

Rytm, Sanacja,
and the Dream
of Modern Art
Patronage
in Poland
(1922–1932)

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Rytm, Sanacja, and the Dream of Modern Art Patronage in Poland (1922–1932)

Rytm (Rhythm) was a society of artists which exerted a strong presence in Poland between the years 1922 and 1932. While the aesthetic and political identities of the group continue to be debated, the role of its individual members in the Polish art world was exceedingly influential. Indeed, due to their links with the new political establishment after the First World War, the members of the group in time came to comprise the backbone of a new public artistic network within the recently-reinstated Polish state. Largely neglected after the Second World War, when the study of the artistic achievements of the interwar period were affected by anti-capitalist Communist propaganda, the group received only limited attention, and remains in need of study.¹ This article discusses Rytm's ideas on modern art patronage, in the context of its relationship with the Sanacja (Sanation) regime, the centre-left movement led by the charismatic Marshal Józef Piłsudski that overthrew, during a bloodless *coup d'état* in 1926, the government of the right-wing National Democratic Party (known as Endecja).²

Rytm and Sanacja

For its contemporaries, Rytm's association with Sanacja formed one of the more characteristic marks of the group's identity. In this respect, Rytm has been contrasted with the well-established Warsaw Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych, or Zachęta (Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts), which had connections with Endecja. The political disparity between the two was paralleled by an aesthetic one: to Zachęta's persisting attachment to the 'patriotic theme' and a picturesque, sentimental kind of Realism, widely perceived as outmoded yet continuously loved by wealthy patrons (see, for example, Józef Simmler's 1860 *Death of Barbara Radziwiłł* (*Śmierć Barbary Radziwiłłówny*) or Wojciech Kossak's 1935 *Vision of the Polish Army* (*Wizja wojska polskiego*, Fig. 10.1)), Rytm opposed the aesthetic ideas of harmony, clarity, and compositional rhythm inspired by the anti-Impressionist reaction they had witnessed in Paris.³ Their works were distinctly different from what Zachęta's audiences had been accustomed to: anti-Impressionist and anti-Realist, they were characterised by a closed, well-structured composition, well-defined line, figurative yet simplified form and an abstract, decorative inclination. Instead of narrating particular historical events, they evoked the sense of a timeless myth, elusively suspended in space and time (see, for instance, Waclaw Borowski's *After the Hunt* (*Po polowaniu*) or *Pastoral* (*Pastoral*), Tymon Niesiołowski's *Woman Picking Flowers* (*Zrywająca kwiaty*), Eugeniusz Zak's *Family* (*Rodzina*, Fig. 10.2), Władysław Skoczylas's *Fighting a Dragon* (*Walka ze smokiem*), or Henryk Kuna's sculpture *Rhythm* (*Rytm*), all displayed at Rytm's first show in 1922). Rytm's first exhibition, which took place in a designated area within Zachęta's building, was widely perceived as being of a new quality, different from what were seen as Zachęta's old-fashioned ways. Politically, Rytm's emergence from within Zachęta in 1922 and its subsequent secession from it in 1924 can be seen as an expression of the same civic impulse that in 1926 led to the establishment in Poland of the new Sanacja regime: the desire to construct a new, modern state, free from the ideological extremes of either Left or Right, and based on the idea of inclusivity and the ethos of a widely-understood community spirit.



Fig. 10.1. Wojciech Kossak, *Vision of the Polish Army* (*Wizja wojska polskiego*, 1935). Oil on canvas, 200 x 299 cm. Warsaw National Museum, Warsaw.



Fig. 10.2. Eugeniusz Zak, *Family* (*Rodzina*, 1922). Photograph, 16.5 x 22.1 cm (original lost). Warsaw National Museum, Warsaw.

While a recurring feature in studies of the group, Rytm's relationship with Sanacja has rarely been described comprehensively. Wiesława Dąbrowska's comments on the matter, included in her unpublished Master's thesis devoted to the group, are illustrative of this: 'The works of Rytm were not the apotheosis of the ruling regime, but they found within that regime a place that suited them; [the group] was content with that place just as the governing spheres were content with the activity of Rytm'.⁴ This comment reflects an ambivalence about the degree to which the artists consciously 'served' Sanacja (arguably the main controversy around Rytm, one which continues to linger to this day). Indeed, the perception of Rytm's position with respect to the authoritarian system in power varies from one commentator to another. According to Urszula Kozakowska-



Fig. 10.3.
Władysław
Skoczylas, *Józef
Piłsudski* (1920).
Colour lithograph,
38 x 29 cm.
National Library of
Poland, Warsaw.

Zaucha, for example, the members of Rytm ‘in the interwar period became effectively the official addressees of state commissions for monumental art designs’.⁵ The author of a monograph on the group, Henryk Anders, on the other hand, was very eloquent in challenging what he saw as being the all too hasty labelling of Rytm as a pro-regime group. ‘The opinion that Rytm was Sanacja’s pro-regime group is, however, erroneous’, Anders claimed.⁶ ‘It is overlooked, or perhaps concealed on purpose,’ he believed, ‘that the group had been constituted long before the May *coup d’état* and that it was precisely those early four years that were the period of the highest creative tension and of the greatest expansion of the members of Rytm’.⁷ Indeed, although demand for public art increased during Sanacja’s rule, the members of Rytm had established themselves as recipients of private and public commissions before Piłsudski came to power in 1926 and it was before the coup that they received most teaching appointments.

In reality, the ambivalence of Rytm’s cooperation with the Sanacja-controlled state was irrefutably tied to the ambivalence of the regime itself, a political system which continues to divide historians to this day. As pointed out by the British historian of Poland Norman Davies, Sanacja ‘was not at all Fascist in its leanings, since the only Fascist sympathizers in Poland were to be found among Piłsudski’s opponents’.⁸ As noted by another scholar, a Polish-Canadian historian of Poland, Piotr Wróbel, Piłsudski considered himself a democrat, advocated individual liberty and cultural and religious plurality, and tolerated the Polish parliament (the Sejm).⁹ Brian Porter-Szücs explained this ‘soft’ character of Piłsudski’s regime in his chapter ‘The Ambivalence of Democracy and Authority, 1922–39’:

The Sanacja did not outlaw the opposition parties, close hostile newspapers, or disband the Sejm. They followed all the proper procedures to elect President Mościcki and to form successive governments. By all outward appearances, the Second Republic continued as before. Nonetheless, Poland was no longer a fully functioning democracy. The Sanacja employed fraud and intimidation to ensure that Piłsudski always got his way, and with each passing year the regime grew more heavy-handed.¹⁰

In the words of Porter-Szücs, moreover, ‘everything we might say about Piłsudski is qualified by “yes, but...” ... He kept both the communists and the radical right at bay—a major accomplishment for any leader in the 1920s and 1930s—but only by establishing a military regime that undermined democracy’.¹¹

Although an in-depth comparison between Rytm and other European artistic groups supported by the state at the time, such as the Italian Novecento, for instance, is certainly overdue, it appears that Rytm’s relationship with Sanacja was quite unlike that of artists in other authoritarian regimes of the time, due to the distinctive nature of the Polish regime. While the political dictatorships of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or Soviet Russia generally strived to control and censor the arts, Piłsudski was not particularly interested in regulating artistic production through censorship and, in fact, during his leadership artists continued to criticise the lack of state interest in art. Agnieszka Chmielewska wrote:

Unlike in totalitarian countries, in Poland the project of art involved in the service of the state and the society ... was initiated by the artists themselves. State authorities never really got involved in visual arts, nor did they create a system of commissions imposing or even just promoting the production of such art. It was the artists themselves who understood the need for adapting art to the needs of the state, of binding it with life, and of making it available to all the strata of the society ... It was they who pointed to the state’s tasks in the sphere of art and culture and to their advantages, and who proposed diverse models of state patronage.¹²

The Polish artists’ approach towards the government, discussed here, was more confrontational than submissive. According to Dąbrowska, they attempted to ‘take the initiative in the face of the state’s incompetence’, while in the words of Rogoyska they fought ‘for the position of art within the contemporary regime’.¹³ The widely-felt expectation that the state should support the arts found expression in a series of debates and lectures, organised in April and May 1928, during which the artists put forward to the President of Poland a number of postulates, including those for increasing subsidies for crafts and artistic education, expanding the national art collection, and establishing new state grants for artistic periodicals, as well as the proposal to build a new exhibition space in Warsaw, which would provide an alternative to the one owned by the private patrons from Zachęta.¹⁴ Indeed, in what was described as ‘the very difficult period of economic crisis, political and national chaos’, some of Rytm’s members were the state’s fiercest critics in the field of art patronage.¹⁵

Still, there is no doubt that there were strong personal links between the supporters of Piłsudski and the artists belonging to Rytm, which must have contributed to these artists’ increasingly influential positions in public life from 1926 onwards. Many of these links were long-standing, often dating back to the period before the First World War, to studies in Kraków, shared journeys to Paris, as well as their past military experiences in the so-called Polish ‘Legions’ and in the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik War. The latter military connection was confirmed in the many surviving political posters from the time designed by Rytm’s future members, such as Zygmunt Kamiński’s *Exhibition of the Polish Legions* (*Wystawa legionów polskich*, Lublin), Władysław Skoczylas’s *Józef Piłsudski* (Fig. 10.3), and Felicjan Kowarski’s *To Arms! Join the Polish Army!* (*Do broni! Wstępajcie do wojska polskiego!*). To put it in the most straightforward way, many members of Rytm and leaders of Sanacja were colleagues or acquaintances. The average member of Rytm fitted well Porter-Szücs’s description of ‘those who occupied leadership positions after the coup’: ‘most had distant ties to the left, had served in the military during World War I and the Polish-Bolshevik War, and had later become respected professionals in law or business, or else academics’.¹⁶ In interwar Poland, the members of this group constituted a strong enclave of liberal and culturally-aware intelligentsia, sharing similar artistic, social, and political interests.

Being on good terms with Sanacja, Rytm skilfully used the national debate on the need for a new state patronage to take over the role as the planner and organiser of Polish artistic life (a role hitherto held by Zachęta). It was art's perceived propaganda potential which provided Rytm with a powerful argument in applying for governmental support and, most importantly, in their proposal to build an alternative exhibition space in Warsaw, which subsequently allowed them to stand up to the hegemony of Zachęta. Indeed, if ambivalent about subsidising contemporary, living art, for which it was bitterly criticised, the post-1926 government partly supported art restoration, much needed after the years of Poland's partition, and what became known as *sztuka reprezentacyjna*, a Polish term which can be translated as 'representative', 'ceremonial', 'monumental' or 'stately' art (suggesting at the same time its public and monumental nature and its propaganda objective of 'representing' the country). The government also funded international travelling exhibitions of Polish art, organised by Towarzystwo Szerzenia Sztuki Polskiej wśród Obcych or TOSSPO (The Society for the Dissemination of Polish Art Abroad), a new association set up specifically to promote Polish art abroad. The artists from Rytm certainly profited from these international projects, for, as noted by Piątkowska, their works constituted a 'mandatory part of almost all' of them.¹⁷

It was the aftermath of the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts (Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes) in Paris, that formed the key setting for Rytm's transformation from a band of activist campaigners to the country's new artistic establishment. Poland saw this event as an important arena for its self-promotion as a new state and Polish artists received the highest number of official awards (about one hundred and ninety, including thirty-five Grand Prix awards, two of which were presented to Rytm members Henryk Kuna and Zofia Stryjeńska).¹⁸ Branded by what was perceived as its Parisian 'success', the eclectic stylistic formula generated for the 1925 exhibition, presented as Poland's own artistic 'style' grounded in Slavic folklore, was recognised by the new Polish state as appropriate for representing the country at other international exhibitions. Standing largely in contrast to the solemn, patriotic art based on the model of the French Academy, which was promoted by conservative-leaning patrons from Zachęta, this new style (today known as 'Polish Art Deco') fitted very well with the new government's diplomatic ambitions.

Regardless of its members' personal links with the government and of its appeal to the government's propagandist agenda, Rytm's relationship with it can be described as complicated, and not just due to the artists' confrontational attitude towards state authorities referred to above. It should be underlined here that Rytm does not fit straightforwardly into the category of 'state-forming' artists (*artyści państwowotwórczy*), a term used in Polish historiography to describe the large number of artists associated with the state structures of the interwar period, which supplied decorative and monumental art for public spaces, a category theorised in distinction to both the avant-garde and to another important group of Polish painters, the Colourists (Koloryści) of the 1930s. Rytm's relationship to the 'state-forming' artists was equivocal: while individual members of Rytm figured in Agnieszka Chmielewska's pioneering 2006 study of the subject, for example, the group as such was not among the artistic associations she discussed in more detail.¹⁹ It emerged from Chmielewska's study, moreover, that the peaks of the activity of the 'state-forming' artists and that of Rytm were not synchronised. As she emphasised, the 'institutionalisation' of the 'state-forming' artists did not take place until the second half of the 1930s, when the state 'started to allocate more substantial funds for ... public edifices and their decoration', while 'the outbreak of the Second World War interrupted [their activity] at the time of its greatest *prosperity*', that is, a good few years after Rytm's dissolution in 1932.²⁰ Certainly, the expansion of the 'state-forming' artists appears to have coincided with the demise of Rytm.

It appears that Rytm's relationship with Sanacja was unfixed and that it changed, over time, in keeping with the swings in the political and ideological makeup of Sanacja, which altered from left-wing to right-wing.²¹ It is reasonable to believe that Rytm as a group roughly identified with Sanacja's early, more liberal makeup, while its later, conservative leanings highlighted the differences between its members. And so Rytm changed its character, and also, it seems, its leaders.

Set up by Henryk Kuna, Waclaw Borowski, and Eugeniusz Zak, in the milieu dominated by the outdated *Zachęta* to champion the aesthetic ideas of harmony, clarity, and compositional rhythm inspired by the anti-Impressionist reaction they had witnessed in Paris, *Rytm* appears, in the later 1920s, to have been gradually steered more by such members as Władysław Skoczylas and Tadeusz Pruszkowski, who became increasingly involved with the state and its structures. Unlike other members of *Rytm*, these two artists could truly be called ‘state-forming’, and their increasingly ardent, socially-orientated writings largely superseded the group’s earlier, primarily aesthetic, concerns. The fact that only a minority of the members of *Rytm* later became ‘state-forming’ artists complicates any interpretation of it being an unwaveringly pro-regime group. The political differences within the group may have well been central in its dissolution.

Discussing Art Patronage: *L’art social* for the Modern State

The members of *Rytm* were more willing to talk about art’s wider role in society than about their partisan loyalties. In this respect, the group was certainly the inheritor of the turn-of-the-century currents devoted to art’s link with life, such as those of William Morris in Great Britain (which influenced Guild Socialism and encouraged such cooperatives as the Omega Workshops of Roger Fry), the *Deutscher Werkbund* and the Bauhaus in Germany (inspired by the ideas of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* which, as noted by Amy Lynn Wlodarski, was posited by Richard Wagner as ‘both an aesthetic and social movement’), and *l’art social* of such critics as Roger Marx (1859–1913) in France.²² *Rytm* also continued Poland’s own tradition of supporting applied and decorative arts, inspired by its Western counterparts, which before 1918 had been concentrated in Kraków and Zakopane.²³ In this respect, it differed from the Polish radical avant-garde of the time represented by such artists as Mieczysław Szczuka, who attacked art’s elitism by promoting its integration into the praxis of life rather than its equality with crafts.

It was the movement for the renewal of crafts which, after the First World War, provided the basis for the programme of the School of Fine Arts (*Szkoła Sztuk Pięknych*) in Warsaw, known as ‘the first academy in Poland aimed at the simultaneous training in fine and applied art’, whose teaching staff included many members of *Rytm*.²⁴ The school’s promotion of applied arts, recently reviewed in the important 2012 exhibition entitled *Art Everywhere. The Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw 1904–1944 (Sztuka wszędzie. Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie 1904–1944)*, was part of a wider, socially-orientated agenda which encouraged students to ‘carry their art outside, to the streets of Warsaw’ (as it was phrased by the school’s director, Karol Tichy, in his speech given at the inaugural 1923 committee).²⁵ The same ideas provided a model for the programme of the Institute for the Propaganda of Art (*Instytut Propagandy Sztuki*), Warsaw’s long-awaited new art venue which symbolically ended *Zachęta*’s hegemony.²⁶

Art’s social potential became the key subject of concern for Władysław Skoczylas and Tadeusz Pruszkowski. Perceiving art works beyond their status as autonomous aesthetic objects, operating within a detached sphere guarded by juries, shared tastes, and the market, these artists saw art as a social enterprise premised on the communication of public values. Art’s ‘public’ nature was especially underlined in the writings of Pruszkowski, whose exploration of the theme developed from 1930 onwards and culminated, in 1936, in his famous and powerful declaration:

I dream of public art, serving the community, encountered in all places where the countries citizens might be: in court in a town hall, in the Inland Revenue, at the post office, in a Market Hall, in a square, in a bathhouse, in the barracks, at school, even in prison and in a public convenience.²⁷

Pruszkowski’s was not only a concern for the physical accessibility of art (its presence in public spaces), but also its intellectual accessibility. He believed art ought to be intelligible to a wide audience, largely unfamiliar with the increasingly-specialised discourse on contemporary art, and saw art’s accessibility for a wider audience as threatened by what he considered increasingly-elitist avant-garde tendencies. ‘Would it not be worth trying to create a kind of art’, he asked in 1930, ‘which, while preserving all the qualities of great art, would not scare the relatively sensitive people at large? A difficult task, for sure,’ he contended, ‘but all the more interesting and I have the



Fig. 10.4. Tadeusz Pruszkowski, *Veit Stoss* (Wit Stwosz, 1920). Oil on canvas, 69 x 79 cm. Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź.

impression that only art of this kind can contribute to the cultural education of the masses'.²⁸ 'To put this task daringly into practice', he added in another text on the subject, written four years later, 'appears to me to be a modern undertaking'.²⁹

This sensitivity to art's wider social and community context was accompanied in the case of Skoczylas and Pruszkowski by a condemnation of the contemporary art market's influence on artistic production. One can detect resentment, for example, in Skoczylas's criticism of the 'set of operations much like the dealings on a stock exchange, which, in the field of art, have turned out to be very damaging'.³⁰ In his 1932 article, entitled, tellingly, 'The Twilight of the Parisian Art Market', Skoczylas described in some detail the speculative activity of the 'dealers' and the 'collectors', which contributed, according to him, to the art market's 'unhealthy relations' (a criticism widely voiced at the time).³¹ 'The negative sides of such trade are far larger than the positive ones', he concluded, explaining:

When forced by contract into mass production, [even] the best 'brand' produces works of no value, which are subsequently advertised as masterpieces, involving a whole arsenal of propaganda measures available to the dealer. This situation misleads the opinion of the genuine admirers of art, unaware of these relations, but above all it misleads thousands of young artists, drawn to Paris from across the world.³²

It is largely in the context of their critique of the art market that these artists expressed scepticism towards much of the radical avant-garde's experimental activity, considering it to be triggered by the artificially-stimulated demand for originality and for the 'brand' of a name-tag. Their renewed interest in craft (whose sources lay in the turn-of-the-century French debate on decoration as a modern social restorative, and which, in the early 1920s, could be compared to such famous statements as Giorgio de Chirico's 1919 essay 'Return to Craft') was less a manifestation of nostalgia for the past, or a reaction against experimentation in art, than an expression of protest at the fetishisation of fine arts and of a commitment to art's collective ideals, closely tied to a vision

of a future egalitarian society.³³ In this objection, they were surely inspired by similar, earlier ideas in operation in Paris, recorded, for example, in Gino Severini's account of an idea that made its way in the art circles in Paris, especially among the Cubists of the *Effort Moderne*: that of a collective and anti-individualistic art, in which anonymity was the rule, as in the time of the Greeks, the Roman Republic and the early Christians. But then this idea vanished, because with the development of the Parisian art market, artists were instead encouraged, indeed driven by the merchants to realise their own personality in the most distinctive and individualistic way; and on this line it came to excesses.³⁴

It is in this context too that one can read the 1920 declaration of the Polish literary group *Skamander*, also, arguably, expressing Rytm's position:

We do not wish to be perceived otherwise than as people conscious of their poetic craftsmanship, and fulfilling it, within our means, without a fault. Assuming this part of human labours, and aware of our responsibility for it, we want to approach it earnestly; therefore, we do not scorn the workmanship [craft] involved in it, seeing clearly the large amounts of inspiration and of hard won legacy that it comprises.³⁵

Here the poets declared their belief in the value and dignity of artistic labour as a physical and applied craft as much as an intellectual and theoretical pursuit, revealing a fascination with the model of an artist as a modest executor rather than an egocentric genius.

It was not unexpected that socially-aware artists, including those from Rytm, would become concerned with their own role in society. Indeed, the belief in art's public nature was accompanied by a vision of the modern artist that was inspired by the idea of a medieval guild, in which individual artists were to be skilled professional labourers working as part of the same union, whose ability and professional expertise were to grant them independence from the instabilities of the capricious art market. These ideas were best articulated by Pruszkowski and are marked in his 1920 painting *Veit Stoss (Wit Stwoszcz)*, a modern depiction of the German Gothic sculptor Veit Stoss, famous in Poland for his 1477–1484 altarpiece made for the St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków (Fig. 10.4). Wearing an apron, with the sleeves of his shirt rolled up, and holding the sculptor's traditional tools, Pruszkowski's *Veit Stoss* communicates the physical nature of his craft and stands for its author's beliefs about the role a modern artist should assume in society. Skill, technical competence, and the workmanship invested in an artwork were to be its only objective criteria for Pruszkowski, who encouraged both methodical and stylistic diversity among his students.³⁶ 'Not boycotting any "method" in painting,' he appealed in 1930, 'let us judge it not by whether it "fits in" with the current fashion, but most objectively to look for the value of the talent and of the skill in each art work—irrespective of whether it is to our individual taste'.³⁷

Pruszkowski's inspiration in the pre-academy, guild-based system was accompanied by a pragmatic wish to grant the next generation of budding artists a profession that they could rely on in providing their own daily subsistence. In a 1928 interview for *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, he confessed that his 'main objective, which [he] constantly remember[ed] while teaching, [was] to train the students in the painterly craft sufficiently for them to be able to support themselves, no matter where life takes them, and not to need to count on the generosity and protection of the people'.³⁸ But there was also a more playful element to Pruszkowski's fascination with the guilds: in his Warsaw studio at the School of Fine Arts he revived a number of rituals inspired by the traditional artisans' guilds of the past.³⁹ In this spirit, he celebrated the end of each academic year with a special performative ceremony, in which the final year students were symbolically appointed qualified painters, and subsequently introduced by him into the local art world. This lighthearted, ironic manner in which Pruszkowski approached his profession was passed on to his students, generating amongst them an atmosphere of confidence and enthusiasm.⁴⁰

Crucially, for Skoczylas and other artists involved in a similar debate in Poland, art's role in society was perceived primarily as educational. While art's educational function had been especially appreciated during the times of partition, with a strong sense of a duty to enlighten and to educate being an important part of the ethos of the Polish intelligentsia, this emerged after the First World War for the first time in the context of the responsibilities of the new state.



Fig. 10.5.
Tadeusz
Pruszkowski,
Self-Portrait
(*Autoritratto*,
unknown date).
Reproduced
in Margherita
G. Sarfatti, *Storia
della pittura
moderna* (Rome:
p. Cremonese,
1930).

'Nowadays,' Skoczylas wrote in his 1926 article 'Printmaking and its Significance', 'when every banknote and postage stamp, by reaching the furthest corners of the country, influences the moulding of an aesthetic taste of the widest social strata, the responsibility and the role of the state, or the government, for the level of artistic culture in the country, is decisive'.⁴¹ Tadeusz Pruszkowski, too, called for increased support for artistic education, pointing to the 'inadequate preparation of people at large to understand visual arts principles. The fault is first of all that of the education system,' he argued, 'which omits the issue of aesthetic education'.⁴²

State patronage of the arts was, therefore, envisioned by these artists as an educational enterprise for the whole society, and the programme of the School of Fine Arts and the Institute for the Propaganda of Art were likewise shaped in this spirit. 'In a democratic state', Skoczylas wrote in 1926, 'the government has no other way of influencing the development of art but to spread artistic culture among the masses'.⁴³ Two years later, he repeated that 'the vast majority of the efforts of the state ... should express itself in the propagation of art among wide masses, and not almost exclusively in backing individual artists'.⁴⁴

Skoczylas and Pruszkowski's interest in art's role in society was thus accompanied by an apparent concern for democracy. In its contribution to the development of a democratic society, art was to be 'public', not only in the sense of being available to everyone, but also as capable of educating the citizen towards a more attentive participation in democracy. In Skoczylas's writings, democracy appeared as a key notion, especially in his texts devoted to the graphic arts, the rapidly-developing medium to which he was incessantly devoted throughout his career. This concern echoed, to some extent, similar ideas in operation in the post-revolutionary French Third Republic where the debate on social art was inherently linked to the promotion of democracy, reflecting the French republican tradition's commitment to the 'democratization, egalitarianism

and utilitarianism' of society, and of art's and culture's role in that process.⁴⁵ The members of Rytm would have surely been acquainted with this French tradition, as was made evident in Pruszkowski's self-portrait (now lost, but illustrated in a book published in 1930 by the Italian critic Margherita Sarfatti), in which the painter showed himself wearing an astonishing hat with the inscription *liberté égalité fraternité* (Fig. 10.5).⁴⁶ As Catherine Méneux has pointed out, in France, 'associated with a social state rather than a political regime, rooted in the memory of the revolutionary years, the idea of democracy irrigated discourses, referring to the ideal of free and egalitarian access to culture and an art for all'.⁴⁷

Conflicts: State Art Patronage and Democracy

So far, I have listed a number of key points raised in the writings of Rytm members Skoczylas and Pruszkowski, including their elevation of crafts; their belief in art's popular nature; their objection to its market commodification; and their concern for the artist's welfare and for art's educational role, seen as the carrier of democratic values. I have not yet explored, however, how exactly the artists perceived the state's role in artistic patronage. The issue is complex, because, upon closer inspection, there was a tension between the artists' views on state patronage and the free market, democracy, the postulate of 'widening participation', and their relationship with Sanacja. Indeed, one could argue that the inconsistencies embedded in Skoczylas's and Pruszkowski's writings, which I will now discuss, reflected the very 'ambivalence of democracy and authority' embedded in Piłsudski's regime.⁴⁸

Sanacja's ideology was complex; political historians have often described it as 'vague', yet also, less frequently, as 'forceful'.⁴⁹ Unlike the right-wing Endecja, with its ideological convictions firmly articulated in its leader Roman Dmowski's theoretical writings, Sanacja's ideology was not articulated directly.⁵⁰ Its members 'made up a true mosaic of different political orientations', as it was pointed out by Kazimierz Zakrzewski in 1930, and, as it was put by Porter-Szücs, 'aside from devotion to Piłsudski and antipathy towards Endecja there wasn't much that held them together'.⁵¹

If not articulated in political terms, Sanacja's ideology was woven as a more wide-ranging movement of a moral, psychic, and (sometimes) even spiritual renewal, which Davies described as 'akin to Moral Rearmament' and one 'which imagined that the evil in men's souls could be scrubbed clean by military spit and polish'.⁵² In this context, the 'community spirit' which characterised Pruszkowski's and Skoczylas's views on art, expressed in their attitude of self-organising despite obstacles, as well as their other postulates, including the elevation of committed work and personal effort, the value of education, and even the general optimism and vigour which characterised their writings and teaching, can all be seen as elements of the ideology of Sanacja.

The concept of education in particular had important ideological overtones for Skoczylas and other sympathisers of Sanacja. Writing about the pro-Piłsudski periodical *Droga (The Path)*, for example, Chmielewska noted that 'until 1926 [it] opposed art's involvement with politics, but after the May coup [it] promoted the claim that all branches of social influence: education, science and art, should support the system of national upbringing and should perpetuate the desirable models of character'.⁵³ This idea of 'national upbringing', also discussed by Krzysztof Jakubiak and Anna Radziwiłł, was in fact a specific kind of activism, linked to a belief in the decisive role of the elite in the shaping of the modern state.⁵⁴ 'The whole discussion about the role of art in the construction of the state', noted Chmielewska, 'was the derivative of the conception of activism. This is why [the authors] would constantly use such categories as "will" and "action", [and] underline the culture-producing role of the elite and the prophetic-educational character of art'.⁵⁵ This 'elite theory' saw the elite as circulating independently from the social strata, and as being autonomous from the government, and was informed by such authors as Vilfredo Pareto and Julien Benda.⁵⁶

There was an essential conflict, then, in the activity of the 'state-forming' artists, including those from Rytm: on the one hand, they expressed collective and egalitarian ideals of employing art for the benefit of all; on the other hand, they were involved in the cult of individuality, and believed in the prophetic role of the elite. Hence the contrast between Pruszkowski's two

metaphorical visions of the artist: the humble, work-orientated craftsman, immersed in his work understood as a collaborative effort versus the artist as a more brazen, egotistical, and self-reliant personality. This conflict, reflective of analogous inconsistencies within the ethos of Sanacja, was expressed in Skoczylas's writings on art. These can appear problematic, because their repeated explicit references to 'democracy' stood in contrast with their author's tacit adherence to Sanacja's elevation of the 'culture-forming' elites, with its implicit negations of democracy.

Similarly-problematic is the relationship in Skoczylas's writings between democracy and propaganda, both of which are discussed by him in the context of the graphic arts. Today, the fact that artists openly pointed to art's propagandist potential as a strength might raise eyebrows. Yet, in Skoczylas's writings, 'propaganda' featured as a positive and progressive concept with the potential to improve society. In his articles Skoczylas repeatedly underlined that, thanks to its ability to multiply the image effectively, graphic art can educate. One could point to an apparent incongruity in Skoczylas's logic: was the state's direct contribution to the 'spreading of artistic culture among the masses', which he advocated, not a potential danger to the democracy which he so overtly promoted?⁵⁷ Much like in the case of campaigning for building the new exhibition space in Warsaw, Skoczylas reached for the 'propaganda argument': the graphic arts' propaganda potential was mentioned by him as an enticement for the state to invest in them. 'In this spreading of artistic culture graphic arts are the main tool of the state', he stated in one of his articles, 'this is why one of the state's main concerns should be the appropriate preparation of graphic artists and the appropriate level of graphic studios as workplaces'.⁵⁸

It was Endecja that most consistently warned against the state's involvement in art at that time. The economist Roman Rybarski expressed this position in his major 1926 article published in the pro-Endecja periodical *Mysł Narodowa* (*National Thought*), when he wrote:

A lot is being written these days about the difficult situation of writers. Many questionnaires are being organised [with a view to] prove that the material conditions of writers and artists are severely destabilised ... The trade unions ... did not help. Can the state help? Some writers turn to the state with the charge that it cares about literature and art too little. But can the state really give effective help to the people working in this area? Even if we suppose that the state's financial condition allows for this, it would still be difficult to imagine a bigger nonsense than nationalising literature and art. They would immediately cease to be [based on] creativity but would become propaganda, politics, whatever one wants, and thus they would simply deteriorate. Real spiritual creativity requires freedom. A sponsored creativity, or one directly maintained by the state, must [then] serve the purposes of those who remain in power.⁵⁹

In the context of the manipulation with which some European totalitarian states used art and art patronage for its political ends, Rybarski's caution against the state's involvement in art sounds almost like a premonition.

It did not appear to concern Skoczylas or other artists who shared his views, however. According to Agnieszka Chmielewska, it was 'very likely that the majority of Polish artists did not realise the existence of the danger of art becoming an element of the apparatus of social control—they wanted to work for the idealised state that was an embodiment of Polish national dreams and was to solve all the problems of the national society'.⁶⁰

But Skoczylas's comment from 1926 shows he was not an 'unaware idealist', unconscious of the risks involved. Quite the opposite, he articulated the danger of the state's involvement in arts with relative lucidity: 'Direct influence on the activity of artists', he wrote, 'usually creates the danger of organising official art, which always places impediments in the way of new art'.⁶¹ For that reason, Skoczylas believed, the state should, firstly, help create *consumers* of art, and secondly, subsidise *institutions* rather than individuals.

Skoczylas saw the 'education of the masses' as the means to invigorate art consumption, which in turn would widen participation in art and solve the problem of the maintenance

of individual artists. ‘In democratic times,’ he wrote in a 1928 article, ‘the expansion of artistic culture among the wider masses creates for artists such wide circles of consumers that the concern for the maintenance and development of individual artists is solved automatically’.⁶² But Skoczylas’s policy of ‘widening participation’ in art by generating ‘consumers of art’ appears somewhat problematic when placed next to his aforementioned criticism of the operations of the capitalist art market. Surely, there seems to be considerable scope for conflict between art’s educational, propagandistic, and market values, a tension which Skoczylas does not seem to have recognised.

Instead, Skoczylas seemed to believe that the free capitalist market could coexist with the partial support given to the arts by the state, much in line with state control of business (so-called *etatyzm*), the socio-economic policy which gained considerable support in interwar Poland and which advocated the state’s partial interference in the economy and the market.⁶³ Endecja’s discouragement of organised state financial support for art, in contrast, was part of the more general free-market economic thought propagated by its supporters. Ultimately, then, the varying views on the state’s involvement with the capitalist art market between Sanacja and Endecja paralleled their divergent views on state art patronage.

Skoczylas’s ideas on the relationship between the state and the free market were further complicated, however, by his simultaneous references to stimulating art consumption and the art market on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by the fact that he considered the state itself as one of the chief consumers of art. ‘The state is a huge receiver of applied graphic arts’, he wrote in 1932,

either by publishing, of its own accord, great amounts of prints, or by making small independent graphic studios to publish them for general state use. I mean here, generally, all kinds of government stock papers, that is banknotes, postage stamps, diplomas, attestations, school didactic aids and all sorts of advertisement used for the propaganda of tourism, state companies and monopolies.⁶⁴

Skoczylas seemed to have followed the view expressed over a decade earlier by Lauterbach:

Instead of insecure grants and occasional philanthropy of patrons, among whom the state finds itself now and then, one should attempt and request that all the state buildings, ... uniforms, and guard booths, go through the hands of the artists. A healthy soil for national art is generated only by a real demand, not by philanthropy. If the Polish state ‘acquires’ from the artists, then Polish art will stand strong, the architects will stop sketching projects of [some] imaginary architecture and the painters will follow the path of monumental painting, instead of producing landscapes and still-lives for the markets of the ‘salons’. As an employer and a receiver of art, the state outgrows, with the scale of its demands and its means, all [artistic] societies and clubs of patrons ... The examples of art history show that the greatest masterpieces were essentially produced as commissions, and that art is alive [only] when it is backed up by a real demand’.⁶⁵

Lauterbach’s comment revealed a call for ‘state art’ *par excellence*, and Skoczylas’s attempts to reconcile this with appeals to the free market and to democracy are really quite astounding.

In what appears to be another attempt to overcome the danger of an ‘official art’, Skoczylas expressed a view that the state should support institutions rather than individuals. He developed this view into what he saw as an innovative model for modern art patronage. ‘In the sphere of the state’s protection of arts we find today no good example in any country’, he stated in 1930, at the first meeting of the committee of the Institute for the Propaganda of Art, continuing: ‘There are many great and powerful countries, rich in many centuries of artistic tradition, but, despite that, having no good organisation system in the sphere of art protection ... Perhaps today is going to mark the beginning of a system of the state’s protection of arts which one day will become an example for other countries’.⁶⁶

Skoczylas proposed a model of state patronage in which institutions played a key role: ‘The essence of that system is that a democratic country can better fulfil its task towards art by giving material and moral assistance to autonomous artistic institutions of a high level, rather than by offering dangerous and difficult protection for individuals’.⁶⁷

In fact, a similar model, described by Catherine Méneux as a 'social project of small associations', had been proposed before 1906 in France, where the necessary reforms in arts administration were to be implemented not by the state, whose reforming capacity was disqualified, but by 'many small associations', allowing for the autonomy of intellectuals and artists.⁶⁸

Indeed, it appears that, at least in the minds of some of its members, Rytm aspired to be precisely such a specialised 'autonomous artistic institution' that could mediate between the state and the artists, acting in the interest of the latter. This emerges quite clearly from Mieczysław Treter's commentary on the group's last, eleventh exhibition in 1932:

It is a great shame that too narrowly perceived local interests prevent our most eminent visual artists from the creation via a careful and strict selection, of one shared association, of an explicitly artistic, and not unionist character; one which would actually constitute a central representation of our contemporary visual arts. In its organisation, it would be something similar to various scientific or literary academies, but without wages and without occupational titles, instead with the obligation of continuous steady work and of constant maintenance of the high artistic level.⁶⁹

Surely, on the occasion of what was to be the group's last exhibition, Treter described the kind of institution that Rytm had once hoped to become.

In practice, however, the vision of a modern institution which would be self-governed by artists, rather than controlled by patrons, and which would support artistic production made for purely 'artistic', non-commercial reasons, evoked in the writings of Treter and Skoczylas, was largely utopian. Treter's nostalgia, for example, seems to have been fed by a number of incongruous wishes: he wanted a 'careful and strict selection', but 'one shared association' for all artists; 'no wages', but 'constant maintenance of a high artistic standard'.⁷⁰ The institution's impartiality also appears somewhat questionable: although he did not say so, Treter probably imagined the artists from Rytm (and perhaps from *Sztuka* (Art), another group of artists with 'representative' ambitions) as the gatekeepers of the new 'academy'. Although it may well have been with a concern for the fate of 'living art' that was at the heart of Skoczylas and Pruszkowski's involvement, among other artists, in the debate on modern art patronage in Poland and the state's responsibility towards it, the practicalities of devising such a system proved more challenging than they may have wanted. The idea of the 'modernist academy', as it were, was utopian not just because it was susceptible to political bias. In its wish to institutionalise 'living art' it was from the very start, one could argue, intent on the impossible task of institutionalising change.

In reality, despite the community-orientated and largely anti-commercial attitude of the artists discussed here, their activity was influenced by the ideological leanings of *Sanacja*. It was also conditioned by changes in the market. Although not to the extent of the Parisian art market, Poland too was influenced by a speculative attitude to buying art, which coincided with the beginnings of Rytm's activity, and was subsequently affected by a dramatic drop in the sales of works of art. This was observed by member of Rytm, Waław Husarski, in his sarcastic comment on the clients of the Salon Garlińskiego (the Garliński Salon) where Rytm exhibited on a regular basis:

Salon Garlińskiego went through a time of great success when the currency decline won us some truly unforeseen collectors and lovers of art, cleverly investing in the Borowskis, the Skoczylases and the Wąsowiczs whose prices grew comparatively more slowly than those of shares, or even of other purchasable commodities; at present [1925], there is a period of stabilisation, linked, in an extraordinary way, to those collectors' sudden indifference towards the problems of art and its trends.⁷¹

If this change in the market was observable in 1925, then after the financial crisis of 1929 the situation of the artists became even more difficult. In 1932 Skoczylas claimed quite openly:

How are paintings' sales doing [today]? They are [simply] non-existent ... As a result of the competition created during the times of inflation, today a large number of artworks are entering the market from owners who have no attachment to them. The artists [therefore] compete with their own paintings. The crisis in easel painting has been going on for a long time. Easel paintings continue to lose consumers.⁷²

In another 1932 text, he stated again: ‘The sale of paintings ... today barely exists’.⁷³ The associated practical difficulties for the artists were described in 1966 by Maria Grońska: ‘The life of artists in these years was very difficult. Easel paintings, and especially good [ones], had fewer and fewer buyers ... The patronage of private people, which during partition had played such an important role, disappeared almost completely’.⁷⁴

It was precisely during this considerable decline in the sales of easel paintings and in private patronage that Sanacja came to power. For Rytm, therefore, and other artists who accepted public commissions, the reality of politics and that of the market became very strongly intertwined. Through commissions, the state provided new opportunities for artists who had become less able to support themselves by selling their easel paintings. ‘After the collapse of the private art market in around 1925’, wrote Anders, ‘artists were forced to turn for help to the state’.⁷⁵ Seen from the perspective of the fluctuations of the art market, the shifts which marked the development of the activity of Rytm—from easel painting to applied and decorative arts, and from private to public patronage—appear primarily as pragmatic moves rather than aesthetic or partisan ones. It is in this practical context also that one ought to see the artists’ extensive pedagogical activity: not only an expression of their commitment to social ideals, but also a very down-to-earth means of providing for their daily existence.⁷⁶

In taking on the role of planner and organiser of Polish artistic life, Rytm bound itself to the authoritarian political system of Sanacja. As we have seen, however, this relationship was not at all straightforward, and developed over time. It is highly possible that there was political disagreement within Rytm itself, though this has never been articulated. In any event, Rytm’s attitude towards the state was marked by tension, both in terms of what its members expected of the government, and in terms of how its members saw the role of art in the context of society. The inconsistencies embedded in Skoczylas’s and Pruszkowski’s writings corresponded with those embedded in Sanacja’s rhetoric, combining discourses on democracy, the prophetic role of the elites, and education. Today, these tensions and inconsistencies continue to generate a divergence in views on the extent to which Rytm was bound to Sanacja, with no consensus yet in sight.

All translations from Polish are the author’s.

1 See, for instance: Henryk Anders, *Rytm. W poszukiwaniu stylu narodowego* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1972); Katarzyna Nowakowska-Sito (ed.), *Stowarzyszenie Artystów Polskich Rytm 1922–1932* (Warsaw: National Museum in Warsaw, 2001); Katarzyna Nowakowska-Sito (ed.), *W kręgu Rytmu: sztuka polska lat dwudziestych* [a collection of conference papers, in Polish with English summaries] (Warsaw: National Museum in Warsaw, 2006). For a more comprehensive literature review on Rytm, see: Małgorzata Sears, ‘The Warsaw Group Rytm (1922–1932) and Modernist Classicism’ (PhD thesis, The Courtauld Institute of Art, 2018), pp. 27–29.

2 The name Endecja came from ‘N. D.’, the initialism for Narodowa Demokracja (‘National Democracy’).

3 For more on the relationship between Rytm and Zachęta, see the sections entitled ‘A New Political Voice’ and ‘Turbulent Outcome: Break with Zachęta’ in: Sears, ‘The Warsaw Group Rytm’, pp. 38–39 and 55–57 respectively. These also include more discussion of the sources of Rytm’s aesthetic ideas in the turn-of-the-century Paris.

4 Wiesława Dąbrowska, ‘Stowarzyszenie Artystów Plastyków “Rytm”’ (MA thesis, University of Warsaw, c.1960–1970). Archived in: ‘Zbiory Specjalne’ Archives, IS PAN, ref. 1624, p. 8. Elsewhere, Dąbrowska claimed that the artists from Rytm ‘agreed with the ruling regime, they never doubted it; though they did not worship it, because their fate as artists and as people was hard at that time, yet they supplied the kind of art which agreed with the intentions of the government, whether intentionally or unintentionally’. Dąbrowska, ‘Stowarzyszenie Artystów Plastyków “Rytm”’, p. 29.

5 Urszula Kozakowska-Zaucha, ‘Wawelska przygoda rytmistów’, in Nowakowska-Sito (ed.), *W kręgu Rytmu*, p. 150.

6 Anders, *Rytm*, p. 10.

7 Anders, *Rytm*, p. 10.

8 Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland’s Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 109. First published 1984.

9 Piotr Wróbel, ‘Poland’, in Richard Frucht (ed.), *Eastern Europe: An Introduction to the People, Lands, and Culture*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Ltd., 2004), p. 26.

10 Brian Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World: Beyond Martyrdom* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), p. 99.

11 Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World*, p. 101.

12 Agnieszka Chmielewska, *W służbie państwa, społeczeństwa i narodu. ‘Państwowotwórczy’ artyści plastycy w II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2006), p. 232.

13 Dąbrowska, ‘Stowarzyszenie Artystów Plastyków “Rytm”’, p. 3. Maria Rogoyska, ‘Z dziejów mecenatu artystycznego w Polsce w latach 1918–1930’, *Materiały do studiów i dyskusji*, 5/3–4 (19–20) (1954): p. 146.

14 The debates and lectures took place in The Artistic Club (Klub Artystyczny), with Rytm’s members Pruszkowski and Skoczylas among the participants. After a few weeks of discussion, a special ‘memorial’ was composed which was subsequently signed by one hundred artists and presented to the President of Poland. Rogoyska, ‘Z dziejów mecenatu artystycznego w Polsce’, p. 142.

These postulates were subsequently summarised in Skoczylas’s article. Władysław Skoczylas, ‘Sztuka a państwo’, *Głos Prawdy* 244 (1928): pp. 295–96. Reprinted in Wojciech Włodarczyk (ed.), ‘Władysław Skoczylas – sztuka – szkoła – państwo’, *Zeszyty Naukowe ASP*, 4/10 (1984): pp. 28–30.

15 Dąbrowska, ‘Stowarzyszenie Artystów Plastyków “Rytm”’, p. 3. Immediately after regaining independence in 1918, the plans for national art patronage in Poland were quite ambitious. In

January 1919, the Prime Minister (and renowned pianist) Ignacy Jan Paderewski established Poland's Ministry of Culture and Art (Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki) with Zenon Przesmycki as the Minister. This, however, did not survive due to the burden of the new state's many expenses and became, in 1922, reduced to a 'Department of Art' in the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego). This reduction was widely perceived as a setback, and the government was criticised thereafter by the artists for its lack of interest in contemporary art.

16 Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World*, p. 98.

17 Renata Piątkowska, 'Ugrupowanie Rytm w zwiernicdle krytyki prawicowej', in Nowakowska-Sito (ed.), *W kręgu Rytmu*, pp. 154–55, p. 157. Among its founding members, TOSSPO's charter mentioned two members of Rytm: Władysław Skoczylas and Edward Wittig. *Statut Towarzystwa Szerzenia Sztuki Polskiej wśród Obcych* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 1926) (accessible from the National Library of Poland, item number: XIXA1a). In fact, Skoczylas was one of TOSSPO's principal founders, and also fulfilled the roles of the Manager of the Visual Arts Section and of TOSSPO's Vice-president. Maria Grońska, *Władysław Skoczylas* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1966), p. 48.

In the years 1927–1932 the Visual Arts Section of TOSSPO organised 24 artistic events, most of which were exhibitions of Polish art in various cities across Europe and beyond. Moreover, TOSSPO published catalogues in different languages. Anders, *Rytm*, p. 66.

18 A contemporary report from the exhibition (held, together with many other documents relating to the long preparations process, at the 'Special Collection' Archives of IS PAN) meticulously lists all the awards received by the Polish participants, with the final number ranging from 186 to 192, depending on the counting method. 'Nagrody dla Polski na Wystawie Paryskiej w r. 1925', Paris (14 November 1925). A report held at the 'Special Collection' Archives of IS PAN, ref. 'Archiwum Wystawy Paryskiej 1925', 808 – 18 a.

19 The 'state-forming' artists were reassessed in 2006, in a monograph by Agnieszka Chmielewska, entitled *In the Service of the State, the Society and the Nation. The "State-Forming" Visual Artists in the Second Polish Republic*, in which she contested their marginalisation in art-historical narratives and argued for the progressiveness of their social ideas. Until the publication of Chmielewska's study, this group of artists had received relatively little critical attention. See: Chmielewska, *W służbie państwa*, p. 5.

20 Chmielewska, *W służbie państwa*, p. 15.

21 Porter-Szücs, for example, noted that Sanacja was 'at first vaguely center-left in their policy preferences, but they vehemently eschewed any ideological pigeon-holes and would grow more conservative over time'. Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World*, p. 98.

22 Amy Lynn Włodarski, 'Exposing the Political Gesamtkunstwerk: Hanns Eisler's *Nuit et Brouillard*', in David Imhoof, Margaret Eleanor Menninger, and Anthony J. Steinhoff (eds.), *The Total Work of Art: Foundations, Articulations, Inspirations* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), p. 118. In her survey of how art's place in French post-Revolution democratic society was discussed with relation to the market, the sphere of education, and the 'art for all' ethos, Catherine Méneux devoted special attention to the art critic Roger Marx (1859–1913). Catherine Méneux, 'Introduction', in Neil McWilliam, Catherine Méneux, and Julie Ramos (eds.), *L'Art social de la Révolution à la Grande Guerre. Anthologie de textes sources* (Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), 2014), accessed 30 October 2019, <https://books.openedition.org/inha/5907>

23 The Polish movement for the renewal of the crafts was upheld by such Kraków-based groups as Towarzystwo Polska Sztuka Stosowana or TPSS (The Polish Applied Art Association), set up in 1901, and Warsztaty Krakowskie (Kraków Workshops), set up in 1913. A similar, craft-oriented profile had also been maintained at the Szkoła Przemysłu Drzewnego (School of Wood Industry) in Zakopane, opened in 1878, and after the 1925 Paris Exhibition at the new Warsaw association called Spółdzielnia Artystów Plastyków 'Ład' (The Ład Visual Artists' Cooperative) or simply Ład (meaning 'order'), 1926–1996.

24 Chmielewska, *W służbie państwa*, p. 193. The members of Rytm constituted a large proportion of the teaching staff of the School of Fine Arts, with Skoczylas, Pruszkowski, Kowarski, Wittig, and Breyer all being professors in their respective fields and heads of their individual practice studios, and other members teaching individual courses.

25 Quoted in Joanna Kania, 'Dziedzictwo Świętego

Projektusa. Program Kompozycji Brył i Płaszczyzn Wojciecha Jastrzębowskiego', in Maryla Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka Wszędzie. Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie 1904–1944* (Warsaw: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych, 2012), pp. 180–81.

26 In the first draft of that institute's programme, written on the occasion of the opening of its new seat in 1931, Skoczylas wrote: 'holding no division between the so-called fine and applied arts, we shall treat equally all kinds of visual arts, that is, painting, sculpture, architecture, graphic design, and interior design with all its branches'. Władysław Skoczylas, 'Wstęp do katalogu wystawy dzieł sztuki pod nazwą Salon Zimowy', in *Materiały do studiów i dyskusji* 5/3–4(19–20) (1954): pp. 35–36.

27 Tadeusz Pruszkowski, 'Niewyzyskane siły plastyki', *Gazeta Polska* (24 May 1936): p. 5. Quoted in Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, p. 228.

28 Tadeusz Pruszkowski, 'O Bractwie Św. Łukasza i Szkole Warszawskiej' (1930). Reprinted in Irena Bal (ed.), 'Tadeusz Pruszkowski. Wybór Pism', published as an issue of the periodical *Zeszyty Naukowe ASP* (Warsaw: Zeszyt, 26 April 1989): p. 12.

29 Tadeusz Pruszkowski, 'O wielką Popularną Sztukę', *Wiadomości Literackie* 4 (1934): p. 2. Reprinted in Irena Bal (ed.), 'Tadeusz Pruszkowski. Wybór Pism', p. 18.

30 Władysław Skoczylas, 'Zmierch paryskiej giełdy sztuki', *Gazeta Polska* 35 (4 Feb 1932): pp. 3–4. Online publication: Polish Digital National Library 'POLONA', accessed 30 October 2019, <https://polona.pl/item/gazeta-polska-pismo-codzienne-r-4-nr-35-4->

31 'The commercial dimension of the success of living art after the Great War was for many years ignored,' noted Christopher Green, for instance, 'but not at the time'. Christopher Green, *Cubism and its Enemies. Modern Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916–1929* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 122–130, 134.

32 Skoczylas, 'Zmierch paryskiej giełdy sztuki', p. 3.

33 Giorgio de Chirico, 'Il ritorno al mestiere', *Valori Plastici* (November–December 1919): pp. 18–19.

34 Gino Severini, *La vita di un pittore* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1984). Originally published in 1946 under the title *Tutta la vita di un pittore*. Quoted in Francesco Mazzaferro, 'Gino Severini and the Sacred Art in a European Context: The Influence of Cennini's "Book of the Art". Part One', accessed October 2019, <http://letteraturaartistica.blogspot.co.uk/2016/05/gino-severini29.html>

35 Preface, *Skamander* 1 (January 1920): pp. 3–5.

36 According to a diary of his student Jan Zamojski, Pruszkowski used to say: 'There is no good painting painted badly. The most outstanding works of art are always accompanied with excellent craft'. Quoted in Chmielewska, *W służbie państwa*, p. 168.

37 Pruszkowski, 'O Bractwie', p. 12.

38 Tadeusz Pruszkowski, interview, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* (18 Feb 1928). Quoted in Ireneusz J. Kamiński, *Kazimierz nad Wisłą. Miasto i ludzie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1983), p. 116.

39 One of Pruszkowski's students, Felicja Lilpop-Krance, described them in the following way: 'He [Pruszkowski] was on friendly terms with his students and ran his studio as a guild association of novices acquiring the difficult craft. He was the master, and we were the apprentices. One would pass—in accordance with the custom—various levels of initiation, and several years' studies were concluded with a tragi-comic final ceremony ("Wyzwolenie)". Felicja Lilpop-Krance, *Powroty* (Bałystok: Zakłady Wyd. Versus, 1991), pp. 39–40. Quoted in Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, p. 229. See also: Włodzimierz Bartoszewicz, *Buda na Powiślu* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1966), pp. 161–64. The first evidence of this final-year ceremony in Pruszkowski's studio is from the year 1925 (10 December). Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, p. 231.

40 For more on these performative ceremonies, see: Felicja Lilpop-Krance, *Powroty* (Bałystok: Zakłady Wyd. Versus, 1991), pp. 39–40; Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, p. 231; Włodzimierz Bartoszewicz, *Buda na Powiślu* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1966), pp. 161–64.

41 Władysław Skoczylas, 'Grafika i jej znaczenie', *Grafika Polska* 2 (1926): pp. 1–4. Reprinted in Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, p. 276.

42 Tadeusz Pruszkowski, 'Niewyzyskane siły plastyki', *Gazeta Polska* (24 May 1936): p. 5. Reprinted in Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, p. 228.

43 Skoczylas, 'Grafika i jej znaczenie', p. 276.

- 44 Skoczylas, 'Sztuka a państwo', p. 28.
- 45 'Art and culture were also to be defined within this nexus of democratization, egalitarianism and utilitarianism, as encapsulated by the prevalence of the terms, "Social Art" (*l'art social*) and "Popular Art" (*l'art populaire*). Fae Brauer, *Rivals and Conspirators: The Paris Salons and the Modern Art Centre* (Cambridge: Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 282–83.
- 46 Margherita G. Sarfatti, *Storia della pittura moderna* (Rome: p. Cremonese, 1930).
- 47 Méneux, 'Introduction', unpaginated (paragraph 3).
- 48 'The Ambivalence of Democracy and Authority, 1922–39' is a chapter in Brian Porter-Szücs's book. Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World*, pp. 90–104.
- 49 For example, Davies, *Heart of Europe*, p. 109.
- 50 Roman Dmowski's main book was his nationalist manifesto *Mysli nowoczesnego Polaka* (*The Thoughts of a Modern Pole*), 1903, in many respects the basis for Endecja's programme.
- Roman Dmowski, *Mysli nowoczesnego Polaka* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Zachodnie, 1943). The book was based on a series of articles published in 1902, and its first edition was published in 1903 under the title *Mysli*.
- 51 Kazimierz Zakrzewski, 'Kryzys demokracji', 1930. Quoted in Krzysztof Jakubiak, *Wychowanie państwowe jako ideologia wychowawcza Sanacji. Kształtowanie i upowszechnianie w periodycznych wydawnictwach społeczno-kulturalnych i pedagogicznych*. (Bydgoszcz: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Bydgoszczy, 1994), p. 18. See also: Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World*, p. 100.
- 52 Davies, *Heart of Europe*, p. 109.
- 53 Chmielewska, *W służbie państwa*, pp. 32–33.
- 54 Jakubiak, *Wychowanie państwowe jako ideologia wychowawcza Sanacji*; Anna Radziwiłł, 'Ideologia wychowawcza sanacji i jej odbicie w polityce szkolnej w latach 1926–1939', *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny* 1–2 (2014): pp. 227–306.
- 55 Chmielewska, *W służbie państwa*, p. 33.
- 56 See, for example, mentions in: Anders, *Rytm*, p. 137; Wojciech Włodarczyk, 'Niepodległość i nowoczesność', in Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, pp. 49–50. Włodarczyk pointed out that the Polish film director and producer Aleksander Hertz wrote about the theory of the elites in his 1931 book entitled *Ludzie i idee*. Aleksander Hertz, *Ludzie i idee* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Drogi, 1931).
- 57 Skoczylas, 'Grafika i jej znaczenie', p. 276.
- 58 Skoczylas, 'Grafika i jej znaczenie', p. 276.
- 59 Roman Rybarski, 'Obecne przesilenie a literatura i sztuka', *Mysl Narodowa* 6/13 (27 March 1926), pp. 193–94.
- 60 Agnieszka Chmielewska, 'Realism as a Solution to the Problems of Modernity', in Irena Kossowska (ed.), *Reinterpreting the past: traditionalist artistic trends in Central and Eastern Europe of the 1920s and 1930s* [conference papers, Warsaw and Kraków, September 2006] (Warsaw: Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 2010), p. 200.
- 61 Skoczylas, 'Grafika i jej znaczenie', p. 276.
- 62 Skoczylas, 'Sztuka a państwo', pp. 27–28.
- 63 'Statism, as a programme of the Piłsudski-ites' camp, was formulated in opposition to the extreme liberal economic conception of *Endecja*'. Wojciech Włodarczyk, 'Niepodległość i nowoczesność', in Sitkowska (ed.), *Sztuka wszędzie*, p. 46. 'Endecja's programme opposed the state's involvement in the arts; this is why the right-wing critics protested against statism in the culture sector'. Piątkowska, 'Ugrupowanie Rytm w zwierniadle', pp. 154–55.
- 64 Skoczylas, 'Grafika – sztuka demokracji', *Gazeta Polska* 251 (10 Sept 1932): p. 3.
- 65 Lauterbach, 'Państwo a sztuka', *Świat* 46 (17 November 1917): pp. 30–33.
- 66 Władysław Skoczylas, 'Przemówienie Władysława Skoczylasa na posiedzeniu inauguracyjnym pierwszej rady Instytutu Propagandy Sztuki 18.VI.1930 r.', in Joanna Sosnowska (ed.), *Materiały do dziejów Instytutu Propagandy Sztuki (1930–1939)* (Warsaw: IS PAN, 1992), p. 29.
- 67 Skoczylas, 'Przemówienie Władysława Skoczylasa', pp. 29–30.
- 68 Méneux, 'Introduction', unpaginated (paragraph 3). These 'small associations' included Le Collège d'Esthétique moderne and the L'Art pour tous, among others.
- 69 Mieczysław Treter, 'Salon Wiosenny "Rytmu" w Instytucie Propagandy Sztuki (Garść uwag i refleksyj)', *Gazeta Polska* 160 (11 June 1932). Press cutting in the 'Zbiory Specjalne' Archives, IS PAN, ref. 70, folder 10. Mieczysław Treter was an art historian and a critic supportive of Rytm.
- 70 Treter, 'Salon Wiosenny "Rytmu"'.
71 Wacław Husarski, *Przegląd młodej sztuki. Pamiętnik Salonu Czesława Garlińskiego obejmujący działalność od kwietnia roku 1922 do maja roku 1925: ozdobiony 24 ilustracjami* (Warsaw: Druk. Wł. Łazarskiego (Salon Cz. Garlińskiego), 1925), p. 58. Quoted in Rogoyska, 'Z dziejów mecenatu artystycznego w Polsce', p. 132.
- 72 Władysław Skoczylas, 'O stanie kultury w Polsce i położeniu artystów', *Głos Plastyków* 9–10 (1932): pp. 122–124. Reprinted in Włodarczyk (ed.), 'Władysław Skoczylas – sztuka – szkoła – państwo', p. 49.
- 73 Władysław Skoczylas, 'Z czego żyją dziś artyści', *Gazeta Polska* 357 (27 December 1932): p. 3.
- 74 Grońska, *Władysław Skoczylas*, p. 50.
- 75 Anders, *Rytm*, p. 61.
- 76 In the December 1932 issue of *Gazeta Polska*, in an article entitled 'What Artists Do for a Living Nowadays', Skoczylas claimed that '[a] large majority of visual artists, reaching 80%, maintains itself from teaching drawing', although he also claimed that these jobs were often insufficient for artists to maintain themselves. Skoczylas, 'Z czego żyją dziś artyści', p. 3.

