

● The National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins commemorating Władysław Strzemiński in the series “Polish Painters of the Turn of 19th and 20th Centuries”, of the following face values:

2 zł – struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold, on 4 December 2009,

20 zł – struck in proof finish, in silver on 7 December 2009.

The National Bank of Poland

holds the exclusive right to issue the currency in the Republic of Poland.

In addition to **coins and notes for general circulation**, the NBP issues **collector coins and notes**.

Issuing collector items is an occasion to commemorate important historic figures and anniversaries, as well as to develop the interest of the public in Polish culture, science and tradition.

Since 1996, the NBP has also been issuing **occasional 2 złoty** coins, struck in **Nordic Gold**, for general circulation.

All coins and notes issued by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.

COINS ISSUED IN 2009 COINS ISSUED IN 2009



Since 2002, the NBP has been issuing the coin series of the „Polish Painters of the Turn of 19th and 20th Centuries”. The theme of „Władysław Strzemiński (1893–1952)” is the seventh in the series.

Information on the issue schedule and on how to purchase the coins can be found at the www.nbp.pl website

The coins were struck at the Mint of Poland in Warsaw.

Edited and printed: NBP Printing Office

NBP

National Bank of Poland

COINS



POLISH PAINTERS OF THE TURN OF 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

Władysław Strzemiński (1893-1952)

Polish Painters of the Turn of 19th and 20th Centuries: Władysław Strzemiński (1893-1952)

● Władysław Strzemiński (1893–1952) is ranked among leading avant-garde artists. Details of his biography make up an entirely extraordinary personality. After he had graduated from St. Petersburg's Military College of Engineering, he fought in World War I and eventually lost his left arm, right leg and suffered an eye injury. When in hospital, he met Katarzyna Kobro, his future wife and an outstanding sculptress, and under her influence he took an interest in art. However, he never completed any course in the visual arts, with the exception of a brief spell in a newly-opened school in Moscow, where he attended classes. In Moscow, he got to know representatives of the radical Russian avant-garde, with whom he was in touch in subsequent years and whose work he introduced to the Polish art community. In a short time, he proved himself to be an important artist and, as such, participated in several exhibitions. In 1921, Strzemiński and Kobro came to live in Poland and settled in Lodz ten years later after moving from one place to another.

● Although his life was totally pre-occupied with art, Strzemiński did not manage to sell a single painting. He earned his living mostly by teaching, the job he treated seriously and to which he was fully committed. He was an active member of several art groups. He produced paintings and drawings; designed architectural compositions, practised printmaking and graphic design. He developed typography of books of verse (among others of Julian Przyboś) and magazines. He also organised

a printing school and defined the tenets of "functional" printing; he even designed his own typeface. Strzemiński authored and co-authored (with his wife) articles and books on various issues of art, primarily on a theory of art. His efforts led to the creation of Poland's first and Europe's second public collection of modern – Polish and foreign – art, later donated to the Museum of Art in Lodz and exhibited there in 1931.

● It is hard to understand how such a seriously crippled person, who walked on crutches, managed to accomplish so many tasks. He even felt a kind of satisfaction, when he was climbing Mount Sniezka with his students or when they saw him hopping on a tram... In 1945, he was appointed a lecturer (later a professor) at the State Higher School of Visual Arts in Lodz. However, in 1950 he was stripped of his position with immediate effect for failing to respect the doctrine of Socialist Realism in his curriculum. At the same time, he was expelled from the Association of Polish Visual Artists. When Strzemiński was dying of tuberculosis in hospital, the order was taken to destroy his relief as it did not conform to the obligatory aesthetic standards. Not so long ago, only in 1932, when Strzemiński received a Lodz Municipal Arts Prize, the conservative community of painters demonstrated their opposition to "Bolshevism" in art.

● Other types of paradoxes were embedded in Strzemiński's Utopian theory of art and related artistic practice. According to Unism, which was

his most individual concept, a painting is just a flat quadrilateral defined by a frame, suggests no illusion, "expresses nothing" and its every square inch is equally important. The series of his paintings perfectly meets these demands. It is amazing that the winding line that meanders along some of these compositions turned out to be capable of giving a dramatic account of the distorted and shattered world of World War II. The tenets of objectivized art and of intellectually rigorous theory formulated by Strzemiński did not rule out participation of intuition. When trying to separate the painting from its author, Strzemiński was, however, aware of the biological mechanisms of life and their relationships with the artwork. In the last years of his life, Strzemiński created an exceptional series of compositions that registered visual sensations arising from gazing.

● Although he was consistent and honest, and at the same time obstinate and uncompromising, he was not an easy person to live with. At the same time he was able to show love to students and wickedness to his wife. The poignant account of the life of the two outstanding artists is given by their daughter, Nika Strzemińska, in her book under the telling title *Art, Love and Hate*.

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FACE VALUE **20** ZŁ

metal **Ag 925/1000** and red, yellow, green and blue paints
 ■ finish **proof** ■ length **40.00 mm** ■ width **28.0 mm**
 ■ weight **28.28 g** ■ mintage (volume) **100,000 pcs**

OBVERSE: On the left-hand side, a stylized image of Władysław Strzemiński's 1934 "Unistic Composition 13". At the bottom and on the right-hand side, an image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. Around the Eagle, an inscription, 20 ZŁ and after a separator dot, an inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland) and the notation of the year of issue, 2009. The Mint's mark, M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

REVERSE: Against Władysław Strzemiński's 1929 "The Composition of Space", on the left-hand side a stylized image of the profile of Władysław Strzemiński and on the right-hand side, a stylized image of a palette and three brushes. On the palette there are red, yellow, green and blue paints. Underneath, an inscription 1893–1952. At the top, an inscription, WŁADYŚŁAW STRZEMIŃSKI. At the bottom, an inscription, WŁADYŚŁAW STRZEMIŃSKI, written with characters designed by the artist.

Coin designer: **EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA**



FACE VALUE **2** ZŁ

metal **CuAl15Zn5Sn1 alloy** ■ finish **standard** ■ diameter **27.00 mm**
 ■ weight **8.15 g** ■ mintage (volume) **1,300,000 pcs**

OBVERSE: An image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland; on the left-hand side, a stylized image of a palette and two brushes. At the bottom, an inscription, 2 ZŁ, at the top, a semicircular inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland) and the notation of the year of issue, 2009. The Mint's mark, M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

REVERSE: On the left-hand side, a stylized image of the bust of Władysław Strzemiński. In the centre, a stylized image of a drawing by Władysław Strzemiński from the 1942 series "Faces". At the top, a semicircular inscription, WŁADYŚŁAW STRZEMIŃSKI/1893–1952.

ON THE EDGE: An inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated with stars.

Coin designer: **EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA**