

działający w latach 1926–1929 Praesens), Towarzystwo uległo pełnemu rozproszeniu. Funkcjonowało jedynie formalnie, utrzymywane żywotnością swojego wieloletniego prezesa, który zdecydował się na postawienie TPSS w stan likwidacji, jednak nigdy go nie rozwiązał. Nie można zapomnieć, że to wytrwała walka „ojców polskiego designu” ukształtowała oblicze naszej sztuki stosowanej pierwszych dekad XX wieku, a w tej walce niepoślednią rolę odegrał Jan Bukowski [il. 45], którego wieloletnie wysiłki tak podsumował Karol Homolacs:

I oto w osobie Jana Bukowskiego widzicie tu jednego z najpierwszych, jednego z najbardziej czołowych przedstawicieli i założycieli owego zrzeszenia „Polska Sztuka Stosowana”; macie tu przed sobą jednego z najdzielniejszych bojowników o tę sprawę, która dzisiaj jest naszą sprawą, a równocześnie sprawą polską. Powiedziałem, że macie tu bojownika, a wyraz ten należy rozumieć dosłownie, bo dzieje polskiej sztuki stosowanej to są dzieje wielkiej i ciężkiej walki, prowadzonej przeciw zalewowi obcej duchem secesji i równocześnie walki z własnym społeczeństwem, które do tych poczynąń odnosiło się obojętnie, a często nawet niechętnie¹⁹³.

*Fotografie 2, 10, 11, 12 powstały w ramach projektu pt. „Kompleksowe badania najstarszych kolekcji fotograficznych ze zbiorów Muzeum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego” realizowanego z funduszy Narodowego Programu Rozwoju Humanistyki w latach 2014–2021.



SUMMARY

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JAN BUKOWSKI AS A MEMBER OF THE ‘POLISH APPLIED ART’ SOCIETY (1901–1934?) IN LIGHT OF THE MOST RECENT RESEARCH

Almost the entire oeuvre of Jan Bukowski (1873–1943), an artist who had played an exceptional role in the artistic milieu of Cracow during the first half of the twentieth century, amounted to putting into practice the objectives set out by the ‘Polish Applied Art’ Society (PAAS; Pol. Towarzystwo ‘Polska Sztuka Stosowana’, TPSS), established in 1901. Bukowski steadily promoted a ‘fondness’ for local applied art by instructing young generations about its value and importance, first, by means of establishing in Cracow his own art school for women, and then as a teacher in the school of Maria Niedzielska and in the State School of Art Industry. By perfecting designs, developing new forms and means of artistic expression, he developed Polish printing industry, book design, and monumental decorative arts, especially in church interiors, to the fullest. Finally, as a manager of the Jagiellonian University Printing House, of the S.G. Żeleński Stained-Glass Studio, and of the painting workshop of Karol Orlecki, as well as the Cracow stencil manufactory, he developed high-quality artistic models for mass production.

Jan Bukowski participated in almost all initiatives of the PAAS, taking active part in in the organisation of the Society’s day-to-day operation. At the very beginning, he became member of the Society’s interim committee. Then, as a member of the Board, he joined the Reconnaissance Commission, which was set up with the purpose of assessing new acquisitions and gifts to the Society’s collection, their selection for exhibitions and evaluation in competitions. Additionally, as a member of the Industrial Section, he represented the Society in contacts with industrial plants and artisanal workshops, and in the years 1904–1910 was the Society’s secretary. Bukowski was a founding member of the PAAS and at the same time participated in the majority of projects undertaken by the Society. He was involved in the production of the Society’s illustrated periodical, published in instalments (17 in total) from 1902 to 1913, first as *Materiały. Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Polska Sztuka Stosowana w Krakowie* [Materials. A Publication of the Polish Applied Art Society in Cracow], and from 1906 under changed title, *Sztuka Stosowana* [Applied Art]. He organised exhibitions and showings, and finally, took part in competitions and exhibited his works as exemplars and appropriate models of realising the objectives of the Society.

The Society’s programme was aimed at revitalising local art in various domains and by various means. The propagation of the idea of reviving craftsmanship, modelled on the English Arts and Crafts Movement, was realised by means of artistic education and promotion of local achievements in this field in the press, and above all,

¹⁹³ Przemówienie prof. Karola Homolacsa z okazji uroczystości uczczenia zasług prof. Jana Bukowskiego i wręczenia Mu medalu pamiątkowego w 1938 r., [w:] *Wystawa typograficzna: Jan Bukowski 1873–1943*, Kraków [1947], s. 13.

by collecting and studying works of Polish applied arts. A campaign of collecting and surveying objects of Polish applied art and historic objects in all three districts of partitioned Poland was very symptomatic in this regard. This initiative, to which not only artists and connoisseurs, but also art lovers and amateurs of folk art contributed, resulted in a collection counting several thousand items, both originals and their images. Jan Bukowski also contributed to augmenting the collection by donating his drawings and watercolours representing, for instance, folk furniture and everyday domestic utensils, or photographs documenting old timber buildings taken during his numerous trips. What is worthy of note is the fact that items from the collection often served as a source of inspiration for the artist. This is particularly well visible in his designs for painted wall decorations, in which particular models he had used can be identified, as for instance in the Chapel of St John of Nepomuk in St Mary's Church in Cracow, in the 'Holy House' of Loreto at the church of the Capuchin friars in Cracow, and in the chapel of the Dr Józef Babiński Psychiatric Hospital at Kobierzyn, and the church of the Reformed Franciscans at Wieliczka. Importantly, all of these examples are not imitations but merely deliberate 'appropriations', attesting to the artist's good orientation in what has been borrowed and creatively transformed in his imagination.

Discussion of Jan Bukowski's achievement within the Society has become a pretext for presentation of the history of the 'Polish Applied Art' Society spanning a broader period than has been hitherto assumed. Thanks to the most recent discoveries, the period of the PAAS activity could be extended beyond the year 1914, until now considered by scholars as the end of the Society's operation. It has been demonstrated here for the first time that the PAAS had continued to inspire the development of Polish applied arts for over thirty years, almost without interruption – first from Cracow, and since the beginning of the 1920s, from Warsaw.

The history of Jan Bukowski's career is to a large degree synonymous with the history of the 'Polish Applied Art' Society. The reform of artistic crafts that was taking place at that time, combined with national ideology, went through various stages that attested to the fact that artistic concepts gradually accumulated and crystallised, continued and then exerted – more or less informed – influence. Bukowski's oeuvre reflects the stages that the Society went through. The most intensive period occurred between 1901 and 1912, but a period when the main principles were formulated: break-up with historicism and foreign models, search for inspiration in local folk art, its promotion and the first artworks realised in keeping with these principles, occurred in the earliest years within that time span, up until around 1905. Starting from 1905, attempts at developing a national style, based on various inspirations combined with modern art, were becoming ever more prominent. It was the most fruitful period, abounding in vigorous activity on numerous fields, when

the most important artworks originated, executed by artists associated with the PAAS, by its agency or in collaboration with it (as for instance the interior design of the dining area in the Stary Theatre, of the music room and a library with a reading room in the Dłuski Sanatorium at Zakopane-Kościelisko, as well as of office rooms in the seat of Cracow Municipal Authorities, and in a number of privately owned apartments). An experimental printing studio was launched, and a few successful exhibitions were held: printing exhibition in Cracow (spanning the end of 1904 and the beginning of 1905), an exhibition at Zachęta in 1908, and exhibition of Architecture and Interiors in garden surroundings held at Oleandry in Cracow in 1912. The abundance of documentary evidence related to the initial period in the Society's history almost totally overshadowed its later history – indeed, not so intensive as the earlier period and no longer so important. Although the lack of documentary evidence makes it impossible to draw a detailed account of the Society's history after 1914, and consequently prevents its proper assessment, the Society's activity should not be restricted to the first dozen years of the twentieth century. The Society still existed and did not stop their efforts to propagate Polish applied art. The period spanning the years 1913 and 1920, destabilised by the war, marked the shift of activity to the Cracow Workshops (Pol. Warsztaty Krakowskie), intended by the Society as a tool in boosting the artistic crafts and industry in Poland. Thanks to the initiatives of Jerzy Warchałowski, the Society's main theoretician and its long-time president, the ideas propagated by the PAAS were publicised yet again during the preparation and by the final shape of the Polish exhibit at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts held in Paris in 1925. The 'Polish Applied Art' Society was able to put into practice – and not alone but in collaboration with similar associations and institutions – the objectives of its own programme, since these were identical, almost quarter of a century after the Society's foundation, with those that were adopted for the major Polish exhibit abroad of the interwar period. In 1921–1925 the Society was reborn and, along with other societies, took part in the process of creating a new appearance of Polish decorative art in the independent state. Most importantly, it finally managed to set up experimental workshops: for furniture models, and for dyeing and weaving, all which had figured among the main objectives of the Society. After 1926, when the 'Ład' cooperative was established, and avant-garde artistic groupings (especially Praesens, active from 1926 to 1929) came to the fore, the Society dispersed, functioning only formally, by virtue of the fact that its president had put it into liquidation but never officially dissolved it. It has to be remembered, however, that it was the unyielding struggle of the 'fathers of Polish design' that has shaped the appearance of our applied art in the early decades of the twentieth century, and no mean role in this struggle was played by Jan Bukowski.