

The aim of the research project entitled "The Founding Fathers of Polish design. The Polish Applied Art Society (Towarzystwo Polska Sztuka Stosowana / TPSS). Interior design and furniture" is to prepare a monograph on the history of the Society and on the reception its activity was given. The monograph will later be published in print. It will be accompanied by an appendix including reprints of the early 20th-century texts or their excerpts on applied art. The TPSS was established in Cracow, in 1901. It contributed to the bloom of interior design, furniture style, textile art, fine art print and metalwork. The TPSS promoted the idea of integrated arts; it also popularized Polish folk art of various regions of the country. The Society gave foundations to the 20th-century Polish applied art; it served as a melting pot where out of a mix of folk art, modernist and historical tendencies emerged the Polish art déco – the Polish national style of the interwar period. The Society also educated future artists, the fathers of the success of the Polish design in the interwar period, and teachers of designers creating after 1945.

The aim of the second stage of the project is to prepare a series of articles discussing interior design and furniture projects completed by the TPSS artists in the years 1901-1913. The Society invited tenders for furniture designs; its members completed collaborative and individual interior design projects. Three tendencies have been distinguished in their style. Initially, inspiration was taken from folk art and the Zakopane style. The Society's artists also frequently drew on historical styles, in particular on *biedermeier*. The third trend, which can be called modernist, was characterized by the artists' tendency to simplify and geometrize objects. These projects anticipated art déco or even functionalistic furniture styles.

The project involves analysing a wide spectrum of sources covering various types of publications, archive documents, preserved interiors and furniture as well as their photographs and designs. The starting point for the research will be preliminary surveys of library holdings and of museum collections as well as preliminary archival research in Poland, which will allow gathering source and comparative material. Preliminary surveys of library holdings and museum collections conducted abroad will help to put the Polish TPSS interior design and furniture in a wider European context.

The activities of the TPSS as well as the history of the early 20th century Polish interior design and furniture have not yet been researched. Thanks to thorough source research, the present research project will introduce new and previously not used or discussed works, archive and iconographic materials into the history of Polish design. It will draw attention to previously marginalized artists. Owing to its pioneer character, this project will open a new interpretative perspective for research on the origins of Polish design, interior design and furniture of the early 20th century.