn in Krakow and now in the collections of the National Museum in Krakow. It made from amaranthine and black flowered silk. The open-fronted bodice is designed in the style of a bolero over an insert imitating a white gauze blouse draped over a satin underpiece. The tight sleeves were set in high, and above the elbow take the form of a small gauze puff designed to look like the trimming of the blouse sleeve. The characteristic bell-shaped skirt curves outwards at the back and the bottom hem is protected with tape securing a brush.

It was in this period too that magazine fashion first began to display distinct features in clothes specially designed in the spirit of the national style. This development was rooted in European-wide ideas of a revival of artistic crafts. The foundations for this current were laid in the theoretical treatises of John Ruskin and his pupil William Morris, and in Poland in the works of famous poet C. K. Norwid. By far the most influential and most varied in terms of numbers of new forms were the Zakopane style, developed by Stanisław Witkiewicz. The Zakopane style marked the beginnings in Poland of applied art as a combination of artistic and utilitarian forms, and transposed shapes and ornaments derived from the folk culture of the Podhale region into professional art.

One example of an outfit designed in accordance with this trend is a dress held in the collections of the National Museum in Krakow, designed and made in Krakow in around 1900 by Maria Łabęcka (phot. 1.). It is an "at home" dress made



1. „Кућна” хаљина, дизајн и израда Марија Лабенцка, Краков, око 1900. Дизајн се повезује са закопанским стилем.
1. „At home” dress designed and made by Maria Łabęcka, in Krakow around 1900. The design links to the Zakopane style.

from white cloth and decorated with simple chain-stitch embroidery in red, green and navy wool. The floral motifs and the style and technique of the embroidery, the colour scheme and the material for dress accented the Zakopane style.

Shoes inspired by folk forms were also designed and made in Zakopane itself. In the collections of the National Museum in Krakow there are shoes which Antoni Wojciechowski, the owner of a shop at 71 Krupówki Street, designed. He made them for the Paris exhibition in 1904, and the acclaim with which they met in the world's fashion capital is reflected the fact that he was awarded the gold medal.

The first generation of the 20th century brought to a close the cycle of change in thinking on clothes. After 1901, the structure of the bodice was altered by the introduction of the short bolero jacket over a loose-fitting blouse or the addition of free-swinging ornaments complementing the construction. Yet the first signals of more revolutionary

change did not come until around 1907. In 1908, Paul Poiret, one of the leading figures among the fashion dictators of the day, brought out a collection in new, simple styles that showed the figure off in a very different way. In around 1910 Secessionist fashion saw a brief period of inspiration by the ancient world; dresses modelled on Greek and Roman attire came into fashion, though at this time they continued to be decorated in accordance with the spirit of the Secession. A prime example is a dress held in the National Museum in Krakow, sewn from lilac gauze over taffeta of the same colour, with the distinctive high-waisted cut gathered below the bust in the antique style. At the front it cut away to a small décolletage; it has short sleeves covered with a light gauze cape. The bodice decorated with appliqué in velvet ribbon and gauze flowers. Another example of the same trend is a cream silk bridal dress also from the collections of the National Museum in Krakow, sewn for the Schayer fashion house in Lvov in the period 1911–1913. It has a high-waisted bodice with a broad, A-shaped cutaway section edged with white embroidery on tulle and featuring a puckered insert piece. It has short sleeves also partly sewn from tulle. The skirt is close fitting and slightly flared towards the bottom, lined with gauze and with a split up the front revealing silk gauze with a vertical line of white embroidery. The structure of this dress preserves a typically Secessionist line, but is reminiscent of the antique style in the placing of the decoration and the lightness of the fabrics with which it was made.

Aside from the emancipatory currents, a further factor in the reform of clothing was the rise in interest in health and hygiene. In 1902, for instance, Dr. Barszczewski held many lectures on and devoted several articles to “the damaging effects of corsets on the female body in the light of X-ray research”. Nevertheless, corsets continued to be used in the Secession period and it was they that created the desirable “wasp-waisted” appearance. Examples of the corsets worn by Krakow have also survived in the collections of the National Museum in Krakow, sewn from linen, cotton satin or ribbed silk. They were worn over a thin undershirt, and under a bodice of very fine lawn painstakingly adorned with lace, frills and inserts. They were then laced tightly to mould the wearer's shape as necessary. They were the cause of significant skeletal deformities and the fainting fits that were so common at the time. Yet they seemed essential under ball dresses, evening dresses, visiting dresses and even morning dresses. After several hundred years of corsets in various shapes and forms, it was only the first decades of the 20th century that showed that women could do without them.



2. „Билим”, дизајн Карол Тихи, израда у студију Антонине Сјикорске у селу Чернихов, крај Кракова.
2. „Kilim”, designed by Karol Tichy, made in the studio of Antonina Sikorska in the village of Czernichow, near Krakow.

At the beginning of last century a new conception for designing fabrics was developed by Krakow artists, involving the rebirth of the kilim (pileless Persian rug), previously in popular use as interior decoration, as an artistic fabric in its own right. This new trend saw kilim design develop into a notable artistic discipline in the first 30 years of the 20th century, with new, innovative compositional solutions being employed. The motivation for these changes was the interest of Krakow artists in the traditional Polish weaving technique employed for centuries by the cottage industry. This was the first instance of a traditional Polish craft being used by well-known Krakow artists to create designs. This form, although derived from broader trends in European art, nevertheless differed from them and constituted one of the differentiating factors of Polish art: the use of indigenous traditions to create works of art reflecting the search and need for independent artistic expression. This movement attracted many artists active in the early years of last century: Józef Czajkowski, Karol Tichy (phot. 2), Karol Homolacz, Kazimierz Brzozowski, Stanisław Wyspiański, and Ludwik Wojtyczko.

The many interesting pieces they created include a kilim made in the studio of Antonina Sikorska in the village of Czernichow near Krakow to a design by Stanisław Wyspiański for the Medical Society in Krakow. The composition comprises colourful geranium flowers arranged on a greyish-white background of natural wool. With the curtains also designed by Wyspiański for the Art Society House, featuring identical motifs, this kilim sparked a fashion in Krakow for decorating interiors with geranium motifs using a wide variety of techniques.

The fin de siècle in Krakow also brought revolution in the theatre. It became characteristic for the audience to dress in accordance with the spirit of the age; women wore elaborately ornamented cloaks over their Secessionist evening outfits, their men used the characteristic white scarves. On stage, however, actors were dressed appropriately to the time and setting of the piece, in line with the latest theatre trends. Back in the middle of the 19th century Georg II von Sachsen Meiningen had initiated a new current in the theatre known as authenticism, which advocated sets and costumes based on historical sources, and so characters started to be dressed in accordance with the trends of the age that they represented. Hence, the stage costumes sewn for Helena Modrzejewska for her roles in *The Merchant of Venice* and as Antigone, which preserved in the collections of the National Museum in Krakow, designed in this spirit.

The costume that she wore for her performance in *The Merchant of Venice* reflects the Italian fashion of the 16th century; it consists of a front-laced bodice with decorative double sleeves slashed at the head and the elbow. The long skirt is made of yellow silk with a dense floral pattern, and has brocade gores inserted at the sides, with silver and gold patterns on a pink background. At the back, it is gathered, and considerable length is added with a train. Her costume for her role as Antigone was designed by Wyspiański; made of hand painted cotton, it comprises a long, sleeveless dress and a shorter tunic with long sleeves. Its cut and the painted decoration in the form of concentric circles allude to ancient dress.

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БЕАТА БИЕДРОНСКА-СЛОТА*

ТЕКСТИЛ И ОДЕЋА FIN DE SIÈCLE-A У КРАКОВУ

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Резиме

Крајем XIX века Краков пружа идеалне услове за развој независних духовних и уметничких погледа и ставова. Градска атмосфера, уз овакве ослонце, утицала је на све области живота укључујући и моду. Многе креације су

потекле од уметника, посебно под утицајем народног стваралаштва.

На почетку прошлог века краковски уметници су развили нову концепцију дизајнирања ћилима.

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