

ornamentation was contrasted with decorations recalling those of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The scene was a classical portico with double Ionic pilasters. The mirrors, hanging on the side walls, in golden frames lavishly decorated with ribbons and flower baskets, referred to the style of Louis XVI. Uziembło designed impressive lighting for the hall – on the side walls hung numerous wall lamps, on the ceiling, there were circles formed with bulbs. The five lantern-like chandeliers, with smaller lamps hanging from them, were especially impressive, and gave the interior an oriental character.

In designing the interiors of the Uciecha cinema and the Bagatela Theatre, Uziembło did not attempt to create spaces that were stylistically consistent but ones with a certain atmosphere of freedom. He eclectically blended various sources of inspiration in order to achieve a surprising, dazzling, slightly fairy-like effect. I feel that his designs could be compared with, for example, the boudoir design of Louis Süe and Jacques Palyart that was exhibited at the Autumn Salon in Paris in 1913 (fig. 17). This interior is also an eclectic fantasy, but this time on the Orient and the art of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, inspired by Léon Bakst's theatre designs. The couches and armchairs referring to the style of Louis XV were covered with a fabric with plant motifs; they contrasted with the striped wallpaper; and an effect of baroque splendor is created with mirrors, a large crystal chandelier and painted panneaux.<sup>20</sup>

“Looking back” designers were permitted themselves to loosely blend inspirations, e.g. the style of Louis XVI, classicism, the Empire style, folk art, and oriental motifs. It was an artistic current that allowed artistic freedom and experimentation with colours, forms, and styles. It offered the opportunity to give a place an atmosphere that would emphasize its function or refer to its past. This was an ideal style to create private interiors such as living rooms and boudoirs or those having to do with entertainment and relaxation, for instance, cinemas and theaters. The Polish designs might be compared to the French and Austrian ones created at that time, which suggests that the Polish designers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were familiar with the latest trends and were able to follow them creatively. However, Polish designers did not aim to create a separate style. On the Polish artistic scene of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this tendency was a niche trend which did not continue in the interwar period. While at l'Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, in Paris, in 1925, France presented interiors designed by “colourists”, who developed this style into art deco, Poland successfully exhibited interiors illustrating Polish art deco, which was inspired by folk art.

## SUMMARY

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### “LOOKING BACK” – AN ARTISTIC TENDENCY IN POLISH INTERIOR DESIGN AROUND 1910

The article presents a so far little discussed artistic trend in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Polish interior and furniture design, which was analogous to French and Austrian artistic phenomena. Its most distinguishing feature was that it combined various inspirations e.g. the style of Louis XVI, classicism, the Empire style, folk art, and East Asian motifs. The trend was characterized by intense and contrasting colours used both in wall and furniture decorations and in upholstery. It was an artistic current that allowed artistic freedom and experimentation with colours, forms, and styles. It offered the opportunity to give a place an atmosphere emphasizing its function or referring to its past. The furniture and interiors illustrating this artistic current can be found among the works of Henryk Uziembło (the Uciecha cinema, the Bagatela Theatre in Kraków), Karol Frycz (The English Hotel in Warsaw) and Ludwik Wojtyczko (the Suskis' salon in Kraków).

<sup>20</sup> F. CAMARD, *Süe et Mare et Le Compagnie Des Arts Français*, pp. 63–64 (as in note 4).