

MAKING A NAME IN A MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY: WOMEN JEWELERS IN POLAND BEFORE 1939

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The marginalization of women in the jeweler profession, which began to weaken in Europe only in the second half of the 20th century, had its origins in the traditional system in which jewelry-making has functioned since the Middle Ages. Guild structures, where the craft has developed, limited female participation. As a result, practically only the women from families with jewelry traditions were able to gain professional experience. Nevertheless, even if they worked alongside men in home workshops, most often they remained anonymous. Since the mid-19th century, as the other training opportunities were unavailable, middle-class women wishing to work professionally in crafts attended various art and craft schools. Still, in the jewelry industry, this form of education did not deliver professional preparation, and it did not expand women's employability in workshops.

In Great Britain, as Maureen Padfield noted, the problem of the inaccessibility of the jeweler profession for women deepened in the era of industrialization. Paradoxically, hiring women in jewelry factories did not elevate their position, but has become another tool for controlling their number in the trade. The main criterion for women's employment in the industry was not associated with the level of skills, but with the physical conditions, specifically nimble fingers. As female workers were not considered worth investing in, they did not have access to specialized technical training. Unable to directly participate in the manufacturing of

high-class jewelry, they were forced to deal with auxiliary tasks, such as less profitable polishing¹.

The emergence of the Arts & Crafts movement was of importance for the development of individual women's jewelry-making². It should be noted, however, that the male-organized movement defined the role of women in crafts and controlled their presence on the market. Charles Robert Ashbee, one of the most important Arts & Crafts' representatives, who was reluctant about women artisans and excluded them from his Guild and School of Handicraft, would agree to allow women to observe his studio's work, however, with a fee³. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized, that the jewelry pieces made by Arts & Crafts jewelers often revealed the lack of technical skills. Thus, although being appreciated at exhibitions for the design, it did could not compete with the jewelry produced by specialized teams of craftsmen⁴.

We do not know of many women jewelers who managed to work professionally under their own name in the 19th century. London-based crafts-woman, Charlotte Newman (1836–1920), may be considered as one of the first ones to succeed. Educated at the Government Art School in South Kensington, she developed her career in the mid-1860s by collaborating with John Brogden, a manufacturer specialized in the revival jewelry. From Brogden's apprentice, she became his assistant, whom he entrusted with the execution of many of his projects. After Brogden died in 1884, she opened her studio by the name of "Mrs Newman". A decade later, when asked to talk about her work by the Society of Arts, she gave a lecture entitled

¹ M. Padfield, *Out in the trade: the occupational community of Birmingham's jewelry quarter* (Ph.D. diss., University of Warwick, 1999), pp. 224–227, <http://webcat.warwick.ac.uk/record=b1457002~S1>.

² T.L. Wolf, *Women Jewelers of the British Arts and Crafts Movement*, "The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts" 1989, vol. 14, p. 37. See also Juliet Weir-de La Rochefoucauld, *Les plus beaux bijoux de femmes joaillières*, Lausanne 2017, pp. 13–17.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32; M. Padfield, *Out in the trade...*, p. 230; Z. Thomas, *Between Art and Commerce: Women, Business Ownership, and the Arts and Crafts Movement*, "Past & Present" 2020, vol. 247, no.1, pp. 155, 161–162.

⁴ T.L. Wolf, *Women Jewelers...*, p. 31.

“Goldsmith’s Work: Past and Present”⁵. In Denmark, Caroline Amalie von Rosen (1880–1971) was able to apprentice for 4 years with Aagren, a local goldsmith. In 1911, after additional studies of jewelry in Florence, she set up her studio in Copenhagen⁶.

At the beginning of the 20th century, in larger jewelry production centers, women could undertake vocational education in industrial and factory schools. Although this could have been an alternative to the traditional apprenticeship system, it seems that women’s opportunities continued to be limited. The jewelry factories of German Pforzheim allowed both male and female candidates to attend training, however not on the same terms: “the period of apprenticeship for the finer grades of work is up to 5 years, for goldsmiths and mounters up to 4 ½ years, for pressers and founders 3 to 3 ½ years, and for females generally 3 years”. Women were trained in Pforzheim mainly to become polishers (“as it requires patience and a light hand”), they also produced enamels and operated special eccentric presses⁷. As examples of women’s careers in the jewelry industry happened rarely, Elisabeth Treskow’s (1898–1992) activity should be mentioned. Considered one of the first women jewelers in Germany, she attended the State Higher Technical School for the Precious Metals Industry in Schwäbisch Gmünd (Die Staatliche Höhere Fachschule für Edelmetall-Industrie) in the period 1916–1917. Before opening her studio in 1919 and gaining recognition as a master of the granulation technique, she apprenticed at the workshop of famous Karl Rothmüller’s in Munich, passing the journeyman exam there. In 1924, she obtained the master title in Dusseldorf⁸.

⁵ A. Schofield, *Mrs Charlotte Newman: pioneer woman jeweler and the first female goldsmith to open her own shop in London*, “Jewelry History Today” 2014, vol. 20, pp. 6–7; Z. Thomas, *Between Art and Commerce...*, p. 151–195.

⁶ V. Maarssø, *Hvis det kan more dem, saa –: rundt om nogle af de første kvindelige sølv- og guldsmede i Danmark*, København 2010, pp. 57–61.

⁷ R.P. Skinner, *Jewellery industry in various countries. Germany*, “Daily Consular and Trade Reports” 1912, February 7, pp. 578–580.

⁸ R. Joppien, *Goldschmiedekunst des 20. Jahrhunderts: Museum für angewandte Kunst, Köln, 22. Mai bis 22. Juli 1990: Deutsches Goldschmiedehaus, Hanau, 12. August bis 7. Oktober 1990*, Köln, 1990, p. 10–11. See J. Weir-de La Rochefoucauld, *Les plus beaux bijoux...*, pp. 67–68.

Elisabeth Treskow began her training during the First World War when the situation forced changes in the industry's functioning as men were recruited for the military. In France, although women began to be trained to perform "male works" (such as setting stones⁹), it can be assumed that they were still attributed mainly to auxiliary and repetitive tasks. In 1916, the first female-only polishing course was opened at the École Rachel in Paris¹⁰. Talking about the French industry at the time, women's involvement in jewelry design, however, should be noted¹¹. Suzanne Belperron (1900–1983) was a *modéliste-dessinatrice* at *Maison Boivin* in Paris since 1919. Before that, she completed a free watchmaking and jewelry decoration course for women organized by the Municipal Schools of Music and Fine Arts (Les écoles municipales de Musique et des Beaux-Arts) in Besançon. Belperron was hired by another woman, Jeanne Boivin, who managed the business after the death of her husband – the company's founder, René Boivin¹². As Jacqueline Viruega wrote, as early as the second half of the 19th century Paris boasted many jewelry companies managed by women. In family businesses, wives often helped men in their daily work. As a result, they were ready to take over responsibilities when the need arose¹³.

Women as the owners of jewelry companies were present in the 19th century Warsaw, which was, after St. Petersburg and Moscow, the third largest goldsmithing and jewelry-making center of the Russian Empire¹⁴. In 1838,

⁹ M. Heuzé, *Haute école de joaillerie. Former des mains d'or, une vocation depuis plus de 150 ans*, Paris 2020, p. 40.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Among the important women jewelry designers in interwar France, Weir-de La Rochefoucauld mentions Suzanne Belperron, Coco Chanel, Juliette Moutard, and Jeanne Toussaint. Her book features also Alma Pihl, Elizabeth Treskow, Olga Tritt and Margaret de Patta. See J. Weir-de La Rochefoucauld, *Les plus beaux bijoux....*, pp. 24–85.

¹² S. Rault, O. Baroin, *Suzanne Belperron*, Lausanne 2011, 21–22. See F. Cailles, *René Boivin: joaillier*, Paris 1994.

¹³ J. Viruega, *La bijouterie parisienne: 1860–1914 Du Second Empire à la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris, 2004, pp. 128–133.

¹⁴ R. Bobrow, *Warszawscy złotnicy, jubilerzy, grawerzy i kupcy wyrobów kruszcowych w XIX wieku*, Warszawa, 2018, p. 19; A. Lipczik, *Jubilerstwo w międzywojennej Warszawie*, Warszawa 2021, pp. 81–83.

Julianna Nast (b. Heintz), replaced her deceased husband, Ludwik Bernard Nast, becoming the head of his company¹⁵. Since 1877, Anna Korngold (b. Kopelman) oversaw the jewelry studio established by her husband, Naftali Korngold¹⁶. The famous jewelry shop of Michał Mankielewicz, located in the prestigious building of the National Theater in Warsaw, since 1911 was run by Julia Mankielewicz (b. Raczyńska, 1861–1939), the wife of the deceased founder¹⁷. In Poznań, a city considered at that time to be another important center of Polish jewelry, an important female figure in the industry was Zofia Stark (b. Suszczyńska). She was married to Józef Stark, the owner of the “J. Stark” company. When he died in 1902, Zofia Stark decided to continue his work. For the next thirty years, although being supported by her son for a while, she was in charge alone. As one of the founders of The Working Women’s Society (Związek Kobiet Pracujących), she was particularly involved in activities for the emancipation of Polish women¹⁸. Nevertheless, although it is not possible to verify it today, it can be assumed that the named women probably were not skilled artisans.

In 1873, Polish writer Eliza Orzeszkowa published the novel *Marta*, where she raised the issue of Polish women’s emancipation efforts. The title character of the novel is an impoverished noblewoman forced to find a job after her husband’s death. Gifted with drawing skills, Marta decides to try her hand in a jewelry workshop. While asking for the position, to prove to the owner that her work would be of value, she sketches a bracelet right away. Although the jeweler appreciates Marta’s work, the idea of employing a woman seems too peculiar to him. Orzeszkowa describes the jeweler’s embarrassment with the situation: he has an opportunity to recruit not only an efficient employee, but also a cheap one, because Marta suggested that she would

¹⁵ R. Bobrow, *Warszawscy złotnicy...*, pp. 198–200.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147. A. Lipczik, *Jubilerstwo...*, pp. 155–156.

¹⁷ In the interwar period, the co-owners of the company were their two daughters. One of them, Jadwiga Strakacz helped in the day-to-day running of the company. See A. Lipczik, *Jubilerstwo...*, p. 171.

¹⁸ *Złoty jubileusz firmy J. Stark*, “Kurier Poznański” 1934, no. 571, p. 18.

work for half of the draftsman's pay. Finally, the fear of novelty triumphs, and the craftsman refuses to hire Marta¹⁹.

The action of Orzeszkowa's novel takes place in Warsaw. According to the local press, in 1888 there were two jewelry apprentices in the city:

Two young daughters of a railway official, the H. ladies, work as apprentices in the jewelry workshop of Mr. K. After completing their apprenticeship, they intend to go to Paris to undertake the training at the Moullier's workshop, addressed especially to women. The H. ladies are the first women jewelers in our country, as this art has so far rested solely in the hands of men²⁰.

The circumstances of the sisters' apprenticeship in Warsaw and their further career in jewelry-making remain unknown. As "railway official's" daughters, they probably had no family ties with the field, thus perhaps they had to pay as it was in the case of other crafts²¹. Considering the industry's reluctance to hire female workers, girls descending from jewelry families had the greatest chance of working in the profession. However, as it was mentioned, it can be assumed that in the 19th- and early 20th centuries, most of them did not receive a craft training, but were involved in business.

After regaining independence in 1918, Poland faced many economic challenges, which made it difficult for the jewelry industry to develop properly. The jewelers struggled with issues that have been a consequence of existing legal and tax systems. The greatest obstacles for them, however, were financial difficulties and general impoverishment after the First World War. The income of the majority of Polish society was so low that it was only sufficient to meet basic needs. The domestic jewelry industry experienced its most difficult moment in the early 1930s as Poland was significantly affected by

¹⁹ E. Orzeszkowa, *Marta*, Warszawa 1949, pp. 246–255. I would like to thank Mr. Jacek A. Rochacki who mentioned the novel in one of our conversations.

²⁰ "Kurier Warszawski" 1888, no. 339 (morning issue), p. 2. Translated by the author.

²¹ Elżbieta Pokorzyńska analyzed the issue of women's position in crafts in Poland of that time in her article on female bookbinding. See E. Pokorzyńska, *Emancypacja kobiet w zawodzie introligatorskim w Warszawie w końcu XIX i na początku XX wieku*, "Bibliotekarz Podlaski" 2014, no. 28, pp. 35–57.

the global economic crisis. Due to the situation, many companies that were established in the 19th century ceased to exist at that time²².

According to data from 1921, women accounted for 3.3% of goldsmiths and jewelers registered in Poland at that time²³. This percentage was almost the same in 1928 – as reported by the press, out of 2000 workers, 70 were women²⁴. As it was in foreign manufactures, female workers were probably employed in jewelry workshops mainly to perform auxiliary works. Nevertheless, even if the conditions were unfavorable, developing an individual career in jewelry-making was not impossible for women in interwar Poland, especially after the reform of industry and crafts in 1927, resulting from the necessity to unify the rules throughout the restored country²⁵. With the introduction of new regulations, women gained the official right to become guild members and obtain a master's title.

Leokadia Szyndlauer (c. 1892–1978) belonged to the Guild of Jewelers, Engravers, and Watchmakers in Łódź (Cech Jubilerów, Grawerów i Zegarmistrzów w Łodzi), a city located 120 kilometers (75 miles) southwest of Warsaw. Together with another woman, engraver Romana Tambelli, not only were they members of the Guild, but also served on its board. Interestingly, this situation gave rise to a conflict in the organization in the late 1930s. Jan Chmiel, who oversaw the Guild at that time, believed that the board seats should be reserved only for men. He threatened that if the women were not removed from the board, he would resign from his position. One of the guild members, Franciszek Sługocki, outraged by Chmiel's attitude, suggested putting the matter to a vote. Effectively, the women's right to perform board functions in the Guild was confirmed, and Chmiel

²² A. Lipczik, *Jubilerstwo...*, pp. 15–58.

²³ C. Ptafiński, *Struktura zawodów drobnoprzemysłowych według spisu z dnia 9.XII.1931 r.*, Lublin 1938, p. XXX.

²⁴ *Zegarmistrzostwo, brązownictwo i pokrewne branże w liczbach*, "Dziennik Poznański" 1928, no. 286, p. 9. For comparison, in 1930, as indicated in the press, there were 1,147 male jewelers and 160 women jewelers in Berlin alone. See *Jakich zawodów unikają kobiety*, "Robotnik" 1930, no. 4191, p. 6.

²⁵ Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 7 czerwca 1927 r. o prawie przemysłowym (Dz. U. 1927 nr 53 poz. 468). See E. Pokorzyńska, *Emacypacja...*, p. 55.

was forced to resign²⁶. It is worth noting that both women descended from families with craft traditions. Leokadia Szyndlauer was the wife of Feliks Szyndlauer, the owner of one of the oldest local jewelry enterprises, listed among the founders of the Łódź guild²⁷. It can be assumed that Leokadia Szyndlauer underwent a craft training, but we do not know if she worked in the family workshop. However, from the family's accounts, she was known to have been a successful businesswoman²⁸.

In Warsaw, Eugenia Bretsznajder (b. Peczyńska, 1893–1972) helped her husband, Kazimierz, in running his jewelry business from 1913. When Kazimierz Bretsznajder fell ill in the mid-1930s, she took over the company. As a master jeweler (she obtained the title in 1941), Eugenia Bretsznajder ran the studio until its liquidation in 1949, possibly using her own goldsmith's mark – the “EB” initials in a rectangular field with cut corners. In newspaper advertisements of her business, she used the name “E. Bretsznajder”, maybe not wanting to emphasize the fact that she was a woman. It is worth noticing that, to the family's knowledge, the father of Eugenia Bretsznajder worked as a laborer in the famous Norblin factory of metal products in Warsaw²⁹.

For Danuta Sokolnicka (b. Szulc, 1918–1989), a jewelry career was a natural path since she was the daughter of Stanisław Szulc, the owner of the goldsmith and jewelry company “W. Szulc”. Established in 1873 in Poznań, the company was one of the most important in Poland, especially in the 1920–1930s. Although women worked there mainly as sales assistants, it is uncertain whether any female employees did craftsmanship³⁰. Nevertheless, it was in her father's studio where Danuta Szulc started her apprenticeship at the age

²⁶ A. Lipczik, *Dział jubilerski Państwowej Szkoły Przemysłowej Żeńskiej w Łodzi w latach 1927–1939*, “Sztuka i Krytyka” 2019, no. 9 (84),

²⁷ Księga protokólna Cechu Jubilerów, Grawerów i Zegarmistrzów w Łodzi (1920, 1922–1939), 39/2499, The State Archive in Łódź.

²⁸ Information from Mr. Rafał Szyndlauer, the great-grandson of Feliks and Leokadia Szyndlauer.

²⁹ A. Lipczik, *Jubilerstwo...*, s. 133.

³⁰ See K. Męczyńska, R. Sobczak-Jaskulska, *Działalność poznańskiej firmy “W. SZULC” w okresie międzywojennym* [in:] *Koral, perła i inne wątki. Biżuteria w Polsce. Materiały z X Sesji Naukowej z cyklu Rzemiosło artystyczne i wzornictwo w Polsce, poświęconej pamięci Zygmunta Dolczewskiego, przygotowanej przez Toruński*

of 17. While studying art history, she continued her professional training. In the period 1937–1939, she attended the Goldschmiedeschule in Hanau, and then learned at Julius Schneider’s school in Munich for six months. After the war, she became a master goldsmith, but the family company ceased to exist in 1950³¹. The workshop was taken over by the authorities and merged with other factories creating the “Juwelia” cooperative. Sokolnicka was forbidden to work there but thanks to her education and professional experience she found employment in the competitive “Rytosztuka”, where she worked since 1952. As Michał Myśliński pointed out, “it was her whom the cooperative owed setting directions for development, giving the designs an individual artistic character and the accompanying quality of work³²”.

Janina Rogalska (1911–1977), who also developed her jewelry career only after the war as one of the designers of the well-known “Imago Artis” cooperative³³, was engaged in artisanry from an early age. She worked at the workshop of her father, a master *chiseleur*, in Kraków. For a while, Rogalska studied in the Academy of Fine Arts but then decided to devote herself to the art of chiseling. As early as 1934, she would take care of the family business during her father’s absences³⁴.

As the access to the profession was the easiest for women descending from families with craftsmanship traditions, for girls from outside the milieu who wanted to train, the aforementioned industrial law of 1927 was of great importance. At that time, the craft chambers, whose task was to control the general craftsmanship, have been established. The new system significantly

Oddział Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki i Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, w dniach 7–8 maja 2009 roku w Warszawie, ed. K. Kluczajd, Warszawa 2010.

³¹ K. Męczyńska, *Szulcowie: wystawa 2 kwietnia – 22 maja 2006 w Muzeum Historii Miasta Poznania – Ratusz*, Poznań 2006, pp. 41–51. As a result of the so-called “Battle for Trade” (pol. *Bitwa o handel*) of the late 1940s, privately owned businesses were liquidated or nationalized by the communist authorities.

³² M. Myśliński, *Srebro z Poznania. Biżuteria i galanteria Spółdzielni Pracy Rękodzieła Artystycznego “Rytosztuka”*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 18–19, 49–50.

³³ See M. Myśliński, *Rozbite zwierciadło. Biżuteria i galanteria Spółdzielni Przemysłu Artystycznego “Imago Artis”*, Warszawa 2015.

³⁴ J. Rogalska-Gach, *Pamiętnik cyzelera Janiny Rogalskiej-Gach*, Kraków 2015, p. 48.

limited the authority of the guilds. In the case of jewelry-making, in order to confirm qualifications, it was not necessary to have a guild title, but it was possible to present a certificate of graduation from a selected industrial or art school. However, to obtain a permit to conduct one's own business, it was still necessary to undergo at least three years of apprenticeship³⁵. Although jewelry-making appeared in the programs of various facilities, The State Industrial School for Women in Łódź (Państwowa Szkoła Przemysłowa Żeńska w Łodzi), was the only one in interwar Poland to offer a full 3-year professional training in the field.

In 1925 The State Industrial School for Women was relocated from a private apartment in Łódź, where it operated since 1921, to the new building at 77 Narutowicza Street. The same year, its students were awarded a gold medal at The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris. The school educated future dressmakers, lace makers, embroiderers, leather goods makers, bookbinders, and, since 1927, also jewelers. The jewelry department was organized by Franciszek Sługocki (1885–1964), an experienced artist and *chiseleur*, educated in Geneva and Paris, whom I have mentioned before talking about the Łódź Guild. Sługocki was the technical director of the school's jewelry workshop. Franciszek Walczowski (1902–1983), a painter and designer of applied art, taught professional and decorative drawing. The complete course in the school lasted 3 years. In the final year, one had to choose a specialization, e. g. chiseling or enameling. A maximum of 12 girls could study in each class. The course took 44 hours a week, including geometric drawing (3 hours), professional and decorative drawing and modeling (10 hours), principles of ornament (2 hours), classes in the studio (29 hours). The school workshop was equipped with gas-connected jewelry benches, as well as larger machines powered by a 2.5 horse electric motor³⁶.

So far, it has not been possible to state whether any jewelry attributed to students of the Łódź State Industrial School has survived. Several examples of pendants, necklaces, brooches, and rings, possibly made of silver, were photographed and presented in the brochure of the institution's in 1929. These objects have two main features in common: all of them are openwork

³⁵ A. Lipczik, *Jubilerstwo...*, pp. 18–22.

³⁶ A. Lipczik, *Dział jubilerski...*, pp. 83–86.

and decorated with single, rather larger stones (possibly decorative ones) or glass plaques. Some pieces reveal an Art Deco inspiration. Most, however, due to the delicate structure and soft lines, resemble Edwardian jewelry. The jewelry made in Łódź school was presented at various exhibitions in the country and abroad, including the famous General National Exhibition in Poznań in 1929 (Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa) and The First International Handicraft Exhibition in Berlin in 1938. Despite voices of appreciation, in the same year, the authorities decided to shorten the jewelry-making course in Łódź to 2 years. After World War II, the school continued to operate. The jewelry department, which became “the department of metal accessories” (pol. dział galanterii metalowej), until 1953 was supervised by Franciszek Sługocki³⁷.

When talking about Sługocki, it is worth to emphasize his feminist attitude. As I mentioned, he protested against the discrimination of women in the Łódź guild of which he was a member. Running his workshop, he employed graduates of his faculty and encouraged his colleagues to do so³⁸. Based on the available sources, it can be stated that the issue of gender equality in the industry was of particular importance to Sługocki. In his memoirs, he referred to the situation that took place during his stay in La Chaux-de-Fonds, where he worked as a craftsman and jeweler in the years 1910–1911. Having the opportunity to talk with one of the workers of the local “Omega” watch factory, Sługocki asked if there were female employees there at that time. In response, he heard that the factory hired women only to perform such tasks as gilding, printing the dials, and packaging. When Sługocki expressed his disagreement on the matter, a man told him: “You believe that a woman should work equally with a man. It would be against God’s command. [...] The man should work to support the family, and the woman should raise the children and make good use of the money earned by her husband.”³⁹.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 88–92.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 87.

³⁹ F. Sługocki, *Wspomnienia: Genewa 1910–1919: drugi pobyt*, Łódź 2009, pp. 28–29. The issue of the marginalization of women in the Swiss watch industry in this period was raised by Michèle E. Schärer. As she noted, in 1894 at *L’Ecole d’horlogerie* in Geneva a female class was opened. However, while the men trained there for 5 years, the women’s

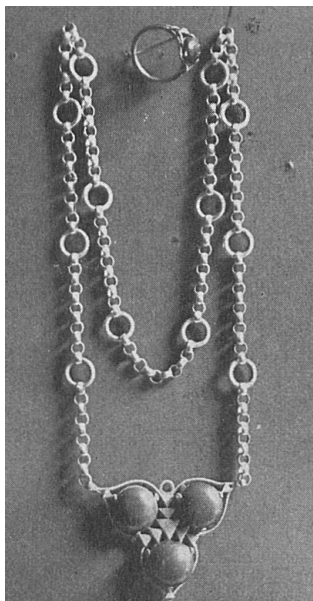


Figure 1. Silver and coral jewelry by Elżbieta Danielewicz, "Bluszcz" 1937, no. 52

Elżbieta Danielewicz (1908–1942) was one of the first alumni of the Łódź jewelry school. She graduated in 1930, passing the journeyman exam at the same time. Appreciated for her skills, most likely thanks to Sługocki's support, she received a scholarship which allowed her to study for two years at the École Nationale des Arts et des Métiers in Geneva. After returning to Łódź, she was employed as a teacher at her alma mater. Since 1933, she ran her studio at 4 Radwańska Street. Danielewicz worked mainly in silver (which she believed not only was cheaper, but also allowed to obtain more effects in jewelry) and used precious stones, including aquamarine and amethyst, as well as coral (fig. 1).

Some of her pieces, known unfortunately only from photos, may be considered as references to Polish folklore, however, the others show the influence of foreign modern jewelry (fig. 2).

In 1938, Elżbieta Danielewicz moved to Warsaw, where she opened a new business (12 Nowy Świat Street). Imprisoned by the Gestapo for her involvement in the Resistance, she was shot in 1942.

For the industry, despite having her own studio, Elżbieta Danielewicz remained primarily "a representative of vocational education", as she was presented in the press report from the All-Polish Congress of Goldsmiths and Watchmakers, which took place in May 1935 in Poznań. At the congress, Danielewicz appealed to her colleagues to accept the graduates of the Łódź school to work⁴⁰. It can therefore be assumed that in the mid-1930s in Poland, regardless of the existence of such an institution as in Łódź, it

course only lasted a year and was aimed at supplementary workforce. See M.E. Schärer, *Femmes et formation professionnelle continue dans une perspective historique. Le cas de Genève: 1880–1914*, "Revue suisse des sciences de l'éducation" 2000, vol. 2, p. 313.

⁴⁰ A. Lipczik, *Jubilerstwo...*, pp. 133–137.

was still rare to meet women working at jewelry benches. The problem of the lack of access to the profession for women was mentioned in one of the Warsaw daily magazines from 1934 (“They do not want to accept girls anywhere for practice⁴¹”). In 1937 Elżbieta Danielewicz was interviewed by “Bluszcz”, a popular women’s magazine. As she said, her dream was to be able to admit to her studio graduates of the Łódź school, who could open their workshops in the future (“So that there were more and more women jewelers”). She argued that this craft did not require hard physical work, but accuracy and precision. About a jeweler’s work, she said: “It is pleasant and very suitable for women. You can do it at home, and you know what to advise your client. After all, we know our whims⁴²”... However, as we learn from the article, many girls started their education in the jewelry department of the Łódź school, but did not finish it.

Discussing women’s opportunities in the jewelry training in interwar Poland, it is worth to mention The State Higher School of Decorative Arts and Artistic Industry in Poznań (Państwowa Szkoła Sztuk Zdobniczych i Przemysłu Artystycznego w Poznaniu), one of the institutions which, following the regulations of 1927, taught goldsmith techniques. At the Sculpture Department of the school, one could learn engraving, chiseling, or metal casting. These techniques were introduced into the program thanks to Jan Wysocki, a recognized sculptor, and medalist, who headed the department from 1923. The school, as the only one of artistic profile in Poland, taught the lost-wax casting at that time. Nevertheless, based on

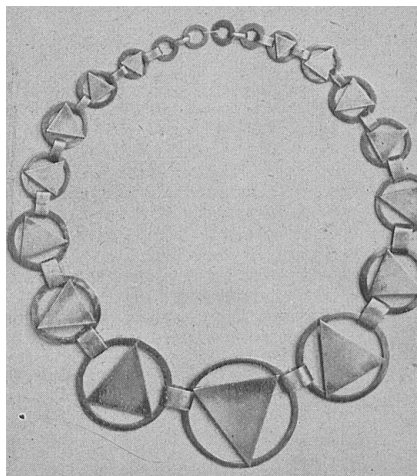


Fig. 2. Silver necklace by Elżbieta Danielewicz, „Bluszcz” 1937, no. 52

⁴¹ *Kronika kobieca*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1934, no. 6, p. 26. Translated by the author.

⁴² N. Grzeszczakówna N., *Jak pracują kobiety. Jubilerka*, “Bluszcz” 1937, no. 52, pp. 14–15.

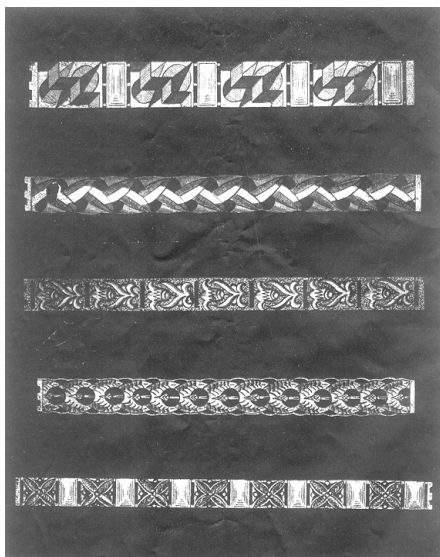


Fig. 3. Designs of bracelets by Halina Rakówna, „Przegląd Zegarmistrzowski i Złotniczy” 1929, no. 1

available sources, it can be assumed that its students made jewelry rather sporadically. The jewelry designs, however, would have been created at the school’s Graphics Department. This is evidenced by the drawings of bracelets by Halina Rakówna (1908-?)⁴³, published in 1929 in “Przegląd Zegarmistrzowski i Złotniczy”⁴⁴ (fig. 3).

Some of those designs have traditional forms with floral motifs. The bracelet shown at the bottom of the photo, on the other hand, is made of rectangular plaques in which Rakówna boldly combined geometric shapes. Even though her ideas were printed in an important trade magazine, it is rather unlikely

that Rakówna collaborated with jewelry studios as a designer. In this matter, however, gender does not seem to be the determining factor. Due to the difficult situation of the industry, there were not many jewelry companies in Poland at that time with an extensive internal structure, with a specialized division of labor, where one employee would be responsible only for designing. Most often, the drawings were made by the jewelers themselves.

⁴³ See J. Mulczyński, *Poznańska Zdobnicza: historia Państwowej Szkoły Sztuk Zdobniczych i Przemysłu Artystycznego w Poznaniu w latach 1919–1939*, Poznań 2009, p. 657.

⁴⁴ *Oryginalne wzory bransoletek pomysłu pani Haliny Rakówniej, Państwowa Szkoła Zdobnicza w Poznaniu*, “Przegląd Zegarmistrzowski i Złotniczy” 1929, no. 1. Rakówna was also the winner of the competition for a poster promoting jewelry-making, goldsmithing and watchmaking in Poland. The competition was organized by “Przegląd...” in 1928. See *Wynik konkursu na plakat propagandowy dla wyrobów naszej branży*, “Przegląd Zegarmistrzowski i Złotniczy” 1928, no. 21–22, p. 9.

In the 1930s, examples of jewelry appeared in the work of a graduate of the Poznań school, Jadwiga Rutter (1906-after 1971). As a student, Rutter became interested in enamel art, which she then explored during her further studies abroad: in Vienna (Kunstgewerbeschule des Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie, 1929/1930) and Paris (École des Arts Décoratifs, 1931), where she also practiced in well-known enamel factories, incl. the company of E. Anssart. At the turn of 1931 and 1932, she opened the enamel studio in Poznań (fig. 4), and soon after she was hired as a teacher in her alma mater.



Fig. 4. Jadwiga Rutter in her studio in Poznań, 1935

In 1935 Jadwiga Rutter presented her enamel works at the exhibition in The Poznań Society of Friends of Fine Arts, where, among the other decorative objects, she showed enamel painted silver brooches in which the colors would “sometimes slightly blend⁴⁵”. Certainly, the exhibition featured also a bracelet made of wide trapezoidal tiles decorated with champlevé. Most likely, this bracelet is presented in the archival photo. Like the two platters and the ashtray photographed next to it, the bracelet is decorated with a contrasting geometric ornament (fig. 5).

In the late 1930s, Jadwiga Rutter received an offer to exhibit her enamel works at the Musée Galliera in Paris, nonetheless, the show never took place due to the outbreak of the war⁴⁶. Between 1958 and 1967 she worked as the chief designer of the Artistic Handicraft Cooperative “Rytosztuka” (pol. Spółdzielnia Pracy Rękodzieła Artystycznego “Rytosztuka⁴⁷”), replacing Danuta Sokolnicka.

⁴⁵ *Pierwsze polskie emalie artystyczne*, “Kurier Poznański” 1935, no. 471, p. 13.

⁴⁶ M. Myśliński, *Srebro z Poznania...*, pp. 51–53; Jarosław Mulczyński, *Poznańska Zdobnicza: historia Państwowej Szkoły Sztuk Zdobniczych i Przemysłu Artystycznego w Poznaniu w latach 1919–1939*, Poznań 2009, p. 235.

⁴⁷ M. Myśliński, *Srebro z Poznania...*, pp. 53–54.



Fig. 5. Enamel works by Jadwiga Rutter, 1935

CONCLUSION

The research conducted so far indicates that in pre-war Poland the jeweler profession remained available primarily to women descending from families with craftsmanship traditions. The job required full training, which was still mostly done through an apprenticeship, and craftsmen were reluctant to teach women unless they were their wives or daughters. Simultaneously, in the late 1920s, the first career opportunities for female candidates from outside the environment began to emerge in Poland. Undoubtedly, this tendency was influenced by the new Industrial Law of 1927 which applied also to the craftsmanship. At the time, the jewelry department at The State Industrial School for Women in Łódź was established. This was where Elżbieta Danielewicz, the only known woman in Poland who managed to create her own jewelry business before the outbreak of World War II, took her first steps in the craftsmanship. Unfortunately, due to the lack of sources, other students of Franciszek Sługocki remain anonymous to this day.

The issue of gender equality in the profession was rather rarely discussed by craftsmen. Women accounted for such a small percentage of workers that they were not treated as competitors, much less was their position a threat. At the same time, it is possible that the difficult situation in the industry influenced the opening of the jeweler profession for women. It should be remembered that during the interwar period, the jewelry-making in Poland was in crisis. As jewelers' attention was focused primarily on the struggle to stay in business, attempts to maintain the gender hierarchy in the profession were not their priority.

While it cannot be stated that women jewelers made a substantial impact on the industry, their work has undoubtedly been noticed. In 1938, the jewelry-pieces made by the students from Łódź, as well as those created by Elżbieta Danielewicz, were presented at The First International Handicraft Exhibition in Berlin, in the department of Polish goldsmithery⁴⁸. At this point, the merits of Franciszek Sługocki, perhaps the greatest promoter of women's jewelry-making in the country, should be emphasized. Sługocki presented his views in every area of his activity: as the organizer of the Łódź school, its teacher, as well as a guild jeweler owning a business. His pro-feminist attitude may be considered unique in Europe at that time.

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⁴⁸ A. Lipczik, *Dział jubilerski...*, p. 90–91; ead., *Jubilerstwo...*, p. 137.

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Sources of Illustrations

Figure 1. Silver and coral jewelry by Elżbieta Danielewicz, "Bluszcz" 1937, no.52, courtesy of the Digital Library of the University of Łódź.

Figure 2. Silver necklace by Elżbieta Danielewicz, "Bluszcz" 1937, no.52, courtesy of the Digital Library of the University of Łódź.

Figure 3. Designs of bracelets by Halina Rakówna, "Przegląd Zegarmistrzowski i Złotniczy" 1929, no.1, courtesy of The National Digital Library Polona.

Figure 4. Jadwiga Rutter in her studio in Poznań, 1935, ref. 3/1/0/11/5025/1, courtesy of The National Digital Archives (Poland).

Figure 5. Enamel works by Jadwiga Rutter, 1935, ref. 3/1/0/11/5029/1, courtesy of The National Digital Archives (Poland).

Abstract

The article aims to present the opportunities for women's professional development in the jewelry industry in prewar Poland. By analyzing the biographies of selected women jewelers who trained in the 1930s, the career paths available at that time were indicated. The article also tries to answer the question of how the conditions in which the jewelry industry in Poland operated at that time influenced the situation of women entering the profession. It can serve as a reference point for further research on the presence of women in jewelry in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: craftsmanship; craftswomen; jewelry-making; women jewelers; Polish jewelry

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