



F oreword

FOREWORD

Bogdan
Zdrojewski
Poland

Art Nouveau appeared at the end of 19th century like a meteor from Wyspiański's poem, shining like a star soaring round the world, only to burn out too early, just at the beginning of the 20th century. In spite of its short life, however, it managed to reach all countries and leave with them some real treasures, each with a different character depending on the personality of its creator. There are probably many reasons for the early disappearance of Art Nouveau, but one of them was surely the experience of the First World War, called the Great War, which resulted in great losses in Europe and brought independence to some countries in Central Europe like Poland. After that experience, the rich Art Nouveau was replaced by more modest styles, and Art Nouveau started to be criticized.



A century later, however, we are witnessing a revival of interest in this art, and so I am pleased to see this issue of the *Uncommon Culture* journal devoted to Art Nouveau. The issue is a result of the Partage Plus project, which has gathered together partners from museums and other European cultural institutions in order to fill the *Europeana* portal with materials representing Art Nouveau and make them accessible to the citizens of Europe and all over the world. As Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland, I am glad to see the Polish institutions involved in digitization of cultural heritage artefacts and supporting *Europeana*.

It will be a real pleasure to see the works of famous representatives of Art Nouveau style such as the architects Victor Horta, Henry van de Velde, and Paul Hankar from Belgium, Antonio Gaudi from Spain, and Otto Wagner from Austria, to mention just a few. Not all of their works have survived to the present day, but through the articles and materials delivered to *Europeana* we will have the best possible guide to where we may go during our holidays to see the treasures of Art Nouveau.

The majority of art pieces from this period remain hidden away in museums. We are fortunate, then, to have easy access to works by Gustav Klimt, René Lalique, Alfons Mucha and many, many other lesser known artists such as Stanisław Wyspiański or Józef Mehoffer from Poland, to mention once again just a few of the artists who have earned a position in the history of art.

I am glad to see that the articles presented in March 2013 during the conference in Rome have been successfully collected and will be distributed together in this issue of *Uncommon Culture* at the conference in Warsaw organized by the National Museum.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. Zdrojewski'.