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*Olga Boznanska - Girl with Chrysanthemums, Oil on Canvas , 1894, National Museum Krakow*

## Artist's Quote



“The object of art is not to reproduce reality, but to create a reality of the same intensity.”

~ *Alberto Giacometti*

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## Editor's Note

Although paintings from the ancient and classical periods included natural scenic elements, landscape as an independent genre did not emerge in the Western tradition until the Renaissance in the 16th century with the rise of Romanticism and often continued to carry a religious significance. Landscapes depict the scenery of the natural world with the views that impact the artist's eyes. The artist tries to capture that fleeting moment in time and space, for all time, thus becoming a co-creator with the original Creator. The primary focus is natural scenery, such as mountains, forests, cliffs, trees, rivers, valleys, etc. especially where the main subject is a wide view with its elements arranged into a coherent composition.

It could be a coincidence but in this issue, our artists in focus- the young promising Ghanashyam Latua and our artist of this month, eminent painter Satyendra Nath Ghosal, are known for their landscape paintings. However, their style, depiction, presentation are strikingly different from each other. Ghosal, a dedicated art teacher who had headed the Govt. College of Art and Craft in his times was an artist whose paintings captured the serenity and beauty of nature. We also introduce you to Latua whose love for nature is expressed in his landscapes where he intentionally injures his paintings to express his rebellion against the human intervention in destroying nature.

In the international section, the review on the ongoing exhibition *Quiet Rebels* exceptionally covers the 130 works, the largest presentation of the "Young Poles" in Germany which celebrates a time of bloom in Polish painting. In all the years since 1795, when Poland was split under the three neighbouring powers, the artists there held the nation together in their works. It was not until 1918, at the end of the First World War, that Poland regained its sovereignty and since then has been looking with pride at the great legacy of its artists, who developed their art during a difficult century in exchange with creative circles in Munich, Paris or Vienna. The phenomenon of the "Munich School" in Polish painting is firmly anchored in Poland's cultural history. It is expected that this show will have an impact far beyond Munich.

With all other informative articles I wish the subscribers will find this issue a very interesting read.

Aparajita Mitra

## Polish Art in Munich: *Quiet Rebels*

*Philipp Grieb*

A special institution among the temples of art in Munich is the Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung. Without having its own collection of works of art, the house has succeeded in putting together spectacular, surprising exhibitions of international rank every year since 1985 and attracting around 350,000 visitors. The curators have managed to create just such a surprise with the current show "Quiet Rebels". With 130 works the largest presentation of the "Young Poles" in Germany to date celebrates a time of bloom in Polish painting.

The exhibition also recalls Munich's great period as an international art centre, which attracted young art students and artists throughout Europe from the 1920s onwards. Especially for the neighbouring East Central European societies, many of which were suffering under authoritarian governments at the time, the liberal Munich appeared particularly attractive. It was during this period that the "Munich School" developed and gained international recognition. In the north of Munich, with the large collections of the old and new Pinakothek, the Art Academy and University, a bohemian scene emerged that drew artists and intellectuals alike.

The Polish people did not have their own national territory at that time. Its territory was divided among the neighbouring powers of Russia to the east, Prussia to



*Jan Matejko, Self-portrait, 1892, National Museum of Warsaw*



*Jacek Malczewski, Vicious Circle, 1895-1897, Raczyński Foundation / National Museum of Poznan.*

the west and Austria to the south. Uprisings in 1830 and 1863, against Russian rule, led to even greater repression, including the closure of the University of Warsaw in 1831 and the School of Fine Arts in 1863. Students and talents were forced to look abroad. Many went to Paris, Vienna, St. Petersburg, a large group came to Munich. Under these conditions, Munich's early internationality was mainly influenced by Eastern Europe, which waned only when conditions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire liberalised from 1867 onwards. The Polish artists, however, remained. During this period of repression in their homeland, they started to renew painting. With their works, they provided what was lacking at the political level: a new common identity. The last third of the 19th century marked the peak of



Jacek Malczewski, *Artist and Muse*, 1898, Private Collection

Polish presence in the Bavarian capital, which lasted about 80 years. The phenomenon of the 'Munich School' in Polish painting is firmly anchored in Poland's cultural history. This is one reason why the exhibition project of the Munich Kunsthalle has received the warm support of the Polish partners. They trust this show will have an impact far beyond Munich.

In the light of the horrifying war in Ukraine, the exhibition takes on a frightening actuality: the Russian attack on Poland's neighbouring country draws increased attention to issues such as identity, culture and freedom.

The large exhibition opened on 25 March and ends on 7 August 2022. We will just touch on it here with a few selected examples. It begins in the first hall with a review of the great masters of Polish history painting, such as Jan Matejko (1838-1893), who understood their art as a patriotic service. The self-portrait of the director of the Krakow School of Fine Arts marks the end of an

mainly portrayed triumphal events in Polish history.

Jacek Malczewski (1854-1929) is one of the most outstanding artists of a new generation. He stands for the transition of artistic engagement with the historical past to new subjects and ways of expression. The young Poles in the European centres of the visual arts were reorienting themselves. In Munich, they turned to the realism of Munich art and created paintings of various themes, still including battle scenes like Józef Brandt (1841-1915) or Maksymilian Gierymski (1846-1874) and historicising genre scenes like Władysław Czachórski (1850-1911). Increasingly, however, daily life motifs from small towns and villages came to dominate. Cloudy or nocturnal landscapes evoking a mood of sadness and melancholy became a speciality of the "Munich Polish School". Its main representative, Maksymilian Gierymski, linked the immediate realistic rendering of nature with the painter's emotions.

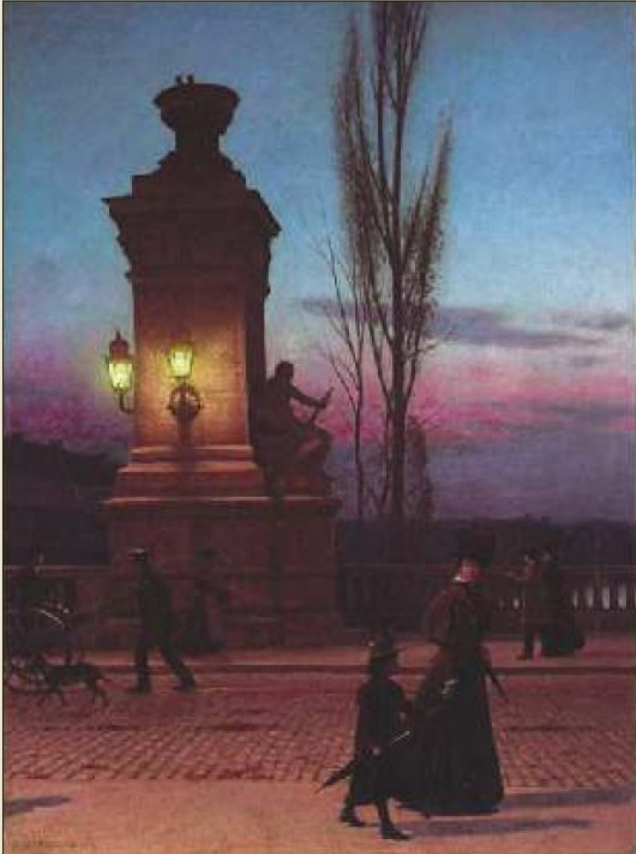


Józef Chelmonski, *Altweibersommer*, 1875, National Museum Warsaw

Maksymilian Gierymski, linked the immediate realistic rendering of nature with the painter's emotions.

The first manifestations of Symbolism in Polish art developed out of atmospheric painting, for example in the work of Adam Chmielowski (1845-1916), who became acquainted with the works of Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) in Munich. In his painting, Böcklin took up themes from Greek antiquity and mythology that "stimulate the viewer to think and dream" (according to Chmielowski). The mysterious and the unspoken dominates the paintings of another Polish artist who studied in Munich, Witold Pruszkowski (1846-1896). In his paintings of fantastic subjects, he referred to folk ideas, developing an

an unreal vision of the landscape that evokes sadness or uncertainty. Aleksander Gierymski (1850-1901), the younger brother of Maksymilian Gierymski) was concerned with luministic challenges in painting - the play of light, shadow and colour - first in Munich, from 1890 in Paris.



*Aleksander Gierymski, Ludwig Bridge, Munich, 1896/97, National Museum Warsaw*

Towards the end of the 19th century, the French Metropole increasingly became the destination of Polish artists, not in a closed enclave, but as part of a cosmopolitan bohemia. The diversity of simultaneously occurring phenomena, styles and formal means, from academicism, realism, impressionism to the new movements of symbolism or art nouveau was a rich field of inspiration.

In 1875, Józef Chelmonski (1849-1914), who had previously studied in Munich, came to Paris. His painting *Altweibersommer*, probably inspired by Franz von Lenbach's (1836-1904) *Hirtenknabe*, is considered a manifesto of Polish realism. In Paris, he stuck to his proven realist painting, with which he gained recognition among French and international collectors.

Only after his return to Poland he moved visibly towards Symbolism.

An impressionist painting technique characterises the work of Olga Boznanska (1865-1940), who came from Munich to Paris at the end of the century with a completed education. Following the example of the old masters and Wilhelm Leibl (1844-1900), she had developed a mature concept for psychological portraits. The portraits she created in Paris are convincing because of their quiet intimacy and concentration on the sitter. Her compositions are made up of cursory and loosely applied patches of colour.

In all the years since 1795, when Poland was split under the three neighbouring powers, the artists held the nation together in their works. It was not until 1918, at the end of the First World War, that Poland regained its sovereignty and since then has been looking with pride at the great legacy of its artists, who developed their art during a difficult century in exchange with creative circles in Munich, Paris or Vienna.



*Witold Pruszkowski, All Souls' Day, 1888, National Museum Warsaw*