

FROM ART NOUVEAU TO MODERNISM 1900 – 1950

Stefania Żelasko

THE KARKONOSZE MUSEUM OF JELENIA GÓRA
Culture Institution of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship
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1926, View of *Josephine* Glassworks in Schreiberhau, Hermann-Pfohl Family Archives, Hadamar.

From Art Nouveau to Modernism: 1900-1950, the temporary exhibition drawing upon the collections of Muzeum Karkonoskie (the Karkonosze Museum) in Jelenia Góra (Hirschberg), features more than 300 unique glass pieces made at the *Josephine* Glassworks in Szklarska Poręba (Schreiberhau), Silesia. The objects were acquired by means of transfer, from the pattern shop at the glassworks in Piechowice (Petersdorf), in 1995. Never displayed before, the finely rendered unique glass pieces, the tableware sets or many roemers; punch, fruit and confectionary bowls can be enjoyed now.

The exhibition presents the output of the artistic craftsmanship of Silesian glass masters. It has resulted from the author's comprehensive, trilingual monograph of the glassworks – based on the study of manuscripts and other source materials – and from her thorough research of archive records. Thanks to this research, it has been possible to attribute specific glass objects to their artists-designers. The monograph contains a documented history of the best glassworks in Europe and its international significance.¹ It demonstrates *Josephine's* ongoing commitment to employing the renowned, university-educated designers and to conquering new markets for its products.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century fine arts underwent radical transformation in search of forms to express a new concept of nature. Newly-formed English intellectual Arts and Crafts Movement exerted considerable influence in the field and was favourably received in continental Europe. In response, the new style called Art Nouveau was created.

¹ Stefania Zelasko, *The Josephine Glassworks. Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Modernism: 1900-1950*, Glasmuseum Passau 2009.



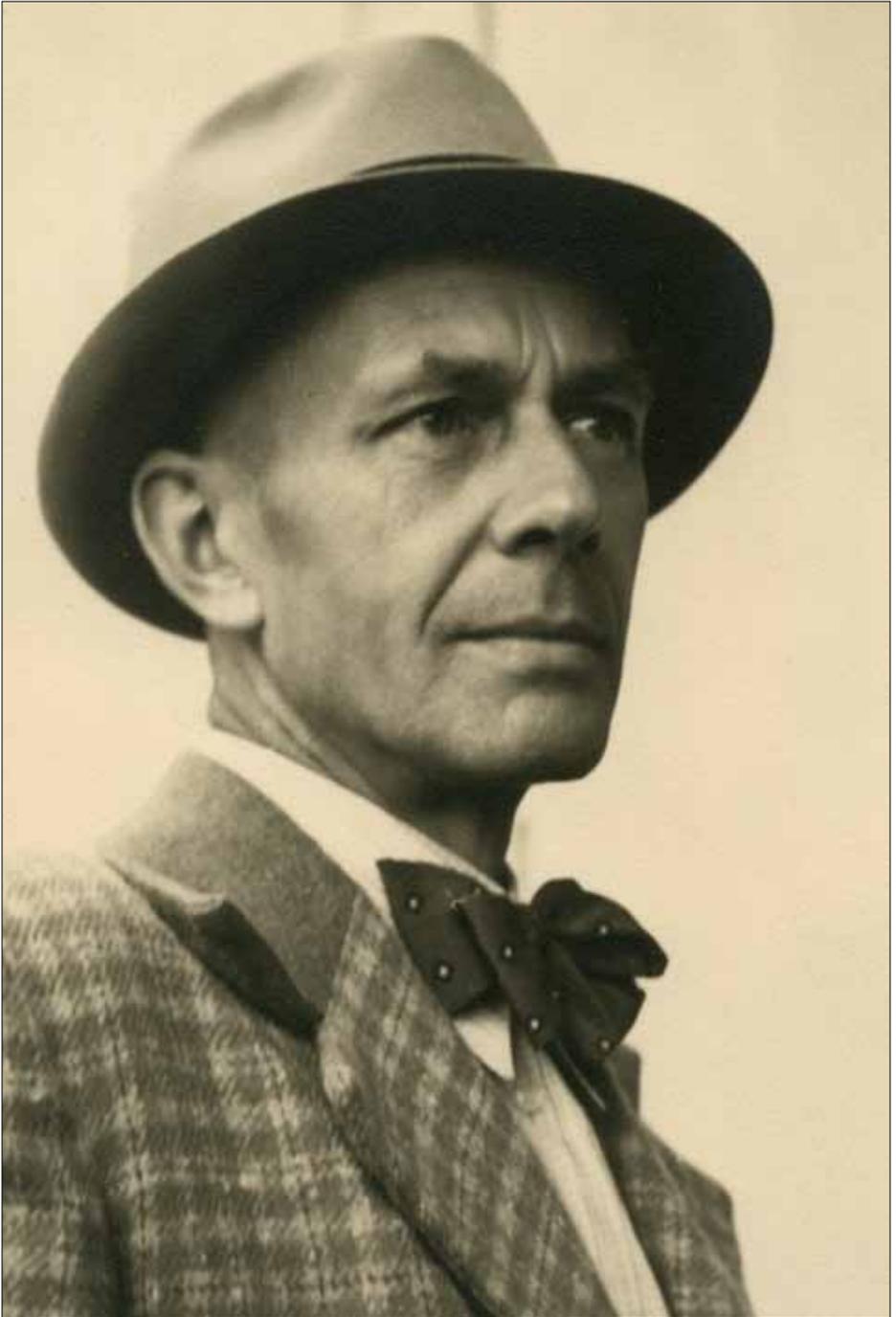
30.10.1928, Alexander Pfohl in *Josephine* Glassworks, farewell to the artist, Hermann-Pfohl Family Archives, Hadamar.

Glass became the perfect means of artistic expression in terms of design for the French artist Emile Gallé and the American Louis Comfort Tiffany, leading figures of the movement. These designers achieved stunning colour effects, particularly with the use of metal oxides for iridescence which transformed the surface of a glass form into a fabulously colourful magical landscape. The formula for iridescent glass was developed by L.C. Tiffany in 1894. At that time, other European glassworks such as Loetz, Harrach or Pallme-Koenig merely imitated the strongly iridescent, bright-coloured Tiffany's glasses.

Although the manufacture in Szklarska Poręba kept a close watch on the new trends in the French Art Nouveau, it had never copied them – in contrast to many Bohemian glasshouses or glass refineries such as the one in Nový Bor (Haida).

On the one hand, the conservative character of the output – for commercial reasons – was suited to the customers' expectations. Therefore, until World War I, the Biedermeier glasses had been replicated there in such a superb manner that there was no way of telling them from the originals. On the other hand, *Josephine* carried on seeking out its own paths to creative development, and that was why its new glass designs – in the Art Nouveau style – were tall, slender-bodied and tastefully proportioned. Their colourless crystal glass forms were painted in gold relief or in transparent colour enamels, and they depicted leaf and flower motifs. Such designs were made in *Josephine* as early as 1900.

Commissioned by Count Leopold Schaffgotsch, the *Josephine* Glassworks was founded in Szklarska Poręba in 1842. It was co-built by Franz Pohl, the distinguished specialist in glass making, and Albert Tolberg who was a tutee of Carl Friedrich Schinkel. The glassworks employed the best glass masters and was



Alexander Pfohl (1894-1953), Hermann-Pfohl Family Archives, Hadamar.

renowned for its reliability as well as perfection of craftsmanship.²

The manufacture, to all intents and purposes, used all the decorative techniques fashionable in the nineteenth century. Its designers and technologists alike kept up with new developments and experimented with new ideas, which can be seen in their output and also in the recognition they gained at the domestic and international exhibitions of arts and crafts. As early as 1844, *Josephine* received a Gold Medal for its lattice filigree glass pieces at the Crafts Exhibition in Berlin. Truly worldwide recognition, however, came at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London where *Josephine* displayed its unique glass pieces. It won a medal for colour glass forms and hundreds of millefiori paperweights. In 1867 it got an award in Paris and, then, a Gold Medal at the 1873 Vienna International Exhibition.

At the beginning of the twentieth century and then in the 1920s *Josephine* employed the best designers of glass forms. They comprised: Prof. Siegfried Haertel – Rector of the Wrocław (Breslau) School of Crafts, Hans Mauder, Alexander and Erwin Pfohl, Prof. Max Rade, Prof. Julius Camillo de Maess, Prof. Rudolf Wille, Prof. Edelbert Niemeyer, Prof. Roux, Prof. M. Esser, Dr Hermann Gertsch, Georg Müller, Bernardine Bayerl and many others. Also the best engravers of the 20th century, Wenzel Benna and his son Edgar deserve to be mentioned. *Josephine's* renown continued to grow and new markets developed.

Throughout the decades, the name *Josephine* was synonymous with the elegance of well-crafted glassware, also famous abroad. Two additional firms worked using the name *Josephine* in the 19th century: Carlsthal Glassworks from 1843 and Hoffnungstal Glassworks from 1863. Enjoying a well-established tradition and position, in 1923 *Josephine* set up a Limited Partnership together with the Neumann & Staebe Kynast Kristall Company from Sobieszów (Hermisdorf am Kynast) and the Fritz Heckert Glassworks from Piechowice (Petersdorf). In 1925, all the three merged into one company, called JO-HE-KY, which employed 1,400 people and soon gained a leading position all over Germany.

Various decorative techniques were used there: cutting, engraving, and painting on glass as well as silver overlay. Cutting was made using cutting wheels of different hardness, whereas for engraving little copper wheels were used. All glass elements, however, were hand worked at each stage, including several types of painted decoration. Each *Josephine's* product was an art work, both in terms of form and decoration. The Glassworks continued to win numerous medals, awards and customers. In 1900, it won another Gold Medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, then a Grand Prix in 1937. It also made a large number of products for the Vienna Workshops. Among *Josephine's* customers were: Prof. Joseph Hoffmann, Leopold Palda, J&L Lobmeyr, Bakalovits & Sons, Bernsdorfer Metallwarenfabrik, Ludwig Moser and others.

From the very beginning of its existence until World War II, America and England were the leading purchasers of *Josephine's* output.

Both Siegfried Haertel (1870-1943) and Alexander Pfohl (1894-1953) ranked among the most important *Josephine's* designers in the 20th century. It was

² Stefania Zelasko, *Graflich Schaffgotsch'sche Josephinenhütte, Kunstglasfabrik In Schreiberhau und Franz Pohl 1842-1900*, Glasmuseum Passau 2005.



Cognac Glass (Inv. no. MJG 1125 PS), design by Siegfried Haertel, form no. 7611, c. 1906

their outstanding talent, intuition and innate sense of taste that inspired their choice of the most elegant patterns to be executed. Some forms were modest; others featured fanciful, subtle, ornamental and figural patterns. For decades, the whole output of the Glassworks bore the imprints of their artistic mastery.

Prof. Haertel, the painter, was well ahead of the times and soon abandoned Art Nouveau showing preference for cubist, geometric forms, surface cutting and sparse painting. He found expression in the Art Deco style, with emphasis on a simple, geometric form. His designs are controlled by a sense of rhythm and a distinct shape, evocative of Cubist or Constructivist forms. The Cubist vases and beakers with faceted bodies displayed at the German Crafts Exhibition in Bern (1917) were his works.

From 1921 onwards, in accordance with the fashion of the time, the *Josephine* Glassworks relied on surface cutting. It was used specifically for decorating flacons, heavy bowls and dark red gold ruby plates, which were made of high quality lead crystal glass.

The influence of the Vienna Workshops (Wiener Werkstätte) on *Josephine's* design is worth mentioning. Discernible in A. Pfohl's designs is the influence



Liqueur Glass (Inv. no. MJG 858 PS), design by Siegfried Haertel, master no. 1364/170, from 1917 to 1925, painted by Ida Härtel



Luxury Roemer (Inv. no. MJG 4045/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, form no. 963, c. 1916. Alexander Pfohl, decor. no. 2079, c. 1920

of both Prof. Joseph Hoffmann and Prof. Michael Povolny. During his studies, Pfohl had absorbed Viennese trends and novelties while designing his own countless patterns for glass forms. While responding to new market developments, Alexander Pfohl also catered for the tastes of those who were looking for unostentatious, bright, smooth glass objects of a regular form and well-conceived arrangement. The customer of the day was interested in the thin-walled glass pieces, devoid of any ornaments. Such forms were also favoured by the Viennese School of design. Therefore, the patterns designed by Alexander Pfohl display those features and demonstrate his mastery in the rules of proportion and his characteristic lightly-drawn lines. His style is recognisable in the patterns for roemers, wine glasses or flower vases with a smooth surface finish. Alexander Pfohl took a special liking to heavy, elaborate, covered and wide-footed glass bowls. His bell-shaped bowl for sponge fingers proves to be a very well-crafted form. It was replicated in various colours or decorated with silver overlay. The artist chose to make use of rather difficult kind of surface cutting – the Number 8 cut, commonly known as faceting. His Venetian glass designs, however, were inspired by the sources he had studied at the *Josephine Glas-*



Luxury Roemers (Inv. no. MJG 5909/s; MJG 1141 PS), designed by Alexander Pfohl, form no. 493, decor. no. 2116; form no. 082, original decor, c. 1920

sworks Pattern Shop.

The Karkonosze Museum (Muzeum Karkonoskie) in Jelenia Góra houses a complete collection of Pfohl's glass objects taken over from the Glassworks's former Pattern Shop. It includes sophisticated crystal wine glasses, vases and bowls decorated with cobalt-blue thread filigree or fancy appliqueés. Other objects depict broad ornamental lines which extend like borders along their edges. His subtle gold decoration does not conceal shiny glass surfaces underneath. The artist combined painting with a transparent enamel and gold arabesque motifs. He used gold for both flat and relief painting. Pfohl was given numerous prizes and medals for his glass designs, at home and abroad. His works were widely copied by other glassworks or manufactures. His work significantly in-

fluenced the development of art glass in the 1920s. As a distinguished artist, he was widely sought after. It was according to his designs that gifts, tableware sets or other expensive glass objects were executed for the European royal courts. One such work consists of the “Crete” tableware set, marked with the X.II initials surmounted by a royal crown. In 1919, commissioned by the King of Saxony, he designed a wedding tableware set for the King’s daughter. Drinking glasses of his design, made for the king of Bulgaria’s train saloon, were later slightly modified at the request of the Rosenthal Company.

From 1921, the *Josephine* Glassworks was a leading producer of glass toilet sets designed by A. Pfohl and Prof. S. Haertel. During that period it also made luxury decanters – often mounted in silver by the Wrocław Lemour and Somme manufactures – and drinking sets.

Between 1925 and 1928, Hans Mauder – educated at the Munich School of Arts and Crafts – worked there as an art consultant. His designs feature marked contrasts, relying on a simple form and repetitive geometric lines for decoration. In 1935, following the Great Depression, the post was taken by Bernardine Bayerl from Munich. Her designs were modern, and the glass objects were also made of heavy lead glass decorated with faceting as well as concave and surface cutting. Commissioned by the government, she had designed a collection of commemorative tumblers for the 1936 Berlin Olympics. In 1937 she was given a Grand Prix in Paris for her design of a liqueur decanter. The same prize was awarded to Dr Hermann Gretsch, the Stuttgart architect, for his timeless drinking set.

More than 5,000 kinds of cutting patterns were applied in the *Josephine* Glassworks, but only two of them: surface cutting and faceting – called Number 8 – had been in use throughout its entire existence.

Its output revealed two parallel dominant tendencies. One satisfied the requirements of the worldwide fashion trends, whereas the other – more traditional – the tastes of conservative customers.

Some things, however, remained unchanged during *Josephine*’s existence: refined taste, perfect workmanship and the elegance of its glassware. These attributes distinguished *Josephine*’s expensive output from that of other German or Bohemian glassworks.

Stephanie Zelasko



Luxury Vase (Inv. no. MJG 192/s), designed by Alexander Pfoh, form no. 0405, c. 1920, produced until 1945



Luxury Goblet (Inv. no. MJG 5933/s), designed by Alexander Pfohl, form no. 408, cut no. 8, c. 1921



Glass Bowl (Inv. no. MJG 1094 PS), designed by Siegfried Haertel, form no. 1640; cut no. 8, c. 1925

Goblet (Inv. no. MJG 4365/s), designed by Alexander Pfohl, form no. 461, cut no. 8, original gold decoration, c. 1921



Plate (Inv. no. MJG 5700/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, legally protected, form no. 1699/3, cut no 4475, c. 1939



Luxury Goblet (Inv. no. MJG 2155/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, form no. 634/3, c. 1917. Alexander Pfohl, decor. no. 1552, c. 1920



Powder Box (Inv. no. 5717/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, form. no. 1720, cut no. 4691, c.1925



Footed Bowl (Inv. no. MJG 1588/s), form no. 2933, cut no. 614, c. 1912

Roemer (Inv. no. MJG 5900/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, form no. 1652/7, cut no. 4782, c. 1921



Powder Box and Perfume Bottle (Inv. no. MJG 6008/s; MJG 5971/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, form no. 1721, cut no. 4737, c. 1925



Ernesta Set (Inv. no. MJG 278/s; MJG 5405/s; MJG 323/s; MJG 1941/s; MJG 1940/s), designed by Alexander Pfoh, form no. 0424, cut no. 802, gilding no 2239, c. 1925



Fruit Bowl (Inv. no. MJG 5934/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, legally protected, form no. 1421, cut no. 8, c. 1935



Wine Glasses (Inv. no. MJG 5105/s; MJG 5103/s; MJG 5102/s), designed by Georg Müller, Cyrano Set, form no. M 66, M 63, c. 1916-1918



Footed Bowl (Inv. no. MJG 6063/s), designed by Alexander Pfohl, form no. 08, c. 1922, executed by Adolf Simon



Footed Bowl (Inv. no. MJG 1101 PS), designed by Siegfried Haertel, legally protected, form no. 1640, cut no. 220. Original engraving, c. 1927. Engraved by Wenzel Benna, signed



Three Dessert Plates (inv no. MJG 1642/s; MJG 6057/s; MJG 1639/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, c. 1921, executed in 1940, cut by Richard Adolph



Jodhpur Luxury Vase (Inv. no. MJG 389/s), designed by Arthur Gerlach, form no. 8032, decor. No. 1554, before 1895, in production from 1895 to 1925



Decanter (Inv. no. MJG 302/s), form designed by Siegfried Haertel, decor. No. 3437, c. 1942



Vase (Inv. no. MJG 4039/s), designed by Alexander Pfohl, form no. 425; cut no. 8, decor. no. 2, c. 1922



Biscuit Box (Inv. no. MJG 6489/s), Alexander Pfohl, legally protected, form no. 019, decor. 3036, cut 8, c. 1942



Roemer (Inv. no. MJG 6488/s), designed by Siegfried Haertel, form no. 989, c. 1905. Decor. Alexander Pfohl, no. 2080, c. 1919



Roemer (Inv. no. MJG 742/s), designed by A. Pfohl, form no. 090, decor. no. 2240A, c. 1919



Footed Bowl (Inv. no. MJG 5520/s), designed by Alexander Pfohl, form no. 0105, c. 1919, Venetian collection



Footed Bowl (Inv. no. MJG 3089/s), designed by Alexander Pfohl, form no. 0106, c. 1921

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EXHIBITION CURATOR
Dr Stefania Żelasko

INTRODUCTION, PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL AND SELECTION OF ARTWORKS
Dr Stefania Żelasko

TRANSLATION
Hanna Wrzesień

PHOTOGRAPHY, GRAPHIC DESIGN AND PRINTING PREPARATION
Arkadiusz Podstawka

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