







Move Your Imagination

# Culture and Art



## **Culture:** Our national heritage and the testimony of romantic reflections

Polish culture is woven from the memories of past greatness and the dreams of a better future, and its national character is deeply rooted in Romanticism. In every branch of contemporary art, our rich Polish folklore becomes a source of inspiration for artists.

nown for being very musical, Poles love dance and music. Folk melodies can be heard in Chopin's works, while Krzysztof Penderecki and Witold Lutosławski set new standards in the world of avant-garde music. Poland attracts a lot of attention, thanks to its talented jazz musicians and young artists excelling in the domain of alternative music. The poetry of Wisława Szymborska, recognised with a Nobel Prize, is appreciated in many corners of the world. Like Szymborska's poems, many others' works have been translated into foreign languages: the literary reportages of Ryszard Kapuściński, the futuristic prose of Stanisław Lem or the dramas of Sławomir Mrożek. Igor Mitoraj and Magdalena Abakanowicz are considered ambassadors of Polish sculpture, with their monumental works arousing worldwide admiration. Roman Opałka's and Wilhelm Sasnal's paintings are highly sought after by art collectors.

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▶ Poland has been home to many illustrious personalities, whose work changed the face of the world. Some were scientists, like Nicolaus Copernicus or Marie Skłodowska-Curie. Others shaped our reality in different ways, for example, the founders of Hollywood, Samuel Goldwyn and the Warner brothers. The Polish Film School, initiated among others by Andrzej Wajda, became the foundation for contemporary Polish cinema, recognised and appreciated worldwide. Near the end of the 20th century, Poles started the process which led to political changes in Central and Eastern Europe. The charismatic leader of Solidarity, Lech Wałęsa, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983. Pope John Paul II was also an ardent advocate for peace. Throughout his 25-year pontificate, he promoted dialogue between cultures and between nations.

> Modern Polish design deserves special attention. Deriving from the past, young artists go beyond boundaries and set out new trends.

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The famous astronomer as also an authority in mathematics, medicine and law. He was a canon priest and an economist. He wrote poems, translated poetry from Greek into Latin, designed maps. He also worked on reforming a calendar.

## Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543):

Clergyman, astronomer and "the man who stopped the sun to move the earth."

**W** ntil the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the officially adopted theory in astronomy was the geocentric one, which viewed the earth as being in the centre of the universe with the sun and other planets revolving around it. The heliocentric model of the Solar System devised by Copernicus, threw our planet off that particular pedestal. The astronomer had been observing the sky and the movements of planets for half a century before he decided to make his claims public in the treatise *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres).* The first heliocentric theory had appeared before, in ancient Greece, but it wasn't until Copernicus that the breakthrough in thinking and in science could take place. The Catholic Church declared the ideas expressed in *De revolutionibus* heretical and the book remained on the Index Librorum Prohibitorum (List of Prohibited Books) until 1828. The theses devised by Copernicus ushered in a revolution in perceiving the position of man and of the earth in the universe. They also gave rise to the development of sciences.



www.visittorun.pl



www.planetarium.olsztyn.pl



www.planetarium.torun.pl



## Marie Skłodowska-Curie (1867–1934)

She was one of the most brilliant scientists of all time and the only person ever to have been awarded the Nobel Prize in multiple sciences.

arie Skłodowska-Curie was born in Warsaw. In 1891, she left for Paris where she began studying at the faculty of physics and chemistry of the Sorbonne. In 1895, she married Pierre Curie, a physicist with whom she carried out research on radioactive properties of uranium ores in Henri Becquerel's laboratory. Together with her husband she discovered two chemical elements which she named polonium (after Poland) and radium. She also explained the mechanism of radiation as caused by nuclear fission. This discovery led to her first Nobel Prize, awarded in 1903 to Pierre and Marie Curie (together with Henri Becquerel). In 1911, her contribution to science was recognised yet again. This time she received the Nobel Prize in chemistry for having successfully isolated radium and for the research on radioactive elements.



www.en.muzeum-msc.pl



She was the first woman to have studied at the Sorbonne in the faculty of physics and chemistry, the first woman in the world to receive a doctorate in physics and the only woman to be buried in the Panthéon in Paris.







Warsaw is home to the multimedia Fryderyk Chopin Museum, which is considered one of the most modern biographical museums in the world.



#### Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849): One of the most brilliant composers in history and one of the most renowned pianists of his age

Known as the "poet of the piano," he has left a permanent mark on musical history.

The composer demonstrated previously unknown possibilities whenit came to this at-the-time new instrument, the piano, exploring its expressive abilities. Its exploration was later continued by such excellent musicians as Liszt, Rachmaninoff and Debussy. Chopin composed his first work, a Polonaise in B-flat minor, when he was only seven, and the following year gave his first public performance in Warsaw. In 1829, he won the hearts of his audiences in Vienna. And even though he spent most of his life abroad (mainly in Paris) after emigrating, he never stopped being Polish. It can be clearly heard in his music. He drew inspiration from the stylistic patterns of Polish folk music, especially in his mazurkas and polonaises, and alluded to the political situation back at home, as in the Revolutionary Étude. He created over two hundred compositions. The most popular ones are: Prelude in D-flat major, Polonaise in A major, and Étude in C major.



#### The International Chopin Piano Competition

Also known as the Chopin Competition, it is held in Warsaw every five years.

While the tradition going back to 1927, it is one of the oldest, most prestigious musical competitions in the world. It is also one of few competitions devoted entirely to the works of a single composer. The contenders are pianists between the ages of 17 and 28. Their performances are judged by an illustrious international jury composed out of the world's most accomplished experts in pianism. The competition is broadcast online and avidly discussed in the press, radio and television. The media coverage of the competition surpasses that for other categories of artistic events. It becomes headline news. What is most telling about the quality of the competition is the fact that many of its winners go on to forge international careers. Among them, there have been many outstanding personalities, such as: Vladimir Ashkenazy, Fou Ts'Ong, Martha Argerich, Maurizio Pollini, Krystian Zimerman, Garrick Ohlsson, Stanisław Bunin, Yundi Li and Rafał Blechacz.





www.nifc.pl



www.konkurs.chopin.pl/pl



www.tifc.chopin.pl



The Chopin Competition is a member of The World Federation of International Music Competitions based in Geneva. Chamber music lovers are invited to the Łańcut Music Festival, which takes place in an amazing interior scenery of one of the most beautiful palaces in Poland.



## Festivals of classical music

The Polish calendar of festival events resembles a kaleidoscope where many different musical worlds come together.

The selection of festivals will meet the expectations of every music lover. Their organisers make sure to invite the best virtuosos and to create an exceptional atmosphere for performances. Devotees of classical music enjoy the concerts of the International Festival of Contemporary Music "Warsaw Autumn" ("Warszawska Jesień"). The festival presents the newest trends in classical music, including experimental music, audio art and multi-media musical installations. Concerts take place not only in concert halls, but also in clubs, sport venues and post-industrial sites, such as old factories. Among other world-renowned events, one should also name Warsaw's Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival.







www.zamek-lancut.pl



warszawska-jesien.art.pl/en/wj2014

www.beethoven.org.pl/en

#### Jazz festivals: In a class by itself

Jazz Jamboree is one of the oldest jazz festivals in Europe. It has continually attracted fans from all over the world for 55 years.

azz Jamboree is one of the oldest jazz festivals in Europe. It has been attracting jazz lovers from all over the globe for 55 years. The Polish music scene justly prides itself on its stellar collection of jazz musicians. The names of such artists as Krzysztof Komeda, Zbigniew Namysłowski, Michał Urbaniak, Urszula Dudziak, Tomasz Stańko, Jan Ptaszyn Wróblewski or Adam Makowicz, are universally recognised. The most noteworthy of jazz festivals is the unrivalled Jazz Jamboree with its international cast. The list of stars who have regularly graced Warsaw with their presence in the past reads like a Who's Who of Jazz: Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Ray Charles, Wynton Marsalis, Stan Getz and Diana Krall. Another popular festival, held in Wrocław, is the "Jazz nad Odra (Jazz at the Oder)," and the "Warsaw Summer Jazz Days," focused on promoting contemporary jazz.

> On summer nights, the Warsaw Old Town provides a charming setting for the International Open Air Festival "Jazz na Starówce (Jazz in the Old Town)."





www.jazznadodra.pl/en



v.jazznastarowce.pl





w.adamiakjazz.pl







#### **Polish dance:** At the international crossroads

Poles seem head over heels in love with dance, whether classical or modern.

odern dance is still looking to find its niche on the cultural map of Poland. The Polish Dance Theatre – Poznań Ballet combines neoclassic techniques with modern dance in its choreography. Cooperating with outstanding artists from all over the world, it has gained recognition on all five continents. Besides the big names, more and more local centres spring up, focusing on smaller but no less ambitious artistic projects. Two such places are the Poznań dance program called Stary Browar Nowy Taniec ("Old Brewery New Dance") and the recently opened "Centrum w Ruchu" ("Centre in Motion") in Warsaw. They both are associations of young people who, more often than not, received their education in artistic schools abroad.

The Polish Dance Theatre organises the International Contemporary Dance Workshops and the International Dance Theatre Festival. Both events are part of the annual "Dancing Poznań" Festival held in the summer.





www.ptt-poznan.pl/en



artstationsfoundation5050. com/dance/program-en



#### Theatre and opera: Variety of discourse

Performing arts in Poland vibrate and blossom.

Contemporary playwrights share a bold approach towards seeking subjects which so far have been seen as taboo. The Polish theatre has begun to shock and evoke the most extreme emotions. Most distinguished directors are Krzysztof Warlikowski, the creator of monumental projects, and Grzegorz Jarzyna, known for his elegant performances of high quality. Both have also presented themselves as directors of opera performances. Polish artists direct and perform not only in Poland. Their artistic skills are very often recognised abroad. Polish opera singers such as Piotr Beczała, Aleksandra Kurzak, Mariusz Kwiecień, or Andrzej Dobber perform at the world's most prestigious concert venues: the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, the La Scala in Milan or in the Paris Opera.



The modest theatre of bare, exposed reality by Monika Strzępka, Paweł Demirski and Krzysztof Garbaczewski together with abstract performances are getting increasingly popular.

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The latest Polish Oscar nomination is *Wałęsa: Man of Hope*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, starring Robert Więckiewicz as Lech Wałęsa.

## Polish Academy Awards winners

Polish cinema enjoys quite a good reputation in the world. To date, Polish filmmakers have been awarded ten times by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Perhaps the most precious of all was the honorary Oscar received by Andrzej Wajda for his contribution to world cinema. Five of his films had also been nominated throughout the years for the Best Foreign Language Film Award. In 2003, Roman Polański received the award for directing The Pianist. The 66th Academy Awards, presented in 1994, were exceptionally prestigious for Steven Spielberg's co-workers of *Schindler's List*: Allan Starski and Ewa Braun were recognised for Best Art Direction, and Janusz Kamiński won the award for Best Cinematography. The latter also went on to receive another Oscar in the same category in 1999, for his work in *Saving Private Ryan*. The composer Jan A. P. Kaczmarek received the Academy Award for Best Original Score for *Finding Neverland* in 2005. Polish animation is also recognised worldwide. In 2003, the mesmerising *Cathedral* by Tomasz Bagiński received a nomination, and the short Polish-British-Norwegian model animation *Peter and the Wolf* won the Oscar for Best Animated Short in 2008.





#### Andrzej Wajda (born 1926): Film and theatre director

Considered the quintessential Polish artist, he has gained worldwide recognition.

**H** e is recognised as one of the founders of the acclaimed Polish Film School. In his early works, Wajda analysed romantic myths by portraying young Polish intelligentsia in breakthrough moments in history. He is also responsible for film adaptations of major literary works, such as *The Ashes (Popioly)* by Stefan Żeromski, *The Promised Land (Ziemia obiecana)* by Władysław S. Reymont and *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz. In his duology, *Man of Marble* (1977) and *Man of Iron* (1981, Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival), he depicted the history of workers' strikes on the Polish coast and the birth of the Solidarity movement. Both films became canonical works in Polish cinematography. The Oscar-nominated *Katyń* (2007) was a memento of the war at its most tragic. Wajda's latest endeavour *Wałęsa: Man of Hope* (2013), tells the life story of the Solidarity leader set against the backdrop of momentous political transformations. Like four others of his films before it, it has been selected as the Polish entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 86<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards.





www.wajda.pl/en/default.html









www.culture.pl

www.waidaschool.pl



In 2000, Andrzej Wajda was presented with an honorary Oscar for his contribution to world cinema.



#### Roman Polański (born 1933): Director, scriptwriter, actor and fi Im producer

He is undeniably the most renowned alumnus of the National Film School in Łódź.

man Polański has been captivating audiences with his outstanding fi Im productions for decades. He debuted with short films, but his first feature-length fi Im, Knife in the Water (1962), earned him his first Academy Award nomination. His subsequent films, often disturbing and full of violence and gore, were made abroad: in France, Great Britain and the United States. The most influential, critically acclaimed ones are: *Repulsion* with Catherine Deneuve; *Cul-de-sac; Rosemary's Baby* (with music by Krzysztof Komeda), Chinatown starring Jack Nicholson; *The Tenant* (a penetrating study of schizophrenia with Polański himself in the leading role); *Frantic; Death and the Maiden; The Ninth Gate* with Johnny Depp; and *The Ghost Writer* starring Pierce Brosnan and Ewan McGregor.

Apart from his achievements as a director, Roman Polański has appeared in many films as an actor.



www.culture.pl/en



#### Film festivals: Celebrating the cinema

Film festivals never fail to attract and satisfy film lovers and critics.

**P**oland regularly hosts events of great importance to the filmmaking industry. One of them is the International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography CAMERIMAGE, the only such event in the world. The awards are the Golden, Silver and Bronze Frogs, and are presented in recognition of outstanding accomplishments in the art of cinematography. The OFF PLUS CAMERA International Festival of Independent Cinema focuses on original films of young filmmakers. The Gdynia Film Festival is a showcase for Polish cinema. It is also the largest national cinema festival in this region of Europe, with its main award known as the Golden Lion. Among the recipients are: Jerzy Hoffman, Krzysztof Zanussi, Agnieszka Holland, Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kieślowski and Jerzy Skolimowski. Each year, the Gdynia festival becomes an opportunity to meet the most talented filmmakers in Poland and the world.



• festiwalgdynia.pl/en



www.camerimage.pl



In Łódź, the Polish film capital, there is also Walk of Fame. Emulating the one in Hollywood, the walk honours Polish actors, directors, cinematographers and composers with stars installed in the pavement.

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#### Outdoor scenery for filmmakers

Thanks to its natural beauty, Polish landscape captivates filmmakers with its magical, even fairy-tale character.

Poland teems with locations which are perfect, rich and varied natural settings for film plots. There is a bit of everything here: lowlands, highlands, deserts, sand dunes, mountains, forests, meadows and lakes. On top of that, the landscape changes its whole colour palette with the passing of the seasons: green in the spring, golden in the summer, multi-colour in the autumn and snowy white in the winter. Both filmmakers and audiences cherish mysterious corners in woods, lakes enclosed in pristine scenery bearing no marks of human presence, gentle hills covered in fields of wheat, ruins of old castles among the white limestone rocks of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland, and the lofty, seemingly inaccessible crags of the Tatras.

The beautiful towns of Kraków and Wieliczka have become the backdrop for a few Bollywood productions, for example: *Azaan, Rhythm, Mujjahir*, while Warsaw "starred" in the latest Indian action film – *Kick*.

## Wisława Szymborska (1923–2012):

## Poet, essayist, literary critic, Nobel Prize winner in literature

The legacy of Wisława Szymborska is a collection of over 250 poems, each one being a masterpiece.

**Her** concern for mankind made her one of the most interesting and highly individual poets in the world. Her thirteen volumes of poetry have been translated into more than 40 languages.

When asked why she published so infrequently and so little, she would answer, "Because I have a rubbish bin at home!"

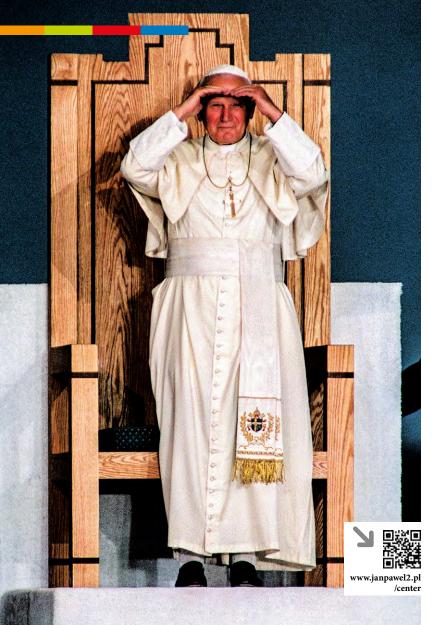




www.szymborska.org.pl/en.html

www.culture.pl/en





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### Pope John Paul II (1920–2005): Pope of the millennium

John Paul II changed the course of history by serving as the lynchpin in the effort to dismantle Soviet Communism.

n October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1978, the Catholic Church conclave which gathered after the death of Pope John Paul I brought an end to the 455 year long tradition of electing Popes from among Italian cardinals, by electing Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, the Archbishop of Kraków. During his pontificate, which lasted exactly 9,666 days, Pope John Paul II visited 135 countries, made 898 speeches and wrote fourteen encyclicals. His teachings and his relentlessness in the face of Communism were consolation to millions of people. When Solidarity was born in Poland in 1980, papal support helped bring about the biggest transformation since World War II, and this was achieved peacefully. While he was dving early April, 2005, hundreds of millions of people held vigil in the streets around the globe. On May 1st, 2011, Pope John Paul II was beatified and made a saint on April 26th, 2014.

Pope John Paul II loved the Polish mountains. The paths he frequented are now called Pope's Trails. 37



# Lech Wałęsa (born 1943)

The most recognised, living Polish personality in the world, legendary leader of Solidarity, Nobel Peace Prize winner, president of the Republic of Poland from 1990–1995.

A n electrician in the Gdańsk Shipyard beginning in 1967, Wałęsa was a leader of the December 1970 workers' strikes. In 1976, he was laid off because of political reasons. The state security service (Służba Bezpieczeństwa) arrested him several times. In 1980, he was one of the organisers of a strike which led to the creation of the Independent Self-governing Trade Union, thereafter known as Solidarity (Polish: Solidarność). Led by Wałęsa, it was the first trade union not controlled by the Communist Party, and its ranks soon grew to ten million members. Following the introduction of martial law in 1981, Wałęsa was interned for almost a year. Because of his non-violent fight for freedom, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983. He then took part in the 1989 Round Table negotiations between the opposition and the authorities. These talks led to Poland's first free elections and, in December 1990, he was elected President of the Republic of Poland.

Wałęsa has received honorary doctorates from universities and colleges around the world. In 2008, he became a member of the EU Reflection Group also known as the "wise men" group.



# Jan Matejko (1838–1893)

During his lifetime, he became an icon of Polish painting. His works went on to acclaim patriotism to generations of Poles during the difficult times of no independence.

Jan Matejko studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. His main theme was Polish history but he earned international recognition through his exhibitions in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Prague and Budapest. He is the most accomplished representative of the historical trend in Polish painting. Painting during the partitions of Poland, he depicted the most momentous political and military victories, such as: *Stefan Batory at the siege of Pskov (Stefan Batory pod Pskowem), Battle of Grunwald (Bitwa pod Grunwaldem), Prussian Homage (Hold Pruski)* and *Jan III Sobieski at the Battle of Vienna (Sobieski pod Wiedniem).* Matejko also analysed the historical reasons for the breakdown of the country in such paintings as: *Stańczyk, Skarga's Sermon (Kazanie Skargi),* and *Rejtan.* His principal aim was to evoke the feeling of patriotism. His legacy consists of over three hundred oil paintings and several hundred drawings and sketches.



www.muzeum.krakow.pl

www.culture.pl/en



authorities bought Matejko's house in Kraków and turned it into a museum.

To honour his artistic activity the local

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# Staging momentous events from the past

Historical re-enactments are enjoying a growing popularity, not only on a local scale.

History approached as fun can elicit many emotions, drawing one in, but also move and teach. Reconstructions are becoming more and more popular. By far, the largest such event is the Battle of Grunwald, staged in August, as it recreates the biggest battle of Medieval Europe. A week later, the Siege of Malbork, the largest brick fortress in the world, is staged. Leaving the military domain, Biskupin attracts visitors to its Archaeological Festival with a reconstructed prehistoric settlement from the 10th century. Combined with a traditional crafts fair and historic in nature, the festival offers various educational presentations, as well as entertainment. Another fascinating festival takes place in Nowa Słupia under the name of Dymarki Świętokrzyskie (Świętokrzyskie Bloomeries, the earliest smelting furnaces), at the site of significant archaeological discoveries. Among other attractions, traditional methods of casting iron are presented there.



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Wolin Island in the Baltic Sea is home to a very interesting open-air museum of Slavs and Vikings. It gives visitors a glimpse of what life was like 1,000 years ago.

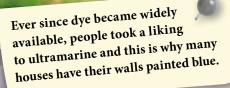






swietokrzyskie.travel/en





## Architecture

Traditionally, country homes in Poland were made of wood, with the differences between regions were exressed mainly in shapes and ornaments of buildings.

The largest number of preserved wooden buildings can be found in the region of Małopolska. It is where the Wooden Architecture Route begins, connecting 252 churches, both Roman Catholic and Orthodox, as well as secular buildings. Throughout the country, wooden monuments are protected in open-air museums, known in Polish as "skansen." There are forty-six of them and they are very popular with visitors from home and abroad due to the harmonious integration of man-made structures with the surrounding natural landscape. There are numerous farming tools inside richly furnished living chambers for the visitors to see and explore. In Southern Poland it is possible to eat traditional Polish food in authentic 17<sup>th</sup> century wooden taverns. And it is always worth taking time to stop at the charming village of Zalipie where flowers painted on house exteriors are a truly exceptional sight.





drewniana.malopolska.pl



openairmuseum.pl /skansen/zalipie

## Folk costumes

Polish regional costumes could be compared to meadows full of colourful flowers. There are almost a hundred different kinds, and each has its own local variations.

Parade of couples in traditional garments is a real feast for the eyes with colourful fabrics, lace, handmade embroidery, glimmering with sequins and beads. In the lowlands, the Łowicz regional costume draws attention with colourful vertical stripes, while the highlanders (górale) are proud of their heart-shaped decorative patterns called parzenica. The ethnic group Kurpie accessorise the woman's costume with a necklace made of amber. The Kraków men's costume has a very characteristic red cap ornamented with ribbons and peacock feathers, called rogatywka. In women's garments, the luscious red beads are a striking contrast against the white shirts worn under velvet waistcoats with rich embroidery and colourful shimmering sequins. Folk costumes are enjoying a revival these days. Very often, they can be seen worn by staff in regional restaurants. Collectors can purchase dolls in national costumes in various shops and on line.

> Even today, highlanders like to dress in their regional costumes for various holidays and ceremonies.



www.stroje.pl









#### Folklore and design: a creative relationship

When folklore, deeply rooted in tradition, meets modern design, rare artistic products are created, proving the makers' excellent craftsmanship.

Some of Poland's most valued treasures are its natural resources: sand, clay, wicker and amber. Used by artisans for centuries, they now serve as inspiration for artists. Wickerwork has evolved from a traditional craft to a fully-fledged branch of art. Young twigs of several species of willow are used to weave baskets and furniture, but also to make artistic installations. In Solec at the Vistula River, there is a castle made of wicker, and in the manor house in Olkusz there is an exhibition of works by Władysław Wołkowski, known as the Wicker Michelangelo. Designers also find inspiration in folk lace-making and the traditional paper-cutting art known as wycinanki. Crochet masters from Koniaków are famous for making not only pretty tablecloths, but also modern women's lingerie.

The traditional art of papercutting was the inspiration behind the design of the Polish pavilion for the 2010 Shanghai World Expo.



### Polish fashion designers: Prime export product

Rihanna has been seen wearing T-shirts designed by Local Heroes.

Tor the last few years, Polish fashion has been doing very well on the market, having entered it with a clear vision and plenty of fresh ideas. Fashion attempts to reflect today's character of life, which means it values simplicity and originality, as well as comfort. It also emphasises one's individuality. Designers, like Gosia Baczyńska, Maciej Zień, Tomasz Ossoliński or the duo Paprocki & Brzozowski, have long established their positions as trend-setting high fashion brands. Their collections can be found in the finest downtown Warsaw boutiques, as well as shopping centres in other large Polish cities. Their design ideas are enthusiastically compared with world trends too, thanks to high profile fashion festivals organised in Poland, such as Fashion Week Poland in Łódź, Warsaw Fashion Street, and the summertime Sopot Art & Fashion Week.

Clothes designed by young, up-and-coming designers are now very much in demand. It is possible to view and shop their collections in online showrooms.



fashionweek.pl/en



fashionweekend. pl/?lang=en



# Arts – crafts – design

Modern creators from Poland are appreciated in the world.

Polish designers are often winners of prestigious awards in high-profile design competitions, for example, in applied art which makes use of recyclables. Polish architects are also getting more and more successful internationally. The Aatrial House, designed by Robert Konieczny and exhibited near Opole, was named "House of the Year" by World Architecture News in 2006. Robert Majkut, specialising in designing luxury interiors of boutiques, banks and cinemas, was responsible for the design of Orange Cinemas in Beijing. Oskar Zięta creates furniture and other objects resembling shiny inflatable balloons. His works can be admired, among others, in the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Janusz Kaniewski is the creator of the current logotype for Fiat, and the "Daybed" armchair by Tomek Rygalik is now produced by the premium upholstery furniture brand, Comforty. Products created by young designers can be bought in many galleries and boutiques, in shopping centres and in design districts dedicated to artistic activity, like the SOHO Factory in Warsaw.

> Polish illustrators' award-winning art work is set ting new standards in book design. The creators of children's books are particularly appreciated and respected.



www.studiorygalik.com





www.design.pl





# **Design festivals**

The map of places of importance for design in Poland constantly evolves

ew centres and institutions promoting design are established. The Gdynia Design Centre supports new technologies, as well as encourages cooperation between designers and employers. It is also the organiser of the Gdynia Design Days festival. Concordia Design in Poznań is the neighbour of the Poznań International Fair Headquarters, which is also home to the college for designers known as the School of Form, as well as the venue for the Arena Design Fair. For several years now, Łódź has been hosting the Łódź Design Festival. The Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź is about to open its own Science and Art Centre and a Centre for the Promotion of Fashion in the near future.



www.lodzdesign.com



www.sof.edu.pl

www.iwp.com.pl/about

The best Polish products and services are recognised in the annual nationwide design competition Good Design (Dobry Wzór), organised by the Institute of Industrial Design.

### Flavour festivals

Poland is known for delicious, hardly processed foods. The profusion of flavours is the heritage of a long history and reflects the influences of many different cultures.

mong the biggest, most interesting culinary events, the one that tops the list is the Ogólnopolski Festiwal Dobrego Smaku (National Festival of Good Flavours) held in Poznań's Old Square. Visitors can try local delicacies from everywhere in Poland, presented in over 120 exhibitors' stalls. A town in southern Poland famous for its old brewery, Żywiec, organises its annual Birofilia Festival, where you can try around five hundred different beers from all over the globe and become up-to-date on selections from Polish microbreweries. Wine consumption is currently undergoing a revival, which can be witnessed at the wine harvest festival, Winobranie in Zielona Góra. Held in September, the Winobranie culminates with a parade, but there is also a beauty pageant and, of course, wine-tasting and concerts. Another event worth recommending is the Festiwal Smaku w Grucznie (Festival of Flavours in Gruczno).



Tourists tend to fall in love with the taste of Polish bread. The most delicious kind is the dark or light rye sourdough bread, baked in a traditional oven. The favourite snack during the festival is a slice of fresh bread with lard.





#### Glass: Polish speciality

The main manufacturer of glass in Poland is Krosno – (Krośnieńskie Huty Szkła). The glassworks produce table glassware for both everyday use and for decorative purposes.

The tradition of manufacturing glass in Poland goes back several hundred years. Polish artists are famous for designing unusual glass forms. Krosno is also home to the Glass Heritage Centre (Centrum Dziedzictwa Szkła). This state-of-the-art museum is also a laboratory which presents a multi-dimensional world of glass. Smelting masters' dexterity shows, concerts and glass jewellery exhibitions are held there. Moreover, movies on the history and art of glass manufacturing are screened and artists' works are displayed. In educational rooms, visitors can perform experiments on their own, using lenses, light pipes and a kaleidoscope. The lowest floor houses an illusionistic painting meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century standards.

Wine glasses, tumblers, pitchers and cake plates designed by Polish artists can be purchased in shops and galleries worldwide.



www.miastoszkla.pl



www.3d.miastoszkla.pl



#### **Ceramics:** Original souvenir from Poland

Polish ceramic manufacturers rely on the national repertoire of decorative motifs and the talent of local artisans.

The characteristic patterns decorating the tableware pottery from Bolesławiec are recognisable worldwide. They echo the traditional Polish motifs and draw inspiration from folklore. Hand-decorated plates, mugs and bowls from the Bolesławiec factory are perhaps the most popular souvenirs from Poland. Connoisseurs from all over the world also praise and seek the top-class products manufactured in the porcelain factories in Ćmielów and Chodzież. Another popular brand is Kristoff from Wałbrzych. Besides the familiar traditional designs, manufacturers are now launching new, bolder collections. Kristoff helps promote the talent of young designers, while the Ćmielów Design Studio is run under the supervision of Marek Cecuła, a well-known ceramic artist and designer who has participated in exhibitions worldwide.



The best selection of ceramic products can be found in "Cepelia" handicraft stores in all the larger cities, as well as in ceramic galleries and workshops.





### Amber: Treasured gift from the sea

Often referred to as "Polish gold," amber is the oldest and most precious export product from the Baltic Coast.

arger and smaller pieces of amber – fossilised resin of coniferous trees growing 40 million years ago – end up on the shore as the tide rolls in. The seaside city Gdańsk is the true capital of amber. It is home to the Amber Museum, where both old and contemporary works of distinguished designers are presented. The Museum's multimedia exhibition takes its visitors to an amber forest, letting them indulge in the perfume of amber oil scent, and take part in an amber jewellery fashion show. Every year, Gdańsk hosts the International Fair of Amber, Jewellery and Gemstones "Amberif." Amber jewellery in all price ranges can be purchased around the country in jewellers' boutiques, galleries and souvenir markets.

The most famous, chic boutiques and galleries selling amber of all shapes and sizes are located, naturally, in Gdańsk. They are collectively known as the "Fifth Avenue of Amber."



www.amber-route.eu



www.ambermuseum.eu

# Traditional religious holidays

Holidays in Poland are always festive and joyful in character and are always eagerly awaited.

n December 24th, families gather at the table for a celebratory Christmas Eve dinner. Among the twelve traditional Christmas dishes, fish, most often carp, a must. Then, there is also mushroom soup or *barszcz* (red beet soup), the Polish speciality *pierogi* and a sweet grain pudding called *kutia*. With joyous carols filling homes, children impatiently wait for the moment they can open their gifts from under their beautifully decorated Christmas tree. Equally important is the celebration of Easter, which heralds the long awaited arrival of spring. Again, families meet at the table, this time for a festive breakfast. Following an old Easter tradition, people decorate hardboiled eggs and have them blessed in church, as a symbol of new life. Every region has its own patterns, colours and even techniques of decorating the eggs. Easter is also a time for baking delicious cakes, such as the sweet yeast *babka* and *mazurek* with colourful icing.

> The locality of Spycimierz in central Poland celebrates the Feast of Corpus Christi by putting together fabulous flower carpets with religious motifs.





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