

# In the Private Sphere: The Photographic Work of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz

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With the growth of interest in the art of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (known as Witkacy) (fig. 1) in the last decades of the twentieth century, researchers took note of the hitherto overlooked photographic activities that this versatile artist engaged in for his private use. As is clear from the first exhibitions and texts concerning Witkacy's photographs, researchers were struck by the originality of the images in relation to those being undertaken by other Polish photographers prior to World War I, as well as by the relationship between Witkacy's private photographs and his published theories concerning art, and the intriguing formal similarities the images shared with some of his other artistic production. Among Witkacy's photographic accomplishments, the formally innovative portraits that he produced in the years just prior to the outbreak of World War I are especially interesting, showing individual members of his family and his immediate social circle tightly framed and often in extreme close-up. Two of Witkacy's portraits at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, exemplify this technique, one of Helena Czerwijowska (fig. 2) and the other of Anna Oderfeld (fig. 3), the latter in the Thomas Walther Collection.<sup>1</sup> Taken around 1911–12 during the formative stages of the artist's career, when he was living with his mother in Zakopane, a well-known spa town situated in the foothills of the Tatra Mountains that was popular among the artistic and intellectual elite, these images are part of a larger body of photographic work that itself was a product of Witkacy's wide-ranging explorations as he developed the framework for his mature practice, which would include painting, writing, philosophy, and art theory.

To fully grasp the originality of Witkacy's photography, one has to compare his images to those of his contemporaries, who largely worked with reference to pictorial aesthetics during the first two decades of the twentieth century, an allegiance that would peak in the 1920s and 1930s, when Pictorialism came to completely dominate Polish photography. A movement born at the end of the nineteenth century that aimed, among other things, to legitimize photography as a fine art, Pictorialism postulated a relationship between photography and other artistic disciplines (particularly painting), which was made manifest through parallels in composition, choice of subject matter, and darkroom manipulation to render photographs visually akin to painting and graphic works. Polish landscape painting from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century was an especially popular reference for Polish photographers, who sought



fig. 1 Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Self-Portrait (Autoportret)*. 1912. Toned bromide print, 7 × 5" (17.9 × 12.9 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz

inspiration in realist, Impressionist, and even Symbolist landscapes. Yet beyond the desire to mimic painterly technique and elevate photography's status as an art, a trend common to photographers across Europe, the representation of the landscape also had patriotic implications specific to Polish photographers of the period, rendering possible the construction of the image of a nation that did not, in fact, exist on the political map of Europe, as Poland's historic territories were divided during this time among Austria, Germany, and Russia. The vast exhibition *The Polish Landscape*, organized in



**fig. 2** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Helena Czerwijowska*. c. 1912. Gelatin silver print, 6 7/8 × 4 7/8" (17.5 × 12.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Russell Lynes and Shirley C. Burden, by exchange



**fig. 3** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Anna Oderfeld, Zakopane*. 1911-12. Gelatin silver print, 1911-25, 6 11/16 × 4 3/4" (17 × 12.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Mrs. Willard Helburn, by exchange (MoMA 1911.2001)

the spring of 1912 in Warsaw, reflected this nationalist urge, and it included photography alongside works by outstanding painters, among them Witkacy's father, the senior Stanisław Witkiewicz. Photographic Pictorialism developed especially quickly and intensively in the Polish territories under Austro-Hungarian rule, the region where Witkacy lived. The first circle to move in this direction was the Klub Miłośników Sztuki Fotograficznej (Friends of Photographic Art Club) in Lwów, which in 1903 became the Lwowskie Towarzystwo Fotograficzne (Lwów Photographic Association), which had been influenced by the photographic Pictorialism that was displayed in the work of members of the Viennese Camera Club at an exhibition held in Lwów in 1900-01. Henryk Mikolasch, the erstwhile president of the association, and Józef Świątkowski both played notable roles in popularizing this tendency. The publication of the *Album Fotografów Polskich* (Album of Polish photographers) in 1905, edited by Mikolasch, was one result of their activities; another was the publication of photographic journals such as *Wiadomości Fotograficzne* (Photographic news; 1903-06) and *Miesięcznik Fotograficzny* (Photographic monthly; 1907-11).<sup>2</sup> A copy of Robert de la Sizeranne's seminal essay "Is Photography Art?"

was published in Lwów in 1907. The shaping of Polish Pictorialist photography was also influenced by the milieu in the former capital of the country, Warsaw (at that time under Russian jurisdiction), thanks to the publication there of the journal *Fotograf Warszawski* (The Warsaw photographer), which between 1910 and 1913 included a series of articles by the photographer Jan Bułhak (fig. 4) based on writings from the Paris Photo Club. Bułhak's star was rising fast (his work was prominently featured in *The Polish Landscape*), and his articles were undoubtedly key to the development of Polish photography, as they were the first to comprehensively introduce the French photographic aesthetic that would come to dominate the worldview of Polish photographers. Bułhak's work in *Fotograf Warszawski* positioned him as the unquestioned leader and greatest authority of Polish photography, and the Pictorialist aesthetic he championed remained the mainstay of Polish photographic practice until the eruption of World War II.

Witkacy's photography developed through an entirely different course. The young artist was persuaded to begin taking photographs in the 1890s by his father, a renowned Polish painter, art theorist, and the creator of the





**fig. 4** Jan Buthak. *The Ghost (Duch)*, also known by the title *Out of the Cloud (W obłoku)*. c. 1907. Toned bromide print,  $3\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{11}{16}$ " (9.5 × 22 cm). National Museum, Wrocław, Poland



**fig. 5** Stanisław Witkiewicz. *The Sea in Carrara (Morze w Carrarze)*. 1897. Toned bromide print,  $4\frac{5}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ " (11.8 × 16.6 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz

Zakopane architectural style, who also practiced photography (fig. 5), producing mostly landscapes of the Tatras that served to complement his activity as a painter.<sup>3</sup> In the 1880s and 1890s, the elder Witkiewicz co-produced the Warsaw journal *Wędrowiec* (The wanderer), which promoted realist art, esteeming above all the accordance of the work of art with nature, a position that challenged the dominance of history painting and sought to propagate art based on the direct observation of the natural world. Although the journal concerned itself primarily with painting and literature, photography was discussed in its pages as well, mostly as a novel and promising alternative to sketching. Witkiewicz himself, fascinated by the possibilities of photography, took advantage of photographs as a starting point for the drawings he published in *Wędrowiec*.<sup>4</sup> He issued a few theoretical statements about the medium and its potential, too, with the best known perhaps appearing in 1903 in the book *Dziwny człowiek* (The strange man): "When the camera is perfected

to the point that it just becomes a part of man's nervous system, photography will become merely another improvement, a faster acting pencil or paintbrush."<sup>5</sup> Thus, as Witkiewicz worked to awaken in his son a passion for painting, literature, and music, it is no surprise that he considered it essential to initiate him into the realm of photography as well, which was of a piece with the unorthodox education Witkacy received, based on lessons given by his parents and private tutors (often well-known intellectuals), with school attendance only to pass his exams each year. It was not until he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków in 1904 that he encountered the institutional educational system for the first time.<sup>6</sup> Hence, Witkacy's experience of photography was not acquired through contact with the world of professional artistic photography; rather, he was educated by his painter father, who engaged with the medium on the sidelines of his own artistic practice.<sup>7</sup> Photography was thus presented to Witkacy as a necessary utilitarian skill that every discerning



**fig. 6** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Stream in Zakopane (Potok zakopiański)*. c. 1902. Toned bromide print, 4 × 6 ½" (10.4 × 16.4 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz

artist should make use of, which is what he did, taking photographs as introductory sketches for his paintings (fig. 6), as is especially evident in his early landscapes. Witkacy never engaged with photography in a professional way, and although he accrued considerable technical skill and knowledge over time, he never invested himself deeply in photographic theory or technique. He participated in no photo exhibitions, and he was in touch with a scant few photographers, such as Tadeusz Langier, Józef Głogowski, and Marian Dederko.<sup>8</sup> The most important of these acquaintances was undoubtedly Langier, who taught Witkacy chromate-based techniques, such as the use of gum; the two also posed for one another's photographs.<sup>9</sup>

The years 1908 through 1914, during which Witkacy produced the majority of his photographic portraits, were critical for the artist. Dividing his time between Kraków and his native Zakopane, where he lived with his mother (who ran a guesthouse), Witkacy worked to establish himself as an artist and to lay the foundations for his mature practice, a process that was undoubtedly informed by several important events in his life. Among the most significant was the permanent move of his father, hitherto his primary mentor and instructor, to Lovran on the Adriatic coast in 1908, in an effort to cure lung disease with the warm climate.<sup>10</sup> Witkacy visited his father a number of times, but he traveled more extensively across Europe as well, dramatically broadening his artistic perspective. Spending a few months in Paris in 1908, he roamed the city's museums while also familiarizing himself with some of the most avant-garde painting of the day, including the work of Cézanne, Picasso, Gauguin, and the Fauves as well as the collection of Gertrude Stein, inspiring him to search for new directions for his art and to go beyond the principles of realism inculcated in him by his father.<sup>11</sup> As Piotr Piotrowski has stressed, "Linearism and the flatness

of the fin-de-siècle painting—an artistic formula that was to have a decisive influence on Witkacy's later work—served as an alternative to the naturalist method."<sup>12</sup> Back in Poland, Witkacy found inspiration in the work of Władysław Ślewiński, whom he had met in Kraków in 1906 and whose work was, in turn, influenced by Gauguin; under Ślewiński's tutelage, Witkacy would also develop an enduring fascination with the French Post-Impressionists.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence of his encounters with modern currents in art, Witkacy's own expressionist form of painting began to emerge around 1908, as linear pictures full of deformed figures with colors and tones that departed radically from naturalist schemas (fig. 7). These works, which the Witkiewicz family referred to as "the monsters," were an important stepping-stone on the path to the formation of his individual artistic language, which he would fully realize after World War I (fig. 8). It is significant that as Witkacy's art took a decisive turn away from the tradition of realist painting and many aspects of Polish art of the turn of the twentieth century, as reflected in the work of landscape painters such as Jan Stanisławski (whom Witkacy knew as a student in Kraków), and even ventured beyond the simplified



**fig. 7** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Fear of Oneself (Strach przed samym sobą)*. First half of 1914. Photograph of a drawing by the artist, 4 ¾ × 6 ½" (11.8 × 16.4 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz

**fig. 8** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Composition (Kompozycja)*. 1922. Oil and tempera on canvas, 3 ½ × 4 ½" (9.1 × 11.5 cm). Collection National Museum Kraków, MNK II-b-1566



forms of his mentor Ślewiński, he was also producing his tightly cropped photographic portraits. This, in effect, demonstrates the measure of his distance from the aspirations of many contemporary Polish photographers, for whom, on the contrary, the authority of the masters of Polish landscape painting from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century continued to grow, coinciding with the rising tide of interest in the theory and practice of Pictorialist photography. As Witkacy dealt with the unraveling and ultimate demise of his three-year relationship with the well-known actress Irena Solska, who was a decade his senior, he wrote his first novel in 1910–11, *622 upadki Bunga czyli Demoniczna kobieta* (622 downfalls of Bung, or The demonic woman).<sup>14</sup> This autobiographical book is not only a painful working through of his romance with Solska; it also includes extensive psychological portraits of his artistic circle (its members rendered anonymous through the use of pseudonyms). These characters engage in numerous discussions concerning the nature of human individuality, its meaning and its aims, and its relationship to art, ruminations that anticipate



fig. 9 Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Jadwiga Janczewska*. c. 1913. Bromide print, 6 7/8 × 5" (17.5 × 12.6 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz

Witkacy's later aesthetic contemplations of the interwar period.<sup>15</sup> By January 1913, Witkacy was engaged to Jadwiga Janczewska (fig. 9), but her suicide in February 1914 shook him deeply, prompting his friend Bronisław Malinowski to suggest a joint trip to Australia to help Witkacy recover his mental state. The two departed in June.

Out of Witkacy's experiences during these formative years would emerge his philosophy of art, which is the backdrop against which one has to situate his thinking about photography. Central to Witkacy's thought was the mystery of existence, specifically the simultaneously singular and multiple character of existence. As Piotrowski has written of the basis of Witkacy's philosophical system:

*The world is binary. It is based on the binaries of time and space, change and permanence, outside and inside, and finally it is singular and multiple. . . . The world can only be described in these sorts of dichotomies. . . . "Singularity in multiplicity" constitutes the essence of Being, which is perceived through "metaphysical feelings." These, Witkacy describes as the feeling of the subject of its identity, the singularity of existence in the context of the multiplicity of human beings. The subject feels his finitude and limitedness in the infiniteness and unlimitedness of Being. On the other hand, he feels a unity with the external world, with other Individual Beings.*<sup>16</sup>

How, then, to visualize, in a work, the mystery of existence? "Witkacy answers, formally," Piotrowski continues. "By form, and form alone, can the Mystery of Existence be conveyed. In a given 'metaphysical feeling' during the process of creation, works are produced whose construction is legitimated by a structure identical to that of Existence. This type of form, Witkacy calls 'Pure Form.'"<sup>17</sup> Insofar as the structure of the work of Pure Form relates to the construction of Being, it is "singularity in multiplicity" represented in visual terms.<sup>18</sup> Piotrowski concludes: "Only the autonomous painting, liberated of the task of describing reality, its appearance, can have the character of a symbol, can reach the 'core of reality,' the essence of Being."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, in Witkacy's view, the representation of reality inherent to photography meant the medium could not fulfill the prerequisites for a genuine work of art; these could be realized only according to the principles of Pure Form.

The impossibility of situating photography in the domain of art does not mean that it was not an important component of Witkacy's life and creative output. While his notions of the aesthetic limitations of the medium led to the artist only producing photographs for his private use, he was also undisturbed by any of the aesthetic conventions prevailing in the world of artistic or technical photography, which meant he was free to create his images in a completely individual way, based on experimentation, distancing himself from the need to make technically perfect pictures. What might be called an "aesthetic of error" characterized his private photography, itself reflective of his acceptance of

technical deficiencies in the domains of focus, lighting, and print development. That he employed a variety of photographic papers for his prints is but one example of how Witkacy appears to have been unconcerned with working toward a single technical standard for his photography, a sort of technical nonchalance upon which his father seems to comment in a letter after having received some photographs of his paintings from his son: “Just one more request: photograph in the sun and make the prints very carefully. A bad photograph makes a bad impression and is better not shown. All the photographic copies of the paintings produced so far have been poor.”<sup>20</sup>

Witkacy used photographic equipment he received from his father, which, having been altered, enabled him to produce almost macro-photographic close-ups of faces.<sup>21</sup> Some brief insight into the modification of the camera, which he shared in a letter to Helena Czerwijowska in August 1912, sheds some light on the technical dimension of the photographs: “For two weeks now, I have had that camera to which Helman added a lens with the help of a water tube. I have taken some wonderful photos and when I have printed them, I’ll send them.”<sup>22</sup>

Undoubtedly the most interesting of Witkacy’s extant photographs are the series of a dozen or so portraits he took between approximately 1911 and 1913, in which the tight cropping of a sort he had experimented with earlier in his landscape work serves to isolate the face from nearly all spatial context and to expose the psychological aspect of the person captured, as in the examples of Anna Oderfeld and Helena Czerwijowska.<sup>23</sup> It should be stressed, however, that this arresting series is not a fully coherent group from an aesthetic standpoint. Above all, differences are apparent in the approach to the face. In the most radical photographs, Witkacy relied on symmetry: the sitter’s face, filling almost the entire picture, was captured *en face*, positioned so that the nose becomes the central axis of the photograph. Notably, it is often the eyes, not the face, that dictate the width of the frame, with the result that the lower edge of the picture cuts off the face in the middle of the chin, excising nearly all evidence of spatial depth (fig. 10). Witkacy did not always keep rigidly to this compositional schema; in some of his photographs we see a departure from full symmetry or a parallel positioning of the sitter’s face to the camera lens. There are technical variations among Witkacy’s portraits as well, for the photographs have been printed on many different types of paper, lending certain prints a unique appearance. The main difference among the portraits, however, is inconsistency in focus. The series includes examples in which Witkacy registers the details of his subject’s face with near scientific clarity and others in which he deploys a homogeneous lack of focus across the whole surface of the picture. Unifying the images, on the other hand, is the photographer’s use of a single light source to illuminate the model, as described by Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz: “The positioning of the



fig. 10 Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). Arthur Rubinstein (Artur Rubinstein). 1913. Bromide print, 7 ¼ × 6 ¼" (16 × 12 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz

model in relation to the natural light falling mostly from the side, through the window, slipping across the face, illuminating the eyes, which, as a result, became the most active point of the photograph—this was to a great extent what the incredible effect of Witkacy’s photographic portraits hinged on.”<sup>24</sup>

Despite Witkacy’s relative lack of pretensions toward professional photography, his portraits were not snapshots. He produced many studies of the same person, often shown from various angles and at various distances. Czerwijowska was a favorite subject, and her portraits were the product of long sittings (figs. 11–13). Referring to the portraits being produced at that time in Witkacy’s studio, Świętosław Lenartowicz has written: “The photographic portrait, like the drawn portrait, was often a frequently repeated attempt to recognize various aspects of the model’s face and psyche. . . . Insofar as it is difficult to discern a concrete method of approaching the subject in [Witkacy’s] drawings and paintings of this period, [the artist] developed such methods in his photographs. The most frequently deployed of these,

intended to analyze the face of the model with minimum means, was a system of three shots: profile, *en face*, and with the famous tight cropping, capturing the face from temple to temple.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting that Lenartowicz indicates that the tight cropping, defamiliarizing the face of the person being photographed, did not appear in Witkacy's painting until the 1920s.<sup>26</sup> This was when Witkacy was frequently to repeat photographic tricks, such as tight framing and enlarged eyes, in his painted portraits.

In an effort to define Witkacy's theoretical model of portraiture, Urszula Czartoryska has written:

*Portrait photography, dating from 1905, fulfills a dual function for Witkiewicz: as a model of interpersonal relations (the observed and the observer, in which he discerned an especially interesting situation in photographs where he was both one and the other) and as a model for defining man, along with an a priori sense of the limitations of the credibility of any such definition. At the heart of Witkacy's ontological system was the question, "Who am I?," and the question of the nature of the relationship between Individual Existence as a whole and its two determining components, the dualism of spirituality and corporeality. There followed from this Witkacy's conscious avoidance of artistry and his interest in philosophical and psychological questions, such as the question of the inevitable chasm between human beings and the existential inexpressibility of experience.<sup>27</sup>*

Witkacy's intensified interest in the psychological photographic portrait coincides with the period in which he was undergoing psychoanalytic therapy. At the beginning of 1912, the artist submitted to the psychoanalysis sessions being conducted at that time in Zakopane by Karol de Beaurain.<sup>28</sup> It cannot be ruled out that Witkacy's knowledge of Freud's theories influenced his portraits as well. Adopting Freud's argument that the way in which a person functions in society is regulated by imposed social norms that require him to enact the roles defined for him and thus adopt various masks, Witkacy's portraits pose the questions: "What can the face—the eyes—tell us about man's inner being, what does a certain intentionally and occasionally adopted mask tell us about the face, and what, in turn, does the two-dimensional equivalent of the mask, the portrait, tell us about the mask?"<sup>29</sup> Indeed, nearly all those who have researched Witkacy's photographic activity have remarked on the significance of the sitters' eyes in the artist's portraits, including Franczak and Okołowicz: "When taking photographs, Witkacy paid particular attention to the eyes, which, as the 'mirrors of the soul' reflected the highest truth about the 'individual being' being portrayed. This is why they are always especially illuminated with natural light, visible, wide open, shining. They enable one to look into the depths of the sitter's personality. One sometimes senses in them the terror aroused by 'the sense of the mystery and horror of



**fig. 11** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Helena Czerwijowska*. c. 1912. Toned bromide print, 7 × 4 7/8" (17.9 × 12.4 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz



**fig. 12** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Helena Czerwijowska*. c. 1912. Toned bromide print, 7 × 5" (17.7 × 12.8 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz



**fig. 13** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Helena. I Photo (Helena Czerwijowska) (Helena. Ja photo. [Helena Czerwijowska])*. c. 1912. Toned bromide print, 7 × 5 1/8" (18 × 13 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz





**fig. 14** Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy). *Maria Zarotyńska with her Alcoforado Portrait (Maria Zarotyńska ze swoim portretem w typie Alcoforado)*. 1938. Bromide print, 3 9/16 x 2 3/8" (8,5 x 6 cm). Collection of Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz

existence."<sup>30</sup> In this way, Witkacy's most arresting portraits can be seen as an attempt to reveal the real "I" of their sitter, to glimpse the true identity that lay behind the social mask. Trying to pierce the veil concealing the human psyche, he deployed tight cropping, which not only served to emphasize the eyes, but also to eliminate all elements that might evoke in the viewer predefined ideas regarding the social position of the given model, such as clothing or the natural domestic background.<sup>31</sup>

How, then, are we to understand Witkacy's photographs and their place in his artistic practice? Nearly two decades after he produced many of the portraits discussed here, the artist was no closer to admitting photography into the realm of fine art, continuing to maintain that the medium's fidelity to natural representation precluded its elevation, even as he accorded it a degree of legitimacy, as his well-known statement from 1931 suggests:

*And so, in my view, producing a psychologically naturalistic portrait is no more of a crime than taking photographs, provided, of course, that one does not try to convince the public that this is Art with a capital A. . . . It is a crime to produce abject naturalist botch-jobs for which there is no real need, while at the same time convincing the public that pure form in painting (which has a history of thousands of years, with the exception of the brief period of naturalism, which was initially noble in its intentions) is just a hoax invented by people unable to draw.<sup>32</sup>*

Photography performed two main functions in Witkacy's life: a useful tool in the artistic process, serving mainly for the documentation of his artistic activities (fig. 14), and a way to create images as personal mementos.<sup>33</sup> Although photography was unable to fulfill the demands of pure art according to the criteria adopted by Witkacy, it remained an important tool for him to explore the depths of the human psyche, a process that no doubt informed his other artistic activity as well. Whether today, a century after these portraits were made, Witkacy might relax his view is, of course, a matter of fantastic speculation; what remains, however, are images that continue to captivate and intrigue.

*Translated from the Polish by Klara Kemp-Welch*



NOTES

1. Helena Czerwijowska was one of Witkacy's most frequently portrayed subjects. Czerwijowska came from Podole in southeast Poland and began studying in Kraków in 1908, where she met Witkacy through her friend Eugenia, the wife of the painter Władysław Borkowski. In the spring of 1909, she encountered Witkacy again in the Adriatic coastal town of Lovran, where she was staying with her friend Barbara Wołk, who was the half-sister of the well-known poet Kazimiera Hłakowiczówna; Witkacy was visiting his father, who had permanently relocated to Lovran for health reasons. Witkacy and Czerwijowska struck up a close friendship at that point, as is testified by their lively correspondence from the years 1910 to 1913. Although Czerwijowska appears to have developed deeper feelings for Witkacy, which she expressed in her diary, their relationship seems to have remained platonic, albeit intense and familiar. Witkacy not only confided to her in his correspondence his experiences and psychic states, he also recounted his artistic dilemmas. He portrayed her as well in his first novel, *622 upadki Bunga czyli Demoniczna kobieta* (622 downfalls of Bung, or The demonic woman), in which she is cast as the demon Angelika, exerting a perverse influence on the work of the title character (the artist's alter-ego), Bung. See Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Listy do syna*, ed. Bożena Danek-Wojnowska and Anna Micińska (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969), p. 753. Anna Oderfeld was the youngest of four daughters of the well-known Warsaw lawyer and art patron Adam Oderfeld, whose home at the turn of the century (and in particular during the 1890s) was one of the more important meeting places for Warsaw's intellectual and artistic elite. Witkacy met Anna at the end of 1911 and intended to marry her. His decision was particularly surprising given that his turbulent romance with the actress Irena Solska had only just ended, a circumstance that may explain the brief duration of Witkacy's fascination with Anna and why the planned marriage never took place. See *ibid.*, p. 789; and B. Danek-Wojnowska, "Listy Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza do Heleny Czerwijowskiej," *Twórczość*, no. 9 (1971): 53.
2. Comprehensive information concerning the activities of the Lwów photographers can be found in Aleksander Żakowicz, ed., *Dawna fotografia lwowska 1839–1939* (Lwów, Ukraine: Wydawnictwo "Centrum Europy," 2004).
3. Witkiewicz conceived the Zakopane style of architecture as a fusion between the traditional folk architecture of the region and elements of contemporary design.
4. Krystyna Lejko, *Fotografia w obiektywie Konrada Brandla* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985), pp. 55–58.
5. Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Dziwny człowiek* (Lwów: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze, 1903), p. 60. The titular subject of the book was Józef Siedlecki, a collector and art lover from Kraków.
6. Irena Jakimowicz, *Witkacy malarz* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe "Auriga," 1987), p. 17.
7. In addition to producing his own photographs, Witkacy's father also amassed a large archive of excellent prints, mainly nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century photographs. See *Witkacy i inni, z kolekcji Stefana Okołowicza i Ewy Franczak*, exh. cat. (Warsaw: Fundacja Profile and Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, 2011), p. 18.
8. Tadeusz Langier became popular during World War I when he made a series of photographs of the Polish armies.
9. Langier and Witkacy were very close at the time when Witkacy made his portraits of Czerwijowska and Oderfeld. Witkacy was no doubt also influenced by the fact that his older colleague was producing self-portraits and psychological portraits in interior settings with natural lighting. Today, however, given the almost total dispersal and destruction of Langier's collections, it is difficult to ascertain whether his photographs directly influenced Witkacy's work. Nevertheless, we know that Witkacy valued Langier a great deal, and he even left all his negatives to him in his will of 1914 (with the exception of those negatives representing his tragically deceased fiancé).
10. Witkacy maintained a lively correspondence with his father, but unfortunately he destroyed his own letters; only those written by his father survive.
11. Piotr Piotrowski, *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz* (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1989), p. 7.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
13. Jakimowicz, *Witkacy malarz*, p. 17.
14. The book remained unpublished until after Witkacy's death.
15. Anna Micińska has noted that the book contains a more or less complete outline of Witkacy's aesthetic theories, which he would formalize almost a decade later in *New Forms in Painting and Aesthetic Sketches*. See Micińska, "Wstęp," in Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *622 upadki Bunga czyli Demoniczna kobieta* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), p. 42.
16. Piotrowski, *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, p. 18.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
20. Stanisław Witkiewicz, letter to Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, December 10, 1912, quoted in Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Listy do syna*, p. 571.
21. In July 1912, Stanisław Witkiewicz wrote to his son: "As to the camera—I offer it to you 'with a warm hand'—rather than leaving it to you in my will. Use it as you wish, only be careful not to ruin the excellent lens. I know that its mechanism is cumbersome and Steinheil claims that he can change it—for a surcharge of 45 marks. I would have done so, only I did not have the money, in my times." Stanisław Witkiewicz, letter to Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, July 21, 1912, quoted in Witkiewicz, *Listy do syna*, p. 553.
22. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, letter to Helena Czerwijowska, August 28, 1912, quoted in B. Danek-Wojnowska, "Listy Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza do Heleny Czerwijowskiej," p. 29.
23. In a series of seascapes that Witkacy took as early as autumn 1904, for example, he eliminated the lines of the shore and the horizon to focus on the dynamic movement of the waves, creating pictures that border on abstraction.
24. Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz, *Przeciw nicości. Fotografie Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1986), p. 15.

25. Świętosław Lenartowicz, "Wpływ fotografii Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza na jego twórczość plastyczną," in A. Żakiewicz, ed., *Witkacy* (Słupsk, Poland: Muzeum Pomorza Środkowego, 2000), p. 198.
26. Ibid., pp. 198–99.
27. Urszula Czartoryska, "Laboratorium 'psychologii nieeuklidesowej' czyli o fotografiach Witkacego," in Leszek Brogowski, ed., *Fotografia—Mowa Ludzka. Perspektywy historyczne* (Gdańsk, Poland: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2006), p. 33.
28. Anna Micińska, *Istnienie poszczególne: Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz* (Wrocław, Poland: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 2003), p. 67.
29. Czartoryska, "Laboratorium 'psychologii nieeuklidesowej' czyli o fotografiach Witkacego," p. 34.
30. Franczak and Okołowicz, *Przeciw nicości. Fotografie Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza*, p. 17.
31. Czartoryska, "Laboratorium 'psychologii nieeuklidesowej' czyli o fotografiach Witkacego," p. 35.
32. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "Bez kompromisu," *Polska Zbrojna* (1931), quoted in Anna Jambroziakowa, "Kobieca podmiotowość w symbolicznym porządku (na podstawie wybranych fotografii S. I. Witkiewicza)," in Józef Tarnowski, ed., *Powroty do Witkacego* (Słupsk, Poland: Muzeum Pomorza Środkowego, 2006), p. 82.
33. Ewa Hornowska, "S. I. Witkiewicz wobec fotografii," *Artium Quaestiones*, vol. 4 (1990): 51.

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