

Olszewski Ciacek
Warsaw

TEFAF 2024
Maastricht

Art, Flowers, Friendship and Sherlock Holmes

A conversation
with Małgorzata Ciacek
and Michał Olszewski

Dominik Kuboń: The Olszewski Ciacek Gallery is the first Polish gallery to take part in TEFAF Maastricht 2024. Where did the idea come from? Why this fair?

Małgorzata Ciacek:

During my studies at the Fine & Decorative Art and Design in London's Sotheby's Institute of Art, we went on a student trip to Holland. And visited TEFAF! The world's oldest, most prestigious fair. You can feel the strong academic support behind it. All the well-known names at your fingertips. Every item is important to the art history discourse. Paintings by the Old Masters, 20th-century artists – along with a lot of flowers, conversation and champagne. It's like a museum where you can buy. As you go through it, you're always learning something new, and you get to talk with the best experts in their field.

Michał Olszewski:

I've been to TEFAF many times. It's the best fair for the art we represent, that is, from the canon of 20th-century historical modernity. The flowers definitely make an impression. One year at the entrance there was a huge wall made of roses, just flaunting its colour and fragrance. It was amazing!

I understand it's a friendly space for different types of specialists to share experience: gallery and museum people, as well as collectors?

Małgorzata Ciacek: Right. You find people from various institutions. At TEFAF museum sales are held. Museum directors from all over the world are there. At TEFAF I understood that art can be a pleasure, not just something inaccessible and closed, like in a white cube. Behind the luxury there's kindness, education, knowledge, curiosity, openness to new ideas. It's all clearly legible, and is in tune with our sensibility. Galleries have catalogues to supplement their displays. You don't go there just to buy something. Every item is carefully chosen, described and given the right amount of attention. It's an exceptional experience you can share with enthusiasts, collectors, everyone from the creative and cultural industries.

Michał Olszewski: The exchange of competences and experience - along with social interactions - is really important. Especially since Polish art, hampered by excessive administrative provisions, is often pushed to the fringes of Europe. Quite unnecessarily, and it's a great injustice to artists, their families, and art lovers.

You represent those families. The destiny of artistic legacies.

Michał Olszewski: That's right. Artistic destinies that were often cut off - for example, by the war. Under Communism, pre-war art fell into oblivion. For various reasons, including because of family or politics. In the 1990s, it seemed we were opening up to the world. And in many areas that's how it was. Market exchange became global in nature, but art remained unaffected. Its reach was still only local.

What will people be able to see at your stand?

Małgorzata Ciacek: Our aim is to show a cross-section of Polish art from the 20th century. We'll be showing works associated with different Polish cities: heliographs by Karol Hiller from Łódź; close-cropped photos by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz from Zakopane; Formist gouaches and drawings by Józef Doskowski from Kraków; Légeresque and Surrealist works by Marek Włodarski from Lviv; graphics by Leopold Lewicki, also from Kraków. We also have a variety of different techniques and media, from heliographs to photography to works on paper, graphics, and even an anonymous sculpture in the Zakopane style with elements of Art Deco.

What guided your choices?

Małgorzata Ciacek: We wanted to emphasise how *au courant* the Polish avant-garde

was. Trends often turned up in Poland very early on compared with other European countries, and there were artistic anomalies - like the technique Karol Hiller developed, which no one carried on after him. His works are really innovative, and were shown in the exhibition *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936 (MoMA, 1976)* and *The Shape of Light - 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art (Tate Modern, 2018)*. Hiller's art is recognised among academics, but could be better known by a wider public. The quality speaks for itself. Hiller was no epigone.

In the heliographs you can feel the strong avant-garde dimension. And Witkacy was the first to make close-cropped photographs. Suddenly it turns out that a Pole who nobody abroad has heard of was first in something.

Michał Olszewski: For year's I'd been observing Czech Surrealists avant-garde artists at fairs. Praise, prices, catalogues, books about their work. At a certain point I understood that their level, and their artistic interests, were very similar to Włodarski's. Légeresque elements were a foundation that he converted into Surrealism in an interesting way. Ultimately, he created very strongly Surrealistic works in a way reminiscent of those of Jindřich Štyrský, whose watercolours command prices of tens of thousands of euros, not to mention his oil paintings. For me, that was a stimulus! I thought - How is it possible that everybody knows Štyrský but nobody knows Włodarski? I tried exhibiting Włodarski in Poland, but it didn't work out. The pandemic scuttled my plans. This process didn't come out of Poland. Remotely, on a website, you can't experience a work of art fully. You have to go to a fair to see things live.

An important artist at our stand is Leopold Lewicki. He used graphics to comment on the socio-political reality of the 1930s. He was interested in human dignity and human rights. Like Hiller. My private collection of heliographs was what made it possible to open the gallery in 2018. Collecting about a dozen pieces took me fifteen years.

What was that like, collecting?

Michał Olszewski: First I turned to other collectors who'd bought heliographs in the past. And to curators dealing with obtaining works from non-museum sources for exhibitions. Then to people who might have had contact with Hiller's widow. It was very much detective work. In the case of artists who are no longer alive, the investigation can be small, or very serious.

Important, if not the most important, is the issue of verifying a work's authenticity.

Michał Olszewski: For me, the key when checking authenticity is an experienced eye. In such situations I always think of Adam Konopacki, an art market expert who taught me the basics. He said: if you come across a forgery, don't look at it, just go on and forget about it. Otherwise the forgery will distort your vision, and later you may have difficulty accepting an original. You have to look only at things that are sure, and have that as your point of reference. The more such points of reference we have, the more we can authenticate.

Tell us about the preparations for the fair.

Małgorzata Ciacek: I appreciate that the organisers require every work on display to be properly researched. Quality is paramount. The works we've chosen are impeccable in terms of execution. But preparing the texts and documents involved a lot of intellectual work. You have to write an essay, prepare a bibliography and a list of exhibitions where the works were shown, provide independent expertise. At TEFAF what counts is universal values. This shows the wisdom of the people who are involved in the fair. They have a substantive approach, and cultural capital. Without knowing Polish art, they're able to assess it in reference to other European avant-garde movements. Such cross-references make sense, and are needed. But the most important thing behind our success is teamwork. The three of us - Małgorzata Starz, Karolina Potocka and I - have been working on this project for several months now. For me, what's most important is people and the team; you can't reach the summit by quarrelling - and even if you could, it wouldn't be any fun. We all have passion and stamina, and back each other up in difficult moments - which are an inevitable part of the process. We're doing this for the first time. I'm 30, Karolina's 27, and Gosia's 24. The strength we have from being together means you don't have to be the most educated, the most experienced, or have enormous financial backup to achieve something no one did before and make a dream of yours come true. And for that I'm forever grateful to the girls.

Some fairs and exhibitions can be overwhelming. What's it like here? Is there enough space for viewers?

Małgorzata Ciacek: You can commune with the works in tranquillity. It's an opportunity for intimate contact with art. You feel as if you were in a completely different dimension. Every gallery builds its own world, drawing you in, offering a different perspective. You learn a lot, experience a lot. After all, without a public fairs would have no sense.

What were the beginnings of your gallery? How did you start working together?

Małgorzata Ciacek: The first time I met Michał was at TEFAF.

Michał Olszewski: Right! A mutual acquaintance introduced us.

Małgorzata Ciacek: A bit like something out of Sherlock Holmes! I was fresh out of university, Michał and his partner had gone their separate ways. We didn't know then that in the future we'd be working together. It was a while before we started Olszewski Ciacek Gallery.

Michał Olszewski: Earlier, I'd worked on the art market for fifteen years. I began in 2003 as a trainee at Rempex Auction House. Then I worked both in expert groups and in sales. Małgorzata and I share an interest in the avant-garde, and we have similar taste.

Dominik Kuboń Art historian, graduate of the University of Warsaw. Independent curator, author of texts on art; deals with photography at the independent KARTA Centre, Poland's largest social archive.

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Karol Hiller

Dominik Kuboń

Karol Hiller (1891-1939) caused a bit of a stir in Polish avant-garde movements. His artistic experiments were strongly individualised, and addressed directly to the interior of the human psyche. Hiller worked against constructivist means of handling space within the pictorial field. His conceptions materialised with the help of his own original technique - heliographics, a combination of painting, graphics and photography. His interest in breaking the boundaries of his craft while focusing on life experience led his work towards pessimism and catastrophism. His works, while disturbing, make us want to know more, to continue looking, to search for the key to these complicated visual puzzles. This desire to know stems from the poetry present in Hiller's works, which for the artist was what bound together the meanings that contemplation could provoke to emerge from behind the shapes and lines. Those meanings encourage us to engage in optical gymnastics - which are not meant to provide care-free enjoyment, but an emotional and intellectual challenge.

The artist grew up surrounded by machines in factories in the industrial city of Lodz, and this influenced his art. Hiller's works engage in a metaphorical dialogue with the concept of the technological sublime, in an atmosphere of a quasi-spiritual fog emanating from overwhelming technological progress. This term, usually used in relation to advanced space engineering, nevertheless seems fitting here, especially since Hiller designed the cover for the typescript of Introduction to Cosmonautics by Ary Sternfeld (1905-1980). With his open mind and innovative take on the world, Hiller not only believed in progress - he took part in it, scrupulously and patiently perfecting his manual and mechanical practices. Hiller's artistic legacy is surrounded by a magical aura. He created cosmoses of the senses. The deeper we look into them, the more we become addicted to them. In this narrative, the human figure is doomed from the outset to be lost to the elements and the ruthlessness of machines. Shapes and forms are totally subject to the decisions of the one who created them. Each of these four heliographic compositions constituted a field in which the artist manoeuvred between the possibilities and the limitations of abstraction.

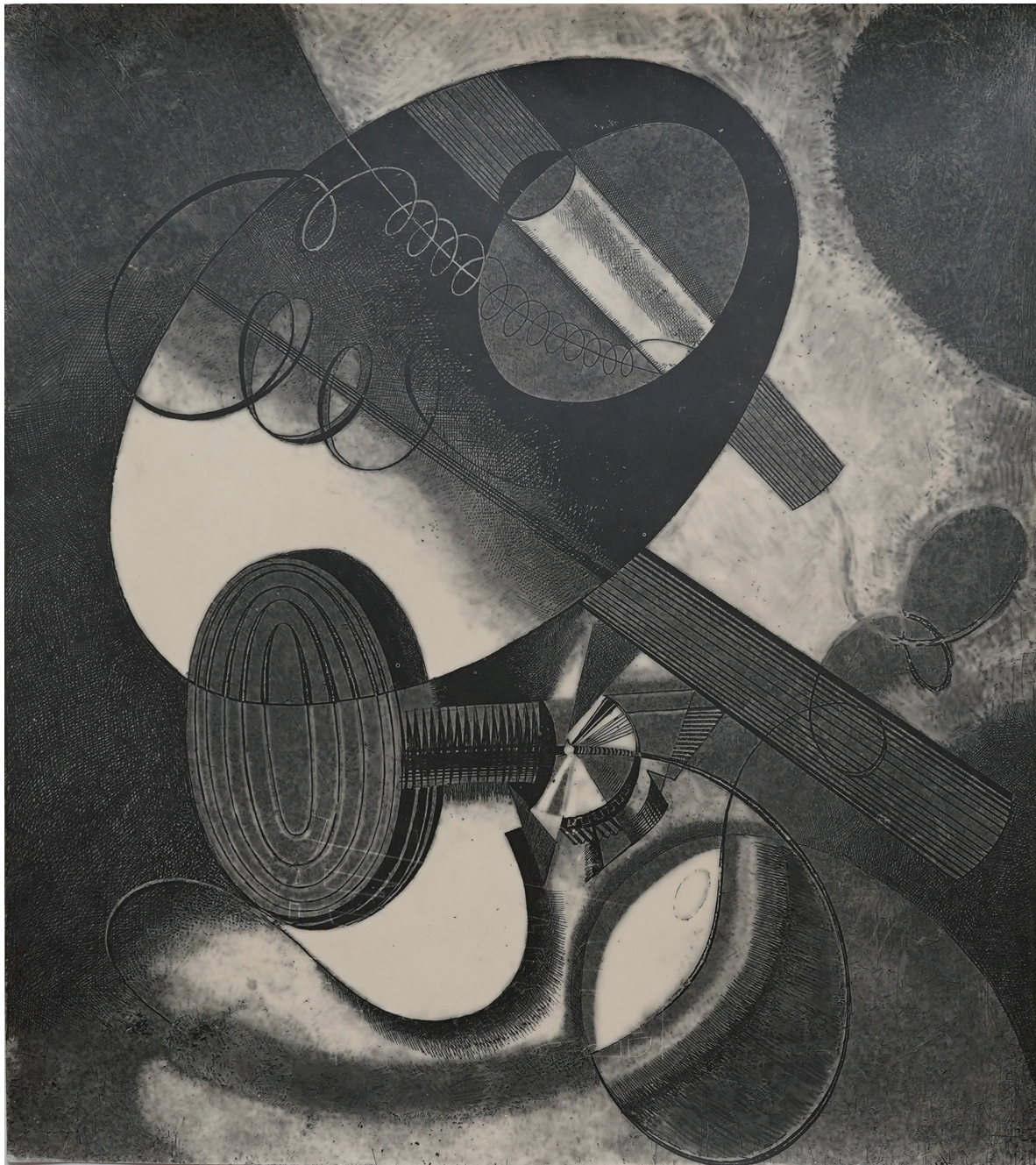




Heliographic Composition (XLI)

c. 1933, before October 1934
heliograph on photographic paper
23.7 × 18 cm

We seem to be looking at objects that are too small to be seen with the human eye, but can be observed through a microscope. Chemical substances spread across the surface, traces of experiments that were not run in a laboratory, but in the artist's workshop. Hiller studied chemistry for a short while at the Technical College in Darmstadt, and this may be important in the context of this composition. In this artistic-chemical reaction, forms burst, shapes crack, spilling their insides across the surface of the photographic paper. This is a work saturated with drasticity. The dynamic is dictated by anxiety and haste. Everything swirls, flees, spreads out, spills and scatters.



Heliographic Composition (XXIX)

c. 1936-1937
heliograph on photographic paper
31.5 × 28 cm

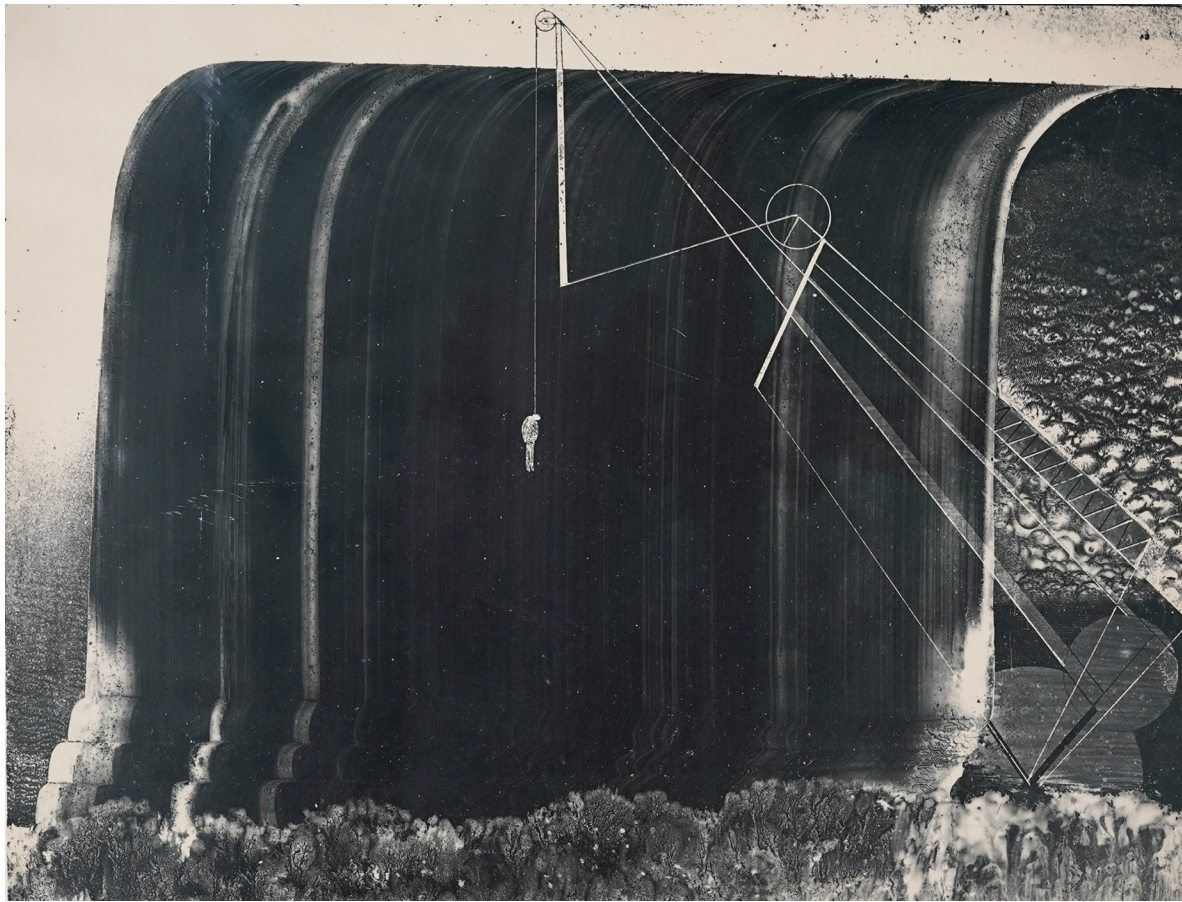
The composition features two mechanical elements reminiscent of the process of constructing a device. But Hiller scatters them about freely, making the scene somewhat surreal. Screws, springs and metal pipes are suspended in space within an abstract system, yet their function is not utilitarian, but aesthetic. Their qualities are emphasised with circles, curves and varying intensities of black, white and grey. The artist seeks to evoke our wonder, in a spirit of technological sublime. The suggested movement of the individual parts brings to mind a factory full of noise and commotion.



Heliographic Composition (XXXVI)

c. 1936-1937
heliograph on photographic paper
39.8 × 29.8 cm

Set against a black, cosmic void, the artist set out the course of the Milky Way, which emerges from the darkness of geometric spatial forms. Disks, cones and circles interact, brought to life by the light of the Sun and the Moon. The heavenly bodies generating that glow are here treated schematically. Rays connect with the figures through white lines reminiscent of seismographic readings. The lines seem to transmit energy, setting the whole arrangement in motion. Hiller calculated the paths his abstract objects were to take in these extra-terrestrial depths, just as pioneer Ary Sternfeld calculated the orbits of rockets and satellites. But in this cosmos everything is arranged in accordance with the artist's vision. Every detail has its place, almost as if in a mathematical-astronomical equation, and a useful instrument for solving the equation is imagination.



Heliographic Composition (XL) The Hanged Man

c. 1932-1934, before 1935
heliograph on photographic paper
39 × 29 cm

The central figure in the composition is a man who hanged himself on the cable of an enormous crane. Yet this small, white silhouette is dominated by a monumental wall, like a waterfall of stone, which, when it reaches the reservoir at the bottom, turns into foam that spreads across the bottom part of the picture. In the place where the foam sprays up, the falling water seems to imitate the base of an ancient column. As presented here, human life is caught between the ruthlessness of the elements and the brutality of the machine. The impression of anxiety and powerlessness is intensified by the play of light and shade.



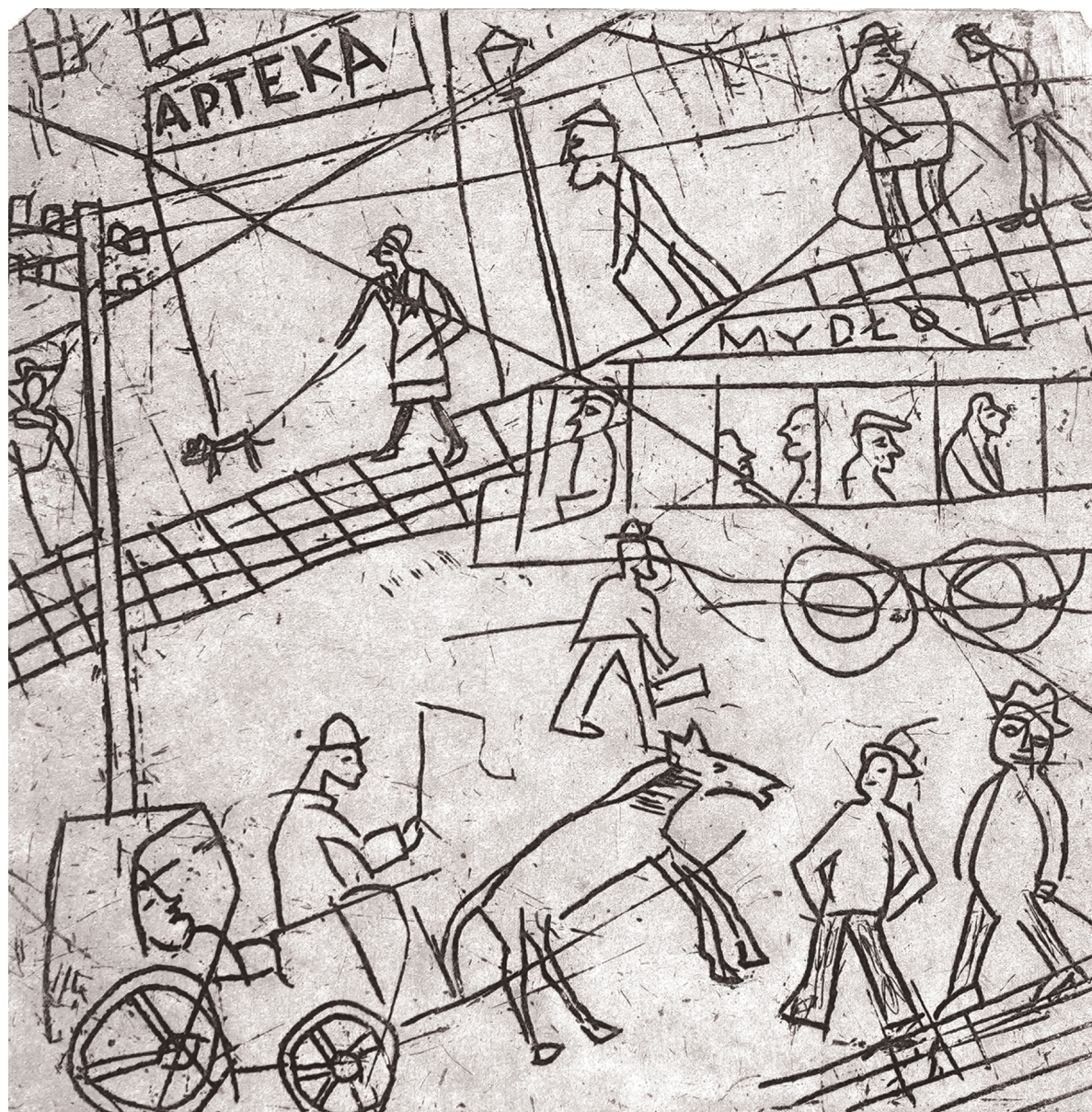
Leopold Lewicki

Agnieszka Salamon-Radecka

Leopold Lewicki was born on 7 August 1906 in the village of Burdionkowiec, in what today is the Ternopil Oblast of Ukraine, to a Polish-Ukrainian family. Growing up in the multicultural, multiethnic environment of the Eastern Borderlands of the old Polish Republic profoundly affected his world view and artistic outlook. From 1925-1932, he studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow (AFA), in the studios of masters of the Young Poland movement: Władysław Jarocki (1879-1965), Józef Mehoffer (1869-1946) and Fryderyk Pautsch (1877-1950). Around the beginning of 1931, he went on a scholarship to the Parisian atelier of Józef Pankiewicz (1866-1940). There, he also developed radical political and social views, becoming a zealous supporter of communism. For taking part in a demonstration at the Communards' Wall in Paris in 1931, he was banished from France. After returning to Poland, he continued studying, including at the graphic studio of the AFA, which since 1929 had been run by Pankiewicz and Jan Wojnarski (1879-1937). There he learned the intricacies of the craft, and alongside painting, graphics became one of his main means of artistic expression. Lewicki's creative work was accompanied by political and social engagement, and this largely determined his future. June of 1932 proved to be a turning point. At the year-end AFA student show, Lewicki's graphic compositions - which Wojnarski had nominated for distinction - not only failed to find favour in the eyes of the General Body of Professors: they were considered a political provocation. Particularly shocking was the radical subject matter of the graphics, which dealt with the reality of Krakow society at that time. Lewicki's works, and those of two of his peers, Franciszek Jaźwiecki (1900-1946) and Stanisław Osostowicz (1906-1939), were removed from the exhibition. Lewicki was arrested and accused of communist agitation. Luckily, the police didn't manage to confiscate his 'wrong-minded' graphic prints or plates, which were stored at the academy until 1934. Following these events, in the autumn of 1932

Lewicki and Osostowicz were expelled from the AFA. But this provided an impulse for consolidating the Krakow Group, which came to be known as the last group of Polish avant-garde artists between the wars. Its members combined strongly left-wing views with a fascination for avant-garde artistic trends.

In the Krakow Group, Lewicki largely devoted himself to graphic art, and his work comprises two distinct periods: in Krakow from around 1930 to the outbreak of World War II in 1939, and in Lviv from after 1945 until his death in 1973 (mainly etchings and linocuts). In the first period he made about 90 graphic compositions, primarily using metallic techniques (etchings, aquatints, drypoints). He was a master of small, almost intimate compositions in which, by modest means, he conveyed a broad spectrum of emotions. He developed a recognisable, individual style that drew on the achievements of the contemporary art of the first decades of the 20th century; his works show influences from cubism, expressionism, avant-garde constructivism and surrealism. His graphic output is clearly distinct from that of other interbellum artists working in the same field.



Outskirts

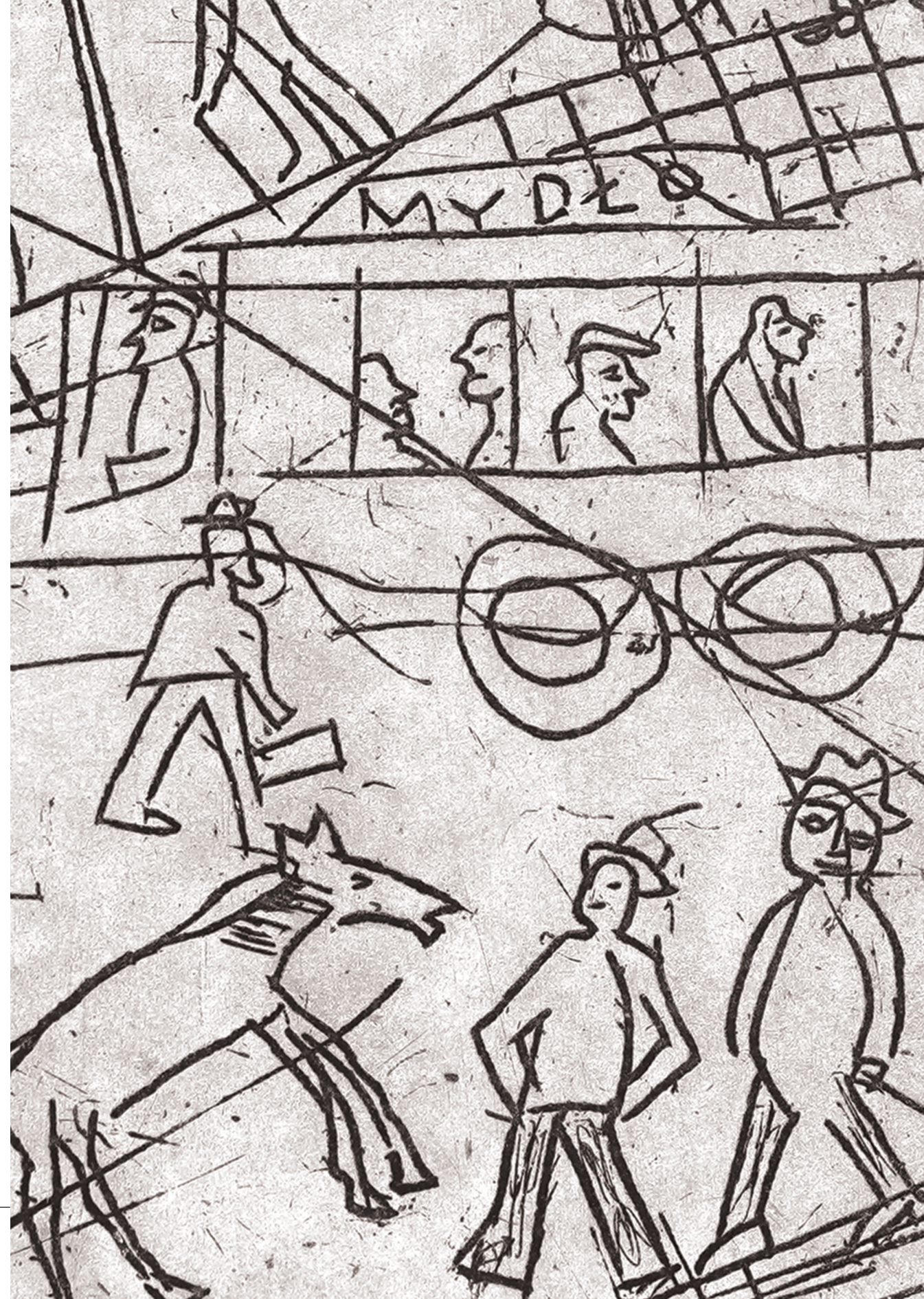
c. 1930
drypoint on paper
21 × 19 cm



Trainstation

c. 1930
drypoint on paper
19 × 20.5 cm

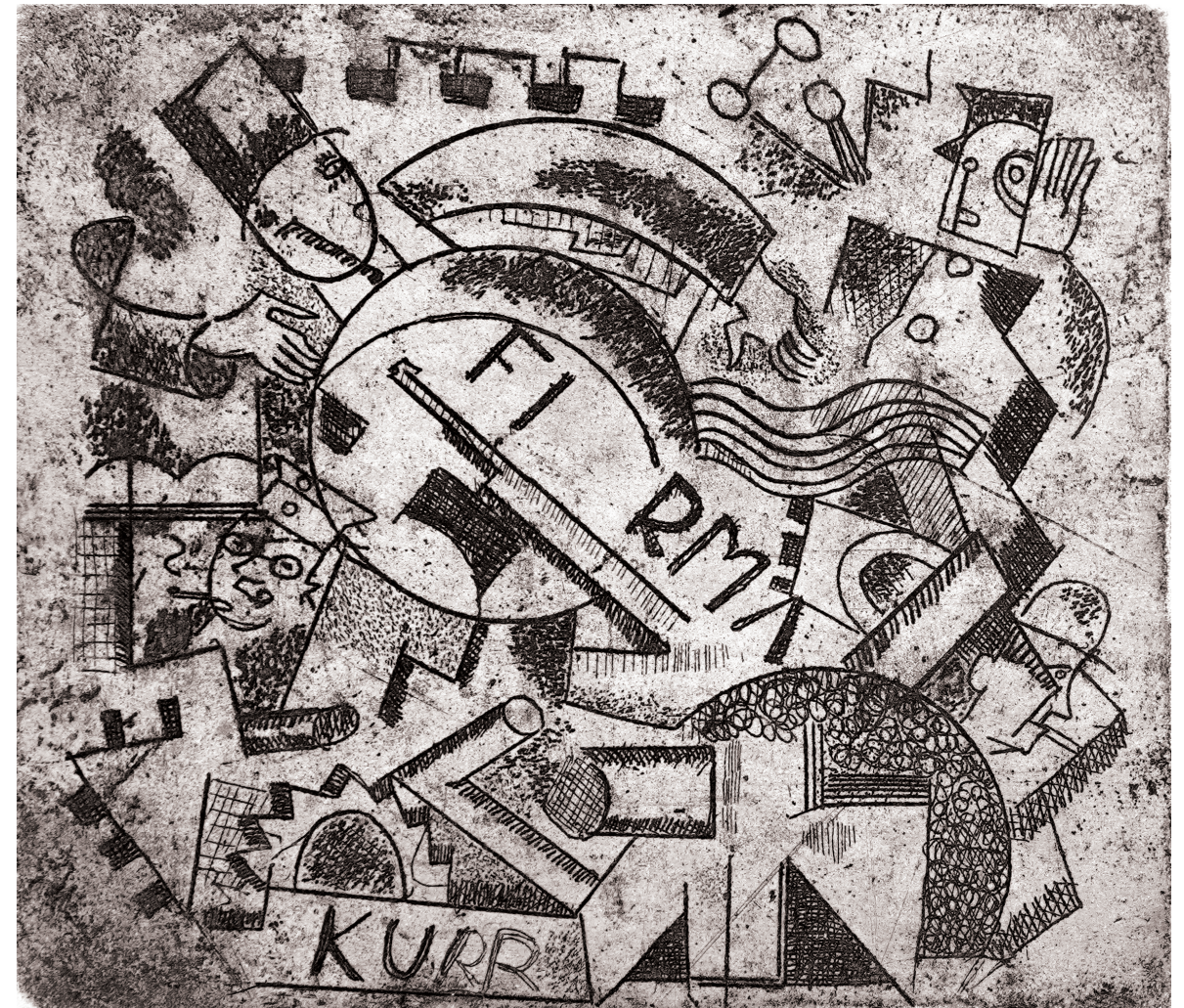
These pre-war graphics by Lewicki features a certain stylistic duality. The compositions *Trainstation* and *Outskirts* represent a trend that is narrative (also known as journalistic). Lewicki took his subject matter directly from the daily existence of the poorest inhabitants of Kraków, and in this way these graphics answered the demand for social engagement and political agitation. This was assumed to be art for the 'masses', carrying a simple message every 'ordinary' person should be able to read. The low cost of making graphic plates and the ease of producing large numbers of prints made it possible for that message to reach a wider audience than was the case with other forms. At the same time, this involved a paradox - techniques in metal were more exclusive than, for example, the woodcuts or linocuts used for similar purposes by the German Expressionists. In his compositions, Lewicki employed modest means of expression, primarily masterful - even single - lines. The dynamic of these images results from the abundant use of diagonals. The primitive level of craft - which was completely deliberate, since Lewicki had had thorough training as a graphic artist and had obtained the recognition of his teachers - was intended to increase the revolutionary message. At the same time, like the dominance of ugliness and crudeness, it was an expression of rebellion against worn-out schemes and academic training. At the beginning of the 20th century, the German Expressionists had employed similar means, and their graphic work influenced Lewicki significantly. The delicate note of caricature and of the grotesque in these works is reminiscent of German artists connected with the Weimar Republic (1919-1933): George Grosz (1893-1959), Otto Dix (1891-1969) and Max Beckmann (1884-1950); like Lewicki, they took a critical view of the socio-political reality surrounding them in Germany after the First World War.





Factory

c. 1930
drypoint on paper
22 × 19 cm



Company

c. 1930
drypoint on paper
21 × 16 cm

A development and consequence of the narrative tendencies in Lewicki's graphic work was a 'constructive-geometricising' current that appeared in the 1930s. The compositions in this vein, *Firma* (Firm) and *Fabryka* (Factory), were a transitional phase from an art that was realistic to the proletarian art of the future: geometric abstraction. Lewicki had had the same bitter experience as others before him who had struggled against the hermeticism of avant-garde art. Art that was revolutionary, and which should therefore be accessible to the widest possible audience - including the uneducated - was often rejected by that very audience as something weird, because of its difficult, innovative form. It needed an appropriate 'introduction', and this was to be provided by hybrid compositions that combined elements of both representative and geometrical art, while the subject matter remained within the field of 'proletarian' issues. At the same time, Lewicki broadened the scope of his means of expression. Using mainly small, dynamic lines, he also added textural effects, including by combining etching with aquatint. He stacked the elements of the composition and employed a simultaneity of the planes of which they were built, achieving an effect of *horror vacui*. Avoiding strong contrasts of black and white, he toned the still-unetched surface of his plates with paint. This allowed him to obtain nuances of grey and create a mood of dejection. These dynamic, diagonally-based compositions of fragmentary human figures woven into geometric, 'industrial' forms were also a pessimistic statement on modern man becoming a cog in the capitalist machine.





Prayer

c. 1930
drypoint on paper
22 × 15.5 cm

Social and revolutionary subjects did not exhaust Lewicki's catalogue of artistic interests, for we can also find compositions that are almost mystical, with religious content. This image of the crucified Christ with other figures praying at his feet was created using lines that are sparse, synthetic - almost as if drawn in a single movement of the hand. The artist depicts the dual nature of Christ, who is both human and divine, by means of two attributes - the crown of thorns around Jesus' head, which is at the same time his halo (in the upper, 'divine' part of the composition), and the exaggeratedly large nail (in the lower, 'earthly' part), which doesn't seem to fix Jesus to the cross, but to the ground. Thus, in Lewicki's interpretation Christ is almost torn between what is divine and what is human. The uniform greyness of the background, achieved by toning the plate, creates a mood of quiet and mystery, but also of resignation. Christological subjects were immensely popular among the German Expressionists during the First World War. They provided a pretext for speaking about the dramatic conditions people were confronted with in the ongoing civilizational catastrophe - for this was how the global conflict was perceived. The presence of this current in the work of Lewicki, who as of 1931 was a devout follower of communism, may be a clue as to the primary sources of his graphics and his earlier fascination with the work of the German Expressionists.

Józef Doskowski

Małgorzata Ciacek,
Karolina Potocka,
Małgorzata Starz

Józef Doskowski depicted the world with reference to the formal achievements of European avant-garde movements, interpreting them through the prism of his own artistic sensibility. He described himself as “a Formist”, emphasising the closeness of his work to the concept of Formism - a trend that drew on the achievements of Cubism, Expressionism and Futurism, as well as native folk art. His aim was to pursue ‘pure form’ by employing planes of unified colours, deforming shapes, and breaking away from traditional representations of space.

The poetic and inventive nature of Doskowski’s work was appreciated by Władysław Strzemiński, the initiator and main organiser of the unique International Collection of Modern Art, which included works by over 75 artists, including Hans Arp, Max Ernst, Fernand Léger, Pablo Picasso, Enrico Prampolini and Louis Marcoussis. From among the 15 Polish artists represented, in addition to Katarzyna Kobro, Henryk Stażewski and Karol Hiller, four painters from the Formist circle were awarded prizes: Leon Chwistek, Tytus Czyżewski, Józef Doskowski and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. Strzeminski considered Formism to be ‘the beginning of modern art in Poland’ and saw Doskowski’s work as an important complement to the achievements of the world avant-garde.

Doskowski graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow in 1920. After his studies, he returned to his family estate in Strzeszkowice, a small village in the south-western region of Poland, where he lived until the end of the Second World War. He was a well-known figure in the whole area - some age-old residents of the Strzeszkowice area remember the artist as follows:

“That painter, Doskowski, rode a wonderful bicycle, nobody had one like it, always in jackboots, he looked dignified, all the ladies were going after him, but he was a scandalmonger, we used to go and peep at him as he bathed naked in the stream and we would run away with a squeal when he splashed us.”

The uniqueness poetic quality of Doskowski’s painting is reflected in the fact that formally, the artist draws on modern trends, but on the semantic level he escapes from them completely. Progress, speed, mechanisation - he associates these with soullessness, destruction, the loss of the human element. Doskowski creates a world of interpenetrating meanings, attempting to illustrate the content of concepts such as dynamism, chivalry, feelings of loneliness or victory, drawing attention to the pointlessness of war and violence. After the Second World War, disillusioned with the reality he found himself in, in which art was supposed to serve socialist ideology, he gave up his participation in artistic life entirely and devoted all his energy to literature and philosophy.

Theatre was very dear to Doskowski, as he left behind thousands of pages of futuristic theatre pieces, which need to be properly studied and are still not publicly available. In the 1920s, he often travelled to Zakopane, where, together with Witkacy, he formed the Formist Theatre, aimed at bringing the idea of “pure form” into reality. Often on the back of works on paper, which are largely scenographic imaginings, there are fragments of novels and philosophical treatises written by the artist. In one of them, Doskowski the philosopher included his thesis on the possibility of exchanging fragments of the soul between individuals. His painting *The Ballerina*, belonging to the International Collection of Modern Art, was lost during the war. Later, a fragment of it that was visible in the photographic documentation of the exhibition was attributed to Leon Chwistek, dooming Doskowski to oblivion for many years. After almost a hundred years, in the catalogue of the artist’s monographic exhibition entitled *The Formist* at the Olszewski|Ciacek gallery, Professor Janusz Zagrodzki corrected this mistake for the first time, thereby restoring this outstanding artist to his rightful place in the history of art.



Towards the Peaks

c. 1920
gouache on paper
17 × 23 cm

The main heroes of the world created by Doskowski are characters from fairy tales and legends, in particular Lady Godiva and Don Quixote. Two riders about to fight a duel may symbolise the battle of ideas. Of humanism - in the form of a man on a brown horse, and contemporaneity - a human-like creature riding a mechanical horse. *Towards the Peaks* is a story of courage and moral strength, about the unequal fight against what limits individual freedom, and the difficulties of the creator who strives for perfection, which can never be achieved. The interpenetration of lines, planes, and sharply-defined concrete shapes, indicating the directions in which the sensually perceived form moves, gives the shapes floating in space a magical "unity in multiplicity" comparable to the structure of a piece of music. The power of the message is contained in the rhythm of abstract forms.





Lances into the Battle

c. 1920
gouache on paper
14 x 22 cm

Two horsemen face each other in preparation for an attack. Doskowski - a master of building momentum - captures the moment just before the battle. On the left side of the painting, a warrior on horseback (closer to a real representation) defends his terrain, depicted in the form of abstractly painted figures resembling flaming towers collapsing amid smoke. In contrast, the black rider symbolises a futuristic war machine, wreaking havoc - depicted by suffocating, thick clouds of smoke that leave nothing behind. In the distance, in the centre of the composition, there is a house on a hill. Faced with the conflict of the figures in the foreground, this simple building placed in a poetic landscape is like a fortress, a symbol of a place worth striving for. In the convention of scenographic fantasy, Doskowski presents the eternal motif of the struggle between good and evil, in the context of the real world shown in the form of a home.



A. B. C

c. 1920
pencil on paper
14 × 22 cm



The artist incorporates the titular letters A, B and C repeatedly, each letter written differently, into a maze of abstract, interpenetrating forms and lines in space. A dragon's head emerges from the cacophony of shapes, swirling in the very centre of the composition.

The fantastic combination of letters and figures seems to constitute the rest of the magical creature's body. From this perspective, the capital letters A and C take on the shape of extended wings. The overlapping planes, lines and concrete shapes, with clouds of smoke rising between them, resemble a complex, modern machine with steam rising from the pistons, and the whole drawing conveys an impression of movement and momentum. Through the lettering, Dostowski alludes to the beginning and dynamic development of language and form. The work contains a number of references to legends and magical figures, typical of the artist's work, derived from his interest in the theatre. In A.B.C. Dostowski negates realism and the illusionistic tradition, and distances himself from modernist utopian ideas in a return to mystical symbolism.

Sitting

c. 1924
gouache on paper
22.5 × 31 cm



Doskowski portrayed a sitting woman several times throughout his career, including in this painting, *Interior*, from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw. There is a striking similarity between the silhouette of the figure and the shape and colour of the seat. This may suggest that the works are conceptual sketches for a similar scene in the theatre.

The composition was probably created in accordance with the principles of the theory of Strophism described by Leon Chwistek. Strophism was a continuation and development of Formism that introduced mathematical logic into painting. It was based on the division of the picture plane into geometric drawing and colour zones - the former characterised by the repetition of the same, dominant shape, and the latter by the repetition of just one colour.

The woman is portrayed alone against the background of a colourful plane of abstract shapes; the colours and forms, divorced from their original context, reflect the individual's sense of loneliness. The cool colour palette, the undefinable facial expression and the elongated silhouette enhance the impression of alienation, and the unreality of the performance. There are no references to material reality, which has been replaced by geometric abstraction. The woman's surroundings may be an illustration of spiritual reality - real but intangible, something that was particularly dear to the artist-philosopher.

School of Wood Industry in Zakopane

Anna Maria Leśniewska

In the history of European art, the 19th century was important in that there was a proliferation of searching for national styles. In Polish art, that search was related to independence and the weight of the cultural achievements of a nation deprived of statehood. A key role was played by folk culture. People became fascinated with it, and felt compelled to understand and admire everything connected with folklore - which became a weapon in the fight for national consciousness, as well as the basis for the creation of the national style known as Zakopane style invented by Stanisław Witkiewicz - an architect, painter, writer and art critic. The style grew out of studies of the culture and art of the Podhala region. Witkiewicz found his models in construction, in equipment he came across in alpine huts, and in ethnographic collections in Zakopane at the end of the 19th century. Zakopane style was a development of Podhale building forms, equipment and ornamentation that served the needs of wealthy, modern people - a new conception of the Polish house and Polish architecture. The pristine beauty of the Tatra Mountains, and the highlanders - perceived as a people unspoiled by civilization and endowed with a sense of liberty and self-worth - became

reasons for the popularity of Zakopane, where in 1876 the Wood-carving School founded the Tatra Society. From the beginning, the society trained both carpenters and sculptors, and its programme was the object of long-standing ideological disputes. Under Witkiewicz, the society was a place where designs in the Zakopane style were executed. Later, after the school became the State Wood Industry School, in the years 1923-1927 it was under the direction of the artist Karol Stryjeński. His programme reforms involved students working continually with the sculptural raw material, and teachers taking great care over the talent of every student. They broke away from the prevailing educational practice of copying pseudo-classicist plaster models, whether of Swiss or Witkiewicz's forms. This led to a change in style, which again inspired local highland creativity. A fascination with Cubism, and especially the indigenous Formism (a Polish art movement from 1917-1922 that proclaimed the prevalence of form in works of art), made possible a transformation of folk inspirations. The results were appreciated during the International Exhibition of Decorative Art and Modern Industry in Paris in 1925: students' sculptures won the Grand Prix. From these inspirations, this specific style features an interpenetration at various angles of contrasting planes, geometric rhythms of arrangements of solids, strong chiaroscuro, and a clear tendency towards decoration, combined with an attachment to folk ornament. In later years, when Stryjeński's programme was continued by the outstanding pedagogues and sculptors Wojciech Brzega and Roman Olszowski, the school's output featured increasingly Cubistic forms seen as a Polish variant of Art Deco. Unsigned, dynamically composed, prismatically-cut solids became the hallmark of the school, and one of the Polish products exported to global exhibitions, including in Paris (1937) and New York (1939).

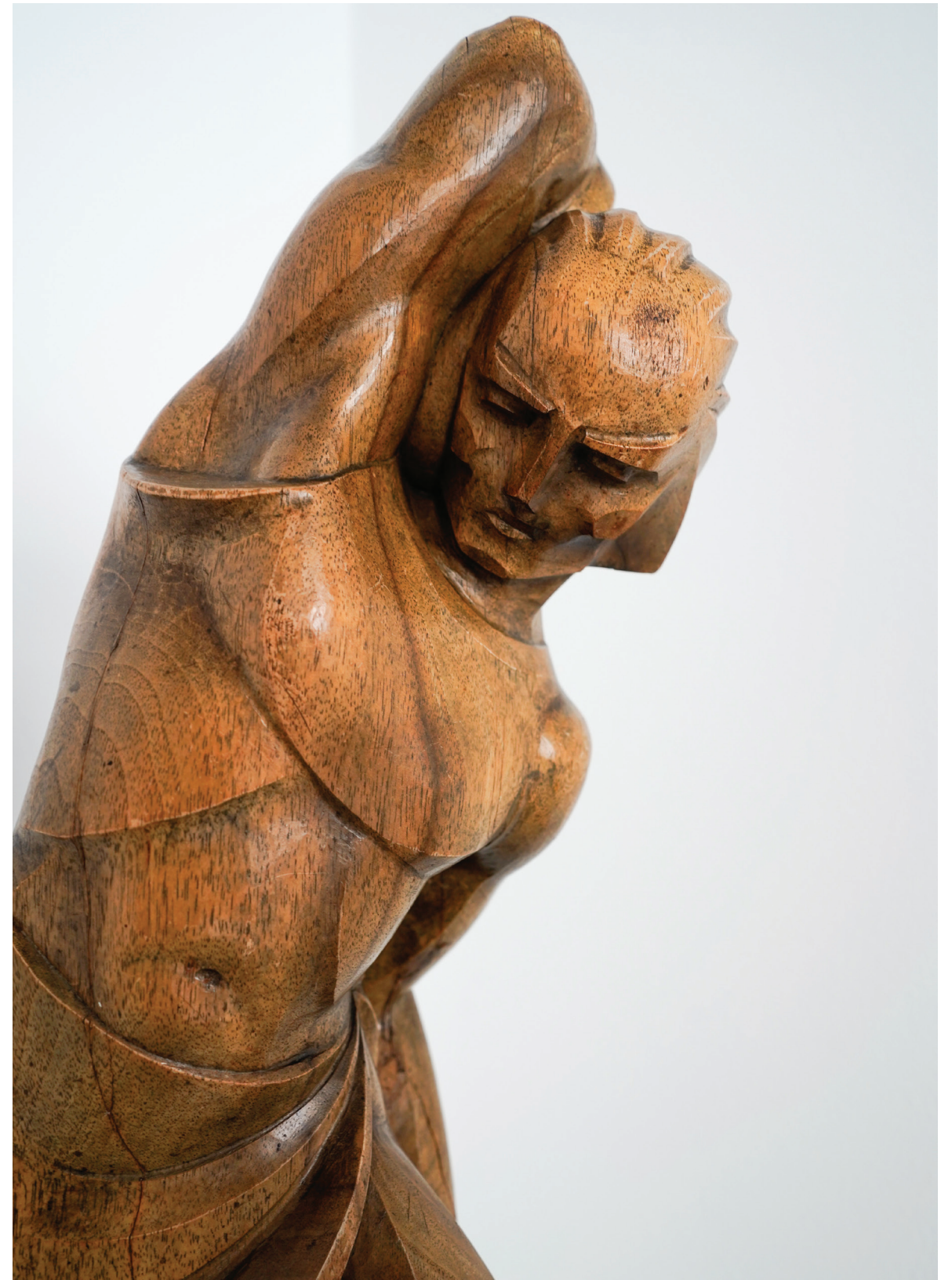


Warrior

1930s
linden wood
65 × 17.8 × 19.8 cm

The sculpture *Warrior* is obviously associated with what came out of the State Wood Industry School, particularly during the directorship of Adam Dobrodzicki (1929-1936), when Roman Olszowski was teaching. This fully modelled figurative composition shows a standing warrior whose body is conceived in an exaggerated pose: a highly accentuated contrapposto and twisting of the body render it dynamic. In his raised right arm, bent over his back, he holds a sword, while in his left hand he holds onto a shield standing between his legs. Both the sharply-cut articulation of the head, including the hair, and the arrangement of the fabric flowing around the body are treated highly rhythmically.

The sculpture bears no author's signature. It seeks to be recognisably schematic, as was manifest in the style characteristic of the school after 1925 that constituted a variant of Polish Decorative Art. Surviving figures by students from the 1930s, built of interpenetrating, cut planes, are a direct reference. The rhythm of *Warrior* is almost natural; its dismembered structure creates a chiaroscuro and an attractive play of plasticity. The piece represents a synthesis of forms deriving from folk legends with Cubistic Formism. Carved in linden, this is a clearly legible, freely flowing arrangement of soft forms and dynamic, rhythmic areas emphasised by the masterly use of the knots contained in the wood.





Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz

Stefan Okołowicz

When photographing the landscapes of the Tatra Mountains, fourteen-year-old Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz abandoned the traditional landscape panorama to discover the world of detail. He restricted his images of nature to expressively composed fragments of nature. Ten years later, from 1910-1914, he took a similar approach when portraying people: steadily narrowing the frame until it contained only the eyes, nose and mouth - an epoch-making compositional breakthrough. The 'tight frame' changed the canon of portraiture, and is a distinguishing feature of Witkiewicz's work. Witkacy recorded his facial studies on 13 × 18 cm glass negatives, from which he made contact prints. This resulted in the faces seeming almost larger than in life. The impact of the images is heightened by the pioneering compositions.

Witkacy photographed people in particular spiritual states. He was not interested in capturing a mood or making typical, naturalistic portraits. He seems to have been more concerned with making photographic records of people who showed symptoms of an extraordinary state approaching a metaphysical experience, a state we know was fundamental for him, that is: the feeling of 'personal unity' and the identity of every *Particular Existence* with itself when faced with the *Mystery of Existence*, which remains inaccessible to knowledge. Witkacy expressed both his subject's psyche and the universal essence of humanity. The subjects in his portraits retain their individual features, yet come to resemble one another. What the photographs all share, what endows them with their unique style, is the living spirit of the artist himself.

A skillful handler of the medium, he was able to penetrate his model's inner life and release the shutter at the crucial moment. His subjects do not look into the lens intruding upon their face, nor at the photographer, but towards a limitless horizon somewhere above the camera.

They gaze "with bulging eyes into some kind of world others cannot see" is how Witkacy described them.

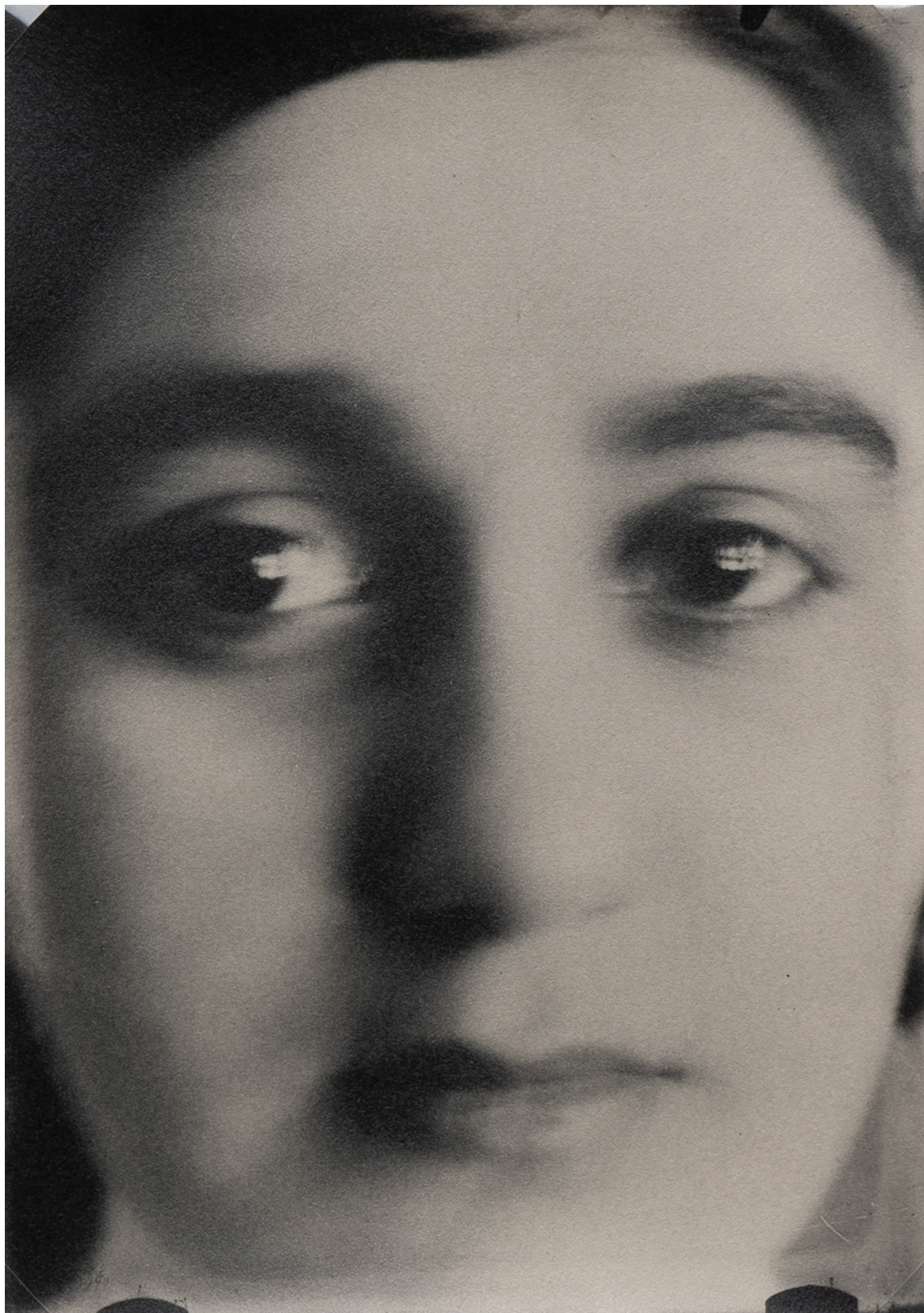
It is as if his models had been hypnotised by him, yielding to the aura he deliberately created around himself. They reveal what may be their true face, allowing "the soul to emerge".

No one knows how Witkacy led his models into this state in which they offered him their souls. In the photographs, our attention is caught by their wide-open, moist eyes. It is in them precisely that we find a reflection of the truth about the sitter's Particular Existence. The models' faces are lit by window-light falling from the side, and the photographs are slightly blurred due to the long exposure time used.

"They are always an expression of a particular self that spoke to the artist and opened itself up to him at the moment the portrait was created," noted the artist's friend Stefan Szuman.

This was in reference to Witkacy's pastels, but applies equally to the photographs.

Witkacy chose his subjects from within his immediate circle, people whose personalities interested him, such as his wife Jadwiga, Tadeusz Langier, Anna Oderfeld, Artur Rubinstein, and others.



Anna Oderfeld

c. 1912,
gelatin silver print
on photographic paper
17.5 × 12.7 cm

After a stormy romance with the actress Irena Solska, ten years his senior (described in his first autobiographical tale, *The 622 Downfalls of Bungo*), Witkacy decided to marry sixteen-year-old Anna Oderfeld, ten years his junior, the daughter of a well-known Warsaw attorney. Witkacy's friend, the doctor and philosopher Ignacy Wasserberg, was married to Anna's elder sister, Karolina, and their good match is probably what inspired the artist to take up with Wasserberg's sister-in-law. The marriage never happened; nevertheless, the photograph of Anna's face counts among Witkacy's most successful works.

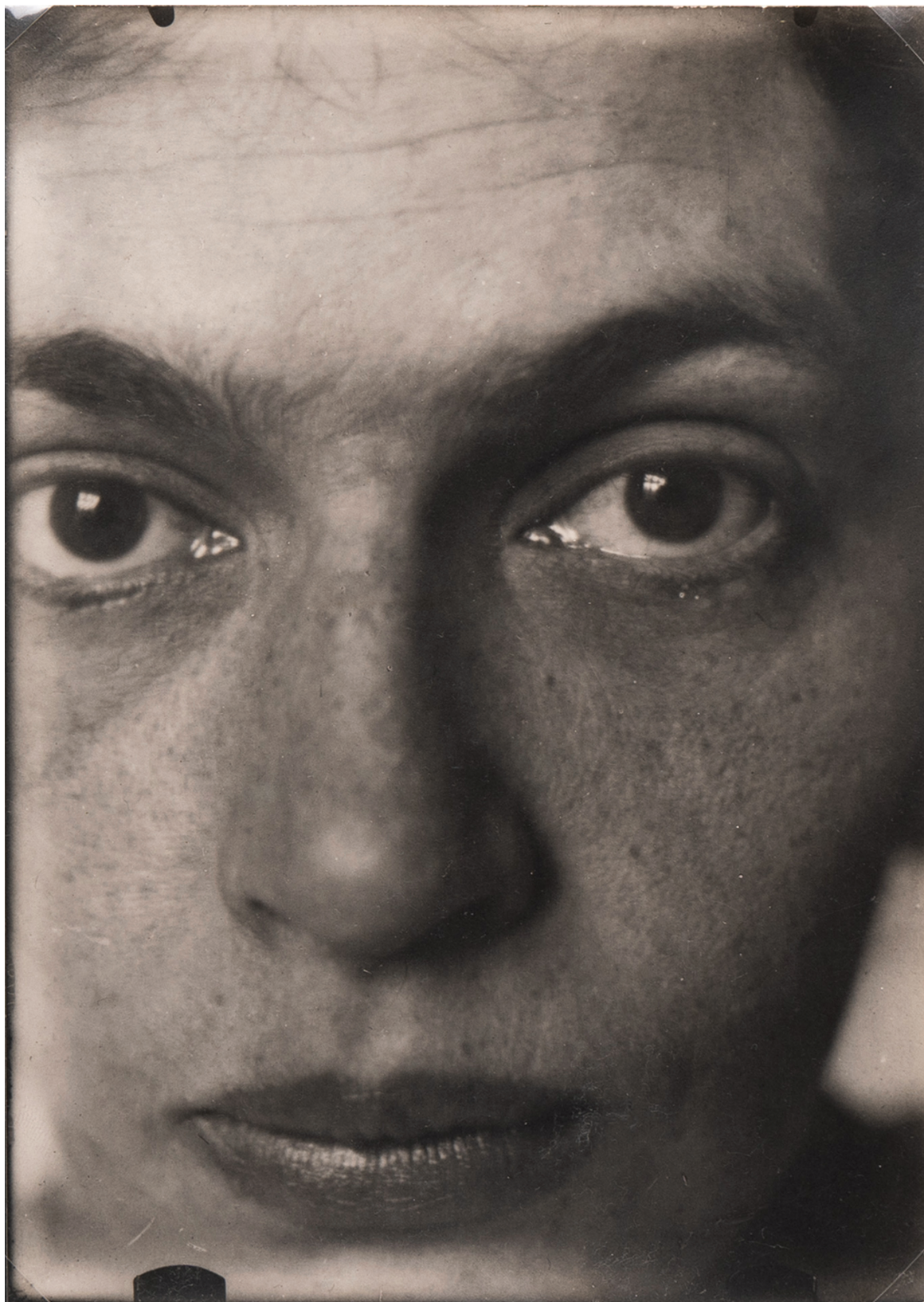


Artur Rubinstein

c. 1912,
gelatin silver print
on photographic paper
17.8 × 12.9 cm

The pianist Artur Rubinstein (1887-1982) became friends with Witkacy in the years 1913-1914, and often took part in the colourful parties on the art scene in Zakopane. The tight frame of the twenty-year-old Rubinstein is one of the most interesting of the photographs.





Jadwiga Unrug Witkiewicz

c. 1912,
gelatin silver print
on photographic paper
17.8 × 12.8 cm

In March 1923, Witkacy married Jadwiga (known as Nina) (1893-1968), from the well-known aristocratic Unrug family. The portrait of her, made around the same time, is the last known photograph of the closely cropped type. Witkacy continued taking photographs, but thereafter made portraits only using painting media and pastels. The almost 1,300 letters he exchanged with Nina from 1923-1939 are extraordinarily interesting given their unconventional form and the biographical information they provide.



Tadeusz Langier

c. 1912,
gelatin silver print
on photographic paper
13 × 17.9 cm

Tadeusz Langier was himself a photographer, the author of a series of the best portraits of Witkacy, made around 1912, before World War I, and again in 1939, just a few months before the outbreak of World War II and the artist's suicide. Significantly, the most popular images of Witkacy are not the naturalistic, unposed pictures of his face deemed to bear the hallmarks of truth, but photographic masks. One such portrait by Langier, which shows Witkacy in Napoleon's costume staring into the lens with a deliberately tragic expression, has become the most frequently published image of the artist, a reference to the essence of what Witkacy conveyed, including catastrophism.



Marek Włodarski

Piotr Słodkowski

Before World War II, Marek Włodarski's name was Henryk Streng. He was a Polish Jewish modernist painter. In the 1920s and '30s he was active in Lviv, which, apart from Krakow and Warsaw, was the largest artistic centre in interbellum Poland, and one of the largest cities in East Central Europe. Streng lived in Krakidaly, the Jewish trading district, where low suburban culture flourished and many local traditions survived. During his studies at the Académie Moderne in Paris (1925-1926), he was part of the small group of Polish artists who had close contact with the French art scene of the day. In the second half of the 1920s, he made an intensive study of the aesthetics of Fernand Léger, combining that influence with inspirations from the Polish-Jewish culture of Lviv. In France, he also made the acquaintance of André Breton just after Breton had published his *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924) and *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1926). This contact with surrealism during its most dynamic phase of development stayed with him back in Lviv at the turn of the 1920s and '30s (surrealism was more widely received in Poland after 1945). Streng befriended writers active in the region such as Bruno Schulz and Debora Vogel; surrealism was as close to these poets as it was to visual artists. In 1930, he joined Artes (1929-1935), a left-wing avant-garde group holding that art should champion the rights of workers and the unemployed, victims of the Great Depression. They proposed a 'factual realism': paintings should display and contrast desirable and stigmatised facts about society within a single composition.

Streng spent the war in Lviv - in the ghetto, and outside, where he hid using the Polish surname Włodarski - and eventually in Stutthof concentration camp. He continued using his new identity after the war, as well, and became an important figure in the post-war art scene in Warsaw.

In recent years, Marek Włodarski has been rediscovered as a key artist in Polish and Central European modern art. In 2021, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, one of Poland's leading cultural institutions, put on a solo exhibition of his work.

Illustration for „Acacia Trees in Bloom” by Debora Vogel

1929
ink on paper
21 × 17.1 cm



Włodarski became friends with Debora Vogel, an outstanding Polish-Jewish writer, critic and art theorist, and gladly lent her works to use as illustrations for his books. The best example of this is the volume *Akacjes blien/Acacia Trees in Bloom*, published almost simultaneously in Yiddish (1935) and Polish (1936). Vogel's texts don't offer a cohesive image of the world; they are more of a montage of various fragments of daily life, a record of stereotypes, commonplace objects, nameless people and the visual clichés that surround them. It is no accident that an important figure in Vogel's writing is the mannequin, which accentuates the theatrical artificiality of the world and provides the reader with a wide range of cultural associations - from a surrealistic doll to a model on display in a shop window.

Vogel's vision corresponds well with Włodarski's drawing. We see a street full of workers. But they are not presented as a political force (as will be the case in the artist's work in the 1930s). For now, they are faceless residents of a big city, a place they share on equal terms with goods that are objects of desire. The ground floors of the buildings are taken up by enormous window displays advertising luxury goods and services. "A discovery of our times is the personality of objects," wrote Leger (1925). *Passersby, a street, a department store* - for both Vogel and Włodarski, all are full-fledged actors in the life of the modern city.

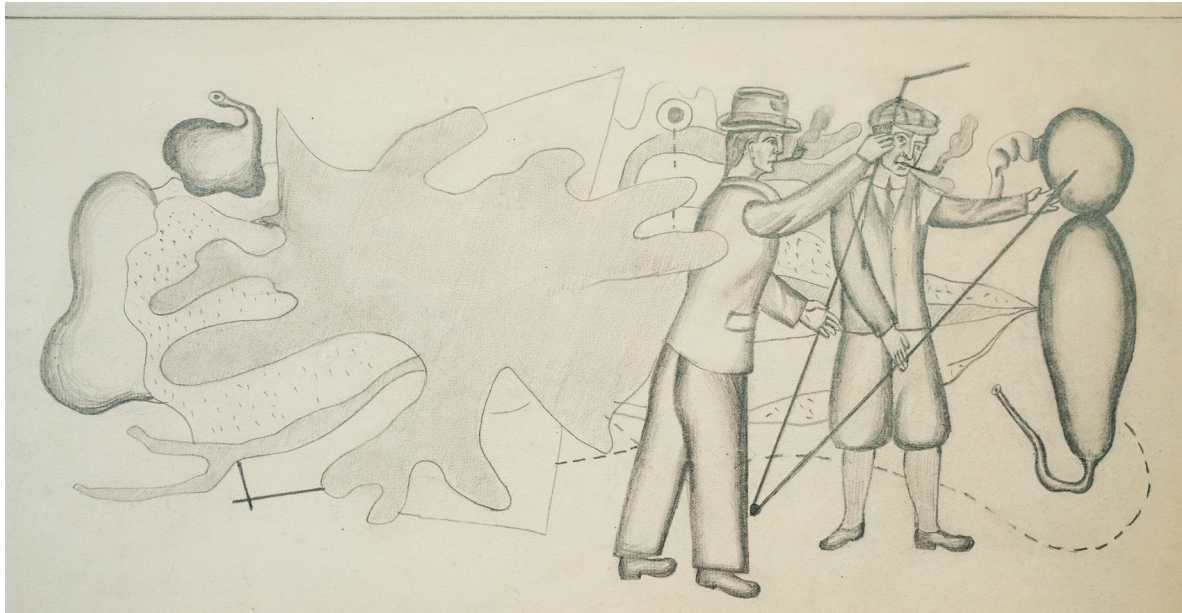


Cyclist

ca. 1926
pencil on paper
22 × 22 cm

Cyclist comes from Marek Włodarski's best-known period, when he was studying under Fernand Léger at the Académie Moderne in Paris (1925-1926), and when he painted his most famous Légeresque paintings on canvas, such as *Hairdresser* (1925) and *Man with a Gramophone* (1926), both universally acknowledged as outstanding examples of Polish modernism between the wars. Certainly, what connected *Cyclist* with those important works is its adaptation of certain aesthetic traits the French master was using at that time - primarily a characteristic 'machinisation' of the figure. In Léger's work, this resulted from his fascination with modern, urban life (the *esprit nouveau* trend), mass production and standardisation in art and architecture. The body of the cyclist, built of repeated geometric-cylindrical forms, clearly refers to those much-discussed ideas.

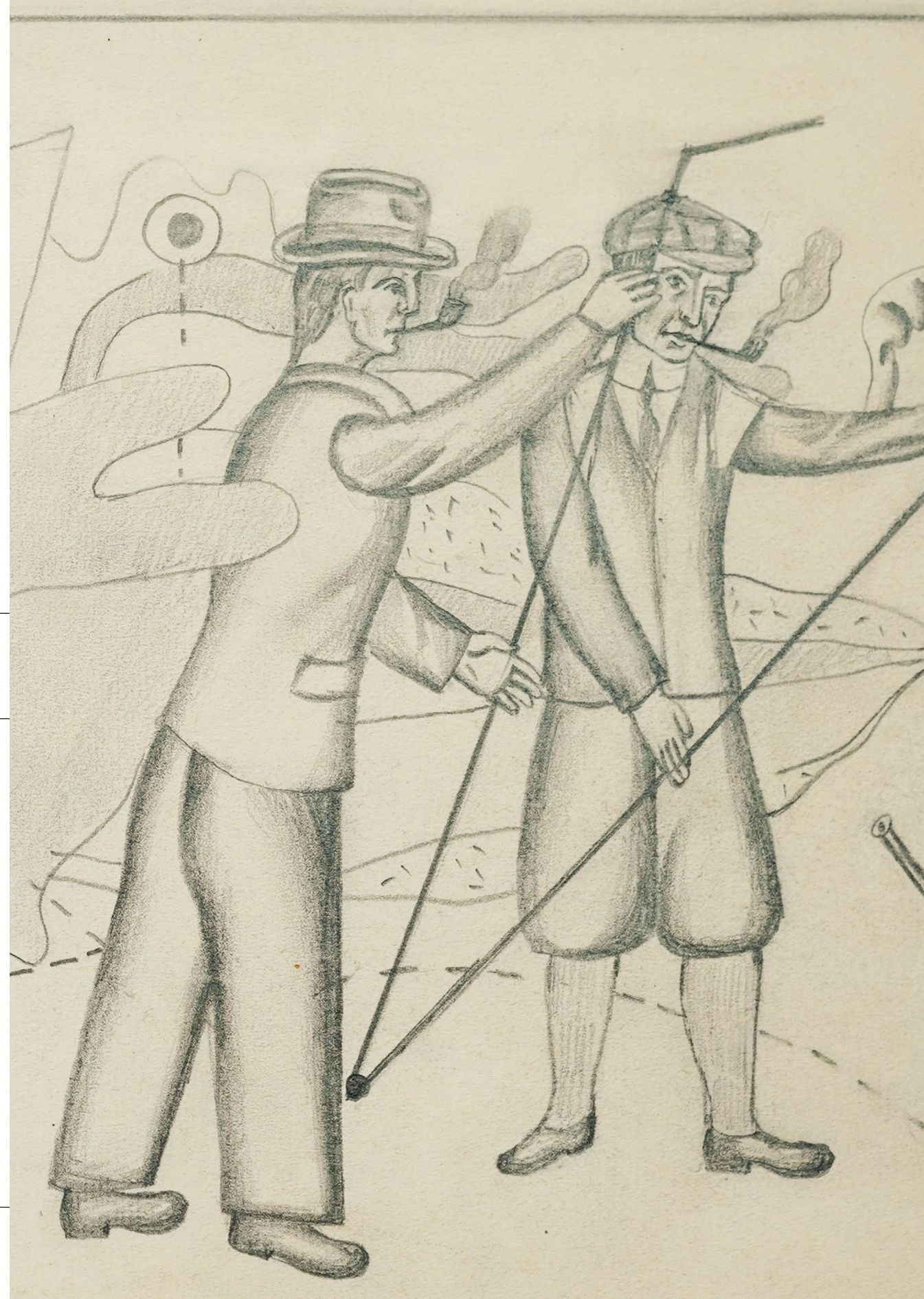
But does this mean that Włodarski was a mere imitator of his professor? Absolutely not! The whole Académie Moderne was conceived of as an arena for a creative exchange of ideas having global reach, and students from different parts of the world - from the United States to Japan - took from Léger what was closest to them in their own explorations. For Włodarski, as well, his Parisian fascination with modernity easily entered into a dialogue with Lviv's suburban and folk culture, inspired by the city's visual culture (shop signs), Jewish tradition, and motifs taken from lively street songs. In this world, the cyclist meets the local heroes of Włodarski's drawings and paintings: workers loading sacks, a janitor sweeping the street, customers in taverns.



Men with Pipes and Forms

1929
pencil on paper
26 × 42.5 cm

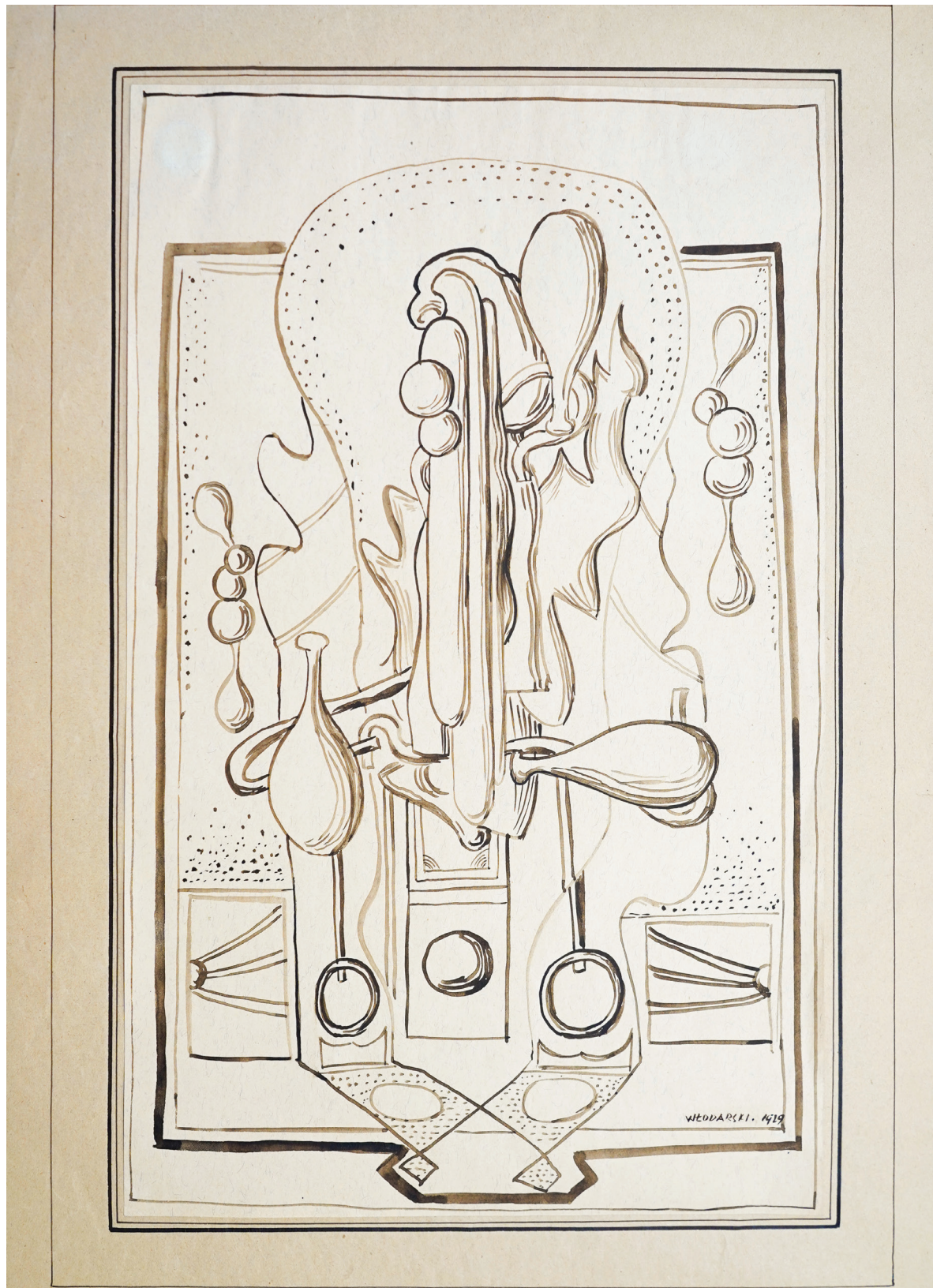
The drawing *Men with Pipes and Forms* clearly illustrates an important feature of Włodarski's work, namely, a frictionless coexistence of motifs and aesthetics schematically associated with various periods of his artistic output. The titular forms - some soft and rounded, some flat, some modelled in three-dimensional space - are very much a part of the means of expression he used in his surrealist works. In this drawing, though, those forms encounter a completely different way of making images, one that does not involve seeking an original subject or creating a poetic atmosphere but is based on figurative drawing understandable to a mass audience. The realistic figures of two men, one wearing a hat and one a cap, suggest an art that is socially engaged, one that Włodarski and the other members of the Artes group would develop most fully in the mid-1930s. Factual realism, as it would come to be called, will then be strongly critical of the social isolation of artists and the hermeticism of modernist art, often identified with, among other things, what the Lviv artists knew very well - surrealism. In this sense, *Men with Pipes and Forms* is an intriguing work, for it contains motifs from Włodarski's oeuvre that several years later would come to oppose one another.



Composition with Balloons

1929
ink on paper
28 × 40 cm

“A poet, an automaton and his Muse, a heroic horse at the sea’s edge, a hundred thousand doves, a startled steed and a drop of blood” - with this absurd set of diverse associations, contained in the manifesto of the Artes group (*Artes Brochure*, 1931), Marek Włodarski characterised the essence of his surrealist explorations. His concern was to conduct an intensive search for a original subject and to multiply objects in surprising configurations. That principle is clearly evident in *Composition with Balloons*, an unconventional image that does not provide an easy answer to the question: What does this picture mean? In fact, the balloons bear no sense we can readily grasp. Mounted in an openwork structure that maintains only a semblance of utility, they are above all a source of wonder for the viewer. They invoke consternation, they intrigue, they tempt us with a vision of an ephemeral world built out of rounded lines. It was the enigmatic poetry of surrealism that Włodarski was closest to.



exhibited works

1. Karol Hiller, *Heliographic Composition (XLI)*, c.1933, heliograph on photographic paper, 23.5 × 18 cm
2. Karol Hiller, *Heliographic Composition (XXXVI)*, c. 1936 - 1937, heliograph on photographic paper, 39.5 × 29.7 cm
3. Karol Hiller, *Heliographic Composition (XXIX)*, c. 1936 - 1937, heliograph on photographic paper, 31 × 28 cm
4. Karol Hiller, *Heliographic Composition (XL). The Hanged Man*, c. 1935 - 1937, heliograph on photographic paper, 30 × 39.5 cm
5. Leopold Lewicki, *Outskirts*, c. 1930, drypoint on paper, 21 × 19 cm
6. Leopold Lewicki, *Trainstation*, c. 1930, drypoint on paper, 19 × 20.5 cm
7. Leopold Lewicki, *Factory*, c. 1930, drypoint on paper, 22 × 19 cm
8. Leopold Lewicki, *Company*, c. 1930, drypoint on paper, 21 × 16 cm
9. Leopold Lewicki, *Prayer*, c. 1930, drypoint on paper, 22 × 15.5 cm
10. Józef Doskowski, *Towards the Peaks*, c. 1920, gouache on paper, 17 × 23 cm
11. Józef Doskowski, *Lances into the Battle*, c. 1920, gouache on paper, 14 × 22 cm
12. Józef Doskowski, *Sitting*, c. 1924, gouache on paper, 22.5 × 31 cm
13. Józef Doskowski, *A.B.C.*, c. 1920, pencil on paper, 14 × 22 cm
14. School of Wood Industry in Zakopane, *Warrior*, 1930s, linden wood, 65 × 17.8 × 19.8 cm
15. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Anna Oderfeld*, c. 1912, gelatin silver print on photographic paper, 17.5 × 12.7 cm
16. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Artur Rubinstein*, c. 1912, gelatin silver print on photographic paper, 17.8 × 12.9 cm
17. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Tadeusz Langier*, c. 1912, gelatin silver print on photographic paper, 13 × 17.9 cm
18. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Jadwiga Unrug Witkiewicz*, c. 1923, gelatin silver print on photographic paper, 17.8 × 12.8 cm
19. Marek Włodarski, *Out of Series of Illustration to Debora Vogel's Novel "Acacia Trees in Bloom"*, 1929, ink on paper, 21 × 17.1 cm
20. Marek Włodarski, *Cyclist*, c. 1926, pencil on paper, 22 × 22 cm
21. Marek Włodarski, *Men with Pipes and Forms*, 1929, pencil on paper, 26 × 42.5 cm
22. Marek Włodarski, *Composition with Balloons*, 1929, ink on paper, 28 × 40 cm

Karol Hiller

Heliographic Composition (XL)
The Hanged Man
c. 1935 - 1937
heliograph on photographic
paper
30 × 39.5 cm

Heliographic Composition (XLI)
c. 1933
heliograph on photographic
paper
23.5 × 18 cm

provenance

- Andrzej Rogowski Collection, Poland
- Private Collection, Poland

bibliography

Karnicka, Zenobia and Janina Ładnowska. *Karol Hiller (1891-1939). New vision*. Łódź: Art Museum in Łódź, 2003. Exhibition catalogue.

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Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery, *Karol Hiller. Heliographs 1931-1939*, 08.12-15.02.2019.

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Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery, *Karol Hiller. Heliographs 1931–1939*, 08.12–15.02.2019.

Heliographic Composition (XXIX)
c. 1936 - 1937
heliograph on photographic
paper
31 × 28 cm

provenance

- Andrzej Rogowski Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Warsaw
- Małgorzata Ciacek Collection, Warsaw

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Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Années 30 en Europe. Le temps menaçant 1929-1939*, 20.02-25.05.1997.

Brussels, Musée d'Ixelles, *a.r. artistes révolutionnaires de Łódź*, 17.10.2001-6.01.2002.

Warsaw, Palac Museum in Wilanów, *Latent capital. 20th century photography from the collection of Cezary Pieczyński*, 16.09-31.10.2010.

Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery, *Karol Hiller. Heliographs 1931-1939*, 08.12-15.02.2019.

Heliographic Composition (XXXVI)
c.1936 - 1937
heliograph on photographic paper
39.5 x 29.7 cm

provenance

- Andrzej Rogowski Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Warsaw

bibliography

Nakov, Andréi. „From Photomontage to Abstract Art: Light Painting Instead of Production.” In *Collages and Reliefs 1910-1905 and Hiller - Heliographs*. London: Annely Juda Fine Art, 1982. Exhibition catalogue.

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exhibited

Łódź, The Art Museum, *Karol Hiller 1891-1939*, 04.1967.

Paris, Musée Galliera, *Peinture moderne polonaise. Sources et recherches*, 1969.

Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni; Venice, Museo d'Arte Moderna; *L'Avanguardia polacca, 1910-1978. S. I. Witkiewicz, costruttivismo, artisti contemporanei*, 1979.

Belgrad, Muzej savremene umetnost; Zagreb, Galerija suvremene umetnosti, *Konstruktivizam u Polskoj 1923-1936. Grupe Blok, Praesens, „a.r.”*, 17.10-4.11.1979.

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Londyn, Annely Juda Fine Art, *Collages and Reliefs 1910-1945 and Hiller - Heliographs*, 30.06-2.10.1982.

Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, *Présences Polonaises. L'art vivant autour du Musée de Łódź*, 23.06-26.09.1983.

Józef Doskowski

Towards the Peaks
c. 1920
gouache on paper
17 × 23 cm

A.B.C.
c. 1920
pencil on paper
14 × 22 cm

provenance

- artist's heirs, Cracow
- Connaissanceur Art Salon, Cracow
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Warsaw

provenance

- artist's heirs, Cracow
- Connaissanceur Art Salon, Cracow
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Warsaw

Lances into the Battle
c. 1920
gouache on paper
14 × 22 cm

Sitting
c. 1924
gouache on paper
22.5 × 31 cm

provenance

- artist's heirs, Cracow
- Connaissanceur Art Salon, Cracow
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Warsaw

provenance

- artist's heirs, Cracow
- Connaissanceur Art Salon, Cracow
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Warsaw

bibliography

Zagrodzki, Janusz. *Józef Doskowski. Formist*. Warsaw: Olszewski Gallery, 2022. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery, *Józef Doskowski. Formist*, 13.05–25.06.2022.

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz

Anna Oderfeld
c. 1912
gelatin silver print on
photographic paper
17.5 × 12.7 cm

Tadeusz Langier
c. 1912
gelatin silver print on
photographic paper
13 × 17.9 cm

provenance

- Stefan Okołowicz Collection, Poland

bibliography

Musiał, Grzegorz. "Witkiewicz Photographé." In *Présences Polonaises*, edited by Urszula Czartoryska and Nicole Ouvrard. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1983. Exhibition catalogue.

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939). Photographien/Photographs. Berlin: Galerie Berinson, 2003. Exhibition catalogue.

Czubak, Bożena and Stefan Okołowicz, eds. *Witkacy & Others. From the Collection of Stefan Okołowicz and Ewa Franczak*. Warsaw: Palace Museum in Wilanów, 2011. Exhibition catalogue.

Kobylińska, Weronika. *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of the Individual. Photographs 1900-1923*. Warsaw: Olszewski Gallery, 2021. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, *Présences Polonaises*, 23.06–26.09.1983.

Berlin, Galerie Berinson, *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939). Photographs*, 06.07–01.10.2003.

Basel, Art Basel, Galerie Berinson, 13-19.06.2016.

Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery, *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of The Individual Photographs 1900-1923*. 12.06–25.09.2021.

Warsaw, National Museum. *Witkacy. Seismograph of the Acceleration Age*, 16.06–18.09.2022.

New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Modern Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection, 1909 -1945*, 13.12.2014–19.04.2015.

Paris, Jeu de Paume, Masterworks of Modern Photography 1900-1940: The Thomas Walther Collection at The Museum of Modern Art. 04.09.2021–13.02.2022.

provenance

- Stefan Okołowicz Collection, Poland

bibliography

Okołowicz, Stefan. *Angel and Son. 30 Years of Dialogue Stanisław and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*. Warsaw: Boss & Okołowicz, 2016.

Czubak, Bożena and Stefan Okołowicz, eds. *Witkacy & Others. From the Collection of Stefan Okołowicz and Ewa Franczak*. Warsaw: Palace Museum in Wilanów, 2011. Exhibition catalogue.

Kobylińska, Weronika. *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of the Individual. Photographs 1900-1923*. Warsaw: Olszewski Gallery, 2021. Exhibition catalogue.

Machnicka, Zofia and Paweł Polit, eds. *Witkacy. Seismograph of the Acceleration Age*. Warsaw: National Museum, 2022. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Glasgow, Third Eye Centre. *S.I. Witkiewicz. Photographs 1899-1939*, 02–27.09.1989.

Tokyo, Theater Gallery. *Witkacy-in-the-Box*, 15–23.09.1992.

Arles, *Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie*, 08.07–16.08.1992.

Munich, Fotomuseum im Münchner Stadtmuseum; Moritzburg, Staatliche Galerie Moritzburg Halle; New York, Robert Miller Gallery; Chicago, Chicago Cultural Center. *Witkacy. Metaphysical Portraits*, 1997–1998.

Cracow, National Museum; Warsaw, Contemporary Art Centre. *Malinowski. Witkacy. Photography: Between Science and Art*, 30.09–29.10.2000.

Berlin, Galerie Berinson. *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939). Photographien/Photographs*, 06.07–01.10.2003.

Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts. *Face au néant. Les portraits de Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, 07.03–04.07.2004.

Warsaw, Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, *Latent Capital. Witkacy and Others. From the Collection of Stefan Okołowicz and Ewa Franczak*, 16.06–15.08.2011.

Basel, Art Basel, Galerie Berinson, 13 – 19.06.2016.

Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery. *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of the Individual. Photographs 1900–1923*, 12.06–25.09.2021.

Warsaw, National Museum. *Witkacy. Seismograph of the Acceleration Age*, 16.06–18.09.2022.

Jadwiga Unrug Witkiewicz
c. 1923
gelatin silver print on
photographic paper
17.8 × 12.8 cm

provenance

- Stefan Okołowicz Collection, Poland

bibliography

Hommage à Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. Düsseldorf: Stadtshekkunstalle, 1980. Exhibition catalogue.

Musiał, Grzegorz. "Witkiewicz Photographé." In *Présences Polonaises*, edited by Urszula Czartoryska and Nicole Ouvrard. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1983. Exhibition catalogue.

Franczak, Ewa and Stefan Okołowicz. *Against Nothingness. Photographs by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*. Cracow: Literary Publishing House, 1986. Exhibition catalogue.

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939). Berlin: Künstlerhaus Bethanien, 1990. Exhibition catalogue.

Ulrich Pohlmann et al, eds. *Witkacy. Metaphysical Portraits. Photographs 1910–1939 by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*. Munich: Fotomuseum im Münchner Stadtmuseum, 1997. Exhibition catalogue.

Clegg, Elizabeth and Alain van Cruyten. *The Pre-Spring: Poland 1880–1920*, edited by Agnieszka Morawińska. Brussels: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 2001. Exhibition catalogue.

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939). Photographs. Berlin: Galerie Berinson, 2003. Exhibition catalogue.

Okołowicz, Stefan, ed. *Facing the Abyss: Portraits of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*. Nantes: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 2004. Exhibition catalogue.

Potocka, Maria Anna. *Witkacy. Psychologism*. Cracow: Bunkier Sztuki, 2009. Exhibition catalogue.

Czubak, Bożena and Stefan Okołowicz, eds. *Witkacy & Others. From the Collection of Stefan Okołowicz and Ewa Franczak*. Warsaw: Palace Museum in Wilanów, 2011. Exhibition catalogue.

Kobylińska, Weronika. *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of the Individual. Photographs 1900–1923*. Warsaw: Olszewski Gallery, 2021. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Düsseldorf, Stadtkunsthalle, *Hommage à Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, 1980.

Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, *Présences Polonaises*, 23.06–26.09.1983.

Berlin, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939)*, 27.05–01.07.1990.

Moritzburg, Staatliche Galerie Moritzburg Halle; New York, Robert Miller Gallery; Chicago, Chicago Cultural Center; Munich, Fotomuseum im Münchner Stadtmuseum, *Witkacy. Metaphysical Portraits. Photographs 1910–1939 by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, 1998.

Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, *The Pre-Spring: Poland 1880–1920*, 03.12.2001–06.01.2002.

Berlin, Galerie Berinson, *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939). Photographs*, 06.07–01.10.2003.
Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts. *Face au néant. Les portraits de Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, 07.03–04.07.2004.

Kraków, Bunkier Sztuki, *Witkacy. Psychoholizm*, 30.04–14.06.2009.

Warsaw, Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, *Latent Capital. Witkacy and Others. From the Collection of Stefan Okołowicz and Ewa Franczak*, 16.06–15.08.2011.

Basel, Art Basel, Galerie Berinson, 13–19.06.2016.

Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery, *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of the Individual. Photographs 1900–1923*, 12.06–25.09.2021.

Artur Rubinstein
c. 1912
gelatin silver print on
photographic paper
17.8 × 12.9 cm

provenance

- Stefan Okołowicz Collection, Poland

bibliography

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939). Photographien/Photographs. Berlin: Galerie Berinson, 2003. Exhibition catalogue.

Czubak, Bożena and Stefan Okołowicz, eds. *Witkacy & Others. From the Collection of Stefan Okołowicz and Ewa Franczak*. Warsaw: Palace Museum in Wilanów, 2011. Exhibition catalogue.

Kobylińska, Weronika. *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of the Individual. Photographs 1900–1923*. Warsaw: Olszewski Gallery, 2021. Exhibition catalogue.

Witkacy – Metaphysical Portraits: Photographs 1910–1939 by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. Leipzig: Connewitzer, 1997.

Witkovsky, Matthew S. *Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945*. Washington DC: National Gallery of Art in association with Thames and Hudson, 2007.

exhibited

Basel, Art Basel, Galerie Berinson, 18–21.06.2015.

Warsaw, Olszewski Gallery. *Witkacy. The Vital Innards of The Individual Photographs 1900–1923*, 12.06–25.09.2021.

Warsaw, National Museum. *Witkacy. Seismograph of the Acceleration Age*, 16.06–18.09.2022.

Chicago, Art Institute. *Crossing the Line: Photography Reconsidered*, 29.01–04.06.2000.

Washington DC, National Gallery of Art. New York, Guggenheim Museum; Milwaukee, Art Museum; Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. *FOTO: Modernity in Central Europe*, 2007–2008.

Chicago, Art Institute. *Photography on Display: Modern Treasures*, 09.05–13.09.2009.

Marek Włodarski

Series of Illustration to Debora Vogel's Novel "Acacia Trees in Bloom"
1929
ink on paper
21 × 17.1 cm

Cyclist
c. 1926
pencil on paper
22 × 22 cm

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Barbara Askanas, ed. *Marek Włodarski (Henryk Streng) 1903-1960*. Warsaw: National Museum, 1981. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Warsaw, National Museum, *Marek Włodarski 1903-1960*, 12.1981-01.1982.

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Barbara Askanas, ed. *Marek Włodarski (Henryk Streng) 1903-1960*. Warsaw: National Museum, 1981. Exhibition catalogue.

Chrobak, Józef, et al. *Czarownik przy Zielonej Skale: Marek Włodarski | Henryk Streng*. Poznań: Piekary Gallery, 2009.

Słodkowski, Piotr, et al. *Marek Włodarski | Henryk Streng (1898-1960): Between the Centre and the Periphery*, ed. Magdalena Piłakowska. Sopot: National Art Gallery in Sopot, 2013. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Lviv, TPSP, Hahn Otto, Streng Henryk, 1928.

Warsaw, National Museum, *Marek Włodarski 1903-1960*, 12.1981-01.1982.

Men with pipes and forms
1929
pencil on paper
26 × 42.5 cm

Composition with balloons
1929
ink on paper
28 × 40 cm

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Barbara Askanas, ed. *Marek Włodarski (Henryk Streng) 1903-1960*. Warsaw: National Museum, 1981. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Warsaw, National Museum, *Marek Włodarski 1903-1960*, 12.1981-01.1982.

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

Leopold Lewicki

Factory
c. 1930
drypoint on paper
22 × 19 cm

Outskirts
c. 1930
drypoint on paper
21 × 19 cm

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Jakimowicz, Irena. *Five Centuries of Polish Graphics*. Warsaw: National Museum, 1997. Exhibition catalogue.

Turowski, Andrzej. *The Architects of the World*. Cracow: Universitas, 2000.

Branicka, Monika, et al., eds. *Leopold Lewicki. Exhibition of Paintings and Graphics: From the Collection of Felicja and Bogdan Kędziorek*. Cracow: Antique Salon "Nautilus", 2001.

Kulpińska, Katarzyna. "Artistic Graphics in The Work of Polish Avant-garde Artists of the 1930s." In *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Monument Studies and Conservation*, vol. XLIII. Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University, 2012.

Ilkosz, Barbara, ed. *The Cracow Group 1932-1937*. Wrocław: National Museum, 2018. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Cracow, The Art Palace, *Artistic Avant-garde in the Circle of KPP. Exhibition of Cracow Group 1932-1937*, May-June 1979.

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Branicka, Monika et al, eds. *Leopold Lewicki. Exhibition of Paintings and Graphics. From the Collection of Felicja and Bogdan Kędziorek*. Cracow: Antique Salon „Nautilus”, 2001.

exhibited

Cracow, The Art Palace, *Artistic Avant-garde in the Circle of KPP. Exhibition of Cracow Group 1932-1937*, 05-06.1979. .

Company
c. 1930
drypoint on paper
21 × 16 cm

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Branicka, Monika et al, eds. *Leopold Lewicki. Exhibition of Paintings and Graphics. From the Collection of Felicja and Bogdan Kędziorek*. Cracow: Antique Salon „Nautilus”, 2001.

exhibited

Cracow, The Art Palace, *Artistic Avant-garde in the Circle of KPP. Exhibition of Cracow Group 1932-1937*, 05-06.1979.

Trainstation
c. 1930
drypoint on paper
19 × 20.5 cm

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Branicka, Monika, et al., eds. *Leopold Lewicki. Exhibition of Paintings and Graphics: From the Collection of Felicja and Bogdan Kędziorek*. Cracow: Antique Salon “Nautilus”, 2001.

Kulpińska, Katarzyna. “Artistic Graphics in The Work of Polish Avant-garde Artists of the 1930s.” In *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Monument Studies and Conservation*, 43. Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University, 2012.

Chojnacka, Barbara, ed. *Multiplicity in Unity: Intaglio Techniques in Poland after 1900*. Bydgoszcz: District Museum, 2012. Exhibition catalogue.

exhibited

Cracow, The Art Palace, *Artistic Avant-garde in the Circle of KPP. Exhibition of Cracow Group 1932-1937*, 05-06.1979.

Prayer
c. 1930
drypoint on paper
22 × 1.5 cm

provenance

- Galeria Piekary Collection, Poland
- Michał Olszewski Collection, Poland

bibliography

Kulpińska, Katarzyna. “Artistic Graphics in The Work of Polish Avant-garde Artists of the 1930s.” In *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Monument Studies and Conservation*, vol. XLIII. Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University, 2012.

Kulpińska, Katarzyna. “Artistic Graphics in The Work of Polish Avant-garde Artists of the 1930s.” In *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Monument Studies and Conservation*, vol. XLIV. Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University, 2012.

exhibited

Cracow, The Art Palace, *Artistic Avant-garde in the Circle of KPP. Exhibition of Cracow Group 1932-1937*, 05-06.1979.

The School of Wood Industry in Zakopane

Warrior
c. 1930
linden wood
65 × 17.8 × 19.8 cm

provenance

- Dominika Blachnicka-Ciacek and Paweł Ciacek Collection, Poland

Translation

Anthony Sloan, Wojciech Szerbetka

Adjustment

Anthony Sloan

Exhibition coordination

Małgorzata Starz

Reproductions

Małgorzata Starz

Graphic and cover design

Julia Błaszczak-Łopatyńska

