

● On 15 February 2011, the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins of the "Polish Painters of the Turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries" commemorating Zofia Stryjeńska, with the following face values:

**20 zł** – struck in proof finish, in silver, (with pad printing),

**2 zł** – struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold.

## The National Bank of Poland

holds the exclusive right to issue the currency  
of the Republic of Poland.

In addition to **coins and notes for general circulation**,  
the NBP issues **collector coins and notes**.

Issuing collector items is an occasion to commemorate  
important historic figures and anniversaries, as well  
as to develop the interest of the public in Polish culture,  
science and tradition.

Since 1996, the NBP has also been issuing **occasional 2 zloty**  
coins, struck in **Nordic Gold**, for general circulation.

All coins and notes issued  
by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.

COINS ISSUED IN 2011 COINS ISSUED IN 2011

Since 2002, the NBP has been issuing coins  
of the "Polish Painters of the Turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>  
Centuries" series. The "Zofia Stryjeńska" coin is  
the ninth theme in the series.

Information on the issue schedule can be found at the  
[www.nbp.pl/money](http://www.nbp.pl/money)  
website.

Collector coins issued by the National Bank of Poland  
are sold in the Kolekcjoner service (Internet auction/Online shop)  
at the following website:

[www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl](http://www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl)

 **KOLEKCJONER**

and at the NBP regional branches.

The coins were struck at the Mint of Poland in Warsaw.  
Edited and printed: NBP Printing Office

NBP

National Bank of Poland

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POLISH PAINTERS OF THE TURN OF 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

Zofia Stryjeńska  
1891-1976



# Polish Painters of the Turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Zofia Stryjeńska

● Stryjeńska's work is widely known and easily recognisable. There is hardly a Pole who has not been exposed to her paintings, which until the 1970s were reproduced – usually shoddily and without quoting her name – on countless chocolate boxes, plates or postcards. In fact, already between the two wars many artists imitated Stryjeńska's distinctive style, thereby trivialising the originals.

● Zofia Stryjeńska, née Lubańska (1891-1976), received her education in private artistic schools in her native Cracow and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. She made her debut under her maiden name in 1912, when she exhibited a series of cartoons entitled *Polish Fables*; a year later she painted a series of watercolours illustrating Polish Christmas carols. During World War I, she designed picture postcards depicting scenes from Nativity plays and popular soldier's songs of Piłsudski's Legions.

● She produced her most impressive works while she was married to Karol Stryjeński, architect and educator. Yet, the union was not a happy one – as time passed, Stryjeński treated his wife with increasing harshness; he spread malicious gossip about her and on two occasions attempted to confine her to a mental institution. Although the doctors excluded mental disease, the stigma of "a madwoman" stuck to the artist, who, in her mutiny against the conventions of middle class morality, would unwittingly get caught up in society scandals. Aware of her talent, she did not attach much significance to her achievements. To be loved was what she desired

above all. She lived constantly torn apart between love of her children and her motherly obligations – and an artist's freedom to follow her own path. Neither the divorce with Stryjeński nor a short-lived second marriage gave Zofia the peace and stability she so desired. And even though her paintings reached exorbitant prices, she forever struggled to make a living, refusing to treat the creative process as gainful activity. Yet she was never quite happy with her work – even at the height of her fame, when she was dubbed the princess of Polish art and considered the greatest of Europe's female artists.

● In fact, success and popularity had accompanied her from the early days – from the *Passover* and *God Hunt* series, as well as the 1923 pieces – *Morning*, *Evening* and *Beriot's Concert*. In 1925, she was awarded four Grand Prix and two honorary diplomas at the *International Exhibition of Decorative Art in Paris*, where she exhibited various works, notably the decorative panels entitled *The Four Seasons*. Stryjeńska created similar panels for other interiors (e.g. the *Fire and Water* panels for the Polish Embassy building in Sofia; she also painted polychromes for several historical houses in Warsaw's Old Town (1928). She published two portfolios of colour lithographs called *Slavic Deities*, as well as making illustrations for several books. She designed posters, advertising materials and toys. On other occasions, she acted as a stage designer or wrote scripts for musical performances. In 1928, she created the entire visual concept for the *Hamasje* ballet by Karol Szymanowski.

● The diversity of Stryjeńska's artistic endeavour is a testimony to her almost unlimited capabilities and an enormous strength of talent. While she adapted her style to the task at hand, she always left her distinctive mark on it. The characteristically simplified forms in her pictures are arranged to create a dynamic, rhythmical composition that fills the frame from edge to edge. The sensual spontaneity of the scenes is also reflected in the manner in which they are presented. This is the nature of Stryjeńska's relationship with folklore – it goes far beyond the mere choice of topics, which indeed she derived from ethnographic sources and processed in a humorous manner so particular to her. She even took liberties with Slavic deities and legendary Polish kings of the Piast dynasty: in one of her paintings, the progenitor of the dynasty holds a wheel as if it were a steering wheel. And her King Casimir the Great is seen with a cigarette in his hand.

● The artist's memoirs, published in 1995 under the title "Our almost daily bread", are the best manifestation of her brilliant wit, an exquisite sense of humour, as well as a view of herself characterised by simplicity and criticism.

**Urszula Makowska Ph.D.**  
**Institute of Art**  
**Polish Academy of Sciences**

COINS ISSUED IN 2011 COINS ISSUED IN 2011 COINS ISSUED IN 2011 COINS ISSUED IN 2011 COINS ISSUED IN 2011 COINS ISSUED IN 2011 COINS ISSUED IN 2011



FACE VALUE **20** ZŁ

metal **Ag 925/1000** and red, yellow, green and blue paints  
finish **proof** ■ length **40.0 mm** ■ width **28.0 mm**  
weight **28.28 g** ■ mintage (volume) **50,000 pcs**

**OBVERSE:** Stylised image of part of a painting by Zofia Stryjeńska. At the bottom on the right, image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. Around the Eagle, at the bottom from right to left, inscription: 20 ZŁ, followed by an interpunct, inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland) and notation of the year of issue: 2011. The Mint's mark, M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

**REVERSE:** Stylised image of a bust of Zofia Stryjeńska. On the left, facsimile of her signature. At the bottom on the right, stylised image of a palette and three brushes. On the palette, red, yellow, green and blue paints. Above the palette, perpendicularly, inscription: 1891-1976. On the right, stylised fragment of a painting by Zofia Stryjeńska. In the bottom right corner, inscription: ZOFIA and, perpendicularly, inscription: STRYJEŃSKA.

Coin designer: **URSZULA WALERZAK**



FACE VALUE **2** ZŁ

metal **CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy** ■ finish **standard** ■ diameter **27.0 mm**  
weight **8.15 g** ■ mintage (volume) **1,000,000 pcs**

**OBVERSE:** Image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland; on the left – stylised image of a palette and two brushes. At the bottom, inscription: 2 ZŁ, along the upper rim, inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland) and notation of the year of issue: 2011. The Mint's mark, M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

**REVERSE:** Stylised image of a bust of Zofia Stryjeńska against the background of stylised fragment of a painting. Along the left rim, inscription: ZOFIA STRYJEŃSKA. At the bottom, inscription: 1891-1976.

**ON THE EDGE:** Inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated by stars.

Obverse designer: **EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA**  
Reverse designer: **URSZULA WALERZAK**