

## FROM THE EDITOR

„**A**rt of the Orient” is an annual published by the Polish Institute of World Art Studies ([www.world-art.pl](http://www.world-art.pl)) dedicated to the art of Asia and Africa as well as artistic relations between Europe and these continents and the reception of their art in Europe. This represents the only writing on this subject published today in Poland. Since the second edition, articles have been published exclusively in English. The majority are written by Polish art historians, ethnologists and orientalists of all generations, who wish to publish their research and endeavours regarding the protection of our world cultural heritage.

The 2014 annual includes 16 studies divided into three parts: the first two relate to Asia, while the last deals with Africa.

Articles relating to old Asian art are dominated by Chinese themes. One study is of particular interest thanks to its author – Edward Kajdański, a prominent expert on China, the author of many books and other publications (born in Harbin, Manchuria). His article (*Guanyin goddess: Two bronze figures – two different stories*), presents Polish research at the frontier of Northern China and Mongolia along with an interpretation of unfamiliar early representations of the Buddhist goddess of mercy. Others are devoted to the origins of collecting in the Tang Dynasty (by Bogna Łakomska), a type of fabric – the so-called Mandarin squares – including techniques used in their creation and their symbolism (by Katarzyna Zapolska). This section of the book is rounded off by a study of the architecture from the Malla period in the Kathmandu valley from the years 1200–1768 (by Barbara Gmińska-Nowak), of Islamic ornamental motifs in Indonesia (by Krzysztof Morawski), and finally of the iconography of non-Christian religions in Asia present in Dutch art at the end of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (by Maciej Tybus).

The section on modern and contemporary Asian art begins with a text about the Indian episode in the work of Polish painter Stefan Norblin, the mastermind behind the decoration of maharajas’ palaces in the Art Deco style

(by Agnieszka Kasprzak). Three more articles are devoted to the contemporary architecture of Beijing (by Joanna Kucharzewska), Bangkok (Lidia Gerc) and problems concerning the cooperation of well-known architects with local communities with examples from Cambodia and Sri Lanka (by Anna Rynkowska-Sachse). This part of the book ends with a study on the fabulous Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama (by Paweł Łukoszek), on modifications to the Barbie doll in Islamic countries (by Dominic Łukoszek) and on the visual arts in Indonesia (by Marianna Lis).

The small section devoted to the art of Africa reveals the transition from nomadic arts and crafts by a feudal state visual culture towards contemporary artistic trends, demonstrated in studies devoted to the analysis of this phenomena from three corners of the continent: about the symbolism of amulets and talismans of the Tuareg (by Hanna Sotkiewicz), about the various ways in which the Emperor Hayle Sillasia was depicted in photographs from books published during his reign (by Hanna Rubinkowska-Anioł) and about the art of South Africa in the 20 years after the collapse of apartheid (by Aneta Pawłowska).

It is worth noting that in 2014 the Polish Institute of World Art Studies organised or co-organised four international conferences devoted to the art of Asia. The first two were associated with the 600th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Turkey in 1414: Bursa and Krakow: history and artistic culture of the Ottoman Empire and Kingdom of Poland in 15th–16th century (23–25 May in Bursa – with Uludağ University) and the 2nd Conference of Islamic Art: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – Ottoman Empire: art & architecture – religions – societies (15–17 September in Warsaw). The third – the 2nd conference on Indian art: Art and culture of India and Polish-Indian artistic relations – was organised to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and India in 1954 (October 9–10 in Torun – with the Nicolaus Copernicus University). The last – the 2nd Conference of Polish and Chinese Art Historians: China-Poland: Art and Cultural Heritage was held at the Tainan National University of the Arts and the National Cheng Kung University (Tainan December 5–6 – Republic of China – Taiwan). Some texts from this conference will be published in the subsequent edition of “Art of the Orient”. Volume IV of this publication in 2015 will contain articles from the Polish-Indian conference mentioned above.