

Polish students at the Académie Julian until 1919

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Abstract

The subject of the article is the presence of Polish students in the most important private artistic school in Paris in the second half of the 19th century. The extant records regarding the atelier for male students made it possible to compile a list of about 165 Polish painters and sculptors studying there in the period from 1880 to 1919. The text presents the criteria used when preparing the list and the diagrams show the fluctuations in registration and the number of Polish artists in particular ateliers in successive years. The observations contained in the article have a summary nature and are illustrated only with selected examples.

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Académie Julian: history of the school

[1] The subject of the article is the presence of Polish students in the most important private artistic school in Paris in the second half of the 19th century. Before 1914 its ateliers have seen many painters and sculptors of both sexes and various nationalities, which is why publications such as dictionaries and monographs of particular artists frequently mention the school; it is often referred to as the "famous" Académie Julian or Académie Julien, for despite the fame its name is often quoted incorrectly.

[2] In the last two decades or so our knowledge about this institution has been significantly enriched and we can constrain ourselves here to recalling the most important facts. The school was founded in 1868 by the painter Rodolphe Julian (1839-1907), student of Léon Cogniet. At first it was an ordinary atelier for studies from a model, initially only for men and later also for women, without professors and only with occasional corrections.¹ Four years later, when it was attended by about one hundred persons,² the owner of the enterprise employed some well-known painters for making corrections, among them graduates and professors of the state-run Ecole des Beaux-Arts, important figures on the

¹ M. Julian n'avait encore que des clients, ce n'étaient pas des élèves. Camille Debans, *Les Plaisirs et les curiosités de Paris. Guide humoristique et pratique*, Paris 1889, 194.

² Debans, *Les Plaisirs*, 193.

official artistic scene. This group initially comprised Gustave Boulanger (1824-1888) and Jules Lefebvre (1836-1911) and no later than 1877 also William Bouguereau (1825-1905) and Tony Robert-Fleury (1837-1911).³ The number of students, both male and female, started to grow rapidly; it was soon necessary to open new ateliers in various (better and worse) districts of Paris and employ new professors of painting as well as sculpture.

[3] The school served as a preparatory course for Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the curriculum was academic, that is based on pencil and paint studies of plaster casts and living models, mostly nudes. The students also made – without a model – essays in composition on prescribed subjects from ecclesiastical and ancient history.⁴ The corrections took place twice a week. Although the progress to another stage of study theoretically depended on the professor,⁵ the system was more liberal than in the state school. The main condition of participating in the course was paying a fee. If a student did not want a correction, he or she could veil the work during the professor's visit. There were competitions stimulating to greater effort: a weekly ranking of the prepared studies, with the winners selecting their place in the atelier for the next week, and the monthly competition comprising several ateliers, with the artists striving for a medal and a one-hundred-francs prize.⁶

[4] Contrary to conventional wisdom Académie Julian was not the only school open to women. Julian's teacher, Cogniet, accepted female students in his atelier and in the second half of the 19th century women had several schools to choose from, for example (from 1879) the atelier run by another student of Cogniet, Edouard Krug, where for 100 francs a month the students had daily corrections, that is more frequent than at Julian's. The prices at the Académie Julian were slightly lower: men paid a 400-francs yearly fee and women paid 700 francs (the difference resulted from higher costs of running an atelier for women as well as from a conviction that female students did not have to earn the money themselves).⁷ The state School of Fine Arts (Ecole des Beaux-Arts) started to recruit women as late as 1897. The access for men was always limited there by the

³ See Germaine Greer, "A tout prix devenir quelqu'un": the women of the Académie Julian," in: *Artistic Relations: Literature and the fine arts in nineteenth-century France*, ed. Peter Collier and Robert Lethbridge, New Haven/London 1994, 53.

⁴ Archives Nationales, 63 AS 8, spool 2 (*Rue Fromentin, sujets d'esquisses*, date not given); see also Horst Uhr, *Lovis Corinth*, Berkeley 1990, 37.

⁵ Greer, "A tout prix devenir quelqu'un," 49.

⁶ Around 1905 there already were several competitions: for a nude, a torso and a portrait, with prizes up to 150 francs. *Académie Julian. School of Painting, Modelling and Drawing*, prospectus from around 1905, preserved in: Archives Nationales, 63 AS 2, spool 3 (*28 rue Fontaine 1891-1892*).

⁷ Greer, "A tout prix devenir quelqu'un," 40-44, 53; Gabriel P. Weisberg, "The Women of the Académie Julian. The Power of Professional Emulation," in: *Overcoming all Obstacles. The Women of the Académie Julian*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg and Jane R. Becker, New York 1999, 14.

number of available places, and beginning from the 1880s it was made more difficult for foreigners through the introduction of a language test.⁸

- [5] Attracting students to a fee-paying school in a free-market environment was not easy. The main virtue and magnet was the names of the professors but the marketing efforts of the owner also played a significant role. They included careful selecting Paris locations,⁹ abolishing (in 1876) ateliers for both sexes and using various forms of advertising, such as a painting by Marie Bashkirtseff showing one of the ateliers, commissioned by Julian for the 1881 Salon.¹⁰ In the press adverts and other sponsored publications, for example in a guidebook issued in connection with the World Exhibition in 1889, the virtues of the academy were highlighted and the potential reservations of moral nature were repudiated. As Camille Debans wrote at that time, employing eminent professors initiated changes which made Académie Julian into

the school of fine arts of the Right Bank Paris, with more freedom, more authentic, younger and with the unique essence of the graceful female component [...] One question almost automatically comes to mind, especially the mind of the fathers and mothers: do the young ladies also work with a living model?

- [6] The columnist offers an untrue assurance¹¹ that

in the ateliers for ladies you see only models of the same sex. Making sure of that is extremely scrupulous. Even the skeleton used on Thursdays osteology lessons is female. [...] Besides the professors no son of Adam enters the ateliers designated for the daughters of Eve.

- [7] Such an intrusion proved impossible even for reporters dressed as itinerant paint-sellers.¹² The school registers recorded information about students: their addresses and sometimes their acquaintances and later distinctions gained at the exhibitions. In the early 20th century the academy published brochures and its own periodical *L'Académie Julian* with information and advertising materials.

- [8] The prominent position of professors employed by the Académie Julian in state-run and corporate artistic structures sometimes led to conflicts of interests. As Jacques Lethève wrote, *In the late 19th century the Julian Academy could be accused of promoting a kind of mafia: professors and some students supported each other in the elections to the*

⁸ Uhr, *Lovis Corinth*, 29.

⁹ Catherine Fehrer, "Women at the Académie Julian in Paris," in: *Burlington Magazine* 136 (1994), 753; Weisberg, "The Women of the Académie Julian," 16.

¹⁰ Firmin Javel ("Les ateliers de Femmes," in: *Art français. Revue artistique hebdomadaire* v. 7, no 318 (27 V 1893), 1, quotes an entry from the painter's diary, where she suggests that the subject was put forward on 28 December 1880 by Julian, with whom she signed a contract stipulating that the finished painting would belong to him. A similar contract, concerning a smaller view of an atelier at rue Vivienne 53, was signed by Julian with Amélie Beaury-Saurel. I did not find this entry in my edition of the diary. The circumstances in which the painting was created are somewhat differently described by Greer ("A tout prix devenir quelqu'un," 46-47), who followed the account of the painter M.L. Breakdell (1907).

¹¹ See Greer, "A tout prix devenir quelqu'un," 55; Weisberg, "The Women of the Académie Julian," 47.

¹² Debans, *Les Plaisirs*, 193-195.

*Salon jury and in the distribution of prizes.*¹³ This was true especially after 1880, when the jury was selected through democratic elections by French artists who had taken part in previous editions of the exhibition.¹⁴ Many former and even present students voted and therefore Académie Julian usually had several professors in the Salon jury and they saw to it that the paintings were admitted, favourably placed and judged. In mid-1880s this practice was already firmly established with technical details of the procedure carefully worked out, as the contemporary student Lovis Corinth recalled: *students informed the school secretariat about the numbers assigned to their works and then the list of names and numbers was passed on to the professors, so that they could use it as jurors.*¹⁵

[9] Académie Julian was successful as a preparatory school for the state-run Ecole des Beaux-Arts, which partly resulted from the institutional affiliations of some professors. In 1904, to give just one example, 44 out of 107 persons accepted by the Ecole were from Académie Julian, including several women.¹⁶ It is believed that students coming from Julian's were favoured in the internal competitions of the Ecole, for example in 1903 no less than seven out of ten candidates for the Prix de Rome were graduates of this private school.¹⁷ Interesting details connected with these practices emerge from a protest – probably not known to researchers – of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts students against the manipulations (*manoeuvres*) of Académie Julian in their school published in *Revue des Beaux-Arts* in 1889. The students complain of irregularities going on for many years, and their protest was sparked by a flagrant bias of Lefebvre and Henri Lévy in an internal competition for a historical composition and a landscape (Concours d'Attainville). Taking advantage of the absence of other professors (only four out of thirty jurors attended the session), Lefebvre, "the pillar of Julian's house", favoured his pupils and students of his friend Bouguereau, while Lévy, who gave individual lessons, pushed through two students, that is as many as he had. According to the authors of the protest the bias was present in all competitions, beginning from the entrance exam – passing it meant exemption from military service – to the Prix de Rome, although at this level the "influence of the schemers" was not always sufficient.¹⁸

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¹³ Jacques Lethève, *La vie quotidienne des artistes français au XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1968, 23; Greer, "A tout prix devenir quelqu'un," 52.

¹⁴ Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in fin-de-siècle Europe*, Princeton 1994, 157-158.

¹⁵ Lovis Corinth, "Un étudiant allemand à Paris à l'Académie Julian (1884-1887)," in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 97 (1981), 223-224.

¹⁶ *L'Académie Julian*, novembre 1904, 2.

¹⁷ Catherine Fehrer, "New Light on the Académie Julian and its Founder, Rodolphe Julian," in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 126 (1984), 212; Greer, "A tout prix devenir quelqu'un," 50, 52.

¹⁸ "L'Académie Julian et l'École des Beaux-Arts," in: *Revue des Beaux-Arts*, 1889, 261-263. See also the next issue and the anonymous statement of a professor of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, who confirms the observations about the excessive solidarity of the Académie Julian professors at the Salons and the Ecole, and suggests that the works assessed should be anonymous and the names of the professors should be omitted in the catalogues of the Salons.

Foreigners at the Académie Julian – state of research

- [10] The controversies mentioned above regarded mostly French students. But Académie Julian was to a large extent an international school. As early as 1873, besides twenty Frenchmen the atelier hosted several English or rather American women.¹⁹ More than a decade later, in 1889, when the number of students was estimated at around 600, one third of them were foreigners, mostly from England, the United States, Russia and Norway.²⁰ The aim of the present article is establishing how many of them arrived from Poland.
- [11] Information about Académie Julian students is contained above all in the ample list comprised by Catherine Fehrer, presented on roughly 110 unnumbered pages of the catalogue of an exhibition mounted by the New York Shepherd Gallery (1989). The list is also unnumbered and we can only approximately estimate that it includes about 5000 names.²¹ The list is intentionally selective for the author took into account only persons recorded in dictionaries. And it hardly mentions women for the main source was the records of the male ateliers, available in the Archives Nationales in Paris.²² The students register posted on the internet around 2010 by the director of a school continuing the traditions of Académie Julian (ESAG) is largely based on Catherine Fehrer's list, with some additions taken from archive records.²³ The on-line list includes 61 Polish artists of both sexes.
- [12] In the introduction to the catalogue and in separate articles (quoted above) Catherine Fehrer presented the history of the school and described its *modus operandi*. Later publications, quite numerous, followed the gender-focused fashion and almost exclusively regarded female students; these works include the catalogue of the exhibition at the New York Dahesh Museum called *Overcoming all Obstacles. The Women of the Académie Julian* (New York 1999). One gets an impression that in very few publications male students are not discriminated against: the catalogue of the exhibition *Le Voyage à Paris* (1990)²⁴ covers American students of both sexes, as does the list kept in a museum in Blérancourt (Musée National de Coopération Franco-Américaine). In 2002 the documents of male ateliers stored in Archives Nationales and the records of female ateliers from

¹⁹ See Greer, "A tout prix devenir quelqu'un," 52.

²⁰ Debans, *Les Plaisirs*, 191, 196. Debans claims (203) that the male ateliers were attended then by 400 persons.

²¹ Catherine Fehrer, "The Julian Academy. List of Students and Professors, 1869-1939," in: *The Julian Academy Paris, 1868-1939. Catalogue of the exhibition at Shepherd Gallery*, New York 1989.

²² *Archives des ateliers d'hommes, Académie Julian*, catalogue number 63 AS. See Françoise Hildesheimer and Bertrand Joly, *État sommaire des archives d'associations conservées aux Archives nationales. Serie AS. Fonds cotés 1 à 75 AS*, Paris 1990.

²³ [Georges Vallin], *Élèves et professeurs de l'Académie Julian*, <https://sites.google.com/site/academiejulian> (visit 8 August 2012).

²⁴ Véronique Weisinger et al., *Le Voyage de Paris: Les Américains dans les écoles d'art, 1868-1918*, Paris 1990.

private collections were analysed by a young researcher from Brasil, Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni; besides an article about 14 women artists²⁵ she published a text with a list of 65 Brazilian Académie Julian students.²⁶ Another author has taken a closer look at several Brazilian grant-holders at the Académie Julian.²⁷

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Poles at the Académie Julian: problems with identification

- [13] Given this state of affairs, during my stay in Paris a couple of years ago I decided to go through the register²⁸ and payment books (*livres de comptabilité*) of the male ateliers (all these documents can be found in the Archives Nationales) of the Académie Julian in search of Polish students. The task was not easy, for many names are misspelled beyond recognition and the notes only occasionally regard the declared nationality ("Russe", "Polonais") and more often they refer to the citizenship.



1 Edward Okuń, Self-Portrait with his Wife, 1900. Płock, Muzeum Mazowieckie (photo: courtesy of Muzeum Mazowieckie, Płock)

- [14] In this period Poles travelled with passports issued by one of the three occupying powers, so some are listed as Austrians, Germans or – most often – Russians. The names in the passports issued by the Russian Empire were written in the cyrillic alphabet (or transcribed from the Russian version) and probably in the Academy they were written

²⁵ Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni, "Le voyage à Paris: L'Académie Julian et la formation des artistes peintres brésiliennes vers 1900," in: *Cahiers du Brésil Contemporain* 57/58-59/60 (2004-2005), 261-281, http://www.revues.msh-paris.fr/modele2/nospebook2.asp?id_nospe=134&id_perio=56 (visit 8 August 2012).

²⁶ Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni, "A viagem a Paris de artistas brasileiros no final do século XIX," in: *Tempo Social* 17 (2005), 343-366, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0103-20702005000100015> (visit 8 August 2012).

²⁷ Arthur Valle, "Pensionnaires de l'École Nationale des Beaux-Arts à l'Académie Julian (Paris) durant la I^{ère} République (1890-1930)," in: *19&20* v. I, no 3 (Nov. 2006), http://www.dezenovevinte.net/ensino_artistico/academia_julian_fr.htm (visit 8 August 2012).

²⁸ *Académie Julian. Catalogue général des élèves: répertoire alphabétique*, 1919. Archives Nationales, 63 AS 1. The year of preparing the register determined the final date of our search, although some payment books also cover the following years (until 1932).

down phonetically or only from hearing. So in many cases it is hard to establish whether we are dealing with a Russian or a Polish name. For example, brothers Józef and Stanisław Czajkowski from Warsaw (the city was in Russia then) are put as Tschaïkovski (1898), and at another occasion as Tschaichowsky (1899). Phonetic transcription turned Okuń (Fig. 1) into Okougne (1894). In the Académie Julian records Russian nationality was usually also ascribed to Jews from the extensive territories of the Russia, from Livonia to Baku, including the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

[15] In the case of well-known persons these errors and alterations did not pose a problem and could even be regarded as elements relieving the tedium of the search. If an artist was not present in dictionaries, establishing the possible connections with Poland was sometimes helped by register entries written in their own hand or some small clues contained in the documents – such as the city or town of origin, an acquaintance or address in Paris were Poles were known to live. An interesting case is that of Rufin "Cherehevsky" or "Schereschewsky" from Odessa (1898),²⁹ whom I first took for a Russian. In the Munich Academy register he is put as Schereschewsky, a twenty-year-old son of a merchant, of the Israelite confession,³⁰ but in the open-air Hollósy's school in Nagybánya he wrote his name down in Polish as Szereszewski (1896, 1897, 1898).³¹ The instability of spelling – often resulting from the tortuous ways of cultural assimilation followed by Jews from Eastern and Central Europe – is also evident in the case of another artist of the same name, about whom I speak only parenthetically, for he was not an Académie Julian student. "David Szereszewsky" (1863-1943), son of a printer-engraver from Brest-Litovsk ("*russische Polen*"), of the Israelite confession, registered at the Munich Academy in 1883;³² he is also said to have studied mathematics in Warsaw and Moscow.³³ Some years later, already as Wladimir Schereschewski, he showed at individual exhibitions in Munich, Budapest and Berlin a large-scale painting called *To Siberia (Nach Sibirien)* sarcastically appraised in the *Kunstchronik* magazine as a "painterly manifesto", which would no more contribute to the downfall of the Russian colossus than to progress of art.³⁴ In Polish painting scenes from the life of exiles belonged to themes from the most recent history of the nation, for they regarded Polish subjects of the Tsar, who after the collapse of the 1863 uprising were sent to the Russian interior in large numbers. In the West, however, Siberia was associated not only with repressions against Poles: the widely read book by George Kennan called *Siberia and the Exile System* (1890-1891),

²⁹ This and the next examples are from the students register (Archives Nationales, 63 AS 1).

³⁰ "01546 Rufin Schereschewsky," *Matrikelbuch 1884-1920*, <http://matrikel.adbk.de> (visit 8 August 2012).

³¹ Jenő Murádin, "A nagybányai Hollósy-iskola névsorai," *Erdélyi Múzeum* 54 (1992), 145-147.

³² "04321 David Szereszewsky," *Matrikelbuch 1841-1884*, <http://matrikel.adbk.de> (visit 8 August 2012).

³³ Matteo Bertelé, *Vladimir L'vovič Šereševskij* [31 VIII 2010], <http://www.russinitalia.it> (visit 8 August 2012).

³⁴ *Kunstchronik*, Neue Folge 4 (1893), 441.

translated into many languages, exposed the cruel mechanism crushing also Russians themselves and other nations of the Empire. At the annual international exhibition in Munich in 1893 "Schereschewski" presented one more painting on this subject, *Song from the Homeland in Siberia (Heimatslied in Sibirien)*, and a year later he sent both canvasses to Lviv for the Galician Provincial Exhibition. The painting of "Włodzimierz Szereszewski" – as his name was written in the catalogue – covered almost an entire wall in one of the rooms but they were not analysed in a review of Polish art published in that period, for the author did not consider him a representative of Polish art.³⁵ In 1895 Szereszewski, together with his wife born in Worms and their two daughters, settled in Venice and successfully exhibited his work at the Venice Biennale a number of times, first in the international section (1897) and then (from 1899) in the room of the Corporation of Italian Painters and Sculptors (*Corporazione dei pittori e degli scultori italiani*), which he had cofounded. So he consistently avoided the Russian section and yet he was regarded in Venice as a Russian, painting the "melancholy Russian soul", almost like Dostoevsky.³⁶ Nevertheless the dictionaries of Thieme-Becker and Bénézit describe him as belonging to the Polish school.

- [16] Going back to the students of Académie Julian whose connections with Poland are difficult to define, we can mention Stanisław Finkelstein, in Paris put down as having arrived from Odessa ("Finkelstein", "Felkenstein", "Junkelstein", 1899-1900), and in Nagybánya as originating from Odessa or Warsaw (1899).³⁷ The Paris records also show that in 1900 Finkelstein lived at an address where two Poles were settled at that time: Kazimierz Brzozowski and Wszyński ("Vezinski") and before that Rufin Szereszewski (1898; 9 rue Campagne-Première). It is difficult to establish the Polish connections of Pierre Gansky from the environs of Odessa (1895), who thus (in a Russian spelling) signed his paintings, but genealogical records show him as belonging to the Polish family of Hański of the Gozdawa coat-of-arms. Although the curator of the Odessa museum writes his name as Gansky, she pronounces it as Hański. "Bronislas Boyarski" born in Warsaw springs a surprise (1903). The Academy was recommended to him by "Oznobichine", "aid-de-camp of the Grand Prince Leuchtenberg",³⁸ so Bojarski, who as a tsarist officer commanded a dragons regiment, could be regarded as a Russian, were it not for the fact that since 1918 he served in the Polish army. As for Oznobichine, who studied at the Académie Julian in 1901-1902 and whose city of origin is also defined in the documents

³⁵ Konstancy Maria Górski, *Polska sztuka współczesna 1887-1894 na Wystawie krajowej we Lwowie 1894 r.*, Kraków 1896, 20.

³⁶ In the comparisons with Dostoevsky Szereszewski did not always look favourably. Matteo Bertelé, *Vladimir L'vovič Šereševskij*; idem, *La Russia all'Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia (1895-1914). Per una storia della ricezione dell'arte russa in Italia*. Tesi di dottorato, Venezia 2011, chapter "Vladimir Šereševskij: il Dostoevskij della laguna" and passim; pdf available at <http://dspace.unive.it/handle/10579/1075> (visit 8 August 2012).

³⁷ Murádin, "A nagybányai Hollósy-iskola névsorai," 147.

³⁸ Alexander Romanovsky, prince of Leuchtenberg (1881-1942).

as Warsaw, at first I gladly categorised him as an artist with possible Polish connections. For he went down in the school's history endearingly as an initiator and sponsor of a competition for sketches with the first prize being a motorised tricycle (*tricycle à pétrole et sa voiturette*) and laudatory mentions were to be backed with bottles of champagne.³⁹ His interest in Poland is perhaps witnessed by the fact that in 1899 he translated into French a reliable work on the Somosierra charge, written by the Russian general Puzyrevsky.⁴⁰ But the numerous later appearances in society columns show that Oznobichine was functioning in the Russian community. Although in 1911 he appeared in the *Annuaire des Beaux-Arts* as a painter⁴¹ his main occupation was the function of a military representative or even *attaché* of the tsarist Russia in Paris and briefly in the Swiss Bern. In 1917 the report of the Russian provisional government assesses him as an extreme reactionary, so he probably was an advocate of restoring the monarchy, perhaps within the pre-war borders.⁴² Another student of the Académie Julian, Eligiusz Niewiadomski ("Eloi Joseph Neviadowski", 1896), named as a Russian in the register and as a Pole in the payment book,⁴³ was a Polish conservative. Niewiadomski held a St. Petersburg Academy scholarship and was a quite good painter and art historian, but he went down in history books above all as the fanatical killer of President Narutowicz (1922).

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Selection criteria

[17] When making a provisional list of "Polish" students in the Académie Julian records, I flexibly used – jointly or separately⁴⁴ – the following criteria:

- originating from a Polish family, except for those fully assimilated in another country (it was usually difficult to establish),

³⁹ The first prize was unfortunately not awarded. *L'Académie Julian*, décembre 1903, 6, and 1904.

⁴⁰ Lieutenant général Pouzerewsky, *La Charge de cavalerie de Somo-Sierra (Espagne)*, le 30 novembre 1808, traduit du russe par Dimitry Oznobichine, Paris 1900.

⁴¹ He gave the address at boulevard des Invalides 31-33, which then also housed Matisse's Academy and ateliers of several other artists. See *Annuaire de la curiosité et des beaux-arts*, 1911.

⁴² Similarly to his brother or cousin Alexis d'Oznobichine, representative of *Russie Blanche*, arrested in April 1920 in Paris under a charge of collaborating with the Germans but soon released. See Roger Mennevée, "Les Influences réactionnaires russes dans la politique française," in: *Les Documents politiques, diplomatiques et financiers* no 8 (1923), 268, and no 2 (1924), 52-54. A. Oznobichine had properties near Kaunas.

⁴³ Archives Nationales, 63 AS 3, spool 1, no 1.

⁴⁴ As the above examples clearly show, using just one criterion in the case of the once multinational territory of Central and Eastern Europe would be misleading. For example the assumption of Vita Susak that representatives of various nationalities born within the territory of today's Ukraine should be counted as Ukrainians, is too inclusive. See V. Susak, *Ukrainian Artists in Paris: 1900-1939*, Kyiv 2010, s. 19.

- originating – especially in the case of Jews – from places where Polish culture played a significant role (for example, from Vilnius, where Poles were the second largest ethnic group after Jews),
- and finally participation in Polish artistic life.

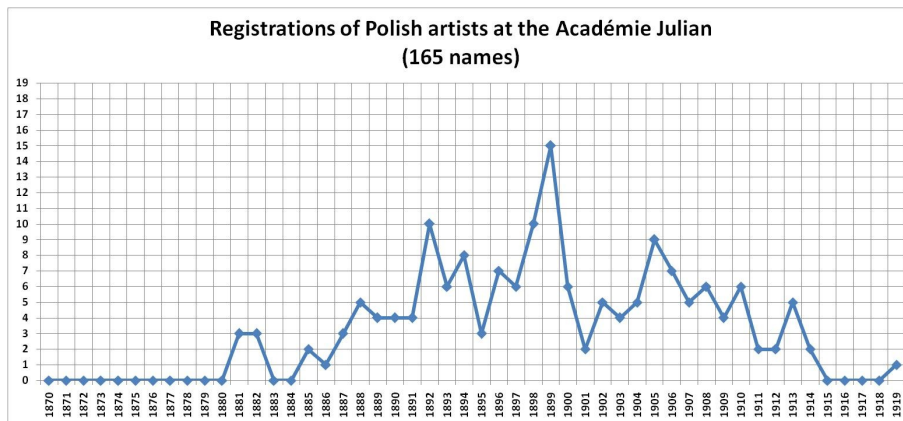
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Poles at the Académie Julian: registration and presence in the ateliers

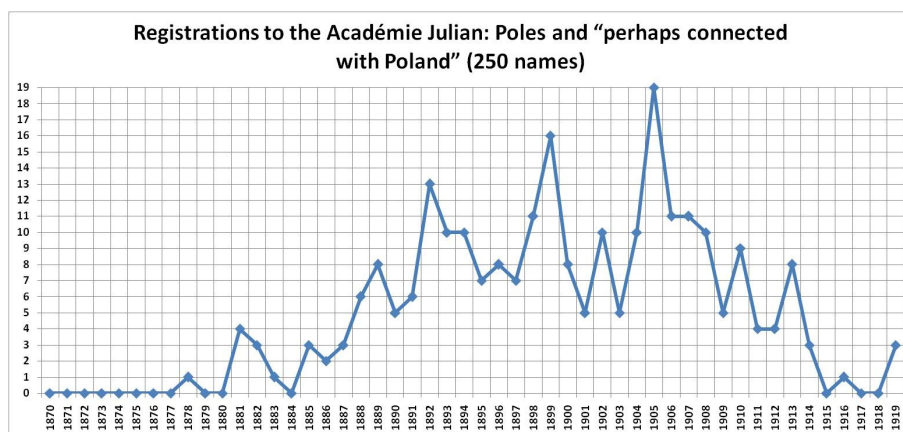
- [18] At the first stage I considered about 350 names. The search in biographical dictionaries, exhibition catalogues, auction indices and various publications⁴⁵ allowed me to remove about one hundred persons from the list (mostly Russian Jews and Russians and Ukrainians with Polish names). The pruned database contained 250 students, whose connections with Poland were very probable. The third group, of 165 students, is comprised of persons almost certainly connected with Poland. The following general remarks will regard this group. In the Académie Julian records 38 persons are marked as "Polonais". The most frequently mentioned city of origin is Warsaw (72), much more rarely Krakow (10), Vilnius (6), Lviv (5) and Łódź (3). The list published by Catherine Fehrer contains only 44 persons from this group. The search also allowed me to establish that a dozen artists from Poland treated by Fehrer (and biographical dictionaries) as Académie Julian students probably did not study there. They include Konstanty Laszczka, in fact a pupil of Mercier, not at the Académie Julian but at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.
- [19] The fluctuation of registrations is shown on the diagram (Fig. 2). Each student is noted there only once, when he first appeared at the academy. I do not know whether the absence of Poles before 1880 results from the fact that the documents from this period are incomplete (the records of the Boulanger atelier from before 1882 have probably not been preserved) or from actual lack of Polish students. You can see a gradual increase in the number of registrations in the last years of the 19th century and then a decline. I cannot explain the peak in 1899 and the decrease in 1900 and 1901. I suppose that the fall in numbers could be connected with high prices in Paris during the world exhibition in 1900.
- [20] The fluctuations of registration in a wider group (including 250 persons) on the next diagram (Fig. 3) is slightly different: after 1900 one can observe another wave of arrivals, probably Jews from Polish lands and the territories of today's Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. In this period Polish artists probably preferred the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, which prospered then, and in Warsaw the newly founded School of Fine Arts

⁴⁵ For example Hanna Bartnicka-Górska and Joanna Szczepińska-Tramer, *W poszukiwaniu światła, kształtu i barw. Artyści polscy wystawiający na Salonach paryskich w latach 1884-1960*, Warszawa 2005 (the book contains fragments of catalogues from selected exhibitions); Ewa Bobrowska-Jakubowska, *Artyści polscy we Francji w latach 1890-1918*, Warszawa 2005; Franciszek Ziejka, *Paryż młodopolski*, Warszawa 1993; Jerzy Malinowski, *Malarstwo i rzeźba Żydów polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 2000.

(1904) or private schools, also those run by former students of Académie Julian (for example by Feliks Słupski, since 1904). But some travelled to Paris even after studying at the Krakow Academy reformed by Fałat; the most successful among them was Ludwik Markus (student of the Académie Julian in 1903-1904).



2 Registrations of Polish artists at the Académie Julian (165 names)
© Marek Zgórnjak

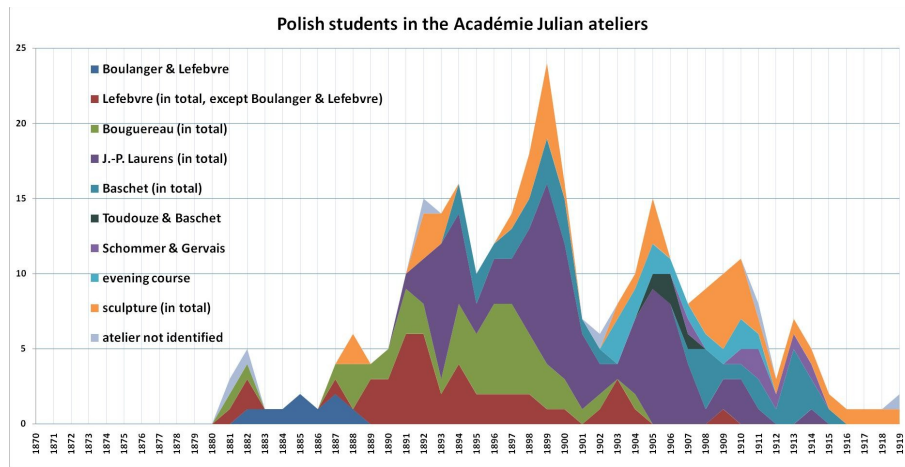


3 Registrations to the Académie Julian: Poles and "perhaps connected with Poland" (250 names) © Marek Zgórnjak

[21] The third diagram (Fig. 4) summarily presents the presence of Polish artists in the Académie Julian ateliers in particular years. The students were recorded there regardless of the length of their studies – some took part in the courses for most of the year (it was possible also during the summer holidays, when one atelier was open⁴⁶) and others shorter, sometimes only for a month. Some of the artists included here paid for the lessons but rarely attended, for example Kazimierz Stabrowski (1894) or historian and painter of batalistic scenes Bronisław Gembarzewski (1895, 1896, 1897), who probably preferred to go for consultations to Edouard Detaille. Others did not show up at all, like the otherwise unknown "Okrent Paprocki", who registered but never came (*n'est jamais*

⁴⁶ *Il n'y a jamais vacances à l'Académie*, said a prospectus from around 1905. *Académie Julian. School of Painting, Modelling and Drawing.*

venu, 1891). What is remarkable in this diagram is the growing popularity of Jean-Paul Laurens's atelier in the last years of the 19th century.⁴⁷



4 Polish students in the Académie Julian ateliers (© Marek Zgórnjak)

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Concluding remarks

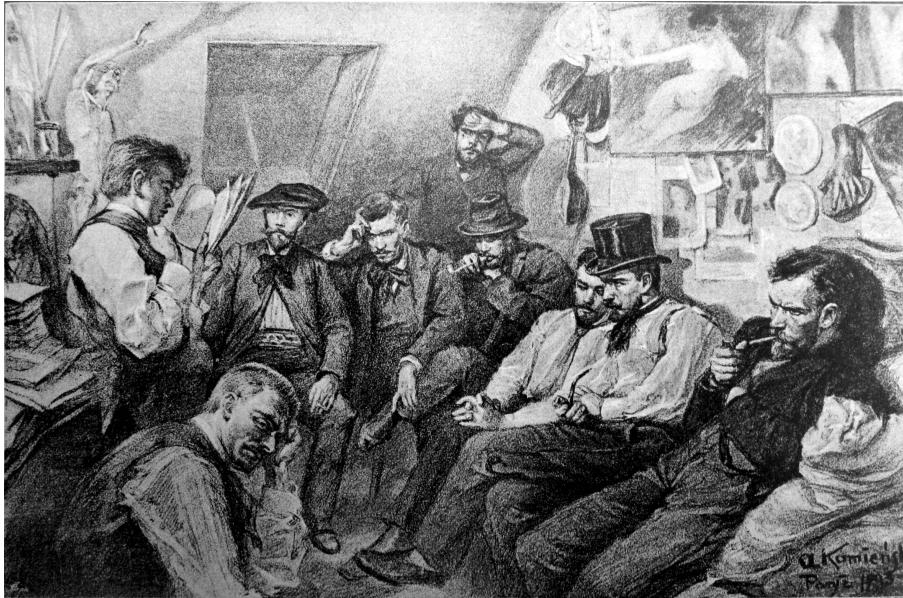
- [22] The period of stay in the male ateliers varied but was usually shorter than in the female ones. The men treated the studies at the Académie Julian as a supplement to their education or as a vacation adventure. Amateur painters, landowners and people from other walks of life, stayed very shortly at the academy. Some of the Poles studied for a long time but usually with interruptions: Zygmunt Glinka (1892-1894), Władysław Granzow (1893-1900), Zygmunt Pachniewski (1890-1894, 1896), Jan Mirosław Peské (1891-1893), Feliks Słupski (1892-1895) or an unidentified sculptor Czerniawski from Warsaw (regularly in 1914-1919), but there were few great artists in this group.
- [23] But the Academy saw many well-known figures of the Polish artistic life, for example Władysław Ślewiński, introduced in 1888 by Marcel Baschet, before the latter became a professor. On the collective portrait of artists (Fig. 5) made in Paris in 1893 by Antoni Kamieński, three out of eight painters and sculptors attended the school: Ślewiński, Michał du Laurans (1898-1899) and the author of the portrait himself – Kamieński, who studied painting and sculpture there (1892-1893).
- [24] Some Polish artists – such as the painter and critic Antoni Austen (studied 1889-1891, Fig. 6) – were the Academy's enthusiasts⁴⁸ and held fond memories of it. Leon Kowalski (a student in 1896-1897, Fig. 7), later the founder of the Polish School of Fine Arts in Kyiv (1917) and president of the artists' association, said in 1909:

⁴⁷ The popularity of Laurens in the Polish artistic colony was mentioned already by Tadeusz Dobrowolski (*Nowoczesne malarstwo polskie*, v. 3, Wrocław 1964, 52).

⁴⁸ "Austen is an ardent admirer of Julian's Academy. [...] In Julian's Academy [with Austen] lots of people, some paint – the hum of conversations – singing – generally good drawings on the walls – painted studies as well." Józef Mehoffer, *Dziennik*, ed. Jadwiga Puciata-Pawłowska, Kraków 1975, 41 (2 and 6 April 1891).

If I could, I would gladly return to Paris again, to one of my favourite professors, Laurens, Constant or Girardot. You would not believe how pleasant it is to study in the company of artists with greyed hair. Their works have long been appraised as eminent or even great but they still come with portfolios for the evening course to keep drilling the eye and exercising the hand [...].⁴⁹

[25] We know of several works created during the Academy courses, for example the nudes of Kowalski (Fig. 8) and Ignacy Marek, a student in 1898-1899 (Fig. 9-10).



5 Antoni Kamieński, *Na wyżynach (Artyści)* (*At the Heights [Artists]*), 1893, drawing in charcoal, reproduced in the *Katalog ilustrowany wystawy sztuki współczesnej we Lwowie 1894*, Lwów 1894 (photo: Marek Zgórnjak)

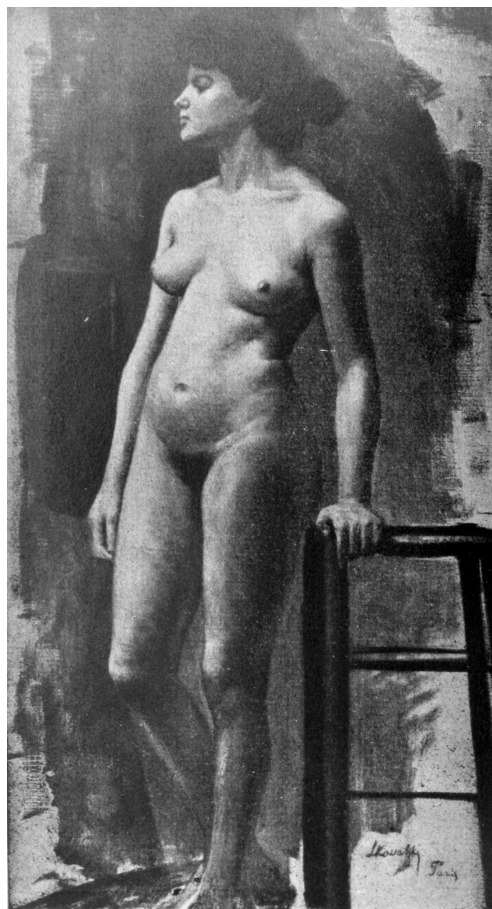


6 Antoni Austen, *Low Tide After a Storm*, 1892, Salon des Champs-Élysées 1892, reproduced in the *Świat* magazine 1892 (photo: Marek Zgórnjak)

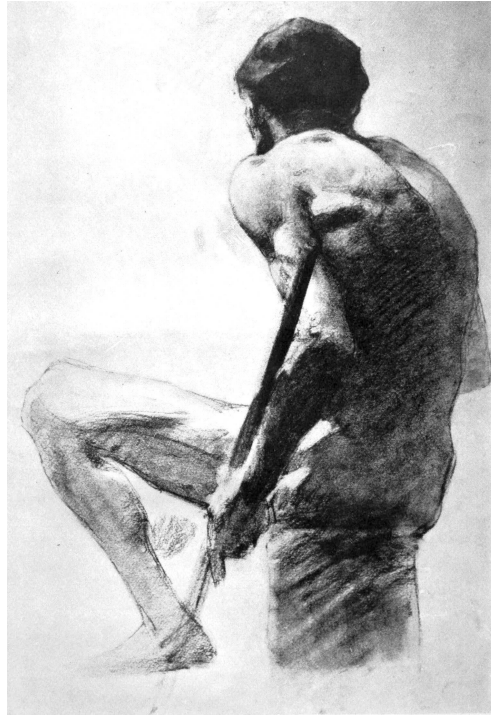
⁴⁹ Leon Kowalski, *artysta malarz i grafik, 1870-1937*, Kraków 1939, 8. The last remark may refer to L.-A. Girardot (1856-1933), who conducted evening courses at the Académie Colarossi. At the Académie Julian Kowalski attended morning courses. Archives Nationales, 65 AS 4, supplementary spool (bobine suppl.)



7 Leon Kowalski, *Apple Trees in an Orchard*. Private collection (photo: courtesy of Auction House DESA Unicum)



8 Leon Kowalski, *A Model from Paris* (based on: Leon Kowalski, *artysta malarz i grafik, 1870-1937, Kraków 1939*, photo: Marek Zgórnjak)



9 Ignacy Marek, *Male Nude*, 1898, drawing
(based on: M. Sterling, *Ignacy Marek*, Warszawa
1930, photo: Marek Zgórnjak)



10 Ignacy Marek, *Flowers in a Vase*. Private
collection (photo: Marek Zgórnjak)

[26] The analysed records of the Académie Julian give rise to many questions which I will only sketchily mention here. They may regard, for example, the sociology of art – artistic journeys, their dynamics and length as well as issues of assimilation. One may consider the question if the limited interest of artists from Krakow in the fee-paying Academy in Paris was caused by the high quality of the Krakow school or rather by frugality, allegedly typical for the inhabitants of our city.

- [27] And finally one should analyse the artistic results of the stays at the Académie Julian. Without going into details (such as the role of particular professors) one may say that every condition for achieving very positive results was provided. The high Parisian level of studies from a model may have served well the newcomers from Central and Eastern Europe, where for various reasons artistic schools usually did not manage to attain such a level. We know that even so talented a graduate of the Munich Academy as Lovis Corinth only learned to draw the nude in Paris.⁵⁰ The drawing imperfections were behind the failures of two talented artists from Krakow after their arrival in Paris in the early 1890s – Józef Mehoffer and Stanisław Wyspiański (at the entrance exam to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts). But the French capital also offered other opportunities for catching up: Mehoffer worked on it in the rival and similarly organised Académie Colarossi and then in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (with Bonnat), while Wyspiański – less willing to work systematically under a guidance – dropped out of the Colarossi Academy in order to exercise his hand and practice his style on his own, painting portraits in pastel.
- [28] Due to the change of the artistic formula at the turn of the 20th century the abilities cultivated at Julian's were no longer sufficient and the institution started to be perceived as too traditional.⁵¹ Around 1900 the new aesthetics also overcame the official artistic scene. It is symptomatic that Mehoffer's success at the World Exhibition in Paris was only partly based on skills of academic type: although one gold medal was awarded to Mehoffer for a rather traditional portrait, another went to him for a stained glass in a new style. And Wyspiański became a great artist despite the lack of academic education. But the fact is that even if not at this or that academy, it occurred in Paris.
- [29] But despite the Modernist breakthrough the methods of teaching developed in the Paris schools such as Académie Julian were used in practice for a quite a long time. It regards, for example, Matisse, who was expelled from the school (in 1892), of which we know thanks to his later fame. When many years later (in 1908) he founded his own academy, he taught painting nudes in a very similar way – first from plaster casts, then from a model. The difference regarded mostly colours. Polish alumni of the Académie Julian, when running their own schools later, also relied on their Parisian experiences. These students-teachers were quite numerous, especially in Warsaw.⁵² In their art most of them represented a moderately conservative tendency.

Translated by Tomasz Bieroń

⁵⁰ Uhr, *Lovis Corinth*, 32-34.

⁵¹ This is confirmed, for example, by the opinion of Karl Eugen Schmidt, see his "Pariser Kunstschulen," in: *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte* 28, Heft 3 (November 1913), 456.

⁵² For example Bilińska (1892), then since about 1904 Słupski, Austen and Stabrowski. After 1918 several graduates of the Académie Julian were active in the Wojciech Gerson School of Fine Arts in Warsaw: Blanka Mercère, Słupski, Okuń and Austen. Other alumni who taught in the capital included J. Czajkowski and E. Trojanowski, and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow: W. Jarocki and F. Pautsch (previously active in Wrocław and Poznań).

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