POLISH PAINTING GREAT MASTERS

BOSZ

POLISH PAINTING

GREAT MASTERS

7
INTRODUCTION

26
GOTHIC

64
RENAISSANCE

104
BAROQUE

150
CLASSICISM

188
ROMANTICISM

234
HISTORICISM AND ACADEMICISM

272
THE MUNICH SCHOOL

312
YOUNG POLAND

382
THE INTERWAR PERIOD

454
CONTEMPORARY ART

513
ADDENDA

INTRODUCTION

JAN K. OSTROWSKI

It is generally believed that painting is the most important, or, in any case, the most popular field of visual arts. The answer to the question as to why this is so goes beyond the competences of an art historian and would probably require the application of psychological research methods, including the opinions and motivations of a wide sample of audiences. Similarly, when asked about the greatest masters of European art, we provide an intuitively compiled list with a predominant majority of painters. Among the top artists on such a list, there will be only one sculptor, who was also a painter and architect, the greatest artist of all – Michelangelo Buonarroti.

Polish art is first of all associated by us with the painters Jan Matejko and Stanisław Wyspiański, rather than the sculptors Jan Jerzy Pinsel or Xawery Dunikowski, let alone architects. Another question – of the status of Polish art in comparison with general art – refers most of all to the international status of Polish painting.

When visiting Polish museums and galleries or following the offers of Polish auction houses, one most often comes across works of Polish painting. It may seem that it is a world-class art and I suspect that the majority of Polish museum goers and collectors are convinced of that. From a European and world perspective, however, it looks completely different. Great international museums feature very few Polish paintings; they are also seldom auctioned at Sotheby's, Christie's and other leading auction houses. They used to be listed at ridiculously low prices. Today, it has already changed once the market realised that Poland-related works (not only paintings) are a rarity sought after by museums and an ever-growing number of collectors from the country that fortunately no longer is the pariah of Europe.

In an attempt to understand the aforementioned contrasting phenomena, we need to draw upon the inexorable laws of geography and history. The world of Western culture was and still is divided into a few centres and vast peripheries. By projecting this observation onto a map, we discover the importance of the Roman *Limes* and the intense urbanisation during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. The central spots are mostly Italy and France and, to a lesser degree, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom.

The position of Dutch painting is a curiosity, just like the economic and civilisational power of this small country (now two) with no roots in antiquity, situated in adverse natural conditions. New York burst onto the high-toned scene of world art centres only after World War II, during the global zoning into liberalism and Soviet authoritarianism. Its success is even described as "the theft of the ideas of modern art". When it comes to Moscow, following the dazzling surge of revolutionary avant-garde, which it destroyed of its own accord (technically speaking: at the behest of the Soviet authorities), now it hardly features on the artistic scene.

Nothing appears to indicate that there will be any shifts in the presented global network of art centres in the foreseeable future.

There is no denying that the land inhabited by Poles is no cradle of European art. While the Mediterranean countries were developing sophisticated art forms, the ideological and aesthetic needs of the inhabitants of what is now Poland were expressed in simple ways, usually executed in perishable materials. This applied not only to Polish people, but also to all countries north of the Alps, which came into closer contact with the incredibly rich Mediterranean culture only as the borders of the Roman Empire were expanding, and then as Christianity was spreading. The Roman *Limes* never included Polish lands, which joined the Latin cultural circle much later than the countries it chooses to compare itself to, such as France or Germany. The encounter of Polish people, entering the theatre of history, with cultural centres of the south and west remained limited due to natural causes: Poland's location behind the Carpathian and Sudeten Mountain ranges, entirely in the basins of rivers flowing northwards, and at the same time with a poor

connection to the sea (which the Scandinavians used as a wide route out into the world).

Soon after the adoption of the Christian faith, however, Poland began to catch up very quickly (obviously considering the long course of history). Already in the early 13th century – if not before – the Polish territory, with its potential richness, proved appealing to Western colonisation, chiefly from Germany. Among the myriad of civilisational and technological novelties brought by incomers, the most precious – from the point of view of art development – was the autonomous commune model, known in Poland as the Magdeburg rights, which enabled a swift growth of urban centres. Let us briefly justify this claim. The culture of Greece and Rome flourished in innumerable cities, and urban civilisation was brought northward by Roman expansion. It was indispensable to the development of Western European culture, now considered a natural or even the only possible option (perhaps not entirely right). Whereas masterpieces of literature or philosophy can, as it seems, be created in isolation, painting, sculpture and architecture are quintessentially urban phenomena. To progress, they require a combination of conditions regulating the aspects of learning and practising of the profession, the procurement market and, last but not least, the environment facilitating the exchange of inspirations and the evaluation of one's own and others' achievements. Florence, Rome and Paris were the centres of art, not in a figurative but in a strictly geographical sense. Within these circles the most outstanding artists gathered and the greatest masterpieces were created. On the other hand, the surrounding rural areas were – from the point of view of artistic activity – almost as passive as the provinces of any peripheral countries, including Poland. The lack of the aforementioned conditions hindered the development of art and doomed potential talents to silence and – in the best-case scenario – to small-town existence. It all changed only after the establishment of urban organisation.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, Polish art achieved a state in which its practising was not much different from that in Western Europe. At the time, the legal and social structure of Polish cities was practically the same as in the entire Central Europe, and most of all in the German states. Art, considered a craft, was practised in a guild, following its detailed regulations governing all fields of life, its teaching system (the apprentice – journeyman – master hierarchy) and the duty of journeyman wandering. As a result, Polish painting and sculpture of the Late Gothic were no different in terms of character and skill from most Central and Northern European centres.

After humble and barely preserved 14th-century examples, the next century saw an advancement of sacred painting and the closely related sculpture, which reached its peak between approximately 1470–1505, with a decline in the next quarter-century. Art historians have carefully recreated the chronology and stylistic evolution of a collection of hundreds of paintings – chiefly winged altarpieces and their fragments, which we can now view mainly in the National Museum in Kraków, the Diocesan Museum in Tarnów and in churches of Southern Lesser Poland. In the early stage of development, they demonstrate the refined idealism of slender figures of saints, clad in rich, softly draped robes, whereas in the second half of the century, they lean towards realistic detail, strong expression and the undulating drapery, blown by a Late-Gothic "wind". A small number of painted epitaphs mark the beginnings of Polish portraiture. These paintings exhibit magnificent calligraphic drawing and vivid tempera colours, contrasted with a golden background. We know of several artists pursuing this style, such as Stanisław Stary (Speckfleisch), Mikołaj Haberschrack, Jan Wielki and Marcin Czarny. It was also possible to identify several anonymous artists, named after their most recognisable works, such as the Master of the Dominican Effigies, the Master of the Death of the Virgin, or the Master of the Altarpiece from Sienno. The paintings of Veit Stoss remain rather enigmatic.

and Strzemiński's work. Moreover, this picture is still dynamic, requiring further studies and follow-up research. Relatively recently, the art of a large group of artists of Jewish origin – belonging to the international École de Paris and pursuing various forms of Post-Impressionism and Expressionism – have been included in this category (Mela Muter, 1876–1967; Louis Marcoussis, 1878–1941; Henryk Hayden, 1883–1970; Moïse Kisling, 1891–1953; Eugeniusz Zak, 1884–1926; Jankiel Adler, 1895–1949; Zygmunt Menkes, 1896–1986; Aleksander "Sasza" Blonder, 1909–1949).

Comprehensive studies still hardly ever mention painters active outside of Poland during and after World War II, although quite a lot is already known about their work. Jan Henryk Rosen (1891–1982) is primarily remembered as the author of the mural paintings in the Armenian Cathedral and the Seminary Chapel in Lviv. He used in them hieratic compositions, gilded backgrounds and an extraordinary array of colours, combined with calligraphically precise drawings, and these seemingly eclectic means allowed him to create a completely new formula of religious painting. In 1937, the artist left for the United States, where he executed around fifty monumental works (mural paintings and mosaics) in churches of various Christian denominations. The career of Stefan Norblin (1892–1952) was even more extraordinary. In the 1930s, he painted portraits and designed posters advertising various Polish sites, which are counted among the greatest Polish Art Deco masterpieces. In 1939, he went, via Istanbul and Baghdad, to India, where he was hired by the Maharaja of Jodhpur. In his newly erected residence, Norblin created various wall and easel paintings and drew up detailed plans for the interior design. Immersed in the semi-desert landscape of Rajasthan, Umaid Bhawan Palace,



Jan Henryk Rosen, *The Glorification of St John the Baptist*, 1925–1927, mural painting in the Armenian Cathedral in Lviv

with the grandeur of a great Baroque residence, is a true Art Deco *Gesamtkunstwerk*, designed and largely built by the Polish artist.

A separate noteworthy phenomenon is the interior décor of churches created under the Nazi occupation. As we know, such work was carried out by the young Tadeusz Kantor. Instances of this kind were also discovered during an inventory of historical monuments in the former Lviv Voivodeship, and it was determined that the authors of the extant paintings were... representatives of a strongly left-wing Lviv avant-garde. Since this kind of work was carried out in the District of Galicia, which only existed for three years and was torn by tragic, multilateral conflicts, it is to be expected that they were also present in the General Government, where the relations were, nevertheless, slightly more stable.

* * *

After the terror of occupation ended, artists generally attempted to return to their pre-war lines of creative activity. Colourism acquired significant importance and its followers took over prestigious chairs at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. The artistic circles, however, were conflicted in many ways. The dominance of "formalism" was opposed by the avant-garde, and already in 1948, Andrzej Wróblewski (1927–1957), who started from abstraction, formulated a thesis on the increasing ideological fight at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków and the need to search for new artistic ideologies and forms. In this way, he anticipated the invasion of the socialist realist ideology, aggressively promoted by the authorities from 1949. It was authoritatively asserted that art must contribute to the building of a socialist society, and any other approaches serve the bourgeois system and the decaying West. This meant the obligation to address themes glorifying the achievements of the new authorities by means of superficially standardised, realistic formal means, regarded as democratic and progressive. In the case of the state becoming the sole distributor of privileges and even basic necessities of life, a number of painters succumbed to this dictate, although there were some who made every effort to remain independent. The best known – and to some degree most successful – socialist realist paintings were authored by Aleksander Kobzdej (1920–1972) and Wojciech Fangor (1922–2015). Even the uncompromising abstract artist Henryk Stażewski yielded to the pressure. Andrzej Wróblewski single-handedly changed the principles of socialist realism by creating heart-wrenching images depicting the trauma of occupation and, more broadly, the tragedy of human existence.

When the ideological pressure subsided in 1955, artists resumed their individual, more diverse pursuits. It must be admitted



Stefan Norblin, *The Battle Between Durgadas Rathore's Forces and the Mughals*, ca. 1942, mural painting in the Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur



Anonymous Dutch painter (?), *Passion of Christ Set in the Jerusalem Landscape*, late 15th c., tempera on board, 221 × 274 cm





Painter from the circle of the Master of the Polyptych of St John the Almsgiver, *Dismemberment of St Stanislaus's Body*, polyptych panel from the Church of St Michael the Archangel on the Rock, ca. 1505, tempera on board, 90 × 66 cm



Unknown author, *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, early 16th c., tempera on board, 161 × 114 cm

VEIT STOSS

ca. 1447 or 1448 Horb am Neckar – 1533 Nuremberg

His exact date of birth is unknown, but it is estimated at around 1447 or 1448. For a long time, his birthplace was also uncertain. Currently, it is believed he was born in Horb am Neckar (Baden-Württemberg). He is among the most outstanding sculptors of the Late Gothic in Central Europe, who practised stone sculpture, woodcarving, as well as painting and printmaking. From 1477, he ran a sculpture workshop in Kraków. His most important work is the monumental altarpiece in Saint Mary's Basilica, created between 1477–1489. In 1496, after over a decade of work in Kraków, he returned to Nuremberg, where he continued his artistic career. He created mostly religious sculptures, famous for their unique expressiveness, realism of the figures and decorativeness. Aside from Saint Mary's altarpiece, while in Kraków, Veit Stoss also created, among others, the stone tomb of King Casimir IV Jagiellon in the Kraków Cathedral.



Veit Stoss, *The Nativity of Christ*, panel from an altarpiece with scenes from the lives of Jesus and the Virgin Mary (closed), ca. 1491, tempera on board, 112 × 83 cm



Veit Stoss and Michał of Działdowo, altarpiece with scenes from the life of Jesus and the Virgin Mary (open),
ca. 1491, tempera on board, 224 × 83 cm (wing), 112 × 83 cm (wing panel), 253 × 202.5 × ca. 40 cm (altarpiece shrine)

LUCAS CRANACH THE YOUNGER

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER

HANS DÜRER

LUKAS EWERT

TOBIAS FENDT

MARTIN KOBER

MICHAEL LANCZ VON KITZINGEN

LORENZ (LAURENTIUS) LAUENSTEIN

JACOB MERTENS

MASTER GEORG

GEORG PENCZ (JÖRG PENTZ)

PETER OF VENICE (PETRUS VENETUS)

STANISŁAW SAMOSTRZELNIK

MARTIN SCHONINCK

HANS SUESS VON KULMBACH

2
RENAISSANCE

MAREK WALCZAK

It is quite impossible to find references to the High Renaissance or the Italian Mannerism in 16th-century Polish painting. The key role was played by inspirations coming from German countries, in particular Nuremberg and – somewhat later – the Netherlands. The source was the Northern Renaissance, which art history textbooks treat as a separate phenomenon. The import of luxurious, expensive goods from Nuremberg in order to satisfy the spiritual, intellectual or aesthetic needs of the elites became one of the characteristic features of the artistic culture in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the early 16th century, the myth was born that this city was one of the most important civilisation centres and the most dynamic hub of craft and artistic production. In 1518, the humanist Franz Friedlieb (1495–1553), also known as Franciscus Irenicus, wrote in his *Exegesis of Germania* that Nuremberg was "the centre and, in a way, the navel of Germany", whereas Matthäus Dresser (1536–1607), in a commentary to the Latin edition of *The Odyssey* from 1581, emphasised that just like Jerusalem was the navel of the world, Nuremberg was the navel of Germany.

Albrecht Dürer was an unquestionable celebrity in Nuremberg society. His paintings fetched astronomical prices, but making multiple copies of engravings was affordable even to an average earner. They spread like wildfire across the whole of Europe and even further, contributing to the unification of works of art. The copying of compositions by prominent artists by less talented ones was not something to be ashamed of at the time. The general availability of engravings, which made it possible to get to know the latest artistic solutions without the need to travel to wherever they were created or located, was among the most important drivers of change in modern art.

The impact and ambitions of the Jagiellons were evidenced by the fact that at their court in Kraków, they employed Albrecht's brother – Hans Dürer, about whom, however, we do not know anything for certain. He is often attributed with various works without sufficient source references; therefore, today he is considered rather as a historiographical myth than as a real person. An outstanding Nuremberg painter, Georg Pencz, worked on commission from King Sigismund I the Old and Bishop Piotr Tomicki. He was the author of painted panels for one of the greatest masterpieces of the Northern Renaissance: the silver altarpiece (1531–1538) in the Sigismund Chapel at the Wawel Cathedral, unprecedented in size (216.5 × 174.5 cm without the finial) and of total weight of over 118 kilograms. These aspirations were shared by Kraków patricians, of whom the wealthiest, Jan Boner, ordered painted altarpieces for Saint Mary's Church from Hans Suess von Kulmbach, the most talented painter working in Nuremberg after Albrecht Dürer. Panels with scenes from the life of Saint Catherine have been preserved, whereas a cycle devoted to Saint John the Evangelist was looted during World War II (only the presumed predella presenting *Saint John's Descent into the Tomb* survived). As far as we know, neither Pencz nor Süss ever visited Kraków, but they must have appreciated their Kraków commissions very much, since both of the aforementioned works by Süss are among the few that he signed.

The imported works of art were admired and had an influence on the local artistic society, which is clearly visible in the copy of *Adoration of the Magi* preserved in Sandomierz, which came from the central panel of the altar painted by Süss for the Pauline Church on the Rock (the original at the Staatliche Museen in Berlin). New trends were also set by painters from Southern Germany and Silesia: Michael Lancz von Kitzingen (the court painter to Jan Konarski, Bishop of Kraków; author of, among others, a triptych from 1521 for his burial chapel at the Wawel Cathedral), Dionizy Stuba (Sztuba), Piotr Wunderlich, a.k.a. Dziwak, and Antoni of Wrocław. In this context, a mention is also due to the most outstanding painter from Kraków from the early 16th century – Stanisław Samostrzelnik, a Cistercian monk from the monastery in Mogiła. The artist was well acquainted with the patterns from Albrecht

Dürer's circle and was educated in the Habsburg lands. His miniatures are actually compact "paintings" marked by an exquisite colour range, brightness and sophisticated, original iconographic solutions. One such example is a miniature in the prayerbook belonging to Sigismund I (1524), in which the king receives Communion from the hands of the martyred Christ, or images in the *Catalogue of the Archbishops of Gniezno* by Jan Długosz (1530–1535), depicting, among others, Saint Stanislaus as the patron saint of the Kingdom of Poland draping his cope around King Sigismund I and the highest-ranking people in the state.

In the early 16th century, new themes appeared in Polish painting, mostly portraits treated as a realistic, observation-based study of an individual. Initially, they presented worshippers within larger epitaph-like compositions, similar to those from the previous century. Most of them came from the Wawel Cathedral (currently located in the Missionary Monastery in Stradom, Kraków) and present: Jan Sakran (ca. 1527), Julian Chełmski (1531), Melchior Sobek (1542) and Jan Borek (1520–1530). Already before the mid-16th century, stand-alone portraits became popular, especially in the royal court. In most cases, we do not know the destinations of those images, but we can assume that their main purpose was to display the likenesses of rulers in public spaces. A portrait of Anna Jagiellon in her coronation robes was sent by her in 1586 from Warsaw to Kraków with the instructions to set it up in the Sigismund Chapel. The gallery of portraits of the Kraków bishops in the cloisters of the Franciscan Church in Kraków is particularly noteworthy. What makes it unique is that, in terms of function, they were closer to tombstones or epitaphs, which influenced the choice of their formal and iconographic solutions. The most exceptional are the images of Piotr Tomicki, Jan Latalski and Piotr Gamrat, undoubtedly the best Renaissance portraits in Poland.

A complete novelty was also the introduction of secular themes although, in this regard, Polish painting does not stand up to comparison even with neighbouring countries. The oldest examples include representations referring to the Thirteen Years' War and the Second Peace of Toruń (1466), such as the Late-Gothic panel painting *The Siege of Malbork in 1460* (1536), and later *The Triumphal Procession of King Casimir IV Jagiellon Following the Capture of Malbork* by Lukas Ewert (1585), both parts of the interior design of the Artus Court in Gdańsk. Already in the first half of the 16th century in Kraków, in the cloisters of the Franciscan Monastery, there was a mural painting depicting the Battle of Wiśniowiec (1512), whilst the cathedral housed a painting of the Battle of Obertyn (1531). Luckily, an exquisite painting depicting the Battle of Orsha (1514) was preserved to this day, created with a thorough knowledge of the historical reality, unfortunately with an unknown author or origin.

When looking at the rather modest legacy of 16th-century Polish painting, we must not forget the set of works which the majority of modern viewers do not associate with this medium at all. This refers to a group of Brussels tapestries (originally at least one hundred fifty-seven) of the highest quality, commissioned by King Sigismund II Augustus (ca. 1550–1560). Designs of a Biblical series by Michiel Coxie earned European acclaim and were copied (with modifications) until the 17th century.

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER

1472 Kronach – 1553 Weimar

Aside from Albrecht Dürer, one of the most prominent followers of German Renaissance. He was a painter, graphic artist and founder of a thriving art studio. Initially, he was probably taught by his father, Hans, a painter. Around 1502, he was active in Vienna, where he created religious paintings, portraits and his first engravings. In 1505, Cranach settled in Wittenberg and became the court painter to Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony. In 1508, he was granted his own coat of arms – a winged snake with a ring in its mouth. In Wittenberg, he also established his workshop, where, together with his colleagues and over time with his sons – Lucas the Younger and Hans – he created paintings and graphic art. During the Reformation, he became involved with Martin Luther, whom he portrayed a number of times, as well as created works referring to Protestant ideas, simultaneously working for Catholic patrons. After the artist's death, the studio was taken over by his son, Lucas Cranach the Younger. The art by Cranach the Elder combined the traditions of Late Gothic with new Renaissance and Mannerist trends. It was characterised by decorativeness, clear contours and sleek, elongated silhouettes. The artist also focused on religious themes and portraits, as well as mythology. His workshop produced works recreating the master's most popular compositions.



Lucas Cranach the Elder's workshop, *Madonna with Child*, 1530s, tempera on board, 79.5 × 62 cm

HANS DÜRER

1490 Nuremberg – 1534 Kraków

He was the son of the goldsmith Albrecht Dürer the Elder and his wife, Barbara; his older brother – the great Albrecht Dürer – was his first teacher and imparted his meticulous style and the woodcut technique on Hans. After a journey across Europe, in 1527, he is mentioned in Kraków, where he won the favour of King Sigismund I the Old and was appointed court painter. He is attributed with works of various character (some marked with the letters "HD"), but his artistic personality is elusive. He worked on interior decorations at the Wawel Castle, created portraits and religious works, and was involved in designing the silver altarpiece in the Sigismund Chapel.

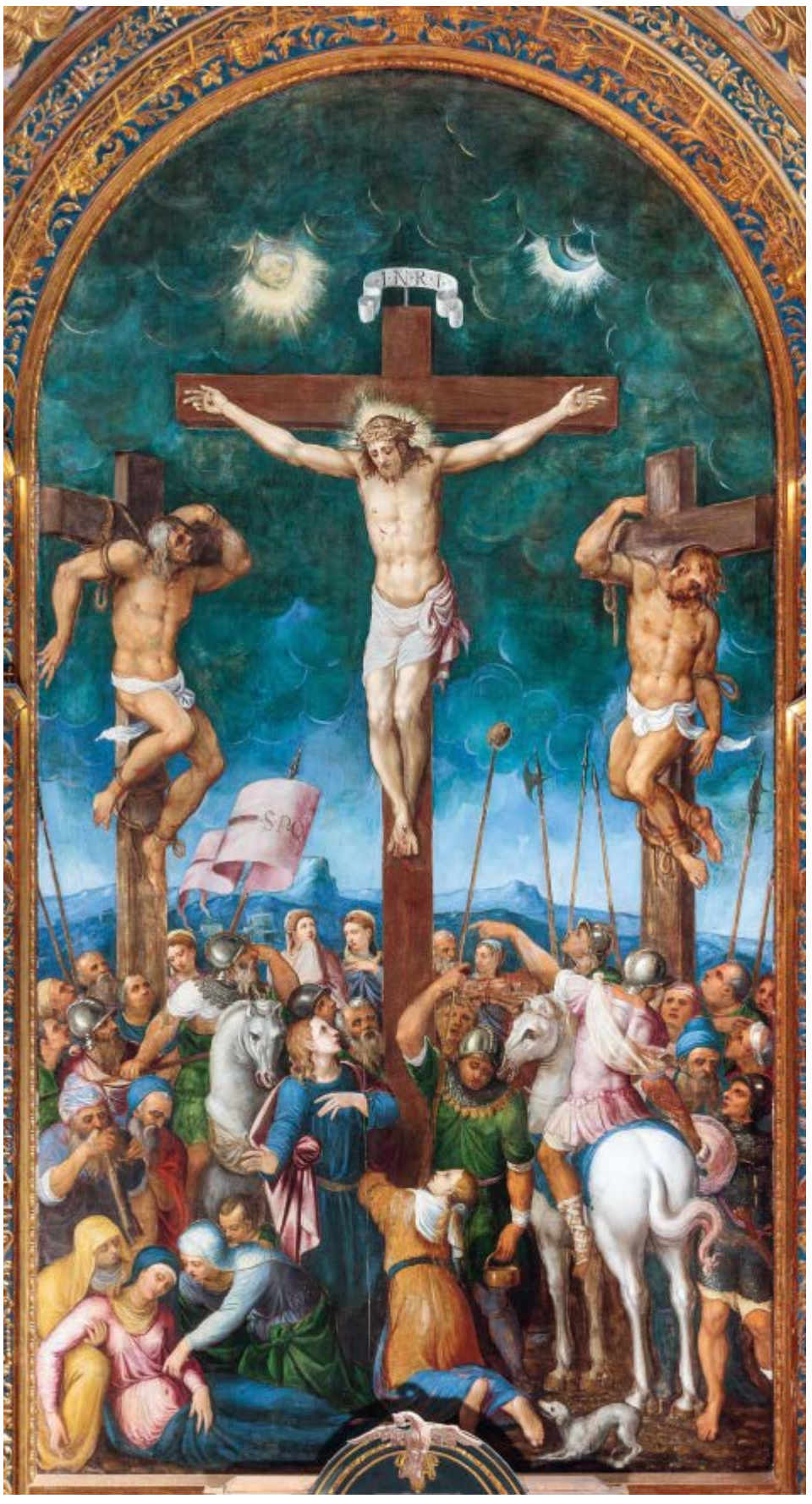


Hans Dürer (?), *St Jerome in Penitence* , 1526, tempera on board, 41 × 31 cm

PETER OF VENICE (PETRUS VENETUS)

active 1546–1547

A Venetian painter in the service of Sigismund I the Old. Mentioned in 1546 in the royal accounts – the bill was for the commission of a painting for the high altar in the Kraków Cathedral. Today, the painting *The Crucifixion of Christ*, signed and dated "Petrus Venetus 1547", is located in the collegiate church in Bodzentyn.



Peter of Venice, *Crucifixion of Christ*, 1547, oil on board, 520 × 270 cm

STANISŁAW SAMOSTRZELNIK

ca. 1480 Kraków – 1541 Kraków

A limner and painter, a friar at the Cistercian Abbey in Mogiła, which he joined after 1495. In 1511, he was granted the right to live outside the monastery, and in 1513 he was appointed parish priest in Grocholice, on the estate of the Crown Chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, to whom he also served as chaplain. At the same time, he ran his own workshop in Kraków. In addition, from the mid-1520s, he worked – probably thanks to Szydłowiecki's patronage – in the service of the royal family and the court. From around 1530, he created works commissioned by the Bishop of Kraków Piotr Tomicki. After his death, he returned to the monastery in Mogiła, where he created polychrome decorations of the church and monastery rooms (library), commissioned by the abbot. His key works are illuminations of four prayer books: of Sigismund I the Old (1524), Queen Bona (1527), Krzysztof Szydłowiecki (1527) and Olbracht Gasztołd (1528). His early works were evidently influenced by the Late-Gothic Kraków illumination school, and from 1520, also by German graphic art, which he probably encountered during his stay with Szydłowiecki in Vienna in 1515. Dutch and Italian influences are also visible in his art. His subsequent works, created mainly at the workshop, are more schematic and closer to native traditions.



Stanisław Samostrzelnik with his workshop, *St Stanislaus as the Patron Saint of the Kingdom of Poland*, miniature in Jan Długosz's *Catalogus Archiepiscoporum Gnesnensium*, 1530–1535, tempera on parchment, 32 × 24 cm



Stanisław Samostrzelnik with his workshop, *Sigismund I Praying Before Mary Clothed with the Sun*, miniature in *Sigismund the Old's Prayer Book*, 1524, tempera on parchment, 16.5 × 11.5 cm

TOMMASO DOLABELLA

ca. 1570 Belluno – 1650 Kraków

An Italian stemming from Belluno in the Alps, educated in Venice, where he was initially active (he and his master Antonio Vassilacchi were involved in the decoration of the Doge's Palace). Having arrived in Poland, he was appointed the royal painter to Sigismund III Vasa, for whom he created paintings for the Wawel Castle. Although after the court was moved to Warsaw, he also carried out work for the Warsaw Castle, his permanent place of work and residence remained in Kraków, where he worked under ecclesiastical patronage, mainly for the Order of Preachers, but also for other patrons (the Jesuits, the Canons Regular, the Camaldolese, the Cistercians, as well as for the cathedrals in Kraków and Gniezno). Thanks to his title of the royal painter and powerful patrons, he was able to develop wide, unhindered activity. In spite of the guild painters trying to keep his competition at bay, he was admired by his clients and emulated by his rivals and the students he educated. Dolabella had a huge impact on Polish painting of the first half of the 17th century, but unfortunately a large portion of his oeuvre has been lost. In Poland, he represented Venetian painting, which was evident in his sophisticated choice of colours, revealed due to contemporary conservation works, as well as elaborate, multi-figure, even crowded compositions and the way he painted large-scale canvases covering huge portions of walls.



Tommaso Dolabella with his workshop, *Swedish Pacts and Treaties*, 1640–1642, oil on canvas, 830 × 720 cm, fragment



Tommaso Dolabella, *Apotheosis of the Canons Regular*, 1627, oil on canvas, ca. 250 × 400 cm

HERMAN HAN

1580 Nowe Ogrody (now Gdańsk) – 1627 or 1628 Chojnice

An artist of Dutch origin born in Gdańsk; thanks to his early journey to Flanders, he was educated in the spirit of Flemish painting. In 1612, an organiser and member of the painters' guild in Gdańsk, from 1614 a citizen of the city. From 1611, he worked for the Cistercian Order, for whom he created works, among others, for monastery churches in Pelplin, Żarnowiec and Oliwa, as well as churches in the Diocese of Włocławek (which, during the Old Poland period, included Royal Prussia), e.g. in Jeżewo. From 1623, a citizen of Chojnice, where he died and was buried. His works are impressive compositions with a triumphant, Counter-Reformation character. Han created several particularly noteworthy versions of the multi-figure *Coronation of Mary* (Puck, Pelplin, Oliwa) characterised by luminous, vivid colours and precise rendering of detail. In his smaller works (predelle), he skilfully depicted various scenes, mainly nocturnes, using luministic effects. He is also known as the author of portraits (epitaphs of the Konopackis and the Hennings, images of patrons and benefactors of the Oliwa Abbey).



Herman Han, *Coronation of Mary*, ca. 1624, oil on canvas, ca. 507 × 303 cm

JAN REISNER

1655 Lviv – 1713 Węgrów

Mentioned for the first time in Warsaw in 1674, from around 1678 involved with the court of John III Sobieski. Thanks to a royal scholarship, he studied in Rome, where he was admitted to the Academy of Saint Luke and won the first award of that institution (1682); Pope Innocent XI awarded him the Order of the Golden Spur. After his return to Warsaw, he worked in Wilanów as a painter, and after Augustus II the Strong came to the throne, he was employed as a geometer and a geographer (1699). As such, after 1702, he also worked for Jan Dobrogost Krasiński in his estates in Krasne and Węgrów.



Jan Reisner, *Lamentation*, before 1698, oil on canvas, 254 × 163.5 cm

DANIEL SCHULTZ

ca. 1615 Gdańsk – 1683 Gdańsk

Probably educated in his hometown and in the Netherlands, where he travelled (in 1643, he was listed as a student of the University of Leiden). He most likely studied painting in Amsterdam and took study trips across Flanders and Brabant. His painting reflects the influences of Rembrandt and other Dutch artists of that circle, such as Bartholomeus van der Helst and Ferdinand Bol. He created mainly portraits, characterised by a particular focus on the personality of the model, whose figure was usually drawn out by light from dark, undefined backgrounds. He portrayed prominent figures from his hometown and Warsaw, where he worked as the court artist to three kings: John II Casimir Vasa, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and John III Sobieski. Schultz also created effective still lifes in the Dutch style. We know of his religious paintings as well (e.g. *Saint Aloysius Gonzaga* at the Visitation Church in Warsaw, ca. 1665, and *Saint Casimir* at the Saint-Germain-des-Prés Church in Paris, missing).



Daniel Schultz, *Portrait of Magdalena Ludmila Libštejnska née Oppersdorff*, 1659, oil on canvas, 87.5 × 71.5 cm



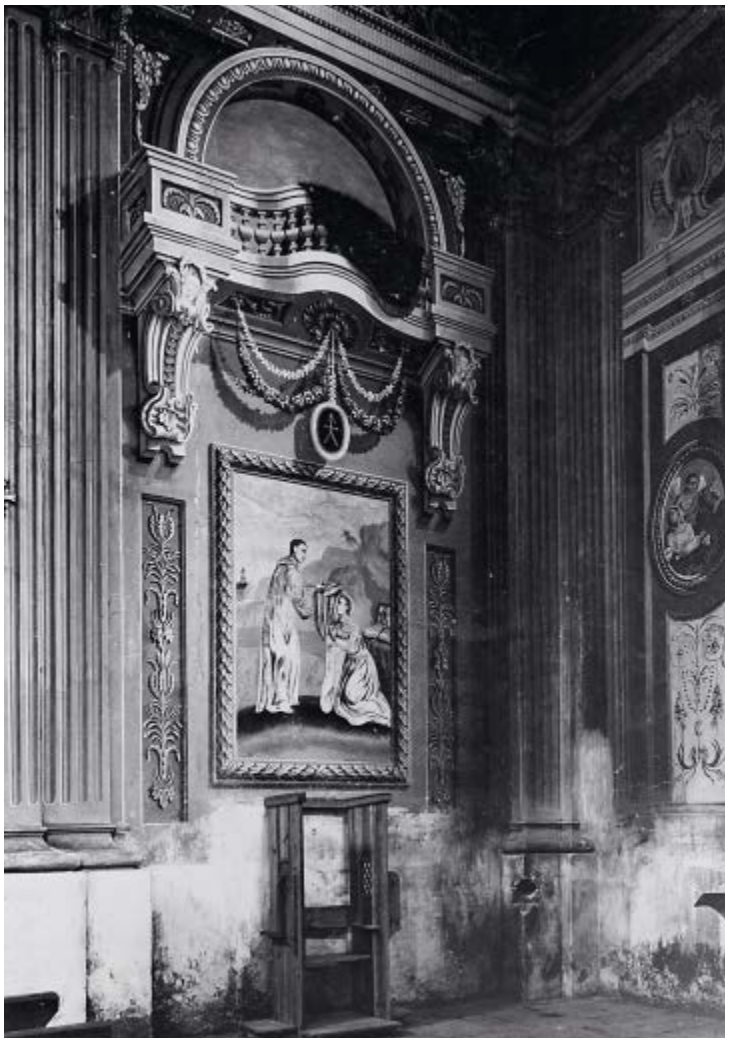
Daniel Schultz, *Portrait of František Karel Libštejnský of Kolovrat*, 1659, oil on canvas, 92 × 72.5 cm

KAZIMIERZ ANTOSZEWSKI

years of life unknown

He was active in Minsk of Lithuania (now Belarus) from the 1780s until the early 19th century. When working in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, he probably created mainly mural paintings in churches. In accordance with the tradition of Baroque illusionistic painting, he aptly emulated architectural forms, such as altars or fictional domes, combining these solutions with Classicist ornamentation. He made mural decorations, among others, in the following churches: the Bernardines' church in Budslaw (1782, 1790–1792), the parish church in Luchay (after 1783), the Capuchins' church in Liubeshiv (ca. 1786), the Bernardines' church (ca. 1786) and the Jesuits' church (before 1790) in Pinsk, the Franciscans' church in Dzisna (1790), the Basilians' church in Malyja Liady (between 1792–1797), the Franciscans' church in Halshany (between 1794–1797), the Benedictines' church in Haradzishcha near Pinsk (the 1790s), as well as in the Minsk Cathedral (1798–1800).





Kazimierz Antoszewski, polychrome decoration of the interior of the Benedictine Church in Haradzishcha near Pinsk, 1790s, fresco, state before 1939

MARCELLO BACCIARELLI

1731 Rome – 1818 Warsaw

He studied in his hometown of Rome at the Academy of Saint Luke under Marco Benefial. In 1750, he left for Dresden, where he found himself at the court of Augustus III of Poland. In 1756, together with the royal and electors court, he arrived in Warsaw. In 1764, he left for Vienna, and the following year he became an honorary member of the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts. In 1766, he settled permanently in Warsaw at the invitation of Stanisław August Poniatowski. In Warsaw, as His Majesty's first court painter (from 1767), he achieved a remarkable position. In 1766, Bacciarelli organised an art school at the Royal Castle called the Royal Painting Studio. In 1768, he was granted Polish nobility. In 1777, he became the chief architect and in 1784 the director-general of the royal buildings. For Stanisław August Poniatowski, he created, among other things, his portrait in coronation robes (1768), which was placed in the Marble Cabinet at the Royal Castle in Warsaw. For this room, he also repainted the Polish kings (1768–1771). As he worked on the decorations in the Royal Castle, he also created a plafond for the Ballroom (1778–1780) as well as portraits of famous Poles and scenes from Poland's history for the Knights' Hall (1781–1786); in the Palace on the Isle, he left behind paintings in the Solomon Room (1788–1793) and the Rotunda (1793–1795). The allegorical *Portrait of Stanisław August with an Hourglass* (1793) is of special significance. Bacciarelli also created many portraits of aristocrats, in particular in the post-partition period, when he still remained a key figure in the cultural and artistic life of Warsaw. Between 1798–1803, efforts were made to retain the old Royal Painting Studio in the castle under the name of the academy; in 1807, he became a member of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Learning, and in 1818, he was awarded the title of Honorary Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Royal University of Warsaw.



Marcello Bacciarelli, *St Isidore*, 1805, oil on canvas, 325 × 194.5 cm

BERNARDO BELLOTTO (CANALETTO)

1721 Venice – 1780 Warsaw

From 1735, he studied at the workshop of his uncle Giovanni Antonio Canal, an outstanding representative of Venetian veduta painting, and then he committed to this genre himself. Until 1747, he was active in Italy, between 1747–1758 at the court of Augustus III of Poland in Dresden, between 1758–1761 (?) at Maria Theresa's court in Vienna and between 1761–1767 again in the capital city of Saxony. In Warsaw, he worked from 1767 until his death; from 1768 as court painter to Stanisław August Poniatowski. Initially, he was employed to decorate the Ujazdów Castle. His most significant works from the Polish period were created in the 1770s, when he painted many views of Warsaw – most of all the series of twenty-six paintings for a separate room at the Royal Castle called the Canaletto Room (twenty-four canvases have survived). Bellotto's work follows the tradition of Baroque painting of the 18th century.





Bernardo Bellotto, *Długa Street*, 1777, oil on canvas, 84 × 107 cm

JULIUSZ KOSSAK

1824 Wiśnicz Nowy –
1899 Kraków

From around 1842, he studied at the Faculty of Law at Lviv University and at the same time learned to draw under Jan Maszkowski. Between 1844–1850, he travelled across landed estates in Volhynia, Podolia and Ukraine; he also visited Saint Petersburg and probably Moscow. Between 1850–1852, he lived alternately in Lviv and Warsaw. In 1852, he was a student of Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller in Vienna. Between 1853–1855, he stayed in Warsaw, then left for Paris, where he had the opportunity to frequent Horace Vernet's studio. After his return to Poland, the artist stayed in Warsaw, where he collaborated with "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" and "Kłosy". Between 1868–1869, he stayed in Vienna and Munich, learning under Franz Adam; he also mixed with Józef Brandt's circle. In 1869, Kossak settled down in Kraków, where he purchased a small manor house, over time dubbed "Kossakówka" – a nest of a multi-talented family of painters and writers, in which artistic talent was passed down through the male line, whilst literary talent – through the female line. He was an active participant in the public, social and artistic life of Kraków. He painted battle, historical-genre, genre scenes, riders and portraits; he was fond of watercolour, rarely making use of the oil technique. He was an accomplished draughtsman and illustrator.



Juliusz Kossak, *Amazon Woman*, 1868, oil on canvas, 74.3 × 63 cm



Juliusz Kossak, *In the Stable*, 1866, watercolour on paper, 39 × 45 cm



Juliusz Kossak, *Patrol*, 1875, oil on cardboard, 21 × 26.5 cm



Juliusz Kossak, *Stud on Podole*, 1886, watercolour on paper, 73 × 130 cm

PIOTR MICHAŁOWSKI

1800 Kraków – 1855 Krzysztoforzyce near Kraków

Between 1815–1820, he studied natural sciences, mathematics and philology at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, and then, between 1821–1823, political sciences in Göttingen. He learned to draw at private lessons in Kraków under Michał Stachowicz, Józef Brodowski and Franciszek Ksawery Lampi. From 1823, he worked in the Government Commission of Revenues and Treasury of the Kingdom of Poland. During the November Uprising he was in charge of the production of weapons and ammunition. After the failure of the uprising, Michałowski migrated to France, at first to Fontainebleau and in 1832 to Paris, where he learned to paint in Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet's studio, as well as studied the works of Spanish, Dutch and Flemish painters in the Louvre. In 1835, he stayed in England, then returned to Kraków, where he ran a studio in the Wielopolski Palace. Ultimately, he settled down in his family estates in Krzysztoforzyce and Bolestraszyce. The artist travelled to France, Vienna, Karlsbad (for treatment), Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy and London. He drew and painted horses, carriages, coaches and domestic cattle. The themes of his paintings also included battle scenes from the Napoleonic Wars and the November Uprising; he painted equestrian portraits of commanders and field marshals, portraits of his family and friends, as well as – as the first Polish artist – portraits of peasants and Jews.



Piotr Michałowski, *Somosierra*, 1844–1855, oil on canvas, 106 × 71 cm



Piotr Michałowski, *Jews*, 1844–1855, oil on canvas, 72 × 118 cm



Piotr Michałowski, *Seńko*, 1846–1848, oil on canvas, 62 × 46.5 cm





Jan Matejko, *The Constitution of 3 May 1791*, 1891, oil on canvas, 247 × 446 cm

HENRYK SIEMIRADZKI

1843 Pechenihy near Kharkiv –
1902 Strzałków

Initially, according to his parents' wishes, he studied at the Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences at the University of Kharkiv, where he defended the thesis *On the Instincts of Insects*. Next, he studied at the academy in Saint Petersburg, which he graduated from in 1872, and he left on a scholarship to Munich. He travelled to Italy and in 1872 settled down permanently in Rome. There he was able to observe at first hand the monuments and relics of the past. This is also where he set up his studio, visited by his friends – Henryk Sienkiewicz and Ignacy Jan Paderewski – as well as the Queen of Italy Margherita of Savoy and members of the imperial family. He was honoured with membership in a number of European academies, awarded with multiple medals at exhibitions and with state decorations (including the French Legion of Honour and the Italian Order of Corona d'Italia). Siemiradzki kept in touch with his homeland, where he displayed his works. In 1879, he donated his painting *Nero's Torches* to Kraków, giving rise to the first Polish National Museum. He also painted curtains for theatres in Kraków (1896) and Lviv (1900). He created historical paintings and compositions with Bible-inspired motifs.



Henryk Siemiradzki, *Idyll*, 1885–1890, oil on canvas, 153 × 91 cm



Henryk Siemiradzki, *The Sword Dance*, 1881, oil on canvas, 120 × 225 cm



Henryk Siemiradzki, *Christian Dirce*, 1897, oil on canvas, 263 × 530 cm



Henryk Siemiradzki, *Nero's Torches*, 1876, oil on canvas, 385 × 704 cm

JÓZEF CHEŁMOŃSKI

1849 Boczki near Łowicz –
1914 Kuklówka near Grodzisk Mazowiecki

Between 1867–1871, he studied at the Drawing Class in Warsaw and at Wojciech Gerson's private studio. In 1871, he went to Munich, where he attended the local academy, with Hermann Anschütz and Alexander Strähuber as his tutors. However, his art was most significantly influenced by his contacts with the Polish artists living in Munich, in particular Aleksander and Maksymilian Gierymski and Józef Brandt. In Munich, Chełmoński painted realistic, strongly expressive genre compositions. In 1874, the artist came to Warsaw, where he worked in a studio in the Hotel Europejski. The following year, discouraged with the rather cool reaction of the critics, he left for Paris. Within the first six years of his stay in the French capital, he created his greatest masterpieces: *In Front of the Inn*, *Cross in a Blizzard*, *Winter Night in Ukraine*, *Horse Fair at Balta* and *Four-in-Hand*. These vibrant scenes enjoyed great interest among collectors (especially Americans). However, due to his success, the artist adopted a mannered style and lowered the artistic level of his works. In 1887, he returned to Warsaw, and in 1889 he settled down in the village of Kuklówka in Masovia. From then on, for the next years, his works reflected his passion for the native landscape and the beauty of Masovian nature. Chełmoński exhibited his works regularly at the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków, the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Warsaw and the Paris Salons. He won multiple awards, among others, Grand Prix at the Exposition Universelle of 1889 in Paris, a gold medal at an exhibition in Glaspalast in Munich and at the California Midwinter International Exposition in San Francisco in 1894. In 1897, he was appointed the honorary president of the Society of Polish Artists "Sztuka".





Józef Chełmoński, *Indian Summer*, 1875, oil on canvas, 119.5 × 156 cm

ALEKSANDER GIERYMSKI

1850 Warsaw – 1901 Rome

Maksymilian's younger brother. In 1867, he studied at the Drawing Class in Warsaw taught by Rafał Hadziewicz; between 1868–1869, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich under Johann Georg Hiltensperger, Alexander Strähuber, Hermann Anschütz and Karl von Piloty. In 1873, together with his brother, they travelled across Tyrol and Italy. From 1874, with short breaks, he lived in Rome. He returned home in 1879 and settled down in Warsaw. In 1884, Gierymski left for Vienna, then Italy, Munich (1888–1890) and, for the first time, Paris (1890–1893). He spent the following years in the French capital and Italy. He was a member of Deutscher Künstlerverein in Rome and the Board of the General Association of Polish Artists in Kraków. He did not accept the nomination as a member of the executive committee of the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków. He depicted period scenes inspired by 18th-century painting, urban landscapes (mostly nocturnes) and views of architecture, genre scenes, which he observed in the poorest districts of Warsaw, as well as landscapes from the Munich and Tyrol regions. He worked with "Kłosy", "Tygodnik Ilustrowany", "Wędrowiec" and German and Austrian magazines.



Aleksander Gierymski, *In the Bower*, 1882, oil on canvas, 137 × 148 cm



Aleksander Gierymski, *Jewess with Oranges*, 1880–1881, oil on canvas, 65 × 54 cm

JACEK MALCZEWSKI

1854 Radom – 1929 Kraków

He began his studies in 1872 as an unenrolled student at the School of Fine Arts in Kraków under Feliks Szynalewski, Władysław Łuszczkiewicz and Jan Matejko; he completed his education in Paris. Almost throughout his entire artistic career he was connected to Kraków. In 1884, as a draughtsman, he joined an archaeological expedition to Greece and Asia Minor organised by Count Lanckoroński. In 1885, he left for six months to Munich, where he mixed with the Polish art colony. He was a co-founder and member of artistic societies and groups, including the "Sztuka" Society of Polish Artists, the Association of Polish Artists and the Zero Group. He worked as a professor at the School of Fine Arts in Kraków, then renamed the Academy of Fine Arts, where he served as Rector between 1912–1914. At an early stage of his career, inspired by Juliusz Słowacki's poetry and Artur Grottger's art, he painted scenes presenting the martyrdom of Polish people after the January Uprising. Later, he revisited the Siberian theme but in a different formal convention. After 1890, Malczewski's characteristic symbolism emerged: combined fantastic and naturalistic motifs were accompanied by a brightened, vivid range of colours, usually marked by dissonant colour associations. Self-portraits, portraits and genre compositions – frequently found in the artist's oeuvre – also typically followed the Symbolist convention.



Jacek Malczewski, *A Painter's Apprentice*, 1890, oil on canvas, 332 × 232 cm



Jacek Malczewski, *Vicious Circle*, 1895–1897, oil on canvas, 174 × 240 cm



Jacek Malczewski, *Self-Portrait in a White Attire*, 1914, oil on canvas, 93 × 78 cm

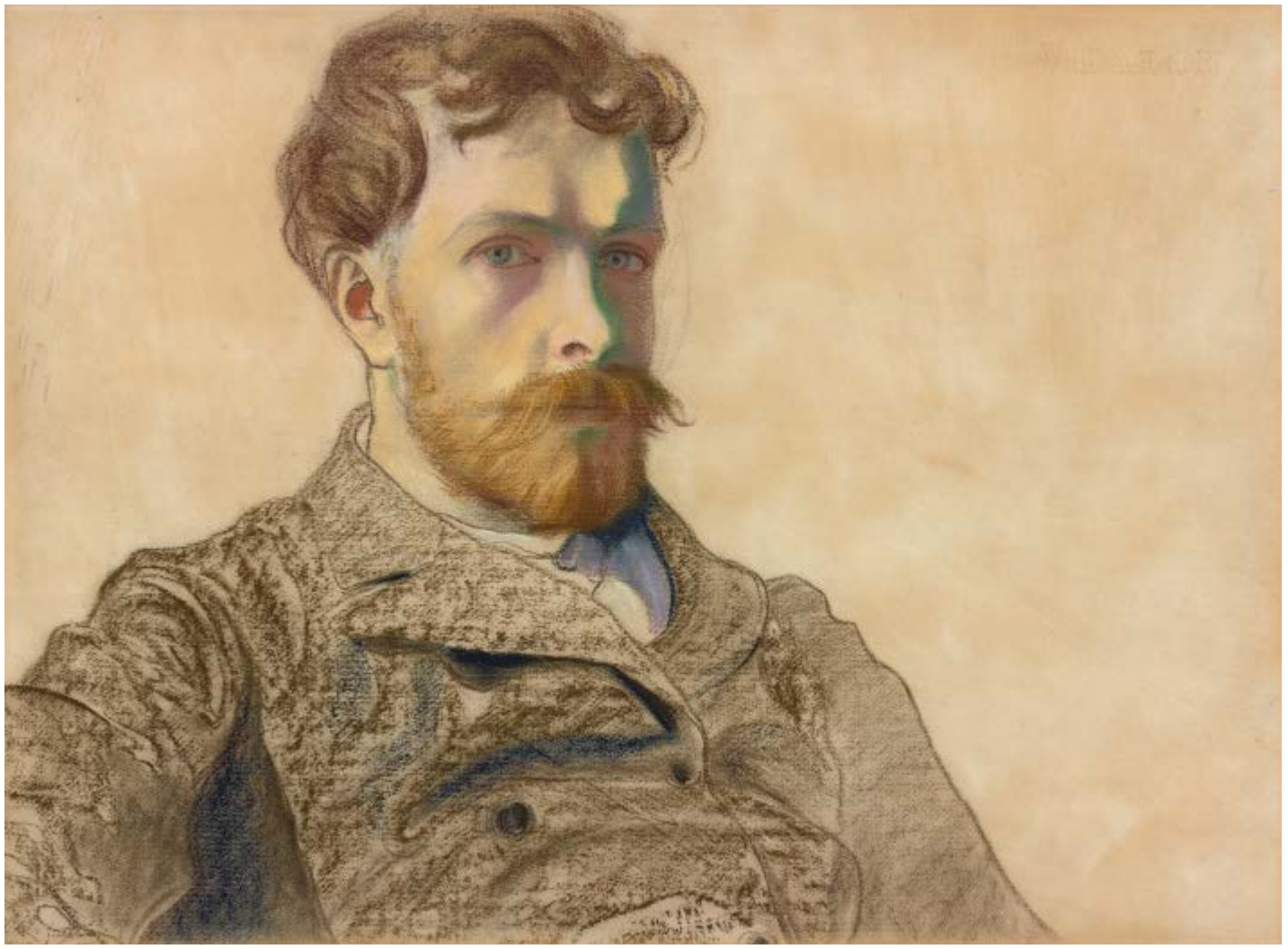
STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI

1869 Kraków – 1907 Kraków

An extensively educated humanist, playwright and poet, reformer of the Polish theatre, stage designer, painter and draughtsman, author of stained-glass windows, mural painting, graphic art and book art, as well as artistic crafts. After completing his education at the School of Fine Arts, he started a course in the History of Art and Literature; then, he worked with Jan Matejko on the polychromes in Saint Mary's Church in Kraków. Between 1891–1894, after a trip around Europe with Józef Mehoffer, he lived in Paris and studied at the Académie Colarossi. At the time, he mixed with Post-Impressionists, was familiar with Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's art, and took an interest in the works of Ferdinand Hodler, Edward Munch and Gustav Vigeland. During that period, Wyspiański created stained-glass window cartoons for the Lviv Cathedral, as well as the well-balanced, atmospheric *Planty Park at Dawn* and *Planty Park at Night*; he revisited this motif in the spectre-like composition *Straw Covers*, preceding the artist's literary masterpiece – *The Wedding* (1901). From 1895, he created polychromes at the Franciscan Church in Kraków; between 1897–1902, he worked on a spectacular set of stained-glass windows at the same church. The artist also prepared stained-glass window designs for the Wawel Cathedral which were, however, rejected by the chapter and the conservative bishop Jan Puzyna. In 1904, he designed the stained-glass window *Apollo – Copernicus's Solar System* for the Medical Society. His tremendous respect for Polish history inspired his idea for the reconstruction of the Wawel Hill and the creation of the Wawel Acropolis – modelled on the Acropolis in Athens; Wawel motifs can also be found in his literary works, including his plays. Aside from monumental works, Wyspiański also created flat, decorative pastel portraits and self-portraits. The final chord of his art was a series of views of the Kościuszko Mound in Kraków, of exceptional artistic value, depicting the place in various seasons and times of day, as well as in the different moods of the then gravely ill artist.



Stanisław Wyspiański, *Apollo* (*Copernicus's Solar System*), stained-glass design for the Medical Society House in Kraków, 1904, pastel on paper, 343 × 146 cm



Stanisław Wyspiański, *Self-Portrait*, 1903, pastel on paper, 47 × 63 cm



Stanisław Wyspiański, *Motherhood*, 1905, pastel on paper, 58.8 × 91 cm

TAMARA DE LEMPICKA

1894 Moscow or Warsaw – 1980 Cuernavaca, Mexico

As a young girl, she attended a boarding school in Lausanne, from where she travelled to Italy – she visited Rome, Florence and Venice and became fascinated with the painting of Renaissance masters. During World War I, she lived in Saint Petersburg, where she married a young lawyer, Tadeusz Łempicki. In 1918, fleeing from the October Revolution, the couple moved to Paris. De Lempicka began to study painting at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and the Académie Ranson under Maurice Denis and André Lothe. It was also here that her artistic début took place in 1922 at the Autumn Salon. In 1928, she visited Warsaw three times, where she had an exhibition at the Zachęta Gallery; she also took part in the General National Exhibition in Poznań. In 1939, she left for the United States and settled in New York; she spent her final years in Mexico. De Lempicka's main theme of art was the human. She painted mostly members of the artistic bohemia, aristocrats and financial elite from Europe and the United States. Her art followed the principles of Art Deco. She combined simple forms with decorativeness, creating an unmistakable style: on the one hand, effective and ornamental, and on the other notable for her keen observation of people. De Lempicka's art was complemented with her excellent self-portrayal.



Tamara de Lempicka, *Girl in a Green Dress*, 1930, oil on plywood, 61.5 × 45.5 cm

TADEUSZ MAKOWSKI

1882 Oświęcim – 1932 Paris

He studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków under Jan Stanisławski and Józef Mehoffer. As a student, he was involved with the "Green Balloon" cabaret from Kraków, for which he designed puppets. After 1908, he left for Paris to further his painting education. He planned to stay for a year but remained in France for the rest of his life, becoming one of the key figures of the Polish artistic community in Paris. Aside from painting, he also created graphic art, mainly woodcuts and lithographs. His first works from Paris reveal the influence of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's frescoes. Between 1911–1913, he created Cubism-inspired compositions. Later, due to his frequent stays in Brittany, he depicted scenes from rural life and landscapes, drawing upon the style of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's paintings. In the 1920s, he was inspired by the art of the "Sunday painters" and Henri Rousseau (Le Douanier). At the time, the artist's favourite theme became children. Genre scenes featuring children and portraits of little models soon defined the artist's recognisable style. Makowski's art was characterised by huge emotional load visible in the theme of the representations and in the stylistic and technical aspects. A painted work was almost always preceded by drawn and painted sketches, which are now considered fully-fledged works of art.



Tadeusz Makowski, *In the Studio*, after 1921, oil on canvas, 45.5 × 55 cm

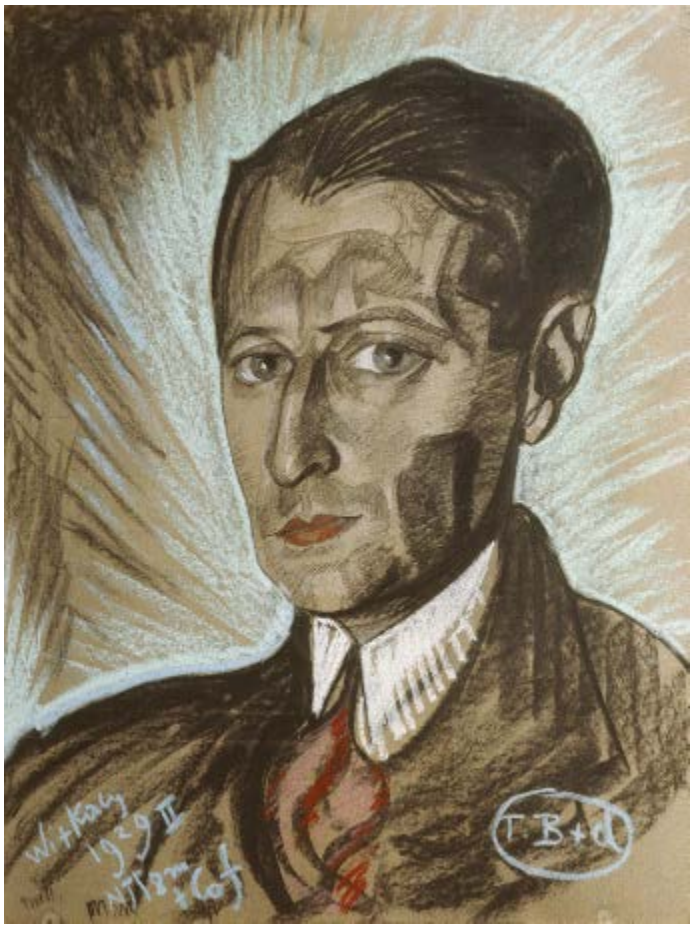
STANISŁAW IGNACY WITKIEWICZ (WITKACY)

1885 Warsaw – 1939 Jeziory, Polesia

He was the son of Stanisław Witkiewicz. From an early age he showed an interest in art – already in 1901, two of his landscapes were presented at the Exhibition of Paintings and Sculptures in Zakopane. In 1903, he passed his final exams as an external candidate in Lviv, where he became friends, among others, with Leon Chwistek and Bronisław Malinowski. In 1905, he started to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków at Jan Stanisławski's and Józef Mehoffer's studios; he also took lessons from Władysław Ślewiński, who was staying in Podhale. During World War I, he participated in the fighting in Volhynia on the Russian side, serving as an officer in the Pavlovsky Life Guards Regiment. As a theoretician, he professed the unquestionable primacy of form over content, but in his Expressionistic paintings, "unsatiated with form" (but also with colour), and in his drawings, he did not shy away from literary references. Around 1925, he abandoned the theory of "pure form" and established the one-man "Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz Portrait Painting Company", drawing pastel portraits to order in several specific categories: A, B, B + d, C, D, E and children B + E. They were also created under the influence of substances that helped him experiment with form. Witkacy wrote four novels, over forty plays, articles and essays on the theory of painting, literature, theatre and philosophy. In the interwar period, he lived mostly in Zakopane. After the outbreak of World War II, he fled from the Germans to the Eastern Borderlands. When the USSR invaded Polish territory on 17 September 1939, the painter was in the village of Jeziory in Polesia, where he committed suicide the following day. Artistically, he was initially associated with the Polish Expressionists group, but ultimately remained a distinct phenomenon in Polish art. His early work was based on the Young Poland aesthetics and the influences of Paul Gauguin and Władysław Ślewiński; he then developed his own unmistakable type of Expressionism.



Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), *Portrait of Nena Stachurska*, 1930, pastel on paper, 63.5 × 48.5 cm



Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), *Portrait of Julian Tuwim*, 1929, pastel on paper, 64 × 48 cm



Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), *Marysia and Burek in Ceylon*, ca. 1920, oil on canvas, 90 × 83 cm

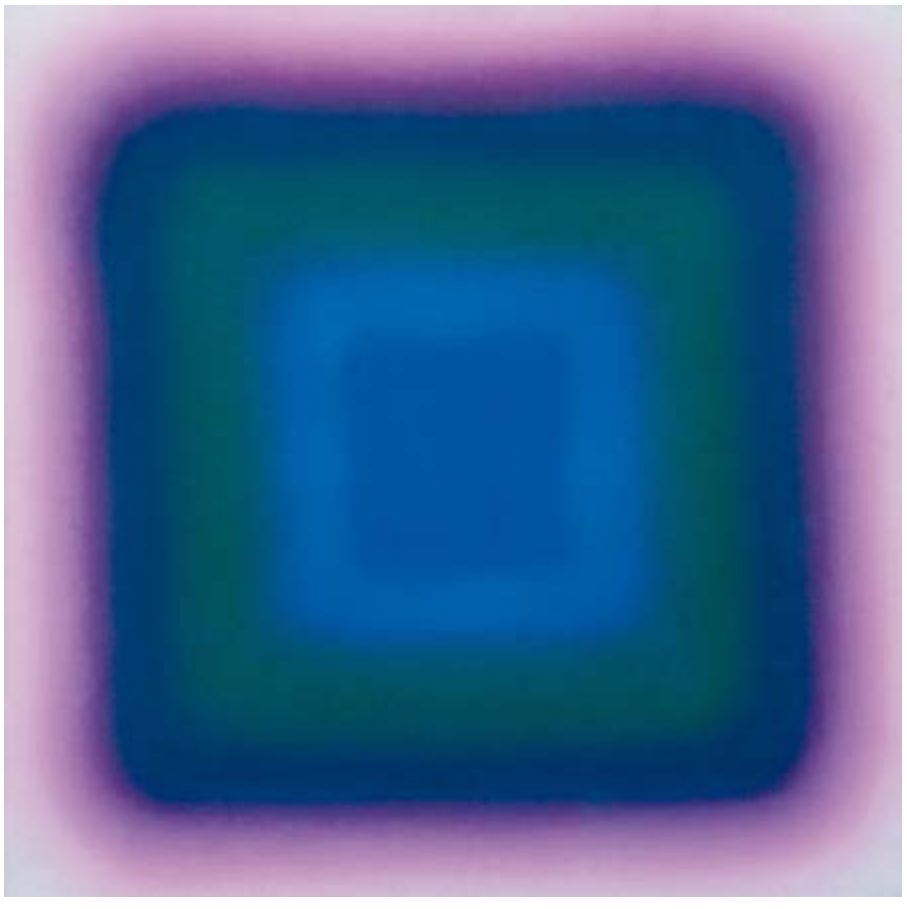
WOJCIECH FANGOR

1922 Warsaw – 2015 Warsaw

One of the most important Polish artists in the second half of the 20th century. He co-created the so-called Polish School of Poster and was the precursor of art in public spaces. As the only Pole, he had his own solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1970. During the war, he studied privately under Tadeusz Pruszkowski and Felicjan Szczęsny Kowarski. After graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1946, he became involved with his alma mater, where he worked as an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Graphic Arts between 1954–1962. During the period of socialist realism, he took an active part in official artistic life, creating paintings and posters. In the 1960s, he was one of the pioneers of op art – an artistic movement using optical illusions. Fangor was also the author of graphic designs, including co-creating the visual identification system and interior design of the Warsaw Metro. In his distinctive paintings, with blurred pulsing circles and undulating colour spots, he studied the relationship between colour and space and the influence of the painting on the viewer's perception.



Wojciech Fangor, *Figures*, 1950, oil on canvas, 100 × 125 cm



Wojciech Fangor, *E 25*, 1966, oil on canvas, 71 × 71 cm



Wojciech Fangor, *N 32*, 1963, oil on canvas, 100 × 100 cm

EDWARD DWURNIK

1943 Radzymin – 2018 Warsaw

He studied at the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw under Eugeniusz Arct and Eugeniusz Eibisch, as well as graphic art under Józef Pakulski. From the beginning of his artistic career, he remained under the influence of Nikifor, whose works inspired him to create extensive, narrative urban landscapes. Over time, however, he developed his own unmistakable style, combining elements of primitivism, the grotesque and sharp social satire.



Edward Dwurnik, *Jagodzianka in Sopot*, 1978, oil on canvas, 114 × 146 cm



Edward Dwurnik, *40 Martyrs After 40 Years*, 2009, oil on canvas, 210 × 150 cm

