

Summary

JAN WRABEC / Through history of art following Professor Zlat

I met Mieczysław Zlat for the first time in 1958, when I moved from Architecture to History of Art. I was surprised with his amazing skills of making contacts with students, without exaggeration in shortening the distance, but still marked with directness, mutual respect and kindness. The friendly atmosphere, conjured up by and around him, made the passing of knowledge easier in the times when the majority of academies were predominated by fear, suspicion and almost military discipline. Getting to know the rudiments of a new discipline was easier for young adepts of art history, and I was one of them.

When I became Prof. Hornung's assistant, Zlat co-operated with Prof. Morelowski. Our academic interest were also quite distant from each other. He focused on art from the turn of Late Gothic to Renaissance, I specialised in architecture of Late Baroque. Following Prof. Hornung I stuck to traditional methods of formal-and-stylistic analysis – he was one of the pioneers of iconology in Poland. However, I owe to Prof. Lech Kalinowski and Zlat that at present I apply this method more and more willingly. Prof. Zlat introduced to us, without any nationalistic prejudices, a rich and varied landscape of Silesian art, at the same time teaching us outdoor work. And cataloguing. Zlat came from Przemyśl and belonged to few at that time researchers of Silesian art who made firm connections with Wrocław. To him (and Tadeusz Broniewski) the historical conscience of the Poles settled in Silesia after the war should be grateful for such valuable for this region publications as the series „Śląsk w Zabytkach Sztuki” [“Silesia in Art Monuments”] and „Sztuka Wrocławia” [“Art in Wrocław”] and (with Jakub Pokora) the first volumes of the “Catalogue of Art Monuments in Poland”.

In the background of Prof. Zlat's didactic and scientific activity the most visible was always his patriotic attitude to which his authority certainly owed most. He conspired already in his youth during the Nazi occupation. As a vice dean he took part in the accidents of March 1968, and in the times of “Solidarity” he became one of the most important councillors of the Association authorities. He was interned during martial law. Unlike many others, he never tried to benefit in any way from his merits in independent Poland.