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Polish modernism in Milan. IWP (IID)_Design Repository_2.0

The IWP (IID)_Design Repository_2.0 is a project initiated by the Institute of Industrial Design that presents a reinterpretation of the Institute's celebrated reference collection – a body of work developed during the first decades of the Institute's existence. Created specifically for Milan Design Week 2026, it is part of the Visteria Foundation's exhibition Polish Modernism. A Struggle for Beauty, and remains rooted in a shared commitment to the legacy of modernism.

Founded and set in motion by Wanda Telakowska in 1950, the Institute of Industrial Design was, from its very inception, an instrument of modernising and industrialising post-war Poland: a place where research, design, and industry converged to build implementation expertise and forge common standards. Over the decades, an archive took shape – one that was never a collection of “iconic objects” in the conventional sense, but rather a living memory of processes: material decisions, functional tests, models of use, and relationship with technology. It is precisely this continuity – rare by European standards – that constitutes the Institute's enduring strength.

At the heart of IWP (IID)_Design Repository_2.0 are new objects created by contemporary designers who reinterpret the classics of Polish design. Working directly with the Institute's archival materials, Agnieszka Stefańska, Maria Jeglińska-Adamczewska, Katarzyna Kempa, Daniel Kraszewski, Paweł Jasiewicz, and Jan Garncarek have each developed new prototypes and research objects. These reinterpretations focus on specific typologies – from a compact sofa-bed, through a Polish furniture system descended from the iconic wall unit, to a new, cantilever iteration of the Płucka chair – while keeping each object firmly within the context of a systemic narrative, and simultaneously drawing on contemporary ideas of hybrid living and micro-spaces. The designers are not merely recreating existing forms; they are testing methods and reconstructing ways of thinking about use, durability, scalability, and the relationship between form and function.

This thinking extends naturally into the realm of manufacturing, where the relationships between designers and manufacturing partners become key. The selection of production partners for IWP (IID)_Design Repository_2.0 was deliberate and carefully considered. We invited manufacturers who not only guarantee excellent craftsmanship, but who – above all – understand the ethos of the IWP (IID)_Design Repository_2.0 and are open to a collective model of working and to the idea of creating value together through genuine dialogue.

What can you see at the Institute of Industrial Design's section?

(tutaj będą wymienione projekty ale to mamy już przetłumaczone)

Co zobaczymy w sekcji Instytutu Wzornictwa Przemysłowego?

IWP_Wzorcownia_FURN_U_60.26_01_A.S./D.K.

Meblościanka

Project conceived: 1960

Realised: 2026

Original concept and design of the modular furniture system: Agnieszka Stefańska

Design of the modular system and moving mechanisms: Daniel Kraszewski

Produced by: Forner, Ango, Noti, Krosno, themost.pl / Tkalnia Olejnik

The project is a reinterpretation of the iconic wall unit (*meblościanka*), adapted to the realities of contemporary lifestyles and technologies. The all-in-one modular system integrates the functions of sleep, relaxation, work, and physical exercise, responding to the demands of micro and hybrid living. Created as part of the Institute of Industrial Design's *IWP (IID)_Design Repository_2.0*, it transforms the historical heritage of Polish design into an intelligent solution for the contemporary compact home.

IWP_Wzorcownia_FURN/FD_SE/RE/SL_60.26_01_A.S./D.K.

Siedzisko/leżysko

Project conceived: 1960

Realised: 2026

Original concept and design: Agnieszka Stefańska

Design of the modular system and moving mechanisms: Daniel Kraszewski

Produced by: Noti, Ango, themost.pl / Tkalnia Olejnik

An integral part of the wall unit and, at the same time, a standalone, movable piece of furniture, this multifunctional seating/reclining module can serve as a seat, a chaise longue, or a bed.

As it can be stored within the wall-unit structure, it remains a concealed yet fully accessible component of the system. The modules can be combined into larger configurations – from a freestanding sofa to a double bed.

IWP_Wzorcownia_LTG_26.26_01_J.G./A.S.

Oświetlenie

Project conceived: 1960

Realised: 2026

Design: Jan Garncarek and Agnieszka Stefańska

Prototype: Jan Garncarek, Krosno Glassworks

The lighting system consists of light modules that “click in”, allowing for quick and intuitive shaping of light within an interior. Each module contains a replaceable LED component charged via USB-C, and a glass lampshade available in various colours and finishes.

The lamps can function as standalone table lights, but can also be integrated into the wall unit’s shelving system or mounted on a dedicated light column, creating subtle, luminous spatial divisions. Dedicated wall and ceiling brackets are also available, offering complete freedom in shaping the atmosphere of a room according to individual needs.

Each shade is hand-blown at the Krosno glassworks. Within it, the light source is concealed and further enclosed in a brass casting. The gently rippled surface of the glass softly diffuses the light, producing a warm, ambient glow.

IWP_Wzorcownia_FURN_SE/RE/SL_55.26_01_K.K.

Amerykanka

Project conceived: 1955

Realised: 2026

Design: Katarzyna Kempa

Produced by: Noti, themost.pl / Tkalnia Olejnik

The Polka Dot design is a contemporary reinterpretation of the convertible sofa bed (*amerykanka*) from 1955, conceived with multifunctionality and small spaces in mind. Thanks to its movable elements and adjustable backrest, the piece adapts to the rhythm of daily life, serving as a seat, daybed, or bed. The design includes a historical accent: a textile by Danuta Paprowicz-Michno, designed in the 1950s at Warsaw’s Institute of Industrial Design.

IWP_Wzorcownia_FURN_TBL_58.26_01_M.J-A.

Stół_DANUTA

Project conceived: 1958

Realised: 2026

Designer: Maria Jeglińska-Adamczewska

Produced by: Ango

A graphic interpretation of a textile by Danuta Paprowicz-Michno, designed at the Institute of Industrial Design in the 1950s. The characteristic dot and triangle motifs have been transformed into a minimalist metal base made of tubes and steel cutouts. The colourful glass tabletop echoes the textile’s neon palette, achieving a new form with minimal use of material.

IWP_Wzorcownia_FURN_CHR_56.26_01_P.J.

Krzesło_Lippu

Project conceived: 1956

Realised: 2026

Designer: Paweł Jasiewicz

Produced by: Paweł Jasiewicz

A contemporary interpretation of the *Płucka* (Lungs) chair designed in 1956 by Maria Chomentowska at Warsaw's Institute of Industrial Design. The original, with its cold-bent plywood mounted on a box frame with turned, tapered legs, became one of the symbols of the post-war thaw: an emblem of organic form, material experimentation, and structural flexibility.

Krzesło_Lippu abandons organic plywood in favour of raw geometry, focusing on the essence of the construction – the springiness that arises from its structure. The flexible frame redistributes tension and adapts to the user's body, while the economical use of material emphasises function rather than decoration.

IWP_Wzorcownia_FAB_57.26_A_01_D.P.M./A.S.

Tkanina

Project conceived: 1957

Realised: 2026

Designer: Agnieszka Stefańska

Produced by: Iza Sojka - themost.pl / Tkalnia Olejnik

This series of textiles is a contemporary reinterpretation of patterns developed at the Institute of Industrial Design in the 1950s. The starting point was a design by Danuta Paprowicz-Michno, created as part of research into machine-printed textiles. In engaging with the heritage of Polish design, Agnieszka Stefańska reworks the historical motif using contemporary tools, lending it a new texture and palette.

IWP_Wzorcownia_FAB_51.26_A_01_D.D./A.S.

Tkanina

Project conceived: 1951

Realised: 2026

Designer: Agnieszka Stefańska

Produced by: Iza Sojka - themost.pl / Tkalnia Olejnik

This textile series reinterprets patterns developed at the Institute of Industrial Design in the 1950s. The starting point was a design by Danuta Dybowska, drawing on folk traditions, particularly the paper-cut art of the Opoczno region. In her reinterpretation, Agnieszka Stefańska emphasises geometricized plant forms, creating a rhythmic composition built on repetition of motifs.

CREDITS:

The exhibition „Polski modernizm. Walka o piękno" presents Polish modernism as a unique phenomenon—shaped by history, yet simultaneously relevant today. The juxtaposition of historical and contemporary objects demonstrates the continuity of design thinking and its lasting impact on today's design culture."

20-26 April 2026
Torre Velasca, Milan

Following its presentation in Milan, the exhibition will be shown in September 2026 at the Visteria Foundation headquarters in Warsaw.

Polish modernism. A struggle for beauty

Anexhibition presented by Visteria Foundation @visteria.foundation
Curators: Federica Sala @lafedesss & Anna Maga @ann.amaga
Exhibition Design: Zofia Wyganowska Studio @zofiawyganowskastudio
Exhibition Graphic Design: Stefania Kolanowska @stefkolanowska
20–26 April 2026
Opening hours: 11:00–19:00
Torre Velasca, Piazza Velasca 3/5, 16. floor, Milan

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