

ZAPIS. Rajmund T. Hałas

2 June 2017 – 13 July 2017

Opening exhibition: 2 June at 18:00

Closing exhibition: 13 July at 19:00

Gallery: Design UAP

ul. Wodna 24

Poznań

Curator: Katarzyna Laskowska

Project support: Mateusz Słociński

Coordination: Julia Błaszczyńska

Collaboration: nowymodel.org

‘Throughout its process, designing is the art of making decisions. The more accurate they are, the more extensive the designer’s knowledge is and the more free thinking becomes.’

R.T. Hałas, ‘Poznan School of Furniture, a few reflections’

ZAPIS Rajmund T. Hałas is the first of a series of exhibitions aimed at presenting the achievements of designers from the Wielkopolska province associated with the University of the Arts in Poznań (UAP). The exhibition presents Professor Rajmund T. Hałas's creative and didactic output. He has made an important contribution to the development of his home institution, PWSSP (now UAP) and he also plays a significant role in the history of Polish design. He learned the first secrets of the art of carpentry in his hometown Krobia. At present, the local furniture factory houses the Museum of Carpentry and the Biskupizna Region, run by the Professor Rajmund Teofil Hałas Foundation of the Krobia Region. While studying in Poznań, Rajmund T. Hałas was a student of Professor Jerzy Staniszkis, Professor Jan Bogusławski, Professor Jan

Węćławski and Professor Jan Cieszyński. He educated generations of prominent designers, including his first assistant Jadwiga Filipiak, Tomasz Matuszewski, Sylwester Kluś, Jacek Patyk and Bogumiła Jung. Another generation of designers included Bogdan Cieślak, Tomasz Wojtkowiak, Dorota Koziara, Tomasz Augustyniak and Mikołaj Wierszyński. In 1971, Rajmund T. Hałas opened the Department of Industrial Form Design at the PWSSP, later transformed into the Department of Industrial Design. This was an important event in the history of the school.

The essence of Raymond T. Hałas's works is that they combine different areas of creative activity: design, didactics, art and the development of design as a discipline. The exhibition presents selected furniture designs from the 1950s and 1960s to show both mass-produced furniture – part of the 1329 type set, seat prototypes that were not put into production, and reissues of furniture available from 2013. From the second half of the 1950s, Rajmund T. Hałas worked for the furniture industry, designing 'New Furniture Designs' for the Main Furniture Development Centre in Poznań (Centralny Ośrodek Rozwoju Meblarstwa w Poznaniu – CORM), later transformed into OBROM. A great many of his projects were introduced by the United Furniture Industry in Poznań (Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Meblarskiego w Poznaniu) into its catalogues. After the presentation at the national fairs, the professor's projects were bought by manufacturers and put into mass production. Some furniture designs survived only in documentation, as models and prototypes. Others are now part of private collections. Based on these models and projects, company *newodel.org* has developed and manufactured three groups of furniture, such as the *Variable Height Bookstand* from 2013, the *Coffee and Cigarette Table* and the *IMUGO Stool*.

When summing up the decade between the 1950s and 1960s, Professor Zdzisław Kępiński states that '[f]urniture became an exponent of practical functions of the room, thus becoming part of architecture (...) on the basis of modern architectural integration'. He also notes that from that period on (1971), the term 'Poznań School of Furniture' has been widely used. Another name for this phenomenon, in which Rajmund T. Hałas plays a significant role, is 'Poznan School of Furniture'.¹

The exhibition shows the parallel areas of the professor's active work for the development of design as a

¹ Zdzisław Kępiński, 1919-1969, Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Sztuk Plastycznych w Poznaniu, 1971.

discipline. Rajmund T. Hałas was the founder of the KOŁO group, which included Czesław Kowalski, Leonard Kuczma and Janusz Róžański. In 1960, this group of designers initiated the development of the discipline of design and began to work on the organization of Furniture Triennial in Poznań. After less than twenty years (1978), the Organizing Committee for the First International Furniture Triennial was set up. At the International Poznań Fair in 1980, the First International Furniture Triennial was held. It was a platform for intercultural exchange for designers, technologists, producers and critics. Witold Gyurkovich was the manager of the First Furniture Triennial.

Carlo Bartoli, one of the members of the jury at the Furniture Triennial, wrote in 1980: 'Furniture and home appliances are full of meanings that are perceptible thanks to their form. They now represent the stories of the civilizations and techniques of the societies that created them, and the way they are used today shows the evolution of customs in our society. (...) The shape of objects is like the words of a spoken language: in order to speak you need to know how to combine words. Similarly, in order to design furniture, you need to know the rules governing the form, from the point of view of both expression and technique'.² Perhaps, the exhibition *ZAPIS Rajmund. T. Hałas* will be an impulse to continue the idea of the Furniture Triennial in Poznań?

² Carlo Bartoli, *The Furniture Triennial Catalogue*, 1980.