



THE ARTS POF LIT SHER

Dorota Folga-Januszewska, Lech Majewski

BoSz



Contents

Polish Artistic Poster / 4

1. *The Image and the Word*. Prints and visual communication from the fifteenth

to the nineteenth centuries. An introduction to the history of the Polish poster / 6

2. *From l'affiche to L'Affichomanie*. The Polish poster until the early twentieth century / 20

3. *The New Language of the Poster*. From the first decade of the twentieth century to the late nineteen twenties / 54

Exhibition Posters and Poster Exhibitions / 60

The Artists' Poster / 76

The Poster and Politics / 100

The Poster and Advertising / 114

4. *The Art of Design*. The nineteen thirties and forties / 142

Advertising, Advertising, Advertising / 150

Technology, Sport and Tourism / 172

Zakopane and the Mountain Poster / 180

Political and Social Campaigns / 186

Artistic Life / 200

Paris 1937 and the 1939 New York World's Fair / 212

The Second World War. The Polish Poster in the Four Corners of the World / 213

The Return / 222

5. *The Socialist Realism Episode* / 228

6. *The Polish School of Posters*. "Thinking is dangerous, thank you Henryk" / 248

7. *Transformations of the Nineteen Seventies and Eighties* / 316

8. *The Social and Political Poster of 1980–1989, Solidarity Poster and Independent Poster* / 418

9. *New Paths of the Poster* / 438

The Polish Poster Outside of Poland / 442

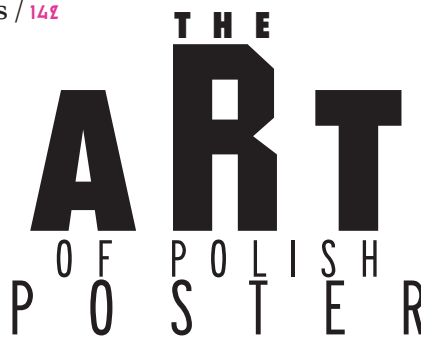
One Print Posters / 452

10. *The Poster Kaleidoscope from A to the Future* / 474

Bibliography / 576

Index / 593

Printing houses and printing works which made posters from the seventeenth century until 1945 / 599



THE
ART
OF
POLISH
POSTER

Dorota Folga-Januszewska

Concept for the content, text, selection and layout of illustrations

Lech Majewski

Artistic concept and graphic design



1. LECH MAJEWSKI,
THE POSTER
MUST SING!,
2011, POSTER DESIGN,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES

Polish poster – one of the best-recognised concepts in twentieth-century art, a marvel springing from the potent juxtaposition of opposites, of ambiguity and limpidity, metaphor and simplicity, artistic trails and effective advertising, is the result of transformations in visual communication which have been going on for centuries, transformations which say a great deal about the specific nature of Polish culture, the essence of which was, and is, the fusion of contradictions.

but it could also be told by the courses taken in the formation of its native language of speech and image, the relationship between word and picture, the *genius loci* encoded in the genetic heritage, the sensitivity and ability making it possible to read between the lines. Was the Polish School of Posters thus the fruit of several centuries of the development of an apt obliqueness? We have endeavoured to tell the story of the Polish poster by employing the logic of the myth. The story thus features details and sometimes forgotten images, but it also contains attempts, mayhap controversial, at tracing the paths which led onward from the first printing centres in sixteenth century Krakow and the birth of artistic printing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They take us via the technical experiments of the nineteenth century and through the phenomenon of Polish artistic printing during the interwar years and the emergence of the Polish school of graphic design in the nineteen thirties, both noted around the world. Those paths then bring us to the Polish School of Posters, to the Solidarity *affiche brut* of the next generation and, finally, to the rise of the youthful, poetic and anarchic poster of the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

It can happen that the history of a civilisation is sometimes recorded as the history of its wars,

There is no lack of artists in our tale, since this book is, in reality, about them, their style of thinking, their graphic intelligence, their experience and unyielding attitude in their *milieu* which they were capable of shaping by imposing a mode of describing the world upon us all. The art of the Polish poster is close to critical art and activism and is ideally suited to both. It may, in part, have left the streets and moved into the museums and galleries, but, contrary to the opinions of the sceptics, it is doing just fine. For, as Jan Lenica used to say, “the poster must sing”.

The Image and the Word

Prints and visual communication from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. An introduction to the history of the Polish poster



2. TOMASZ TRETER,
REGES POLONIAE,
THE WHITE EAGLE,
THE POLISH COAT
OF ARMS, WITH
THE PORTRAITS OF
POLAND'S RULERS,
KNOWN AS THE
TRETER'S EAGLE,
1588, COPPERPLATE
ENGRAVING,
54 X 39 CM,
ROYAL CASTLE IN WARSAW,
ZKW/171

3. KING ALEKSANDER
JAGIELLOŃCZYK
IN THE SEJM,
1506, WOODCUT, PAPER,
27.1 X 32.5 CM,
[IN:] JAN ŁASKI, *COMMUNE
REGNI POLONIAE PRIVILEGIUM*,
JAN HALLER'S PRINTING
HOUSE, KRAKOW, NO DATE;
INSERTED AS A SEPARATE
PRINT, PRINTED ALSO AS
A SEPARATE WOODCUT,
NLP, G. 7456

In the Polish literature devoted to the history of the poster, there is an oft-reiterated opinion to the effect that the poster in the form which we nowadays consider to be artistic was a creation of the late nineteenth century. In art, though, nothing is born in an instant; things tend, rather, to erupt at a propitious moment. So, if we accept that the poster is an announcement combining image and word, the task of which is to draw the attention of the viewer in places which have not been created for art, which is to say, in the public space of streets, squares, fences and walls, then we should trace our history of the European poster back to the examples of the art of ancient times.

As long ago as 1895, Charles Hiatt remarked that “the poster is one of the oldest and most obvious forms of advertisement”¹, pinpointing its

¹ Charles Hiatt, *Picture posters. A short history of the illustrated placard, with many reproductions of the most artistic examples in all countries*, London 1895, p. 3.

bath houses. On similar grounds, we could also accept that the origins of the poster can be perceived in the first prints produced by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany or William Caxton in England, in the initiation of the great wave of “reproduction” which inaugurated a new era of visual-linguistic communication and/or in the birth of the concept of turning a composition of word and image, duplicated over and over again, into a method of rapidly conveying meanings, be they obvious or be they implied. From the early sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth, that concept was consistently developed, making of the marriage of word and picture in print a long-range weapon used both to glorify and to censure ideas, beliefs, opinions and people. In this early phase, it is impossible to separate graphic art used in books and occasionally, as well



source in specimens of Egyptian papyri or the Greek inscriptions uncovered by Charles Clermont-Ganneau in the early eighties². In turn, an exhibition held in 2008 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington and devoted to research into life in Pompeii³ demonstrated that the poster form can just as well be traced back to the replicated tiles bearing rough paintings which were affixed to the exterior walls of the houses in that town in the first century A.D., their enticing pictures provided with the appropriate captions advertising

² Cf. Feliks Gryglewicz, "Charles Clermont-Ganneau" [entry in:] *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 3, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1989, pp. 510-511. Hiatt was referring to the widely commented upon discovery in Jerusalem of a stone which had once occupied a place in that city's temple and which bore a description prohibiting pagans from entering a courtyard set apart for the Jews.

³ Cf. *Pompeii and the Roman Villa. Art and Culture around the Bay of Naples*, [exhibition catalogue], National Gallery of Art, Washington, 19 October 2008-22 March 2009.

as satires, printed bills and even illustrations torn from books and put up on the doors of churches, town halls and on town and city gates, from the poster's ancestral forms, the proto-posters. Before print attained the status of an artistic field, the proto-poster in a duplicated form combining an image with a verbal announcement was already widespread everywhere where European civilisation had shone a light on the educational and promotional uses of reproduction.

→ 8

From l'affiche to L'Affichomanie

The Polish poster until the early twentieth century



Za pozwoleniem Zwierzchności.

Dziś we Czwartek to jest
w **Teatrze**
KAROL  **RAPPO**
BĘDZIE MIAŁ ZASZCZYT

okazać Szanownej Publiczności PO RAZ OSTATNI Akademią sztuk Hurońskich, Atletycznych,
Olimpijskich i Herkulejskich, w czterech Oddziałach.
Kapella C. K. Austriackiego wojska towarzysząc temu widowisku, odgrywać będzie najpiękniejsze sztuki.

ODDZIAŁ PIERWSZY.
Chińskie igrzyska zręczności.
1) Przechodząca Zonglery. 2) Turecka gra la chérelle. 3) Równowaga na słupku. 4) Chiński Błąk kłębiący. 5) Równowaga z odcinanym papierem. 6) Ustawienie chińskiego deszczu-chronu. 7) Tyrolskie strzelanie paciorków. 8) Nadzwyczajne ćwiczenie tureckiego dziewczynki. 9) Przechodząca powietrzna na sznurze wietrzyni.

ODDZIAŁ DRUGI.
Olympika.
1) Siła nad ludzką ludzka. 2) Artysta panuje na rusznicych i łuskach czterech osób, wsiadając razem 600 funtów, i z tym ciężarem przechodząc do lewej. 3) Walczenie i rwanie wielką wężem. 4) Gra trzema kółkami działowymi kulami, wagiem 20, 30 i 40 funtów. Artysta ułoży wszelkiego rodzaju, aby Szanownym Widzom pokazać satysfakcję jak najdokładniej.

przez tym również siłę, która na wiele lat zostanie w pamięci Szanownej Publiczności.

ODDZIAŁ TRZECI.
Herkulejskie próby siły.
Artysta w oddziale tym wykazuje, co dla ludzka wydane jest w stanie, bowiem przyniesiony liniami na nogi do góry strony, przyniesiony rękoma koniec tygrysa oddzielonego od popęty, i kłó się z nim wciągając do góry, trzymając lewą ręką siłę swoich rąk w powietrzu; chociaż widok takowej sztuki zdawać się będzie okropnym, jednakże tylko rozdźwięk wzdoby.

ODDZIAŁ CZWARTY.
Atletyka.
1) Długość lewej ręki Artysty, doświadczenia starość, aby przez dźwięk swoje, zjednać contentment i zadowolenie Szanownej Publiczności. 2) Sam Rappo ojciec i oddała tym, wykaza

rozdzielną grę mistrzowskie kształtem ciekawości, jako tu: krędo ułożony; tuteż z niegłębokością przez kilka osób, i ułożony po brzośnie z trzema ciekawymi pod gołymi. 3) Nadzwyczajna przechodząca w kółko żelaznego pręta, która ułożoną będzie z dwoma kółkami płomieniemi.

Na zakończenie:
Walczenie ciężką masywą herkulejską w sposób artystyczny; podczas tych odmalowania godnych postaw i ruchów. Artysta będzie odczytywać znoważ chińskim wspaniałym figuralnym; ogień ze wszystkich stron testu skierowany na Artystę, będzie się od niego oddzielał, nie schodząc mu łuski. W zgodności Artysta ułoży wszelkiego, aby rozpraszający tę energię odlatującej.

Artysta skłoda całą wdzięczność swoją Szanownej Publiczności za lekkość prędkości i łaskawość na jego przedstawienie; apasunując, iż dąży do łaskawej łaskawości i w najdokładnym oddaaniu, zostaw w wiecznej jego pamięci.

CENA MIEJSC ZWYCZAJNA.

Dla wygody Publiczności Biletów dostać można z rana od godziny 9 aż do wieczora w Kassie Teatralnej.

Bilety służą tylko na to Widowisko, na które są kupione.

Początek o godzinie wpół o 8mej wieczór.

23. PLAYBILL ANNOUNCING A PERFORMANCE TO BE GIVEN BY KAROL RAPPO IN KRAKOW THEATRE ON 21ST JULY 1836, PRINT ON PAPER, 49 X 38 CM, JL, REF. NO. 224659/V

In 1898, Jan Kacper Wdowiszewski, the director of Krakow’s Municipal Technical and Industrial Museum at the time, wrote:

(...) suddenly, unfolding before our very eyes [is] a movement dubbed the NEW ART OF THE POSTER [author’s emphasis]. The concept is an erroneous one. No new art is emerging. It is simply evolving and embracing an ever-wider sphere (...)⁹. Wdowiszewski most certainly had a basis upon which to voice such an opinion in the opening sentences of his book, *Sztuka w plakatach* (*Art in Posters*), published at his own expense. He was both an observer of, and a participant in, the transformations bound up with the growth of industry, commerce and advertising. He also possessed a goodly knowledge of the history of printmaking and applied arts and thus argued that the “art of the streets” which had become so popular in the course of the nineteenth century was an evolution of that field: The modern poster sprang from the domain of graphic art and never in history has there been an era when that field has blossomed with more magnificence than in this, our century¹⁰.

While the graphic arts were the offspring of the drawing, the latter also constituted one of the foundations of painting and the poster

was thus a composite creation and heir to a multitude of artistic traditions.

However, it was not in European art alone that Wdowiszewski perceived the wellspring of the artistic poster.

He went on to remark that, for him, “the best of models was indisputably the Japanese type of vari-coloured,

planar decoration”, as well as citing Berlepsch’s¹¹ questioning as to whether... “we would have poster art at all, in the sense it is understood today, were it not for the fact that, for decades now, works of art from the Far East have taught us how an exquisite impression may be attained by means of a few vivid splashes of colour”¹².

→ 22

24. COVER OF JAN WDOWISZEWSKI’S BOOK, ART IN POSTERS. THE PURPOSES, CREATION, TECHNIQUE AND ARTISTIC PRINCIPLES OF THE MODERN POSTER, [PUBLISHED AT THE AUTHOR’S OWN COST], KRAKOW 1898



24

⁹ Jan Wdowiszewski, *Sztuka w plakatach. Cele, powstanie, technika i artystyczne zasady nowoczesnego plakatu*, Krakow 1898, p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

¹¹ It can be presumed that Wdowiszewski is citing the opinions of Hans Edward von Berlepsch-Valendas, a Swiss painter and architect connected with the Jugendstil movement in Zurich.

¹² Jan Wdowiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

56. HENRYK KUNZEK,
"ONWARD". TWICE
THE VOLUME FROM
1ST DECEMBER...,
1910, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
70.7 X 54.5 CM,
LV, EP 61921



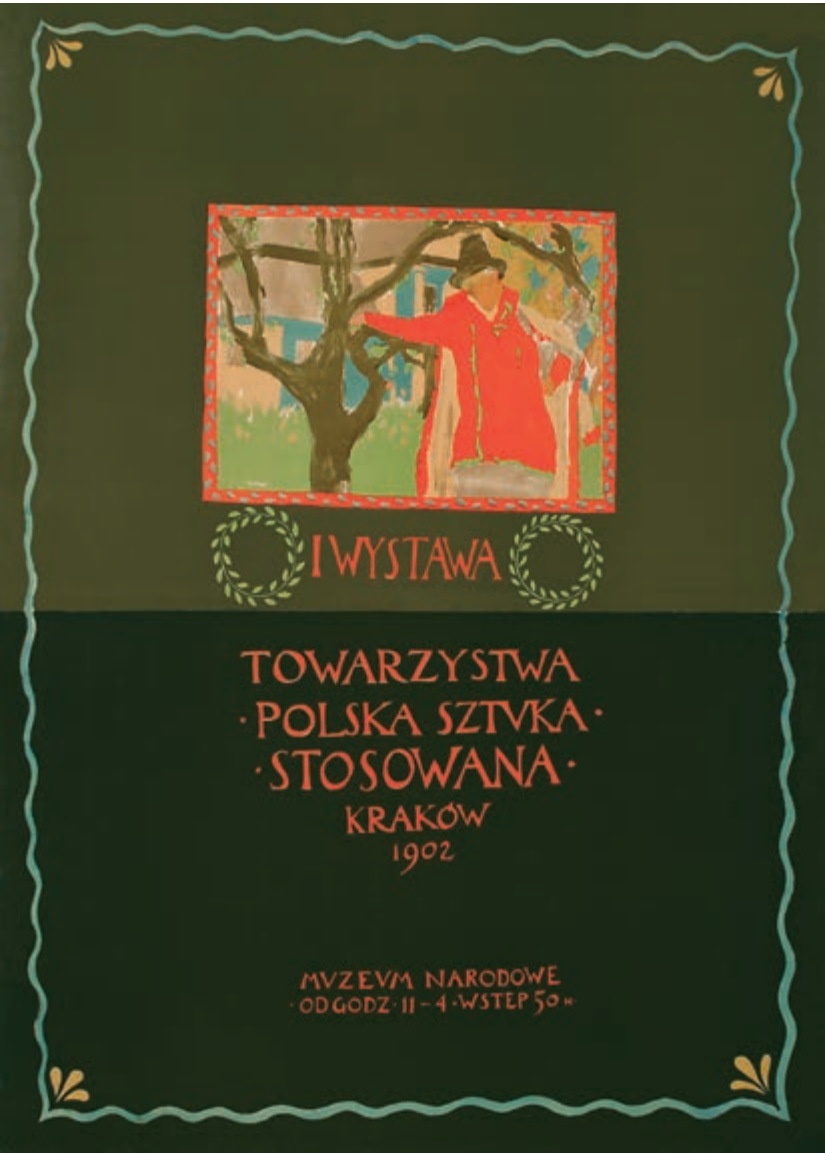
56

57. JÓZEF CZAJKOWSKI,
1ST EXHIBITION
OF THE SOCIETY
OF POLISH
APPLIED ARTS,
1902, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
106 X 76 CM,
PM, PL 1140/1



58

58. KAROL FRYCZ,
"ONWARD",
CIRCA 1910, PRINT,
98.6 X 72.5 CM,
LV, EP 61920



57

59. EXHIBITION CATALOGUE COVER FOR THE: **L'AFFICHOMANIE. COLLECTIONNEURS D'AFFICHES – AFFICHES DE COLLECTION 1880–1900** EXHIBITION, MUSÉE DE L'AFFICHE, PARIS 1980. THE NOTION OF "L'AFFICHOMANIE" WAS INTRODUCED BY LOUIS OCTAVE UZANNE IN 1880

60. COVER OF ERNEST MAINDRON'S BOOK: **LES AFFICHES ILLUSTRÉES (1886–1895)**, PARIS 1895. MAINDRON'S WORK BECAME AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR POSTER COLLECTORS SUCH AS JAN WDOWISZEWSKI OR PAWEŁ ETTINGER, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NUMÉRIQUE DE FRANCE/GALLICA

61, 62. AN EXHIBITION ROOM DURING THE PROCESS OF SETTING UP THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY POLISH POSTER COLLECTION HELD IN THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS IN MOSCOW EXHIBITION, THE FIRST SHOWING OF PAWEŁ ETTINGER'S COLLECTION, DECEMBER 2011, PHOTO BY D. FOLGA-JANUSZEWSKA

By the late nineteenth century, awareness of the value of the artistic poster was so deep-seated that Roger Marx posulated the founding, in Paris, of a Poster Museum²³ which would present the achievements in that field of art, while Jan Wdowiszewski, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was sharing his reflections on the stages of the development of the artistic poster and on its quality with his readers in Krakow. In 1908, Roger Braun had grounds upon which to decide that, with so many theoretical and critical works on the topic of the artistic poster now having been written, the time was right to publish a work of his own entitled *A Bibliography and Iconography of the Illustrated Poster*²⁴. The publication is worthy of note because, in his panorama of the places deemed vital to the development of the art of the poster around the world, he mentions Poland for the first time, with the indication "Cracovie – Musée des Techniques et l'Industrie. Exposition Internationale 1898" (Krakow, Technical and Industrial Museum, International Exhibition, 1898).

At that time, Krakow was the artistic and intellectual capital of partitioned Poland and, along with Lviv, it fulfilled the role of principal cultural centre, bringing every possible innovation in the field of art from Austria, England, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland to its native soil. This phenomenon was possible thanks to the large degree of administrative autonomy which prevailed in the Austrian Partition. However, the primary reason lay in the conditions of life there, which were conducive to, and supportive of, the development of science, learning and art. It was there, too, at the instigation of the Municipal Technical and Industrial Museum's then director, Jan Wdowiszewski, that the first international, public exhibition devoted to posters was held. An impressive combination of two hundred and fifty exceptional works was presented. They were created by such masters of the poster as Jules Cheret, Eugene Grasset, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, Pierre Bonnard, Alphonse Mucha, Dudley Hardy, J. & W. Beggarstaff and William Bradley. A mere fifteen Polish works went on display, amongst which, posters by Teodor Axentowicz, Juliusz Kossak, Konstanty Mańkowski, Piotr Stachiewicz and Wojciech Weiss could be seen. A catalogue *Art in Posters. The Purposes, Creation, Technique and Artistic Principles of the Modern Poster*, and also *Guide for Visitors with Comments on the Development of the Poster Art in Specific Countries and with the Description of the Notable Poster Artists* were published for the occasion.

The event was proof positive of the fact that, even though Polish statehood did not exist, a Polish artistic potential did, with an emphatic role for the Krakow museum, while Poland had become one of the distinguished company of only seven countries, alongside France, Germany, the United States, Italy, Norway and Belgium, where a review-cum-exhibition of the poster was held in the late nineteenth century.

That century's fascination with the poster, the artistic advertisement and new forms of printing and illustration was a fact which was known as *L'Affichomanie* (Poster Mania), a concept introduced in 1880 by a critic and poster expert, Louis Octave Uzanne, who also gave the name to one of the chapters of his book, *Le Livre Moderne* (Paris, 1891)²⁵. It is thus difficult to posit that the origins of the artistic poster should be dated from the late nineteenth century, since it had already obtained such an advanced stage of evolution by then that opinions were being voiced to the effect that the time had come to summarise the achievements in the field. The popularity of the artistic poster is borne out by the fact that, in Europe and America of the late nineteenth century, there existed a network of collectors fascinated by this form of graphic design, while Paweł Ettinger, a Polish bibliophile, numbered amongst the most esteemed of them. His extraordinary collection of Polish and European posters, accumulated

thanks to his friendships with artists and printers and currently held in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, was the subject of a wide-ranging, showpiece exhibition held in 2011²⁶. However, it was already known to Edward Chwalewik²⁷ prior to 1916. → 38



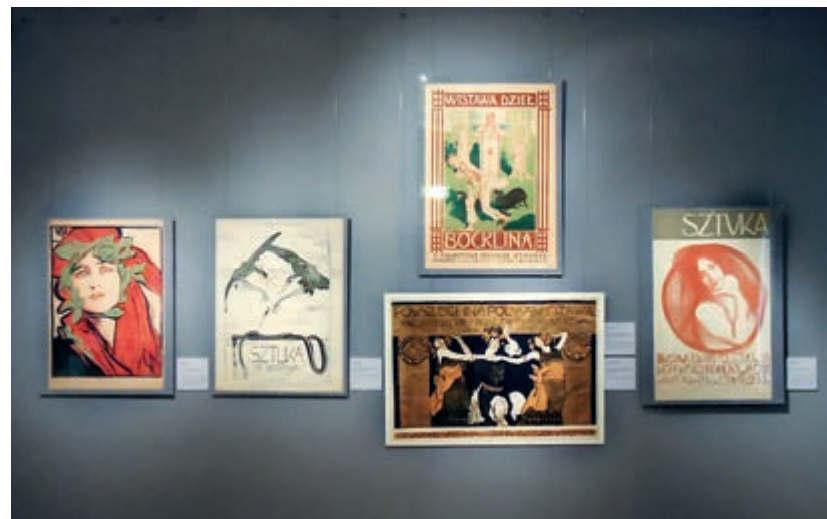
61



59



60



62

3 The New Language of the Poster

From the first decade of the twentieth century to the late nineteen twenties



92. ANONYMOUS ARTIST,
1ST LVIV AVIATION
EXHIBITION,
1910, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
108.3 X 76.5 CM,
LV, EP 61866

93. A TRAVELLING ARTS
EXHIBITION PASSES THROUGH
THE STREETS IN RÓWNE (NOW
RIVNE, IN UKRAINE),
PHOTO BY THE ALFA STUDIO
IN RÓWNE, FROM THE
ARCHIVES OF THE
"ILUSTROWANY KURIER
CODZIENNY" ("ILLUSTRATED
DAILY COURIER"),
NDA, 1-K-6216

94. MOBILE PLACARDS;
PRE-ELECTION AGITATION
IN THE STREETS OF WARSAW,
PHOTO FROM THE ARCHIVES
OF THE "ILUSTROWANY
KURIER CODZIENNY"
("ILLUSTRATED DAILY
COURIER"),
NDA, 1-A-819-1

The end of the first decade of the twentieth century brought innovation upon innovation throughout Europe; in reaction against the Secession, growing anti-decorative trends were making themselves manifest, research into the theory of colour and the psychology of sight was flourishing and the daily papers were reporting important discoveries in the fields of mathematics and physics. “Multidimensional space” and “the relativity of time” became the watchwords of the moment and, in art, the Futurist and Cubist trends were in the vanguard. After Marinetti proclaimed his *Futurist Manifesto* from the columns of *Le Figaro* on 20th February 1909, there was no turning back from the powerful wave of the avant-garde and artistic “-isms” of the new century. The world of the eighteen hundreds, respectful of aesthetic values and decoration, began to slip into the past. By the time the First World War broke out and then the October Revolution erupted, the majority of the transformations in art had already taken place. The war shifted the balance of power which had previously held sway; the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Imperial Russia and the Prussian state all fell. Artists roamed Europe in every direction, fleeing, emigrating and arriving with hope in new centres of art. After almost one hundred and twenty-four years of subjugation, new Central European states were born; Poland regained her independence in 1918. This complex melange of artistic activities and political and social events was conducive to the development of social art and the art of the streets which the poster had become by the turn of the centuries.



93



94

Changes also occurred in the province of the poster itself. What sprang forth from a beautiful field of art which had been slightly commercial and slightly social was the political art of agitprop. It demanded new forms, new rhythms and new methods of making an impact. With increasing frequency, artists began treating the poster as an end in itself, instrumental to the struggle and not merely an addendum to their other work. Its kinship with graphic art, painting, book design and typography was still important, but its task had become considerably more far-reaching. → 60



207



208



209

206. FELICJAN SZCZĘSNY
KOWARSKI,
PUBLIC BONDS
FOR THE REBIRTH
OF POLAND,
1920, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
99 X 70 CM,
MUSEUM OF INDEPENDENCE
IN WARSAW,
PL 3023

207. JAN MUCHARSKI,
PUBLIC BONDS
FOR THE REBIRTH
OF POLAND,
1920, LITHOGRAPHY,
47 X 32 CM,
BIBLIOTHÈQUE POLONAISE DE
PARIS, THLP 18

208. ANONYMOUS ARTIST,
LET US BUY PUBLIC
BONDS FOR THE
REBIRTH OF POLAND!
1920, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
94.8 X 62.8 CM,
PM, PL 1119/1

209. STANISŁAW BOHUSZ-
-SIESTRZEŃCEWICZ,
PUBLIC BONDS FOR
THE REBIRTH OF
POLAND,
1920, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
69.5 X 48.5 CM,
PM, PL 2413/1



210

210. ALEKSANDER GRZYBOWSKI,
THE ENEMY LEFT
US THIS. WE WILL
REBUILD LIKE THIS
WHEN YOU BUY
PUBLIC BONDS
FOR THE REBIRTH
OF POLAND,
1920, LITHOGRAPHY,
69.8 X 55.3 CM,
PM, PL 3914/1

211. BOGDAN BARTŁOMIEJ
NOWAKOWSKI,
CRUSH THOSE
TALONS! THE WEAPON
IS BESIDE YOU!,
1921, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
95 X 62.7 CM,
LV, EP 62019



211

4 The Art of Design

The nineteen thirties and forties

299. LEON JAN WŁODARCZYK,
ALONG POLISH
ROADS ON A POLISH
BICYCLE,
1930, ROTOGRAVURE,
95.2 X 67 CM,
PRASA POLSKA (POLISH
PRESS) S.A., WARSAW,
LV, EP 62520



When we compare the situation and atmosphere of the two successive decades of the interwar years from a present-day perspective, then we could come away with an impression that this was a meeting of two different epochs. The nineteen twenties were years of tremendous experimentation in art, seeing the creation of a new language, a variety of approaches and viewpoints, a democracy, an extravagance verging on folly, all kinds of play and a fascination with science and art alike. The glorious era of the “Roaring Twenties”, *les années folles* (the crazy years), was brought to a close by the Wall Street Crash and the onset of the recession and the Great Depression.

By the early nineteen thirties, an entirely different atmosphere held sway, with the birth of Nazism and Stalinism, the growth of nationalisms, the closing down of important centres of modern art in Europe, such as Bauhaus, for instance, and a steady, widespread migration encompassing thousands of people, intellectuals from various countries emigrating for a range of reasons. In reflections on art, the issue of reproduction, popular culture, commercialism and professional advertising was referred to with increasing frequency. The decade was also an era of sporting events on a grand scale, of the film industry and advertising on film and of the first commercialisation of art and burgeoning of mass and popular culture on such a scale. Amongst the numerous trends in European art, a return to realism, often underpinned by the absurdity and magic of Surrealism, was increasingly perceptible and a tendency toward a new objectivity, frequently teeming with the symbolic and metaphoric references, became noticeable.

The outbreak of war in 1939 came as an indisputably violent disruption of countless artistic activities and brought the collapse of established institutions, but it did not constitute an absolute interruption of the process which had already begun. Although, nowadays, reconstructing a full picture of the life of the Polish poster during the Second World War is still difficult, we have no doubts whatsoever as to the fact that this field of design played a colossal role in patriotic, military and political activities on Poland's behalf, not only in various parts of the world, but also in those parts of the country under German and Soviet occupation. And shortly after the war had ended, when Henryk Tomaszewski won five first prizes at the International Film Poster Festival in Vienna in 1948, it transpired that the formula developed in the nineteen thirties was lasting and still valid. With that, the Polish poster became a phenomenon which was exhibited, recognised and singled out for distinction. Even the head-on charge of Socialist Realism was unsuccessful in changing the metaphoric thinking which, armed with the technical experience of the artists and experimental typography, was capable of overcoming the influences of totalitarianism. The Polish School of Posters which was taking shape was the fruit of the free creativity and intellectual discipline developed within the artists' and designers' *milieu* of the nineteen thirties and strengthened by the international experience of the war years.



461



462



463



464

461. EMIL DANFER,
FILM POSTER,
**THE SOUTH SEAS
GOD (THE SEA GOD)**,
DIR. GEORG ABBOTT,
1934, OFFSET,
98 X 67.5 CM,
PM, PL 1533/1

462. ANONYMOUS ARTIST,
FILM POSTER,
**I MUST HAVE YOU
(A SONG FOR YOU)**,
DIR. JOE MAY,
1933, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
100 X 70.5 CM,
PM, PL 1066/1

463. STEFAN NORBLIN,
FILM POSTER,
LIFE SENTENCE,
DIR. JULIUSZ GARDAN,
1933, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
110 X 78 CM,
PM, PL 5545/1

464. ANONYMOUS ARTIST,
FILM POSTER,
THE TUNNEL,
DIR. CURTIS BERNHARDT,
1933-1934, COLOUR
LITHOGRAPHY,
70 X 100 CM,
PM, PL 1065

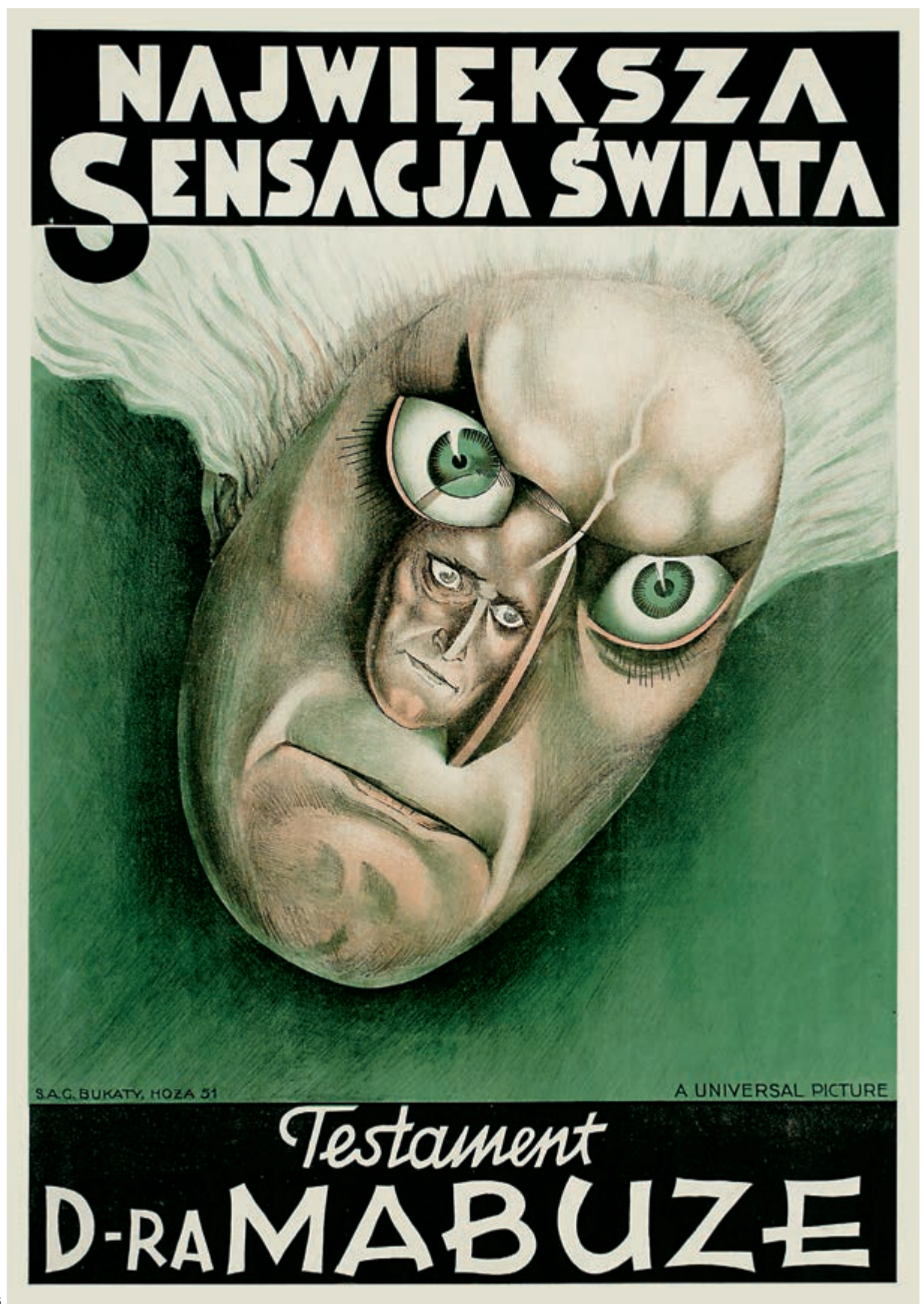


465

465. EMIL DANFER,
FILM POSTER,
**THE REVENGE
OF DR FU MANCHU
(MYSTERIOUS
DR FU MANCHU)**,
DIR. ROWLAND V. LEE,
1934, OFFSET,
98 X 67 CM,
PM, PL 1532/1

466. ANONYMOUS ARTIST,
FILM POSTER,
**THE WORLD'S
GREATEST SENSATION.
THE TESTAMENT
OF DR MABUSE**,
DIR. FRITZ LANG,
1933, COLOUR LITHOGRAPHY,
70 X 50 CM,
PM, PL 5550/1

466



5 The Socialist Realism Episode



524. LUCJAN JAGODZIŃSKI,
**WHAT HAVE YOU
DONE TOWARDS
CARRYING OUT
THE PLAN?**,
1953, OFFSET,
85 X 58.2 CM,
PM, PL 291/1

525. ANONYMOUS ARTIST,
**LONG LIVE THE WORLD
PEACE CONFERENCE**,
A MONTAGE FEATURING
PABLO PICASSO'S
LITHOGRAPH, *DOVE* (1949)
AND TEXT,
1949, OFFSET,
99.5 X 70 CM,
PM, PL 3440/1. THE POSTER
APPEARED WHEN THE PEACE
CONFERENCE WAS TAKING
PLACE IN PARIS FROM
20TH TO 23RD APRIL IN
THE YEAR FOLLOWING
THE ONE HELD IN WROCLAW

526. TADEUSZ TREPKOWSKI,
**FORWARD TO
SOCIALISM UNDER
STALIN'S BANNER**,
1955, DESIGN, POSTER PAINT,
COLOUR PHOTOMONTAGE,
PAPERBOARD,
100 X 70 CM,
PM, PL 1021/1

527. WITOLD SKULICZ,
1945,
1951, OFFSET,
99.5 X 68 CM,
PM, PL 265/1

528. MACIEJ NEHRING,
**THE POLISH-SOVIET
FRIENDSHIP
MEANS PEACE,
INDEPENDENCE
AND A HAPPY
FUTURE FOR OUR
HOMELAND**,
1952, ROTOGRAVURE,
100 X 69.7 CM,
PM, PL 269/1

In the immediate post-war period, between 1945 and 1949, just when it seemed that Polish art was attaining contact with the world and the traumas of war were giving way to the building of a new reality, when the Peace Conference in Wrocław in 1948 had welcomed not only Pablo Picasso and Paul Éluard, but many other notable scholars, writers and artists from various parts of the world and when the 1st Exhibition of Contemporary Art had opened in Kraków, then came the moment when it was once again cut off.

In 1949, an initiative on the part of Włodzimierz Sokorski, a member of the Legislative *Sejm* and, from 1952, Minister of Culture, the authorities introduced instructions for artists issued from on high and setting out how art should be shaped in a socialist state and which values should be propagated. The first sign of the changes emanating from the Soviet Union was a speech given by Bolesław Bierut at the Warsaw Conference of the Polish United Workers' Party on 3rd July 1948.

⁶⁰ Cf., *inter alia*:
Włodzimierz Sokorski,
Zadania współczesnej plastyki,
Przegląd Artystyczny, 1952, No. 1.

A conference held in Nieborów from 12th to 13th February 1949 was to have a practical significance for the visual arts. During the proceedings, Sokorski⁶⁰ and Juliusz Starzyński argued the need for art which would reach people. In order to get the ideological import across to the public, art would have to become communicative and comprehensible to all, not providing an artistic education, but facilitating indoctrination. It was to be realistic in form and socialist in content. → 230



525



526



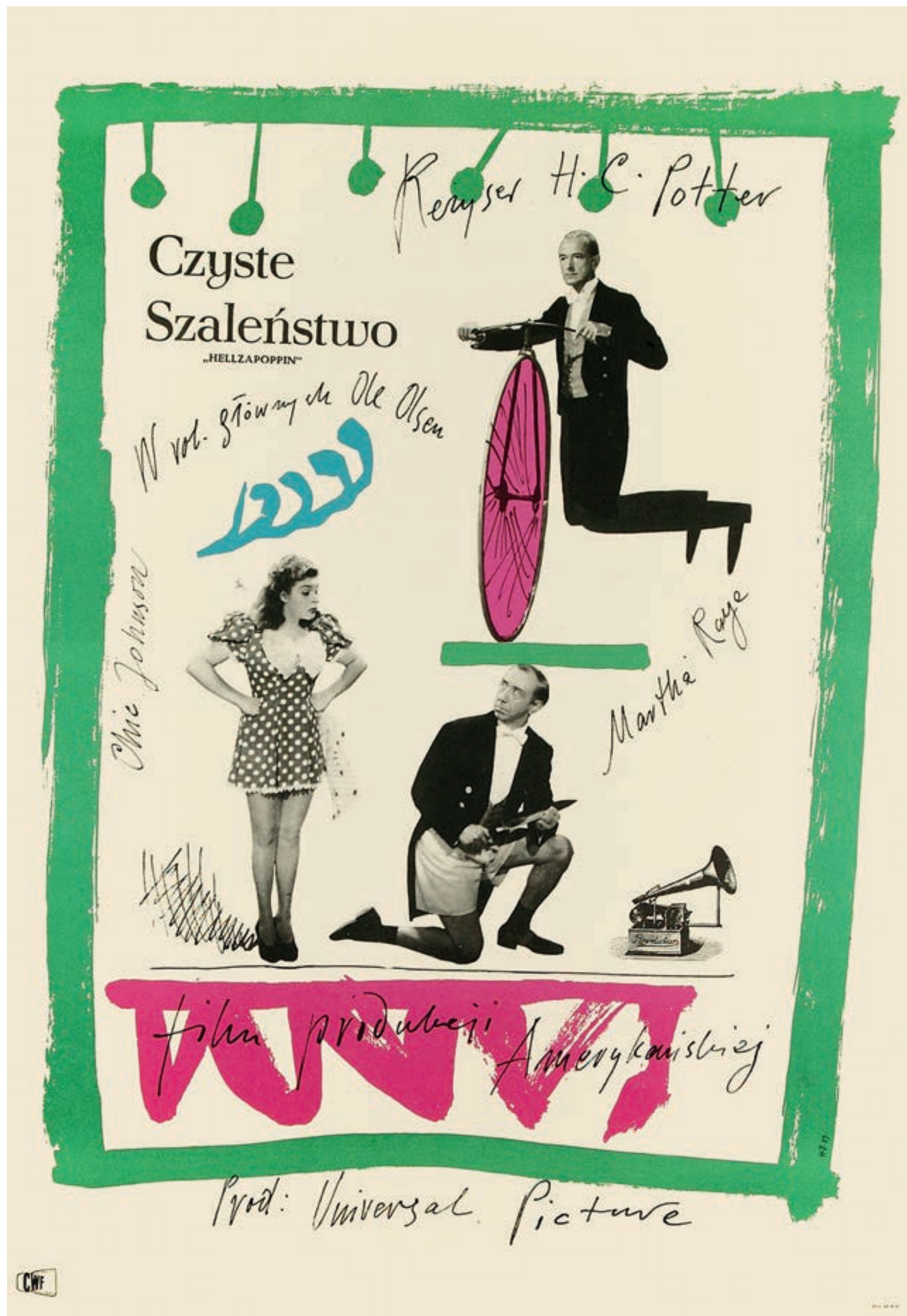
527



528

6 The Polish School of Posters

“Thinking is dangerous, thank you Henryk”⁶⁵



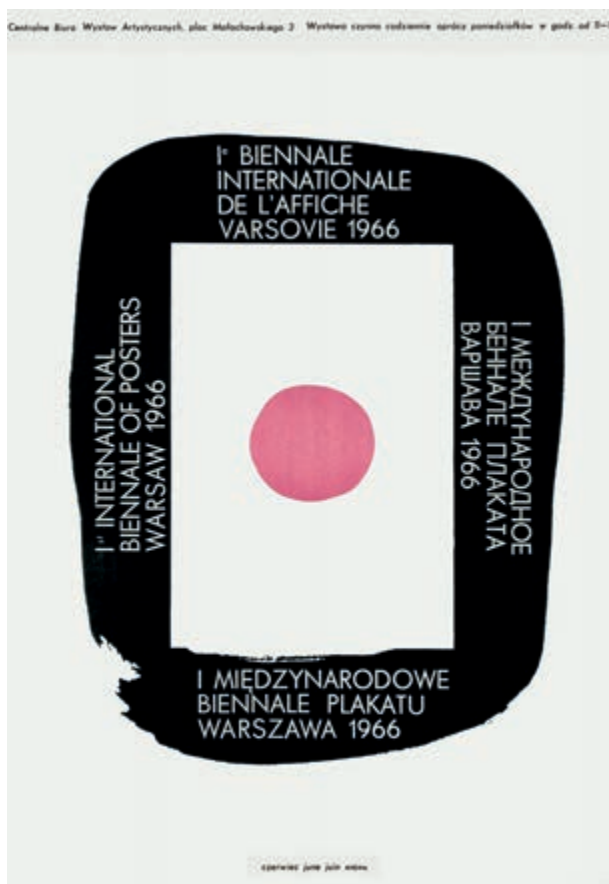
589

589. HENRYK TOMASZEWSKI,
FILM POSTER,
PURE MADNESS
(HELLZAPOPPIN'),
DIR. H.C. POTTER,
1959, OFFSET,
84.4 X 58.7 CM,
PM, PL 650/1

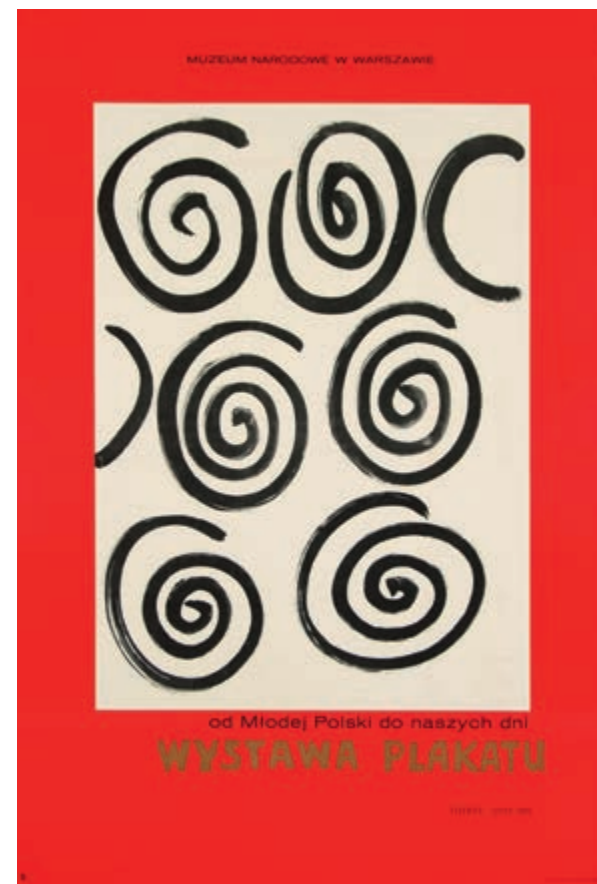
The concept of the “Polish School of Posters” appeared in the literature in the nineteen sixties, but it refers to a phenomenon of the period running from the late nineteen forties to the end of the sixties. It would be difficult today not to reiterate the questions as to what that phenomenon involved and the cause of the concept’s enormous popularity around the world.



590



591



592

In his foreword to the catalogue for the 1st Warsaw International Poster Biennale, held in 1966, the event’s founder and instigator, Józef Mroszczak, wrote: In Poland, and other countries as well, it is often the case that, in various abodes, in the homes of people from

diverse professions, one might well encounter posters hung on the walls. When asked “Why?”, they will answer by saying that the poster “appeals” to them, that the “picture” affects them, that they “like” it. And, further on: The poster is a creature endowed with two souls; speaking less poetically, it can bring a twofold influence to bear, either by means of the strictly utilitarian values of advertising or by way of its purely aesthetic and artistic qualities. There are, of course, also posters in which both these values and qualities find expression with an equal and simultaneous intensity. And it is these which are the best (...). The poster, that humble object of our interest, should constitute a reflection of everything that changes, a reflection of this moment in time⁶⁶.

→ 250

590. ANONYMOUS ARTIST,
THE 1ST NATIONAL
POSTER EXHIBITION,
1952, DESIGN, COLLAGE,
99.5 X 68.8 CM,
PM, PL 12595/1

591. WOJCIECH ZAMECZNIK,
THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL
POSTER BIENNALE,
1966, OFFSET,
97 X 67 CM,
PM, PL 04964/1

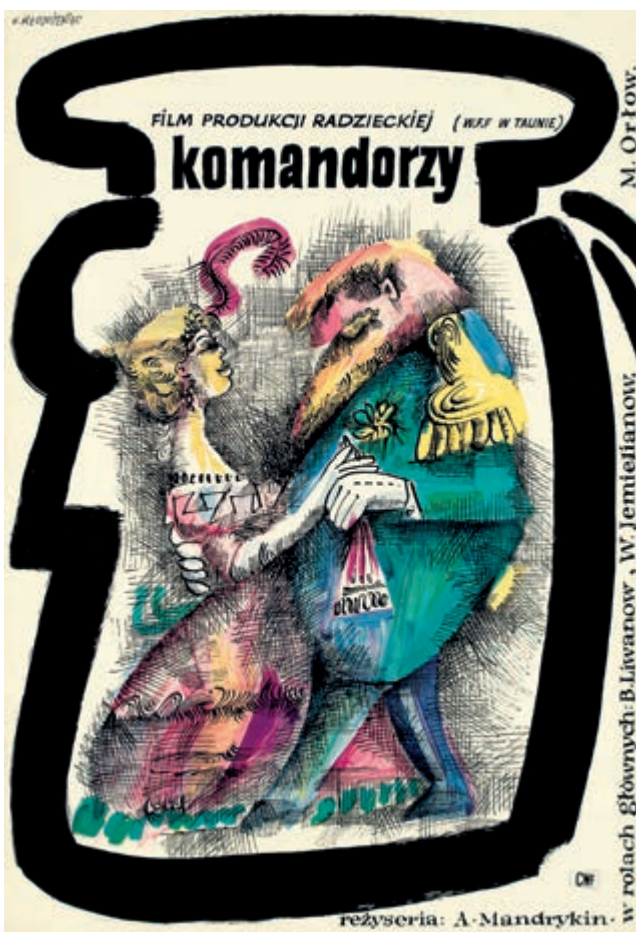
592. HENRYK TOMASZEWSKI,
FROM YOUNG
POLAND TO OUR
TIMES. POSTER
EXHIBITION,
1966, OFFSET,
98.5 X 67.5 CM,
PM, PL 10866/1

⁶⁵ Thus reads the title of a drawing which Thierry Sarfis dedicated to Henryk Tomaszewski on the occasion of the latter’s ninetieth birthday. Cf. *Henryk Tomaszewski od nas*, a design for publication: Marjatta Itkonen, Piotr Młodożeniec, Mieczysław Wasilewski, Finland 2004.

⁶⁶ It should be added that Poland was represented at the 1st Warsaw International Poster Biennale by Roman Cieśliewicz, Jerzy Flisak, Marek Freudreich, Wiktor Górka, Tadeusz Grabowski, Tadeusz Gronowski, Hubert Hilscher, Leszek Hołdanowicz, Tadeusz Jodłowski, Zbigniew Kaja, Jerzy Krechowicz, Jan Lenica, Eryk Lipiński, Zbigniew Lutowski, Gustaw Majewski, Stefan Małeckci, Jan Młodożeniec, Tadeusz Moskała, Józef Mroszczak, Jerzy Napieracz, Jacek Neugebauer, Julian Pałka, Bohdan Prądyński, Witold Maciej Raducki, Gabriel Rechowicz, Bożena Rogowska, Kazimierz Sławiński, Jerzy Srokowski, Franciszek Starowieyski, Waldemar Świerzy, Rostaw Szaybo, Henryk Tomaszewski, Maciej Urbaniec, Wojciech Zamecznik, Bronisław Zelek and Danuta Żukowska.



656. JAN MŁODOŻENIEC,
FILM POSTER,
COMMANDERS
(CAPTAIN OF
THE FIRST RANK),
DIR. ALEKSANDR MANDRŹKIN,
1960, OFFSET,
85.5 X 61.5 CM,
PM, PL 6187/1

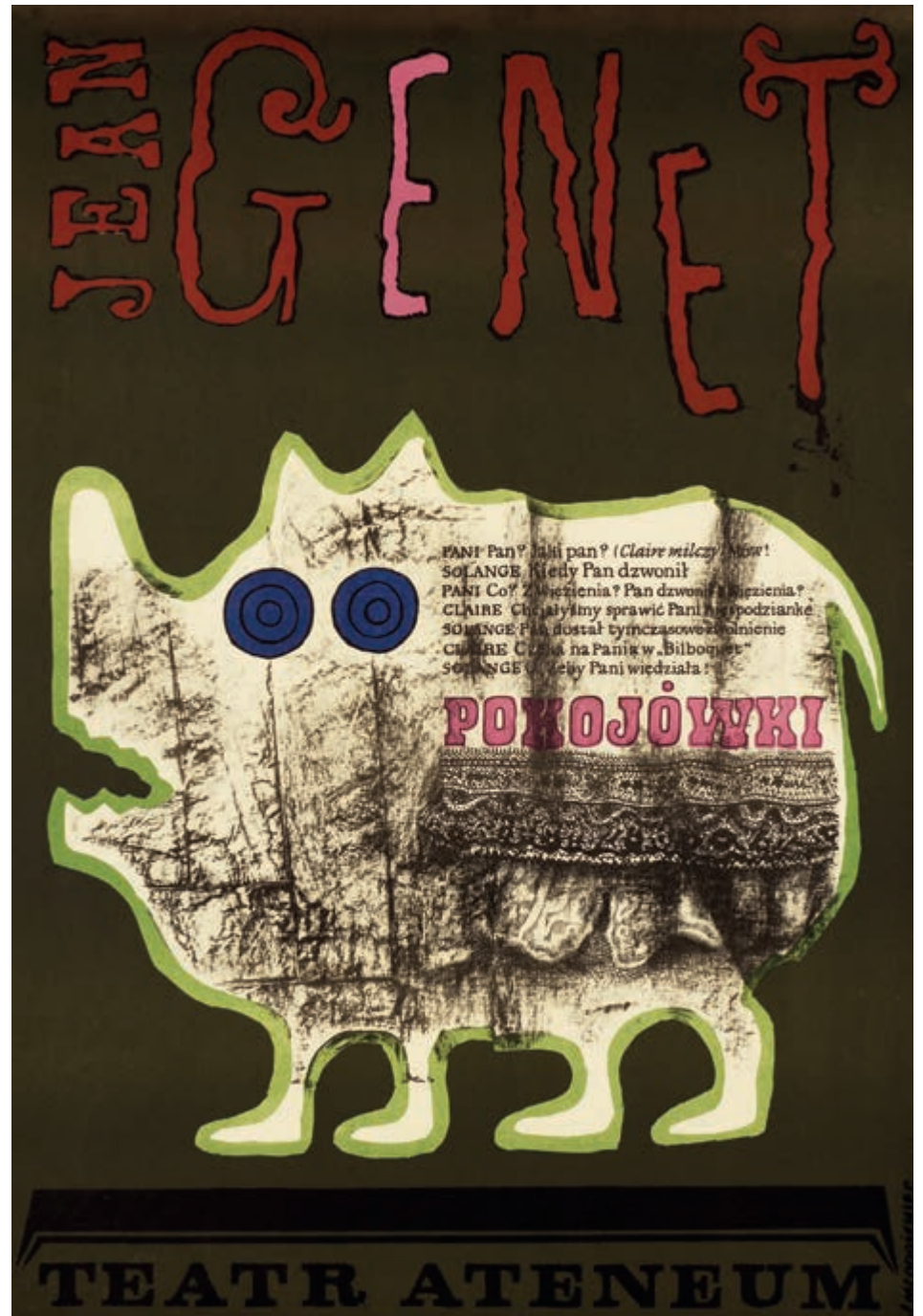


656

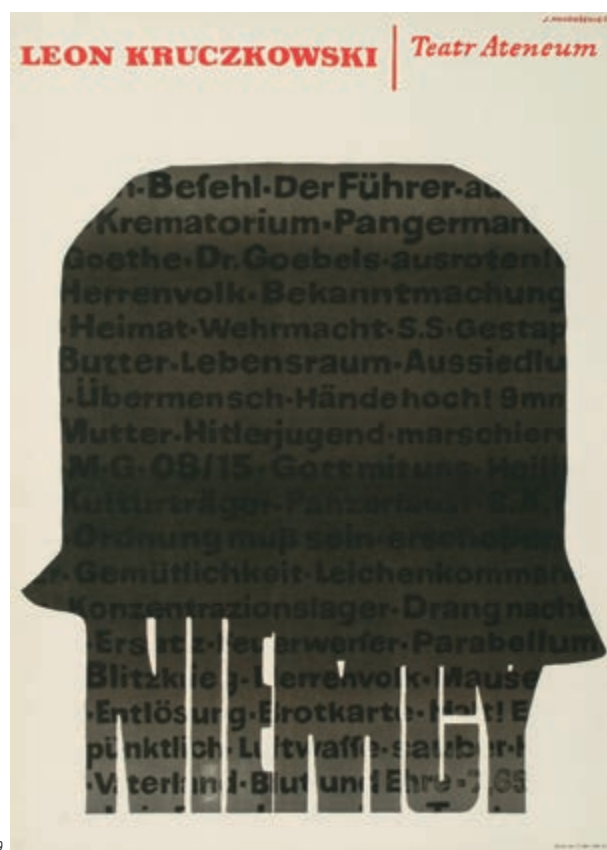
659. JAN MŁODOŻENIEC,
THEATRE POSTER,
THE GERMANS,
LEON KRUCZKOWSKI,
1967, OFFSET,
85.5 X 60.7 CM,
PM, PL 5134/1



657



658



659

7 Transformations of the Nineteen Seventies and Eighties



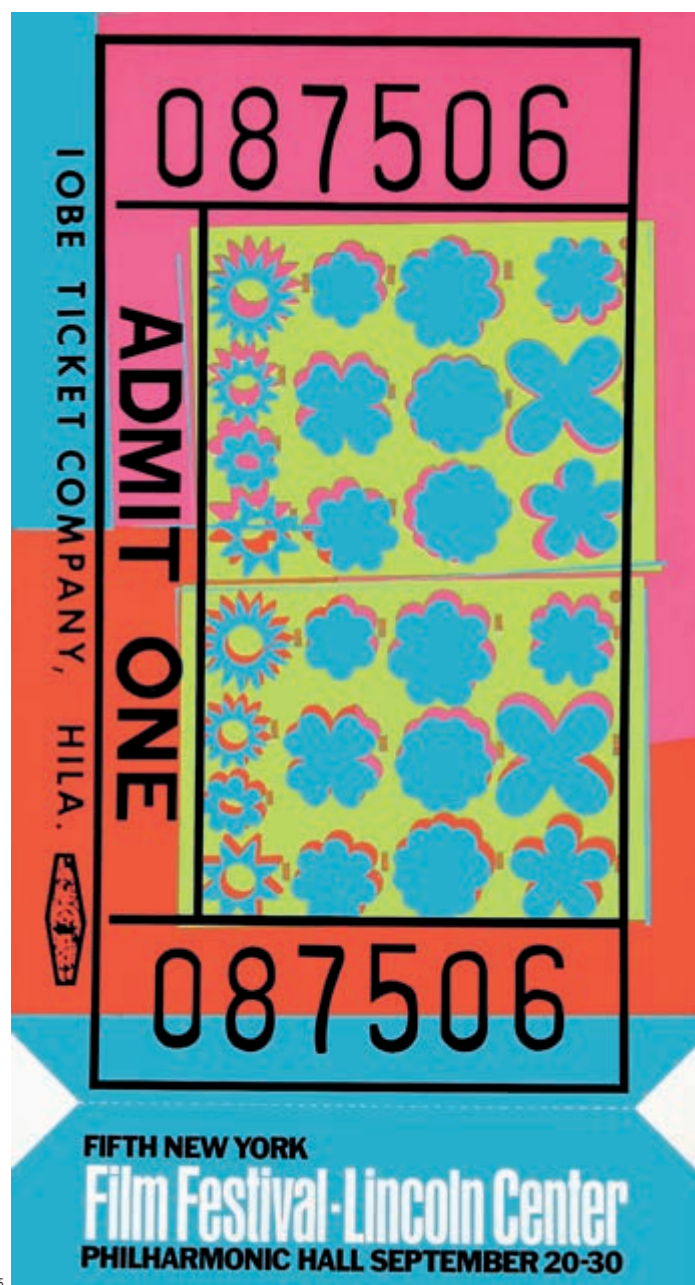
764. HENRYK TOMASZEWSKI,
JAZZ JAMBOREE '71.
XIV INTERNATIONAL
JAZZ FESTIVAL,
1971, OFFSET,
97 X 68 CM,
PM, PL 15181/1

The ideological thaw that occurred after 1955, the Arsenal⁸⁰ exhibition and an ongoing normalisation of artistic life in Poland, as mentioned in the previous chapter, reinforced the position of the poster, brought the International Poster Biennale to Warsaw (1966) and opened the Poster Museum in Wilanów (1968). Changes that at the same time started to engulf all fields of art also had a considerable influence on the diversity of currents and designs.

The late nineteen fifties was also a time of changes in poster printing technology and the starting point of many new experiments. Arts academies began to open silkscreen printing workshops (the workshop of Leszek Hołdanowicz at the Academy of Fine

⁸⁰ Young Visual Arts Exhibition *Przeciw wojnie – przeciw faszyzmowi* (*Against War – Against Fascism*) was organised in 1955 in the former Arsenal of Władysław IV in Warsaw, at the time of the 5th World Festival of Youth and Students, and is often referred to as *Arsenal 55*. The exhibition was the first to present pictures that were entirely different from the formerly prevailing socialist-realist mainstream.

Arts in Warsaw, of Witold Skulicz in Krakow and of Andrzej Smoczyński in Lodz) and in the sixties the spread of this method showed many younger artists a new direction in their searches. This technique won ultimate recognition with an award for Andy Warhol at the 2nd International Poster Biennale in Warsaw in 1968, which he received for a silkscreen poster [ill. 765]. → 318



765

765. ANDY WARHOL,
FIFTH NEW YORK
FILM FESTIVAL –
LINCOLN CENTER,
1967, SCREEN PRINT,
115 X 62 CM,
PM, PLO 4108/1

953. JAN SAWKA,
THEATRE POSTER,
EXODUS,
LESZEK ALEKSANDER
MOCZULSKI,
1976 (DESIGN 1974), OFFSET,
98 X 68 CM,
PM, PL 18107/1



954. JAN SAWKA,
THEATRE POSTER,
PATIENTS,
KRYSTYNA GONET
AND KRZYSZTOF JASIŃSKI,
1976, OFFSET,
67.7 X 96.5 CM,
PM, PL 19894/1

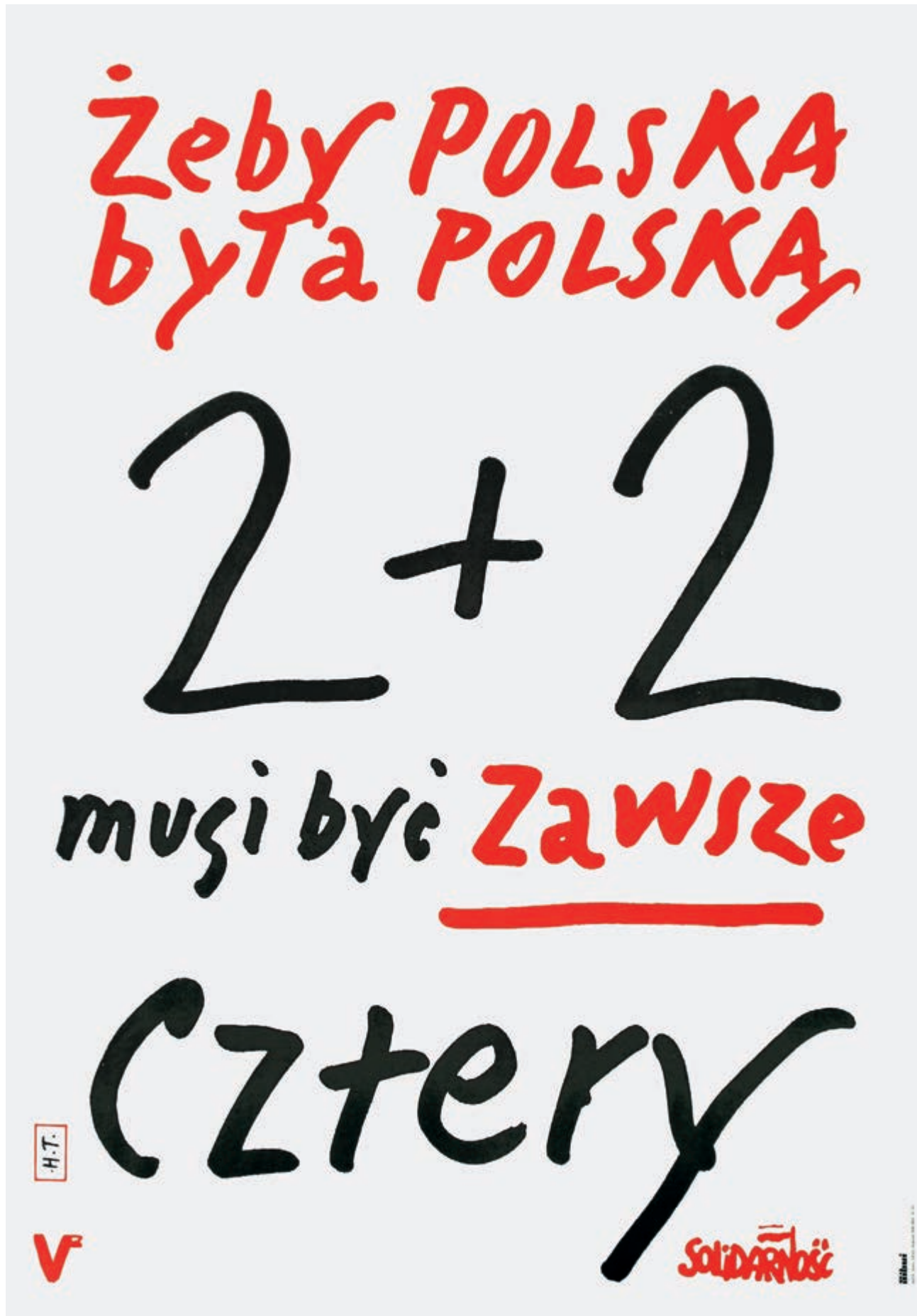


954



955

The Social and Political Poster of 1980–1989, Solidarity Poster and Independent Poster



1059. HENRYK TOMASZEWSKI,
FOR POLAND TO BE
POLAND, 2+2 MUST
ALWAYS EQUAL
FOUR. SOLIDARITY,
1989, OFFSET,
100 X 69.5 CM,
PM, PL 27472/1

1060. LESZEK NADSTAWNY,
JUNE '76. URSUS,
1981, OFFSET,
67 X 48.1 CM,
PM, PL 22450/1

1061. MARCIN MROSZCZAK,
FILM POSTER,
MAN OF MARBLE,
DIR. ANDRZEJ WAJDA,
1977, OFFSET,
94 X 65.5 CM,
PM, PL 20035/1

1062. WALDEMAR ŚWIERZY,
FILM POSTER,
MAN OF MARBLE,
DIR. ANDRZEJ WAJDA,
1977, OFFSET,
66 X 45.5 CM,
PM, PL 34036/1

At one stage the colourful, spontaneous and rich world of the Polish poster collided with the new political and social reality, which became more and more apparent from 1976 onwards. In August 1980 a great festival of freedom and Solidarity found a separate record in posters. The former poster and artistic life continued, however, new content, symbols and references started to enrich the iconosphere and collection of the symbols in use. A notable moment was the publication of Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Marble* in 1976, and the accompanying posters designed by Waldemar Świerzy and Marcin Mroszczak were the trigger for unrest. In 1976–1980, outside of official circulation, more and more political posters started to appear in connection with the events in Radom, the Workers' Defense Committee, the demand to account for the events of Gdansk 1970, and eventually with preparations for a strike. → 420



1060

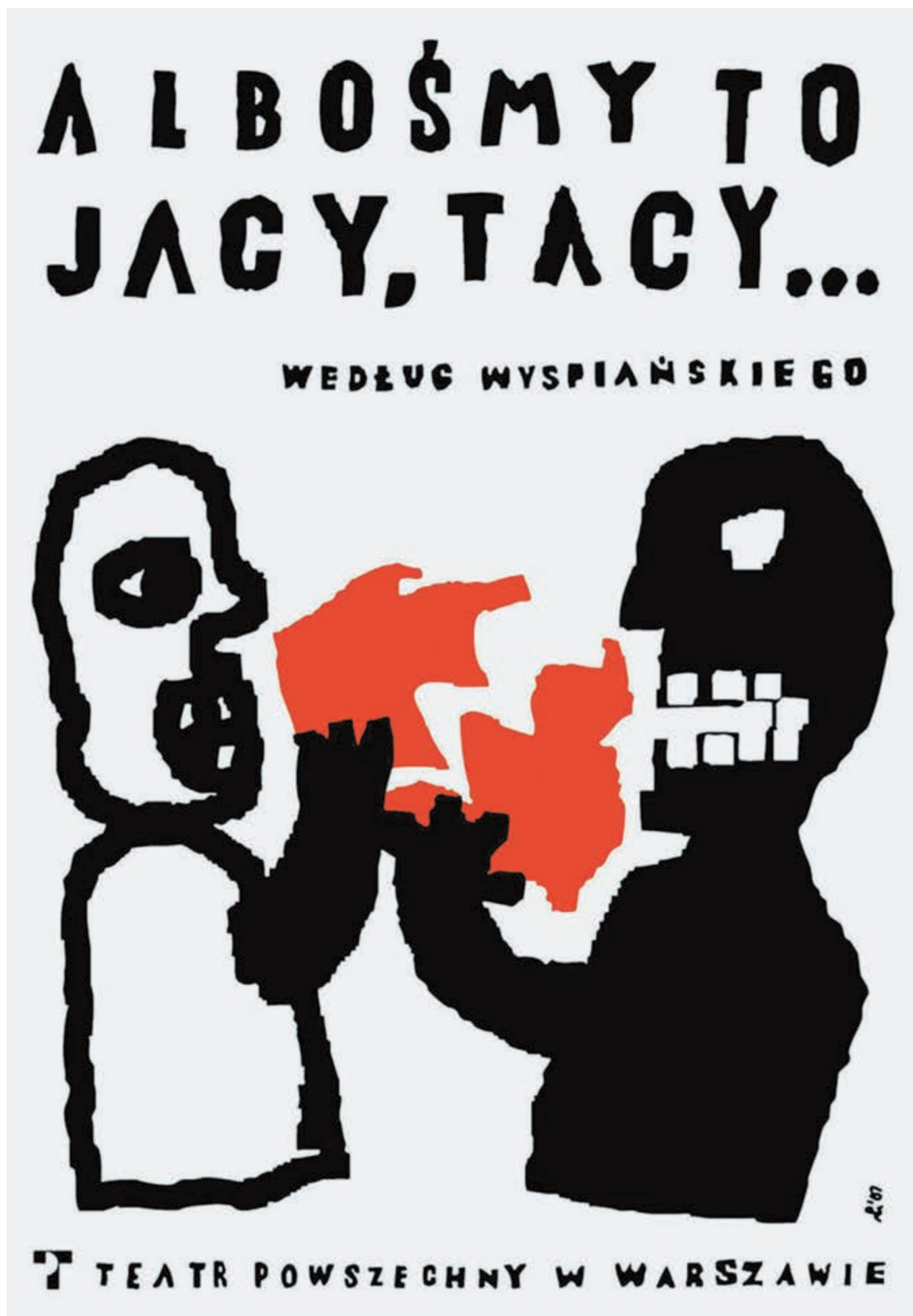


1061



1062

9 *New Paths of the Poster*



1134

1134. PIOTR MŁODOŻENIEC,
THEATRE POSTER,
SUCH WE ARE,
BASED ON *THE WEDDING*
BY STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI,
2007, OFFSET,
98 X 68.4 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES



1135

Year 1989, the date of a symbolic and real return of the democratic order in Poland and the beginning of social and political transformations, was not the best time in the poster's history. A wave of social dialogue spread and became visualised in the form of posters and leaflets in the streets; there were elections, a change of government, followed by establishment of the new order, which first and foremost

resulted in the commercialisation of culture. Early nineteen nineties also brought a free market; many artists – designers, painters, graphic artists – discovered the power of free press and literature, and channelled their energy there.

Of course, the poster remained mainstream in academies; this was a widely taught subject, because it already constituted a part of the Polish culture. However, the simultaneous and rapid import of international advertising, which came after 1990 together with ready products, companies, events (films, concerts) destroyed the idealistic land that had been around from the late nineteen fifties, where Polish poster designers were concentrating primarily on high artistic value and individual character of their works.

→ 440

1135. PIOTR MŁODOŻENIEC,
THE POLISH ORDER,
ZACHĘTA GALLERY
OF ART IN WARSAW,
1991, SCREEN PRINT,
69.5 X 99.5 CM,
PM, PL 28419/1



1136

1136. MARCIN WŁADYKA,
CONVERSION
OF MATTER '89-'99,
1999, DIGITAL PRINT,
71 X 150 CM,
PM, PL 32515/1



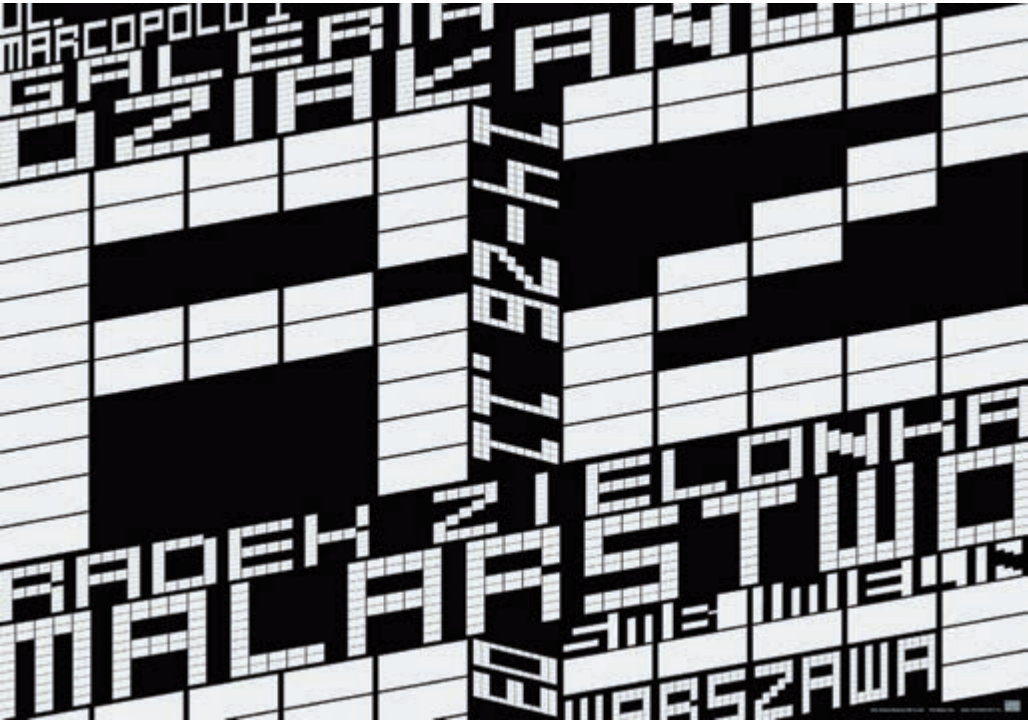
1217



1218

The typographic poster also reflects the changes that occurred in the design of books at the beginning of 21st century, such as: departure from the convention of composition and a traditional way of supplementing the text with an image, liberating the written text from the obligation to represent meaning (typographic abstraction), personalization of fonts designed for specific publications and purposes. This form of the typo-poster often balances on the edge between the critical drawing, colour play, visual neuroprovocation and fiddling with critical and irreverent content of the sticker art. An interesting situation developed, it became more and more obvious that the contemporary poster can hardly be ascribed to any system; it represents itself and defines its own identity. This is an advantage to the artists who treat the art of the poster as a document or, rather, as evidence of their own philosophy and experiences.

→ 464



1219



1220

1217. JAKUB STĘPIEŃ,
BEAUTY OR PAINTING EFFECTS,
2004, OFFSET,
98 X 68 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S ARCHIVES

1218. JAKUB STĘPIEŃ,
OUTSIDERS AND EXPOSERS, THE 4TH FESTIVAL OF ARTISTS - MAGNIFICATION,
2002, SCREEN PRINT,
100 X 70 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S ARCHIVES

1219. JAKUB STĘPIEŃ,
RADEK ZIELONKA. PAINTING,
2003, SCREEN PRINT
70 X 100 CM,
PM, PL 33404/1

1220. JAKUB STĘPIEŃ,
BOYS, BOYS, BOYS,
2005, OFFSET,
98 X 68 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S ARCHIVES

1221. ARTUR FRANKOWSKI,
MAGDALENA FRANKOWSKA
(FONTARTE),
MISS SWISS,
2013, DIGITAL PRINT,
100 X 70 CM,
FROM THE AUTHORS'
ARCHIVES

1222. OLA NIEPSUJ,
THE EX,
2012, OFFSET,
100 X 70 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES

1223. ARTUR FRANKOWSKI,
MAGDALENA FRANKOWSKA
(FONTARTE),
BERLEGUSTOPOL,
2011, DIGITAL PRINT,
100 X 70 CM,
PM, PL 36746/1

1224. ARTUR FRANKOWSKI,
MAGDALENA FRANKOWSKA
(FONTARTE),
BOOM BOOKS,
**A LECTURE
BY IRMA BOOM**,
2009, SCREEN PRINT,
100 X 70 CM,
PM, PL 34144/1

1225. MICHAŁ JOŃCA,
ED WOOD,
A RECORD RELEASE,
2010, DIGITAL PRINT,
100 X 70 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES



1221



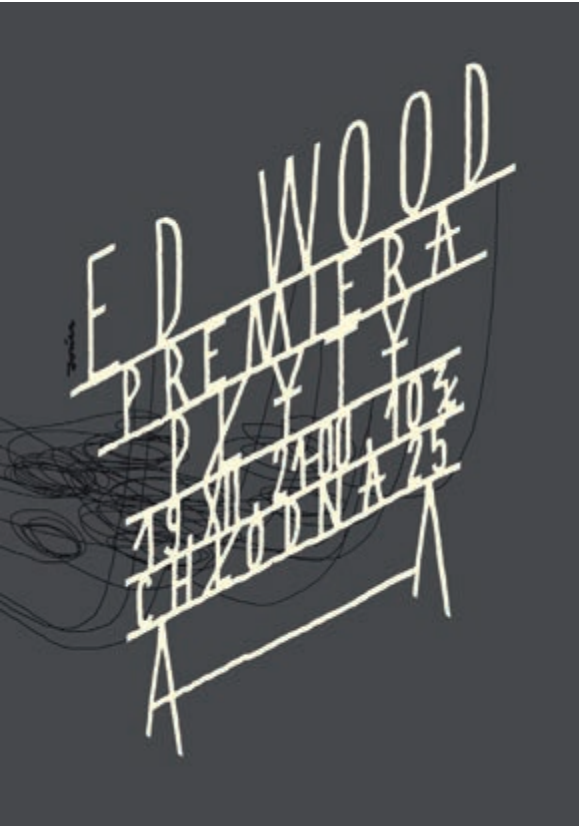
1222



1223



1224



1225

10 *The Poster Kaleidoscope from A to the Future*





Despite many difficulties characteristic for the initial period of transformation in Poland, within the past twenty-five years four generations of artists, in parallel, have been active and successful on the scene of the poster. The oldest generation was born before the World War II. The next generation was born after the war, in the nineteen forties and fifties, and at the time of the transformation its representatives were already masters and teachers themselves. A new generation of artists and designers also appeared – those people were born in the nineteen sixties and seventies. At last, the youngest generation joined them, born in the nineteen eighties, and even in the initial period of free Poland – after 1989.

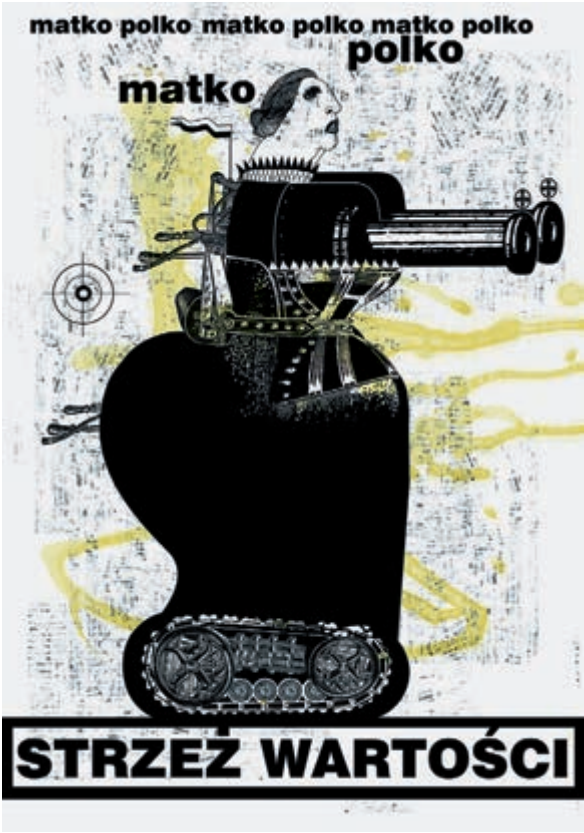
From today's perspective – a rich kaleidoscope of attitudes, inspirations and thinking styles characteristic for the last twenty-five years of the Polish poster is an artistic phenomenon. There are strong individualities meeting and crossing, but a glimpse (below) on the poster kaleidoscope does not clearly indicate an affiliation to a generation, but rather shows different styles of thought and design. What probably displays the strongest influence in the youngest generation is the “lesson of perverse illustration” and the “lesson of naughty typography”, but as a matter of fact, the transformation influences everyone. The book is supplemented with an alphabetical (per the artists' surnames) review of different kinds of the poster philosophy. There are no divisions into generations, regions, trends, but an attentive reader-observer will notice the “schools of thought”, which were always a source of the Polish authentic specificity. The poster is based on the framework of language, and the framework shapes our thinking, thinking shapes imagination, and imagination – sensitivity. This is what turns the wheels of the poster – a constant influx of new signs, symbols and associations coming in for the past four centuries. → 575



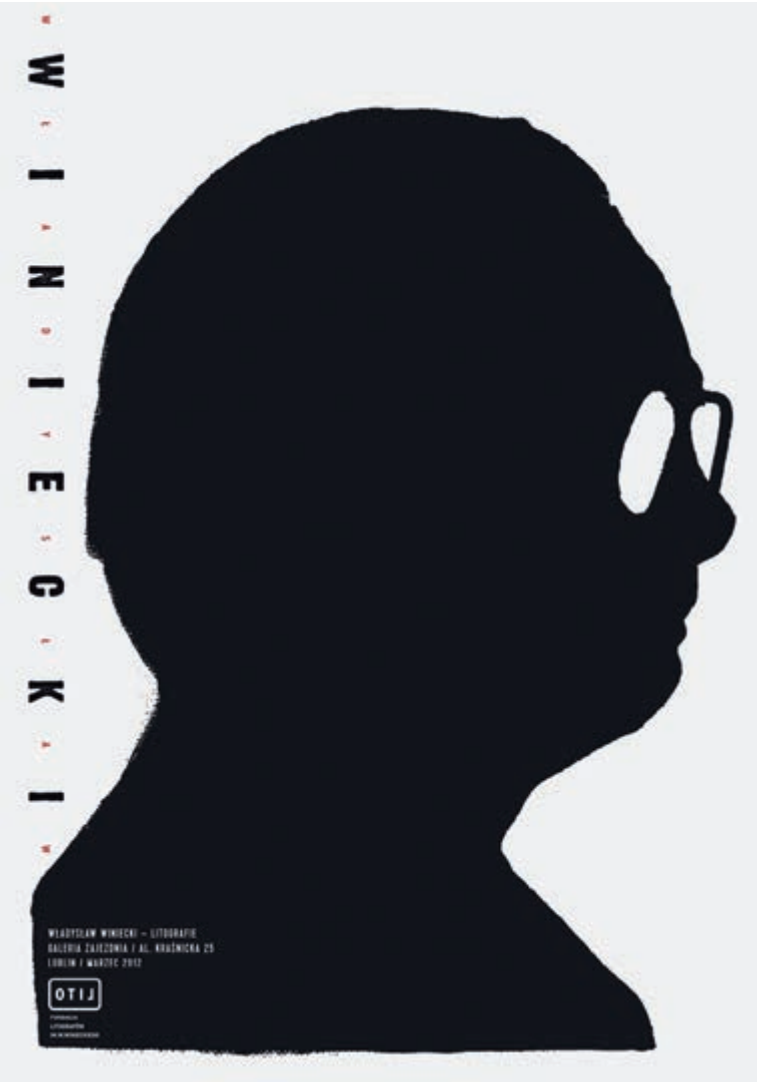
1529



1530



1531



1532



1533

1529. BOGNA OTTO-WĘGRZYN,
FILM POSTER,
METROPOLIS,
DIR. FRITZ LANG,
2007, OFFSET,
98 X 68 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES

1530. BOGNA OTTO-WĘGRZYN,
CABARET,
2006, OFFSET,
98 X 68.5 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES

1531. BOGNA OTTO-WĘGRZYN,
**THE POLISH MOTHER –
GUARD YOUR
VALUES**,
2007, OFFSET,
97 X 67 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES

1532. BŁAŻEJ OSTOJA LNISKI,
WINIECKI,
2012, SCREEN PRINT,
97 X 67 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES

1533. BOGNA OTTO-WĘGRZYN,
**THE 29TH ANNUAL
BUCKTOWN ARTS FEST**,
2014, SCREEN PRINT,
100 X 70 CM,
FROM THE AUTHOR'S
ARCHIVES

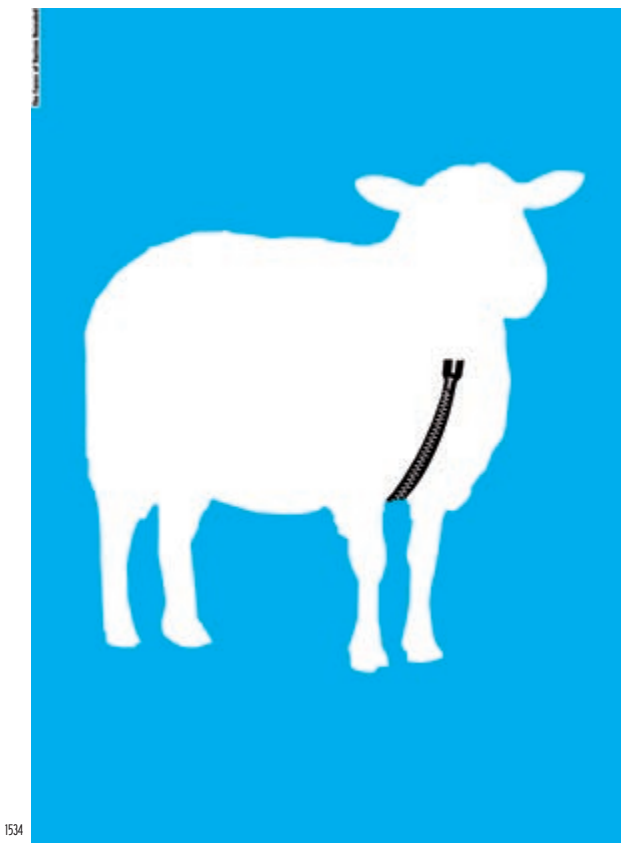
1534, 1535. KATARZYNA OKRASZEWSKA, **REVEALED FACE OF RACISM**, 2011, DIGITAL PRINT, 100 X 70 CM, PM, PL 35892/1, 35891/1

1536. DOROTA PAWIŁOWSKA, POSTER TO PROMOTE THE BOOK **SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE** BY KURT VONNEGUT, 2011, DIGITAL PRINT, 99 X 69 CM, PM, PL 35895/1

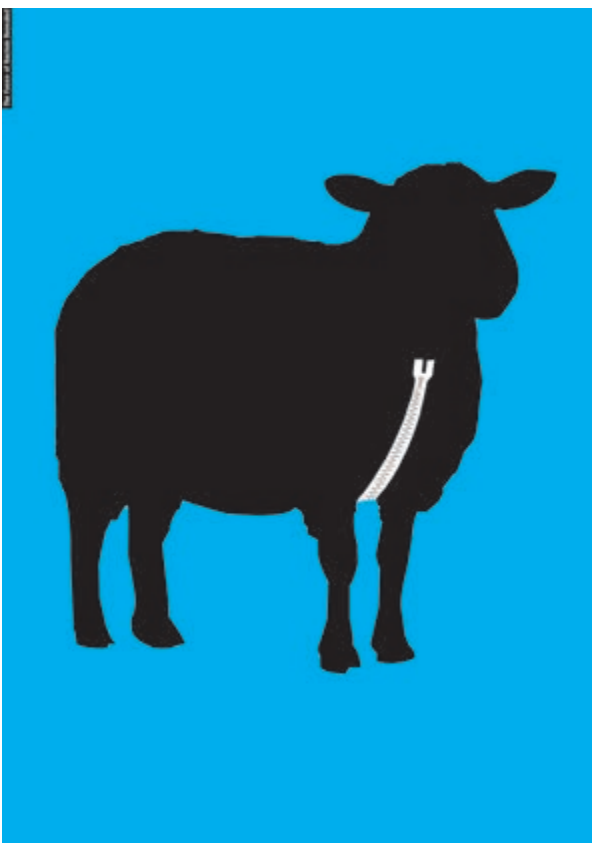
1537. DOROTA PAWIŁOWSKA, POSTER TO PROMOTE THE BOOK **GALAPAGOS** BY KURT VONNEGUT, 2011, DIGITAL PRINT, 99.5 X 69 CM, PM, PL 35894/1

1538. FILIP PAŃGOWSKI, **BLACK. COMME DES GARÇONS**, 2013, DIGITAL PRINT, 70 X 130 CM, PM, PL 36988/1

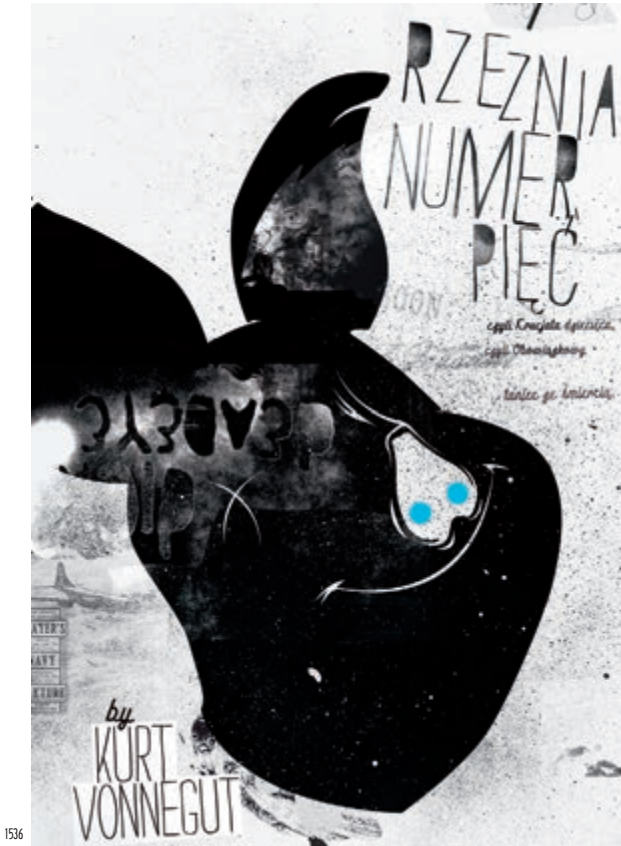
1539. FILIP PAŃGOWSKI, **PLAY. COMME DES GARÇONS**, 2013, SCREEN PRINT, 100 X 70 CM, FROM THE AUTHOR'S ARCHIVES



1534



1535



1536



1537



1538



1539



The book presents the history of Polish graphic tradition leading to the so-called phenomenon of the Polish poster – the history, which starts with the first printing workshops in Krakow in the sixteenth century. It continues with the birth of graphic arts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, through workshop experiments in the nineteenth century, modernist transformations, world-famous Polish graphic arts in the interwar period, and the birth of the Polish school of graphic design in the 1930s, leading to the rise of the Polish school of posters in the second half of that century.

It then goes on to Solidarity's *affiche brut* of the next generation and ultimately the full bloom of a young, poetic and somewhat anarchic poster at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. The book offers a voyage through 1724 reproductions of works created by several hundred artists, which come from different collections in Poland and around the world, showing transformations in this Polish specialty.

Dorota Folga-Januszevska

