

# ANDRZEJ TARANEK

**Andrzej Taranek** (born November 22, 1953) is a Polish graphic artist, painter, and illustrator. His work focuses on printmaking, drawing, and book illustration, often exploring the changing landscape and cultural heritage of Gdańsk.

## Early life and education

Andrzej Taranek was born in Gdańsk to Mieczysław Taranek (1908–1987) and Irena Taranek, née Chrapka (1913–2004). From 1976 to 1982, he studied at the Faculty of Painting and Graphic Arts at the State College of Fine Arts (now the **Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk**), earning his diploma in the studio of Professor Witold Janowski. In 2015, he received his Ph.D. from the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk with a dissertation titled *The Landscape of Gdańsk as a Cultural Heritage Amid Ongoing Transformations* (Polish: *Krajobraz Gdańska jako dziedzictwo kulturowe wobec zachodzących przemian*).

## Career

From 1985 to 1987, Taranek taught at the State High School of Fine Arts in Gdynia-Orłowo. Following a period from 1991 to 1994 spent in the Caribbean, he became a regular collaborator with the **Gdańsk University Press** in the mid-1990s. He has also created designs for other publishers, including Ossolineum. His work includes posters, book illustrations, and graphic designs. He has been a scholarship recipient of the **Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage** twice, in 2008 and 2014.

## Artistic work

Taranek's creative output spans graphic arts, drawing, and painting. His work is characterized by recurring themes of his native Gdańsk, through which he explores universal concepts of memory and transience. He maintains a project he calls a "drawn journal," a collection of several hundred works that document important historical and often overlooked elements of the Gdańsk landscape that are in the process of disappearing.

He has designed several notable medals, including those for the **Gdańsk University of Technology** (2004, 2007), a medal commemorating Roman Kaliszan, the rector of the **Gdańsk Medical University** (2020), and a medal and pin for the 100th anniversary of the **Gdańsk Scientific Society** (2022).

## Exhibitions

Taranek has held numerous solo exhibitions, including at the International Amber Fair (2002), the State Art Gallery in Sopot (2004), Uphagen House in Gdańsk (2011), and the Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk (2019). He has also participated in group exhibitions, such as *Personalities* at Blik Gallery in Gdańsk (2012).

## Awards and honors

Taranek has received recognition for his artistic contributions, including:

- Awards at the Józef Gielniak All-Polish Graphic Competition (1983, 1989).
- A special award at the International Veterinary Ex Libris Competition (1996).
- The **Gdańsk Society of Friends of Art (GTPS)** Award for Gdańsk Print of the Year (1983, 1990, 1995) and the GTPS Artistic Award for 2011.
- Honors in the Polish Society of Book Publishers' competition for the Most Beautiful Book of the Year (1997, 1998, 1999).
- The 100th Anniversary Medal from the Society of Friends of Science and Art in Gdańsk, the Gdańsk Scientific Society, and the Gdańsk Society of Friends of Art (2022).

## Collections

His works are included in the collections of the **National Museum in Gdańsk**, the **National Library in Warsaw**, the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław, and the **Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences**. His art is also found in private collections across Poland, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Finland, the USA, Lithuania, and the West Indies.

## Publications

Taranek has published both artistic and scholarly works, including:

- *Cztery widoki góry Fuji widziane ze Stoczni Gdańskiej* (Four Views of Mount Fuji from the Gdańsk Shipyard), short stories, 2012.
- *Pamięci dzieła Jana Heweliusza Firmamentum Sobiescianum sive Uranographia Exlibrys Papieża Jana Pawła II* (In Memory of Jan Heweliusz's Work Firmamentum Sobiescianum sive Uranographia Exlibrys Pope John Paul II), article, 1987.
- *Collected Crumbs, Graphics and Drawing* (in: *Studia Germanica Gedanensia*, vol. 25, 2011)

## Recognition

In 1995, the **Gdańsk Television Center** featured Taranek in a series on local artists. A documentary on Gdańsk, its history, and its artists, produced for the German television channel **ZDF** in 1997, also featured his participation. His work has been reviewed by critics and writers, including **Kazimierz Nowosielski** and **Paweł Huelle**.

## Personal life

Andrzej Taranek was married to Elżbieta Łoś (1951–2015), a proofreader at Ossolineum. They had three children, including his son Jędrzej Taranek (born 1984), an actor and a graduate of the Academy of Theatre Arts in Kraków. Jędrzej is a co-founder of the EKIPA Theatre Association and is known for his role as Jędrzej Paruzel in the Polish television series *Ojciec Mateusz*.