



ZEITGEIST

POLISH DESIGN CRAFTING A FUTURE
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PRESS KIT

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The exhibition features Polish designers working in synch with the Zeitgeist, crafting their products locally, drawing on tradition and crafts. This year, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute returns to Dutch Design Week, online edition, with a new edition of Let's Exhibit! devoted to Polish design. Curated by Paulina Matusiak, the exhibition features Polish designers working in synch with the Zeitgeist, crafting their products locally, responsibly, drawing on traditional culture and crafts.

Zeitgeist (German for "spirit of the times") is the set of ideas and beliefs typical of a given time period. The need to solve problems through good design has always been with us. Even before people started calling their productions design. The global pandemic has ushered in a period of change. All aspects of our lives are changing. Possibilities are also emerging that we would not have seen had it not been for the pandemic. Today, it is not enough to design by modifying. We have to meet the challenges that reality throws us. This does not mean that we will stop making beautiful things. On the contrary, to cite Lidewij Edelkoort: "Creating beauty is a form of activism."

The designer's daring and curiosity, trusting one's intuition, thinking of nature and of the user's needs are all part of good design. Responsible design requires rethinking processes, materials, and waste. By using local resources and traditional techniques we tap the wisdom of many generations. By renouncing mass production and returning to the workshop we eliminate overproduction and get a sense of sustainability. We get unique products at the cusp of art and design, the distinction itself becoming increasingly blurred.

Olga Milczyńska's *Kunstkamera* illustrates this well. This unique collection stems from reflection on mass tourism and environmental and landscape degradation. The name refers to Baroque curiosity collections whose richness reflected a fascination with the natural world. In *Splot*, Beza Projekt get their inspiration from Podlasie and the region's centuries-old fabric weaves and colors. *Uauproject* use PLA which can be recycled or industrially composted to make their vases. Tomasz Drózdź has translated the artistic solutions used in Łódź jacquards and the Łódź jacquard style into the language of computer programming. In her *Totems*, Malwina Konopacka alters the function of utility items, giving them an extra dimension through artistic upcycling. Breathing new life into seemingly dilapidated objects highlights the designer's responsibility in an age saturated with luxury goods. Calligraphic forms, strong colours, dignified materials and techniques are the hallmark of Pani Jurek's *TRN* collection, a tribute to Jan Tarasin. Agnieszka Czap's *Module Carpet* results from research into warp and weft. It transcends the traditional weaver's craft, techniques, and definitions. Monika Patuszyńska has chosen porcelain casting as her method. She is inspired by the flaws and unexpected features that arise in the process. *NIC Łódź* knit all their sweaters in Łódź factories using top-quality natural fibres and recycled yarn. In his *Obsee Eruption* objects Mateusz Wiewiórowski goes for traditional crafts and innovation. His projects are poetic, inspired by the power of nature. It is nature, during the pandemic, that incites us to change. To start all over again.

The exhibition highlights various aspects of the design process. It presents the profiles of Polish designers, their vision and process of creation. Despite the diversity, their common denominator is design awareness attuned to the spirit of our times

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CURATED BY

PAULINA MATUSIAK

ORGANISED BY

ADAM MICKIEWICZ INSTITUTE

VISUAL IDENTIFICATION:

PAULINA MATUSIAK

COORDINATION:

NATALIA GEDROYĆ, OLGIERD ZBYCHORSKI

PRODUCTION:

MONIKA BRAUNTSCH, MARTA ŁEMPICKA

FILM EDITING:

RAFAŁ MALKO

The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is a national cultural institution whose mission is to develop and communicate the cultural aspect of the Poland brand by actively participating in international cultural exchange. The Institute has so far carried out cultural projects in 70 countries across 6 continents, including the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Israel, Germany, Turkey, USA, Canada, Australia, Morocco, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, as well as China, Japan, and Korea. Through its activities to date, the Institute has introduced 38 strategic programmes watched by 60 million viewers. It also runs the Culture.pl website – a daily updated news service about the most interesting events and phenomena related to Polish culture.

www.culture.pl



CONTACT:

NATALIA GEDROYĆ

ngedroyc@iam.pl

+48 600 900 670

PARTICIPATING DESIGNERS:

OLGA MILCZYNSKA

www.instagram.com/olga.milczynska

PANI JUREK

www.panijurek.pl

MATEUSZ WIEWIÓROWSKI

www.mateuszwiewiorowski.com

AGNIESZKA CZOP

www.agnieszkaczop.com

BEZA PROJEKT

Anna Łoskiewicz and Zofia Strumiłło-Sukiennik
<http://www.bezaprojekt.pl/>

MALWINA KONOPACKA

www.malwinakonopacka.com

NIC ŁÓDŹ

www.nicknit.com

TOMASZ DRÓŹDŹ

<https://www.behance.net/TDrozdz>

MONIKA PATUSZYŃSKA

www.patuszynska.art.pl

UAUPROJECT

www.uauproject.com

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