

Bożena Kostuch

National Museum in Krakow
Al. 3 Maja 1
30-062 Kraków
bkostuch@muzeum.krakow.pl

**AMONG PRESTIGIOUS EDIFICES – ON CERAMIC
DECORATIONS AND MOSAICS IN POLAND POST-WWII**

Abstract

Ceramic materials may have multifarious applications, the visual arts being one of them. Furthermore, they have been often used in architecture for decorative purposes. In Poland, the application of ceramics in architecture reached its peak of popularity in the post-WWII period. It was used in mosaics, reliefs, architectural and sculptural details, as well as combined with other materials, like glass or stone. Ceramics was applied for creating various small decorative forms but also large compositions that covered even several dozen or several hundred square metres, in buildings that served various functions, and were situated either indoors or on their external facades. Amongst these, there are buildings which were both important for local communities and became landmarks for particular sites, like modern hotels, railway stations, theatres, museums or academies. The paper is focused on compositions executed for such prestigious edifices.

Keywords:

Poland, post-war period, mosaic, ceramics, decoration

Ceramic materials may be used for various purposes including numerous applications in art. During processing, properties of the material may be modified and its durability, lucidity, colour and texture can be adjusted to meet specific requirements. Artists and architects have long appreciated these advantages and have consequently incorporated ceramics in their works.

In Poland, the application of ceramics in architecture gathered momentum soon after WWII. Expansion of artistic use of architectural ceramics was accelerated by the building boom prompted by the reconstruction of the country after the war and the need for construction of prestigious buildings. At the same time, a material which could have vivid, durable colour, was easy to work with and inexpensive to produce was much in demand. For this reason, ceramics were used in mosaics, reliefs, architectural and sculptural details and were combined with other materials like glass or stone. It was used in small, decorative items

and in large decorations of several dozen, or even several hundred square metres. Ceramic elements and mosaics were used both indoors and on buildings' facades. As embellishments, they were used as a complementary element, or as an accentuation of an architectural structure. They added to the aesthetic quality of an architectural edifice and at the same time helped establish the visual connection of a building with its setting and therefore made it distinctive.

The introduction of a new political system in Poland had an impact on all areas of life, resulting in political, social, economic and ownership changes, centralisation and nationalisation. What was of particular importance in the case of culture was the implementation of censorship, national politics of memory, and the use of art for broadly defined propaganda and educational purposes. As Jarosław Jakimczyk wrote, Polish artists became dependent on three orders: ideological, administrative and repressive-control, all of which changed and evolved over time.¹ Therefore, the 45 years of socialism was not a homogeneous period. In the first post-war years, the connections with pre-war art were still visible, although soon – in the Stalinist period – culture and art were subjected to strict control and thematic and formal rigours. The year 1956 marked a break with the aesthetics and ideology of socialist realism, restoration of artistic contacts with the West, and return of art to modernity, and architecture to modernism. Changes were also visible in the compositions made for architecture. Their artistic expression reflected what was happening in art at the time. What is worth emphasising, however, is that in the case of Polish mosaics, only a few realisations from the first half of the 1950s, which were in line with the socialist-realist tendencies, can be found. However, their references to the new political system were not “pushy,” and the artistic value of these works ought to be highly appreciated. While the years 1955–56 can be perceived as transitional – alongside mosaics featuring folk or genre themes, they saw the appearance of the first modern designs – since 1957 Polish architectural ceramics was dominated by abstraction and emerging experiments with structure and material. This does not mean, however, that figurative or symbolic works were no longer created. Architectural ceramics and mosaics were created mainly by young artists practicing various disciplines of art (and what is characteristic, very few of them were educated as ceramists), and the vast majority of the works were created thanks to state patronage. It was for the state institutions and factories that various buildings were erected and interiors were renovated, and their artistic elements and equipment were designed by artists. The P.P. Pracownie Sztuk Plastycznych [Visual Arts Ateliers] as well as Art and Plastyka cooperatives, whose special commissions issued opinions on projects and assessed the completed works, acted as the intermediary and the final decision-

¹ Jarosław Jakimczyk, *Najweselszy barak w obozie. Tajna policja komunistyczna jako krytyk artystyczny i kurator sztuki w PRL* (Warszawa: Akces, 2015), 49.

maker. Thus, the artists operated in a network of connections involving state supervision, architects, customers and intermediaries, but they were often offered well-paid work and an opportunity to carry out their – sometimes monumental – projects. They co-decided on the look of the city.

A modest decoration designed by Nina Jankowska in 1948 for the wall of the kindergarten in Suzina St in Warsaw is said to be the first Polish post-war architectural mosaic.² At the same time Jan Seweryn Sokołowski and Zofia Czarnocka-Kowalska created their mosaic decorations in the Warsaw district – Mariensztat, i.e. the clock on a tenement house at the Market Square (see fig. 1) and the glazed bottom of the fountain with Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz sculptures.³

The first half of the 1950's (the period of socialist realism) included many subsequent projects. Various decorations including mosaics and ceramic friezes were used as embellishments to houses reconstructed after WWII damage in Gdansk at Długi Targ and Długa Street.⁴ Mosaics and other ceramic elements also decorated the buildings of Marszałkowska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa (MDM) in Warsaw, a housing estate for workers erected in the centre of the capital, which constituted the essence of socialist realism in architecture and the related visual arts. It was here that the flagship mosaics of that period were placed – allegories of four seasons, made in 1952 by Hanna Żuławska's team, regarded as “an interesting document of a vision of a new socialist classless society.”⁵ The houses reconstructed in Gdansk and the edifices of MDM are the foremost and the most prestigious examples of architectural ceramic design of that time. They were also well received by critics, who remarked on the decorative and utilitarian values of ceramics. These decorations became a model for subsequent designs.

² The mosaic is described under number 1 in: Paweł Giergoń, *Mozaika warszawska. Przewodnik po plastyce w architekturze stolicy 1945–1989* (Warszawa: Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, 2014), 22–23.

³ The mosaic on the bottom of the fountain is not preserved; the clock is described in: Giergoń, *Mozaika warszawska*, 103.

⁴ All decorations are described in *Dekoracje architektoniczne Gdańska 1945–1989*, vol. 1, *Główne Miasto – fresk, sgraffito, mozaika, ceramika* ed. Jacek Kriegseisen, (Gdańsk: Nadbałtyckie Centrum Kultury, 2016). The compositions were highly decorative, eclectic and at the same time ahistorical in character, highlighting Gdańsk's ties with Poland, overlooking German themes and creating a new iconography of the city.

⁵ Anna Wiszniewska, “Ceramika jako wyższy etap malarstwa,” in *Hanna Żuławska (1908–1988). Twórcy i założyciele Szkoły Sopotkiej*, ed. Andrzej Zagrobelny (Sopot: Muzeum Sopotu, 2016), 14. Described in: Paweł Giergoń, *Mozaika warszawska*, 248–251, 254–261.



Fig. 1. Warszawa–Mariensztat, *Mosaic Clock*, Zofia Czarnocka-Kowalska, Jan Seweryn Sokółowski, 1948. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2016.



Fig. 2. Warszawa–Nowe Miasto, *House at Mostowa Street*, Zofia Czarnocka-Kowalska, 1956. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2016.

In the mid- 1950s numerous ceramic projects were completed. Among them are mosaics in a house at Mostowa St in Warsaw designed by Zofia Czarnocka-Kowalska in 1956. They were installed on three outer walls and constitute a kind of framework for the structure. The decoration, clearly visible from a distance, makes the building distinctive (see fig. 2). Czarnocka-Kowalska wrote: "...it was the first façade covered with a ceramic siding mosaic."⁶ In the same year, the mosaics in the cocktail-bar "Murowana Piwnica" in Hotel "Giewont" in Zakopane were designed and executed by a team of artists led by Czarnocka-Kowalska. This is one of the largest indoor mosaic projects, and was completed in the 1950s.⁷

In the following years, ceramic decorations and mosaics were more widely introduced. They were particularly popular in the 1960's and 70's. They are often found in regularly frequented public areas such as shops, workplaces or educational buildings, but also in industrial structures and in office blocks. Mosaics may be seen in the areas of refreshment and leisure, theatres, medical centres and in administration buildings. Amongst these, there are buildings which were both very important for local communities and became landmarks for particular sites, buildings which were conceived as symbols of modernity, progress and national development, namely the qualities creating the picture of Poland desired by the authorities, but also buildings erected earlier, which were being renovated at that time. The decorations of these buildings were also mostly modern. Mosaics and ceramic compositions were usually individual works of art and only some of them referred to the function of the building. At the same time, they were of certain educational significance by being in line with the idea of the universality of art and its accessibility for everyone, including those who did not participate in cultural life, did not frequent galleries and museums. This paper will focus on decorations of such prestigious edifices. I have selected some categories of buildings to illustrate this issue which decorations conveyed a message about modernity addressed to guests and residents, and at the same time were intended as a proof of the state's care for non-material needs of its citizens.

⁶ The biography of Zofia Czarnocka-Kowalska is stored at the archives of TPSP in Cracow. Mosaics described in: Joanna Kania, "Powojenna polichromia Starego i Nowego Miasta w Warszawie," in *Powinność i bunt. Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie 1944–2004*, ed. Grzegorz Kowalski, Maryla Sitkowska (Warszawa: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie, 2004), 31.

⁷ Described in: Bożena Kostuch, *Kolor i blask. Ceramika architektoniczna oraz mozaiki w Krakowie i Małopolsce po 1945 roku*, (Kraków: Muzeum Narodowe, 2015), 489–494.

HOTELS

The abovementioned Hotel “Giewont” in Zakopane is not, of course, the only hotel building with decorations which are worthy of mention, however there are three hotels which should be discussed. The first is “Dom Chłopa” in Warsaw intended primarily for visitors from rural areas. The building and its decorations were supposed to dazzle them and make them feel special. A large composition designed by Hanna and Gabriel Rechowicz is recognized as the most spectacular project belonging to the early 1960s. It was also the first architectural project, where the Rechowicz implemented a new experimental technique based on combining painting and mosaics. The majority of the decoration was located indoors on the walls of the hall and restaurant, but it was also extended to the walls of a courtyard, thus creating the illusion of “bringing the outside in.”⁸

Another mosaic, executed by Władysław Zych (see fig. 3) is not preserved: “This mosaic (with the motif) of huge, stylized Kielce Easter “palms” on a gilded background, set in the entrance at a specific angle, makes a magnificent luminous effect at sunset. It is clearly visible from afar.



Fig. 3. Warszawa, *Dom Chłopa Hotel*, Władysław Zych, 1961. Photo by Marek Czapelski, 2000.

⁸ More on this issue: Marek Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski – warszawski architekt XX wieku*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008), 258–269; Bożena Kostuch, “O potrzebie dokumentowania i ochrony polskiej powojennej ceramiki architektonicznej,” in *Kolorystyka zabytkowych elewacji od średniowiecza do współczesności. Historia i konserwacja*, (Warszawa: Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji Zabytków, 2010), 290–291; Klara Czerniewska, *Gaber i Pani Fantazja. Surrealizm stosowany*, (Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie 40 000 Malarzy, 2011), 114–146; Max Cegielski, *Mozaika. Śladami Rechowiczów*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B, 2011), 163–174; Paweł Giergoń, *Mozaika warszawska*, 156–161.

It makes the huge cube of the main building discernible without a second glance...” reported Krystyna Zbijewska of “*Dziennik Polski*.”⁹ The mosaic that welcomed the visitors not only highlighted the main entrance to “*Dom Chłopa*”; it was also considered important to local urban design. Bogdan Pniewski, designer of the building, intended it should correspond to the giant mosaic on the windowless wall of the National Bank of Poland operation hall, which was to be constructed according to his design on the opposite side of Powstańców Warszawy Square,¹⁰ although this project was not completed.

Other outstanding examples of hotel decorations are those in hotels “*Merkury*”, Poznań (see fig. 4) and “*Cracovia*” in Cracow. Poznań was



Fig. 4. Poznań, *Merkury Hotel*, Andrzej Matuszewski, 1963. Photo by Jarosław Mulczyński, 2016.

frequently visited by foreigners on the occasion of the Poznań International Fair, thus the city authorities wished to build a new luxurious hotel, suitable for visitors from abroad. The hotel – designed by Jan Cieśliński, Henryk Grochulski and Jan Węclawski – was to become a showcase of modern Poland and to prove the economic development of the country. In 1963, ceramic details were

⁹ Krystyna Zbijewska, “W chłopskim domu,” *Dziennik Polski* 196 (1961): 5.

¹⁰ Aleksy Czerwiński, “I co dalej?,” *Stolica* 7 (1962), 12–13; Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski*, 267–268.

introduced in the building and they “...imparted an extremely modern character to its interior.”¹¹ These decorations, designed by Andrzej Matuszewski, who combined relief elements with smooth brick surface (see fig. 4), embellished the wall of the side entrance hall. The cafeteria wall was decorated with ceramic details by Janusz Bersz (these, unfortunately, have not been preserved).¹²

“Cracovia” was the first hotel in Cracow built after WWII. This modern and luxurious building designed by Witold Cęckiewicz was located in a prestigious area and was initially intended mainly for foreign tourists and official delegations. In 1965, the hall was ornamented with “The Golden Mosaic” by Krystyna Zgud-Strachocka. The room occupied by the travel office, located on the ground floor, was embellished with a long frieze by Helena and Roman Hussarski. The frieze, visible through a transparent glass wall, was intended to unite this interior with the building’s surroundings.¹³ It should be added that both hotels were outstanding examples of post-war modern architecture.

RAILWAY STATIONS

Railway stations are crucial for local communities, as they are the proverbial ‘window on the world’; the buildings often first seen by visitors. According to Alicja Gzowska, train stations were supposed to be “a tangible proof of the success of the state’s modernization policy.”¹⁴ Thus, modern interiors and decorations were granted not only to newly built railway stations, but also to older ones, undergoing renovations and alterations. It is believed that the first station which was decorated with mosaics was the one in Gdynia. The building, designed by Waław Studnicki, is an example of architecture combining modernism and social realism. In 1956–1957, it received exceptional wall paintings executed by a team of Gdańsk artists consisting of Juliusz Studnicki,

¹¹ Magdalena Weber-Faulhaber, *Ceramika w Poznaniu. Od roku 1945 do teraźniejszości*, (Poznań: Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, 2003), 12.

¹² Both of them are reproduced in: *Architektura wnętrz i formy przemysłowe: Poznań, Arsenal, luty – marzec 1965*, ed. Zbigniew Kaja, Maria Józefowicz (Poznań: Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków, Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, 1965).

¹³ More about the hotel and its decorations: Bożena Kostuch, *Kolor i blask*, 196–201; Witold Cęckiewicz, “Hotel Cracovia,” in *Witold Cęckiewicz*, vol. I, *Rozmowy o architekturze. Projekty*, ed. Marta Karpińska, Dorota Leśniak-Rychlak, Michał Wiśniewski (Kraków: Instytut Architektury, 2015), 99–103; Michał Wiśniewski, “Cracovia,” in: *Witold Cęckiewicz*, vol. II, *Socrealizm, socmodernizm, postmodernizm. Eseje*, ed. Marta Karpińska, Dorota Leśniak-Rychlak, Michał Wiśniewski (Kraków: Instytut Architektury, 2015), 48–56.

¹⁴ Alicja Gzowska, “‘Fabryki ruchu’. Z problematyki dworców kolejowych w Polsce w latach 60. i 70. XX wieku,” *Miejsce. Studia nad sztuką i architekturą polską XX i XXI wieku* 2 (2016), 233.

Teresa Pałowska and Hanna Żuławska who lead the group. The ceiling and walls in the restaurant were polychromed and station halls were tiled with mosaics. They depicted fancy surrealistic visions of a harbour (see fig. 5), deep-sea creatures and hippogriffs, with train wheels and a background of starry sky.

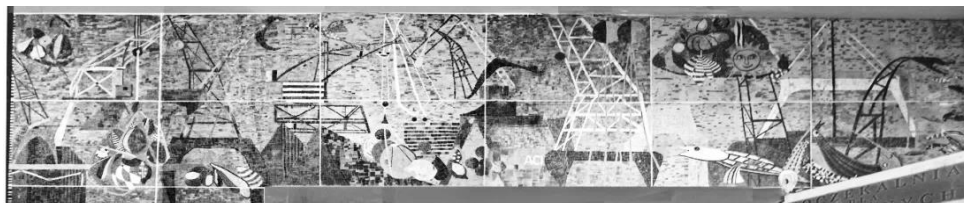


Fig. 5. Gdynia, *Railway Station*, Teresa Pałowska, 1956–1957. Photo by Anna Kriegseisen 2008.

Decorations composed of ceramics, glass, stone and other materials, executed using various techniques, were introduced into the halls of many railway stations, e.g. in Oświęcim, Bytom, Szczecin, Poznań, Olsztyn, Kraków-Płaszów and Warszawa Wschodnia. I would also like to mention another original monumental ceramic decoration – an abstract composition inspired by industrial landscape evoking connotations of energy, modernity and science, which was created in 1967 by Zygmunt Lis and Witold Bulik in Gliwice, an industrial city in Silesia, which in 1945 was located within the Polish territory and where the Silesian University of Technology was opened in the same year. The huge picture made of ceramic panels by the cooperative “Kamionka” at Łysa Góra was contrasted with traditional pre-war architecture. Bolesław Książek, artistic manager of the cooperative, was also responsible for the technological side of the project (see fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Gliwice, *Railway Station*, Zygmunt Lis, Witold Bulik, Bolesław Książek, 1967. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2016.

ACADEMIES

University buildings were very often decorated with mosaics. The earliest of these was constructed in Cracow on the occasion of the sixcentenary of the Jagiellonian University in 1964. The main hall of the newly built Agriculture Academy was ornamented with a mosaic which roughly depicted a landscape by Krystyna Zgud-Strachocka. Another very decorative composition was created by Roman Hussarski's team on the wall of the canteen of the Students' House which was also used as a summer hostel for foreign students.¹⁵



Fig. 7. Warszawa, *Technical University, Department of Electronics*, Stanisław Preyzner, 1966. Photo by Kinga Bogdanowska-Dzi-gowska, 2016.



Fig. 8. Częstochowa, *Jan Długosz Academy*, Stanisław Łyszczarz, 1968–69. Photo by Katarzyna Sucharkiewicz.

¹⁵ Described in: Bożena Kostuch, *Kolor i blask*, 190–191, 186–189.

Among many compositions and projects, the mosaics placed on the avant-corps at the entrance of the Department of Electronics of the Warsaw Technical University (fig. 7) are outstanding. Paweł Giergoń remarked that the works by Stanisław Preyzner, designed and created in 1966, prompted op-art film experiments by Joel Stein and acknowledged them as “...a fine example of immediate implementation of the novelties in modern art.”¹⁶

The mosaic in Jan Długosz Academy in Częstochowa is much more traditional. This composition, measuring 190 m², was executed and designed in 1968/69 by Stanisław Łyszczarz. It includes eight symbolic figures holding different paraphernalia related to science, knowledge and sport, placed in the crown of the Tree of Wisdom (fig. 8).¹⁷ The walls of the Assembly Hall of the Zielona Góra University were also tiled with mosaic of rather conventional form: in the upper part there is the head of the first human in space – Yuri Gagarin, the Soviet patron of the University. The mosaic was designed in 1969 by Witold Cichacz in collaboration with Henryk Krakowiak. Decoration



Fig. 9. *Left*, Katowice, *Silesian University, Department of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry*, Henryk Kobylński, Magdalena Kurek, 1972. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2016.

Fig. 10. *Above*, Lublin, *Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Department of Law and Administration*, Kazimierz Gąsiorowski, end of 1970's. Photo by Marcin Semeniuk, 2014.

¹⁶ Paweł Giergoń, *Mozaika warszawska*, 264.

¹⁷ Described in: Katarzyna Sucharkiewicz, “Mozaiki częstochowskie,” *Wokół Płytek Ceramicznych* 4 (2014), 42.

of the glass avant-corp of the Department of Mathematics of Wrocław University is absolutely unique in all respects. This intriguing composition was designed by Anna Szpakowska-Kujawska in 1971 and it depicts supinely swirling figures soaring into the air.¹⁸

There were many other decorations created in the 1970s, but I will mention only the most outstanding ones. In 1972, two artists – Henryk Kobylński and Magdalena Kurek created a mosaic for a newly constructed building housing the Department of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry at the Silesian University in Katowice. Its decoration accentuates the main entrance to the building. It has strong colours, a rich surface and depicts a stylised eagle (see fig. 9).

A year later, a large composition designed by Krzysztof and Julian Henisz was installed on the main wall of the entrance hall of the Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń. The composition is made of bas-relief ceramic panels. The colour scheme is grey and navy and the composition relates to the solar system.¹⁹ At the end of 1970s some important buildings of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin were also embellished with mosaics. They were made of stone, ceramics and glass and remain characteristic because of their refined colour scheme. The author of these works is a Warsaw artist – Kazimierz Gąsiorowski (see fig. 10).²⁰

THEATRES

The next group of public buildings to consider, which were ornamented with mosaics, are theatres. In 1964, the side elevation of the Mały Theatre in Tychy was adorned with a mosaic described as “...a composition resembling an urban landscape in a geometrical and simplified form – as if it were seen with eyes of a child.”²¹ The composition was designed by Janusz Włodarczyk and executed together with Franciszek Wyleżuch (see fig. 11).

¹⁸ “In the new medium, the artist created the subject present in her painted work. She showed an alternative, non aesthetic, disquieting vision of the contemporaneity, filled with a grotesque, cartoonish crowd.” Andrzej Jarosz, “Modi operandi Anny Szpakowskiej-Kujawskiej,” in: *Puls życia: Anna Szpakowska-Kujawska*, ed. Elżbieta Łubowicz (Wrocław: Ośrodek Kultury i Sztuki we Wrocławiu, 2016), 50–53.

¹⁹ Emilia Ziółkowska, *W poszukiwaniu nowoczesności. Architektura kampusu uniwersyteckiego i jej metamorfozy*, in *Toruński modernizm: architektura miasta 1920–1989*, ed. Katarzyna Kluczwajd, Michał Pszczółkowski (Toruń, Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki 2016), 139–162. I should mention that the façade of the Assembly Hall was distinguished with an enamel, Copernicus composition by Stefan Knapp in 1972.

²⁰ Described in: Marcin Semeniuk, “Zespół gmachów Rektoratu i Wydziałów Ekonomii oraz Prawa i Administracji UMCS,” *Modernizm w Lublinie* [social cooperative's blog], <http://modernizmwlublinie.blogspot.com/2014/04/zespo-gmachow-rektoratu-i-wydziau.html>, accessed 5. 12. 2016.

²¹ Patryk Oczo, *Tychy. Sztuka w przestrzeni miasta*, (Tychy: Muzeum Miejskie 2015), 80.

One of the most outstanding ceramic projects may be found in Cracow. In 1967, the elevations of the Bagatela Theatre were decorated with three compositions created by Witold Skulicz and Bolesław Książek, with tiles produced at Łysa Góra. Two of them are elaborate, asymmetric, huge reliefs made of ceramic panels with rich texture and elegant, cool colours (see fig. 12). Due to the contrast with their background, the ceramic reliefs are interesting, decorative forms, visible from the distant prospect of the street, whereby they constitute a landmark in the urban space.²²

Vast glass mosaics, designed by Zbigniew Brodowski in 1974 and 1976, were installed on the elevations of the Philharmonic Hall in Rzeszów. The abstract compositions in shades of green, grey and sapphire create a giant, brilliant scheme, which perfectly corresponds with the modern architecture of the building.



Fig. 11. Tychy, *Mały Theatre*, Janusz Włodarczyk, Franciszek Wyleżych, 1964. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2016.



Fig. 12. Kraków, *Bagatela Theatre*, Witold Skulicz, Bolesław Książek, 1967. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2014.

Not only facades of theatres were decorated with original ceramic compositions, but also more often their interiors were adorned with mosaics and architectural reliefs. We can find such decorations in the Nowy Theatre in Zabrze, Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź, the Musical Theatre in Gdynia and the Powszechny Theatre in Radom.

²² Described in: Bożena Kostuch, *Kolor i blask*, 212–216.

MUSEUMS

Mosaics are strongly connected to museums. They have symbolic meaning and are usually related to the purpose of the building. This is their distinctive feature. For example, in 1967, the mosaic which “...depicts tourist attractions of Wolin and its environment” was designed for the Regional Museum in Wolin by Teresa and Jan Zdarewicz.²³ Its bright, contrasting colours attracted much attention.

In 1976 nine mosaics designed and created by Zbigniew Bednarowicz in cooperation with Włodzimierz Dudkowiak, were installed in the upper part of the façade of the National Museum in Poznań (see fig. 13, 14). They are



Fig. 13, 14. *Left*, Poznań, *National Museum in Poznan* (façade), Zbigniew Bednarowicz, Włodzimierz Dudkowiak, 1976. Photo by Jarosław Mulczyński, 2016; *Góra Św. Anny, Muzeum Czynu Powstańczego*, Ryszard Kowal, 1980. Photo by Witold Iwaszkiewicz, 2016.

Fig. 15. *Right*, Poznań, *National Museum in Poznan* (façade/detail), Zbigniew Bednarowicz, Włodzimierz Dudkowiak, 1976. Photo by Jarosław Mulczyński, 2016.

²³ My sincere thanks to Mr. Ryszard Banaszekiewicz, the managing director of the Regional Museum in Wolin for the information about the designers of the mosaic. Its description is included in the report of the former director – Mr. Andrzej Kaube.

easily seen from Wolności Square. In this work, rectangular compartments are filled with golden and colour glazed tiles. The central one is gilded and it constitutes a background for a cartouche with a coat-of-arms, while the other eight, symmetrically arranged, have the names of Polish painters.²⁴

The building itself, erected at the beginning of the 20th century for the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, was decorated with mosaics featuring portraits of German artists. By referring to that project, the mosaics by Bednarowicz and Dudkowiak symbolically linked the building with Polish art.

Another mosaic of 66 sq. metres was installed on the front wall of the Museum dedicated to the Silesian Uprisings (Muzeum Czynu Powstańczego) at Góra Św. Anny. The composition was created in 1980 by Ryszard Kowal and depicts three eagles which symbolize three Silesian uprisings (see fig. 15).²⁵

BUILDINGS OF SYMBOLIC MEANING FOR THE COUNTRY

Reaching the end of this paper, I would like to present compositions adorning the buildings which are of great symbolic importance for Poland. I have already mentioned the seat of the National Bank of Poland. As mentioned earlier, the elevation facing Powstańców Warszawy Square was not decorated according to the initial project, the actual mosaic was designed later in 1967, by Maria Leszczyńska. It is made of glass and stone elements. It was installed “...in the prestigious main court of the Bank at Świętokrzyska Street,”²⁶ emphasizing the representative character of its entrance (see fig. 16).

In 1970, a vast mosaic, measuring 180 square meters, traditional in form and expression, decorated the main entrance of the Silesian Stadium in Chorzów. The mosaic depicts football players, referring directly to the function of its location. It was created by Henryk Kobyliński and Henryk Holecki (see fig. 17).

²⁴ Described in: Magdalena Weber-Faulhaber, *Ceramika w Poznaniu*, 14, 41, 38–39.

²⁵ The artist also impelmented another mosaic for this building – in the hall there is a picture covering almost 90 square metres – “A nurse and a wounded insurgent.” I am very grateful to Mr. Witold Iwaszkiewicz, the manager of the Muzeum Czynu Powstańczego for all the information and photos provided concerning the mosaics.

²⁶ Paweł Giergoń, *Mozaika warszawska*, 150.



Fig. 16. Warszawa, *National Bank of Poland*, Maria Leszczyńska, 1967. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2016.



Fig. 17. Chorzów, *Silesian Stadium*, Henryk Kobyliński, Henryk Holecki, 1970. Photo by Bożena Kostuch, 2016.

In 1978, a quite different work of art, though also monumental and impressive was installed in the Children's Health Centre in Warsaw. It was designed by Kazimierz Gąsiorowski. This one was made of scrap metal elements provided by a gas oven factory. A giant, monochromatic composition with extraordinary brushwork covered a vast surface of almost limitless wall, contrasting with the glazed part of the building.²⁷ Ten years later, Gąsiorowski's works were placed in another prestigious edifice. In 1987, the artist created mosaics for the National Library in Warsaw. Abstract images composed of scrap materials were installed on the walls of the administrative parts of the building. They filled empty spaces around the refreshment areas located near the staircase, becoming the waypoints in the "...spacious and unified interior of the monumental building" – the edifice which, according to Paweł Giergoń, was "...the last prestigious construction of the communist regime."²⁸

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²⁷ Ibidem, 404–409.

²⁸ Ibidem, 324.

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