

9: Workshop room

We are in the final room of the exhibition that we called the “Workshop room”. This space is devoted, among others, to young designers, students of Warsaw design faculties with whom we collaborated to invite them to execute pieces inspired by the works of Julia Keilowa. We wanted to know if young people would be inspired by what the artist from the previous century has created. As it turns out, they were. Within this project, we cooperated with two Warsaw schools. With the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, design department, and in particular the ceramics design studio under Bartłomiej Mejer PhD, from which five students participated. The other one was the School of Form, a design faculty of the SWPS University – here we had two groups of students from two different paths: domestic design, i.e. young designers who learn to make everyday use objects, and another group of students training in industrial design. The first group worked under the supervision of Ms Aleksandra Kędziorek and Mr Bartosz Mucha, while the industrial design group was directed by Ms Megi Malinowska and Ms Sara Boś. Works of these three groups differ in terms of the techniques used. The ceramics studio worked, of course, in ceramics design, so in this case we have a single material. When it comes to the School of Form industrial design studio, we have items made of metal, and the interesting aspect is that students worked with the KUKA robot that pressed and cut metal. Meanwhile the domestic design group created a varied array of projects in ceramics, metal, and wood, sometimes using combined techniques.

Let us take a closer look at some of the more compelling projects, although they are all very interesting. The ceramics design studio of the Academy of Fine Arts is where very small, we could even say jewellery-like, items were produced. A very interesting idea is Piotr Sołdaj’s “Porcelain feather”, executed in a very decorative manner. Here the artist was inspired by Julia Keilowa’s projects related precisely to office accessories, for the use in studies, etc. That was the basic inspiration. Another interesting and very different project is the design by Kaja Okuń. The artist named it “Objects with blades”, they include knives and a peeler. Here, the artistic form is contained in the handles of these tools, cast in porcelain, in a completely contemporary, intense cobalt colour.

The premise of the entire project was first and foremost, the inspiration by Julia Keilowa's work, both in terms of form and function, but of course, in relation to the present times, our contemporary needs, so the created projects are related to the table. These are items connected to meals, dishes, as well as writing accessories, office objects, even though the students extended the office aspect to include more contemporary tools. And it is in the domestic design group that we have one of the objects with a most distinctive form; a pedestal, or a rest for a laptop. A metal form with a very menacing look that is supposed to go on your lap, so that you can place your laptop on it. This was inspired by Julia Keilowa, but altogether in relation to contemporary times. This curious object was made by two young artists, Oliwia Głogowska and Matylda Olszewska.

Another object that alludes with its form to Julia Keilowa's works, for instance to her platter designs, but with a completely contemporary function, is an item that its creators called a "Platter at the edge of an era": a phone charger. The authors are Jan Banasiak and Stanisław Łoskot.

Young creators approached Julia Keilowa's designs in quite a defiant way. Some of them pondered if, in the present context of the overconsumption crisis, or the climate crisis, there is a point to design at all. Two of the artists took a very critical look at the profession that they intend to pursue, wondering if being a designer in our times makes sense and is it even a right thing to do to design new objects. They created a slightly Dadaistic form alluding to Julia Keilowa's dishes and they are, as well, in terms of their function, items related to work in the kitchen, graters or juicers. But they created a sculptural form which is supposed to prompt us to reflect whether all these items are actually necessary. The authors of the project are Zuzanna Orlof and Oliwia Popławska.

Objects created within the industrial design group were all made of metal. Sometimes it is combined with other elements, such as blackened wood, or plastics. Students

worked with the help of the KUKA robot programmed to cut and emboss metal in a specific way. These forms are much larger than the works of domestic design students, which stems simply from the way you would use such a tool. It created very interesting objects, as well, both in their forms and function.

One of the works is, in terms of its form, very close to the works of Julia Keilowa, even though it is contemporary. "Tavern" by Liza Nalewajko and Ewa Stecewicz alludes to Julia Keilowa's oval forms and it is also based on the contrast between metal and wood that also occurs in Julia Keilowa's work.

Aleksandra Majewska and Ewelina Dzienyńska took the Keilowa's inspiration to the present times, the era of consumption, we could say. They created a serving tray. A tray that is shaped to create separate compartments to arrange particular foods in our meals. There are several shapes for pieces of apples, nuts, cookies, pieces of vegetables, so it is a dish designed to help create a fully balanced meal. The tray is pressed from metal with bright pink plastic elements, so it's a completely contemporary Julia Keilowa.