

**Mieczysław Janikowski** - one of the most prominent Polish abstractionists of the post-war period, whose work enjoyed international recognition, especially in the field of geometric abstraction - was born in 1912 in Zaleszczyki in Podolia. He spent his early youth in Olkusz. He studied at the Faculty of Law at the Jagiellonian University, resigned after a year and entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków (1934-1939). He studied painting under Władysław Jaroński, Kazimierz Sichulski and Stefan Filipkiewicz. As a second lieutenant in the 22nd Regiment of Uhlans of Podkarpacie, he took part in the September campaign, then made his way to Hungary, and from there, in 1940, to France, to the forming Polish Army. Evacuated to Great Britain, he was assigned to the General Stanisław Maczek's 1st Armoured Division, which was being formed. He took part in the liberation of France, Belgium and the Netherlands. After the war, he settled in Scotland, where he graduated from the College of Art in Edinburgh with a diploma and a year's scholarship to Paris in 1947. After a year's stay in London, he returned to Paris in 1952 and settled in Montparnasse, in the legendary "La Ruche" ("The Hive"), at 2, passage de Dantzig. i.e. with the avant-garde painter Stanisław Grabowski, a pupil of Ferdinand Léger. Before the war, this was the cradle of the avant-garde, with Chaïm Soutine, Marc Chagall or Fernand Léger living here. Beginning in the 1940s, Janikowski created geometric abstractions that became increasingly simplified over time, a greater synthesis of form and colour. His art became more balanced and calm, intellectual and refined, free from random emotions, intensity. It should be remembered that in addition to geometric abstraction, in which he achieved a significant international position, the artist practised figurative painting in parallel, creating landscapes, especially Provençal landscapes, still lifes, portraits, religious works and informel-type works with great success. Surprisingly, his favourite artist was Francisco de Zurbarán, a Spanish artist of the Baroque period, whose paintings he most eagerly viewed during his visits to the Louvre. Mieczysław Janikowski was interested in, among other things, the painting of matter, in which he was close to the work of the Polish painter Jadwiga Maziarska (he met her during his studies in Krakow and later maintained his acquaintance). In 1959, the Parisian "Kultura" awarded the painter its annual art prize. Mieczysław Janikowski came to Poland for the first time in 1962 and had only three solo exhibitions during his lifetime. He exhibited his paintings in Poland (e.g. at the Krzysztofory Gallery in Kraków, the Art Museum in Łódź, the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw) and abroad (e.g. at the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles in Paris, which presented abstract art, and at London's New Vision Center Gallery). His work was recalled with a monographic exhibition at the National Museum in Warsaw in 2004. He died in 1968 in Krakow.

The works shown are a gift of TP&E