

SUMMARY

Hanna Żuławska was an artist engaged in various disciplines of art (she practiced easel and monumental painting, graphic arts, small-scale and architectural ceramics, and also designed so-called small architecture) and was very creatively active throughout her life. By education, she was a painter, initially working in the form of colorism. Probably the greatest influence on her work in monumental painting, including mosaics, was exerted by the lecturer at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts – Felicjan Szczęsny Kowarski, but she also owed much to Józef Pankiewicz, in whose studio she spent time and from whom she learned while on a scholarship in Paris. Undoubtedly, her husband, the painter Jacek Żuławski, had some influence on her art, mainly in terms of subject matter (interest in Greek mythology and ancient art). Żuławska did not stay permanently in Paris most likely due to the lack of any prospects for making a living. Before World War II, she moved with her husband to Gdynia, where she joined the Gdynia Branch of ZZPAP and participated in exhibitions.

After the war, she co-founded the first higher art school on the Coast – the State Higher School of Fine Arts, where she took over the management of the Ceramics Studio. She assumed this studio not because she wanted to and had education in this field, but because after the war it was difficult for women to engage in art fields considered "male." It was believed that the proper role for them was to be lecturers in studios dealing with "female" disciplines, such as ceramics or artistic textiles. In the spirit of socialist realism, she created relatively few paintings, the most well-known of which are two: the group work May Day Demonstration of 1905 and From the Battle of the Czerniaków Bridgehead – the death of Lucyna Hertz. She is considered part of the 'Sopot school' and indeed was a typical representative of it – on one hand pursuing her own artistic goals in a style of her choice, but on the other hand 'seduced' by the socialist authorities and employed to create art with a nation-building character.

The period when her most perfect and most appreciated works were created was the 1950s and 1960s. Żuławska was one of a small group of coastal creators associated with PWSSP who managed to achieve nationwide recognition, not just local, secure many prestigious commissions, and see exhibitions of a wide reach. She was probably the only woman (if we do not count Józefa Wnukowa and Teresa Pągowska, who was 18 years younger than Żuławska) from the Gdańsk PWSSP community who managed to break through beyond the local environment.

By all appearances, she was a very modest person who did not seek honors. She achieved her greatest successes in the technique of monumental decoration, where her most outstanding works were created for the artistic adornment of newly constructed buildings (mainly in Warsaw and Gdańsk) as well as the artistic decor of the facades of restored historic townhouses in the Old and New Towns of Warsaw and in the Main Town of Gdańsk (polychromes and sgraffito). Her most well-known work is the allegorical mosaics *The Four Seasons* in the arcades of the houses at Constitution Square in the Warsaw Socialist Realist housing estate *Marszałkowska Residential District* (MDM).

The artist made equally significant contributions as the head of the Ceramic Workshop at the Gdańsk PWSSP and the *Kadyny Group*, where she conducted, together with young artists, a series of experiments in the field of artistic ceramics that were unique on a Polish scale. Her ceramics from the mid-1950s had a 'thaw-like' character – unprecedented and bold. She trained a group of talented fine artists who later successfully pursued their own ceramic activities, became lecturers at higher education institutions, and co-creators of artistic life on the Coast (such as Maria Alkiewicz, Teresa Kłaman, Henryk Lula, and Andrzej Trzaska). They remembered Żuławska as an outstanding educator with unique interpersonal skills, a warm and kind person.

She participated with her team in prestigious exhibitions, and in the 1960s she began moving away from traditional forms, creating ceramic sculptural cycles such as *Torsos*, *Centaurs*, *Birds*, and *Mermaids*; works from this period were presented in prestigious galleries both at exhibitions in Poland and abroad. In some ceramic works (like the plates, *Day and Night*, or *Masks*) one can see inspiration from Pablo Picasso's works.

Between 1973 and 1976, she participated in art workshops in *Kadyny*, associated with later presentations of the works created there. She was the author of ceramic designs intended for decorating buildings and residential areas such as *Piecki Migowo* and *Żabianka* in Gdańsk, and *Sadyba* in Warsaw (boundary posts, decorative claddings called "dream scenes," small garden sculptures, objects of small architecture, etc.).

Hanna Żuławska's painting is less well-known. Her oil paintings are present in renowned Polish state museums (the National Museum in Gdańsk, the National Museum in Warsaw, the National Museum in Poznań, the National Museum in Szczecin, the Museum of Warmia and Mazury), although most of them are in private collections.

Żuławska did not achieve notable success in the field of painting, but it seems she did not seek it and painted primarily for her own pleasure; therefore (with few exceptions) she did not display her canvases in solo exhibitions, and if she did, they were an addition to ceramic exhibitions. The most interesting paintings she created are both satirical and somewhat terrifying canvases depicting scenes from life in Warsaw, styled like frames from a documentary film from the 1960s and 1970s. Also noteworthy are the abstract paintings from the early 1960s, which formally and texturally reference Żuławska's ceramics from that period, as well as some of her Nudes.

It seems that since the late 1970s, Hanna Żuławska gradually began to withdraw from artistic life, probably due to deteriorating health, and her exhibitions from the 1970s and 1980s no longer received the wide attention they once had. Perhaps this is why Żuławska was somewhat forgotten during that time. However, interest in the artist's work has been increasing for some time now.

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