

IRENA HUML

*“A perfect piece of furniture”  
from the T&W Krąkowsky company in Warsaw*

The history of the company manufacturing cane furniture, T&W Krąkowsky, founded in 1908 by Tadeusz and Wanda Krąkowski, is described. This first Warsaw’s “factory of cane furniture” was initially located at 36 Nowogrodzka Street, to be

soon moved to 16 Ujazdowskie Avenue. It provided highly popular furniture for verandahs, gardens, hospitals, summer houses, rooms, and studies, as well as nurseries.

*Translated by Magdalena Iwińska*

JELENA W. KARPOWA

*Portrait à l’Antique. Contribution to Research  
into Tomasz Oskar Sosnowski’s Oeuvre*

An attempt is made to identify the figure presented in the marble bust by Tomasz Oskar Sosnowski in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw (Inv. No. 158125). To date the work has been regarded as the portrait of Tsar Nicholas I. However, through a comparative iconographic and archival research, the Author has ascertained that the portrayed individual is Fyodor Berg, the last Governor of the Kingdom of Poland. Apart from this piece, Sosnowski also executed two identical Berg’s

busts (the 1850s, St Petersburg, Mining Museum) and his full-figure effigy (1868, lost). The Author has additionally ascertained other sculptor’s works related to Russia: Fyodor Paskevich’s bust (1854, Yerevan, National Gallery of Armenia) and two allegoric figures of Fame (Victory) and Law and Order (ca 1850) placed on the outside stairs of the Belvedere Pavilion at Babigon near Peterhof (currently the remains in the collection of the “Peterhof” palace and park complex).

*Translated by Magdalena Iwińska*

KATARZYNA ANNA KESLING

*Exhibition activity of Maria Nostitz-Wasilkowska  
in the years 1893-1919*

The oeuvre of Maria Nostitz-Wasilkowska is mainly connected with St Petersburg and Warsaw. She won critics’ appreciation already as a student at St Petersburg’s Academy of Fine Arts, where she was enhancing her skills under Ilya Riepin and Pavel Chistyakov. Nostitz-Wasilkowska portrayed important personalities from the world of art and politics. This stage of her artistic output, however, still requires a thorough research in the Russian archives, libraries, and museums. In turn, Nostitz-Wasil-

kowska’s artistic activity in Poland is much better known.

Having married the painter Kazimierz Wasilkowski in 1893, she moved to Warsaw. Actively participating in exhibitions, she displayed her works e.g. at the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts (Zachęta) or Krywult’s Salon. Her paintings were first displayed at the Zachęta in 1893. The artist’s presence at the exhibitions was eagerly reported on, and positive opinions on the works she was presenting

abounded. The portrait painter was ranked next to such female painters as Anna Bilińska or Olga Boznańska. Many of her paintings were reproduced in "Tygodnik Ilustrowany". Nostitz-Wasilkowska displayed her works for the last time in 1919.

The popularity of Maria Nostitz-Wasilkowska's works was in line with the bourgeois taste of the time. Despite the existence of photography, painted portraits were still eagerly commissioned. Having

mastered academic skills, a painter could satisfy the public's expectations. Nostitz-Wasilkowska was one of the few female artists known outside Poland. Appreciated in St Petersburg, she continued her artistic career in Poland. Actively participating in the artistic life, she went beyond a certain social boundary, beyond the model of a mother, beyond hearth and home. She consolidated her position, which allowed her to make a living with her own art.

*Translated by Magdalena Iwińska*

MACIEJ JARZEWICZ

### *International Politics in the „Mucha” Magazine's Caricatures in 1914*

International politics as seen through the caricatures published in "Mucha", the major Polish satirical magazine in the Russian partition, is analyzed. By choosing 1914, it was possible to discuss almost six months of normal politics until the assassination in Sarajevo, the month of the crisis which concluded with the war declaration, and the first five months of the armed conflict. It seems that prior to the war, international politics occupied a less prominent position in the magazine's contents, though on the other hand, if compared to the press in general, it played a proportionally bigger role.

International politics is particularly attractive to caricaturists due to being so personalized (effigies of the heads of states and other important politicians are generally known) and thanks to the possibility of using national stereotypes. The analyzed examples refer to such subjects as the situation in Albania, the worldwide competition of empires, up to the assessment of the Polish question in the international context. The aspect emphasized in the analyses is the visualization through caricature of metaphors used in the description of international politics such as "balance of forces" and "game" which in the general understanding had lost their metaphorical character.

The assassination in Sarajevo and the crisis it entailed dominated the July edition of "Mucha". One of the more interesting reaction examples is

a two-page story of the anticipated war in a form of a comic-strip, predicting the conflict would be limited to a local one in the Balkans.

War caricature is analyzed in the context of the actual events on the front, these reported on by "Mucha" selectively and possibly in accordance with Russia's interest. The magazine having represented an anti-Semitic attitude in the pre-war period, not surprisingly strengthened such message during the war. The analysis of particular pictures makes one conclude that caricature, using exaggeration as the main expression means, is generally incapable of rendering the horrors of the war.

One of the more surprising aspects of the activity of the Polish press in the Russian partition is the change of the undertone at the moment of the crisis to decidedly pro-Russian, this being reported on by the official supervision of magazines which had replaced the former censorship office. The shift occurred despite the lack of any central institutions in Russia responsible for war propaganda. It is not possible to judge the influence of press, therefore also satirical press, on shaping social attitudes at the onset of World War I. Worth emphasizing, however, is the fact that the general attitude of Poles in the Russian partition: passivity, moderate friendliness towards Russia, hostility to Germany, were in harmony with the stand promoted through "Mucha".

*Translated by Magdalena Iwińska*

JOANNA M. SOSNOWSKA

*The spolia-monuments in Poland after 1917*

The described phenomenon consists in eliminating monuments raised by the Poland's partitioning powers' administrations (Russian, Prussian, and Austrian) throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1914, and erecting new ones in their place, building the latter to a greater or lesser extent with elements belonging to the first. This occurred in the territory of the Second Polish Republic in the inter-war period, yet is characteristic of political transformations worldwide and at different historical moments. Such monuments can be called spolia.

The first monuments to be raised after an over 200-years' bondage were dedicated to Tadeusz Kościuszko, Poles' unquestioned hero. Many of them

were erected using such elements of the previous structures as plinths, pedestals, obelisks. Transformed were also Bismarck Towers, these subsequently and gradually demolished. In the second decade of free Poland the use of the elements of hostile monuments became more complex: they were melted or pulled down and the material acquired in such a way was used to erect new monuments. Moreover, the material applied came from demolished Orthodox churches or enemy army canons. The most famous monument created in such a way was the canopy designed by Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz over the entry to the Crypt of Silver Bells at the Wawel Cathedral where Józef Piłsudski was buried.

*Translated by Magdalena Iwińska*

RENATA PIĄTKOWSKA

*Jewish Students at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (1923–1939). Study – Debuts – Careers*

The School of Fine Arts, opened in 1904 in Warsaw, was a modern institution, unencumbered by traditional hierarchies both in its programme and in access to it for all those who wished to attend. The success of the school was dependent upon the personalities of its professors, eminent artists such as: Kazimierz Stabrowski, Konrad Krzyżanowski, Ferdynand Ruszczyc, Ksawery Dunikowski, Wojciech Jastrzębowski, Władysław Skoczylas, Tadeusz Pruszkowski, or Tadeusz Breyer.

Copious, though incomplete archives for the years 1923–1939 have been preserved. In this article only those students who indicated Judaism as their religion on their admission applications are taken into account. Additional declarations concerning their ethnicity and native language show how differentiated the spectrum of their own identities was. We find many personal thoughts in these official documents, thanks to which we can discover their aspirations, plans, and hopes for the future, but also encounter their difficult, impoverished everyday existence.

Up to 1939, 118 Jewish students (both men and women) passed through the institution. They constituted around 10% of all students. Most of them studied during the 1923–1939 period, after the school was reopened, this time as a state institution. They differed in wealth, education and also in their sense of ethnic consciousness and personal identity.

The Warsaw Academy appears to have been an exceptional place, both from the information contained in the documents that have been preserved and the souvenirs of its students, where open conflicts of a political or ethnic nature never appeared. Also in the 1930s, when the political and economic situation of Jews – citizens of the Second Republic – worsened, when anti-Semitism ensconced itself at other institutions (not excluding the Academy in Kraków), Warsaw's Academy remained friendly and guaranteed security. Students and professors jointly opposed attempts to introduce the *numerus clausus* or the "bench Ghetto". A question therefore arises: is writing about the Jewish students of this institution as a separate group at all justified? I believe it is worth looking at this group of young people, who

saw no danger (through “assimilation”) in Polish educational institutions, but instead perceived them as a possibility for self-development, including on the level of national aspirations. Owing to the experiences gained at the Warsaw institution, which through the voices and activities of its professors introduced the concept of the “artist-artisan” serving the national cause, these young Jewish creators like Fiszel Zylberberg, Jehuda Wermus, Ilya Schorr, and Natan Rapoport, entering into their artistic maturity in the 1930s, were prepared to introduce and implement a modern form of Jewish culture in Poland.

It is through Abraham Frydman, one of the most promising talents at the Warsaw Academy, that we can observe how in the 1930s, when racism

and anti-Semitism started to define Polish culture ever more strongly, there occurred a gradual “drifting apart” of Jewish artists and “Polish” cultural institutions, as well as perceive the deepening dissonance between an ever fuller integration with Polish culture and the strengthening of Jewish national identity. The open reluctance and discrimination towards Jews in public life, overshadowing mutual relations, resulted in artistic communities closing themselves off within their own ethnic worlds.

Jewish students graduating from the Academy left a common, fondly remembered place in Powiśle to enter the Polish-Jewish frontier, which as Silber notes, is not a privileged “space of openness and dialogue”, but a “space of ambivalence, contact and conflict, cooperation and rivalry, negotiation and isolation.”

ANNA KOSTRZYŃSKA-MIŁOSZ

### *Interior Design of the First Polish Transatlantic Liners SS Pułaski and SS Kościuszko*

The history of shaping the interiors of the Polish first transatlantic liners SS Kościuszko and SS Pułaski is described. Moreover, coloured designs made for these ships in 1932, and never published before, are presented. They are signed by the Danish Shipyard Nakskov Skibsværft. Comparing the photos of the actual interiors’ decor with the drawings, it can be stated with no doubt that the given designs were never accomplished. The 1935 interiors’ modernization of both liners did not take the designs into account. They are merely models that can testify to the style of the period and manner of designing special interiors, such as ocean liners popular at the time. Softly upholstered streamlined furniture, characteristic cubic masses so important on a ship in view of stability, as well as toned down warm colours of wood put next to

greyish-blues or “faded” reddish-browns are characteristic of the interiors from the 1930s.

An assumption can be made that the preserved designs are the designs for the modernization of SS Kościuszko and SS Pułaski proposed by the above-mentioned Danish Shipyard, competing for commission to construct the most famous in the 1920s and 1930s Polish ocean liners M.S. Piłsudski and M.S. Batory with the Italian Shipyard Cantieri Riuniti dell’Adriatico. At the final competition stage only two shipyards had stayed, namely the Italian and Danish ones, and possibly at that point the coloured interior designs were made as an extra offer. The thesis seems very likely, as the decision to have M.S. Piłsudski and M.S. Batory built was being made in 1932, namely the year featured in the drawings, while the final contract was concluded in 1933.

*Translated by Magdalena Iwńska*