

Summary

ANETA GRODECKA (Adam Mickiewicz University) / Pearls from the lumber-room. Artists of the interwar period and children's books. The case of Mikolaj Wisznicki

Usually, we look for the crumbs of modernity in the old art, which is intended to be the proof of its value and insight. I have decided to reverse this trend, in accordance with the rule that the new is not always better than the old. I am interested in children's books from the 1920s, specifically its sphere of fantasy, illustrations of fairy tales and fantasy novels. On this background, I present illustrations of Mikolaj Wisznicki, an amateur in the field of fine arts, whose drawings decorated *Bardzo dziwne bajki* (Very Strange Fairy Tales) by Kornel Makuszyński, *Na srebrnym globie. Rekopis z Ksiezyca* (*On the Silver Globe: A Manuscript from the Moon*) by Jerzy Zulawski or *W zbożu. Opowiesc o szczurach* (In Rye: A Tale about Rats) by Julian Ejsmond. His works fall within the scope of modernism tradition, but they are unique; on the one hand, they are characterized by "noble" realism shaped by the experiences of the Russian school of drawing, and on the other hand, they show a tendency to grotesque and humour. In the years 1923–1928, the children's books discussed in the article were recommended to Polish libraries and schools by the Children and School Students Book Assessment Commission of the Ministry of Religious Beliefs and Public Enlightenment.