

*Young Poland, The Polish Arts and Crafts Movement 1890-1918* edited by Julia Griffin and Andrzej Szczerski. London: Lund Humphries, 2020. 240 pp. ISBN: 978-1-84822-453-7. £40.00.

On my first trip to Poland in 2004, while visiting the Polish National Gallery in Warsaw, I was overwhelmed at the beauty and originality of the works the group of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Polish artists known as *Młoda Polska* – in English, Young Poland. I was shocked that such exceptional art was unknown to me. Young Poland drew me back and I have visited Poland three more times. On each trip, I planned my travel to ensure that I saw more of the remarkable art created by this fascinating movement in several trips to Kraków as well as Poznań, Gdansk, and Lwów. Young Poland's artists created stunningly beautiful works of art of great originality but, unfortunately, they remain largely unknown outside of Poland. This movement should be better known and acknowledged, but there is frustratingly limited material available on it in English. This remarkable book provides long-needed attention to Young Poland. The volume is beautifully illustrated and well researched and is the first to focus solely on Young Poland and the decorative arts, particularly on the influence of William Morris, John Ruskin, and British art on Young Poland, focusing on the period from 1890 to 1918. It was written in accompaniment to a major exhibition held at the William Morris Gallery from October 2021 to January 2022.

The essays in the book highlight the amazing achievement of the Polish people in retaining their identity as a nation almost solely through culture. Through the aggression of three hostile neighbouring countries – Russia, Austria, and Prussia – the Polish state was partitioned and wiped from the map of Europe for more than one hundred years. From the time when Poland's existence as a state was ended in 1795 until 1918 when it re-emerged as an independent nation, Polish intellectuals kept the idea of Poland alive through culture. These cultural productions included the music of composers such as Chopin and Paderewski, the literature of writers such as Adam Mickiewicz, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Stefan Żeromski, and Eliza Orzeszkowa and, as this book ably shows, the work of artists – particularly those of Young Poland. In the areas of Poland controlled by Russia and what became the German Empire, there were active campaigns to suppress Polish nationalism and even eliminate the Polish language. However, in the areas controlled by Austria, conditions were less harsh and in the two major cities Kraków and Lwów as well as the town of Zakopane, a nationalist art movement could thrive, and Young Poland found its true expression beginning in the 1890s. The movement was influenced by several currents in European art including Symbolism, Art Nouveau, and the Austrian Secession, but one of the primary