

WARSZAWA W BUDOWIE
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**CITY
OF ARTISTS**

WARSZAWA

W

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TEXTS

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**WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION.
6TH CITY DESIGN FESTIVAL:
THE CITY OF ARTISTS**

In the past, WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION festival dealt with architecture and its designers, advertising in the public space, and participation processes. And now, the time came for artists.

Warsaw of the year 2014 is a centre of the Polish artistic life, being the seat for the most important Polish cultural institutions, commercial galleries and cultural periodicals. Every month, Warsaw witnesses dozens of new exhibitions, book presentations, performances, discussions and film shows. As a result of symbolic installations in the city public space (such as Greetings from Aleje Jerozolimskie by Joanna Rajkowska or The Rainbow by Julita Wójcik), Warsaw art is commented on the front-pages of the biggest papers, and is well-known to the city inhabitants. Through their lifestyles, also artists themselves set trends that, after a while, become popular in the society as a whole or in some of its sections. Thus, artists and their art play an important role in emancipatory processes.

WUC has always been a festival depicting the city. This year, we will look at the city from the perspective of visual artists whose role in shaping Warsaw is still underrated, though it is them who often have been the initiators of the new city lifestyles that make the capital so attractive today.

Today, artists discuss the problem of their inclusion in the general social security system. People who have for many years been creative in the field of culture cannot retire for economic reasons, and have to look for other employments to secure for themselves/ health and retirement insurance. In the era of common economic uncertainty, artists again open a discussion that can soon become pertinent also for other social groups if they find themselves in a similar situation.

Uncritical participation of some artists in the free-market processes is a disturbing phenomenon. Though Warsaw has not yet become a city where gentrification significantly impairs the conditions of life for excluded groups, there is little doubt that this will happen in the near future. The role of artists in the processes is often ambiguous and should be watched and critically evaluated.

The local government in Warsaw, having huge real-estate stock at its disposal, fails to initiate any programs of cheap studios for artists. Artists are left alone. How do they manage in the existing reality? What are their attitudes? Are they aware of their rights? Does Warsaw need a new social contract between artists and the local authorities? What is the role of artists in shaping the public space? Can their activities become an inspiration for the inhabitants of Warsaw? These are the questions that we will try to answer during this year's festival.

The main events of the WUC6 will be exhibitions organised in five localisations: the Institute of Avant-Garde, the Jabłkowski Brothers Emporium, studios at Inżynirska Street, the studio of Jan Styczyński and the Museum of Modern Art at Pańska Street.

As in the previous editions of the festival, the past will be our point of departure. WUC6 will tell the story of today's artistic life, looking for its roots in the beginnings of public exhibitions and in the origins of the artistic education system, and surveying their influence on the

life of the city.

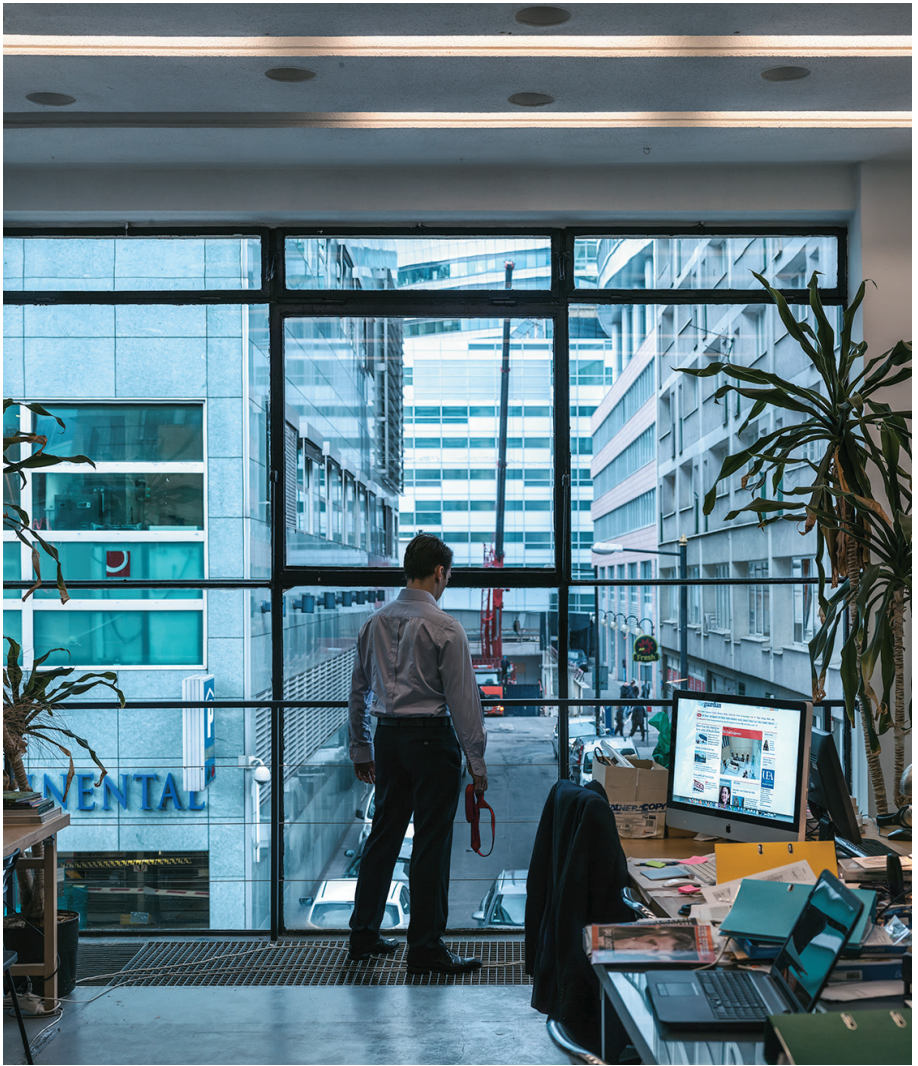
ABOUT THE FESTIVAL:

The festival **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** deals with the transformations of public and private spaces in the capital. The event has its tradition and loyal public. The festival was initiated in 2009 under the city's bid for the title of the European Cultural Capital 2016. The idea of the event has evolved from a simple presentation of the contemporary art design in a broad sense (pattern-designing, graphics, architecture) to a participatory research and education project focused on designing in the context of modern city problems. The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw is the organiser of the event, and from 2013 the Museum of Warsaw (formerly the Historical Museum of the capital city of Warsaw) is our partner.



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MAIN EVENTS OF THE FESTIVAL

WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION not only includes five exhibitions, but also several dozen accompanying events. Sessions, debates, walks, meetings with artists, curators, art theoreticians, officials and activists. Some of these meetings deserve particular attention.

We would like to invite everyone interested in the current situation of art ateliers in Warsaw to a debate held on 15 October at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. The meeting hosts not only representatives of the art circles, but also officials from the Municipal Property Management Authority, the Office of Culture and the Centre for Social Communication. A representative of Łódź municipality will discuss experiences from Łódź's perspective. A report, included in this folder, drawn up by Marta Żakowska shall serve as a point of departure. The aim of the discussion and study hosted by **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** is to work out recommendations for the present and future authorities.

During a session programmed by Sebastian Cichocki on 17 October, Maria Poprzęcka, Ewa Majewska, Ewa Tatar and Stanisław Ruksza will be talking about Warsaw and, more precisely, about artistic realizations in the public space. After a boom such art projects observed in the first decade of the XXI century, hardly any new works of public art have emerged in recent years. Sculptures and installations have been replaced by initiatives aimed at responsible use of the public space, publications that arrange the knowledge on grassroots designing and modernist architectural heritage as well as series of debates and conferences. **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** festival is also an example of such change of focus – from an object to a situation.

New themes will be added to domestic discussions on the artist's presence in the city by guests invited by Kuba Szreder – an independent curator and a co-founder of the Free University of Warsaw. On 5 November Stephan Dilleuth will talk about bohemia and self-organization. As early as in the 1980s and 1990s Dilleuth took an active part in artists' grassroots movements. Their aim was to fashion and use the living and creative spaces alternative to the academic, artistic and social mainstream. In Berlin the artists occupied vacant buildings, bankrupt factories or art academy buildings in order to create ateliers, habitats, workshops and exhibition spaces. In this context Dilleuth worked out the concept of bohemian research, that is, "bohemia as a method of creating knowledge.

CITY-MAKERS

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA

mentation. The festival events, organised in cooperation with many researchers, activists and non-governmental organisations, enabled us to look from a new perspective on the architectural legacy of the socialist modernism. The festival also highlighted the grave problems related to housing, social participation, or the intrusive presence of large-format advertising in the city space. It also initiated a chain-reaction leading to a more active role of inhabitants-citizens in consciously shaping and maintaining their city environment.

This year, we will focus on art and artists, and their involvement in changing and experiencing the space of the present day metropolis. Public art comes as a natural association in this context - but it will be only one of many themes of the festival.

There are several reasons for this "return to art" during a festival dedicated to city designing in a broad sense, performed in and for the city, an event organised by an institution popularising the modern art. Most importantly, we would like to help art and artists reclaim their proper place, to empower them and to support their striving for being more visible. Among public institutions, the Museum of Modern Art has been a pioneer in the field of research on modern city. Short, but turbulent history of the institution has been closely connected with the problems of the city. This year edition of the festival **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** is intended to show how close are the links between artists and the city. For a long time, we have witnessed gradual development and consolidation of the local artistic scene in Warsaw.

In the wake of the World War II, when discussion on reconstruction of art institutions was under way, Warsaw was rivalled by Cracow in the role of

The sixth edition of the festival **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** comes in the year of the 25th anniversary of the Polish democracy when both achievements of the newly democratic state and opportunities missed in the process of transformation are widely discussed. The discussion can well be focused locally on Warsaw, for the capital can - in a smaller scale - serve as a mirror of the whole Polish transformation. It is a city with magnetic power, attracting people from all over the country, a city of dreams coming true and disappointed ambitions, of utopian modernisation projects and life full of everyday worries.

In the past five years, the **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** festival served as a platform to exchange observations and proposals concerning the present and the future of the capital, helping to evaluate and reevaluate various historical phenomena, as well as to propose new solutions for imple-

the "Polish capital of art". The first Exhibition of Modern Art after the war was organised in 1948 in Cracow, but the next two exhibitions - in 1957 and 1959 - already took place in Warsaw, after the famous Polish artists' manifestation against the socialist realism in Arsenal in 1955. Soon, Warsaw became the site of the centralised artistic institutions of the communist Polish state, such as the Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions or the Association of Polish Visual Artists, having their branch offices in provincial cultural centres. Today, despite some very interesting local initiatives in other cities, Warsaw indisputably dominates on the artistic map of Poland. On the one hand, Warsaw attracts and absorbs artists and other "art workers" from other smaller centres, as witnessed by the process of moving to Warsaw of many galleries and artists from Poznań (Starter, Stereo, Galeria Pies – renamed as Galeria Dawid Radziszewski) or Cracow (Tomasz Kowalski, Janek Simon). But more importantly, Warsaw has the most developed infrastructure of art institutions and art life (the Academy of Fine Arts, museums, galleries, art critics, national media, art collectors, potential sponsors, and finally - the best communication with the international art world). It seems that art and its contemplation (as well as consumption) became important for the inhabitants of Warsaw, as witnessed by popular art fairs such as Warsaw Gallery Weekend, Salon Zimowy, Art Yard Sale, and longer and longer queues to modern art exhibitions. Thus, during the festival we will look at the capital that aspires to become "the second Berlin" - a vibrant city of free and creative people, present in the urban public space. Could that be only provincial aspirations of an un-self-assured "poor cousin" of the Western Europe, or self-fulfilling prophecies, becoming the

more real, the more they are reiterated?

Secondly, the 2014 edition of the festival is intended as a voice in the nationwide debate on the existing economic and social conditions for artistic activity. The initiatives from the Civic Modern Art Forum to renegotiate the working conditions and enhance the social status of visual artists were a direct inspiration for us to focus on the role of art and artists in the city. The artistic strike organised by CMAF in May 2012 not only showed that the problem of support and social security for artists is ignored, but also highlighted how weak the group is in terms of their social impact, in spite of their deep engagement in and influence on social change and the life of the city, and in spite of the clear success of the "Agreement on minimum wages for artists" signed with several important modern art institutions in Poland.

We are also interested in multidimensional diffusion of art and everyday life on different levels of experience - the intrinsic "citygenic" aspects of artistic activities, both on the material and the symbolic level. They include both positive and negative effects of physical presence and activity of artists in a given space. It should be noted that not all effects of artistic interventions are positive - they can also lead to gentrification processes in districts inhabited by the so-called creative class.

To present a comprehensive history of the Warsaw artistic scene is not our objective. This mission is successfully realised by the section of Modern Art Documentation in the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, meticulously gathering materials on the Polish artistic life in multi-volume publications. We would rather highlight some important themes in the artistic life of the capital, presenting

their peculiarities and problems, and describing them using up-to-date notions and methodological approaches. Thus, we pay particular attention to the issues of education (both academic education and alternative self-education models), grassroot initiatives and informal artistic life manifestations (social contacts, Bohemianism, counter-cultural underground), material and non-material traces of artistic activity (studios, art in the urban space, city legends shaping the identity of places), and above all to the role of art and artists in citygenic processes, the part played by them in urban revolutions, their contribution to the symbolic and economic capital of urban space. We would like to find an answer to the question of how the artistic life can become an emancipatory impulse for inhabitants of the city, an encouragement to transform the city in line with their own needs, to become "city-makers" themselves. We will also focus on the conditions of everyday artistic activity, problems of art in the public space, and spaces created and maintained by artists.

Thus, the 2014 edition of the festival has no single main exhibition that would sum up the history of the Warsaw artistic scene, and instead offers smaller presentations, intended to convey the atmosphere connected with the living urban legends.

ARTISTS: PRECARIAT OF THE CREATIVE CLASS?

The periodical „Dwutygodnik” writes: "In recent years, Polish artists have made a collective coming out as precarians. The artistic strike of 2012 showed that artists were subject to the same exploitation processes as people employed on junk contracts or forced to become self-employed"¹. The collective frustration is manifested through exhibitions organised all over

the country, such as the international exhibition *Economy in art* in MocaK in Cracow (ironically, financed by the National Bank of Poland), *Artistic profession* in Galeria Wschodnia in Łódź (curator: Marcin Polak), or the exhibitions organised by Stanisław Ruksza *Workers of the art world unite* in Kronika in Bytom and *The face of the day: social costs in Poland after 1989* in Nowa Huta. The last exhibition, according to its curator, encouraged "to look at the Polish artistic life of the time and the context of economic conditions and social relations not only in terms of a *cold war between art and society or applied social sciences*, but also seeing it as a medium used by a social group, forming a part of the conscious society that experiences democracy through criticising their own institutions".

The issues of precarianism (the sense of uncertainty, temporariness, instability and insecurity resulting from the type of employment), poverty or lack of social security for creative people are undertaken by artists not only in their works of art, but also in their activity under CMAF or the Committee for Art Workers of the National Trade Union Inicjatywa Pracownicza. But, as noted by Łukasz Izert and Kuba Maria Mazurkiewicz, initiators of the experimental Laboratory of Mental Structures at the Department of Cultural Management of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, "not only artists cooperating with galleries are in difficult social situation. Many young people working in media, music, advertising, film, architecture or craftwork find themselves in a similar situation"². Authors of *The guide for students from students of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts* (available at: <http://przewodnikasp.uratujewas.pl/przewodnikasp.pdf>) ask why the artists that went on strike in 2012 protested separately from other groups,

fortifying themselves in art institutions. The answer seems trivial: these are the institutions that confer visibility to artists, being a kind of "embassies", and their workers are "advocates" of different artistic groups, speaking "in the name of artists". But in fact, closing down art institutions on the usual "free Thursday" could seem insufficient in view of the gravity of the problem. "There is such thing as a substitution strike", says to me during an interview an artist, Artur Żmijewski. It is a situation where one group of workers goes on strike in the name of other group, that is less used to traditional forms of protest.

Artists respond to the difficult situation trying to organise themselves and to take their matters into their own hands. Creation of CMAF and joining Inicjatywa Pracownicza trade union by many artists resulted from the need to speak openly and with common voice on their problems. Till the 1980s, the Association of Polish Visual Artists had played the role of such "representation" of the interests of visual artists. The powerful, bureaucratic organisation, still existing in residual form, had premises suitable for studios at its disposal, offered social benefits or basic painting tools for artists. At the time, to buy paints in a specialised shop you had to be a member of the organisation - so young painters from outside the Association often had to prepare them themselves. After the martial law was introduced in 1981, the Association was delegalized, then tried to transform into the Solidarity of Artists, and finally, after the transformation of 1989 lost most of its credibility.

Today, artists seem to be more and more aware of their rights and abilities. They are supported by valuable initiatives, supplementing the traditional model of academic education. Programs such as "Project graduate" led by

Marta Czyż and publications such as Practical guide for artists (ed. Agnieszka Pindera, 2012) offer useful information for artists on methods of financing artistic activity, scholarship and residency programs, intellectual property rights - thus supplementing their artistic education with the knowledge on practical aspects of professional creative activity. On the other hand, "Readings for art workers" organised by the Free University of Warsaw help to introduce theoretical frameworks and alternative models for social and economic conditions of work for artists, curators, coordinators, apprentices and other workers of culture. A session of FUW on "division of work and related social and economic capital distribution in the field of visual arts in today Poland" will be held at the same time as our festival. One of the organisers of the event is Jakub Szreder, responsible for the program of sessions and meetings with eminent theorists during the **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** festival.

The discourse of the so-called creative class and creative city is another topic at which we will take a close look during the festival. The notions, introduced by a specialist in city marketing, Richard Florida, become as stunningly popular as the notion of precariat. A creative class member is described as highly mobile and flexible in his or her activities, and being in need of permanent stimulation. As Ewa Rewers puts it, "People searching for new forms of creativity want to live and work with similar persons, in a flexible and dense space of symbiotic links stimulating their imagination, leading to unexpected meeting, exploding with happenings"³. The creative class produces cultural capital that attracts economic capital. Politicians and developers know about it, and compete on the international market of "crea-

tive metropolises"⁴. The policy stimulating the post-industrial concept of economy based on knowledge can lead, on the one hand, to the so-called Bilbao effect, but on the other also to uncontrolled gentrification processes and social exclusion, visible in particular in former working class districts such as Praga or Wola.

In both cases, visual artists only belong to a broader community, becoming representatives of newly-defined working class of the 21st century. Perhaps, talking about them we fail to cover all the issues concerning members of other creative groups, but we believe that we touch the essence of the problem.

CITY-CREATIVITY

„Every activity performed in the city space violates the status quo. (...) Every gesture, sound, moving object, body violates the urban context, preventing it from settling down in an urban form. Motionless city is one of the most futuristic images”, Ewa Rewers notes⁵. She concludes that everything that we say about city has performative nature - i.e. every action, the very presence in the city, is an influence transforming the city. According to the researcher from Poznań, city can be described as a collective, social work of art. The metaphor seems especially true in Warsaw - the city so often described as a palimpsest composed of contrasting layers of historical, social, economic and artistic meanings, a chaotic city of democracy shaken by internal conflicts.

The role of visual artists in creating space is seen by us in two ways. On the one hand, we analyse the impact of their work on the local contexts (participative activities and public art, e.g. the project of "Oxygenator" at Grzybowski square by Joanna Rajkowska, that accelerated the process of revitalisation of the neglected area). But

on the other hand, we are interested in the "private"/informal side of the artistic life, concerning the transforming effects to the city of the very presence of artists. In this connection, we focus on the physical workplace of artists (artistic studio perceived both as a topos and a myth, the "source" of art and the place for informal, or even counter-cultural meetings, and as a workplace that is so scarce in today Warsaw as a result of housing policy of the city authorities), and on the role of the so-called Bohemia as a social and artistic circle, and the public image of artists, intentionally created by themselves and present in the collective imagination.

PUBLIC ART

One of the sessions of this year edition of **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** festival is dedicated to the problems of public art, also because in 2014, the Museum of Modern Art took under its patronage the work of art by Joanna Rajkowska "The Greetings from Aleje Jerozolimskie", or the popular Palm tree. Since under the new local land management plan for the area of Charles de Gaulle circus in Warsaw, the 12-years old artwork by Rajkowska was not recognised as a sculpture or monument, there was a need to discuss anew the function of artistic realisations in the urban tissue. Why promoting the city (and other private and public institutions) through art must mean that the art itself is seen instrumentally, as a decoration of buildings and squares, or as a kind of "urban furniture"? Why allocating parts of budgets within new investments for cultural activities must lead to erecting traditional sculptures, or perhaps should it take the form of long-term projects geared for interdisciplinary cooperation? To what extent may the artist (or his or her employer), interfering with the city tissue, exert

symbolic violence towards the "rest of the society" - violence resulting from both imposing some taste/visual language⁶ defined by his or her class background, and from the message/meaning of the work of art itself, often open to (mis)interpretation, as can be seen in the case of the "Rainbow" by Julita Wójcik, being an object of acts of vandalism? These are no doubt only some of the questions that will be raised during the planned discussion on the public art.

STUDIO

The theme of artistic studios, usually associated with the so-called free professions, is important to us for many reasons. Above all, in spite of the era of post-studio postulated since the 1960s and connected with the conceptual turn in art, having creative studio still remains a decisive factor for pursuing artistic activity, being also a kind of privilege, a sign of the status of the artist. Since the 19th century, artists could use various spaces under both institutional (the state, artistic schools, then the Association of Polish Visual Artists), and private (painters' studios in Europejski Hotel owned by an aristocratic family) sponsorship. During the communist era, premises for creative activity were built under the new socialist housing policy - they were at the disposal of the Association of Polish Visual Artists and were granted as studios to chosen artists. Besides, if an artist found a space suitable for a studio (usually basement or attic), he or she could register it in the APVA pool and apply for it to be granted to him or her. But then, the space had to be adapted for an artistic studio at the artist's expense, and sometimes premises found by one artist were granted to someone else. Unfortunately, the effects of the policies of the communist era can be experienced till now. The

recurrent problem is the fact that studios are officially treated as business premises - as a result, studios cannot be simultaneously used as living spaces and are subject to unfavourable regulations as to the rates of rent applied by city's Real-Estate Management Units.

During the festival, the theme of creative studios will return many times. Together with the chief editor of the magazine "Miasta", Marta Żakowska, the representative of the Team for Warsaw Historical Art Studios and the Society for Protection of Historical Monuments, Michał Krasucki, and the artist, Laura Pawela, from the Civic Forum for Modern Art, we have prepared a report on the demand for studios among Warsaw artists. We hope that our questionnaire surveys, interviews and research will result in drafting a resolution on premises for studios that will be transmitted to the City Council. That would be a real success, especially in the context of the discussions on how the city's Real-Estate Management Units administer the housing stocks at their disposal - there is plenty of empty flats or apartments, as well as buildings for refurbishment or changing their functions (such as office buildings waiting for demolition or closed schools) that could be temporarily rented for cultural and artistic activity.

The space of a studio, a place where new works of art are created, can also be the space of their first confrontation with the audience. A studio itself can become a medium - an intentional artistic creation, a kind of artist's microcosm, a blend of art and life. Inspired by this recently popular idea, and remembering events such as the festival Open Flat and meetings with artists, organised by the artist Karolina Breguła during the event Pracownie, or interesting publications in popular media, from the 1960s series "My hobby is my flat" by Felicja Uniechowska in

the magazine „Ty i Ja” to the present time blogs FreundeVonFreunden.com, wheretheycreate.com and domykultura.com, we decided to organise three out of five main exhibitions in the former artistic studios connected with eminent Warsaw artists.

The present premises of the Institute of Avant-Garde, being formerly a studio-apartment of Henryk Stażewski, Maria Ewa Łunkiewicz-Rogoyska and Edward Krasiński, will again become THE PLACE, in the meaning of the manifesto of the founders of Galeria Foksal, Wiesław Borowski, Hanna (Anka) Ptaszewska and Mariusz Tchorek, and the 1973 text of Henri Lefebvre, unpublished till 2014, as "a space that is created by bracketing, suspending all rules valid in the world". The figure of Henryk Stażewski will be recalled by people who had had direct contacts with him. Their stories will be illustrated by photographs and objects, giving only shimmering, fragmentary picture of the crucial figure for the history of avant-garde. We realise how incomplete is the presentation, in particular in view of the 120th anniversary of the date of birth of the co-founder of one of the first modern art museums in Europe. For Stażewski, „daily present” (an expression of Milada Śliżyńska), played an exceptional, animating role, shaping notions of the whole group of artists, critics and theorists who today are authority figures for the next generation.

An interesting discovery made in the former studio of the photographer, Jan Styczyński - a mural painted by Marian Bogusz in the style of informalism, his only mural painting from the period of the Thaw - forms a point of departure for a double-track narrative on merging art and life during our second exhibition. It was created spontaneously during a social meeting in the studio and requires urgent conserva-

tion. The exhibition will also feature remarkable collection of works of art that tell the story of friendships between artists: compositions on ceramic plates made by leading Polish modern artists were their gifts for Jan Styczyński, who in return used to give them colour reproductions of their works. The aim of this "confrontation" (as read the title of one of the exhibitions organised in the 1960s by Marian Bogusz) is to show the interweaving of social life and everyday artistic practice. The plates as ironic *tondi*, round paintings, tell us anecdotes of the time, but just under their surface the real debates can be discovered, crucial for critics and artists influenced by the ideas of modernism. The obvious point of reference is a set of ceramic plates by Pablo Picasso, given by the artist to the Warsaw National Museum in 1948 - that undoubtedly influenced the subsequent fashion for "pikasy" in the Polish design of the period of the Thaw.

Self-organising is the third presentation made in a studio space. In the artistic studios of Katarzyna Górna, Katarzyna Kozyra i Bruno Althamer in the Warsaw Praga district we let the artists speak for themselves and recapture the counter-cultural atmosphere of artistic events that had taken place in private flats and studios of the 1980s and 1990s. The exhibition is about co-operation among artists and their natural need to unite in order to organise joint exhibition, open a gallery, manage an open artistic studio, or collectively and critically cope with some important social problem. The historical part will take place, among others, in Pracownia Działań i Dokumentacji, Galeria Piwna, an will include exhibitions in artistic studios at Inżynierska and Białostocka streets.

But as usual, the heart of the festival beats in the temporary premises of the Museum of Modern Art at Pańska 3

Street. Here, next door to the serious debates taking place in Emilia auditorium, a mysterious world of artistic parties and dressing-up can be discovered. The exhibition *Nightlife Archives* shows the artistic nightlife and its visual side. Photos taken at balls or in clubs are rather marginalised by the "official" history of art - but they are valuable documents showing diffusion of different artistic scenes and attitudes, and interactions between different artistic groups, such as creative cooperation between visual artists, musicians and filmmakers.

Finally, the role of photography in documenting artistic life, as well as in our exhibitions, should be emphasised. Old photos taken by artists connected with avant-garde circles, Zbigniew Dłubak, Irena Jarosińska, Eustachy Kossakowski or Tadeusz Rolke, remain important testimonials - in particular, when accompanied by the stories told by the participants and witnesses of the events. Reflection on photography also shows how technological developments make art more and more democratic: thirty years ago, colour prints were still rare, and today, in the times of smart phones and Instagram, virtually everyone can become an artist.

We hope that participants of the festival events will be inspired, excited, sensitised, pleased, and encouraged to make revaluations. Artistic life can stimulate the city inhabitants to transform their environment and make it more adapted to their needs. In our opinion, art opens the way to emancipate the "new city dwellers" - Warsaw citizens of choice who use the city, familiarize it in their own way, and are free of closed capsules of cars, shopping centres and guarded housing complexes. They spend their time in cafes, ride pushbikes, organise cooperatives and neighbourhood associations, they initiate revitalisation pro-

jects of neglected areas and actively take part in city designing processes - e.g. through proposals for the participative budget. This year edition of **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION** festival will show that the capital is and can be the city of artists - people who take initiative and create alternative, more friendly reality.

1 Karol Sienkiewicz, *Witajcie w życiu*, <http://www.dwutygodnik.com/artukul/5280-witajcie-w-zyciu.html>, dostęp: 18.06.2014.

2 Łukasz Izert, Kuba Maria Mazurkiewicz, *Życiowy zawód*, „Szum” 2013, nr 2, s.75.

3 *Sztuka: kapitał kulturowy polskich miast*, red. E. Rewers, A. Skórzyńska, Poznań 2010, s. 7.

4 Por. publikacja *Creative People – Creative Living in Poland. Guide to Warsaw's Creative Sector* wydana przez M.St. Warszawę w 2010 r.

5 Ewa Rewers, *Miasto-twórczość. Wykłady krakowskie*, Kraków 2010, s. 32.

6 Por. felieton Marii Poprzęckiej *Sztuka wszędzie*, <http://www.dwutygodnik.com/artukul/4647-na-oko-sztuka-wszedzie.html>, dostęp: 22.06.2014.

7 Wiesław Borowski, Hanna Ptaszkowska, Mariusz Tchorek, *Wprowadzenie do ogólnej teorii MIEJSCA*, Puławy 1966 (<http://www digitizing-ideas.hr/pl/wpis/20541/2> dostęp: 25.06.2014); H. Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, wstęp Łukasz Stanek, <http://artforum.com/in-print/issue=201404&id=45759&pagenum=1> dostęp: 25.06.2014.

















**EXHIBITION: ACCIDENTS
AT WORK**

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA

Sometimes works of art emerge spontaneously, on the spur of the moment. That is the case of the mural created by Marian Bogusz in 1958, during one of the friendly get-togethers in the studio of the photographer Jan Styczyński in the Warsaw's district of Żoliborz. The mural constitutes a starting point for the double narration describing the intertwinement of art and life, the tension between what is private and intimate, and what is public and official; what is accidental, created on an impulse, and what is consistent and all-encompassing. That metaphorical reunion of characters with extremely different life stories and attitudes is knitted together with the thread of creative cooperation.

In 1958 Marian Bogusz was one of the key actors on the Warsaw art scene. Two years earlier he had opened the *Krzywe Koło Gallery* in the *Old Town Community Centre* (Staremijski

Dom Kultury), which in various periods was known under various names, even as the Gallery of Modern Art, yet always referring to “Krzywe Koło” or the community centre. The exhibition space of the club comprising the intellectual elite of the Polish October living in Warsaw constituted one of the most important venues on the cultural map of the capital. It united the art community in the city and exhibited the works of the most important contemporary Polish artists, from Magdalena Abakanowicz and Włodzimierz Borowski, to Henryk Stażewski and Alina Szapocznikow, to Jerzy Tchórzewski and Barbara Zbrożyna. Art shows were accompanied by poetry readings and concerts of experimental music from composers nowadays considered to be classics: Włodzimierz Kotoński, Krzysztof Penderecki, Kazimierz Serocki. The formula and activities of the club and the *Krzywe Koło Gallery* resembled the Young Artists' and Scientists' Club established in 1947, in which Bogusz was a member of the painters' division, alongside Zbigniew Dłubak, Stanisław Fijałkowski and the deans of the pre-war avant-garde: Henryk Stażewski, Maria-Ewa Łunkiewicz-Rogoyska, Władysław Strzemiński and Marek Włodarski. In both cases the avant-garde model for integrating artists from different fields was based on the Polish Arts Club active in the years 1916-1931 in the Polonia Hotel in Warsaw.

At that point Jan Styczyński had already published his first titles, translated into foreign languages and therefore considered to be “export goods”, and had had his first solo exhibition in Kordegarda (1957). For a year he has been enjoying his new studio and a townhouse apartment in the Żoliborz district, allotted to him by the housing cooperative. He was working there until 1961, when he moved with his entire

family to the Mokotów district. The studio in Żoliborz is where – with his wife's help – he was taking animal portraits and occasionally advertising photos. Earlier, in the period dominated by the social realism, like Marian Bogusz he had found employment in the exhibition business: he developed scripts for exhibitions of the Spolem cooperative reactivated after the war. As an ex-Home Army soldier he had to find shelter far from the main stream of events. Genre photography, outwardly neutral in terms of ideology, seemed to be the perfect solution.

Unlike Styczyński, who preferred to work quietly, Bogusz was an artist to the bone – his main field was painting, but he also created scenography, exhibition and interior arrangements, graphic design, and later on sculptures and spatial forms in the public space. At the same time he was one of the most active postwar animators of the Polish art scene, who strengthened the avant-garde community, provoking theoretical debates, founding new initiatives and artistic events. After the forced closure of the Krzywe Koło Gallery in 1965, Bogusz took upon himself to organise efforts aiming at bringing art and everyday life closer together, opening the space beyond the gallery and becoming open to a direct relationship with the environment. Between 1965 and 1978 he contributed to organising open air painting sessions, symposiums and a spatial forms biennale. He was striving to promote art and aesthetical education. In order to directly shape tastes and develop artistic sensibilities of the general public, he organised, among others, so-called artistic Mondays – exhibitions and talks in workplaces, workers' hostels and community centres in remote places. But, of course, these activities would not have been possible without the cooperation of other artists and

communities. Most remarkable names among his collaborators include Emanuel Munios with whom Bogusz was developing the concept of "the city of artists" while they were being held in a concentration camp; Zbigniew Dłubak and the remaining members of the Group 55; Jerzy Fedorowicz with whom he worked on the organisation of the open air sessions in Osieki (from 1963); Gerard Kwiatkowski, the co-organiser of the Biennale of Spatial Forms in Elbląg (from 1965) and Jerzy Olkiewicz, the co-author of the idea for a route from the National Museum to the Zegrze Reservoir.

Bogusz and Styczyński were usually meeting in informal settings, as they became acquainted during frequent gatherings in Styczyński's studio, where strong liquor was not uncommon. It is also where they met Jan Lebenstein, working from an adjacent studio. In such casual circumstances, in 1958, two artistic events took place: the creation of the mural by Bogusz and the birth of a painted ceramics collection. Without the proper presentation of the broader context of their realisation, these facts could be considered mere anecdotes. But in both cases we can refer to the modernist awe for the functional art, or the willingness to entwine visual arts with architecture and everyday life, which are all very particular phenomena for the period of the Polish thaw. In the West we can see the same tendency displayed in Le Corbusier's fabrics or Picasso's ceramics. The latter, during his stay in Poland in 1948 on the occasion of the World Congress of Intellectuals in Defence of Peace in Wrocław, presented to the National Museum in Warsaw a collection of 32 ceramic plates of his own making.

After several years of the predominance of social realism (1949-1953/4), which constitute a break in the "natu-

ral” development of art, artists readily took up ceramics (dubbed *pikasy*, after Picasso and his plates), thus building in the late 1950s a new, more liberated aesthetics of modernity. Their gaze still fixed on Paris, they drank in and implanted on home ground their own, processed version of Picasso’s linearism with its classicist tendencies, *informel* painting and surrealism. Bogusz became infected with the Picasso and Leger virus as well. In the initial design for the decoration of Manekin cafe walls in the basement of the Old Town community centre, where Krzywe Koło Gallery was situated, Bogusz and Kajetan Sosnowski made imitations of French compositions only to paint over them and transform them later on in the process of mad painting improvisation. The mural in Styczyński’s atelier was created in the same year as the Manekin decoration and it constitutes a typical example of Bogusz’s painting from this period, inspired by art *informel*.

Years later, Styczyński admitted that he had been inspired by Picasso’s plates in the National Museum. But according to his daughter Anna Sfarti, who participated in the spontaneous painting of the mural, when the first of Styczyński’s plates was being painted by Jan Lebenstein, the artists debated the possibility of painting a round picture, as opposed to the traditional, rectangular shape. After all, Styczyński was interested in the picture as such, not in creating a popular decorative item. This story echoes modernist debates on the nature of the painting. It brings to mind Clement Greenberg’s postulate concerning abstract expressionism (which is an American version of art *informel*) about the painting as an autonomous, paint-covered surface, limited by a rectangular frame.

According to the artist’s daughter, plates decorated by famous artists were

not so much a gift, as a barter item. Styczyński received them in return for colour reproductions of his works created for all kinds of publications.

Plates were created spontaneously and rather irregularly from the beginning of the 1950s. In the early 70s Styczyński began preparing another type of “export goods” – a photo album devoted to the work of outstanding artists. The book entitled *The Artist and His Work* was published in 1976 in Polish and in the following years also in English and German. It featured portraits and colour reproductions of works by painters, sculptors, architects, composers, musicians, as well as film and theatre directors. While working with the artists, Styczyński expanded his collection of plates, this time in a systematic fashion. At first, random items, like decorative bowls from Cepelia, served as canvas for the artwork. Later on, after compiling a list of artists he wanted to involve in the project (which was supposedly consulted with Ryszard Stanisławski, director of the Museum of Art in Łódź) Styczyński purchased a number of even *bisque* pieces – unglazed pottery – which he gave out to artists, asking them to paint a composition. This unique collection, comprising several dozen pieces created by outstanding artists spanning many generations (Henryk Stażewski, Tadeusz Kantor, Jerzy Nowosielski, Zbigniew Gostomski, Ryszard Winiarski, Teresa Pągowska, Tadeusz Kulisiewicz, Jan Dobkowski and Marian Bogusz), was exhibited only once before, in 1978, in the Kordegarda Gallery.

Artists: Marian Bogusz, Jan Styczyński

Authors of images: Zbigniew Dłubak, Irena Jarosińska, Erich Lessing, Zbyszko Siemaszko, Bartosz Stawiarski, Andrzej Żórawski

Authors of plates: Stefan Gierowski, Tadeusz Kantor, Alfons Karny, Jan Lebenstein, Jerzy Nowosielski, Teresa Pągowska, Henryk Stażewski, Jonasz Stern, Jerzy Tchórzewski

Venue: Dawna pracownia Jana Styczyńskiego, ul. Krasieńskiego 10/151, Warszawa









EXHIBITION: PRESENT
EVERY DAY

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA

[Towards the architecture of enjoyment], discovered by the philosopher and architecture researcher Łukasz Stanek, the French thinker calls for releasing the architect's imagination through enclosing political and economic conditions in brackets, so as not to let them push architects to the margin of social division of labour again. As explained by Stanek, by "enclosing the brackets" Lefebvre meant a "suspension by mind" and a temporary neutralization of forces that subdue architecture. It is only possible by demanding relative autonomy of discipline to release imagination and reclaim architecture as a practice where a fundamental transformation of everyday life is at stake.

In the context of previous, symbolic understanding of creating a PLACE and being familiar with Borowski, Ptazkowska and Tchorek's manifesto, Lefebvre's utterance can be comprehended in a broader sense, not limited exclusively to architecture as a production of material buildings. Space is transformed every time we use it, which Lefebvre attested on another occasion, writing about a "social production of space."

"A PLACE is an area that comes into being when we enclose all the world's laws in brackets and suspend them. (...) A PLACE is isolated, but at the same time, it must manifest itself. Its existence is not a subjective issue exclusively, and thus cannot be induced by means of purely private endeavours. A PLACE, as an artistic fact, needs to make its mark outside, needs to objectify itself in the world, while simultaneously A PLACE exists inasmuch as it manages to save itself from the world's pressures and avoids to equate itself with what remains outside" – stated the creators of the Foksal Gallery – Wiesław Borowski, Hanna (Anka) Ptazkowska and Mariusz Tchorek – in a manifesto published in 1966. This quotation finds an astounding parallel in texts penned by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in the wake of the May 1968 revolution. In a 1973 manuscript entitled *"Vers une architecture de la jouissance"*

Henryk Stażewski was a person who would incredibly transform each space he occupied into a fully meaningful PLACE. Memories of people he was particularly dear to allow us to draw a specific topography marked by his presence, consisting of his atelier where he also lived (shared until 1967 with the painter Maria Ewa Łunkiewicz-Rogoyska and her husband Jan, at first at 11A Piękna Street and since 1967 on the last floor of a block of flats in Świerczewskiego Street - now called aleja Solidarności), the Foksal Gallery's office and the SARP café. These were the spaces that delineated his "natural habitat" in which, as expressed by Milada Śliżińska, "he was present every

day“ as part of his ritualised daily rhythm that constituted an important reference point to all those who wanted to visit him. He started work at dawn, at noon sharp he appeared at the café. At evenings, robed in a dressing gown, he would host guests in his apartment-atelier. Long-time friends used to drop by almost every day, whereas foreign visitors have remembered these visits ever since. Stażewski's circle of friends, who would gather around him, both at the SARP café and at home, included among others: his pre-war friends like general Teodor Naumienko and director of the Warsaw Zoo Jan Zabiński, Miron Białoszewski and Bogusław Choiński, Erna Rosenstein and Artur Sandauer, the Foksal Gallery associates Wiesław Borowski, Anka Ptaszewska, Mariusz Tchorek, Jerzy Ludwiński, Zbigniew Gostomski and Tadeusz Kantor, later joined by Milada Ślizińska and Andrzej Przywara, Roman Owidzki, Włodzimierz Borowski, Andrzej Partum, Marek Konieczny, Emilia and Andrzej Dłużniewscy who ran the Piwna 20/26 gallery, sports commentator Bohdan Tomaszewski as well as numerous female friends, among others Zofia Gawlikowska, Urszula Dłubakowa and Alina Oxińska.

Additionally, Stażewski's apartment-atelier was an obligatory venue on foreign visitors' schedules: it was visited by artists, gallery owners and collectors. It is impossible to enumerate everyone – the most frequently recalled names include Daniel Buren, Lawrence Weiner, Emmett Williams, Alan Charlton, Christian Boltanski or Arturo Schwarz. By the way, it is worth adding that the atelier used by Henryk Stażewski, Mewa Łunkiewicz-Rogoyska and Edward Krasiński happened to provide room for other artists' actions: here in 1974, as part of “Galerie 21”, Daniel Buren performed his intervention, while a year later Marek Ko-

nieczny's movie “*Santa Conversazione*” was recorded on the atelier's terrace.

After Stażewski's death in 1988 Edward Krasiński remained the only inhabitant of the suddenly empty atelier. The absence of a friend was strongly exposed by Krasiński; then it was drowned by subsequent interventions creating a new topos of the artist's home, a new Gesamtkunstwerk. A symbolic moment of “taking over Stażewski's atelier” was an exhibition *Hommage a Henryk Stażewski* at the Foksal Gallery in 1989 – Krasiński recreated the apartment-atelier's interior by means of, among others, large format photographs taken by Tadeusz Rolke. Sticking a characteristic “blue strip” on them he metaphorically joined the topography of the apartment-atelier and the gallery again, albeit upon different principles than Stażewski's.

Only a few objects that bear witness of the previous inhabitant's presence have survived: discoloured walls and wires on which paintings once hung and a few pieces of furniture, such as a red swivel armchair on which Stażewski has been immortalized on numerous photographs, a frame of the bed on which Stażewski made his sketches, now placed vertically at the entrance to the first room by Krasiński, a small table designed by Stażewski following De Stijl principles and a table with a metal “shark fin”, crafted together by Stażewski and Krasiński as well as scarce keepsakes such as a teacup painted in colourful stripes, photos, tools, single oeuvres and a fragment of the abovementioned installation by Krasiński.

The exhibition “Present Every Day” aims at defining the aura around Henryk Stażewski, recreating the atmosphere of his atelier and the impression in made. It includes statements by several people known to have been in-

fluenced by Stażewski. Words are reflected in thematically and typologically collected objects, artefacts and documents. Therefore, we are building Stażewski's image from fragments of memories, places, material traces of presence and photographs. The image is incomplete and fleeting, but at the same very personal, and thus real. Complemented by the context of a former atelier, it reminds us a simple fact that it is people who create a PLACE.

Artist: Henryk Stażewski

Authors of images: Daniel Buren, Zbigniew Dłubak, Peter Downsbrough, Irena Jarosińska, Eustachy Kossakowski, Tadeusz Rolke, Jerzy Sabara, Jan Styczyński, Ryszard Waśko, Andrzej Żak

Venue: Instytut Awangardy, al. Solidarności

64/118





**EXHIBITION:
SELF-ORGANIZATION**

KATARZYNA BIAŁACH

other spaces - outside museums and galleries.

Artists self-organize for various reasons. Some of them refuse to enter into any relationships with the system, wishing to create a new paradigm of art and redefine basic terms and values, while others try to join the artistic mainstream. Still others decide to act outside institutions, since their artistic practice goes beyond, undermines or in any other way opposes closure, absence or exclusion from the dominating art system. By initiating independent actions artists try to explicitly demonstrate what the system fails to notice.

Self-organization is based on undertaking actions upon one's own conditions, on taking control over all distribution channels that influence the artists' work. In an essay "There is No Alternative: The Future is Self Organized" Anthony Davies, Stephan Dille-muth and Jacob Jakobsen define self-organization as a process of social communication and an exchange-based community, sharing similar problems, knowledge and available resources. In practice, this exchange can occur during a debate, a social meeting or an exhibition - each public presentation of a certain content can make room for dialogue between participants. In Hannah Arendt's opinion, spaces and institutions of authority become established in each place where people gather together to act and converse. Those who isolate themselves or refuse to take part in the common life voluntarily lose voice and become powerless.

However, it would be risky to say that the concept of self-organization assumes the possession of causal or transforming powers. Despite the fact that single spaces and incidents can exemplify the impact that grassroots initiatives undertaken by artists can

In 1969 during the meeting of the Art Workers Coalition at MOMA in New York Carl Andre announced that the system of art itself needed to be destroyed and it could be done through creating a real community of artists. Without concluding business relationships, organizing exhibitions and co-operating with museums, without a "scene", cash and artists' representation, without collectors, fame and expectations of museums or art journals, without grants and subsidies, without pedagogy at academies of fine arts and without participation of artists teaching at those institutions. This radical and nearly utopian declaration contains plenty of postulates and ideas that refer to initiatives and actions undertaken by artists in Warsaw. Although many of them do not propose any alternative for existing and functioning structures of the art system, they undoubtedly attest the fact that art can be performed differently in

have on the shaping of image and development of certain urban areas or local social structures, usually they are merely a response to the current socio-political situation and consequences of a changing economic system.

The exhibition is a presentation of documentations related to ephemeral actions programmed by artists in ateliers, private apartments and galleries, whose way of speaking about art was different from the institutional one. It shows artists outside the official art stream, institutions and state financing structures. The exhibition does not attempt to map the territory, rather than indicate various directions and motifs of artistic self-organization.

From 14 October to 9 November the building at Inżynierska 3 hosts the “Dar” (“Gift”) initiative – actions expressing solidarity with Ukrainian artists. The participating artists include: Jacek Adamas, Bruno Althamer, Paweł Althamer, Katarzyna Górna, Jacek Markiewicz, Roman Stańczak, Artur Żmijewski, Rafał Żwirek and other guests. The idea of this action refers to Josef Beuys' gesture: in August 1981 he travelled to Łódź by his van to hand a gift to the local museum – a chest with hundreds of his own works and documentations. To Beuys, the action entitled “Polentransport 1981” was a means of transferring his artistic ideas to peripheral areas and a symbolic integration of Europe. The works created during the sixth edition of the Warsaw Under Construction festival will be sent in chests to befriended Ukrainian artists. More information on: www.warszawawbudowie.pl.



Marek Klonieczny - akt z
00-950 W-ws p.o.k. 716 memoria

**EXHIBITION: YOUR CITY IS A
BATTLEGROUND**

STANISŁAW RUKSZA

ers. The recovered city quickly started to stratify into recovered public space and fenced off privatized properties. Warsaw, as the capital, remains not only a city serving its inhabitants, but also a place where decisions and deals are made, and demands and attitudes concerning other parts of the country are manifested.

Artists have become some of the many decision makers with regard to the visible shape of the city. Oftentimes their works were an example of the critical reflection; they initiated debates, thus becoming a litmus test of social tensions, saturated in the new content. Other projects were commissioned by patrons or corporations in order to improve the living space – sometimes by decorating, or gentrifying it according to the fashion for art festivals organised in public space, or filling cities that want to promote themselves with gadgets. However, certain rare pieces served as a kind of “community microphone” for the excluded. The exhibition features various examples of these realisations, both successful and failed in terms of fulfilling their initial assumptions.

The exhibition entitled *Your city is a battleground* raises the question of the relationship between art and conditions for its production in a city dominated by neoliberal logic of the last 25 years. During that period the hold of the single authority over the city space has been broken. Brand new, complex conflicts founded on various, often historic or religious premises within its network of notions have emerged. The city has once again become the platform for open policy, economy and ideological disputes.

On the one hand, it resulted in the active citizenship of urban movements, attempting to negotiate all change at the grass roots level. On the other hand, however, the city has become the space with an unregulated market driven by a prospect of profit. In this vision, the euphemism of “the free market”, has become the tool of huge companies’ monopoly and a competitive race, which has its clear winners and invisible los-

The military-sounding title refers to the famous piece by Barbara Kruger, *Your body is a battlefield*, shown in Warsaw in 1995 in the context of the debate on women’s right to abortion. Such a paraphrase indicates the physical aspect of the issue. The starting point for all action and awareness is our body, and in the social sense – it is one separate, subjective body alongside another one. Two bodies initiate the economy (e.g. barter), while three can initiate politics and establish their own standing in relation to one another.

The exhibition takes up two floors of the Jabłkowski Brothers Department Store in Warsaw, one of the emblems of Poland’s prosperity in the interwar

period, which several times changed its function (shops, offices, art gallery) both during the Communist period and afterwards. This “warehouse of satisfied customers”, as it was advertised, paradoxically becomes the background for the visual history of the Polish transformation and its consequences as regarded from the visual arts’ point of view. An important part of the Polish transformation is a thread omitted in many historical summaries – its social cost: decreased quality of life for the considerable part of the citizens for whom there was not enough “safety net” in the Polish “shock therapy”.

The art show consists of the most important, although sometimes forgotten works created after 1989, devoted to the image of the city’s social transformations. Artists featured in the exhibition represent various generations, artistic approaches, and circles; they use different media and constitute a wide cross-section of the Polish art scene. Documentation of artistic actions will be displayed as well.

It is most surprising that during transformation, the issue of economic conditions did not merit an appropriate artistic response in the form of numerous visual (as well as theatre, film, or literature) works. The 90s gave us the abundance of works with narration that was liberal in terms of morals, but not social issues. In the words of poets from 1992: not a fucking idea outside (Marcin Baran, Marcin Sendeki, Marcin Świetlicki). To a large extent artists trusted the ideology of the invisible hand of the free market, which turned them into victims of precarity, outsiders in the process. Lately, they have started to raise the issue, having perhaps realized that it directly concerns them as well.

The attempt to categorise the art of the last 25 years from the social and economic perspective would therefore look

as follows:

- 1990s: rare works connected to the subject of the atomisation of society subjected to the pressure of competitiveness;
- after 2000: agoraphilia versus agoraphobia related to the execution of the so-called “art in public space”;
- anti-corporate works in the vein of the alter-globalist criticism of capitalism, numerous especially after the publication of Naomi Klein’s book *No Logo*;
- artists’ actions connected to their economic status in society (creation of the Civic Forum for Contemporary Art, artists’ strike in 2012, etc.)

The exhibition encourages the creation of alternative images of history. It also aims at prompting people to look at the Polish art scene from the perspective of economic conditions, and its relationship with society not only in terms of the “cold war with society”, or “applied social arts”, but also as a medium of a participating social formation: a (self)conscious part of the society that experiences democracy through the criticism of its own institutions. The subject of the artist’s social self-awareness becomes therefore a parallel narration of the Your city is a battleground exhibition.

Artists and documentations, m.in.: Jacek Adamas, Paweł Althamer, Azorro, Markus Bader, Michał Budny, Bogna Burska, Hubert Czerepok, Grzegorz Drozd, Wojciech Duda, Katarzyna Górna, Oskar Hansen, Rafał Jakubowicz, Grzegorz Kłaman, Michał Korchowiec, Barbara Krueger, Karolina Kucia, Przemysław Kwiek, Zbigniew Libera, Jan Liesegang, Darri Lorenzen, Alicja Łuksiak, Franciszek Orłowski, Katarzyna Przeważńska, Mariola Przyjemaska, Wojciech Puś, Joanna Rajkowska, Alicja Rogalska, Natalia Romik, Robert Rumas, Jan Smaga, Mikołaj Starowieyski, Łukasz Surowiec, Jerzy Truszkowski, Łukasz Trzcinski, Marek Wasilewski, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Artur Żmijewski.

Venue: Dom Towary Braci Jabłowskich, ul. Bracka 25, Warszawa



EXHIBITION: NIGHTLIFE
ARCHIVES

TOMASZ FUDALA

artists' private nightlife archives remain the deeply hidden, even shameful, part of their artistic output. Such photos remain at the bottoms of their drawers or in the most remote corners of their PC discs.

For artists, clubs are not fashion catwalks. They don't care how critically other partygoers look at their extravagances. Home-made outfits usually look as if their owners visited a theatrical dressing-room and took with them anything they could find there. Fancy dresses are completed hastily and can serve as an exceptional examples of fashion DIY. Fashion critics describe them as manifestations of trash, queer punk, or simply camp - the kingdom of stylisation and exaggeration. The party fancy dress-ups described by writers on camp have often critical undertones - they are created as a response to boredom with, and predictability or consumerism of the popular partying activities. They also have, as indicated by Przemysław Czapliński, an otherness aspect: "The camp aesthetics invites us to take part in a game where, in our presence, a puzzle of social identity of a man is staged, and then left unresolved." As a result of camp fancy dress-ups, "every social construct based on gender - the orders of power and production - become open for revision"

That's how artists party. They can wear an old golden dress and a tailcoat from between the world wars, as well as garbage bags, Christmas tree lights or a woven doormat. The exhibition shows how the artistic nightlife looks like. We can see artists as occasional fashion designers, club performance or concert organisers, or social jokers. The photographs show not only the visual side of the parties - outfits, styles, make-ups - but also artistic transformations of artists' identities and their bodies. Their common theme are fancy dresses that can and should be visually appreciated when we watch their owners without club spleen, alcohol, and partying crowds.

Photos taken at balls or in clubs are an interesting - though unjustly ignored - part of the history of art, showing the diffusion of different artistic scenes, attitudes, and circles - e.g. the cooperation between visual artists, musicians and film-makers. Unfortunately,

The exhibition starts with a series of reporter photographs taken by Tadeusz Rolke at the "Ragmen Ball" in 1957. The event invoked the tradition of parties for graduates, students and sympathisers of artistic schools that over a hundred years ago had started to be organised in the Warsaw Academy of Arts. As the organisers of the 2005 edition of the ragmen ball in the Academy wrote, "Every outfit is allowed: from tailcoats and Roman gladiator loincloths to tin stoves with little door labelled "Do not open"".

Fancy dresses during the political thaw of 1957 were stylised for lumpenproletariat, in contrast to the music - in the wake of the Stalinist era, the time of jazz and modern dance started for good. The weekly "Stolica" reported: "our art students so skilfully and madly danced the rock and roll as if they had done nothing else from their childhood".

In his photos, Erazm Ciolek documented the artistic life in almost all its manifestations: openings of art exhibitions, art-work documentation, ephemeral events (such as Church art of the 1980s), as well as night parties. The last category is represented at the exhibition by a series of photographs showing fancy-dress artistic balls organised in the premises of the Association of Polish Architects by an art historian, Piotr Nowicki. Every ball had its main theme and title, as well as rich scenographic layout. The ball titled "Dziady" was intended as a confrontation between the tradition of "ragmen balls" and the real anxieties of the 1990s - the times of political transformation with its problems, such as hyperinflation, social inequality, economic and political hopes and disillusionments. Doleful mood of the time, reflected in the guests' outfits and a special shop with rags, stood in contrast with ostentatiously rich table full of meats and fruits. It was not a coincidence that the party was attended by Jacek Kuroń, twice a minister of labour and social policy, along with artists, actors and other people of culture.

Quite a different era of artistic partying is shown in a series of photographs titled "The art of beautiful women-artists" (2003) by Anna Baumgart and Agata Bogacka. They organised photo shoots in clubs - the most popular venues of social nightlife of the time, trying to challenge the stereotypes concerning the artistic activity of women. The series of photos is a

response to a satiric article by Łukasz Gorczyca and Michał Kaczyński published in "Machina" magazine². The article titled "The art of beautiful women-artists" maintained that though it's not easy for beautiful women-artists, overshadowed by their older female colleagues, to become popular on the local artistic scene, their "good looks add glamour to the social life of the capital". In response to the text, the series of photos were created where the women-artists shown as stylish and fashionably dressed "beauties" played the roles assigned to them by the Warsaw artistic world.

Everywhere, going out at nights is an indispensable part of artistic life - clubs and cafes as usual places to meet old and new friends are almost worshiped in the artistic world, and every city has its own places that are most popular among artists. Bogacka and Baumgart try to look critically at the superficiality of nightlife encounters. "The nights are very repetitive", says Anna Baumgart in an interview with Ewa Witkowska. "Dressing, going out to a club, ordering a drink, and waiting for something special to happen. We kind of put ourselves for sale... And after a while, we already know that again nothing special, nothing new will happen. A dose of superficial, banal contacts, moments of boredom (...) and we go home". The photographs show the women-artists clearly bored, standing as wallflowers in the most popular Warsaw clubbing places of the time. In the 1990s, clubbing became very popular in Warsaw - magazines proudly reported that Warsaw, with its ninety or so nightclubs, was the clubbing capital of Poland. Clubbing also entered the artistic world. Many clubs in their program and interior design aspired to be artistic, attracting a special type of guests, to only mention

exhibitions and performances in Le Madame club, space designs in Między Nami club, GS Rozwój gallery in Praga district, or places created and led by artists, such as Baumgart Cafe and Aurora. In the case of Galeria Off, the very name of the club was intended to make it "more artistic". Thus, the series of photographs document the era of flourishing clubbing life. It can also be seen as an allegoric image of the art world, the domain of self-creation, duplicity, atrophy of social bonds replaced by rivalry, and also often of forlorn hopes.

In 2003 Paulina Ołowska, together with a Scottish artist Lucy McKenzie, opened for one month a lounge-cafe Nova Popularna at Chmielna street in Warsaw, trying to animate the city artistic life. The lounge-cafe was intended to remind of legendary artistic cafes, places of meeting for Bohemians, serving as a space for artistic discussions and diffusion of different circles. The two artists themselves, wearing special dresses and jewellery, became an integral part of the carefully designed interior of the bar and the lounge. The place had special wall-paintings, furniture, as well as carefully selected details such as cut glasses for drinks, posters, and the event programme. As recounts Paulina Ołowska, "The whole Nova Popularna reminded a place from a dream where barmaids, guests and the interior of the place merged into one picture, reminiscent of a post-impressionist painting or a meeting place for avant-garde". The opening of the ephemeral cafe had not been announced in any way, the news about the new interesting place was spread by city gossip, and invitations to events were passed from man to man. After four weeks, Nova Popularna disappeared as suddenly as it had emerged.

The photographs by Radziszewski from 2008 take us to music clubs, such

as Jazzgot, to witness performances connected with queer culture that are so rare in the public space. In his work, Radziszewski uses the camp aesthetics and often refers to popular culture. In his projects - the magazine *Dikfagazine* and cyclical event, the independent festival *Pomada* - the artist explores rituals related to parties, promotion and fashion world, balancing between the real world situation and the artistic action, designed, as he says, "in a spectacular, brocade, frenetic and perverse way".

Sławomir Belina, in a series of actions performed in Warsaw clubs (2006–2009), impersonates several absurd figures, questioning the language of popular clubbing ritual: schematic fashion, ritual movements, moral correctness. Some of his actions are inspired by the current media reports, as in the case of *Three colours*. The club performance was organised in the time of massive media reports concerning senator Krzysztof Piesiewicz, who was accused of possessing drugs (he was later acquitted of the charge). The artist was inspired by this attack from tabloids on the well-known politician and scriptwriter for Krzysztof Kieślowski films, who often used to pronounce his opinions on ethical and religious matters. *Three colours* was a troupe of actors in costumes who staged their own *commedia dell'arte*. As a "Ballet Support Group for Senator P.", they performed absurd choreographies, posing for photographs and disrupting the normal course of parties. To the puzzled guests they said, "We defend the right to use stimulants and to dress up, but the outfit the senator was photographed in, leaves a lot to be desired. What an awfully badly-cut dress!". Many of Belina's ephemeral performances relate to the presence of art in the real world mediated by mass media, moral norms, and phobias of the society in times of transformation.

In the last decade, their own original styles of artistic partying were presented by Anna Baumgart, Zbigniew Libera, Mariola Przyjemska or Paulina Ołowska, and many others. The club Saturator, opened in 2006, has been in recent years one of the more active artistic places. Its co-owners (Marcin Brzózka, Aneta Starowiejska and Mikołaj Biberstein-Starowiejski) played the roles of ringleaders and performers impersonating different figures. The activities were described in „Konteksty”³ periodical by Jakub Sadowski: "The club Saturator likes to be provocative. Among the regular events are Porno-Valentine's Day, being a parody of mawkishly romantic idea of this global holiday. The club advertises the party as "mega-anti-Valentine's Day". (...) Dressing up is an important part of many events. All guests are encouraged to dress up, but only few do it. Nevertheless, it is an indispensable ritual, (...) being a sign for other participants that normal rules are suspended. Mikołaj is the leading dresser-up (...). One of his outfits looked like this: white sneaker-type shoes, golden trousers, naked breast, with a telling downward arrow painted in the lower part of his back, a kind of harness on his shoulders with big, stiff, vertical peacock feathers in it, a golden fireman helmet on his head, plus a golden Venetian mask on his face. And, of course, makeup and jewellery". Karol Grygoruk, Sandra Roczeń and Łukasz Rusznica are the authors of contemporary club photography, eagerly documenting the visual side of the nightlife.

It is evident that in their night escapades artists try to divert us from simple patterns and accepted identities. Their presence in the life of the city has usually been a commentary to the existing reality, a voice for openness, tolerance, and against ideological

struggles with their Orwellian new-speak and violent attitudes. In the wake of the communist era, Warsaw artistic nightlife has become an asylum for pluralism and experiments that probably would not be welcomed in the official art institutions. Clubs and cafes are excellent places for witnessing emancipatory processes, changes in lifestyles, and reactions to the new democracy after 1989 in the Polish society. One of the outcomes of the transformation was dismantling the myths connected with the political change. As the publicist, Marek Beylin, said in his interview with Michał Sutowski: "Democracy was seen as a kind of harnessed order. Today, we already know that it is an order, but totally unharnessed, for its diversity of various practices and opinions cannot be controlled".

Artists and documentation authors: Anna Baumgart i Agata Bogacka, Krzysztof M. Bednarski, Sławomir Belina, Mikołaj Biberstein-Starowiejski, Erazm Ciołek, Magdalena Grenda, Karol Grygoruk, Paulina Ołowska i Lucy McKenzie, Karol Radziszewski, Sandra Roczeń, Tadeusz Rolke, Mateusz Romaszkan, Karol Słowik, Grzegorz Szczepański

Venues: Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, ul. Pańska 3

1 Przemysław Czaplński, Anna Mizerka red., Kamp. Antologia przekładów, Kraków 2012, s. 13–14.

2 Machina Machina nr 9 (30), 2000.

3 „Konteksty”, 2009, nr 1–2.







anna czuje, że jej
znajomości stały się
powierzchowne

tworzywo.ort.pl/20



SOKE z marchwi - 4
sałatka z porzeczki - 5
kanapki - 2
tosty - 5
pierogi - 8
kanapki z awokado - 4
nasecz. z uszkami - 5
babka ziemniaczana
Dziękuję











STUDIOS FOR
ARTISTS IN WARSAW

MARTA ŻAKOWSKA

"Artistic studio is not only a space. It must also ensure conditions for reflection, for creative work at any time of night and day, for using different artistic materials without the threat of spoiling other objects", writes A. Wallis in his book *Visual artists: profession and artistic circle* (Artyści-plastycy: zawód i środowisko¹). Having in mind the conditions prevailing in the majority of premises rented by artists for studios in Warsaw, we should also add to the definition not only modern media presently used by artists, but also the impact of the quality of premises on the health and safety of artists. The diagnosis prepared by Wallis shows that in the 1940s and 1950s Polish visual artists surveyed by him, both young and older ones, conducted "long, costly and exhausting battles" to get their own space for artistic work². As he says, in 1958 only every third artist from the Association of Polish Visual Artists had a separate prem-

ises devoted only to creative work. But as a result of the demands from the APVA delegates, the Minister of Culture and Art requested the Minister of Municipal Policy to introduce regulations concerning building new artistic studios. As a result, in 1961 the Ordinance no. 27 was issued "on programming, designing and building studios for visual artists within housing complexes built by national councils"³. Financed from city housing funds, the premises were to meet special "guidelines for designing studios for visual artists" defined in the ordinance. The premises were to "be suited for creative work of visual artists and meet the general standards of premises adapted to permanent presence of people"⁴. It was planned that for every thousand of inhabitants, 5 to 9 square meters of such premises will be built - with ante-room, toilet, small storeroom, of the height 2.25 m, with top and side light, and the proportion between the area of openings and the floor area 1:6. Also official classification of studios for different kinds of visual arts was prepared.

Later, another Ordinance no. 34 was issued defining technical conditions for designing studios for visual artists in cooperative housing complexes that reiterated the guidelines from 1961, adding also new requirements for photographic studios. As W 1968 roku Minister Waldemar Baraniewski says, "in the beginning, these relatively rough studios in cooperative housing complexes were expensive and difficult to get, and formed (...) a small percentage of all existing studios, but in time they became the most popular type of studios"⁵. In 1974 a notion of business premises was introduced in the housing law (Art. 5 par. 3 of the law said that business premises are "separate premises or a part of them used for purposes other than

housing"). Eight years later, artistic studio was legally defined as business premises of special character. Only persons conducting activities in the field of culture and art were entitled to rent such premises. According to the ordinance of the minister of administration and land management of 1983, a studio was "separate business premises or their part, as well as a part of premises used by an artist for housing purposes"⁶. Persons entitled to have a studio were artists such as visual artists, photographers, violin makers, musicians, composers and - as indicated by Waldemar Baraniewski - for the first time in history, architects. "Studios were granted, on the application from the interested party, by voivodeship state administration body, after consulting a special advisory unit"⁷. In Warsaw, the role was performed by the Advisory Unit for Granting Rights to Artistic Studios created by the President of the city. Together with the WUC team, we decided to survey the situation in the field the city housing policy in the context of city premises for artistic studios.

Today, Warsaw artists rent premises for studios mainly from the city business premises pool. It is also possible to rent premises from the housing pool if the premises cannot be used for municipal housing purposes. In the case of studios from the housing pool, tenants are protected by the provisions of the Act on protection of the rights of tenants, on municipal housing pools, and on amendments to the Civil code of June 21, 2001. Earlier, the issues were regulated by the provisions of the Housing law of 1974 and of the Act on renting housing premises and on housing subsidies that was in force between 1994 and 2001. So the history of renting city premises for studios in Warsaw is long and full of radical changes in the situation resulting from cultural changes,

the change of the political system and changes in social standing of artists in the context of the vision of the development of the society, local community, the city and the country.

FACTS

The majority of artistic studios are studios used based on administrative decisions from the past, with a living area⁸. Business premises, in line with the existing regulations, are rented for a defined period of time: up to three years, or from three to ten years, with the option of extending the contract. The studios from the housing pool, with or without the living area, are rented for indefinite period of time, so if only the tenant pays the rent on time, he or she can use the premises for his or her lifetime, no matter if he or she is still an artist and independently from the quality of his or her works of art. From recently, artists can also rent for a short period of time (up to three months) unoccupied premises from the city business premises pool - according to the Director of the Bureau of Culture of the city of Warsaw, Tomasz Thun-Janowski, about 900 such premises are presently available. They can be used by firms, NGOs and individual persons, for any artistic, commercial and social activity, until the time of finding a permanent tenant. The short-term use of such premises is payable, but in justified cases the rent can be reduced to only operating costs. Most commonly, such premises are rented by artists for exhibitions.

In Warsaw, artists are the only group that in order to rent city premises for a studio (either from the housing pool or from the business pool) need not to be self-employed or conduct non-governmental activity. The same applies for premises from the unoccupied premises pool for short-term rent. In

order to rent premises from the city, artists have only to present diploma from an artistic academy or a proof of membership in a nationwide artistic association or of professional artistic qualifications. Artists who are not self-employed or do not conduct non-governmental activity are not allowed to participate in tenders, but they are organised by the city relatively rarely, and anyway usually the proposed rents are too expensive for artists. Just like all tenants of city premises, also artists renting studios are usually entitled to buy the rented premises with a bonus. When city premises from the housing pool are bought, the bonus is between 50 and 60 percent of their value, but when the premises are rented for more than 20 years, the bonus can even reach 70 percent of the value. Business premises are sold for full price (but the city sells only 40–50 such premises a year).

Information on all city premises for rent or sale, their prices, conditions of rental can be easily found at the web page of the city council: www.um.warszawa.pl.

PROBLEMS

The city web page is well organised, but the artists surveyed by us who had to do with city premises usually say that the situation is dramatic. There are no new premises for studios from the housing pool, and the rented ones are rented for indefinite period of time, so they are practically unavailable on the market - it takes years of waiting to get such premises. The fact that this cheapest option (maximum rate of rent 8.12 PLN per square meter and many additional bonuses in operational costs) to rent a studio for an indefinite period of time is in practice unavailable for artists is witnessed by opinions from many artists that studios from the city housing pool are not offered and that it is impossible to rent them. On the other hand, ac-

cording to the representatives of artistic circles surveyed by us, the premises from the city business premises pool offered outside competitions have many defects. "It's grotesque", says Edyta Dzierż, a painter. "There is a problem", say the members of the Civic Forum for Modern Art. Similar opinions are presented by many artists from Warsaw whom we talked to, but who - because of their relations with city Real Estate Management Units - prefer to remain anonymous. So what are the reasons for the problem, or rather many problems encountered by artists in Warsaw when artistic studios are concerned?

The Nationwide Wages Survey led by Sedlak&Sedlak shows that in 2012 art and culture workers earned on average 3100 PLN pre-tax a month, while in 2013 it was 3000 PLN pre-tax a month. So no wonder that the great majority of artists cannot afford to take part in competitions for renting city business premises where monthly rates are between 30 and 60 PLN per square meter. In addition to the rent, also operational costs have to be paid (water, waste management, electricity, heating, gas). So they have no choice, and have to look for premises for studios on the market, work at home, or rent business premises outside competitions. On the market, a 50-square meter studio can be rented on average for 700 PLN, including operational costs. But as indicated by many artists, such rental is connected with a "serious risk" that one day the artist will be required to suddenly leave the premises, together with all his or her artistic output. "Artists complain that sometimes they are thrown out from private studios overnight: the owner changes locks, and then the artist has a problem with recovering his or her artistic works left in the studio", says Edyta Dzierż. But many artists need a studio, in view of both physical, and psycho-

logical inability to work at home. So they often decide to rent city premises outside competitions - and there are reasons why such premises are withdrawn from competitions. As the artists say, in most cases these are neglected, often decrepit, dank premises in the attics or basements (sometimes also on the ground floor), often without floor, separate electricity counters, with holes in walls and roofs, and broken glass in the windows. Many artists describe them as "hovels"⁹ "not meeting even basic health and sanitary standards", often without toilet, electricity, hot tap water or heating.

But the artists need the premises, so they rent them, and then "incessant problems start: necessary repairs, refurbishments, leaking pipes, consequences of the lack of heating". They go bankrupt on electricity bills, using additional electric heaters in the winter, because these are business premises and suppliers charge the higher, business rates for electricity. Many such buildings are not insulated, so it is hard to heat the rooms in the winter. Artists also pay higher, business rates of property tax.

So, as they say, their experience with a city studio starts with the need to refurbish the premises - and they hardly can afford it after paying security deposit worth a three-month rent, 50% of notary costs related to signing the required Declaration of willingly submitting to execution (the other 50% is paid by the city), and the rent for the first month. If a refurbishment agreement is signed, the district Real Estate Management Units refund costs that permanently increase the value of the premises in the six-month rent for the premises, and the rest after the contract expires (but refurbishment financed by the city can be done only once in every five years). If during the refurbishment the premises are

adapted to the needs of disabled persons, the whole adaptation costs can be deducted from the monthly rent without limitation as to the number of months. But to refurbish the premises, the artists first have to pay the costs in cash that they usually lack, and only then they can reclaim the money from the city. And in case of three-year rental contracts, that are preferred by the RMUs, it is risky to invest in refurbishments. As many artists say, after the three-year period they usually have to negotiate new contract, because RMUs want to "increase the rent because of higher quality of the premises after refurbishment". But many artists are not aware that these are only negotiation tricks on the part of Real Estate Management Units, because though they monitor the situation on the real-estate market and if the average prices grow they try to increase their rates, in fact they are obliged to increase their rates only according to the indicator published by the National Statistical Office which is not higher than 1% a year.

And not all artists, as they say, are entitled to be refunded the costs of refurbishments. Some of them, when signing contracts with RMUs, agree - though no legal regulations provide for such possibility - that they will not reclaim refurbishment costs from the city in exchange of lower rental rates. The Director of the Housing Policy Bureau of the city of Warsaw is surprised by the situation, but the artists file no complaints on the matter. "The city should take into account the fact that artists are not covered by appropriate protection from the state in the field of retirement or social security. There are different premises offered for rental as studios, but the artists, for financial reasons, usually choose business premises offered outside competitions that are often in a very poor shape, because

they are the only ones that they can afford to rent", says Edyta Dzierż. "For long years, we are educated usually in public academies, so the state and the city should more actively support our professional activity. Also meetings with artists in districts would be useful where we could discuss our problems concerning premises for studios. In return, we could support districts by proposing original artistic and cultural projects for the inhabitants of Warsaw".

Some artists also indicate that the workers of RMUs often fail to realise the condition of premises that they try to rent and for which they negotiate the rate of rent with artists. "I rented premises after two-month negotiations", says Laura Paweła from the Civic Forum for Modern Art. "When I received the keys to the studio I found out that the premises are occupied by a homeless person. The city officers were unaware of the fact. When I negotiated the rate of rent for the following years and indicated that the staircase in the building is in a very poor condition, the city officer could not believe it. I managed to convince her only when I showed her photos. She had no idea what was going on there. And now, city officers visit my studio once a half year to check if I do not live there or rent the premises to someone else. They started to be suspicious when I furnished the premises. In my studio, I have a sofa, a kitchen and a bathtub... I make castings, so I need a bathtub! I rest on the sofa!".

"Galleries and artists from other Polish cities move to Warsaw, so the administration should take into account the process", says professor Paweł Nowak, vice-president for artistic and scientific matters in the Academy of Fine Arts. "The city should maintain residencies, like in Halle or in Berlin. We have residencies, e.g. in the Centre for Modern Art, mainly for

artists from outside Warsaw, but we need much more of them. Warsaw should make available such premises, but in good condition and with affordable rents. Premises other than normal studios (that should not be granted for a lifetime) should be granted in competitions for particular projects - and the artists should be accounted for results in the form of exhibitions or other outputs. The competition procedure, even co-organised by the city, can be a good solution. Also the quality of works of art should be taken into account. Premises for studios should not be granted to anyone, but to the person who presents the best project (of course, I mean subsidised studios, other studios can be freely rented on the market). I have already talked several times about my ideas with the city hall, and they like them. But we still have a serious problem with studios from the city housing pool. In Paris, artists receive a subsidy from the city in the form of premises, in Berlin the situation is similar, but they also get a budget for materials. For the purpose, cities sometimes borrow studios from artists who e.g. leave them for a longer period of time. In Berlin, the artists' association help them to find premises for studios, and the city even builds new studios with a small living area. Halle, situated 100 km from Berlin, is an interesting example. They have high unemployment rate, so the city tries to encourage people not to leave the city. They have a big and good artistic academy there that received from the city a whole refurbished apartment building. Premises in the building are rented on preferential terms to artists and designers based on competition. They have only to pay for operational costs. They get the premises for a year or two to conduct particular project. Such solution would be very helpful for our graduates from artistic schools".

The problem that is still unrecognised by the city are the so-called historical studios, or premises of famous artists from the past or studios of contemporary artists located in historical environment. An Unit for Historical Studios is being created in the city hall. Its members will have the task to develop legal solutions for such premises, to create a catalogue of such studios and a list of works of art present there, as well as to develop mechanisms to support and care for such places, popularise them and their history. They will also promote the status of historical memorials for such studios, with preferential rents for such places in local RMUs. The idea of the unit emerged in 2013 during the festival Open Apartment organised by the Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments. The idea met with interest on the part of the city, and in the beginning of 2014 the city hall declared its willingness to cooperate in its implementation. The Unit will include experts, representatives of museums (including the National Museum, the Museum of Warsaw, and the Museum of Modern Art), the Academy of Fine Arts, the Warsaw University, the Association of Polish Architects, the Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments, and the Architecture Centre. They will also be joined by representatives of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the National Heritage Board of Poland, and other cultural institutions and organisations. The idea of the Unit was also developed in cooperation with the representatives of the local administration from the bureaus of the Warsaw Historical Monuments Conservator and the Regional Mazowsze Historical Monuments Conservator.

RECOMMENDATIONS

"In the capital, more places suitable for studios should be created, so

that premises of different standards are available", adds professor Paweł Nowak. "Artistic enclaves should also be developed. To some extent, the district of Praga has such characteristics, but some galleries and artists leave the area, because of poor conditions in available premises. Higher awareness of the role of art among different groups is also needed. The problem is, of course, how to do it, and the money, but in the long run, investments in art pay off, as witnessed by the examples of many cities that decided to support conditions of work for artists. The issue of studios for artists should also be handled by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage that has to seriously consider the issue of the conditions of art production. We have to enable people to perform the profession for which they are educated. And in Warsaw, studios are a serious problem, mainly in view of related costs. Of course, natural selection is important, but in Poland even the best artists have problems. Problems with artistic studios have also older, well-known and renowned artists such as Jacek Maślankiewicz, the president of APVA, or Robert Maciejuk. Because of related costs, also professors loose studios. And all the cities known of their cultural life - from Paris to Berlin - show that good cultural policy can create conditions for development of art and artistic life, which is in the long-term in the interest of every city, for both economic, and social reasons".

And what changes are expected by the artists themselves? Many recommendations have been presented by the Civic Forum for Modern Art led by Laura Paweła. They indicate, among others, that the status of premises used as studios should be changed, the property tax rate should be lowered for the studios rented from the city business premises pool (the tax rate is even

higher in the case of studios being a part of private apartments or houses). It is also indicated that the change in legal status of the premises used for studios is necessary, because today their users are treated as business entities and electricity providers apply higher, business rates. The same is true for waste management costs. CFMA also indicates that the rental contracts where refurbishment costs permanently improving the quality of premises are not reimbursable in exchange for lower monthly rates of rent should be reviewed. Artists say that also premises in better condition, not requiring refurbishment, should be rented for artistic studios, with higher but not commercial rental rates, so that premises of better quality are also available on the market. The situation would also be greatly improved if, as a rule, premises for studios were rented for periods of time longer than three years, as many district RMUs - though no regulations require them to do that - sign rental contracts only for this shortest possible period of time. If artists had a stable perspective of a longer use of premises, they would be more willing to invest in refurbishments. The artists surveyed by us opt for introducing new forms of rental of premises for studios, e.g. granting premises in poor condition for studios where the tenant undertakes to refurbish the premises and pays no rent for three years, while the rental contract is for ten years. They also say that more studios with living area are needed, because many artists cannot afford to bear the costs of both a flat and a studio.

Also the criteria for granting studios are discussed by the artists. Today, an artist without diploma, professional certificate or membership in a nationwide artistic association cannot rent premises for studio in Warsaw, even if he or she is successful and well-known

in artistic circles. A solution to the problem could be to include in the relevant regulations a provision that artists without professional credentials can produce recommendations from artistic circles. Such provision is present e.g. in a Resolution no. XLIV/827/12 of June 29, 2012 of the City Council in Łódź on the rules for renting premises from the housing pool of the city of Łódź. The resolution also indicates that "applications for rental of artistic studios are considered by the Commission for Artistic Studios (...) created by the President of the city of Łódź for the term of the City Council. The Commission includes two representatives of the unit responsible for culture in the City Hall of Łódź, two representatives of the Committee of Culture of the City Council of Łódź, one representative of the unit responsible for city business premises management of the City Hall in Łódź".

Such cooperation with expert commissions could also help in the operations of the Warsaw city offices. Piotr Królikiewicz, the director of the Cultural Unit for the district of Mokotów, says that district RMUs, when deciding on applications from artists to rent studios, ask for opinion the district cultural department. Director Królikiewicz concedes that city officers are not always competent in this field. He indicates that a practice to advertise available premises for artistic studios by the district authorities would be advisable. Then, criteria of choice should be prepared and the deadline for filing applications should be set. The applications would then be considered by a special commission of city officers and - above all - experts. Such solution would enhance transparency and effectiveness of procedures - information on the procedure and its results should be published at the web page of the district and the city. Królik-

iewicz indicates that such competitive procedures would also help to solve another problem: today, city districts have limited numbers of premises for studios at their disposal, and they are granted according to the principle "first come, first served" or "better informed, first served". But to introduce such competitions, the resolution LVIII/1751/2009 on the rules for renting housing premises from the city housing pool should be again amended. He also indicates the risks related to the legal provision that artistic studios from the housing pool must be rented for indefinite period of time. Local authorities cannot be sure that the person renting such premises will always conduct artistic activity, and even if so, they cannot be sure whether his or her activity will always be worth the support from local authorities. The artist can also leave the country for many years and then the premises will not be properly used, etc. Thus, municipal authorities can only either rent such premises for indefinite period of time, risking that they will not be properly used, or refuse to take the risk. As Królikiewicz says, in such situations it is better to avoid the risk and refuse to rent premises from the housing pool for artistic studios. So the apparently beneficial legal regulations can be in fact disadvantageous for artists. Królikiewicz also indicates that appropriate criteria for granting premises for artistic studios should be developed. There are still doubts and questions, such as whether it is better to grant premises to young and promising artists, or to experienced and well-known ones. Advice from an expert commission would also help in the process of renting on preferential terms better premises for studios from the business premises pool.

At the same time, the opinions from artists clearly show that appropri-

ate standards for the premises for artistic studios should be defined. To this end, the city should commission preparation of a diagnosis led in Warsaw artistic circles concerning their conditions of life, in order to learn about their needs related to premises for artistic studios and about their financial situation. Based on that, the city offices could develop appropriate policy concerning premises for art production in Warsaw. The Bureau of Culture and the Bureau of Housing Policy should also try to develop a platform of communication with artists. A body gathering representatives of artists, the Bureau of Culture and the Bureau of Housing Policy could prepare guidelines for RMUs on the needs related to premises for artistic studios. Also a review of all available city premises is needed: part of them that meet appropriate standards should be used for artistic studios. The City Hall could also start a dialogue with housing investors in Warsaw and try to persuade them to create spaces for artistic studios, sold or rented on preferential terms, in the new housing investments, and try to monitor the conditions of rental of premises for studios from private owners. Also a set of good practices related to the city market for artistic studios, based on examples from other cities and countries, could be helpful to overcome the crisis situation.

On the other hand, the artists have to be aware of their rights and possible solutions. It is surprising how few of them present their problems and doubts concerning rental of premises to the Bureau of Housing Policy of the city of Warsaw or to the Bureau of Culture, or know their rights and regulations concerning rental of premises. The artists should also be aware that although RMU is a city unit, it also follows market trends and can use tricks

during negotiations.

CHANGES

"In many cities of Europe, city offices and municipal authorities realise that in the long run, creating space for artistic activity will increase revenues for the local budgets", sums up professor Paweł Nowak. "Local administration in Poland should also understand that artistic studios are not commercial ventures in spite of being located in business premises, with high rates of property tax and operational costs. Warsaw in its city strategies declares promotion of culture and art. Visual artists need premises for their creative activity. So the part of the city budget dedicated to culture should also support studios, and not only cultural events and institutions. The decision-makers should look down and understand that culture must be created somewhere, that art must be produced! It is in the long-term interest of the city". "We lack a direct contact with artists, and their representatives also fail to present their problems directly to us", says the Director of the Bureau of Housing Policy of the city of Warsaw, Beata Wrońska-Freudenheim. "The Bureau of Culture of the city of Warsaw welcomes the presence of artists in the city", says Tomasz Thun-Janowski, the Director of the Bureau of Culture. "Their presence is crucial, because harmonious development of the city and its local communities is possible only when the city has a serious cultural offer. Our strategic document, the program for cultural development in Warsaw, says that creating conditions for various creative activities is one of priorities in the operations of the city administration. Institutions are important, but independent artists also need a space for their activities. Their contribution to the life of local communities is very valuable, and

brings beneficial effects for balanced development of the city, inspiring people, alleviating social differences etc. It has long been shown that without artists, city development is not so fast and harmonious as with their presence and activity. Their work enhances confidence, participation in community activities, social capital building, entrepreneurship and creativity in cities. We are interested in supporting reasonable and balanced housing policy that would guarantee appropriate premises for artistic studios, and we are ready to seriously discuss the matter".

However, so far the city has no thorough diagnosis of the situation in the field of artistic studios in the capital - only the data on the number of premises rented for artistic studios in particular districts are available. The Director of the Bureau of Culture (holding the post for one year) indicates that the situation is a result of the scale and the complex nature of the problem (of which he is aware) rather than of negligence on the part of the city. That's why from the beginning of his official duties he participated in the preparation of the project to revitalise Praga district, implemented by the Bureau of Housing Policy and the district authorities, under which in the vicinity of Targowa, Markowska, Stalowa and Inżynierska streets suitable premises for studios, workshops and NGO artistic activities are to be created. The Bureau of Culture also took part in developing the rules for short-term rental of unoccupied city premises and in creating the Unit for Historical Artistic Studios attached to the City Hall of Warsaw. The cooperation with the Unit and prepared diagnoses and discussions on contemporary and historical artistic studios are seen by him as an opportunity to become more familiar with the problems of artistic studios in the

city, and to try to react to the problems within his field of competencies. According to both Tomasz Thun-Janowski and Beata Wrońska-Freudenheim, to understand the problem, a proper balance must be built between the parties and the scale and diversity of the existing needs must be diagnosed. "We have to use open and flexible criteria in granting the premises. I understand that artists need good conditions for their work, and the Bureau of Culture is a serious advocate of their presence in the city. But we also have to keep in mind the general policy of the city", says Tomasz Thun-Janowski. "I care about appropriate premises for artistic studios, but unfortunately our priority is to guarantee premises for people that need flats. Thus, RMUs must have appropriate revenues, and for the time being, as our resources are limited, we have to think about people in need of flats, about building new housing premises and refurbishing the existing ones". The Director of the Bureau of Housing Policy also says that he will try to assess what can be done to improve the situation in the context of the diagnosis on city premises for artistic studios performed by the team of the **WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION 6** festival in the spring and the summer of 2014.

Za współpracę przy zbieraniu materiału do artykułu dziękujemy: Obywatelskiemu Forum Sztuki Współczesnej, w tym przede wszystkim Laurze Paweł, wszystkim artystom, którzy podzielili się z nami swoimi doświadczeniami, Tomaszowi Thun-Janowskiemu, Beacie Wrońskiej, Agacie Dąbrowskiej, Piotrowi Królikiewiczowi, Pawłowi Nowakowi, Edycie Dzierż, Katarzynie Sobczak, Michałowi Krasuckiemu, Katy Bentall.

1 Wallis, A., *Artyści-plastycy: zawód i środowisko*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1964, s. 67.

2 ibidem

3 Baraniewski, W., *Pracownia artysty w PRL, w: Pracownia i dom artysty XIX i XX wieku: mitologia i rzeczywistość*, Wydawnictwo Neriton, Warszawa 2002.

4 ibidem

5 ibidem

6 ibidem

7 ibidem

8 Dane zbierane po I kwartale 2014 roku, dzięki uprzejmości Biura Polityki Lokalowej U.M. Warszawy.

9 Wszystkie cytaty, wypowiedzi artystów pochodzą z badania przeprowadzonego na rzecz festiwalu WARSZAWA W BUDOWIE 6 na próbie około 200 artystów ze stolicy w różnych grupach wiekowych, od 20 do 80 lat, i o różnych statusach. Twórcy w większości zastrzegli sobie prawo do nieupubliczniania swoich tożsamości.





THERE IS NO PROFIT TO BE
MADE HERE

FOUNDING PARTNERS
DANIELA BRAHM AND
LES SCHLIESSER
IN CONVERSATION WITH
TOMASZ FUDALA AND
ALEKSANDRA KĘDZIOREK

TOMASZ FUDALA: I see plenty of people here. What are they doing in the former factory space of ExRotaprint?

: DANIELA BRAHM: Everyday life here is very active. We have artist studios on the compound, but also carpenters' workshops, electricians, architects, graphic designers, a shelf-system production, a lot of community outreach organizations, and we run our project space...

: LES SCHLIESSER: We also installed a canteen with a kitchen, there are 140 meals served daily and it has become an important meeting point here in the district. ExRotaprint has about 10,000 square meters to rent out, occupying 11 very different kinds of buildings of the former factory complex; we have 96 rental contracts and 220 people working here each day along with 250 daily visitors, so it plays a crucial role in the neighborhood now. The whole complex is a declared historic monument. It has been listed in the early 1990s and that preserved it. Probably it wouldn't exist otherwise. It is a very interesting mix of spaces and architecture. We have postwar late-modernist buildings that are connected with older Wilhelminian-style buildings.

TOMASZ FUDALA: But your original activity as artists is related to exhibitions; do you present exhibitions at ExRotaprint?

: DANIELA BRAHM: No, we decided not to have exhibitions here. We have a space that would be very suitable for exhibitions, but instead of installing a gallery space there, we rent it out to a school for dropout teenagers in order to offer new prospects to the district. We don't push the art aspect into the foreground. We want to keep equality between all the groups that are part of our concept "work, art, community". To focus only on art and the creative class would gentrify the area and that would have a negative impact on our

local neighborhood.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Artists are very often seen as the first step in gentrification.

: DANIELA BRAHM: As artists we are confronted with the process called gentrification. We are the protagonists of gentrification but also victims of gentrification. Between those two poles we try to find a position.

A lot of investors use artists or other creatives as a short-term motor for profit making, but what about other social goals? Culture had become a useful tool for developers. We don't want to be part of their PR strategy.

TOMASZ FUDALA: What is the official real estate policy in Berlin?

: DANIELA BRAHM: The city of Berlin has huge financial problems since the late 1990th, and they set up a city-owned company (the Liegenschaftsfonds) just to follow one goal: to sell city-owned grounds and real estate to the highest bid, which means to the investor who'll pay the most money. The results of this policy are visible right next to ExRotaprint. As long as the real estate market is regulated by no other interest than money you get a Lidl supermarket to be built attached to an architectural landmark from the 1950th. In our direct proximity it was obvious that the City Development Department had no idea how to direct urban planning in a locally sustainable way.

ALEKSANDRA KĘDZIOREK: How did you developed the idea of this unusual place?

: LES SCHLIESSER: We knew that we couldn't rely on the city because they're interested in those who pay the most like in the case of the Lidl supermarket. That was a warning to us. We knew that we can't wait for the ideas the city might bring to the former Rotaprint complex, but that we'd have to manage ourselves.

TOMASZ FUDALA: What was the context of your idea for ExRotaprint?

: LES SCHLIESSER: After the fall of the Wall, Berlin developed a new, vivid and experimental cultural scene. This development was not planned or intended by the city government, it just happened thanks to really low rents – between something and nothing– and thanks to the complete absence of restrictions by the state. In its first six years, the former East Berlin was free of tax registration, fire-safety plans and building regulations. In those creative years of smooth anarchy, Berlin became a city for the creative class, artists, DJs, musicians, bar and club owners. Bars, galleries, studios and free-art spaces emerged in neglected houses and cellars in what had been East Berlin.

The big plans of the government failed, because the official development scenario for Berlin after the major disruption of reuniting the city was for quick-growth capital to provide the needs for new offices and a huge number of apartments for the expected population growth. But the rush to Berlin of so-called young professionals, the office employees and the happy rich, took its time. In its first years, reunited Berlin became the number-one city for low-income professionals: the creative class.

In those years, foundations were laid for cultural institutions like Tacheles, Kunstwerke and many important galleries, bars and clubs. After the establishment of interesting bars and cultural places, living and working in this area became an attraction. This finally had a negative impact: prices escalated for renting and buying spaces. Investment in this inner-city area had a short but

strong disruption in 2008 with the so-called outbreak of the financial crisis. The EU government and the state decided to battle the crisis by pushing cheap money into the financial market and the run on real estate investments driven by low-interest costs accelerated to a high level and is still increasing. Berlin's legendary time as a low-cost living place is coming to an end. For the creative class and for experiments in living and working, the air is leaking out.

TOMASZ FUDALA: How did you find the Rotaprint complex? When was your first encounter with this space?

: DANIELA BRAHM: I'm very interested in architecture wherever I am. I saw this building from the street, while cycling around here back in 2000. It was hidden behind the uncontrolled growth of a waste land and looked really unique. When I came back to our studio – Les and I had a studio together in the Mitte district – I told him that I'd seen a fantastic late modernist building and we came here together. We persuaded the Wedding district to rent out two spaces to us. At that time only half of the compound was rented.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Why did ExRotaprint decide to include local communities, like immigrants and the unemployed?

: DANIELA BRAHM: When you take over a complex of this scale, the crucial question is for whom shall we do this? This was a very important question for us. We wanted to do it not only for artists but as part of a much bigger social picture.

It was a very special situation at that time, when the real estate market in this district wasn't very active yet.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Good for you!

: LES SCHLIESSER: Yes, it was a very important moment for us. We call it "Point Zero". When there's no competition among investors in your area, you have a bit more time to set up your own concept and find out what alternatives might work. When you want to start an alternative project, what you need is time. There was also a very bad image of our district as a former working-class district, very poor, having all the stigmas of social problems: high unemployment rate, a high percentage of recent immigration, drug dealing, a district in a state of neglect. Shops were dying, shady casinos were popping up. We had such a feeling that the district itself was a kind of protection for our project, creating an umbrella for it. It was simply not attractive for investors. And when you start a project coming from within the district, knowing people in the street, you have a different bottom-up perspective as a local protagonist, as a local actor.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Who was the owner of the former factory?

: DANIELA BRAHM: After the Rotaprint company went bankrupt in 1989, the site was left without any future prospects. The Wedding district took over the responsibility for the former factory site, because the printing-press manufacturing company Rotaprint had left with debts. In return the land and the buildings became a city owned property. Later in 2002, the City government installed the Liegenschaftsfonds that had the task to sell city owned property to the highest bid and the Rotaprint factory was immediately put on the market.

In 2005 we started to negotiate with the Liegenschaftsfonds who was in charge to sell the property on behalf of the city of Berlin. The Liegenschaftsfonds didn't want to negotiate with a tenants' initiative, an association of rent-

ers. It was very a difficult time for us, they didn't budge. Instead they put up the property for auction, saying they'd sell it and would take the highest price offered. This auction failed because nobody was interested back then. ExRotaprint was the only bidder, we offered one euro. They didn't accept the offer but from that moment on we were part of the game.

Unfortunately later on the Liegenschaftsfonds tried to elude ExRotaprint again by putting the complex into a package of 50 real estates in order to sell it to an Icelandic investor.

ALEKSANDRA KEDZIOREK: And you were already working together with other renters?

; DANIELA BRAHM: At that stage we had the most stressful time setting up our group. We founded an association of renters to have a platform for our interests, but it was very difficult among us to negotiate what the goals of the association and our approach to the real estate development would be. The most difficult thing, which became obvious, is that real estate and private property is always connected with the idea of profit. Some of the renters of the complex had dollar signs in their eyes; the hope to make a personal profit immediately came up and almost destroyed the project right in its beginning.

TOMASZ FUDALA: The real estate free market sounds like your enemy, therefore we want to bring this kind of alternative attitude and your knowledge home to neoliberal Warsaw.

: LES SCHLIESSER: It took us two years to take the former factory out of the logic of the real estate market. In the beginning of 2007, we set up the banner with the slogan "There is no profit to be made here," because we had to fight. The Icelandic investor wanted to buy the former Rotaprint site within this package we mentioned. We had developed much further as a group by that time, and this banner expressed our deep conviction that there is not profit to be made here! We knew that we don't want to find ourselves on the free real estate market again, and didn't want somebody who'd raise rents.

Now everything we'd earn from rent will be invested back in the buildings, in renovation work. We were against the idea of profit because we had to find a solution for the whole compound; a solution for all the spaces regardless of the financial possibilities of the renters and the renovation backlogs. We wanted to think about it in a different way, to keep the decision making among us, and to stay independent from whoever will bring in money.

The idea of personal profit just diminished step by step, instead a realistic perspective grew. If we wanted to stay with low rents we wouldn't make any personal profit out of the premises due to the need of a lot of renovation work. The complex is a heritage-listed monument but for 40 years nothing had been done – there were really significant problems.

ALEKSANDRA KĘDZIOREK: In the photograph "There is no profit to be made here" you see many immigrants.

: DANIELA BRAHM: We have a language school on the compound that teaches German to immigrants. The school offers a very important opportunity in a district that has a lot of immigration. In the end this photograph convinced politicians, because it shows that our project is not only about artists, it's for a lot of different kind of people.

TOMASZ FUDALA: What's the legal structure now?

In 2007 we were finally able to buy the complex because the deal with the

Icelandic investor never happened. The Tageszeitung newspaper in Berlin ran the title “Culture Beats Capital (Kunst schlägt Kapital)”. It also suggests a meaning that culture creates a different kind of capital. That’s the way we thought about ExRotaprint. The model we installed was developed in our association. Its legal structure just exclude the idea of profit at all from the project. Our model consists of two contracts: we signed a heritable building right for 99 years and we set up a non-profit limited liability company. The contracts are related to each other. With this model, we focus on the usage of space and not on space for investment returns. By using the space the renters are creating social capital.

The heritable building right separates ownership of the land from ownership of the building. In our case, the land is now owned by two foundations, and the ExRotaprint non-profit company owns the buildings. We are fully responsible for everything, the only limitation is that we cannot sell it. The goal for bringing the foundations in was to keep the premises off the market, to cut the spiral of real estate speculation and stay away from the logic of buying and selling. We decided on this because we wanted to have a long-term perspective. We wrote down the goals of our project, and the primary one was the mixed usage of space: work, art and community. We wanted to safeguard the project from displacement.

The ExRotaprint non-profit company (ExRotaprint gGmbH) is the heart of the project. We do the financing, the management and we decide also on the renovation of the space and the further development. Our legally obligated non-profit goal is the preservation of the historical listed monument. And we have a second non-profit goal to support arts and culture. The income from rents must be invested in the declared non-profit aims. People stay equal, there is no capital outflow to any investor. Rents are the economic bases for the project. We don’t rely on grants.

With such a big complex you have a lot of work to do, but you also have an income from rents to work with. We generated a lot of power with this project.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Who’s reacted to the model ExRotaprint’s established?

: LES SCHLIESSER: Politicians who reacted first were those having local contact here, working in the district Wedding. They understood the need to save these buildings and to save jobs or to offer new possibilities in such a problematic neighborhood.

Today there is a lot of national and international interest in the project, its goals and its legal structure – mainly from the art context, the urban and architectural field, city planning departments etc.

ALEKSANDRA KĘDZIOREK: Tell us something about the two foundations in charge of the grounds of ExRotaprint.

: DANIELA BRAHM: One foundation is from Switzerland (Stiftung Edith Maryon) and one is German (Stiftung trias)– their main goal is to protect the ground from real estate speculation. They use the instrument of a heritable building right that was established a hundred years ago in Germany to allow poor families to get their own homes. With a heritable building right you don’t buy the land, you lease the land. The hurdle for getting your own property gets lower because you don’t have to pay for the land in the beginning. Instead, you pay every year a certain percentage of the land value to the land

owner. The foundations use this instrument as an anti-speculation tool. They don't do anything; they own the ground. We own the buildings but we can't sell the compound. It's impossible. They would never agree, also, if we tried. If we would go bankrupt, for example, they would try to find another group to take over. Now the compound is really out of the real estate market. We wanted to collaborate with the foundations because we wanted to avoid the pressure and the temptation of the market. This provides a really long-term perspective to the project – the heritable building right lasts for 99 years.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Why are there two foundations – to supervise each other?

: DANIELA BRAHM: The German foundation was very small at the time and was not able to pay the purchase price. They brought in the Swiss foundation to participate. Both foundations paid the purchase price and ExRotaprint pays every year 5.5 % of it back to the foundations. This reinvests the purchase price and in the long run the foundations generate money to start other projects. For us this is the right financial circle to be part of.

TOMASZ FUDALA: But what does it mean for you to mix work, art and community in one factory? How do you interpret the notions of work, art and community?

: LES SCHLIESSER: "The social sculpture" – we apply this term to ExRotaprint because our goal is to integrate other social groups, people with different educations, professions and backgrounds to have a mixed picture of society. That's very unusual, because most often investors are concentrated only on the "creatives." We wanted to have a mixed profile that makes sense in this district.

Tomasz Fudala: Who are the renters?

: DANIELA BRAHM: We include people who are typical for the Wedding district. We rent out in equal parts: a third to local businesses that bring jobs to the district, that produce something and function with local labor; a third to community outreach projects that offer things that are greatly in need in this district. We have a school teaching German language to immigrants, and it brings many people from the direct neighborhood to ExRotaprint. We have an organization working with unemployed people and giving help. We have a school project that brings dropouts back to class. The final third goes to art: artist studios, graphic designers, architects, writers and musicians. Our key word is heterogeneity: to have an inclusive system, to prevent segregation, which happens a lot in Berlin recently. In our contract we committed to allow no displacement of people who are already here, and to maintain the balance between "work, art and community."

ALEKSANDRA KEDZIOREK: How does it work?

: DANIELA BRAHM: There are conflicts, of course. Not everybody understands exactly what the neighbors do and there are different needs: of small businesses and of kids going to school here, for example. So there is a constant higher need for moderation when you have a concept like this. Which is a general idea for any contemporary city: that somebody has to moderate. To avoid segregation you have to face the problems. But still we think that the policy of only selling real estates in Berlin has brought us in a wrong direction in the city's development.

- TOMASZ FUDALA: The rate of rent for creatives is also an important and very much discussed now in Warsaw.
- : DANIELA BRAHM: Studios for artists in the low-price range are very important. At ExRotaprint the base rent (excluding bills) is 3 to 4 euros per square meter for a studio. The rent rate is the most important thing for all renters, and our goal is to be always at the low end of rents. But we need to be realistic because we still have to make money for the renovations of the complex. An investor, on the other hand, tries to charge as much rent as possible.
- TOMASZ FUDALA: Is the aspect of exchange among people here in one complex important?
- : LES SCHLIESSER: It's very important. Exchange happens on very different levels: sometimes it's collaboration between businesses, two companies collaborate on a job, or creatives develop something together with a company, or the community outreach organizations arrange jobs, interns or further education. The important thing is observation and acknowledgement of different living conditions.
- TOMASZ FUDALA: Does this mean that you're selective? Who decides about the new renter?
- : DANIELA BRAHM: We don't have a structure or complicated procedure yet, so we decide among us – two architects, two artists and 11 partners who are with us in the non-profit company – all of them renters here. We have different levels of communication, and there is plenty of informal contact – I compare it to a village. We still have the association for all the renters, it's a platform for the renters to participate in the process, and the association is also a partner in the company. Nobody is obliged to participate, but if you want to participate there are opportunities.
- TOMASZ FUDALA: But ExRotaprint is also your artistic project?
- : DANIELA BRAHM: In the beginning, we were simply pushing the project forward and we didn't express it as an artistic project. This came later when we saw that our interest in social uses of architecture and the formal and collective ideas that shape the project ExRotaprint derive from our artistic practice. Our activity at ExRotaprint became an art project shifted from the exhibition space into reality, the urban context.









SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OF ARTISTS

**Z ZUZANNĄ JANIN
ROZMAWIA
KLARA CZERNIEWSKA**

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: Was creating the Civic Forum for Modern Art a kind of answer to inaction on the part of the Association of Polish Visual Artists?

: ZUZANNA JANIN: When we started the Forum some people said that we should merge with the APVA, but I said at once that it was impossible, that I would not undertake the task. Perhaps to cooperate, but not to merge. I had the feeling that the APVA was unchangeable, non-reformable. Sometimes it's better to pull down a house and build a new one. As Jacek Kuroń said, "Instead of setting fire to committees, create your own ones". And now, we can see that it was a good idea to create the new Forum - the Civic Forum develops its own structures to represent artists: it is the responsibility of Kaśka Górna, we have wonderful secretariat gathering people of different strength, dynamics and experience. We work on reforming the system of social security for artists, we defend their interests, we sign agreements on minimum wages, we see to that that artists are represented in various bodies and committees, we work on the system of granting premises for studios and easing the tax regime for the existing ones, we take part in the discussion on how institutions such as the Center for Modern Art and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw or Art Bunker in Cracow should cooperate with artists. Everyone brings their own experiences, and based on them we develop proposals for new, better solutions. I, for example, am an artists, but also a mother. I know that the state does nothing for mothers-artists or for parents-artists. What's more, sometimes I feel discredited even among artists because of my motherhood. That's how in reality women are treated even in supposedly progressive, equality-oriented circles.

I feel that many achievements from the socialist era should be maintained: day nurseries for babies, kindergartens, healthcare, free university education or social help and studios for artists. We know how the wild 19th-century capitalism oppressed artists: the Young Poland artistic movement, the image of a poor artist starving to death...

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: The image of Boznańska living with mice?

: ZUZANNA JANIN: Exactly. That should be a lesson for us. Do we want to return to this?

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: But we also have written relations describing how factory owners in 19th-century Łódź cared more for social security of their workers than the present day institutional authorities in cities.

: ZUZANNA JANIN: Of course, and not only in the cities: building housing for rural workers, sewage systems, enhancing living conditions or supporting education in rural areas was the responsibility of real-estate owners. And in tsarist Russia private provident funds were created by wealthy people in small towns, and by capitalists, bankers in big cities. They supported people in need. But then, everything was destroyed, abolished by the October revolution of 1918. It was a nucleus of social thinking about other, weaker people.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: When you graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in the late 1980s, did you join the APVA?

: ZUZANNA JANIN: Probably not, I had never got any membership card. And maybe they automatically enrolled everyone? At the time, it was less obvious and indispensable. Before, the Association of Polish Visual Artists had been a central organisation under the socialist system - relatively ok in the sense that they had taken care of social security matters, rights and privileges for artists - for example, together with city councils they had organised studios for artists. In Warsaw, there had been quite a number of such studios. To whom they had been granted is another thing.

The Association supported artists in many ways: membership card gave access to cheap paints, brushes and frames, to free plain-air trips, for example to the well-known Osieki. But later on, the APVA became an ossified, mouldy office. When the Solidarity movement began, artists who wanted to change the situation tried to transform the institution. During the Martial Law the APVA was dissolved to punish the artists who created the Solidarity of Artists. Later on, the APVA was reactivated based on the Solidarity.

Within the APVA, and later the Solidarity of Artists, there was a group of artists who tried to change the world for better. My mother, a painter, Maria Anto, took part in the process in the late 1980s and the early 1990s as one of the few professionally active artists. The Solidarity was of course joined by many different artists who were not artistically active. But in some way, she managed to reconcile art and utopian activism. I cannot fully recall what was going on there, but I remember that my mother was always idealistic and believed in change, so she actively participated in the movement. At the time, I was interested in different things: travelling, then my artistic debut, first exhibitions.

After June of 1989 and the change of the political system, suddenly artists found themselves in severe capitalist conditions. I rather disliked it.

The city authorities started to take away studios from artists. A tragedy. City officials were ruthless. They could throw someone out on the street, together with his or her paintings, the whole artistic output. My mother told me about it with tears in her eyes. At the time, her enormous empathy irritated me, but now I understand her, I myself became active in the Civic Forum. My mother had her private studio in her house in Żoliborz district, but she relentlessly fought for others, finally at the cost of her health. She simply worked on this without a break. All the time she gave interviews to media, so she was seen as an "activist". Together with her colleagues, she developed a language to describe problems of artists. She indicated that everything around us - even a table, a chair or a telephone - was a work of art, derived from art. A truism - but not so obvious for city officials. She repeated that artists must have not been marginalised, because their work was important for society, that it could not be decided that artists should live only from the free market, because many of them were unable to do it. Besides, where was this mythical free market in Poland of the time? She was entitled to talk about it, because she knew from her own experience the capricious nature of the market. In the 1970s she earned her living selling her paintings and was represented by the Gallery Cortina in Milan. And she had her own studio. Not everybody was so lucky.

After her death, when discussions started to organise a big museum exhibition of her works, I heard unfair opinions that she was a "trade union artist". For an artist, to be active for others is a risky thing. People remembered her activism rather than the fact that she was a good painter - one of the few, authentic, sincere, firm and avowed magical surrealist. Her paintings, so modern today, resulted from her authentic and sincere feelings, were a manifestation of her resistance, rebellion against limitations and propaganda. She had nothing to do with the official trends, social realism or later conceptualism and post-constructivism. She believed that art was a driving force for freedom, she fought for herself, for her identity, for her artistic freedom, and later she directed her feelings to the work for others. She also had her weaknesses and - for unknown reasons - she refused her paintings to be transmitted by Ryszard Stanisławski to the Museum of Art in Łódź after the biennial in São Paulo. Later, she regretted her decision.

She was a true erudite, she had excellent knowledge of history, literature, she used a beautiful language and she wrote poems. Erna Rosenstein, Max Ernst, Dino Buzzati, Michał Walicki and the poet Teodor Szczepański were her friends and visited her in her studio.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: Please, tell us about her studio. In the published extended interview with Jarosław Modzelewski he says that that's where his debut took place. We are very interested in the theme of exhibitions in artistic studios as a kind of self-organising or self-sufficiency.

: ZUZANNA JANIN: It was in the time of the Martial Law. In the house of my mother, at Karpińskiego Street in Żoliborz, in her studio, various meetings, performances, exhibitions took place. We used to come there, still being students of the Academy of Fine Arts. Different people came there: Olga Wolniak, Agnieszka Niziurska-Sobczyk, artists, actors, writers, young painters, Włodek Pawlak, the whole Gruppa before it started to use the name Gruppa. Jarek Modzelewski had his first exhibition there, he showed for the first

time his "Road to the East". And close by the house, on the street militia cars and plain clothes stood. The house was full of people, some of them came just to meet Maria Anto, to talk with her on art.

The building where my mother's - and later my own - studio was located belonged to the modernist housing complex designed by Tołłeczko, between Tucholska, Karpińskiego, Sułkowskiego and Dziennikarska streets. My mother's house was built in a place where a shell exploded during the Warsaw uprising. It was the only building that was destroyed in the vicinity and nobody knows why it wasn't rebuilt according to the original design of Tołłeczko. Reportedly, the local administration refused to give permission. Before the war, cousins of my grandfather lived there, my aunt Maria Czarnecka, talented painter, but unfortunately professionally inactive. She was visited by Roman Jasiński, a famous hedonist figure, Warsaw Bohemians, and supposedly also by Witkacy, Stryjeńska and Berezowska. After the war my grandfather together with his cousin organised a cooperative to rebuild the house according to the pre-war project, but he was ordered by the authorities to build a house with a sloping roof, so this is the only house with a sloping roof in the vicinity.

Later, the house served as a studio and a place of many meetings and discussions. In the 1970s artistic studios played an important role. Even the Dziekanka Studio was a real studio, and not only a gallery, for example when Wojtek Krukowski together with Akademia Ruchu theatre cast faces of inhabitants of Warsaw. At the time, Piotr Nowicki had the only professional gallery, and my mother cooperated with him.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: We are interested in exhibitions organised in artistic studios also after the Martial Law period ended, in the 1990s.

: ZUZANNA JANIN: I took part in exhibitions organised in the studio of Olga Wolniak. The projects were important to me, because Olga invited very interesting artists. For some time, in the artistic studio located in the building at Inżynierska street, that recently was burnt in a fire, the Theatre Akademia of Roman Woźniak had its location. Lokal_30 was also created in my studio at Foksal street. Today, it is a professional gallery located in a new place at Wilcza street, but in the beginning, together with Agnieszka Rayzacher we had only 40 square meters of my studio and a small budget. To a great extent, we financed lokal_30 from royalties from the movie „The folly of Majka Skowron”, and later from the prize we won in Vienna. When lokal_30 was created as an independent place, it was only a third decent, modern gallery in the city. Earlier, it was my studio where Paulina Ołowska, Paweł Śliwiński and Tymek Borowski worked as guests. And later, new places started to be created. But finally it became too burdensome for me as an artist, so I decided to withdraw and leave the gallery to Agnieszka, and to transform this artist-run space into a professional gallery. Lokal was created in a kind of "energy whirlpool", close to other artistic places around Foksal street.

In my opinion, a map of such "energy whirlpools" or "chakras" can be drawn, places attracting artists, studios, galleries and other important initiatives. Today, the district of Praga is such "chakra", but also the Otwock line - a phantom place, built along the railway line, as if inspired by the Oskar Hansen idea of linear architecture: a summer colony of "świdermeiers" initi-

ated by the 19th-century artist Michał Andriolli. Marek Sobczyk had his studio in Międzyzlesie, Tomasz Ciecierski until recently hired some place in Anin, as Ryszard Grzyb, Roman Stańczak, Marek Kijewski worked in Falenica, as well as Małgorzata Ritterschild (a member of the first Gruppa). Mirosław Bałka has a house and a studio in Otwock, I had one in Radość, and now I have a studio in Międzyzlesie. In the past, Żoliborz or Stare Miasto used to be such artistic basins.

Hotel Europejski is an extremely important building for Warsaw. Its owners, the family of Czetwertyńscy, were patriots in the good sense. On the highest floor, in the attic, they organised studios for artists, and flats for families, lonely women whose husbands had been deported to Siberia. Many of them were left without means of support, without help, so also jobs were organised for them, e.g. as teachers. The January Revolution - I say revolution, not uprising, in view of the social change it brought about - was a starting point for a great emancipation of women. It was the first great urban revolution, something like Maidan in Ukraine. The society, not the nation was its driving force: Jews, Germans, Russians, women, students, artists participated in it. A year ago, the Polish Academy of Sciences organised a conference "1863. The birth of modern Poland" where the issues were discussed. The role of women was crucial. Women founded many schools, also artistic ones.

In Hotel Europejski, after return from deportation to Siberia, also my grand-grandfather, the painter Ignacy Jasiński worked (it was his family that later owned the house in the Tołłoczko colony). In his studio, equipped with electric light - a very rare thing at the time - he made his drawings. Jasiński, like other students of the Main School of Fine Arts, was very active during the uprising, took part in the attempt to assassinate Fiodor Berg in 1863. As a result of the active participation of students in the uprising, the school was closed, and many students, including my grand-grandfather were deported to Russia. Recently, I visited the place of his deportation, using his diary and his sketchpad found in the house of my mother as a guide. And in an archive in Russia I found plenty of interesting information. For example, I learnt that my grand-grandfather conspired together with a Teofilia Blendkowska, who left five children and a husband in Warsaw. During his stay in Russia, Jasiński together with Michał Andriolli taught drawing to people such as Wiktor Wasniecowa and Anna Bilińska, an esteemed painter of the Young Poland period.

But returning to the center of Warsaw and the vicinity of Hotel Europejski, just before the January revolution or uprising, Karol Beyer, a pioneer of photography in Poland lived close to the hotel. He was famous for the first photography of the eclipse of the moon and the first photomontage, combining several shots in one print. On one of his photos, shown a year ago at an exhibition organised in the House of Meetings with History, I saw my grand-grandfather in a group of students of professor Rafał Hadziewicz. But above all, his photos of the streets of Warsaw of the 1850s and 1860s are fascinating. They show scenes of demonstrations like from the Kiev Maidan: crowds of citizens of Warsaw in black during a Corpus Christi procession, houses decorated in black as a sign of mourning. Beyer himself spent two years in Russia as a result of deportation, and his mother led one of private painting schools for girls.

Hotel Europejski was a center of artistic Warsaw. Later, in the 1920s Zofia Stryjeńska lived there. In the 1970s, every Thursday Warsaw artistic youth used to meet there. These were the secret meetings for initiates.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: I wonder what themes would be interesting for you as an artist during a festival dedicated to artists in the city.

: ZUZANNA JANIN: The most important thing is to show their presence. Open the studios. I would also like different worlds to diffuse. It seems very important to me that the special situation of inhabitants of Warsaw should be highlighted - they developed culture and normal good life in the times of between-war mobilisation, when they had to, wanted to... It's not widely known. They did it in their own way, but nevertheless to a great extent just like we do it now. We could gather their stories and confront them with the present time, look at their memories about Warsaw and see that the history is modern, progressive, and that they are allies of modernity. Perhaps in fact, I am one of the few persons in the active artistic circles who are truly from here. But in spite of the fact that I grew up in Warsaw, I am not a "hard conservative" - to the contrary.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: I have the feeling that when talking like that you take a rather conservative stance. Generally, it is said that those who are mobile, who come to a big city looking for jobs, are modern and set new trends.

: ZUZANNA JANIN: Yes, of course. That's what I am talking about. Warsaw is a city of migrants - everyone came here from somewhere else. Mobility like progressivity is inscribed in someone's genes! Even travelling between Żoliborz and Praga can be revealing and creative. Its diversity is the strength of Warsaw. People must not be divided and judged based on who lives where and for how long. People migrate to Warsaw, running away from smaller localities, because here they can find self-fulfilment – they have a chance to live in a modern way without bigotry, backwardness and prejudices. It doesn't matter who and from where came here - the important thing is what they brought with them and have to offer. Warsaw is a melting pot of progress and diversity. It cannot be said that someone who came here six generations ago is more conservative than someone else who came here yesterday. It would mean classifying people according to their location, using stereotypes that simplify and distort the discussion. In my opinion, other people should not be excluded in this way - it can result in developing different new group histories of the city. Our history is already fragmented. To build a narrative disconnected from the - critically assessed - links with the old Warsaw is a road leading nowhere. Anyway, the discussion about superiority is ridiculous on both sides.

In my artistic practice, I am interested in processes, in what is in-between, invisible, and that's why sometimes I try to take various things from a „lumber room”, bring them to the present world and visualise them in a new, modern way - including the values appropriated by the conservative narrative, such as patriotism, solidarity, and family - seen as a partnership and not as a stiff dependence - respect for reason, for positive activity. Perhaps it sounds strange, but after the communist era, after the sense of imprisonment and impotence and limitation during the Martial Law, I felt patriotic when I opened lokal_30_warszawa-londyn in a small premises in east London, close

to other international galleries. From Foksal street we moved to a space hired from Scots, aptly named Foxall brothers, during the Polish Year (2009-2010). I had the feeling that finally I live in a democratic country that is really free, without war, and that I can pursue any project I want, and what's more, with the help of Polish institutions (the Adam Mickiewicz Institute or the Polish Institute) that now are friendly, trustful and supportive. I still remember struggles with unfriendly institutions of the communist era, so I can appreciate it now. Now, you can realise your own small patriotism in your work, promoting Polish artists, Polish art and culture, building values. The activity strongly elevated our sense of freedom, identity and empowerment. I believe in importance of such activities. Today, we already know that we are able to open gallery or realise an artistic project in any place in the world.









**WE HAVE TO BUILD
SOMETHING NEW**

**Z ŁUKASZEM GORCZYCĄ
ROZMAWIAJĄ
KLARA CZERNIEWSKA
I TOMASZ FUDALA**

TOMASZ FUDALA: When you opened the gallery in 2001, what was most interesting for you in the artistic life?

: ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA: We didn't like Warsaw that much. To travel around Poland was a fine alternative. In Warsaw, we couldn't find any intriguing people or groups. We managed to witness the last days of Dziekanka. Together with Michał Kaczyński, we were at the last performance of Grupa in Dziekanka. There were many such scattered places, for example Galeria Działań in Ursynów. These were interesting groups, open for young people, rather faithful to basic artistic work, without any mainstream ambitions. They lived in a niche, were interested in books, visual poetry, things that are now completely ignored, because in the 1990s it was Zamek Ujazdowski, and in part Zachęta, that set the tone for artistic life.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: At the time, Warsaw was not so international as today ...

: ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA: The whole story of foreign guests is interesting. In the communist era, these people were hosted privately. There was no official space for them, but several places for them to see and people to meet, private collections etc. Together with Michał, we had no access to these circles, we were not so much connected with the artistic circles, nor we had professional or social contacts with them, in contrast to e.g. Andrzej Przywara, Joanna Mytkowska, Adam Szymczyk, who were engaged in the activities of Galeria Foksal and became deeply connected with its history and the people. We had different points of reference, in the early 1990s related rather to the literary scene.

TOMASZ FUDALA: In your case, was the creation of the periodical a method to become known and define yourself in relation to the artistic scene? Soon, people started to say that the Raster is ok, because it critically presents new proposals.

: ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA: For us, making the periodical was a cognitive process. We created our own language, a way of thinking that helped us to understand the mechanisms of the artistic world and the artists. We knew that we wanted to go further. We were not frustrated, we were mainly interested in cultural change, activity for transformation in the field of art and artistic life. I think that in this sense, our program was positive. In the beginning, we were perceived as students who mock everyone. Then, we opened the gallery, because we were interested in a real change of the existing situation. We wanted to build something new. For us, also the generational aspects were important, the feeling that we were young, that we had defined views, that we formed a group, that we were strong, that we wanted to describe our reality. We believed that creating the Raster - first the periodical, and then the gallery - we created a new micro-community.

TOMASZ FUDALA: An interesting activity of the Raster was the graphics from 1998 titled "Integrated circuit of the Polish art". Haven't you thought about returning to the idea?

: ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA: A couple of years ago, Artur Żmijewski tried to persuade me to do it, when he was engaged in the Warsaw Artistic Activism that operated for a couple of years at Kozia street. And once in a while, somebody comes to me with the proposal, which convinces me that I should not do it.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Which activity of the Raster, other than the periodical, was the most valuable contribution to the artistic life?

: ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA: I think that the Artistic Club-Room at Hoża street. That was an important initiative intended to change the organisation of the city artistic life in Warsaw. Many different people started to come there. We created a model for others. Later, in the vicinity several other similar galleries and organisations were created. As Paweł Dunin-Wąsowicz spent a lot of time in the Raster, also many writers came there. All the different people from different quarters mixed. On the one hand Ania Kuczyńska, and Kain May on the other. We were also visited by many interesting people from abroad. That was a turning point. That was also the place where the Cheap Art Fairs were organised that attracted a mass audience.

TOMASZ FUDALA: I think that your idea of the Raster was clear and that's where its strength lied.

: ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA: Generally, at the time there were only few places connected with culture that were led by young people. We showed that different, sometimes absurd events can be organised, for which there were no other places. Today, every such activity can be done better somewhere else. Concerts can be performed in clubs, exhibitions are organised in white cube galleries. Everything is subject to a growing specialisation.

TOMASZ FUDALA: Now, for example, the Club Powiększenie was closed that was known as one of the best music places.

: ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA: Warsaw audience is easily bored with the existing places, and flows from one club to another. Perhaps, that's the idea of

"being in the city", and in a sense it's ok.

TOMASZ FUDALA: All the time new places are opened. Cultural places become short-term media facts, they organise mass events, and soon decline, because they have no long-term strategy.

: **ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA:** The problem is also connected with the city policy concerning premises. In this respect, Warsaw is still an unfriendly environment. The city policy is very commercial, with some exceptions. Maybe it's just natural in Warsaw that people prefer not to rent premises at all than to rent them cheaply. In the Śródmieście district, there are many unoccupied premises, and if they are rented, then they are again empty in a while. I remember that when we looked for premises for the Raster, we reviewed city competitions for commercial premises. Sometimes the prospective tenants offered 240 PLN for a square meter a month. It's absurd. Recently, I visited Brussels where I learned that a monthly rent for average business premises in the centre of the city amounts to 1000-1500 euro, or about 6000 PLN. In Warsaw, the same money is paid by many galleries situated in the back yard on the second or fifth floor.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: Is it at all possible to make the things easier, to get cooperation from the city? For example, there was a project of an artistic district in the city. Is it feasible in the bureaucratic environment?

: **ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA:** It depends on individual people, individual city officers. If more open or more reasonable people can be found, a lot of things can be changed. It's a lottery, but on the other hand, mechanisms should be introduced to select wise people for such official posts. The premises that we presently use at Wspólna street stood empty for ten years. It's a shame. We got it thanks to good will of several people. Finally, it was decided that a competition for cultural activity can be organised, but the matter had to be handled at the highest levels of city authorities. The district of Śródmieście introduced the idea of "Cultural premises". I think that the program is very helpful. When I recently talked with officers from the Real-Estate Management Unit, they told me that e.g. in the square by the Anders street many things changed for better when the foundation and the gallery moved there. Something useful was done for the district and the city. And above all, it's good that the city officers themselves appreciate the changes and the potential of new galleries or foundations under a reasonable city policy.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: Does the fact that artists and galleries migrate from Poznań, Kraków and other places to Warsaw mean that in Warsaw the artistic life flourishes, or economic aspects are more important?

: **ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA:** Yes, the economic conditions matter, but also access to contacts is important. Warsaw is more international than other Polish cities. Living in Warsaw helps to establish various contacts. Artists feel it. This monopoly of Warsaw is not a healthy situation, but I think that other Polish cities lack something. When the art, the artistic life is concerned, I think that many things changed in Warsaw thanks to galleries. They also attract artists. Many clients, curators come here. For beginners, Warsaw is a place creating more opportunities. What's more, now the galleries started to cooperate in some areas. At present, the process of registration of an association of gal-

leries is under way. The association will become an official producer of the Warsaw Gallery Weekend. It will be a real structure.

Galleries are institutions rooted in the market. In Poznań, there are four biggest modern art collections in Poland, managed by foundations. They were not interested in supporting new local galleries. Perhaps, even Warsaw is not so interesting for them as e.g. Berlin, which can be understandable. So, if we want to enhance the respect for the Polish artistic life, we have to stand together. I am proud that Warsaw managed to develop such artistic initiative that gathered fifteen different private entities.

KLARA CZERNIEWSKA: The club-room Raster means openness, because a club-room is a place where people can come and spend their free time.

: We didn't want to open a gallery that would be directed to nowhere. We were not interested in an idealistic project assuming that art would speak for itself. We wanted to face the reality. If the reality is as it is, then let it be. It will be our reference point. We were interested in audience and contact with other people.











ARTISTS' NIGHT VIGIL

ZBIGNIEW LIBERA AND
OSKAR DAWICKI INTER-
VIEWED BY SŁAWOMIR
BELINA

SŁAWOMIR BELINA: At the supper I prepared for you we are supposed to talk about artists' nightlife, entertainment and, perhaps, social pranks. Pork neck in champignons and alcohol are there to soften you up and prompt you into secret confessions.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: We'll see.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: How secret should these confessions be?
 SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Very secret. Additionally, I've got these two silver kettles, Bellemore I guess, this is a form of a bribe, one that would easily fit the Polish political class.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Not kettles but nice, heavy timepieces. Ok, go ask.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Yes, they're nice, we're going to tell you everything.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: I only wonder how you'll convey this sound in a text. (Here they both start shaking their watches over a recorder).
 SŁAWOMIR BELINA: In a descriptive way. So, how do the artists entertain themselves? Is it in any way different from non-artists?
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: It's the critical artists who entertain themselves in a different way, I guess. (laughs)
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Or not at all.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Why would one adorn the tree in August? Did your doctor recommend it as part of a psychotherapy?
 SŁAWOMIR BELINA: No, I wanted to be ready before Christmas. It's all about pure fun, not art.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: This whole art is one big fucking hogwash.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: And what is not hogwash?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Well, for example football is no hogwash. We've got a match, so we've got a result, let's say 1:0, and this is undisputable.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Have you heard about the final match between Argentina and Germany? It included an utterly fascinating incident. A German player was hit with force and fell down, completely unaware, walked out of the pitch, then returned and played for some 20 minutes. After the match he said he didn't remember anything...

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yes, yes, I've heard about it.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: He told the press that to him the match had begun with the second half, so isn't it hogwash? You can play without being aware of it, just like in art.

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: (laughs) I've got an idea: let's make a football team and hire a hypnotist; he'll hypnotize us and we'll be playing like crazy.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Well, no, I'd prefer to guide it somehow.

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: You won't even be aware of it.

: SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Can I be your manager?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: No, you'll be a striker and we'll call ourselves Elegy. And we'll have a match with Legia. (laughs)

: OSKAR DAWICKI: I think it's not a losing game for us.

: SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Ok, who else shall we incorporate into our team?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Well, I don't know, I don't like Artur Żmijewski, but he'll work out as a striker.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Paweł Althamer necessarily in defence, he's prone to hypnosis.

: SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Kozyra Katarzyna?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: No, women play in a different team.

: SŁAWOMIR BELINA: But maybe as a cheerleader?

: OSKAR DAWICKI: There are no cheerleaders in football.

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yes, there are! It's got everything now, brother.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Under hypnosis?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yes. And then we beat Legia Warsaw, that's for sure.

: SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Anyone else in our team?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Kuśmirowski, a bear of a man, he'll play as a sweeper.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: As three sweepers.

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yeah, nobody's ever going to tackle him. Plus Truszek, but he's fucking bats in the belfry.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: And what, Truszkowski as a goalkeeper?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: No, Truszkowski would've run away thinking they want to rob and kill him.

: SŁAWOMIR BELINA: So maybe Prof. Mirosław Bałka?

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Nooo, Bałka should be throwing a boomerang.

: SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Ryszard Grzyb?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Oh yes, yes. He would commit fouls all the time. He'd be a great defender. Yes, we're taking him. A wonderful player.

ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: Jarosław Modzelewski?
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Unfortunately, he's in a bad shape. He partook of life to the hilt.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: No, he's not drinking anymore.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Olaf Brzeski to add – young, tall, sculptor.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Yes, the Brzeski guy's damn agile
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: He can use such heavy tools... Oskar Dawicki: Alright, so we've got another frigging defender.
 ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: Is he gay or straight?
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Straight. But after all, is it relevant?
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Talking in Czech, we'll eke out some players, for there aren't enough of them.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: (laughs) So, maybe the young ones, Bujnowski?
 ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: Is he young?
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Well, younger than us, but still, we need fifteen players – what about substitutes?
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: So let's take some art goners, maybe the ball bounces against the coffin and it all goes on somehow.
 ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: It's going to be a huge show, while it was supposed to be a match only.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yes, but after all, a match is a show.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Yeah.
 ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: But not that massive, as you're planning here.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Why not? A match and a stadium equal the greatest show of all.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Exchanging shirts with goners will be a bit problematic.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: (laughs) Yeah, who would want to exchange?
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: But we're still missing a few players. Anyone else? Who else should join our Elegy?
 ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: Wait, wait, we were supposed to talk about the nightlife, and what I get is sports and goners. I've spent half a day cooking for you.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Tasty, indeed.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Potatoes are excellent.
 ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: So, how do the artists entertain themselves?
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: This is how they do, just like we're doing now. Note that this table has just turned into a stadium. We've had a nearly full team of the living and the dead. There's been no exchange of shirts with the dead, but the stadium's been full of people.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: There's been so much light in there, the light towers just like on a stadium.
 (Again, they both started shaking their watches close to the recorder)
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: A friend's friend went to buy flowers for his mother's funeral, 70 roses, that's how old she were. When he was waiting in a queue, he saw our national team's goalkeeper, Szczesny, who suddenly asked him: These for a girl? Huh? Well, yes, replied our friend's friend, so the goalie said to the lady: "so 150 for mine, please."

SŁAWOMIR BELINA: You seem to be possessed by sports and death. What a combination.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Oh, they match each other very well. Sports and death. They fit perfectly to each other. I would even say that it's a prehistoric construct.
 SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Alright, but playing isn't dying, these are two different shapes.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Dying is everything.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: There was a football player, Smolarek, he played for Widzew.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: The king of the corner.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: With such a player in the line-up, it made Widzew piss Legia off, so they drafted him to the army and told to play for Legia. His only response was: fuck off, I won't play for Legia. So he had to serve two years in the military as a stableman. He passed away recently.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: I love this phrase...
 SŁAWOMIR BELINA: "Passed away recently?"
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: No, "as a stableman."
 (Both start laughing and shaking watches over the recorder).
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: "Rattle of timepieces" I'd call it. Not kettles. There is no such word as a kettle for a watch, remember that.
 SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Yes, there is. I love non-existent words.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: We're all poets.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Back to the topic, the Smolarek, as a stableman, exercised individually. Everyone thought that he wouldn't continue to play, but he remained in a good shape and after they let him go he returned to Widzew and scored two goals in a match against Legia. Widzew won 2:1.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: He tackled with a horse, so he could remain in shape. Nobody was able to knock him over.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: In the 1990s I lived in Okęcie district and although it was very far from the city centre, I lived on the "Central" street.
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Paradoxically.
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yes, paradoxically. To get there, one should reach the bus terminal and then walk for a while. On the way you went past a bar, a shed from corrugated steel. The worst bums spent their time there. Crème de la crème. The bar was open until very late, they even served beer at 4 or 5 in the morning. One day I pop by with my friends, we order beers and realize some dodgy curiosity growing around us. Then there was an encounter...
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: Verbal?
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yes, verbal, and I see that we need to evacuate ourselves immediately, but it ain't that simple, since they're standing at the door. So I thought, I'd trick them. I tell one guy I can read hands... Sławomir Belina: Hell no!
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Yes, a classic escape forward, so he sticks out his hand and says: read it now!
 : OSKAR DAWICKI: But you told him: "today you're gonna beat the best Polish artist black and blue."
 : ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: (laughs) No, it's you who would have done it

like that. We were sitting there for a while and I'd heard some scraps of their conversation. I take his hand, look at it and say: aw, I can see two breaks in the lifetime. Then I improvised on those fragments of their conversation, I freed my imagination completely, so they let us go with respect. (laughs) He told me that I'd told the pure truth. From this left hand.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: This is what the nightlife of the 1990s looked like. All clear like a bum's hand.

ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: And tell me how it was to throw pork knuckle at Urszula Czartoryska in Łódź?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Not at Czartoryska, but at Piotr Piotrowski. And not in Łódź, but in Poznań. Zygmunt Rytko video-recorded it: the knuckle is flying suspiciously long before it lands on Piotrowski new, light-coloured suit. A merciless fat stain on a chest.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Good that you didn't aim at his beard...

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Well, he would've wiped his beard off, while the suit had to be dumped.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Light suits are horrible, that's why I haven't got any.

ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: But Łódź Kaliska would throw pork knuckles at Czartoryska several times; Andrzej Kwietniewski and Marek Janiak.

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Several times? A bunch of boors!

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Louts!

(And they both started shaking their watches over the recorder, this time with indignation).

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Urszula Czartoryska was an outstanding, wonderful person. She was the first to have bought my piece to the collection in 1989.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: You've never told me about it. Which piece?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: „Intimate Rites.” Now screw Łódź Kaliska. You better tell me about Łódź Fabryczna you've taken part in...

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Do you remember that we first met in Łódź?

Śławomir Belina: Yes, in a now defunct Museum of Artists.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: There was some nightlife there, wasn't there?

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Nightlife my ass. There were only 24/7 shops nearby. I only remember Allen Ginsberg's bluish lips from that Museum of Artists thing. I stood next to him and I stared bewildered at this dark-violet lips of his.

ŚLAWOMIR BELINA: I remember how he voraciously eyed up young boys.

: OSKAR DAWICKI: So let me tell you about Zbigniew Warpechowski and Ginsberg. Krakow, the 1970s.

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: Why, Ginsberg tried to pick Warpechowski up?

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Wait. Tadeusz Kantor invited Ginsberg to Krakow to read his poems. Perhaps. After the poetry recital a total booze in Krzysztofory. They finished at a railway station restaurant where Ginsberg told Warpechowski that he actually didn't have any place to sleep. So he took him to a single-bedroom flat he rented with a friend. And yes, there was only one

bed there. So the three of them lie down on this bed. Ginsberg, obviously, in the middle. The light turns off and Warpechowski can sense Ginsberg's hand on him. He asks him in French what it is, while Ginsberg replies that he wanted some loving. Warpechowski pretends he doesn't get it and tells him, alright, but there are no women in here. Ginsberg felt offended and went to sleep.

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: (laughs) It's a pity that we can't listen to Allen's recollection of that night in Krakow. On the other hand, it must have been pretty good.

SŁAWOMIR BELINA: Alright, screw Ginsberg, let's return to the basic question: how do the artists entertain themselves?

: OSKAR DAWICKI: Like this!

: ZBIGNIEW LIBERA: How else?

(And again they started shaking their watches over the recorder).







IMAGINARY ARCHIVE

GREGORY SHOLETTE

automobile tires. The barricades were built to impede the advance of pro-Yanukovych forces, while simultaneously protecting the square's motley crew of demonstrators. Now, after the events of February, these barricades are less functional and more like monuments. Perhaps that is why we were able to cut a deal with the local Maidan "self-defense" to relocate scores of tires to Les Kurbas State Center for Theatre Arts, a nearby cultural space where the Ukrainian edition of *Imaginary Archive* (IA) is being hosted.

IA is a traveling installation that I have organized together with curator Olga Kopenkina and with technical assistance from Matt Greco. For this occasion, Larrisa Babij makes up the fourth member of our team. IA consists of dozens of artist-generated "documents," each of which represents a past whose future never arrived. As it moves from country to country local artists contribute new fictitious histories which, despite their fantastical dimension, manage to address concrete political, historical, and social struggles. So far IA has appeared in New Zealand (2010), Ireland (2011), Austria (2013), and now Ukraine (2014) thanks to support from CEC Artslink and a crowd-funded IndieGoGo campaign.

A principle aim of the project is to release the utopian dimension of history, or as a reporter from Ukrainian *Pravda* described IA,

At a time when living impressions and personal memory are no longer a reliable instrument for "digesting" the endless stream of events, the need for an alternative approach to understanding the history, which is unfolding before our eyes, becomes more than relevant.

And so we gather up these ready-made materials, rolling them one by one into a waiting cargo van that is

With a sharp tug, the soot-covered tire slides free from a pile stacked over my head. Then another. And another. Soon I have fifteen tires loosened. It's April 22, 2014, and along with local curator Larissa Babij I am standing on the battle-charred northeast corner of Kiev, Ukraine's Independence Square, known locally as Maidan ("Square"). Only a few months earlier, the state's special military units and riot police confronted an assortment of extraparamilitary forces and ordinary citizens here as they attempted, and ultimately succeeded, to oust their corrupt president, Viktor Yanukovych, from office.

Throughout the battle, DIY barricades appeared across all the streets leading to Maidan. Stacked three and four meters high, these improvised barriers combined wood shipping pallets with packed ice and assorted objects from benches to pieces of the dismantled city-sponsored Christmas tree to

quickly filled to capacity. Yet even as we do so, small units of camouflaged men huddle about Maidan on this chilly spring morning. Some chop firewood. Others peel potatoes and tend stoves. They remain stationed here 24/7, presumably dug-in “just in case.” (Or is it because the entire square is now charged with historical significance, or more accurately, with multiple auras of signification?) Meanwhile, Kiev’s residents swarm between these grimy, makeshift obstacles heading to and from work. At certain points their flow is reduced to a single-file. In other words, the barricades still function. Before we pull away I tuck some folded Hryvnias into a plastic donation box adorned with a small Ukrainian flag. It amounts to only a few US dollars, but in an extraordinarily imploded economy valuable nonetheless. The blue and gold flag is sealed beneath several layers of yellowing packing tape and it dawns on me then that both the tape and the box and the tires are all made from the same petrochemical ingredients that sparked the Maidan uprising.

It was Yanukovych’s Kremlin deal, which had aimed to slash Russian gas import prices in exchange for securing Moscow’s vital oil pipelines across Ukraine into Europe, that brought masses of anti-Russian, pro-EU demonstrators into public squares and spaces starting November 21st. Dubbed Euro-maidan () via Twitter and then by the press, the crisis peaked on February 22 when Yanukovych fled into exile in Russia, though not before government-loyal forces killed over one hundred protestors, many of whom were shot by unmarked snipers along Institutskaya Street, not far from the National Art Museum. (Notably those who lost their lives during Maidan protests were of many nationalities and religions and also from all regions of Ukraine — the first person

killed was an Armenian, the second from Belarus.) To détourne a Situationist slogan: *Beneath the streets, petropolitics; above the streets, blood, tires, asphalt, and chaos.*

Easy to acquire in large numbers, pneumatic automobile tires have become the “cobblestones” of 21st century uprisings. Made primarily of Styrene-butadiene copolymer, they roll naturally into position and yet are light enough to be stacked into tall, unyielding barriers. But it is thanks to their mostly synthetic carbon composition that their superiority to paving stones becomes evident. At about 140 degrees Celsius (284 Fahrenheit) tires combust, thus amplifying their usefulness as barricades separating protesters from police, or protesters from other protesters, as things turned out in Ukraine. For a while at first Maidan was a swarm of intermingled Ukrainian bodies — far right ultranationalists, middle right and middle middle patriots, and even a small liberal-left made up of feminists, anarchists, and anti-Stalinist neo-Marxists. These latter groups never coalesced into a block, yet still continue to meet and exert force.

In general, precise lines of political stability were difficult to draw on Maidan. Certainly, from the outset in December, there was conflict — often violent — between protesters with varied or opposing political leanings, especially a number of incidents where leftist (sometimes specifically feminist or anarchist) activists were attacked for their political inclination by right activists claiming that there is no place for leftists on Maidan. Still, there was a unified objective to all this opposition: oust the Yanukovych government. After the government fell, this commingling of positions grew less unified. Insignia and slogans, many of them reflecting strident Christian be-

liefs — and others archaic historical imagery — all began to crystallize into an array of distinct positions. As if a series of micro-nations had sprung up overnight on Maidan, each minute grouping generated its own rules, identifiable mottos and imagery, as well as bureaucratic structures.

Imaginary Archive's participants belonged by and large to the small, liberal-left intellectual sector. By one artist's estimate it consists of between seventy and a hundred people. Passionate though disorganized, and seriously outnumbered, their brief presence on Maidan was easily foiled by men wielding clubs. Not surprisingly many artists turned to the cultural sphere to express their resistance. In the summer and fall of 2012, about a year before the massive Maidan protests, many of these artists worked in coordination with staff at the National Art Museum of Ukraine to pressure the Ministry of Culture into hiring a competent director who would prioritize the interests of the museum as a public institution over personal ambitions and political ties. Not unlike the Art Workers' Coalition from New York in the late 1960s and early '70s, or Occupy Museums today, these artists engage in direct action, the wellspring of "institutional critique." The Art Workers' Self-Defense Initiative's manifesto reads in part:

In a country that declares democracy the preferred mode of interaction, we, as art workers, must impact the formation of new cultural policy principles and how they are put into practice.

But mass political-cultural uprisings today are seldom the sole province of political progressives. Maidan was no exception. What is striking about the Ukrainian revolution is the degree to which a previously shadowy sphere of ideological interests rapidly cohered, if only momentarily, through acts of

self-representation thanks to a combination of populist activism, networking technology, and a significantly weakened central state. And perhaps there is a link between Ukrainian "zhlob-art," with its overtly folksy kitsch paintings of unemployed citizens, and Maidan's improvised plywood shields, behind which men bore sticks, rods and makeshift wooden maces.

At one point protestors constructed a Molotov cocktail launching contraption that resembled a medieval catapult. On another day babushka flashmobs sang quaint Ukrainian folk-songs. Illuminated by pyres of flaming tires, this brightening slew of unrestrained fantasies, some at least partially real — though all decidedly heroic — flared rapidly into visibility. As my Ukrainian collaborator Larissa Babij notes,

Maidan became a platform for certain zhlob-artists to demonstrate their own righteous patriotism and also for accusing other artists (especially those same leftists who were already unwelcome in the square) of not being active enough, especially in day-to-day presence on the square. I bring them up not because I find their work, political positions, or modes of operating in the public sphere sympathetic or thought-provoking; what astounds and disturbs me is their extreme popularity, a kind of channeling of aggressive, populist, patriotic and anti-Other sentiment and their support in the glamour- and scandal-craving wider Ukrainian contemporary art scene. You may recall the photo of some art exhibition that opened just after IA with a photo of "Russians" in a cage...

(Examples of "zhlob-art" and similar analysis of Euromaidan's seemingly "regressive" imagery were also made by the artist Nikita Kadan, whose work in Imaginary Archive appeared during a Skype session at the New Museum on

February 1, 2014, at the height of the struggle.)

The unleashing of Maidan's imaginary archive is just one of many recent examples in which a previously unrepresented cultural mass or "dark matter" has generated its own public presence. Yet even as this process of brightening opens-up progressive possibilities, it also allows space for reactionary tendencies to gain visibility and coherence. Still, if we sympathize with the "counter-publics" thesis expressed by Kluge and Negt that "throughout history, living labor has, along with the surplus value extracted from it, carried on its own production — within fantasy," then the often anachronistic and mythopoeitic imagery of Euromaidan comes as no surprise.

Of course, the political economy of this imaginary production is never neat and orderly. It is instead permeated with hopes as well as resentments. It is also a resource or archive ready to be mined by an ever-expanding culture industry that has moved far beyond the administered Fordist model once proposed by Adorno and Horkheimer. Creativity, collaboration, horizontality; neoliberal capitalism's new business vocabulary applies equally well to the globalized sphere of art as it does to finance. The rapid illumination of this missing cultural mass has become a primary intake-valve for deregulated enterprise culture. Resistance is not futile, though it can be costly. Not only in terms of one's life or career of course, but also politically, as we now see in Egypt in particular.

IA opened as planned on April 23, 2014, though hours beforehand electrical power was cut to Les Kurbas Center. Using small flashlights and a dose of adrenaline, Olga Kopenkina, Larissa Babij and I completed the installation. Later on, thanks to a portable generator and some gasoline that participat-

ing artist Volodymyr Kuznetsov biked in from protestors on Maidan, we installed temporary lighting for our guests. After that the exhibition had to be viewed with a flashlight in hand. It now seems that electricity rationing, as well as the privatization of previously public utilities, led to the sudden cut-off, this despite the fact that Kurbas is a state-funded institution.

Babij describes the installation itself as resembling or resonating with "the barricades on Maidan" while remaining "consciously artificial." She also pointed out that this congruity of real and synthetic structure echoed the more "formal" barricades constructed in eastern Ukrainian cities as they were being taken over by separatists. Most recently the new mayor of Kiev, Vitaliy Klitschko, called for cleaning crews to dismantle the Maidan barricades. His efforts were met with angry protestors not ready for a return to business as usual. Instead these barricades are now being tidied up and transformed into genuine monuments to the uprising, and in some places even urban gardens have appeared in Maidan.

Where then does this leave us barricade builders and barricade busters who construct mock-institutional identities to slip between the interstitial spaces of capital? Or what about those who envision the possibilities of progressive dark matter and its imaginary archive? Perhaps by refusing to construct our own absolutist mythologies and by keeping all notions of identity in play we produce a kind of alternative usership, to deploy a smart, handy term devised by theorist Stephen Wright. In this scenario art literally attempts to escape its own ontological conditions by seeping out unrecognized into the everyday world. Not that every artist in IA would agree with Wright's objectives, and some in fact are already established figures

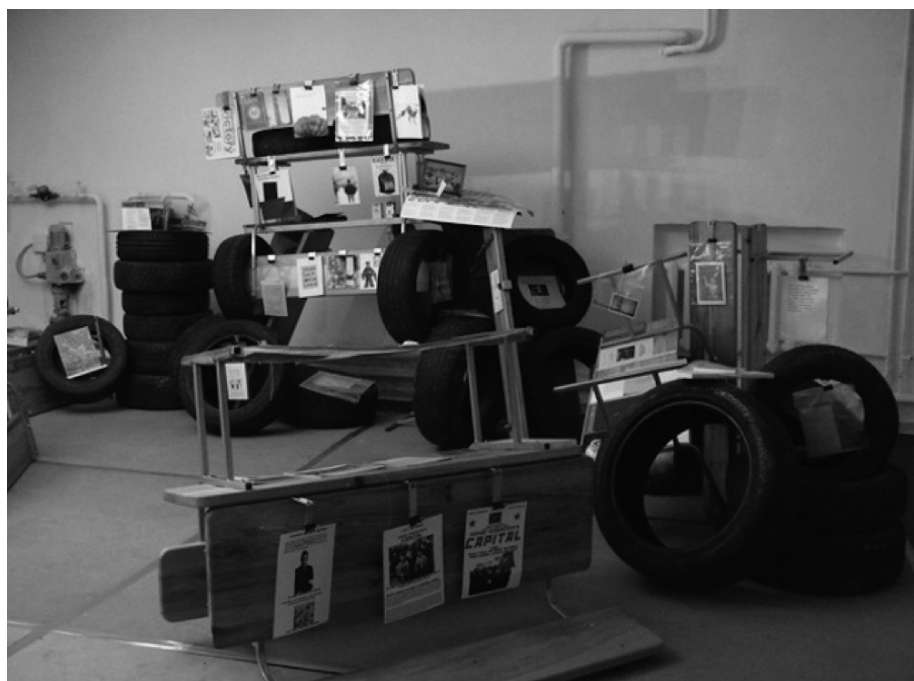
within the Ukrainian art scene and beyond.

In any case, we seem to have arrived at a moment of great possibility and equally great risk. Meanwhile, the socially conscious intellectual never surrenders questioning the substrate of his or her discipline, no matter how squalid its conditions, and never loses hope. “Dark matter” and “imaginary archive” are just two names for this paradox.

Imaginary Archive: Kiev took place at Les

Kurbas State Center for Theatre Arts (23-B Volodymyrs'ka Street, Kiev, Ukraine) in April 2014. More information about the project can be found [here](#).

Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture was published by Pluto Press in November 2010.





ARTISTIC LIFE
IN WARSAW

JOANNA M. SOSNOWSKA

Soon we will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first art exhibition in Warsaw that marked the beginning of the contemporary organisation of artistic life. The very fact that everyone could see the exhibited items changed the relation between the artist and the public, it established a new connection between the two sides of this system, of the most crucial importance to art in general, in which the institution is but an intermediary enabling and facilitating the contact.

“Nothing can begin, nothing can be done, without a previous orientation – and any orientation implies a fixed point. [...] The discovery or projection of the fixed point – or the centre – is equivalent to the creation of the world.”¹

In the time of difficulty in finding the definition to art, artistic institutions have become a focal reference point making it possible to differentiate what is and what is not. And even though not everyone is willing to accept this fact and even though some are still looking for a new definition which would account for the equivocality of the contemporary art, it seems that there is the generally shared understating of the fact that major shifts in art happen not only through stylistic innovation, but also through the evolution of the relation between the artist and the external world, namely what surrounds them directly and from a larger distance. The role of an interme-

diary in such relations is played, as mentioned, by the artistic institutions. Both the true art enthusiasts and the casual viewers find the institutions as such indispensable in the process of discovering art and in being able to accept or critically assess the variety of artistic achievements. At the same time, the institutions always constituted a form of a fixed starting point, of a centre creating the art and history. However, it was often done in a rather arbitrary way. There never existed such a thing as an innocent institution, they always reflected the given political standpoints, economic calculations and private interests.

Academies of Art, Past and Present by Nicolaus Pevsner, published in 1940 in Great Britain, was one of the first most important historical works on the position of institutions in artistic life. The decades following the Second World War brought a number of books and articles presenting the history of

various museums or art schools, as for instance *Towarzystwo Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie: zarys działalności* [*Society of Fine Arts in Warsaw: An Outline*] by Janina Wiercińska, published in 1968, or, the now multi-volume oeuvre *Polskie życie artystyczne* [*Polish Artistic Life*] issued by the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, fundamentally important for the present research. In the sixties the world (Poland did that slightly later) entered the era of research based on the methodology of semiotics, so the sign-based theory of culture and structuralism assuming that every institution is a text of culture, namely that it constitutes a well-organised structure of signs contained within the given limits, which, however, were and are still often transgressed. This introduces the changes to the spatial and organisational factors that define the institution, sometimes even leading to its annihilation. Still, this does not change the fact that these are indeed the statutory or regulatory frameworks and the real-world buildings that guarantee the existence of an institution. Another crucial incentive triggering the development of the research on the history of the institutions in artistic life was Michel Foucault's theory on the relationship between the area of knowledge and the real power. The growing of the scientific discourses caused simultaneously the increase of control over the individuals, also in the area of the art. One of the tools of exerting power in this domain is the canon the shape of which depends on the institutions such as museums or the academic faculties of the history of art.

The last 25 years have been marked with the broadening of the notion of the institution of artistic life and, as the coming of the virtual proved to us, its borders or limits are often difficult to capture. Such an approach was influenced by the past; the

historic research was becoming less and less popular, the possibilities of semiotic methods have been exhausted and the theoretical reflection led to the formulation of the so-called new museology, which finally resulted in the large-scale revision of the then current museology practice. Nowadays the research on the institutions of artistic life is being based on a true diversity of theoretical assumptions, the most vital and inspiring being those employing the findings of the performative turn in art that clearly stress the causative nature of the institutions.

The earliest traces of the artistic life institutions can be found in the Age of Antiquity, however the beginning of the institutions as we know them today should be attributed to the Age of Enlightenment. It was only then that the idea of the publicly available museum has been realised, and the customary practice of organising temporary exhibitions referred to as "the Salons" the history of which is closely related to the development of art criticism, has taken its shape. The Salon can actually be considered as an institution itself, by analogy to the Internet today. The oldest form of art institution, namely the Academy, had also been transformed in this very period. Apart from their representative and opinion-forming functions, the Academies progressively started to occupy themselves with the education of the young artists. New art schools have also been formed. Poland witnessed the described processes with a certain delay due to political reasons. Its unstable political situation during the whole 18th century, then resulting in the Partitions of the country, deferred the formation of the modern forms of institutionalised artistic life until the beginning of the next century. By "modern" we understand here the institutions that were not related to the exclusive life of the court, but the ones

of common and democratic nature. In Warsaw, their existence should be attributed to the foundation of the University of Warsaw in 1816, and to the creation of the *Faculty of the Fine Arts and Sciences with a Division of Painting and Sculpture* [Wydział Nauk i Sztuk Pięknych z Oddziałem Malarstwa i Rzeźby]. The University entered into possession of a collection of ancient plaster casts, modern sculptures and Graphic Art Room previously owned by the king Stanisław August Poniatowski that became this first publicly available collection of works of art, additionally enriched by the donations of many great figures of the contemporary intellectual and artistic life such as Stanisław Kostka Potocki, the owner of Wilanów. The collection, yet significantly reduced in its range, survived until today and forms a part of the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw. This leads us to a conclusion that the first place on the map of the Polish capital that entered the history of modern art in a modern way was the seat of the University of Warsaw, located in the former Kazimierzowski Palace at Krakowskie Przedmieście, and in particular the building nowadays referred to as the museum building (now the building of the Faculty of History), which was constructed in the years 1820–1821 and hosted the Division of Painting and Sculpture, the collection and often temporary exhibitions of the works of art.

EXHIBITIONS AND ART SHOWS

“In 1818, under the provision of the namiestnik of the Kingdom of Poland, the institution of art and industrial exhibitions has been founded in Warsaw. Both types of exhibitions were meant to take place in the same period once every two years, and to be analogical in the terms of their organisational form and the attribution of

the prizes. The said provision formed the basis for the 1819 exhibition: the first public exhibition in Poland. It featured only the works of fine art, as the industrial exhibition did not take place that year. It has not been until the year 1821 that both exhibitions started to be organised simultaneously.”² The total number of the events was nine: five took place before the November Uprising, four after it, and the last one was organised in 1845. The rules according to which they happened were officially announced in the act published in *The Journal of Laws of the Kingdom of Poland*, which made them similar to the ‘Salons’ in Paris: the jury awarded medals, and the catalogues were issued as well. By all means, the 200th anniversary of the first exhibition could be seen as the beginning of the contemporary organisation of artistic life in the Polish capital. The very idea that everyone could see the works presented changed the relation between the artist and the viewer in the described system in which an institution played the role of an intermediary. The exhibitions attracted a large audience, contributed to the increase in art sales and awakened artistic needs. When they were annulled by a ruling issued by the tsarist authorities, a visible gap appeared. A number of private undertakings took place, yet none of them ever achieved the status of a temporary periodic exhibition, as they were often of a rather commercial nature. Artistic life in Warsaw stabilised to a certain extent when in 1844 the School of Fine Arts was created. It replaced the University’s Division of Painting and Sculpture that was closed as a result of the November Uprising. Where and when it was possible, the new unit continued the operation under the previous university teaching curriculum. Nevertheless, the situation was highly unbalanced, as the School provided

the artists with education without giving them the possibility to act afterwards, marginalising them and creating the so-called artistic proletariat. The years before the January Uprising, which was massively joined by the School's students, are often referred to as the period of Varsovian bohema and responsible for creating the myth of an artist rejected by the society, living on its margin and interested only in his or her art. Still, this was but a myth, as a considerable number of artists engaged in social affairs and it was thanks to them that in 1858 the National Exhibition of Fine Arts was organised and later became the foundation of the most important artistic institution of the 19th century Warsaw.

'ZACHĘTA'

"The history of the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts ['Zachęta'] is well-known, readily available to us and simple. One does not need more than entering the edifice to be overcome with the feel of the past [...]. It was in this very edifice that a major portion of Polish art happened."³

Today this feel of the past still lingers there, even if the building at Małachowskiego square does not host the collection gathered by the Society since the beginning. The Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts [Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych] was brought to life in 1860 and created a new space and a point of reference for further artistic activity in Warsaw, on the territory under Russian occupation and in other parts of the country. Society's organisational structure differed from the one presented by the Kraków *Society of Friends of Fine Arts* [Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych], which was founded in 1854. Kraków Society gathered only art enthusiasts, while in Warsaw also artists could join, and, at its start, it was them

who held most of the organisational matters in their hands. In a year after its foundation, the Society in Warsaw already had 1,500 of members who paid the member's contributions,⁴ among which one could find the painter Wojciech Gerson, considered to be the most distinguished member of the organisation.

The Society has been very long perceived as an extraordinary creature, shining with its originality and exceptionality. A painting presented there was raised into glory by the very fact of its exhibition, even if the oeuvre itself did not inspire awe, or even, on the contrary, was harshly criticised. The causative nature of the artistic institutions was at the time even more visible than today.

The institutional framework of Zachęta was defined by its charter and the space where the exhibitions were held. The members of the Society were well aware of the fact that an institution, in order to build its prestige, requires a proper seat. Unfortunately, the construction of the dedicated building could not have been achieved for forty years. The spaces were rented, and it was there that Zachęta tried to imitate what the space for the contact with the art should be, at least according to the requirements of that time. In 1868, the Society managed to lease a space in the building previously owned by Saint Bernardino's order, located next to Saint Anna's church at Krakowskie Przedmieście in Warsaw. Immediately the Society started to define the spatial framework of the exhibition to be organised, an exhibition that would present the history of Polish art, all according to the state of knowledge of Warsaw artists at the time. This action showed one of the crucial functions of the institutions of artistic life, namely the creation and the preservation of the historical canon of the art. Russian au-

thorities in the capital did not allow the decorations of the halls to be carried out as planned, but nevertheless the temporary seat of the Society became a permanent element of the urban space. The Warsaw public adopted a custom of going to Zachęta on Sunday, just after visiting the church. The location of the gallery changed, but the habit of going there to watch the art stayed. For most of the viewers, the contact with the art is related to their free time. As our civilisation develops, we have more and more free time, so the participation in the artistic life does not have to be limited only to free days and holidays. The audience itself is highly diversified; the artists, the art critics and other representatives of the art world usually decide to visit an exhibition on different days than the people not professionally involved in art. Yet, the vernissages, finissages and other related events still keep their festive and ritual character.

It was not until the year 1900 that the Society finally moved into its proper seat. The building was designed by a local architect, Stefan Szyller. However, even the opening of the exhibition halls, where apart from temporary exhibitions one might also see the collections gathered by the Society, did not in truth increase Zachęta's activity. With time, Zachęta started to lose its importance as an artistic institution, the Society's decisions were often conservative, did not follow the turns and changes in art, let alone inspired it. What stayed was the sentiment and the memory that it was here that all has begun, which is why, even in the light of criticism, it is difficult to imagine Warsaw without Zachęta.

GALLERIES

"Whatever appears in painting, new or extraordinary, is being exhibited at Unger's salon, while Zachęta

feeds on the plain and daily pieces falling off the painting tables."⁵

The Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts 'Zachęta' induced the development of the artistic life in Warsaw, which resulted in the appearance in 1879 of the first professional salon of contemporary art curated by Józef Unger, and, a year later, of the second one belonging to Aleksander Krywult. This new state of affairs was best described by Wojciech Gerson, who, even though emotionally connected to Zachęta, wrote that: "Our institution was a signpost and a guide for the capitalist attempts, it was Zachęta and its many years of service that lead to formation of a group of art workers [...], it was Zachęta that showed the way of spreading out the good taste thanks to its permanent exhibitions, it was also Zachęta that normalised the means of development of such enterprises. [...] It is thus that private exhibitions in Warsaw are the children of the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, they are the unintentional helpers in lighting the flame of love for beauty, and for the artists – the intermediaries in facilitating the sales."⁶ Similar mechanisms can be observed even today, although one cannot fail to observe that the appearance of the new salons and galleries upset the previous, clearly-cut division between art and non-art. Salons again played an intermediary role, at some times being closer to Zachęta, exhibiting the painting of Matejko and Siemiradzki, while in other cases organising exhibitions of drawings and transforming into a fair of artistic diversity. Krywult's salon entered into history as the Warsaw's salon of the rejected. It started to be perceived that way when in 1889 it held an exhibition of Józef Chelmoński Paintings that have previously been refused at the Society.

A year after that, it also hosted as exhibition of the impressionist paintings by Władysław Podkowiński and Józef Pankiewicz, also rejected by Zachęta. Krywult's salon was a copy of the art world in Paris, just in a smaller, Warsaw-proper scale. That marked the start of the division in the artistic world which abandoned the criterion of art and non-art to shift into the notions of modern art (or the avant-garde art) and traditional art (or the conservative art). This differentiation started to be visible in Warsaw only after the reclaiming of the Polish independence. The division in the art world resulted in the fact that its definition and the assessments following this criterion became more ambiguous. Another consequence of this process was the formation of the canon of Polish art. In Warsaw, where one could find but a poor substitute of a true museum of art, the collection gathered by Zachęta took the role of the museum of contemporary art. The first oeuvre bought as a start was *Śmierć Barbary Radziwiłłówny* [*Death of Barbara Radziwiłłówna, 1860*] by Józef Simmler. Because of its relatively realistic form, the painting was considered to be a contemporary work of art, while at the same time complying with the need for patriotism. With time, it became a cult piece for Zachęta's audience and an icon of this institution.

THE MUSEUM

In the Western European countries, which entered the Enlightenment in the 18th century, the institution of a museum, such as the British Museum, founded on 1753, realised the encyclopaedic urge to describe all that there is. The knowledge was organised and catalogued in order to make it available for a broader audience in a form of permanent exhibitions, and, later on, temporary ones. At the same time,

museums became a propaganda tool held by the authorities, a way of exerting ideological influence on the society. As the democratisation of the political systems went on and the importance of the private capital in the rule of the country increased, the museums started to change as a reflection of intellectual and economic needs of the elites. Still, they were ruled by the idea of enlightenment and education, they also took the safeguarding of the relics of the past and the proof of human achievements to be their goal. In the 19th century museums were believed to be the institutions of the highest social rank. Many assumed the name of 'national museums' not only because of the nature of the memorabilia stored there, but also because they constituted a common and commonly available good. However, the turn of the centuries was marked with the appearance of doubt in the culture-creating power and importance of the museums. At the beginning of the 20th century the futurists shouted that it was enough to visit a museum once a year, just like a cemetery during the All Saints' Day. They were seen as a dead house, as a morgue. The situation in Poland was even more peculiar due to the fact that the state was not independent and because of the oppressors' policies. There was a great need to safeguard the national memorabilia and to educate through giving access to the collections of the art from the ages past that were held by private persons, yet the possibilities to satisfy those needs were scarce. The idea to create a museum was born in Warsaw in a second half of the 19th century.

"The Museum of Fine Art founded in 1862 has been transformed in 1916, so when the political conditions allowed it, into the National Museum. If we assume the year 1862 to be the birth date of our Museum, we are then sup-

ported not only by the uninterrupted continuity of the institution, but also by the clear intention of its founders to organise the National Museum under the name of the Museum of Fine Arts.", wrote Stanisław Lorentz in 1938, for the occasion of opening the new building designed by Tadeusz Tołwiński. Lorentz highlighted the fact that the threads of tradition link the Museum to earlier collections, the ones owned by Stanisław Poniatowski, University of Warsaw and the School of Fine Arts. Even the initial location of the School in the territory previously occupied by the University imposed a link between the two institutions. Until the reclaiming of the national independence when the Museum was able to move into its own building, it was continuously moved and plagued by the lack of exhibition spaces and financial issues, so its development was rather slow. The most difficult was the period between 1876 and 1898, when the collections were nearly permanently stored and only a couple of times and only in part showed during temporary exhibitions. In the following years, the Museum managed to hire a space at Wierzbowa street from the city authorities. In 1912 a parcel of land was bought, but the War interrupted even the design works. The project was taken up again after the reclaiming of the national independence, however until the current edifice at then Aleja 3 Maja 13, now at Aleje Jerozolimskie 3, was constructed, the museum was housed in a building at Podwale 15. The foundation stone was laid down on 15 June 1927, in February 1931 a part of the Museum's collection was moved into the freshly built wings (or pavilions) of the new edifice, yet the construction of the whole finished only in 1938. Still, this very year alone the Museum was visited by nearly a million viewers, which confirmed the great need for the existence

of a place presenting the outcome of artistic activity from the ancient and the more recent past. The National Museum, as an institution, answered the needs related to the national identity and the purely artistic and intellectual ones. The museums are nowadays referred to by the contemporary researchers in the terms of a mirror in which both in the past and in the future the society or the nation was and will be able to see itself just as it is, to determine its origins, to contemplate the way it has travelled and to find itself right now, in the plate defined by the space of a museum. The National Museum in Warsaw, on one hand, preserved the already existing canon of Polish art, which can be proved by the temporary exhibitions from the very year 1938: *Pamięci Artura Grottgera [In the Memory of Artur Grottger]*, *Wystawa rysunków i szkiców Jana Matejki [The Exhibition of Drawings and Sketched by Jan Matejko]* and *Wystawa Aleksandra Gierymskiego [Aleksander Gierymski Exhibition]*. On the other hand, the Museum was a part of the current social life, hosting in its halls an exposition *Warszawa wczoraj, dziś, jutro [Warsaw: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow]*, which was its third subsequent art show on the life of the capital that, altogether with the previous ones, *Warszawa przyszłości [Warsaw of the Future]* from 1936 and *Dawna Warszawa [Warsaw of Old]* from 1937, constituted an important voice in the creation of a new image of the city.

THE AVANT-GARDE ALTERNATIVE

Destructive slogans of Italian Futurists shouted against the museums and other artistic institutions did not get much acclaim in Poland. Zygmunt Waliszewski did call for the burning of the *Hold pruski [Prussian Homage]* by Jan Matejko at the Main Square in Cra-

cow, but most artists, also the avant-garde ones, were more focused on building, not on destroying. The reclaiming of the independence woke up the faith in the possibility of creating the new framework for the functioning of the art. An avant-garde group 'Blok', created in 1924, had an intention to create a museum of reproduction. Such plans were naive and realistic at the same time, as in a freshly rebuilt country one could not count for more. The attitude of the Blok artists was avant-garde in its specific minimalism and resignation of the ritual gestures. Their first exposition was organised in Laurin-Clement car showroom at Mazowiecka street. At the same time, in Austro-Daimler car showroom at Wierzbowa street, an artist Henryk Berlew, initially associated with Blok, had his works presented. It was a certain form of manifestation negating the existing cultural institutions, although this negation was a constructive one, and that was the difference between Blok and the destroyer futurists. Exhibitions in car showrooms emphasised the avant-garde character of the art shown there and even though it did not become customary, those two events should be regarded as daring and innovative. It was not as much an attempt at building the new order, yet more a trial of contradicting the existing one. After the avant-garde artists proved to themselves and to the public that it is possible to act differently and against the custom, they went back to the traditionally expected behaviour. They were exhibited both in Polish Artistic Club in Polonia Hotel, created during the First World War as an alternative for Zachęta, and in Zachęta, so widely criticised by a large portion of the artistic milieu. The last exhibition of Blok was organised in 1926 and took place in Zachęta as well. It was an international exhibition of architecture which

needed a proper setting and space. However, the decision to enter into cooperation with Zachęta cannot be seen as compromising, as it was rather pragmatic. At that time, the atmosphere in Warsaw was not especially encouraging for the development of avant-garde initiatives. The artistic milieu was divided according to the line: Zachęta against the School of Fine Arts and conservative art against modernism, not against the avant-garde art.

THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

"The new school had, to a certain degree, satisfied the needs of a moment. It can be confirmed for instance by the massive inflow of the students and a great general interest shared by large groups of young people. One could sense that the air that the dusty world of arthritic artistic relations within the city was suddenly moved by a gust of fresh wind, that the silent still water of a Varsovian pond previously was in slumber and now has been brought back to life by a invigorating wave coming from the new, vaster environments and currents."⁷ These are the words of Zygmunt Kamiński, a student of the new academy created in 1904. Since the cancellation of the School of Fine Arts after the January Uprising, the Russian occupation allowed only the existence of a Drawing Class. It constituted but a substitute of an art school, was dedicated to the education of craftsmen and it was only thanks to the unwearied activity of Wojciech Gerson that it kept its high level of teaching and instruction. After Gerson left, the institution was soon degraded, only to be born again in free Poland as the City School of Decorative Arts and Painting. The beginning of the 20th century was especially difficult for artistic education in Warsaw, even though the initiative of Kazimierz Strabowski and a group of graduates from

the Petersburg Academy led to the creation of Warsaw School of Fine Arts. It has kept its shape, dictated by the Russian regulations, nearly unchanged until the year 1920, in order to be re-created two years later as a new university-level institution, now adjusted to the regulations and the ambitions of the new-born state. Its exceptional input into the creation of the artistic life in Poland in the Interwar period still cannot outshine a number of important achievements from the previous time. First of all, it was founded in 1904 as a co-educational entity, training both men and women according to the same principles, which was not standard in Europe of that time. Secondly, thanks to the generosity of Stefania Kierbiedziowa, it was possible to build a modern seat of the School in Powiśle district, which exists until now as one of the buildings of the Academy of Fine Arts. The edifice in question was opened in 1916, so in a period which was truly difficult for the inhabitants of the capital, although at the same time full of hope for independence, which incited many to act. Thirdly, thanks to the circumstances enumerated above the atmosphere in the Warsaw School of Fine Arts was quite special and allowed its graduates to influence to a great extent the artistic life of the whole country in the Interwar period. This group also included the members of the avant-garde initiative of Blok, as described above. The most important person linking the tradition of the first School and the one reborn in 1922 was Tadeusz Pruszkowski, first a student, then a professor and a chancellor of the school, renamed in 1932 as Academy of Fine Arts. It was mostly his personality which gave the institution its fully democratic character, where racial, gender or talent-based exclusion did not take place. The students felt there well and the training

was exquisitely efficient. The School, and then the Academy, hosted yearly exhibitions, balls and New Year's and Christmas plays, the school community also left for *en plain air* work. All this created exceptional atmosphere which could not even be negated if one presents a rather critical approach to the art promoted by the institution. However, objectively speaking, it was art of paramount professionalism. The professors and the graduates were present everywhere where the art was crated, they also took part in all larger events requiring artistic assistance such as the construction of state edifices, of pavilions at international exhibitions or the decoration of transatlantic ships. They designed the furniture and the fabrics, they made the ceramics and usable metal objects, provided the graphic pieces (mostly the woodcuts), posters, illustrations, sculptures and of course paintings. The Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw was a truly prestigious institution of artistic life, its professors also engaged in a number of other art-related activities. Actually it was them who initiated the foundation of a new and a very modern exhibition institution in Warsaw.

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE PROPAGANDA OF ART [INSTYTUT PROPAGANDY SZTUKI]

The Institute for the Propaganda of Art was created on the 18 June 1930. It was the date of the first meeting of the Institute's Council, held at the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. However, one should consider December 1931 as its true beginning, as it was the day when its main seat in a building at Królewska Street, next to Saski Square (today Piłsudskiego Square) . The building was designed by Karol Stryeński and constructed in an in-

novative way with prefabricated materials. It was meant to serve for 10 years until a more representative edifice would be built. The outbreak of the war cancelled these plans and the temporary pavilion stood there until the 1970s. Its location in Zachęta's neighbourhood had some symbolic meaning, as the Institute was founded with the intention to create an alternative space for the Society. The rivalry between the two institutions covered not only the type of art advocated there, but also the principles of the guardianship held over the artistic activity. Zachęta was a Society, its members included the representatives of the bourgeois and conservative intelligentsia, however it was mostly composed of the lower middle-class. Regardless of the statute changes in the 1930s, the society kept its ways of operation, typical for the past century, and was completely independent of the state sponsorship. The Institute, on the contrary, acted as an association and was politically and financially connected with government agendas, so in truth it should be regarded as one. "Maybe today will be the date when a new system of organisation of the state sponsorship for the art was created, and maybe it will become an example for other countries. The essence of this system lies in the fact that a democratic state can fulfil its task towards art in a better way if it provides financial and moral help to quality autonomous artistic institutions than risking the difficult assistance to individuals."⁸, as said Władysław Skoczylas during the inauguration meeting of the Institute. The Institute was with no doubt an elitist organisation. It did not admit voluntary applications, one could only join as a supporting member, which only entitled one to a reduction price tickets for the exhibitions. The Council of the Association was the only deci-

sion-maker, choosing among its members the Main Committee responsible for the implementation of the plans. One should not wonder why the committee was considered to be partial. The Institute was personally connected to the Academy of Fine Arts and even though it was open to other directions, it mostly supported the artists following the principles of the Academy.

For ten years of its existence, the Institute organised over 80 exhibitions, including the national yearly salons, the exhibitions of foreign art, a great number of individual art shows and a couple of historical exhibitions ranked as a museum presentation. Just before the War the Institute also started to conduct research activity, to gather the documentation on modern and past art, a photo library was created and some films on art were started to be made. To some extent the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences continues this activity.

Zachęta and the Institute were not the only artistic life institutions in the Interwar period. A number of less prestigious entities of a smaller social range, such as private galleries and auction houses, also led their activity within the city, however they did not mark the history of artistic life to any important degree. At the end of the 1930s appeared a need for a unified organisation which could represent the artistic world before the local and central authorities. It was then than a project for founding an alliance of trade unions.

THE ASSOCIATION OF POLISH ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS [ZWIĄZEK POLSKICH ARTYSTÓW PLASTYKÓW, ZPAP]

In the 1920s, especially at the end of the decade, the desire to bring the art under state control was rather strong and advocated by the intellectu-

als of the political centre. It has, for instance, led to the creation of the Academy of Literature, although the creation of a similar body of the Academy of Art was never accomplished. The artists of a young generation did not want it, fearing that the old would have too much influence there. The term 'the old' was usually used to describe those artists whose world view and artistic preferences were shaped before the regaining of the national independence. What the young wanted was most of all to get the state support through the activation of the existing trade union structure. At first the trade unions were rather varied, were regional and trade-specific, presented various political views, yet at the end of the 1930s a Central Inter-Union Committee of the Artists and Designers of the Republic of Poland [Centralny Komitet Międzyzwiązkowy Plastyków RP]. Its main tasks consisted in introducing its own candidate to the Senate, drafting the statute of the future common organisation and gaining state financing for the creation of a health cooperative and a credit union with loans with no interest rate. Such actions were widely accepted all over Europe. No-one was then surprised by the idea of creating such a union of national range within the structures of Polish Committee of National Liberation in Lublin, which happened before the end of the war. In the first six months of 1945 local branches of the Union appeared in the majority of big cities liberated one by one, and the Temporary Main Board of the Association of Polish Artists and Designers was settled in Warsaw, initially in *Saska Kępa*. In August 1945 Cracow hosted the General Meeting of the Association where the common and uniform character of the organisation was approved. The Association played a crucial role in shaping the artistic life during the period of the Polish People's Republic, as it was an institution that formed opinions, organised exhibitions and took care of the artists on one side, and censored the artistic work and granted the right to pursue artistic professions on the other. Only the members of the Association, namely academic students and a small group of artists who were approved by the Ministry of Culture and Art, were allowed to take part in the exhibitions, receive orders and commissions, only their works were bought by the museums and state institutions, only they received the spaces for their ateliers. If a given application was rejected by the selection committee and the candidate was not admitted as a member of the Association, then such a person had to say goodbye to the artistic profession and its privileges, was not insured and did not receive the food stamps. Therefore the institution which was meant to help and assist became a controlling and disciplinary one, truly powerful and influential, having a number of its own exhibition galleries, sales showrooms, houses of creative work, printing and design companies, magazines and bulletins. It organised exhibitions, competitions and plain air events, it had international contacts and supervised the participation of Polish artists in exhibitions abroad. "According to Dunikowski, one artists can be separated from another by millions of light years. Following this thought, we could say that the Association of Polish Artists and Designers is a truly rich astro-nomic mass."⁹, as wrote Jan Cybis in his journal. The Association was an enormous institution, in which the majority of members were but an anonymous background for the activists. Since 1957, Warsaw division of the Association had its own gallery at *Marszałkowska* street in the MDM [Marszałkowska Street Living District,

in Polish: Marszałkowska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa or MDM], which was kept until 1976, even though in 1965 a House of Artists and Designers [Dom Artysty Plastyka] was opened at Mazowiecka Street. The original project that connected the remains of a ruined post-war building with a modernist glass shape was prepared by Jerzy Kumelowski. It was here that for the next 15 years the artistic life happened. The situation was disrupted by the crisis during the martial law period, when the creative trade unions (including the Association) were first suspended and then dissolved. This was a way to punish the artists for their collective support for Solidarność and later on for the boycott of the official exhibitions. After the dissolution of the previous trade unions, the authorities created the new ones, this time under the complete state control. After 1989 the old union structures were reactivated, although their importance in the new political reality lessened. For a number of artists, especially the ones of the older generation, the building at Mazowiecka still represents some prestige and value. Again, the seat of the Association was purposefully built in the proximity of Zachęta. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the artistic life in Warsaw was concentrated in this part of the city. After the war Raczyński Palace, located nearby at Krakowskie Przedmieście street, became the main seat of the Academy of Fine Arts, and Potocki Palace, again not so far away, was a home to the Ministry of Culture and Art. Such level of concentration facilitated communication between the institutions on one hand, and the control over them on the other. In the period when the House of Artists and Designers was built, the old building of the Institute for the Propaganda of Art was still in place, although just after the war it was taken by the military.

The artists tried in vain to reclaim it. In the time when the building hosted the House of the Polish Military, the exhibitions of the Club of Young Artists and Scientists (Klub Młodych Artystów i Naukowców, an avant-garde art organisation active in the period of 1947–1949) were also held. The introduction of the socialist doctrine made these attempt unsuccessful. Later on, the building hosted the Jewish Theatre which stayed there until the building was taken apart. Yet, Zachęta was still the most important edifice on the artistic map of Warsaw, and in the post-war period there was no-one to compete with it.

THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF ARTISTIC EXHIBITIONS [CENTRALNE BIURO WYSTAW ARTYSTYCZNYCH, CBWA]

The building of Zachęta survived the war nearly without damage. During the occupation it hosted German Soldier's House, the Society was dissolved and its collection passed on to the National Museum. By the power of the decree from 26 October 1945 *O własności i używaniu gruntów na obszarze miasta stołecznego Warszawy* [On the property and the use of land in the capital city of Warsaw] the Society lost its seat and even when it was possible to petition for the perpetual usufruct, no-one in the Society used this possibility. The building and the land it was on became the property of the state. "Zachęta's renovation carried out by BOS started with the removal of the traces of German administration of the place. First of all a [German] sign House of German Culture above the entrance was purposefully obliterated. Another [German] sign inside above the stairs was erased: "No nation lives longer than the documents of its culture", a motto which motivated the Germans to destroy the monuments of

the capital. The exhibition halls were a house to boxes used for card games and piles of empty vodka bottles. In Matejko room, along the wall with *Grunwald*, a podium for the band was placed, and above it: greenish Prussian eagle on a red background and a swastika. Over a glass plafond: a large number of soldiers' undergarments hang on the balustrade. All documents of German 'culture' left in the House of German Culture were photographed before being removed.⁷¹⁰ It should be noticed that the new communist authorities removed the symbols of occupation without removing a number of political and legal regulations directed against the identity of the state. Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts 'Zachęta' was not reactivated, for many years it was also forbidden to even talk about the Royal Castle and other national symbols. At first Zachęta's building was given to the National Atelier of Art Restorers, afterwards it housed a number of cultural institutions, for instance the Ministry of Culture and Art. However, the artists demanded the exhibition hall, so on two initial general meetings of the Association of Polish Artists and Designers in 1947 the matter of creating a central entity connected to field delegates, which could coordinate the issues related to exhibiting and propagating art, was discussed. Also the return to the pre-war spaces used for exhibition purposes such as Zachęta and the Institute for the Propaganda of Art was postulated. Replying to such claims, in May 1949 the authorities created the Central Bureau of Exhibitions [Centralne Biuro Wystaw], later on the Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions, which only in 1951 entered the old Zachęta building. Before that the exhibitions were organised in other spaces, also in the edifice of the National Museum, which was not de-

stroyed during the war. In spring 1950 the infamous 1st Polish Exhibition of Art and Design [I Ogólnopolska Wystawa Plastyki] which implemented the principles of social realism was organised there.

The foundation of the Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions was an element of the new policy which satisfied the previously showed postulates, but in practice it was meant to exert centralised control over the creative work. It did not include the censorship which lied in the hands of the Central Office of Censorship, but the reign over the whole artistic output, its diffusion, education of various levels, purchases for state collections or organising exhibitions abroad. It soon became clear that the 50-years-old building is too small and in 1958, at the commission of the Ministry of Culture and Art, the design of the edifice from the side of Królewska street started. The proposition was put forward by Oskar Hansen, Stanisław Zamecznik and Lech Tomaszewski and was a major achievement. The glass building was meant to house a space to be shaped according to the needs of the current exhibitions. Unfortunately, the beginning of the 1960s was marked by the turn from the Thaw policy, which blocked all the plans related to the development which was taken up again in the 1990s.

The statute of the Bureau was repeatedly changed, the powers of the institution grew for the Bureau to finally become nearly almighty, although it operated directly under the Ministry of Culture and Art and indirectly under the Basic Party Cell, the Culture Division of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. One can say that the token of subordination was the opening of the Guardhouse (Kordegarda) of Potocki Palace at Krakowskie Przedmieście, where the Ministry of Culture and Art was located, as

an exhibition space. The exhibition policy of the Bureau was at the same time lacklustre and so intricately planned that it gave the impression of trying to satisfy different needs. It is especially visible from a time perspective. At first one thinks that the programme changed mostly in relation to political changes, the Thaw and then the pressure, the sympathy towards foreign allies, as well as the changes in the official ways of interpreting modern history. However the more in-depth analysis of the artistic events happening in the past five decades clearly shows one dominating tendency which resulted in lack of characteristic expression and dullness. This tendency can be described as shabby and forged according to the current political needs. However this does not change the fact that a number of important exhibitions took place there. The next directors implemented the administration and political plans, not the artistic ones. What counted was the statistics and conformity to cultural policy set forth by the authorities, hindering the freedom of creation and participation in international artistic life. Out of all initiatives organised by the Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions only the International Poster Biennale was of more important range and gained more acclaim outside of Poland, but even in this case it seemed that there was a need to change the on-going project and to adjust it to modern exhibition requirements. It was also not noticed that in the 1980s this domain of creation has been exhausted.

An unchallenged accomplishment of the Bureau was organising a large range (as for the current possibilities available) artistic education for various groups of participants. In 1962, a special role was played by the *Inter-School Circle of Art Lovers* [*Międzyszkolne Koło Miłośników*

Sztuki] with 500 members yearly. It organised the meetings during the exhibitions, cycles of lectures on modern art, plain-air, visiting the monuments, classes and competitions on art. A large number of the inhabitants of Warsaw entered the halls of Zachęta thanks to the activity of the Circle. The programme was very modern and it was a couple of years ahead of the current educational activity of exhibition spaces and museums.

An overall evaluation of the activity of the Bureau is really difficult. For Warsaw and its artistic milieu it was still mostly related to Zachęta, namely the most important exhibition space of the capital and the country. Showing ones work in its halls was an honour, a confirmation of one's artistic position and often a crowning achievement of years of work. Young artists started to be invited there only at the end of the 1970s but it was the time when the artistic life started to get more diverse.

THE SO-CALLED 'INDEPENDENT GALLERIES'

In the mid-seventies Warsaw was a home to approximately fifty galleries, exhibition halls and places for temporary exhibitions. Counting them precisely is rather difficult, as these entities were often accidental and ephemeral, which does not mean that the events happening there had no importance to the field of art. It is also difficult to call them artistic life institutions. These were often performative events, such as CDN exhibition organised under the Poniatowski bridge in 1977. Their true power can only be appreciated today. Although calling any of these institutions or initiatives 'independent' is not correct. These labels were used so often that the 'independent' creators were spotted abroad and started to be invited to participate in international events. Then it became clear that 'the inde-

pendents', artists and curators, were refused passports. Independence was an illusion in the times when all was controlled by the censorship and the artists were as much invigilated as other professional groups. Nevertheless, with time, the artists learnt how to play with the authorities, and for the field of art it had special importance. It would be difficult to describe all so-called independent institutions of artistic life in Warsaw in the period of Polish People's Republic, yet the activity of Krzywe Koło Gallery should be seen as its beginning.

"In the history of Polish modern art there are but a few initiatives and events with such positive course as the activity of the Gallery Krzywe Koło, which did fulfil the great expectations associated to its birth. It was created as a consequence of October 1956 and to continue winning everyday the fight in practice, the fight won in theory, namely the fight for the artist's right to (...) have the freedom to decide about all matter related to his art."¹ Gallery co-operated closely with Krzywe Koło Club, revisionist group of leftist intellectuals and based on the Old City House of Culture located in the Main City Square. The Gallery's main animator was a painter, Marian Bogusz, after the war associated with the Club of Young Artists and Scientists. For ten years he managed to lead the Gallery exhibiting the art showing what happened in the world: informal and abstract art, surrealism and the main question discussed was the issue of the metaphor. The independence of the Gallery meant that the financial aid from the state was really minimal, so that the authorities did not support the entity, and was ensured by the personality of the leader. The first factor was an encumbrance, the second one gave the event its impact. The Gallery was closed in 1965 as a result of the change in political course, intensification of

the communist rhetoric, limitation of the abstract art and the return to realism. However the seed has been sown. Artists and critics taken the next attempts in organising the artistic life outside of the main, politically and socially sanctioned institutions such as the Association of Polish Artists and Designers or the Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions, looking for support in less defined structures.

In 1966 Foksal Gallery was created, its founders being the art critics who did their first steps in Krzywe Koło Gallery: Hanna Ptaszkowska, Marian Tchorek and Wiesław Borowski. This new initiative was administratively related to the Ateliers of Design Arts [Pracownie Sztuk Plastycznych] which were the *éminence grise* of the artistic life institutions in Polish People's Republic and were founded in 1951 under the ruling of the Minister of Culture and Art. They operated under the minister and were closely connected to the Party's authorities through the person of their director, Henryk Urbanowicz. It was an enterprise aimed at bringing income to the state's budget. The Ateliers supervised and were an intermediary in the distribution of art commissions, starting with interior design or architectural decorations up to the retail of art works. At the end of the 1970s, the Ateliers managed already six galleries: Foksal, Krytyków, Mała ZPAF [Small Gallery of the Association of Polish Photography Artists], Praska, Forma and Vena. Only the first three ones that did not have commercial character played a role shaping the artistic environment, Foksal being the most prominent one. The Gallery was located in the back premises of the former Zamoyski palace at Foksal 1, in which since 1949 resides the Association of Architects of the Republic of Poland [Stowarzyszenie Architektów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej]. The history

of Foksal Gallery is a milestone in the whole history of Polish modern art. The innovative approach of the art critics who opened Foksal and the artists associated with it initially based on the critical position towards the artistic life institutions, including their own initiative. The number one personality was Tadeusz Kantor who for some time dominated all its actions.

The independent galleries were also called the author galleries because of the importance of their leaders. The best example in Warsaw may be provided by Współczesna Gallery. It was active in the period between 1965-1973 and was lead by Janusz Bogucki, a historian and an art critic, on the premises owned by the Club of the International Press and Books at the back of Teatr Wielki. Just like Foksal, it was created in the moment of liquidation of Krzywe Koło Gallery. Nature abhors the vacuum, so the dead element of the artistic life had to evolve into new life forms.

One should remember that the authorities continuously perfected their methods of control and art management. The mid-sixties were a period of great plain air events in different Polish cities, mostly in the so-called Recovered Territories. Such actions made the artists feel more free, although they were equally penetrated ideologically. Of course it was easier for the authorities to control the galleries of the capital and in other large cities where the artistic life was concentrated. This is why one should remember that the independent galleries were more a way for the authorities to realise its political and control objectives than a pressure release. However, the political situation in place did not offer any other possibilities. Janusz Bogucki knew how to talk to the authorities and even though the interventions from the censor's office did happen, Współczesna Gallery was very active and managed to develop its own

style of arrangement of the exhibitions changed into one large installation or stage set. Bogucki made use of this special arrangement during the Martial Law period and organised big expositions of opposition art, which were important to the artistic milieu and took place in churches. Współczesna Gallery offered a different model of art than Foksal, not only in the way in which it was presented, but also in the understanding of its goals. Still, some artists were exhibited in both spaces. As a result of the accusations placed on Bogucki by the administration authorities, he resigned his director's position, which was not welcome in the artistic milieu. Political authorities decided in that case to give the gallery to the hands of young artists who were not a part of the events taking place. The generation gap was manipulated for its own purposes, as often the authorities did. The 1970s is a period of the increased activity of the youth as a consequence of the event in 1968, the local political ones and related to the social protests in the world. The authorities, seeing the threat, decided to use the young potential for its own ends. A number of the so-called galleries was founded. They were formally connected to the academic councils and the Polish Students Union [Związek Studentów Polskich]. Their faith was not always the same, different were their actions and programmes. Undoubtedly one of the most important from the historical perspective was Repassage Gallery, formally connected to the University of Warsaw and located in one of its buildings at Krakowskie Przedmieście 24. Artistically speaking, it represented a group of young sculptors, graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts in the 1970s, interested in conceptual art and performance. Its end came only with the Martial Law. Another important places connected to the student's movement was Remont

Gallery, administered by Warsaw Technical University and Dziekanka Gallery located in a students' house of artistic universities. The last one was active also during the boycott introduced by a large portion of the artistic milieu as a sign of protest in the view of the political situation after the events of 13 December 1981. The participants of the boycott allowed the existence of Dziekanka, as they presented the opinion that young artists should have the chance to present their doings to a wider public. The gallery has seen the debuts of a number of creators who then gained much acclaim. The boycott did not hinder the artistic life and for eight years the relationship between the institutions, the creators and the public was even more than strange. The decisions concerning both the organisation and the entities depended on the changing humours of the authorities and to an increasingly great extent they based on personal connections, persecutions and administrative opportunism. In such conditions the attempts to create any remains of artistic life were very demanding and required great entrepreneurship.

PRIVATE GALLERIES

There are voices that the 1980s were the time of church exhibitions which in total brought more bad than good. It is a big simplification, as this period was very busy, although the quality and the intensity of the artistic life in Poland was far from comparable to the situation on the West of Europe. First of all, this difficult time enabled many initiatives, however having the rank of survival actions, yet these actions revealed that it is indeed possible to operate outside of the system imposed by the authorities. One of such initiatives were the private galleries. First of them, Piotr Nowicki Gallery, was opened in 1976 and constituted a

breach in the fully nationalised art market. Before, the sales of the works of art was conducted exclusively by the agencies of the state companies such as the Work Cooperative of Artists and Designers 'Plastyka' which never gained any recognition among the more ambitious creators, and Desa State Company, founded in 1950, known mostly for its trade in antiques, although offering also modern art. The next five showrooms were created only in the 1970. The biggest importance for the artistic milieu of Warsaw was kept by Zapiecek Gallery in the Old Town, led for twenty years by Mirosława Arens. The Gallery hosted the exhibitions of well-known and acclaimed artists, for example the professors of the Academy of Fine Arts, yet it also promoted the young graduates of this institution..

In the 1980s, despite the situation which really did not favour the development of the artistic life, the privatisation of the market of art managed to appear and continue. The authorities, knowing that the system is eroding, kept high political control on one side, but on the other allowed the privatisation in various sectors of the economy. The creation of private galleries was a collateral of this policy. Their activity, difficult because of the unclear regulations and the reluctance of the officials, soon became not only a simple source of income for the owners and the artists, but also an important element of the alternative to the boycotted state institutions. Other galleries that operated in Warsaw besides the 'PN' by Piotr Nowicki were: Alicja and Bożena Wahl Gallery, DS Gallery by Antoni Dzieduszycki and Paweł Sosnowski and many, many more of a more commercial character. The exhibitions were organised though gathering a circle of artists and promoting a given type of art.

Another reason for the develop-

ment of the art trade was the fact that the big state institutions basically stopped buying the works of art. It can be very vividly noticed in the example of the National Museum in Warsaw. At the end of the 1970s the economic crisis grew and the money for the completion of collections in the museums was limited. Lack of purchases led to the impoverishment of the artists and the risk of them protesting because they had no means to live was present. In order to calm the atmosphere, the need to create the Museum of Modern Art or the Centre of Modern Art. Studio Gallery, founded altogether with Studio Theatre in the Palace of Culture in 1971, was meant to be its substitute. The whole entity was managed by Józef Szajna. In 1985, the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle was created. Its role became important only after the break-through of 1989, when Wojciech Krukowski became its director.

Studio Gallery gathered a collection mostly composed of the works of the artists who used to be exhibited there. Today it can be considered to be one of the most interesting Polish art collections with the works from the first half of the 20th century. Unfortunately, the Gallery does not have any space which would allow a permanent exposition. This problem also touches other institutions, including the National Museum. As it was written by Juliusz Starzyński in *Od Młodej Polski do naszych dni* [From Young Poland Until Today] for the occasion of an opening of an exhibition: "The museums of modern art that exist in the world today have a truly diverse and flexible forms of operation. In general though, such museums, and especially the local museums and the local Gallery of Modern Art, will have to, due to financial and spacial requirements, operate for a rather long period as the

so-called dynamic museum that manages its quickly changing exposition."¹² This still happens today, even though the well-merited director of the National Museum, Stanisław Lorentz, who fulfilled his function for many years, supported the idea of completing the collection of modern art with new pieces and the need to create a proper space for the collection was commonly voiced by the artists, art historians and the public. In the 1980s, after professor Lorentz retired, the situation in the Museum stagnated and it has lost a lot of its prestige. In general, in the period from the Martial Law to the Round Table the institutions of artistic life underwent a serious devaluation, which was a side effect of the boycott.

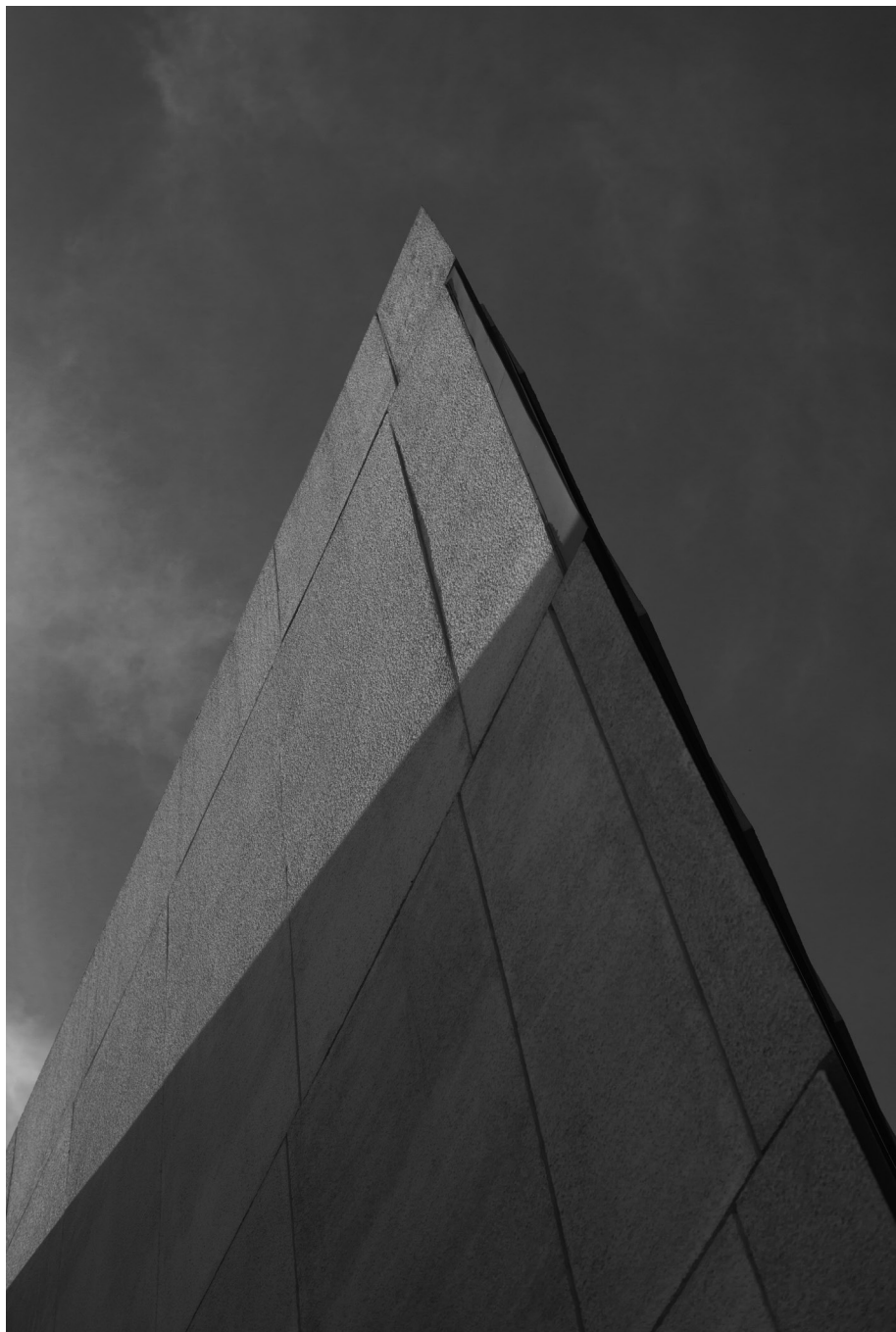
Aiming at a conclusion of the history of how the subsequent types of institutions appeared in Warsaw and how the artistic life expanded due to their appearance, one cannot help but notice that within the period of one hundred seventy years, taking the years 1819 – 1989 as our time framework here, Warsaw became the home to the types of institutions of artistic life which survived in different shape until today, and the new ones appeared only at the turn of the 20th and the 21st century. Among the old institutions, the society lost its reason for existence as it stopped conforming to the modern reality of life. The Society for the Encouragement of the Arts was dissolved for political reasons but the attempt to reactivate it after the year 1989 was not successful as the entire social system has changed.

Up to the second half of the 20th century artistic life of Warsaw happened in the city centre, in the space among the buildings sanctified by tradition. Only the next decades allowed it to spread within the structure of the city. In the past it was political reasons,

today it is the economic principle, but it is still focused around the city centre, visibly larger than before, yet still marked with the splendour and the tradition, even in the case of the history of the Polish People's Republic. Thanks to that, the institutions gain a strong support for their actions.

It was virtually impossible to highlight the fact that the institutions are the people who work in them in a sufficiently extensive and in a way that they properly deserve, as this is only a summary review. Many names were quoted, yet one thing is sure: without all of them artistic life of Warsaw would not look as it does.

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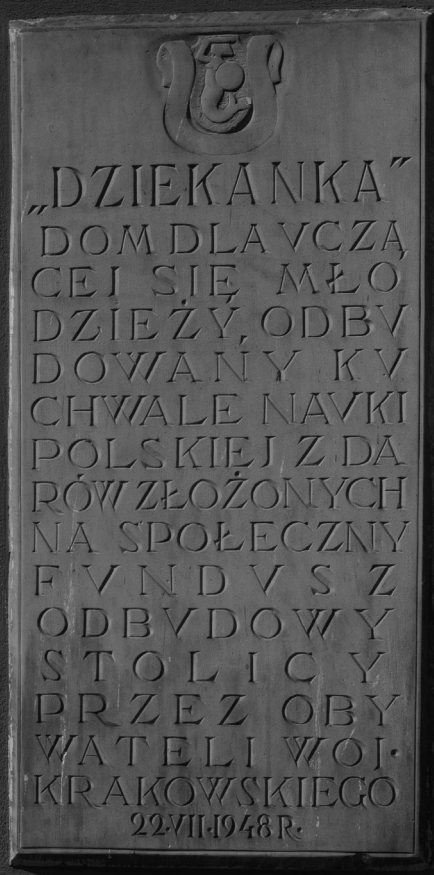


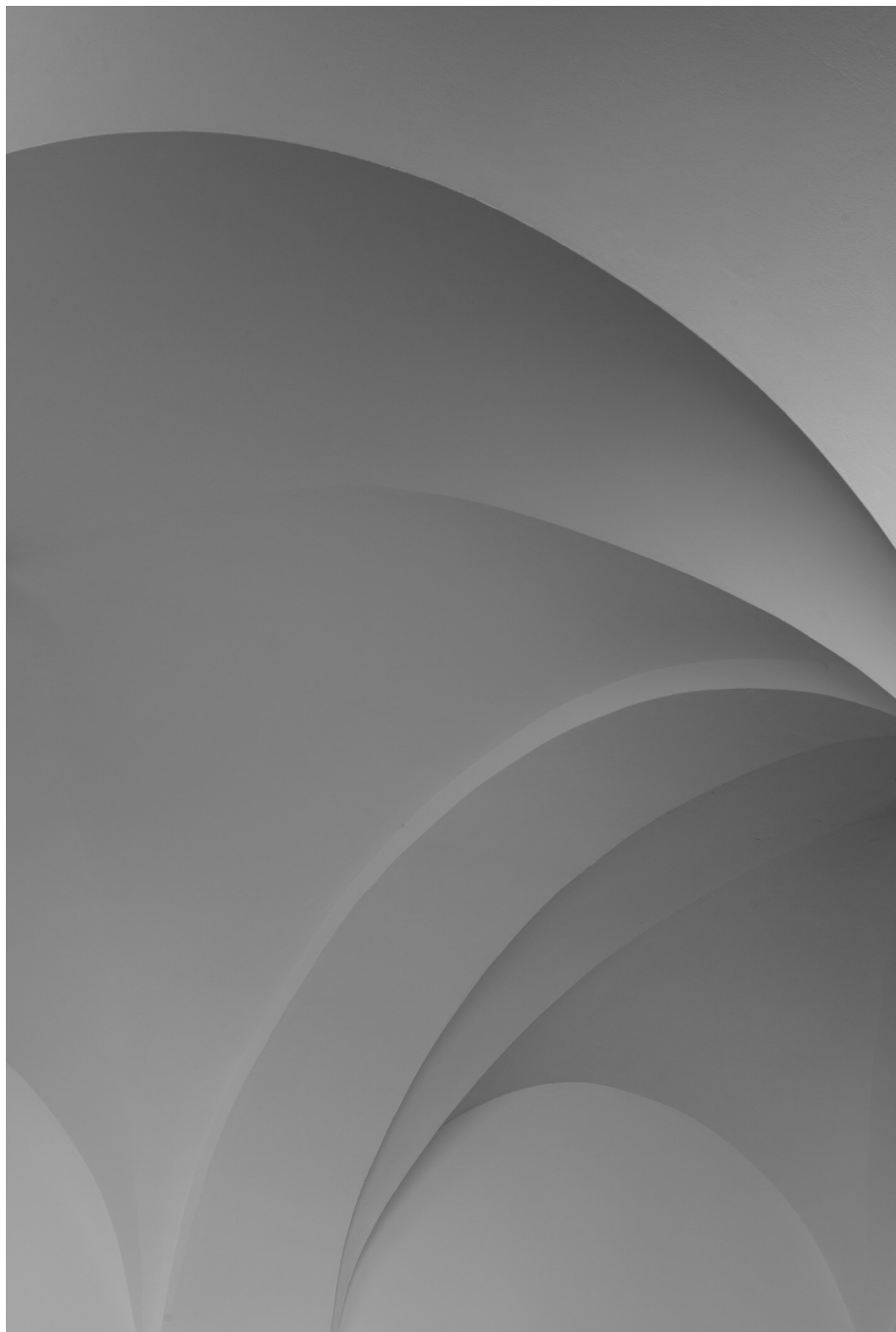


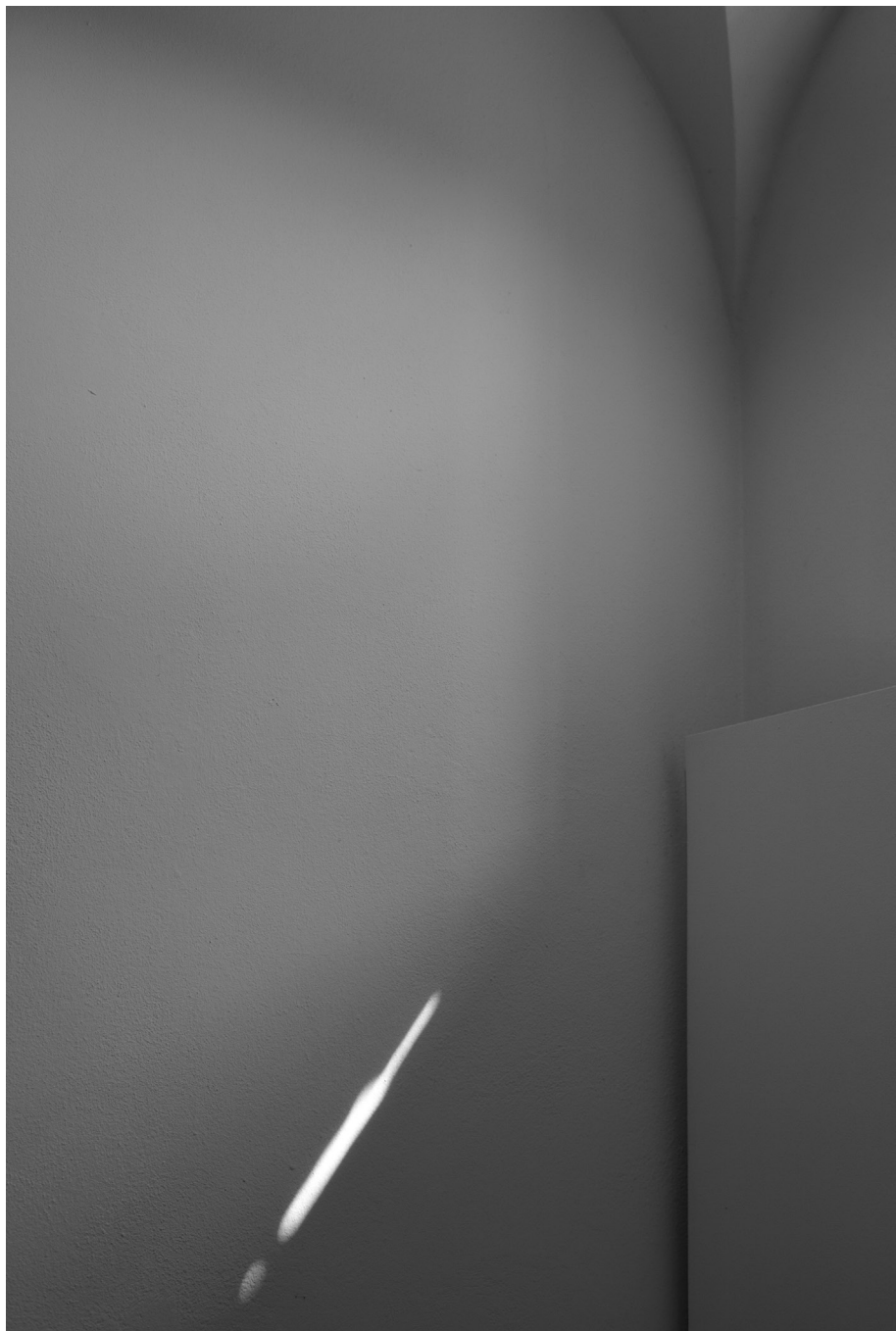


















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