



*U-jazdowski*  
**Open Storage**

R K O C D  
R A S Z A F



# Introduction

## Open Storage

Curator

Ewa Gorzałdek

Ujazdowski Castle  
Centre for  
Contemporary Art

Art storage spaces are usually only accessible to a few — only those in the know: employees of institutions, conservators or researchers. The Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art is different, thanks to a completely new form of sharing collections that has been introduced. This is the Open Storage – an original space combining the function of storing collections with an educational function and a curatorial programme. The warehouse is organised in such a way that, during study visits, the audience can become acquainted with a selected part of the collection. Interested people have the opportunity to view, in intimate conditions, the works of contemporary artists collected at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art since 1992, presented in the form of a “storage” exhibition. Everything has been displayed on custom-designed art storage furniture, allowing easy access to the objects.





The space has been arranged as a modern warehouse open to visitors, where the personal relationship with works of art is crucial.

Open Storage contains over a hundred works – mainly paintings, sculptures and installations – made by both established and young artists from Poland and abroad. The collection itself is a representative and diverse part of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art Collection. Most of the exhibits have previously been shown at exhibitions at the Ujazdowski Castle, thus creating an interesting combination of the history of this institution with the current curatorial and educational programme. By appointment, Open Storage can be visited by small groups and individual guests, including specialists in contemporary art, curators and students of art history.

It is a place where a permanent curatorial programme is created on an ongoing basis to activate the collections. Specially

prepared curatorial proposals serve to show the historical and artistic context of artworks, while also furthering the task of multifaceted education. The main role here is played by dialogue with the recipient, developed forms of active participation in getting to know the collections, and an interdisciplinary approach to their presentation, including the study of various interpretative planes of the collected works. The curators of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art and other institutions, artists, writers, musicians, theoreticians and art historians take part in audience-engaging activities. As part of building a context for the resources of the Open Storage, we are working on selecting archival documentation related to the Collection. These types of materials, in addition to interviews with the authors of the works, are the most helpful in interpreting and building the history of individual works of art. Their critical juxtaposition with archival documents

creates a very inspiring and rich context for reflection and educational work, in which both types of testimony – the artwork itself and the archive – matter greatly.

Opening museum storages to the public is a trend that has become more and more popular in the world in recent years. This phenomenon is the result of the evolution of views on the role of museums and cultural institutions with collections. It is increasingly believed that their essential function is not so much to collect objects, i.e. to build collections, but to gather communities around these collections. The viewers and their needs change. Today they are no longer just spectators; more and more often they become participants in cultural proposals, keen to create their own story, to enter into relationships with objects and learn their history in their own way. Breaking down the barrier between the audience and a work from the collection

introduces a unique kind of intimacy resulting from direct contact with art. However, the growing number of open-storage spaces must strike a delicate balance between access and openness and the need to ensure optimal conditions for the preservation and storage of collections.

The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver is considered to be the birthplace of the idea of an open warehouse – it was there that the first one was established, back in 1976 when the museum moved to its current building. The concept of making part of the stored collection available to the public came from curator Audrey Hawthorn, who developed this idea as part of an exhibition strategy, assuming that the programme exhibitions are intended for the general public, while the Open Storage is a space for students, researchers and professionals dealing with cultural heritage. It has





become one of the strategies of implementing the Canadian government's policy of democratising collections and increasing the knowledge available to the public. Next was the Strong Museum in Rochester, USA (1982). The first major world museum to organise an open-storage and installation space was the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where, in 1988, the Henry R. Luce Center for the Study of American Art was opened. The process of making available collection storages was gaining momentum, which became particularly visible at the beginning of this century, when museums in many countries implemented open-storage projects of various types, e.g. the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Washington, the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, the Museo Larco in Lima, the Jewish Museum Vienna, the MAS in Antwerp, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

There are already quite a lot of museums with open storages in Poland, for example, at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, the Xawery Dunikowski Museum of Sculpture (a branch of the National Museum in Warsaw), the Shipwreck Conservation Centre in Tczew (a branch of the National Maritime Museum in Gdańsk), the Museum of King Jan III's Palace in Wilanów, and the Thesaurus Cracoviensis – Centre for the Interpretation of Artefacts at the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow. In addition, the Silesian Museum in Katowice, the Central Museum of Textiles in Lodz, the Museum of the History of the City of Poznań, as well as the Museum in Kolbuszowa and the Subcarpathian Museum in Krosno, where glass collections will be placed in the basement of the Mazurkiewicz House in the Krosno Old Town, are preparing to launch their own open storage spaces.

Opening storages to visitors allows cultural institutions to democratise their



collections and provide a more transparent, open relationship with the public. This tendency harmonises with current curatorial strategies, in which great emphasis is placed on the communicative function of exhibitions and on inviting visitors to interact, to talk. In recent years, museums and institutions with art collections have undergone a clear

transformation from being for something to being for someone – the public. Studio warehouses are confirmation of this: they are exceptionally friendly places for art lovers, who can now discover works that hold particular appeal for them.

# Artists

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Jacek  
Adamas

Marek  
Chlanda

Stanisław  
Drózdź

Aneta  
Grzeszykowska

Marek  
Kijewski

Paweł  
Althamer

Tomasz  
Ciecierski

Edward  
Dwurnik

Izabella  
Gustowska

Grzegorz  
Klaman

Eric  
Andersen

Elżbieta and  
Emil Cieślár

Mirosław  
Filonik

Thomas  
Hirschhorn

Komar  
and Melamid

Mirosław  
Bałka

Martin  
Creed

Adam  
Garnek

Zuzanna  
Janin

Jarosław  
Kozakiewicz

Krzysztof  
M. Bednarski

Attila  
Csörgő

Stefan  
Gierowski

Zdzisław  
Jurkiewicz

Jarosław  
Kozłowski

Agata  
Bogacka

Zenona  
Cyplik-Olejniczak

Mariusz  
Gill

Ilya Kabakov  
and Joseph Kosuth

Zbigniew  
Libera

Włodzimierz  
Borowski

Tatiana Czekalska  
and Leszek Golec

Wanda  
Gołkowska

Koji  
Kamoji

Richard  
Long

Olaf  
Brzeski

Andrzej  
Dłużniewski

Paweł  
Grunert

Tadashi  
Kawamata

Luxus



Małgorzata  
Mirga-Tas

Joanna  
Rajkowska

Marek  
Sobczyk

Tomasz  
Tatarczyk

Monika  
Zawadzki

Jarosław  
Modzelewski

Robert  
Rumas

Roman  
Stańczak

Małgorzata  
Turewicz-  
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Jakub Julian  
Ziółkowski

David  
Nash

Ursula von  
Rydingsvärd

Henryk  
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Tomasz  
Wilmański

Ludwika  
Ogorzelec

Wilhelm  
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Haim  
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Ryszard  
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Jadwiga  
Sawicka

Paweł  
Susid

Winter  
Holiday  
Camp

Włodzimierz  
Pawlak

Janek  
Simon

Maciej  
Szańkowski

Jan  
Wyżykowski

Wojciech  
Prądmowski

Slavs  
& Tatars

Andrzej  
Szewczyk

Krzysztof  
Zarębski

Katarzyna  
Przezwąńska

Mikołaj  
Smoczyński

Radek  
Szlaga







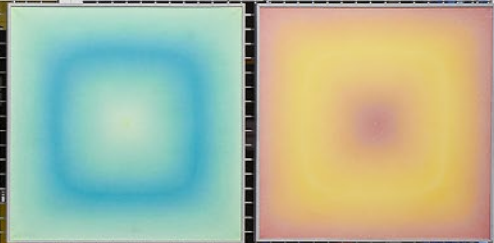
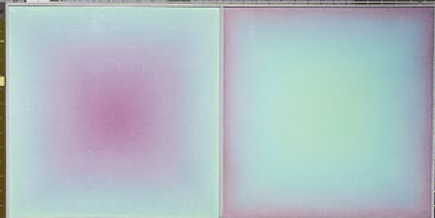
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# Jacek Adamas

(b. 1955) A sculptor, who is also involved in various of actions and installations, an environmentalist and activist. From 1988 to 1993, he studied in the class of Professor Grzegorz Kowalski in the Faculty of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Winner of the Annual Award from the Minister of Culture, National Heritage and Sport of the Republic of Poland for 2020. He lives with his family in the village of Worławki in Warmia.

Themes relating to participatory art, activism, ecology, defending the interests of local communities and the deconstruction of official historical narratives feature prominently in Adamas's work. He is one of the most radical Polish activist artists, working primarily in the social field, using typically artistic strategies such as performances or happenings. He protested, for example, against the construction of a landfill near human settlements, and the operation of an illegal gravel pit. He resisting planned fellings of old-growth trees, hanging white shrouds on them and, when local officials left his petitions unanswered, he

exhibited large-format copies on the floor of the Voivodeship Office in Olsztyn. In 2006, he staged the *Clean Hands* campaign in front of the same office, distributing white towels and soaps; before the 2008 Olympics in China, he sent a meat grinder to the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne. On 10 April 2010, he installed a dozen black-painted human-shaped steel shooting targets in front of the Ujazdowski Castle.

In his work, verging on social activism, Adamas enforces the civil right to criticise the way in which power is exercised, holding officials accountable for the rule of law and monitoring their activities.

Jacek Adamas  
*Artforum*

2011, object; paper, print



In 2009, as part of the celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the elections of 4 June 1989 – symbolising the end of Communism in Poland and the emergence of a free democratic state – Paweł Althamer invited his neighbours from a tower block in Warsaw's

Bródno district for a trip on a golden plane to Brussels. All the participants were dressed in golden overalls, and their photo, taken on the apron of the Brussels airport, appeared on the cover of the prestigious art magazine *Artforum*.

Jacek Adamas, Paweł Althamer's colleague from the famous Kowalnia (Professor Grzegorz Kowalski's studio at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw), has long been a critic of neoliberal capitalism and transition-era Poland,

taking the side of those for whom the post-1989 socio-economic transformation was a nasty experience. When Adamas received a copy of *Artforum* with the golden Boeing on the front cover, he pasted an image of the wreck of the presidential Tupolev that crashed near Smolensk on the back cover. Seen with its covers spread out, the magazine took on a distinctly accusatory tone after this intervention.

The juxtaposition of both photographs comes as a symbolic evocation of two images of Poland: one celebrating the success of the Third Polish Republic and the other, for which the transformation turned out to have tragic consequences.

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the National Collection of Contemporary Art programme.

Jacek Adamas  
*Building Blocks*

2014, installation; wood, plywood, paint

*Building Blocks* brings to mind a child's educational toy. These are large wooden cubes with colourful letters of the Polish alphabet that can be arranged into words and sentences. They were used in numerous artistic interventions in public space (for example, during protests against the Olsztyn Gallows, i.e. the Monument to the Liberation of Warmia-Masuria), where efforts to work through the difficult twentieth-century history of Poland were their frequent context. On many occasions, Adamas used the blocks "for fun," and to actively engage the audience in his happenings. The meaning of the work is updated each time a new caption is created. It is hard not to consider Jacek Adamas's objects, and the actions they are used in, as references to works that form the canon of critical art today inspired by children's toys, such as Zbigniew Libera's *Lego. Concentration Camp* or *The Doll You Love to Undress*.

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# Paweł Althamer

(b. 1967) A sculptor, performer, actionist, creator of installations and videos, and an activist. Studying sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1988–1993), he was a student of Professor Grzegorz Kowalski, and, alongside Katarzyna Kozyra, Katarzyna Górna, Jacek Markiewicz and Artur Żmijewski, among others, part of the group known as Kowalnia, which was one of the most interesting sensations of young 1990s' art. Winner of the prestigious Vincent Award (2004). Winner of the *Polityka* Passport for 2009 in the category of culture creator. Since completing his studies, Althamer has been running a ceramics workshop for the Nowolipie Group, composed of patients with multiple sclerosis and other chronic diseases.

Althamer successfully combines two divergent disciplines of art: traditional sculpture and radical performance. He has mastered the technique of

a figurative sculptor, and undergone training in the famous class of Professor Kowalski who perceived the artwork in terms of process and taught that the way of arriving at the final work was more important than the work itself. From the very beginning, Althamer consistently maintained a performative aspect to his work, turning the viewer into an active participant, necessary for the work to complete itself (e.g. *Bródno 2000*, *Common Task*, *Draftsmen's Congress*). This is due to Althamer's confidence in the communicative power of art, a commitment to "relational aesthetics." His practice has helped redefine the term "social sculpture." He is also the initiator of the Bródno Sculpture Park, where art projects have been presented since 2009. In 2011, Althamer started the *Almech* project, making his father's plastic factory, operating under that name, part of his artistic activities. In the subsequent years, he made

sculptures in polyethylene, among other things creating group portraits of people associated with the places where exhibitions of his art were organised.

Althamer works closely with members of marginalised communities, organises trips and performance projects involving neighbours, children, immigrants, the homeless, the outcast and the sick. In his case, contextualisation means combining art with non-artistic methods, formats and media, but it also means treating life itself as a form of art.

## Paweł Althamer

# Skin

1998, object; second-hand clothes

*Skin* is Paweł Althamer's self-portrait, made from clothes bought at a thrift store in Warsaw.

The work was created at the request of the then director of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Wojciech Krukowski, as a replacement for another self-portrait of the artist, which was in the Collection as a deposit and was withdrawn. In this work, Althamer referred to two topics close to his heart: clothes as a social aspect and the body as a bag in which consciousness resides. Leather genitals and button nipples can be seen on the clothes, which have been moulded into a human form. From the beginning of his career, using various types of materials and conventions, Althamer has keenly embraced the subject of the human figure, especially the self-portrait; this motif was also at the centre of his graduation project.

In the wax-covered *Self-Portrait* of 1993, made on a scale of 1:1 with grass, hemp, animal intestines and wax, Althamer achieved veristic mastery. His next self-portrait, *Clothing* (1994), was equally realistic in another sense; for that project, Althamer tightly wrapped up his clothes, watch, documents, keys and money in cling-film. Taken together, these self-portraits can be considered as a diptych in which the natural (the body) meets the cultural (clothing). Another work, *The Observer* (1995), depicts a figure made of second-hand men's clothes, suspended on a steel mesh; a figure in an aviator hat watches the world through an 8mm camera. Althamer often returns in his sculptures, but also in many performances and films, to the question of the definition of individual identity.



# Eric Andersen

(b. 1940) An intermedia artist, co-founder of the neo-avant-garde artist collective Fluxus, which in its time contributed significantly to redefining contemporary art. As a child, Andersen studied music, taking composition lessons from renowned Danish composers. In 1959, he became interested in intermedia art, which was popularised in the mid-1960s by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins. The term “intermedia”, i.e. “media between media”, defines the tendency to cross the boundaries of classic art genres and create works that cannot be classified into a specific artistic category. In November 1962, Andersen joined Fluxus, taking part in one of the first legendary Festum Fluxorum concerts at the Sankt Nikolaj Kirke in Copenhagen. His most

outstanding works include *Hidden Paintings*, *Crying Spaces* and *Lawns That Turn Towards the Sun*. He was a frequent visitor to the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. In Poland, he exhibited in the galleries Akumulatory 2 in Poznań, Potocka in Krakow, Awangarda in Wrocław, and at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, among others. In his performative actions and installations, Andersen explores relationships and interactions with viewers, who are always an active part of his work. He was among the first artists to embrace participation-based practices and involve viewers in creating artworks.



# Eric Andersen *Crying Stone*

1989, object; wood, stone, metal

This work was commissioned by Francesco Conza, a collector from Verona. It consists of nineteen polished stone hemispheres, elliptical in shape, each with two indentations to collect tears. They are made of the highest quality red Verona marble. According to the artist's concept, it is a travelling *Crying Stone* that you can always have with you and use in moments of emotion. The marble is housed in an elegant mahogany box with small accessories such as a bottle to collect tears. The whole set weighs twelve kilograms. The stone is shaped so that it is easy to hold while crying, and tears fall precisely into two small depressions. In the ideal version of this work, every person in the world would have their own

weeping stone, being a very valuable item that would be passed down from generation to generation, and after four hundred years the tears we cried would change the shape of the marble due to the minerals they contain. In the Nikolaj Kunsthal gallery, located in an old church in Copenhagen, you can see Eric Andersen's permanent installation *Space for Crying* with six *Stones*. It also incorporates various objects and aids that induce crying, such as needles, feathers, scissors, onions and a tape with a recording of the wailing of professional weepers. The work comes to life when one of the visitors makes use of it.



(b. 1958) A sculptor, who also works with videos, photographs and drawings. He studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating in the class of Professor Jan Kucz in 1985. From 2005 to 2007, he was a visiting professor at the Faculty of Sculpture and Spatial Activities of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań, where he ran the Studio of Spatial Activities at the Faculty of Intermedia until 2008. Since 2011, he has been running the Studio of Spatial Activities at the Faculty of Media Art of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. In 1986–1989, Bałka, alongside Mirosław Filonik and Marek Kijewski, was a member of the art collective *Neue Bieriemienność*. He is a member of the *Akademie der Künste* in Berlin. In 1993, he represented Poland at the Venice Biennale. Winner of the *Polityka* Passport for visual arts (1995). In 2009, he created the project *How It Is* at the Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London. He is the author of a memorial of the victims of the

*Estonia* ferry disaster in Stockholm (1998), as well as public installations, including *AUSCHWITZWIELICZKA*, Krakow (2010) and *HEAL*, University of California, San Francisco (2009), among others. In 2015, he created the scenography for Paweł Mykietyn's opera *The Magic Mountain*.

Body, memory, transience and private mythology are the principal topics of Mirosław Bałka's work and can already be found in his earliest works. The signs, codes and references contained in them have their sources in the artist's biography and only through it do they become fully legible.

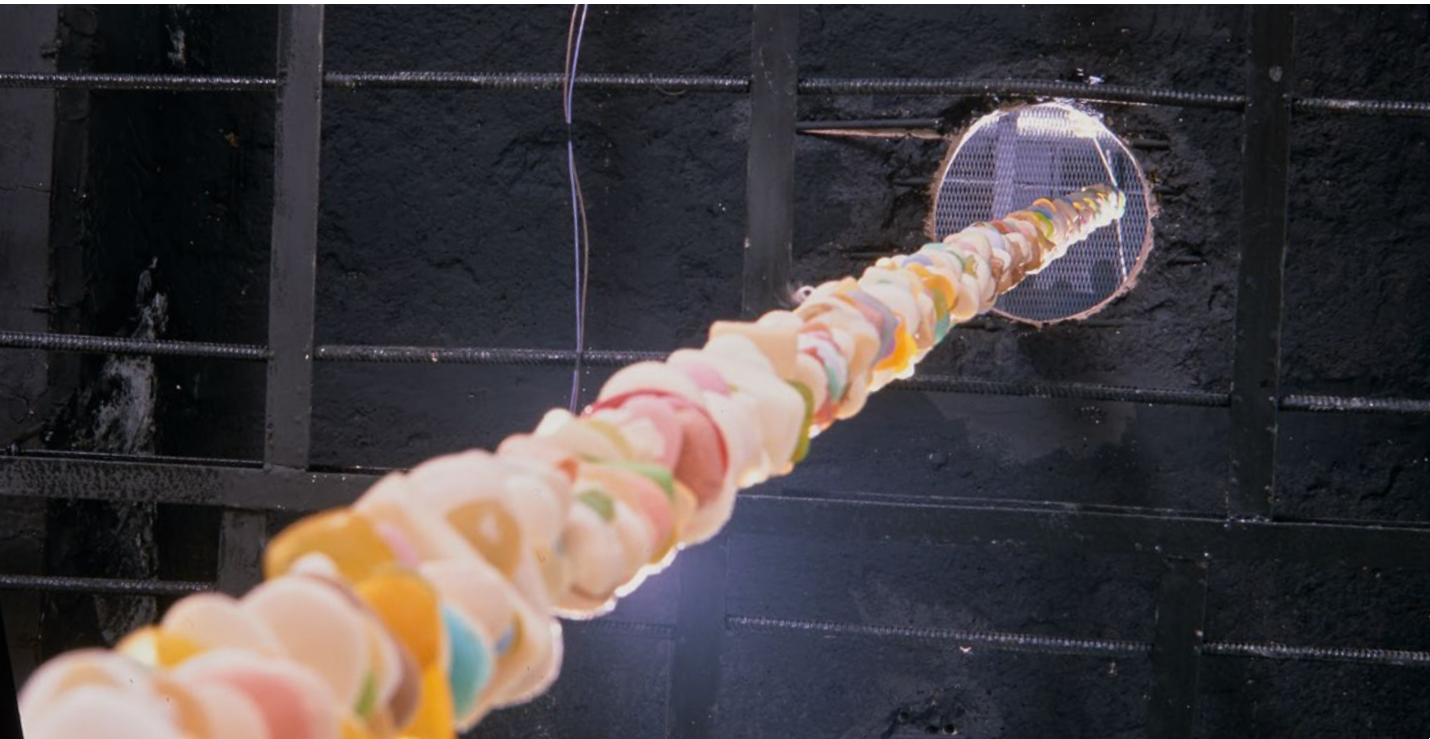
Bałka consistently uses a vocabulary reduced to the simplest forms and means of expression. The body is present in his works, not through its representation, but in an indirect and encrypted way. The artist is interested in forms that accompany the body on its journey through life (bed, coffin, urn, etc.) and traces left by the body

(sweat, urine, semen, tears). To construct his ascetic objects or installations, he uses the dimensions of his own body, employing them as a permanent module and pattern, a gesture that endows his works with a highly personal aspect. It is also emphasised by the unique role played by Bałka's family home in Otwock, where he grew up and later set up his studio. In recent years, the artist has also produced installations that incorporate video projections.

Mirosław Bałka

**7×7×1010**

2000, installation; soap, steel wire



*7×7×1010*

Bałka made this work for the exhibition *Scene 2000* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. The actual execution was preceded by a collection of used soaps that could be thrown into a glass container in the main hall of the Ujazdowski Castle or sent by post. Some of the soaps were packed like Christmas presents, with cards or poems. They were also accompanied by letters in which people told the story of a given soap. The work presented at the exhibition was a 10-metre-long sculpture made of nearly a thousand bars of soap strung on a steel cord. Each of them carried a personal story of the person who washed with it. Washing yourself is an intimate activity related to getting to know your own body, which changes over time. Bars of soap strung on a wire are like a metaphor of human life, of enduring in time. Old soap is also a sentimental object: pieces appearing in many of Bałka's other works come from the artist's grandmother's stock, who for years collected unfinished bars.



Miroslaw Bałka

Ø120 × 52,5 × (67 × 6 × 800)

2001, installation; concrete, salt, steel, stearin, rotating mechanism



The work was included in Bałka's solo exhibition *Around 21°15'00"E 52°06'17"N + GO-GO (1985-2001)* at the Zachęta in Warsaw. It consists of a concrete water-well ring filled with table salt, piled on a base that rotates very slowly and clockwise. The ring comes from the backyard of the artist's family home in Otwock, just like other materials often used by Bałka, such as wood, salt, ash, iron and soap. "It's a clock, a work about the hardships of life," said the author. Above the ring, level with the artist's own height, there is a double trapeze

made of rusty pipes and metal cords. The tubes are flooded with paraffin from a candle and there are two candlesticks hidden inside. "The spiritualisation of minimalist gestures," explained the artist. The symbolism of salt in Bałka's works is very rich, with one of its meanings being "dried sweat." *Blue Wave (1990)* is Bałka's first work in which salt appears as a component, still without any symbolic baggage, as a substitute for salt water. Since then, this substance has often recurred in Bałka's sculptures as a carrier of symbolic meanings.

Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Krzysztof M. Bednarski

(b. 1953) A sculptor, creator of installations, objects, actions, videos and posters. In the years 1973–1978, he studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where his instructors included professors Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz and Oskar Hansen. In the years 1976–1982, he was associated with Jerzy Grotowski's experimental Laboratorium Theatre. He is the author, among other works, of a Federico Fellini memorial in Rimini (1994) and the tombstone of the filmmaker Krzysztof Kieślowski at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw (1996). Laureate of the Katarzyna Kobro Award (2004), the *Exit* Quarterly Art Prize (2005); recipient of the Gold Medal for Merit to Culture "Gloria Artis" (2011).

Bednarski creates works with a universal message, inspired primarily by his individual biography, literature, as well as the specific nature of the time and place of their making. A super grasp of the classical categories of the matter,

form and space-time aspect of sculpture allows him to combine traditional and innovative approaches, expanding the language of this medium with a performative gesture, a search for the sound dimension of visual forms and the plastic modelling of space. Early on in his career, Bednarski used sculpture as a means of commenting on the socio-political situation in Poland, creating expressive metaphors for it (*Group Portrait*, 1980; *Victoria-Victoria*, 1983; *Sphinx*, 1984). Among his artistic achievements, two large series of sculptures stand out: one, *Total Portrait of Karl Marx*, began as his graduation project in 1978, the other, *Moby Dick*, was initiated in 1987, after the artist's trip to the Gulf of Guinea, originally taking the form of an installation titled *Moby Dick: 16 Sections Onto Infinity*. Both series are continued, Bednarski treating them as a never-ending conversation with himself and a continuous work with the language of sculpture. As Bednarski himself emphasises,

the *Karl Marx* works define his relationship with the reality he lives in — primarily in the political and social sense. *Moby Dick*, in turn, deals with the hidden sphere of life, the metaphysical dimension. Both of these themes, these two figures, one oriented to the outside world, the other to the inside, complement each other.

In the 1990s, Bednarski created, over time, a series of installations called *Passages*. To make it, he used spatial modules in the form of a metal table-turned-altar and everyday household items, including decorative dishes and lace napkins. In the 2000s, Bednarski made many works dedicated to artists important to him, such as Joseph Conrad, Tymoteusz Karpowicz, Andrzej Szewczyk, Paul Celan, Jerzy Grotowski, Dylan Thomas and others.

## *Group Portrait*

1980, sculpture; aluminium, iron, glass

A small sculpture, 31 cm high, consisting of eight identical profiles adjacent to each other and one profile in the middle of this set, with its mouth open to scream, facing the opposite direction. In 2005, the *Group Portrait*, enlarged to monumental scale, was to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of Solidarity. The project did not go through, however, and a General de Gaulle memorial was erected in Warsaw in its intended place. *Group Portrait II*, a replica of the work rendered in a new material, transparent acrylic glass, was a follow-up on those plans.



## Krzysztof M. Bednarski *White Passage*

1990, installation; metal, wood, mattresses, light bulbs, flour

Metal tables with the same dimensions were first presented by Bednarski in 1986 in the installation *We Are the Revolution / Homage to Joseph Beuys*. He showed his first installations from the *Passages* series in 1990 at the Studio Gallery in Warsaw (*Three Passages* exhibition). *White Passage* is part of the installation *Vision & Prayer Passage*, Bednarski's solo presentation, inspired by the poetry of Dylan Thomas, which took place at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1990.

The passage presupposes a spatio-temporal structure. Six pairs of white-painted metal tables, their legs connected vertically, form a long, bright passage in a repetitive arrangement, creating a strong rhythmic effect. Each pair of tables forms a specific frame, set at an equal distance from the adjacent modules. The tops, lying on the floor, are covered with white leatherette just like the upholstery, while the tops have holes cut through which glowing light bulbs on long white cables were placed. The last pair of tables, set slightly further apart, is made of rusted metal. Flour is sprinkled on the lower table, while the upper one looks as if it was kicking: it is welded with only one leg to the lower table, all the rest being raised dramatically upwards.







Krzysztof M. Bednarski  
*Grass, Just Grass*

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1996, installation; barbed wire, plastic, cotton wool, light bulbs, peat, wood

The work is made out of 1,800 metres of barbed wire coated in green plastic. The half-metre-high “stems” are decorated with red balls of cotton wool. The grass was “planted” in boxes filled with peat. An important element of the installation is the smell that comes from the peat, heated with special lamps. From a distance, *Grass, Just Grass* looks like an

ordinary plant seedling, only up close you can see that the grass is “suffering”, being covered with blood-red droplets. In this way, the artist refers to the associations that barbed wire evokes in our part of Europe (entanglements, war, concentration camps).



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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Signs of Time programme.



# Agata Bogacka

(b. 1976) A painter, who also makes photographs, sculptures and drawings. In the years 1996–2001, she studied at the Faculty of Graphic Arts of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating with an additional degree in Painting. From the very beginning, Bogacka has presented a characteristic style in her work: she paints with acrylics on canvas, bringing out flat patches of colour from the usually uniform background with a strong, graphic contour. Her art is synthetic, poster-like and employs a limited range of colours. The composition of the paintings is carefully thought out, devoid of any unnecessary details. In the first years after graduation, she recorded her emotional states and everyday experiences in this way, creating an intimate diary and a kind of painting autobiography. Working on a picture, she first carried out photo shoots following a predefined scenario, using herself or people emotionally connected with her as the model. Later, the anecdote and literalness

disappeared from the paintings, replaced by an analysis of the subconscious mind. The expressive outline also went away as the images became more fluid, difficult to define, sometimes even abstract, with interpenetrating planes.

Bogacka's latest paintings are abstract, built on the tension between the geometry of the form and the painting gesture. Talking about them, the artist draws attention to the Italian term *pentimento*, a term for traces of an earlier part of the painting, later repainted. In her new works, she consciously leaves fragments of earlier layers, shapes, or brush marks as a legitimate element of the finished picture. In this way, she presents painting not only as a finished, closed work, but as a process where changes in artistic decisions occur and the creative dynamics are visible.

## Agata Bogacka *Interaction*

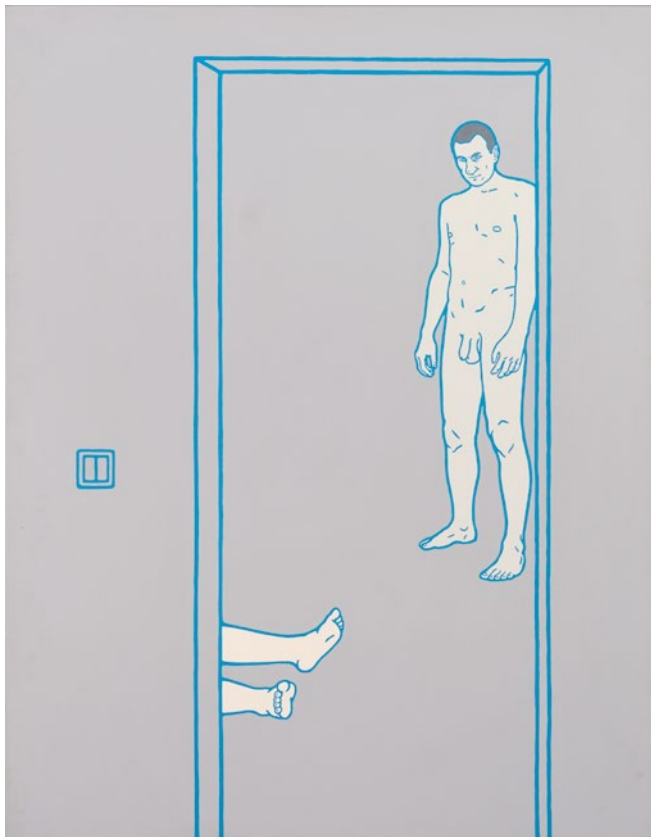
2002, acrylic on canvas

In 2003, the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art hosted an individual exhibition by Agata Bogacka called *I'm Bleeding*. The artist showed sixteen works there, all sharing autobiographical motifs. The paintings resembled rebuses, one could discover in them "keys" relating to the artist's private life, read the hidden reflection forming the author's emotional self-portrait. In *Interaction*, we see a naked man standing over someone's body, visible

only fragmentarily through a door. It can be conjectured that the painting depicts an intimate situation from the artist's life. In an interview in 2003, Bogacka said: "I paint my life. Those with whom I share common experiences. Sometimes those I envy or someone I would like to keep. Painting for me is like therapy or writing a diary. I keep a painting diary of mental states. But I think I'm also telling a universal story."

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Signs of Time programme.



# Włodzimierz Borowski

(1930–2008) He was an avant-garde artist, painter, creator of objects, environments, happenings, performances, installations, conceptual works and theoretical texts. In the years 1956–1959, he studied art history at the Catholic University of Lublin, and co-founded the Zamek [Castle] group, which brought together young artists and art critics. In 1973, he received the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Critics' Award.

Borowski's creative path reflects most of the changes that avant-garde Polish art underwent from the mid-1950s to the late 1970s. His works created during the existence of the Zamek group (1956–1960) are considered one of the highest achievements of Polish structural painting. In the years 1958–1963, he made *Artons* — unique objects and assemblages, often mobile and powered by electricity, made of plastics, lights, organic elements and modified waste materials. From 1966 onwards,

he produced *Syncretic Shows*, an original form of artistic performance that made him one of the pioneers of performance art in Poland. His *maniluses*, made of pieces of mirrors and conceptual projects, were famous. In subsequent years, Borowski's creative activity was limited; apart from occasional exhibitions, he focused on theoretical work. In the 1980s, he participated in presentations organised under the auspices of the Church. In 1992, a retrospective exhibition of his works titled *Traces* was held at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art (many of Borowski's objects that had not survived were reconstructed there). Critics recognised him as a precursor of the post-modernist attitude in Poland, distanced from the modernist belief in the autonomy of art.

Włodzimierz Borowski  
*Formula*

38

1966/1992 (reconstruction), installation; mirrors

The work *Formula* derives from the idea of the *manilus* that Borowski presented in 1963. The term *manilus* is a neologism created from the first syllables of *Manifest lustrzany* [*Mirror Manifesto*], a text in which Borowski explained his intent and the purpose of using mirrors. The *manilus* was a (usually) elongated mirror mounted on a wooden frame. In the compositions of mirror strips placed on gallery walls, figures of the exhibition visitors would be reflected. "I fragment and multiply the individual with strips of

mirrors, adding various accessories to their reflection and observing them," Borowski wrote. As part of the 1st Symposium of Artists and Scholars, held in Puławy in 1966 under the slogan *Art in a Changing World*, Borowski placed plus and minus signs assembled from strips of mirrors in one of the spaces of the local industrial plant, creating a mathematical and philosophical formula. Paweł Polit considers this work "one of the first articulations of conceptual awareness in Poland."

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Signs of Time programme.



## Włodzimierz Borowski *Carpet-Beater Set*

1967/1992 (reconstruction), installation; metal, thread

In the years 1967–1968, Włodzimierz Borowski produced a series of works called “sets”: *Carpet-Beater Sets*, *Rack Sets*, and the *Plant and Flower Set*. Before the *Carpet-Beater Set*, in 1967, he made a series of works called *Threaders*, consisting of wardrobes, cupboards and drawers, painted black and decorated with geometric floral ornaments. Inside these, Borowski hung threads of different colours to endow the practical items with organic features. The coloured threads also referred directly to the medium of painting, with Borowski using the spools as tubes of paint.

The *Carpet-Beater Set* is a reconstruction made in 1992 for Borowski’s solo exhibition *Traces* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. It is a typical backyard carpet beater, painted black, on which hang colourful threads of equal length, reminiscent of paint trickles, and the beater itself seems to have become a stretcher. This work can be read as a spatial painting that reacts directly to the surroundings, as the movement of air makes the hanging threads gently wave.



(b. 1975) A sculptor, who also creates installations, drawings and films. In 1994–1995, he studied at the Faculty of Architecture of the Wrocław University of Technology and later (1995–2000) at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław. He made his debut in 2001, winning the competition for the Orange Alternative monument with the design of a stone dwarf standing on a pedestal in the form of a fingertip (Świdnicka Street, Wrocław).

Brzeski works mainly with bronze, steel, resins, latex and ceramics. He usually creates narrative projects that show a highly distorted reality, immersed in the poetics of the absurd, surreal visions and nightmares. His objects tend to be hermetic, with a very strong visual impact and often elude attempts at interpretation. “My works are constructed on the basis of associations. It’s like poetry: all its power lies in putting together the

right words, even though they may be distant in meaning and not form a story at all.” Brzeski’s works adhere to the aesthetics of ugliness, being characterised by deformation, destruction, disturbance of scale or proportion. Formally, they usually assume the form of complex environments. The main theme of his work is the human figure, shown in its physical, psychological, and emotional dimensions.

In a series of exhibitions held in 2007–2008 (including *Mr. Hunter* at the Okna Gallery of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art), Brzeski presented an almost apocalyptic vision of a world in which there is an unresolved conflict between nature and culture. The villain of these projects was the character of Mr. Hunter, who was a great absentee in them, in contrast to the traces left behind: skeletons of mutated animals, deformed ceramic trophies, a shotgun turned to dry bone, household utensils

littered in the forest floor and thickets overgrowing his office, which had become a place taken over by nature and turned into a cemetery. In 2013, the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art hosted a survey exhibition of Olaf Brzeski, *The Self-Seeker*. It presented two of the main threads of his work: a fascination with nightmare and aggression, and an exploration of the method and matter of sculpture.



Olaf Brzeski  
**Shine**

2013, sculpture; steel



"This is a 10-second sketch I made while staring at the sun until a small disc of the star itself emerged from the brightness, which seemed to be in constant motion. Then I repeated this tiny drawing on a scale of 20:1, devoting much more time to it, copying each line in a steel rod." The artist's commentary is very useful in this case, because without it, it is not immediately clear what the work of art, intricately forged in steel, represents. The title of the work also helps to solve the visual puzzle – brightness, a moment of revelation, something as intangible and fleeting as only light can be. It is a spatial work created by significantly enlarging a simple drawing, actually scribbles, made by the artist after gazing straight at the

sun. It seems that Brzeski sought to arrest this moment, to manifest it. What draws attention, however, is the perverse contrast between a quick, clumsy sketch and a solid three-dimensional metal object welded from steel rods.

Brzeski likes to use traditional sculpting materials, such as bronze, steel or ceramics. They not only impose technical discipline, but also evoke associations with academic art; the artist neutralises the seriousness attributed to it in his works with elements of humour or irony. He attaches great importance to the physicality of his works, the language of matter and craftsmanship.

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.

(b. 1954) A draughtsman, graphic artist, sculptor, performer, painter, creator of installations and sculptural-choreographic performances. He studied at the Faculty of Graphic Arts of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, graduating in 1978. He taught at his alma mater, at Vestlandets Kunstakademi in Bergen (Norway) and at the branch of the University of Silesia in Cieszyn. Winner of the Nowosielski Foundation Award for 1997.

Chlanda works at the intersection of diverse media and his work is based on a strong conceptual foundation. He made his debut as a draughtsman in the mid-1970s and to this day drawing remains an inseparable element of his artistic expression. Over time, he began to add simple materials to his drawings, such as string, untreated wood, wax, plaster, pieces of metal, which led him in the mid-1980s to turn towards sculpture

and installation. Drawing and sculpture are the most important fields of Chlanda's creative activity, which in his works interact and connect with each other. The artist has repeatedly integrated drawing with performance, music and documentation, emphasising the processuality of the creative act.

Characteristic of Chlanda are his serial works ("families," as he calls them), on which he usually works for a long time. These projects tend to assume the shape of multi-element unique structures in the form of site-specific spatial installations. They are rich in references to literature, art, philosophy, mythology and history – always in an allusive form, devoid of literalness, and always accompanied by the artist's commentary. Chlanda's work is a special combination of a poetic mood with a strong intellectual element.

Since 1974, Marek Chlanda has made over 30 series of drawings (including *The Way of the Cross*, 1979–2000; *Gammel Kongevej*, 1981; *The Last Supper*, 1982; *Apocalypsis cum figuris*, 1991; *Codex Jerusalem*, 1993). In his more recent series, such as *Codex Vistula* (2001–2002), *God's Diaries*, *Afterlife*, or *Gravestone Boxes* (2003–2004), drawings and objects are dominated by abstract forms and references to nature. In recent years, the artist has completed several painting series (including *Beatifications*, 2006–2007, and *Health Resort*, 2011–2012).

Marek Chlanda  
*Goodnight series*

Marek Chlanda is an artist who combines various fields of art: sculpture, music and dance. His collaboration with the Brazilian dancer Elizabeth Brodin on the performance *Good Morning / Buenos Días* was a unique experiment in choreography and sculpture. Brodin designed the choreography, inspired by Chlanda's sculptures, while he created the sculptures by observing the dancer's movements. Brodin in a bird mask danced around the sculptures, with her every move being a response to the surrounding objects. The play was presented for the first time at the Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz in 1995. It was repeated at the Zachęta in Warsaw and at the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea in 1996. The sculptures series *Goodnight* was created in connection with the performance under the same name. Both works refer to the night and the state of body and mind associated with it.



Marek Chlanda

## *Goodnight 2*

1995, sculpture; metal, papier mâché, wax, plaster

This wax mould with a ribbed, slightly twisted structure is built on an elliptical plane. It is closed, slightly tapering upwards, topped with an opening also in the form of an ellipse. The axes of both ellipses are shifted relative to each other. The sculpture gives the impression of a shape frozen during a rotation around its own axis. One of the ribs of the figure is more forward, as if taking over the weight of the body. Above it hangs a white mask attached to the edge of the upper hoop by a piece of metal, used by the dancer while working on the performance. The metal hoops, trimmed with fabric, were put on the back of the head. From the right corner of the mask's mouth, a white ray runs out into space, making a gentle arc towards the ground. Beneath it, a white, empty vessel stands on the floor.



Marek Chlanda

## *Goodnight 3*

1995, sculpture; metal, wax, paper, plaster

This is a figure with the plan of an incomplete ellipse, in which a straight segment has been inserted in one place. The construction consists of vertical metal ribs, arranged diagonally from left to right, as if emphasising the dynamics of rotation or twisting. The walls of the figure are made of a metal mesh covered with canvas and wax. The sculpture opens like parted flaps of a coat. Inside there are two masks, a cardboard-wax one at the top and a plaster one at the bottom, covered with wax from the inside; both are connected by a metal bar. From the mouth of the upper mask comes a delicate form, as if a white string or ray.



(b. 1945) A painter, who also works with of drawings, collages, and photographs. He studied painting at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, graduating in 1971 in the class of Professor Krystyna Łada-Studnicka. In the years 1972–1985, he was a lecturer at his alma mater. He was awarded the Jan Cybis Prize for 1999.

Ciecierski's work, produced in series, is like a treatise on painting presented through the medium itself. In his early paintings one finds references to the history of European painting, and his entire body of work is a constant reflection on the essence of painting itself, which allows the artist to verify and update this medium. Ciecierski's painting has always had a representational character, although in the 1980s the artist gave up the narrative and figurative way of depicting and focused primarily on landscape, presented synthetically, bordering on abstraction. He also rejected the

traditional understanding of the picture and began to create relief compositions that consisted of small oil paintings layered on top of each other. A characteristic feature of Ciecierski's work is the construction of works, both drawings and paintings, from fragments, separate canvases or sheets, and putting them together into larger entities. The choice of such an artistic strategy was dictated, among other things, by the artist's predilection for juxtaposing formally diverse elements within a single work. From the beginning of the 1990s, landscapes became the leading theme in Ciecierski's painting, absorbed from reality during his numerous travels; these are also mental landscapes, painterly records of moods and emotions.

Ciecierski collects postcards, clippings, Polaroid photos and amateur photographs, which he often pastes onto canvas as an integral part of the picture, as well as using

pages from old calendars as a background for his drawings. From an image he is not satisfied with, he cuts out the best fragment to use in another of his works. It is a kind of conceptual game with the image, in which painting, on a par with a painter's patch and line, is accompanied by a reproduction, a postcard, a photograph or a collage insert. It is also the disclosure of a private archive and an introduction into the matter of painting of personal fascinations and memories registered in non-painting materials.

Tomasz Ciecierski  
*Untitled*

1992, oil on canvas



The landscape motif, which appeared in Tomasz Ciecierski's paintings almost from the beginning, became virtually omnipresent in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, the artist produced spatial compositions, or a kind of reliefs, consisting of many small pictures joined together as a collage. The seascape was often the theme of this type of work.

The work from the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art is made up of around a dozen small paintings combined into a multifaceted whole. Each of them presents a different view of the landscape, with a water motif and a marked horizon line. Ciecierski's paintings have a patchwork structure and are a painterly visualisation of their author's philosophy of seeing. The lack of a single point of view, a multitude of scenes, numerous overlapping representations, all this brings to mind a vision broken into atoms, a desire to

record the variability of one's perception of nature. It is an artistic reality created as an effect of the working of the artist's inner gaze, his calling forth from memory of specific reminiscences and their related emotions.

Rather than painting directly from nature, Ciecierski works in the studio, using photographs and postcards on which traces of places and moods have been preserved. On his canvases, nature is always mediated by a mechanical recording tool, the photographic image. The past mingles with the present, spring with autumn, the artist combining canvases showing different takes of the same theme, recorded from different points of view. By multiplying the motif and showing it in various contexts, he is able to show nature in its constant transformation.

# Elżbieta and Emil Cieślars

↑ Artists list 48

Sculptors, designers, actionists, creators of installations and other forms of ephemeral art, as well as animators of artistic activities, who have been working together from the very beginning of their career.

## Elżbieta Cieślars née Dembińska

(b. 1934) She studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1956–1961), graduating in the class of Professor Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. From 1973 through 1978, she and her husband Emil ran the Repassage Gallery in Warsaw, an influential counterculture institution of the period and a focal point for Polish neo-avant-garde artists.

## Emil Cieślars

(b. 1931) He studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1953–1959), graduating in the class of Professor Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. Right after graduation, he started teaching as an assistant to Professor Oskar Hansen, a position he held until 1964. Between 1964 and 1976, at the initiative of Professor Jerzy Sołtan, he ran an independent sculpture studio at the Faculty of Interior Design of his alma mater. Since 1982, he has been involved in projects based on the theory of colours, developing his *Colour Collection* as the basis for combinatorial activities, which was the beginning of his *Music of Colors*. In 1985, he constructed his first instrument, the *Colour Organ*, which allows one to play coloured light the way one plays music. Emil Cieślars continues working on *Music of Colours* to this day.

The Cieślars questioned the role of art as a phenomenon that marks the boundary between the artist and the viewer, conducting formal research into spatial interactions of forms and visual interactions of structures, among other subjects. In the 1970s, their interests shifted towards the social impact of sculptural objects and the establishment of active contact with the recipient; they sought to implement this principle in works such as *Kaleidoscope: Look Through the Pipe*, the action *Collection of Used Shoes*, or the performance series *Carousel of Attitudes*. They also made works and undertook activities with political overtones. In 1978, the Cieślars relocated to Paris, and since 1994 they have been based in Savoy. Since then, they have been carrying out their artistic works individually, Emil continuing to work on the music of colours, Elżbieta creating series of interactive sculptures and performances. In 2003, their retrospective exhibition was held at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art.



Elżbieta and Emil Cieślár  
*Sewing Patterns*

1972, installation  
paper, cardboard, plywood, foil, string, wood

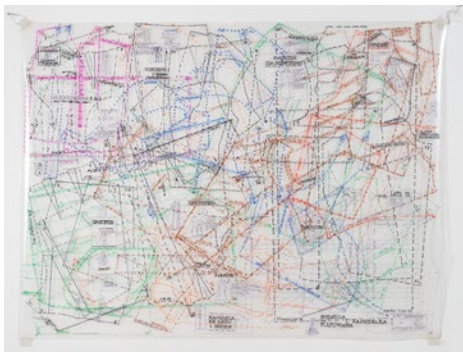


## Elżbieta and Emil Cieślars *Sewing Patterns*

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The installation was part of a performance and exhibition presented by Elżbieta and Emil Cieślars at the Sigma Gallery (later renamed the Repassage Gallery) in 1972. An archival description by the artists: "In the space of the gallery, all 16 models of women's costumes drawn on a sheet of sewing patterns were produced with kraft paper. Thanks to this, liberated from their aesthetic meanings, fashion, from social (prestige of the owner) or

physiological (protection of the body) considerations, they appear just like on the battlefield: a cut neck, abandoned skin, an empty man... From the senselessness of our manipulations, an image of the eternal happening of life has arisen. In the attached diaporama, you can see photographs of the outfits, other sheets of paper with cut-out holes, a wardrobe for 16 paper clothes and one transparent plastic outfit for a girl."



# Martin Creed

(b. 1968) A British post-conceptual artist and musician. In 1990, Creed graduated from London's Slade School of Fine Art and in 2001 he was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize.

Creed creates minimalist works full of humour and distance towards himself and the world. He forces people to confront the simplest things – a crumpled sheet of paper, inflated balloons – which he places in the gallery, giving them no other meaning: if Creed's works represent anything, it is only themselves. The artist's intention is that they do not carry any metaphor, they do not have a second bottom. Creed uses terms so general that you can fill them with almost any subject matter. His brilliant works are about having fun, but also about making people see everyday life

in a different light. In *Work No. 227*, he installs a mechanism that alternately turns on and off the light in the gallery space. Is this a metaphor for life and death? Or maybe good and evil? Creed will answer that it is light going on and off. *Work No. 850* (2008) was a series of sprint runs through the Duveen Gallery between surprised visitors. If these works have any meaning at all, it arises in the viewer's imagination. Creed's works are numbered like catalogue numbers in a library. He took this idea from classical music, from Beethoven's catalogue of works. All his works should be treated equally, whether it is a small or a large thing. On the wall of London's Tate Gallery, the artist once wrote: "The whole world + an artwork = the whole world." Creed also constructed neon-sign installations on the facades of buildings, informing

passers-by that *Everything Is Going To Be Alright*. The first of them appeared in 1999 on the Portico building in London, then on the Tate Gallery building in London (2000), and in 2003 permanently in New York on the walls of Gavin Brown's Enterprise (Greenwich Street). Creed is also known on the London art scene as a musician of the minimalist punk trio Owada (1997–2000). The band's performances were accompanied by video projections of his making.

Martin Creed

## Work No. 325: RZECZY

2004, installation; yellow neon sign



## Work No. 326: UCZUCIA

2004, installation; white neon sign



Both minimalist neon signs were made for Creed's solo exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2004. They are displayed on the wall, with cables and electronics visible. Pulsating with yellow light, the *Things* sign is a visualisation of Creed's song *I Like Rzeczy [Things]* (Work No. 114, 1995). The artist pays attention to ordinary things without specifying the concept itself – it's about the things that are around us. In one interview with him, he confessed that he started making art because it helped him connect

with people more often: "It's 50% what I do and 50% what other people think about it." Therefore, *Uczucia [Feelings]* is the reverse of *Rzeczy* and vice versa. Both of Creed's neon lights played a key role during the presentation of the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2010, which was entitled *Things Evoke Feelings*, emphasising the relationship between the materiality of objects and their emotional potential.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art,  
deposit of Martin Creed and Hauser & Wirth

# Attila Csörgő

(b. 1965) An artist who works with sculptures, installations, drawings and photographs. He graduated in 1994 from the Faculty of Painting and the Faculty of Intermedia at the University of Fine Arts in Budapest. He also studied at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. He represented Hungary at the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999. He won the Nam June Paik Award in 2008. Csörgő works on the borderline of art and science, his research relates to his fascination with exact sciences, especially geometry. He creates installations combining many media, such as photography, sculpture and drawing. In search of perception mechanisms, he analyses the relationships

between the plane, time and space, taking advantage of the achievements of kinetics, optics and geometry. The artist is known for his do-it-yourself kinetic constructions, referring to the relationship between the Platonic solids. His projects combine fantasy and curiosity, representing various physical and mathematical phenomena, creating an original view of reality. Csörgő's works, incorporating pulleys, sticks and strings, at first sight appear funny, but they raise important questions about how we construct our vision of the world and about the boundary between art and science.

## Attila Csörgő *Platonic Love*

1998, kinetic installation; metal, wood, string, electric motor

There are only five regular solids in the universe: tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron and icosahedron. The first known description of them is in the writings of Plato, hence the name Platonic solids. They can all be inscribed in a sphere and in any solid, all the faces, edges and vertices are the same size. *Platonic Love*, from the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, is based on specific aspects of the geometric correspondence between the first two of the five solids, which the artist noticed by performing a simple mathematical operation: he counted the number of edges in a tetrahedron and a cube. It turned out that a tetrahedron has exactly half as many edges as a cube. In order to

create a visual representation of this fact, the artist constructed a movable model of sticks, strings, weights, gears and electric motors. The mechanism that moves the strings stretches the rods, deconstructing geometric figures. Symmetrically arranged, two tetrahedrons merge into a cube and then the cube again splits into two tetrahedra. The duration of the metamorphosis is much longer than that in which the solids appear as separate forms. This encourages the perception of Csörgő's work as a multi-directional, pulsating body with two timeless forms in the final phases of transformation. The visual quality has a sensual dimension, the artist exploiting the aesthetics of geometric bodies.



# Zenona Cyplik-Olejniczak

A painter, graphic artist, creator of objects, installations, happenings and films. A graduate of the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Poznan (degree in painting with Professor Zdzisław Kępiński, in lithography with Professor Lucjan Mianowski and in woodcutting with Professor Zbigniew Lutomski). Her works were featured in the exhibition *Grandmother, Mother, Daughter* at the Arsenał Municipal Gallery in Poznan (2015) and in the exhibition *Historiophilia. Art and Polish Memory* at Stara Drukarnia in Warsaw (2017) and in the exhibition *Signs of Freedom. On the Endurance of Polish National Identity* (2018–2019) at the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Cyplik-Olejniczak is the author of published poems, short stories and art essays; she also writes film scripts and makes her own films, e.g. *Let Us Come Out Into the Field* (1988–1989), *Poznań, December 9, 1989, 11.59–12.13* (2007) and *House Lights* (2003–2007). Her works are part of private collections in Australia,

Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Canary Islands, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Monaco, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, as well as of private and public collections in Poland. The recipient of a Ministry of Culture and Art of the Republic of Poland research grant in 1991, Cyplik-Olejniczak emphasises in her works symbolic content referring to such universal concepts as transience and continuity, dying and growth, impermanence and rootedness, chaos and memory, as well as femininity, motherhood and hope. She often finds topics for her works in her own biography and family history, creating objects and installations incorporating various worn items or old photos, which she elevates to the rank of artefacts and endows with new meanings. Her art is an attempt to save not only matter from oblivion, but also memories, thoughts and events.

Zenona Cyplik-Olejniczak  
*Reliquary: A Warm Shirt for a Daughter*

2017, installation; paper, acrylic glass, ink



The work consists of a transparent house-shaped reliquary containing a shirt sewn from original letters written to the artist by her mother. The work tackles issues frequently recurring in the artist's work, dealing with the relationship between historical events familiar from textbooks and individual human lives. The letters

are personal in tone, but many of the events described therein are rooted in historical facts that affect the intimate relationship between parent and child. All this has been placed in a reliquary, sacralising the relationship between family members and the memories contained in the letters.

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the National Collection of Contemporary Art programme.





# Tatiana Czekalska and Leszek Golec

An artistic duo working together since 1996. From the very beginning, the artists took up ecologically engaged topics in their works, which in the 1990s was still a niche phenomenon in Poland. They are considered pioneers of ecological awareness and Polish posthumanism. A search for harmony with the world of nature is a constant element of their work; they defend animals or work with them, allowing them to take part in the creative process. The art of Czekalska & Golec has a profound ethical aspect; taking notice of the smallest and weakest manifestations of life, their works are aimed at aiding the survival of tiny creatures exposed to threats of civilisation

## Tatiana Czekalska

(b. 1966) She works with photography, painting, drawing, sculpture and fashion design. In 1995, she graduated from the Department of Fashion Design at the Władysław Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz.

## Leszek Golec

(b. 1959) A photographer, curator of exhibitions, author of installations, sculptures and objects. A graduate of the Wyższe Studium Fotografii photography college in Warsaw, in the 1980s and 1990s Golec was associated with the Lodz neo-avant-garde scene, centred around the Wschodnia Gallery. He is a curator at the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko and member of the Association of Polish Art Photographers (ZPAF).

## Avatar I Ag

1996/2009 (reconstruction), object; silver, glass, metal

Czekalska & Golec call the works they design Avatars. *Avatar I Ag* is a prototype item that can be helpful in saving insects and other tiny animals. According to the artists' own description, it is intended to be used by a "five-fingered superior being" and is intended to "facilitate the provision of assistance to endangered beings incarnated in an insect body," thus serving to "carry small, living, moving, sentient beings." *Avatar I Ag* is designed to make it easier to move them to a safe place and thus protect them from a death that may await them in the

urban environment. The work itself consists of a low, marble column, on top of which there is a glass shade, covering the silver object inside. All the works from the *Avatar* series are small, aesthetically and precisely designed objects made of precious materials, i.e. gold and silver, which have antiseptic properties. Their minimalist forms bring to mind elegant jewellery or advanced technological tools. The artists always accompany them by detailed operating instructions, making the objects fully functional and safe devices.



(1939–2012) A conceptual artist working with painting, drawing, photography and installation art, who also designs posters and works with various literary forms, from fiction to concrete poetry. He studied architecture at the Wrocław University of Technology (1958–1960) and attended a course in philosophy at the University of Warsaw as an auditor (1960–1961). In 1962, he enrolled in the Faculty of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where he studied with Professor Marian Wnuk and Professor Oskar Hansen, graduating in 1968. Starting from 1970, he lectured at the Faculty of Interior Design of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where he was awarded the title of associate professor (1991). Between 1980 and 1993, Dłużniewski and his wife, Emilia Małgorzata, a painter, organised exhibitions, lectures and conferences of Polish and foreign artists (including presentations of the Fluxus movement) at their home at 20/26 Piwna Street, which at that time became an important hub of artistic life. He was a recipient of the Katarzyna Kobro Award (2003) and the Jan Cybis Prize (2006).

Dłużniewski's intellectual and thought-provoking work is not easy to analyse. The artist often changed the articulation of his artistic language and embraced highly diverse media. Linguistic interests brought him closer to conceptualism, as did self-reflective art. He believed that art should

be useful, by which he meant its ability to provoke reflection, to provide or inspire a special kind of intellectual provocation.

In the 1970s, Dłużniewski formulated the concept of the "absent image" and the "image of the absent image," based on the assumption that in the process of creating an abstract image, "specific features were replaced by general features, including absence as a specific form of being." In the mid-1980s, Dłużniewski focused on linguistic issues, developing a special interest in the relationship between the meaning of words and their grammatical gender in different languages. Browsing through an album of Dürer's drawings, he noticed that death is depicted as a male, unlike in Slavic iconography, where it appears as a female figure. It turned out that there are more of these differences and that they concern such fundamental concepts such as "war", "heaven", "faith", "home" and "space."

Dłużniewski's linguistic interests were naturally reflected in his paintings and installations, the artist looking for an appropriate form for them. In 1991, he published a book titled *T.* — a combination of a monographic study and an artist's book, revealing links between the visual arts, poetry and reflection on simple yet important concepts. The book was published in conjunction with the

exhibition *Words and Things* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art.

In 1997, the artist was involved in a car accident in which he lost his sight. From 1998 onwards, he worked from memory, conceptualising paintings that were then executed by his son Kajetan, his wife Emilia Małgorzata or his friend Maciej Sawicki. Among the text paintings produced in this period were *Like Pica-bia* (1998, with white-black-and-red letters), *Kak Eto?* (1998, in Cyrillic letters with a painted green sun), *If the Sky Is Red, Round and Masculine [der Himmel] and Earth Is Blue, Square and Feminine, Then What Is White and, Consequently, What Is Grey?* (1999), *It's Hard to Count Butterflies* (1999, with an almost invisible inscription) and *God* (1999). In an exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2000, Dłużniewski showed *Geonauts*: miniature bronze sculptures arranged on the edge of a large white cube, tiny figures of beings that, according to his description, were invisible and had come on a short visit to our planet.

# Sun I

1989, acrylics on canvas



In the mid-1980s, Dłużniewski took up the topic of the relationship between words and their grammatical gender, studying this issue in various European languages (mainly Polish, English, French, German and Russian). In the centre of the composition, written one below the other in three colours on a grey, raw canvas, are the words denoting the sun in French, German and Russian. The field with the words is surrounded by a frame painted in the same colours. This is surrounded by a second frame, in yellow. The colouring of the words corresponds with their grammatical gender, according to a predetermined rule: red for masculine, blue for feminine and green for neuter. The yellow band represents the light emitted by the sun. Therefore, colour has not only an analytical function here, enabling linguistic analyses carried out by the artist, but also a symbolic one, by pointing to a feature of the depicted phenomenon.

Andrzej Dłużniewski  
*Earth, Home, Sky*

1990, installation; plywood, acrylics

Yet another example of a work presenting Andrzej Dłużniewski's linguistic interests, expressed in a search for the relationship between meaning and grammatical gender. The work consists of a group of four vertical objects of identical shape but different colours. The words "earth" "house" and "sky", in Polish and German, were painted on each object (at the bottom, in the central part and at the very top, respectively). The artist used the previously adopted colour system related to the grammatical types of words. In Dłużniewski's works, colour plays a double role, as an element both symbolic and ordering, showing at the same time the cultural differences inherent in language itself. The work metaphorically indicates the place of man in the world, between the earth and the sky.



Andrzej Dłużniewski

## *Sun II*

1991, installation; plywood, acrylics

The installation consists of three vertical forms tapering towards the top, painted in blue, green and red, with yellow endings and the inscription “sun” in three languages. This is another work by Dłużniewski raising the question of why in many languages the same concepts and words have different grammatical genders, whether this fact affects their understanding by people, and if so how. The artist studies this phenomenon like a linguist, but he presents the results of his deliberations using the language of forms and colours. Semantic investigations concern both the lexical sphere, related to the type of word (masculine, feminine or neuter) and the visual sphere, referring to the form and symbolism of colours.

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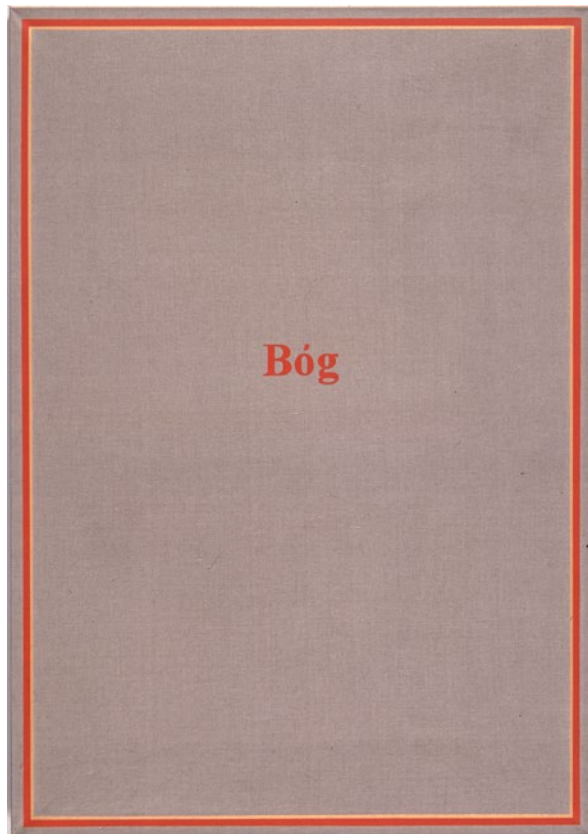
The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.



# God

1999, acrylics on canvas

The work was created two years after the accident in which the artist lost his sight. In the centre of the raw, unprimed canvas there is a red inscription: "God." The artist used red because in Polish the word god is masculine. The image is surrounded by a red frame along the edge, doubled from the inside with a thinner yellow frame (the colour of sunlight and the equivalent of gold, a symbol of divinity). The work's minimalist visual form houses a rich load of content. Dłużniewski, using very sparing means of expression, enters into a dialogue with the artistic tradition, referring to meanings and senses fundamental to our culture. On the one hand, he refers to the historical dispute between the supporters and opponents of depicting a deity in a painting, while on the other, by presenting an image of God (as evidenced by the format of the painting, typologically related to the category of the portrait), he deprives it of any references to figuration and abstraction, leaving it in the form of a written word.



# Stanisław Dróżdź

(1939–2009) A leading author and animator of concrete poetry. A graduate of Polish philology at the University of Wrocław (1959–1964), in 1967 he began writing concrete texts and in 1979 he edited and published the book *Concrete Poetry. A Selection of Polish Texts and Documentation 1967–77*. In 2001, he was awarded the Nowosielski Foundation Award; in 2003 he represented Poland at the 50th Art Biennale in Venice.

Dróżdź's works began with words, letters, punctuation marks and mathematical symbols. He produced printouts, offprints, typescripts, objects, installations and interactive works, describing his work in the following way: "Concrete poetry consists in isolating the word, making it autonomous. Isolating it from the linguistic context, isolating it also from the context of extra-linguistic reality, so that the word as if means in itself and for itself. In concrete poetry, form is

determined by content and content by form. Traditional poetry describes the image. Concrete poetry writes with the image."

From the very beginning, Dróżdź referred to his works as thought-forms, the name denoting the shapes of concepts that are realised at the moment of their spatial formation. He produced texts on a two-dimensional plane and in three-dimensional space, and highly diverse ones: letter texts, word texts (e.g. *Hourglass*, *Forgetting*, 1967), digital texts (e.g. *Loneliness*, 1967), sign texts (e.g. *Uncertainty–Hesitation–Certainty*) and text objects (e.g. *Between*, 1977). The latter work was accomplished at the Foksal Gallery. The gallery interior, a white cube, is covered with neat rows of randomly arranged black letters that spell out the word "between." The word itself, however, did not appear anywhere in the notation of the successive letters. The artist led the viewer as if inside the text and inside the word

"between." As Tadeusz Sławek noted, spectators of the work had a sense of being read by the text itself. Dróżdź himself suggestively described the process of looking at a text arranged in such a way as observing it "from a fly's perspective."

In 2001, as part of the presentation of the AMS Outdoor Gallery, Dróżdź's *Or* was displayed on 400 billboards in several cities all over Poland. In 2003, the same work was executed on a monumental scale (35 × 12 m) on the façade of the Upper Silesian Centre of Culture in Katowice (slightly modified by the artist). In the project *Alea iacta est*, produced for the 50th Venice Biennale, Dróżdź used a billiard table and playing dice.





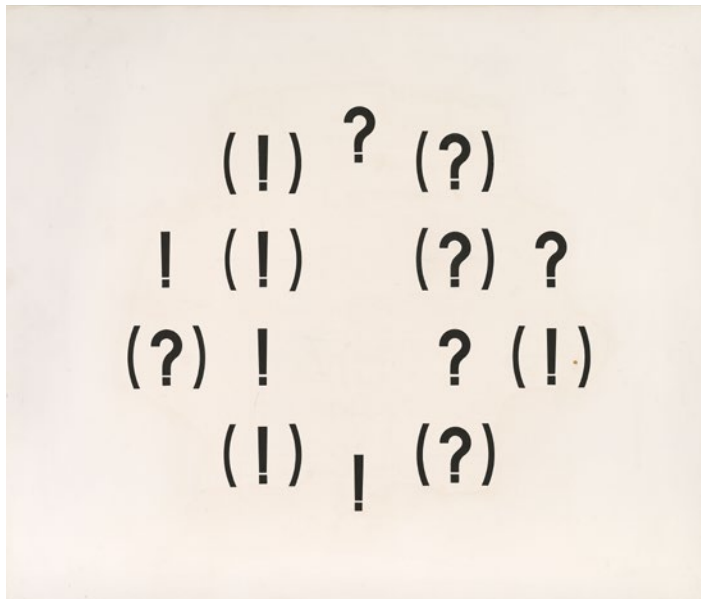
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Stanisław Dróżdż  
*Untitled*

1974, object; fibreboard, acrylic



The work is composed of question marks, exclamation marks and parentheses, which can be interpreted as the equivalent of specific emotional states: uncertainty, certainty and hesitation. The artist shows the monotony and at the same time the simplicity of these three abstractions, which to a large extent determine our behaviour. A single sign here builds space in a typographic, aesthetic and even conceptual sense.

Dróżdż deprived the words used in his works of their natural context, placing them directly on one or more panels to create diptychs, triptychs and polyptychs. The background of these works is

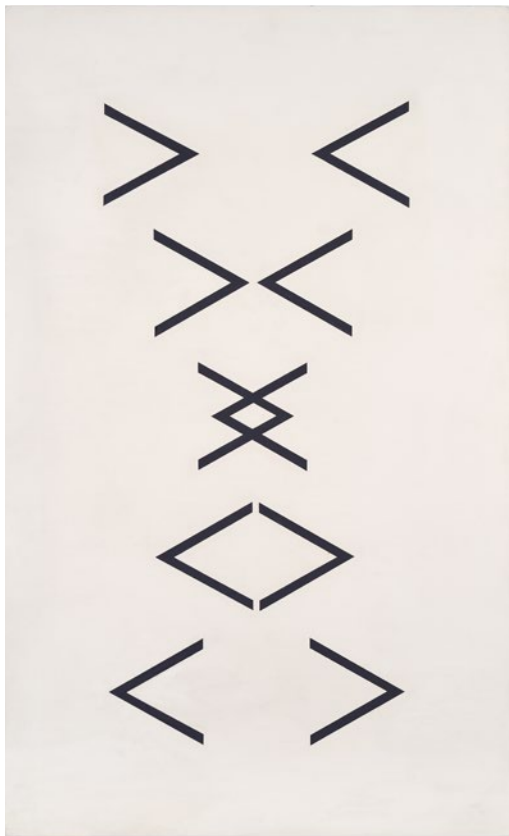
always neutral: white or black and the colour of the characters contrasts with the colour of the background (which is also white or black). In addition to words, Dróżdż's works were also composed of letters, numbers, punctuation and diacritical signs, mathematical symbols and straight or curved lines. These works evoke associations with typography, graphic arts and drawing. Typically, the artist used a strictly defined technique: letters or words were first pasted on paper, photographed and then a large print was made, which was glued to a hardboard or wooden board.

Stanisław Drózdź

*Untitled*

1974, object; fibreboard, acrylic

Drózdź was able to bring out what a sign can mean on many levels, not merely grammatical or visual. This work is composed of mathematical less-than and greater-than signs that form five pairs, each time in different relations. The signs change places so that we are dealing here with a dynamic process and a reversal of values. When you look at them from top to bottom, you can see that they are getting closer to each other, overlapping at the very centre of the composition, only to diverge again. The figure placed in the centre brings to mind the rune *ingwaz*, symbolising, among other things, fertility and rebirth.



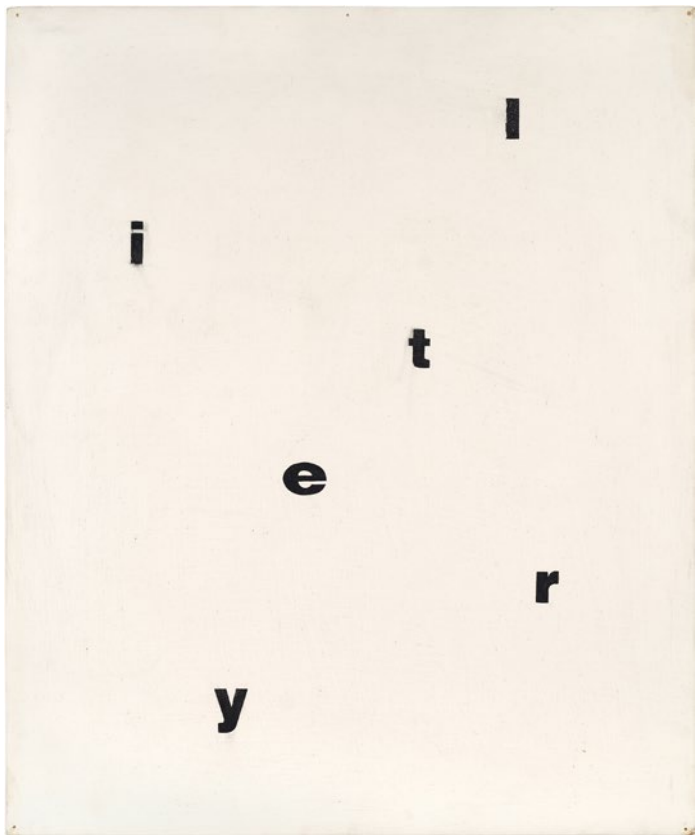
Stanisław Dróżdź

## Word

1974, object; fibreboard, acrylic

Dróżdź's works remain topical. Their artistic meaning is confined within the bounds of the visual poem and does not depend on the context of other works or external justifications. For Dróżdź, the specific matter of individual letters or words was important, because he believed that "unlike sentences, words do not lie." The characters, words and letters used by the artist function both on the semantic and semiotic plane. Their spatial implementation means that the forms he brings to life also gain visual significance. However, it is only the process of mutual coupling of content and form that makes these works legible and proof against the whims of fashion.

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# Edward Dwurnik

(1943–2018) A painter and drawing artist. In the years 1963–1970 he studied at the Painting Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the class of Professor Eugeniusz Eibisch and at the Faculty of Sculpture in the class of Professor Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. He was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Critics Award (1981), the Independent Solidarity Culture Committee Award (1983) and the Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award (1992). Dwurnik was an extremely prolific artist; his output includes over 4,500 paintings, 3,500 watercolours and about 13,000 drawings. He usually arranged his paintings in cycles, e.g. *Road*, *Plaster Plein-Air*, *Various Blues*, *Clouds*, *Moment*, *Paris*, *Hitchhiking*, *Cross*, *Warsaw*, *Passions*, *Diploma*, *Workers*, *Way to the East*, *From December to June*, *Long*

*live the war!*, and *Counting Rhyme* are only the principal among them, produced in various periods of his artistic career, sometimes over the course of many years. Dwurnik's work is firmly rooted in the realities of contemporary Polish history. For over half a century, he depicted, with the passion of a chronicler, the reality he observed from the perspective of Poles' everyday life: their customs, frustrations, problems and traumas. Poland and Polish society are reflected in his paintings as in a distorting mirror: the artist's gaze was often critical, sometimes even grotesque. In the mid-1960s, Dwurnik developed a characteristic style that he retained practically for the rest of his life. He painted in a manner reminiscent of naive painting, using a drawing-like, hasty form, a comic style of narration, multiplying the details of the representation. Dwurnik's

encounter with the paintings of the primitivist Nikifor Krynicki marked a turning point in his work: he saw them for the first time in 1965 and they immediately became a great inspiration. He took over Nikifor's blunt realism and "anti-aesthetic" attitude, but his art was also influenced by the art strategies of the 1970s, the notions of registering, recording and documenting. Dwurnik's paintings were also distinctly narrative: he described them as cinematic. In the 1980s, his style became expressive and dramatic, while after 2000 he produced compositions oscillating between expression and Pop Art visuals. For several years, he also painted pure abstractions inspired by the work of Jackson Pollock.

## Edward Dwurnik *Blue County*

from the *Plaster Plein-Air* series  
1970, oil on canvas



In his debut exhibition, which took place in 1971 at the Współczesna Gallery in Warsaw, Dwurnik showed several series of paintings, including *Plaster Plein-Air*. His longest series to date, *Hitchhiking*, started in 1966, serving as the background for the “heads in the landscape,” as the artist used to call *Plaster Plein-Air*. The *Hitchhikes* were visual stories told from a bird’s eye point of view: “I was painting the yard, I could look inside, into the pot. I could move this character to other situations, other times, I could make him older or younger. To shift all the architectural elements at any moment, mix them up. It was very appealing.” *Plaster Plein-Air*, on the other hand, consists of heads against the backdrop of *Hitchhikes*. “Later on, I did *Plaster Plein-Air*. Here it was even more interesting, because I used the *Hitchhikes*, which I did before, as working material. I took the scissors, cut the pictures, pasted them, made them into backgrounds, cut the heads out and so on.”

## Edward Dwurnik *Defending the Idol*

from the *Plaster Plein-Air* series  
1971, oil on canvas



Edward Dwurnik painted cityscapes, most often without a horizon line: seen from a bird's eye point of view, with a characteristic accumulation of motifs. Although they usually depict specific Polish cities, the artist was not faithful to topography or perspective. In the paintings from this series, objects and buildings may be adjacent to each other that in reality are situated far apart. Dwurnik's cities are inhabited by people and a whole set of artefacts. One of the more frequent of those are the "idols", monumental heads symbolising totalitarian power, the idea of which was formed in the summer of 1970. There is usually a lot happening on these canvases, the compositions overwhelming with their level of detail. Combining documentary features with those of symbolic painting, they capture the mood of the Polish reality, often with a keen sense of humour.

# Mirosław Filonik

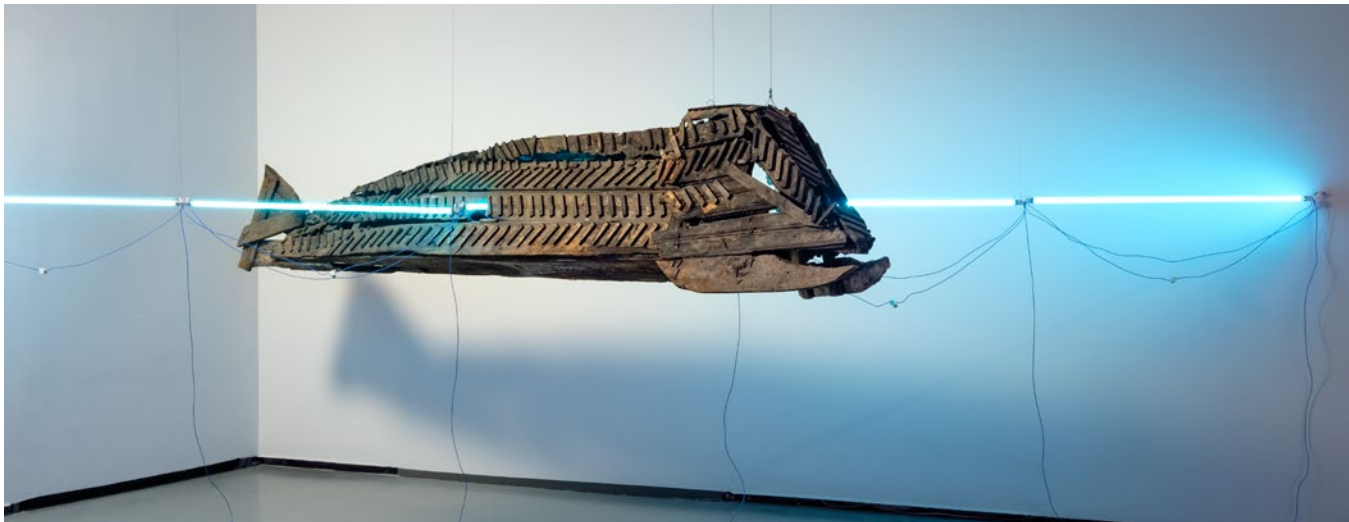
(b. 1958) A sculptor who also makes installations. Between 1980 and 1985, he studied at the Sculpture Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating in the class of Professor Jan Kucz. In 2008, he obtained a PhD at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań (now the University of Arts). In 1985, together with Mirosław Bałka and Marek Kijewski, he founded the group *Neue Biermiennost* (active until 1989), one of the major art collectives of the 1980s. During this period, its members created works of a similar nature, categorised as post-painting sculpture. Since 1989, Filonik has been using in his installations fluorescent lamps of a unique light blue colour, produced specially for him by Philips Lighting Poland. His projects are characterised by a minimalism of means, the drawing of simplified geometric forms

and signs with light and tactics of intervention. Filonik's installations, designed for specific interior or outdoor spaces, are created in dialogue with the place, often bringing out previously unnoticed features of a given site, as was the case with *Daylight*, presented at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1992. Introducing his light constructions into a designated space, Filonik makes it unreal and emphasises it at the same time: describing the square of the interior of the room, the line of light pierces the walls and floors. Light is a suggestive message, particularly important in various branches of Eastern philosophy that Mirosław Filonik has been exploring for years.



# Fish

1989, installation; wood, fluorescent lamps



*Fish* is a work from the transitional period of Filonik's work, the first sculpture to incorporate fluorescent lamps and at the same time the last figurative one. The monumental installation was designed as a site-specific work.

A wooden form depicting a giant fish suspended in space is pierced by a straight line of lamps. The boards for the construction of the fish came from a demolished shed standing in the backyard of the artist's family

house in Białystok. The installation was the first work in which the artist used fluorescent lamps, which from then on became a hallmark of his art. Filonik does not try to hide the technical component of his works: the

stabilisers, cables, suspensions and all the gear required for the lamps to glow. They are always an equal element of the work.

(b. 1964) A sculptor, who works with objects, machines and installations. A graduate of the State Higher School of Fine Arts (currently the University of Arts) in Poznan, where he studied in the Faculty of Painting, Graphics Arts and Sculpture (1983–1988). Winner of the City of Poznan Art Award (1991), recipient of research grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (1995) and the Minister of Culture and Art (2003).

An artist fascinated with the mechanics of movement and form, Garnek brings to life objects that defy obvious labels. Placed in the gallery, his works are perceived in terms of sculpture, but due to their constructive ingenuity, we see them also as products of the industrial era, creations of an engineer. In the 1990s, the artist produced mechanisms constructed with engineering imagination: mobiles, vehicles and machines, nearly all incorporating some form of mechanical movement, whether driven

by muscle strength or the use of an electric motor. Seemingly intended to serve practical purposes, in reality these objects invited the user to participate in an activity in which movement had only a purely aesthetic purpose. At the same time, there is room in them for wit, irony and humour. Garnek's works from this period were usually built from scrap-metal parts, such as wheels, springs, gears, bearings, frames and pieces of sheet metal, which the artist found in scrap yards. Garnek ridicules the notion of technological progress, or even the terror of modern technical civilisation itself, sometimes using the language of mild irony or grotesque, allowing the viewer to savour the idea of a mechanism whose only function is the action itself. In the 2000s, Garnek began to create a new type of work: machines for drawing on sand and paper, as well as portable drawing instruments. His recent (2017–2018) projects include *The Screen*, a work made of several thousand

movable plates embedded in a steel frame, reacting to human touch and a several-metre-high *Postcard*, mounted at the Old Brewery in Poznan.

Adam Garnek  
*Form IX*

1991, object; metal



Adam Garnek constructs devices, usually in the form of mobiles, which only seemingly serve practical purposes. These are usually surrealistic and even absurd objects. This mobile is the first in a series of vehicles that the artist made in the 1990s. Its accomplishment became an opportunity for Garnek to get acquainted with the specific nature of steel, the ways of shaping it, building wheels, welding, etc. The inspiration came from the idea of making a large machine, a multi-wheeled vehicle capable of moving around the streets. While working on the mobile, the artist decided that two wheels were enough to make the vehicle move. Able to accompany a person during walks, the machine can be controlled and rolled on metal hoops in any direction. The transformation theme is not without significance in this case: at the beginning of the 1990s, when Polish society was opening up to the West, many modern cars appeared on the streets of our cities, arousing the artist's fascination and admiration.

## Adam Garnek *Yellow Bike*

1995, object; metal, paint

"I think that of all the objects that man has created," the artist confessed in the early 1990s, "he has come to love the most the one that can move." This work also comes from the period when Adam Garnek was fascinated with vehicles and various types of conveyances. He created usable mobile objects, in which he also proposed ingenious technical solutions. Made of metal and relatively heavy, the vehicle is driven by a pedal mounted on the front wheel, which makes it quite difficult to move around. The bicycle has been painted yellow, which emphasises the form and makes the object appear more lightweight. It also very clearly marks its presence in space. In his works from this period, Garnek's artistic utopia concerns the selfless contact between man and machine. The artist offers the viewer a special way of cognition, through which, by entering into a partner relationship with his machines, we can learn something important about ourselves, as well as about the reality that surrounds us.



# Stefan Gierowski

(1925–2022) An outstanding representative of the contemporary painting avant-garde, a classic of Polish modernity. In the years 1945–1948, he trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow with Professor Zbigniew Pronaszko and Professor Karol Frycz. From 1962 to 1996, he taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, also serving as the dean of the Faculty of Painting. In 1986 he received the title of full professor. Winner of the Jan Cybis Prize for 1980, Gierowski was also an outstanding teacher: Marek Sobczyk and Jarosław Modzelewski of Gruppa were both students of his class, which was a phenomenon unto itself within the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

In his early figurative paintings, the influence of post-Cubist aesthetics is evident, but around 1957 Gierowski developed his characteristic abstract

style, based on colour explorations. From then on, his paintings play primarily with plane, light and colour; sometimes they are almost monochromatic, broken with the dominance of one intense colour. Aleksander Wojciechowski aptly described Gierowski's art of that time as "autonomous abstraction." Emphasis on the very phenomenon of the image shows that Gierowski began searching for a new formula of painting devoid of content, apart from the effects of colour. At the same time, he abandoned giving titles to his paintings, marking them with Roman numerals instead (not always in order).

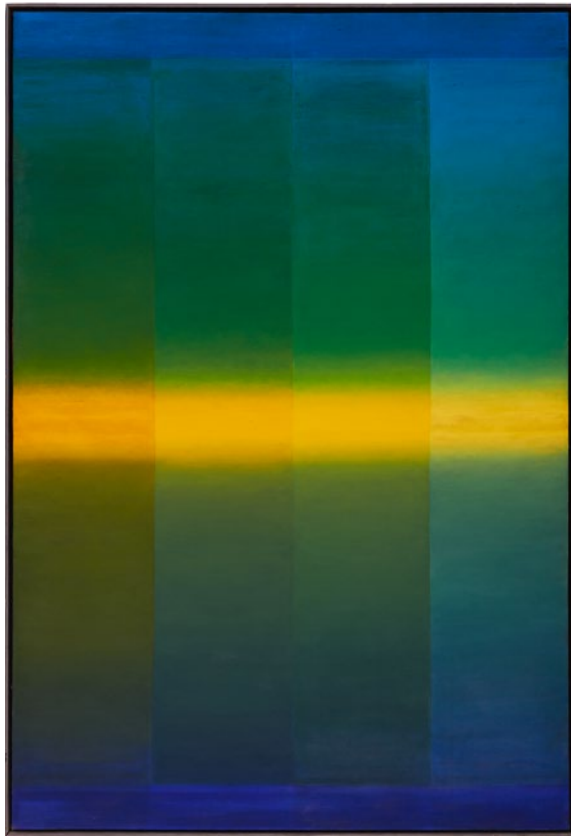
Gierowski's work grew increasingly intellectual. In the mid-1960s, he experimented in the vein of op-art painting, although the similarity was purely formal and external.

From the 1970s, he focused more closely on the interactions of colour fields, sometimes contrasted, sometimes broken into patches of pure pigment. In the paintings of the 1980s, the emotional impact of colour came to the fore and Gierowski began to express himself in a more subjective and even spiritual way. In his latest works, he used basic geometric shapes and intense colours. Some of the paintings are almost monochromatic, only grading the intensity of colour.

Stefan Gierowski

*CDLV*

1980, oil on canvas



As a young artist, Gierowski painted figurative compositions, but with time he arrived at non-representative painting. Figuration was too limiting for him and did not allow him full freedom in representations of general subject matter, ideas, emotions, or concepts. Gierowski's paintings make their effect primarily through colour; he is a master of chromatic expression. On the presented canvas, we can see alternately painted horizontal zones of cold and warm colours. The artist analyses the way individual colours interact with each other. Horizontal layouts are juxtaposed here with vertical divisions, obtained thanks to the illusion of the concavity and convexity of the texture. Light is very important for Gierowski – it is through it that he builds the depth of the composition. Glowing paths emanating with energy against a dark background, like cracks through which light escapes, are a frequent motif of his paintings, including this one. Using extremely reduced

elements of the painting language, the artist undertook to study the mutual relationship between line and colour. The line carries both peace and emotion; it can make the plane dynamic, but can also immobilise it. It can be an element that closes the composition or opens it to a different space. In the 1980s, the line was the main element of Gierowski's art; it became a carrier of energy: light that moves space.

In one interview, the artist commented on the line in his paintings: "The line has a content element, so to speak, namely it describes something that it defines; it is a line that goes somewhere, or a line that outlines an entire space; a line that cuts through space; lines that repeat and multiply, each of distinct content. The question of the line was one of the elements of the construction of some of the paintings. It recurred from time to time as the cause of subsequent pictures."

(b. 1961) A sculptor, creator of installations and artworks in public spaces. He earned a degree in sculpture at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Poznań (1980–1984), where he then worked an assistant lecturer in the sculpture class. In 1990, Gill relocated permanently to Denmark. He has made several monumental public sculptures in Poland and abroad, including a group of four stone works in the town park in Zbąszyń (graduation project, 1984) and the “millennial” granite bell near Odense, Denmark (1988). Gill uses both noble materials (granite, bronze, steel) and base ones (sand, ashes, bread, chalk, wax). His works often venture into the metaphysical and are intended, as Jarosław Kozłowski has put it, to become a means of dialogue with the Absolute; they contain a Mystery. There are frequent references to religious symbolism, most often Christian, Gill being interested in the transformation of these symbols, occurring along with the development of civilisation and human consciousness. As the artist himself said: “The most important thing for me is the possibility of discovering primality. It’s

one of those spheres you can’t discuss, but sometimes you can create one.” In Gill’s art, intellectual aspects intertwine with a poetic or even mystical perception of the world. Through his works, the artist asks basic questions: are the symbols that have functioned for centuries in various cultures and religious systems relevant today? Are they still carriers of the content that once made them powerful?

The materials, forms and contexts that Gill’s works create in space are supplemented by the titles, which serve as a key to interpretation and builds a new level of meaning, e.g. *One of the Last Objects of the Old World Carefully Packaged*, *Pure Matter in a Waiting State*, *Principia Pneumatica*, *On the Objectlessness of Sacrifice*, or *The Last Supper According to Mariusz Gill*.

Mariusz Gill  
***Work in Blue, Black and Gold***

1991, installation; wood, glass, paint

This sculptural work was shown in 1993 at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art as part of Mariusz Gill's solo exhibition *Dialogues with Heaven*.

*Work in Blue, Black and Gold* was a result of the artist's fascination with the cult of Black Madonnas. The burnt wooden Madonna with Child is covered with remnants of gilding and enclosed in a glass blue case with spreadable wooden wings, echoing the genre of cabinet reliquary Madonnas. The figure of the Madonna is set with her back to the viewer, her golden hair flowing down her back.

The artist meticulously carved the Madonna and Child in wood, then burned it and finally carefully restored it. Construction, destruction, reconstruction: an attempt to symbolically purify myth?





# Wanda Gołkowska

(1925–2013) A painter, who also makes objects, installations and drawings; an animator of artistic life and an initiator of mail-art exhibitions and projects. Between 1946 and 1952, she studied Polish philology at the University of Wrocław and art at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Wrocław, graduating at the latter in the class of Professor Eugeniusz Geppert. She went on to teach at her alma mater, where she obtained the title of full professor in 1991. She was a member of the art collectives Exploration of Form and Color (1957–1961) and Wrocław Group (1962–1976).

From the mid-1950s, Gołkowska was associated with the post-war Wrocław avant-garde. She is considered to be one of the precursors of Polish conceptualism, mail art, op-art and structuralism. The 1st Biennale of Spatial Forms in Elbląg in 1965 was a breakthrough for Gołkowska; she presented a sculpture there in which she addressed the issue of the relationship between the object and its surroundings:

she treated a three-dimensional object as a drawing in the air, the elements of which served as lines organising space. In 1968, Gołkowska formulated the concept of a work of art as an “open system,” with a non-exclusive formula in which chance and the presence of moving details introduced the possibility of modification. Incorporating elements of the environment into the work, such as movement, light, space and sometimes sound, as well as assuming the viewer’s active participation, Gołkowska stressed the role of perception as the factor determining the final shape of the work. At the same time, she proclaimed the primacy of concept over implementation, which made her works part of the conceptual trend in art. In the 1970s, she created the *Collections* series, in which she combined conceptual art with abstract elements. From the mid-1990s, inspirations from nature began to appear in Gołkowska’s works; in the landscapes she painted at that time, Gołkowska also used the language of geometric forms.

Wanda Gołkowska  
*Disapprover*

1972/2010 (reconstruction), spatial implementation  
wood, paint, PVC foil, silicone paper



Wanda Gołkowska's works from 1967–1972 were critical statements about art and the dizzying pace at which new artistic proposals emerged at that time. *Disapprover* remains a topical work in that it raises the problem of the viewer lost among a great number of cultural events. It is an object in the form of a huge reel with a roll of paper tape partially wound up, with the artist's manifesto

written on it. The remaining part of the tape is hung on the wall (in another version it lies unrolled on the floor). The tape reads: "The overproduction of artworks works and the surfeit of information make it difficult to choose and blur the distinction between authenticity and imitation. Automatism and habit are often called the necessity of artistic expression, contained in kilometres and tonnes of materials available in earthly conditions. The inevitable excess of the energy produced must be accumulated." The rest of the manifesto, if it exists at all, is on the piece of tape wound on the reel. The artist postulated the creation of a World Repository of Artistic Information, operating on a principle similar to that of the patent office; this would counteract the repetition of ideas and themes in art, prevent their imitation and the lack of evaluation criteria.

The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.



Wanda Gołkowska  
*Disapprover*



Installation view of Bik van der Pol exhibition  
*Far Too Many Stories to Fit into so Small a Box*.

# Paweł Grunert

(b. 1965) A designer and sculptor. He studied at the Faculty of Interior Design of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating with honours from the Studio of Furniture Design (1990). In 1990–1991, he worked as an assistant in that studio and, in 1993–1994, in the Studio of Visual Forms. What he likes the most is designing and creating chairs; it was these appliances that were the subject of his graduation project, *My Chairs*. “I dream of fields sown with chairs that are grown like vines in France,” said the artist. He has designed and executed several hundred pieces of furniture, sculptures and installations, with his works more often being found in galleries than in stores. Among the objects he has designed are growing chairs made of ivy, a chair with roots, a bed made of grain, a table made of earth and a rocking staircase.

Grunert works at the intersection of sculpture and applied art. Looking for unconventional formal solutions, spatial layouts and structural combinations, he explores the possibilities of materials, trying to find the perfect form for his projects. He uses natural materials – branches, straw, earth, grass, hay, reeds and wood, as well as bricks, textiles, metal alloys and recycled materials. The *Bottler* (2009), a chaise-longue made of mineral water bottles, has become one of his most recognisable pieces of furniture. The artist tries to find answers to important questions appearing in contemporary design: Is there a border between sculpture and furniture? To what extent can a piece of furniture turn into a decoration? What is eco-furniture?

Paweł Grunert  
*Throne for the Wind*

1994, object; wicker, metal

Paweł Grunert's furniture are artworks inspired by typical shapes of household furnishings. His chairs, armchairs and other seats, however, have primarily an aesthetic function. *Throne for the Wind* was a submission for the Chair 94 national competition in Krakow, where it won third prize. The idea for this original form came from a non-standard approach to

wicker furniture. The artist set himself the task of creating an object that would not be woven and would not reference the landscape. The artist later modified the prototype, enlarging the seat and installing wheels under the structure, among other changes. So far, 15 copies of the *Throne* have been made.



Paweł Grunert

## *Overturning Chair*

1994, object; wood, paint



This object was also created for the competition Chair 94. Unfortunately, the work was disqualified, because during the seating test, a poorly welded element broke and a leg fell off. This is a playful project, the author following the path of absurdity and reversing meanings in design.

# Aneta Grzeszykowska

(b. 1974) A visual artist working with the media of photography and film, who also make sculptures, objects and installations. After graduating from the Faculty of Graphics Arts of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where she studied from 1994 to 1999, Grzeszykowska worked in a duo with Jan Smaga (the famous project *Plans*, 2001–2003); since 2005 she has been working mainly solo. Winner of the *Polityka* Passport for visual arts (2013).

The primary medium in which Aneta Grzeszykowska works is photography. She explores the role of photography in documenting presence and creating human identity, studying this process on the example of herself and her loved ones, which is why many of her works feature her own image or those of her family members. Grzeszykowska plays this game with identity on many levels, being interested in the potential of image manipulation and the performative dimension of photography. In *Album* (2004), she used family photos collected over the last 30 years,

photoshopping herself out of them. In this way, the documentation of almost her entire life was created, but without the main character. The *Album* is complemented by the series *Portraits* (2006), comprising computer-generated photographic images of non-existent people. Grzeszykowska often references the canon of post-war art, including by reprising Cindy Sherman's cult series *Untitled Film Stills* in 2006, and reinterpreting Maya Deren's *At Land* in 2013; reaching for the works of other artists in order to lend them new meanings is one of Grzeszykowska's strategies. In addition to photography, her most famous works include art dolls, created since 2007 as self-portraits or as imaginary future portraits of her daughter. She is also the author of several animated films, such as *Black* (2007) and *Headache* (2008), where she addresses the problems of body representation (with her own body serving as visual material).

Aneta Grzeszykowska  
*Franciszka 2025*

2016, sculpture; wool, metal





Grzeszykowska has been sewing dolls for a long time. As a teenager, she also made them for her younger brother, whose eye she accidentally damaged (her hand slipped while holding a needle). In 2006, Grzeszykowska took a close-up photograph of the distorted pupil in her brother's eye and dated the photo to 1993–2006. She sewed a sculpture for the photo, recreating a toy she was making for him at the time: a little black devil (*The Devil*, 2007). Consequently, she permanently returned to doll-making, although the dolls she started producing at the time were much larger than before and had become sculptures.

Grzeszykowska has been working on two series of hand-sewn objects. She began with black dolls referencing the past and usually self-portraits of the artist, made on the basis of photographs from her childhood; they also recreate the clothes she was wearing at the time. Then she also started making



white dolls depicting her daughter, *Franciszka*, in the future, in the subsequent stages of her life — in two, five, or ten years' time. The dolls are always made "in advance," as predictions for the future, but they are not portraits in the literal sense of the

word. Each woollen *Franciszka* will be supplemented with a photographic image of the artist's daughter when she reaches a certain age; in the case of the doll from the Collection, this will be in 2025.

The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.

# Izabella Gustowska

(b. 1948) A visual artist, a pioneer of feminist art in Poland working with various media: painting, graphic arts, photography, installation art, performance, video and film. Gustowska studied at the State Higher School of Fine Arts (now the University of Arts) in Poznan from 1967 to 1972. For many years she taught at her alma mater, where she obtained the title of professor and ran the Studio of Film and Performing Activities. In 1984, Gustowska received the Birgit Skiold Memorial Prize for innovation in graphic arts; she participated in the São Paulo Art Biennale (1983 and 1987) and in the Venice Art Biennale (1988). She was a member of the para-theatre group Od Nowa (1970–1978) and ran Poznan's ON gallery from 1979 to 1994.

Gustowska puts figures of femininity, images of women, self-portraits and portraits of friends at the centre of her art. Since the 1970s, the artist has been returning to these themes and topics in

new ways in extensive series of works. Among the best known of which is *Relative Similarities*, which raises the issue of duality/twinism and the search for female identity. Here, Gustowska developed a unique technique consisting in the sculptural materialisation of photography and painting. From the 1990s, video began to play an important role in Gustowska's art; using this medium, she produced series such as *Dreams* (1990–1994), *Floating* (1994–1997) and *Singing Rooms* (1996–2001). Video footage was combined in them with spatial arrangements, while light and sound played an important role, complementing the work's visual aspect. Characteristic of Gustowska's installations are the mysterious objects she designs, in which she places video monitors; sometimes they open up like great shells or boxes for storing precious memories. Her works produce the effect of unreality, evoking a sense of tension between what is real and what is

imagined. Ryszard Kluszczyński called this peculiarity of her art the "oneiric syndrome". Gustowska considers the Media Story SHE (2008) project, developed in thirteen spaces and the film *The Case of Josephine H.* (2012–2013), where the character of Josephine Nivison, American painter Edward Hopper's wife and muse, "comes to life," enacted by over a dozen contemporary New York women, as the principal artistic "adventures" of her life.

Izabella Gustowska

## Day of the Eclipse: Tea Time

2000, mobile video installation; screen, metal frame, motor, video projection



Izabella Gustowska creates mysterious objects known for their formally and technically sophisticated construction. The work from the Collection is part of the series *Relative Similarities II – L'amour Passion*, created in 2000–2002. Its main part

is a large movable object in an oval shape, acting as a screen. It is built in the form of an openwork structure made of metal rods and transparent acrylic glass. The whole thing resembles a giant antenna or a space probe. On the edges of the object,

symmetrically opposite each other, there are two small monitors. The oval screen in the form of a bowl moves in a swinging motion thanks to a motor, tilting slowly once to the left, once to the right. The projection on it shows accessories for drinking tea – a cup, a teapot, a sugar bowl with a spoon – and a hand reaching for them. The projected image is subjected to a looped transformation: it is mirror-doubled in relation to the central axis and also rhythmically recedes and approaches. During this process, the tea set turns into an image of breasts and a stylised lily, a symbol of female sexuality.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Thomas Hirschhorn

(b. 1957) A sculptor, who also creates objects, installations, performances and videos. He studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich (1978–1983) and in 2011 represented Switzerland at the Venice Biennale. He has received numerous awards, including the Marcel Duchamp Prize (2000), the Joseph Beuys Prize (2004), the Kurt Schwitters Prize (2011) and the Meret Oppenheim Prize (2018). Since 2002, he has been implementing a series of projects called *Presence and Production*, which, among other things, included the creation of the *Bataille Monument* in Kassel (2002), the *24H Foucault* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2004), the *Gramsci Monument* in New York (2013), as well as the *Robert Walser-Sculpture* in Biel (2019).

Since the 1980s, initially as a member of the Grapus collective, Hirschhorn has been producing, in galleries, museums and public spaces, installations and sculptural constructions that relate to current socio-political issues. He uses disposable, mass-produced and readily available materials: press clippings, adhesive tape, cardboard boxes, wrapping paper and plastic. He connects the elements of his installations with thick layers of grey tape (this is his hallmark), building a parallel universe of hybrid forms and fascinating accumulations. Hirschhorn's ephemeral social-sculpture practices have had a significant impact on thinking about sculpture in public spaces, which, according to the artist, should have an unstable, "poor", "journalistic" form and should also be negotiated with local communities, serving their interests and needs. Some of his more famous works, which have been placed in run-down neighbourhoods

or on the outskirts of cities, are "monuments" dedicated to philosophers such as Antonio Gramsci, Baruch Spinoza and Gilles Deleuze. These half-sculptural, half-architectural, highly elaborate installations are as temporary and impermanent as Hirschhorn's other works. The artist often emphasises in interviews that his goal is to show the brutal reality as it actually is, without resorting to poetic metaphors. That is why the viewer watching his works is bombarded with dozens of images of violence, death or pornography, as in the installation *Théâtre précaire* (Rennes, 2010) or the video *Touching Reality* (Paris, 2012).

## Thomas Hirschhorn *Subjecter (Manifa)*

2010, sculpture; plastic, synthetic fabric, metal, packing tape, prints on paper

The work comes from an auction organised at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art by the Razem Pamoja Foundation, which donated the *Subjecter (Manifa)* to the Collection. It is part of a series of sculptures by Thomas Hirschhorn under the same title. All of them are made on the basis of female mannequins dressed in gowns made of newspaper photographs and headlines. The slogans and images of social conflicts, wars and catastrophes are eye-catching. The word *subjecter* is a neologism created by the artist from the word "subject". As well as the series' title, it is, as the artist explains, an attempt to give form to the "subject" in action: the activated subject becomes a subject that encourages the viewer to reflect. The dress on each of the *Subjecters* is unique: it is a distinct, closed world. Hirschhorn has been using mannequins in his art

for several years now, considering them as a material familiar to the audience, unpretentious, democratic and simple, just like the adhesive tape, aluminium foil and newspaper clippings that usually appear in his installations.



# Zuzanna Janin

(b. 1961) A visual artist, who also creates sculptures, installations, environments, site-specific works, photographic objects, drawings, videos and performances. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1980–1987), since 2003 she has been co-running Lokal\_30, an art venue in Warsaw. Janin is a finalist of the Adi Prize for Art 2003 and winner of the main prize at Viennafair (together with Agnieszka Rayzacher, 2006).

Janin is interested in topics related to identity, memory and passing. She draws inspiration from her emotional biography, body memory and her relationship with the environment. Memory, one of the leitmotifs of Janin's art, appears in her works for example as the memory of a place, an object, genetic memory stored in the body, and as a resource of information stored in the mind. In her work, Janin starts from what is closest to her and discovers what is undisclosed and unobvious, trying to get through to the essence of her own identity. She focuses on what is hidden, what is in between, in the process.

Zuzanna Janin

## Sweet Girl (Melka) Sweet Boy (Krzysiek)

2001, sculptures; brass wire, cotton candy



Starting from the 1990s, the artist made several sculptural objects using food products. From 1997 comes *Sweet Girl (Zuzanna)*, of an autobiographical nature; from 2001 *Sweet Boy (Krzysiek)* and *Sweet Girl (Melka)*, modelled on the bodies of models: the artist's 15-year-old daughter and a 19-year-old boxer with whom Janin worked on the production of her video *I Love You Too (2001)*. Open-work figures in the scale of 1:1 were covered with fluffy and sweet cotton candy and the viewers in the gallery could help themselves to it during the opening reception. In this phase, the objects looked very alluring and "sweet." However, after some time, the cotton wool began to crystallise, turn brown and fall off, revealing the

skeleton underneath. The material used here gave the artist the opportunity to show the process; it is unstable, so the sculpture changes until the cotton candy solidifies into crystallised icicles. The work evokes *vanitas* content: the artist used a very strong formal and semantic contrast between fluffy cotton wool and a cold skeleton. Sculptures subjected to such a process cease to be visually pleasing, become ugly skeletons and deteriorate. Janin's works are a story about the body, which, undergoing successive transformations, loses its physical attractiveness. Cotton candy is associated with passing, the impermanence of life, because it is a delicacy often sold at the gates of cemeteries.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Zdzisław Jurkiewicz

(1931–2012) A painter, the who also made of drawings, photographs and installations. A graduate of the Faculty of Architecture of the Wrocław University of Technology (1950–1956), he also studied in the painting class of Professor Eugeniusz Geppert. Eventually, he started teaching at the Faculty of Architecture, Painting and Sculpture of his alma mater, in 1996 obtaining the title of full professor of fine arts. From 1979 he also lectured at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Poznań. Jurkiewicz was a versatile artist, keenly aware of his creative strategy. One of the leading representatives of Wrocław avant-garde art and Polish conceptual art and a member of the Wrocław Group, he represented Poland at the Art Biennale in São Paulo (1974) and participated in the legendary exhibition *Présences Polonaises* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (1983). In 1974, he was awarded the Cypryan Kamil Norwid Critics Award. Jurkiewicz's rich oeuvre is a testimony to his exceptional

sensitivity and curiosity focused on the phenomena taking place in many areas of reality, which intrigued him. The artist was a reflective observer of the world, both in its macroscale, being interested in cosmology and the movement of planets, and in the microscale, as someone who grew exotic potted plants and kept Japanese mice or hamsters. Jurkiewicz was inspired in his art by exact sciences and was passionate about jazz music and poetry. From the late 1960s, he explored the capacity and limits of the painting medium. In the *Zones* series, the polarisation of blue and red colours appeared, which would become the artist's trademark for many years. Red as the pole of heat and blue as the pole of cold. It was also then that Jurkiewicz began to pursue the idea of the "shape of continuity", creating a series of drawings, paintings, objects and actions. Jurkiewicz was very consistent in purifying and simplifying his painting: first he gave up imitating reality, then he began to

remove colours from his paintings and finally he abandoned the very act of painting. From the mid-1970s, he gradually limited his artistic gesture, adopting a more contemplative attitude. In 1972, the first photographs were taken in which the artist recorded the movement of planets, images of the sky and also "caught the sun" using a self-built telescope. In 1977, lab mice and hamsters appeared in his studio and in his work; he designed a glass building for them, a multi-story pyramid with a labyrinth on the ground floor. It was a palace for his favourite rodents, a kind of environment that was supposed to be shown at the Foksal Gallery but was broken. In the 1980s, rodents in Jurkiewicz's works were replaced by potted plants, which he cultivated with passion. From today's perspective, these were avant-la-lettre ecological practices. From 1978, Jurkiewicz, in addition to art-making, also took to writing poetry; in 1997, a volume of his poems, *Only Solely Always*, was published.



Zdzisław Jurkiewicz  
***Unattainable Stairs***

1970/1999, object; wood, paint



*Unattainable Stairs* dates from the period when Jurkiewicz's art was entering the conceptual phase. The work's status is ambiguous. For over 30 years it existed only in the form of a drawing and was only realised in 2000 in conjunction with the exhibition *Conceptual Reflection in Polish Art. Discourse Experiences 1965–1975* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. The object was built of wood and plywood according to the artist's 1999 technical layout. Jurkiewicz's stairs reverse their course after the seventh step, as if in a mirror image, which makes further climbing impossible. It is a construction that is isolated from the architectural structure: fully autonomous. The work seems to be a visualisation of the idea of continuous endless movement, providing the viewer with an experience of an intellectual nature.

Zdzisław Jurkiewicz  
**169 Greys**

from the *Final Paintings* series  
1980, acrylics on canvas



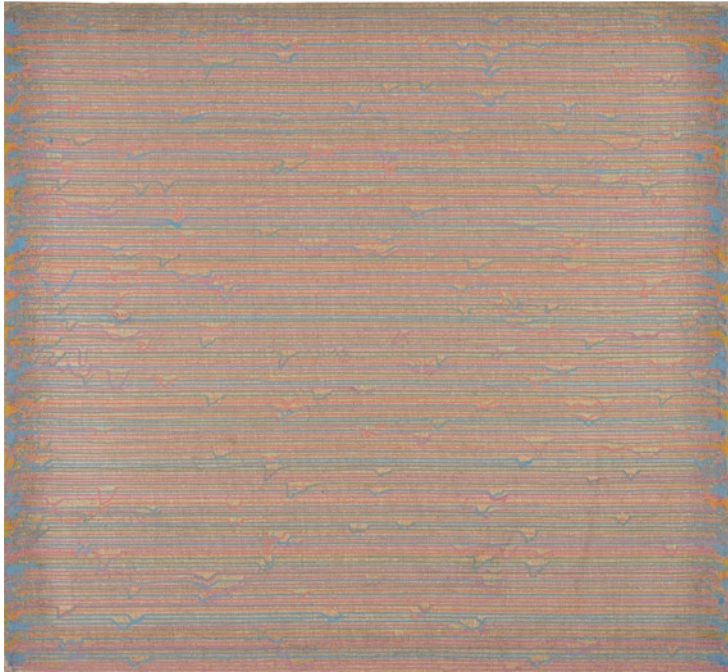
In the 1970s, Jurkiewicz began to paint compositions of parallel red and blue lines stretching for metres; the size of the canvases was standardised to 55.5 × 60 cm. Around 1975, he called them “final paintings,” considering them as a kind of recapitulation of painting. →>

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Signs of Time programme.

Zdzisław Jurkiewicz  
**Untitled (187)**

from the *Final Paintings* series  
1975–1980, acrylics on canvas



→ Jurkiewicz used a 1 cc paint pot, which he alternately filled with blue and red paint. He used a T-square and a special funnel that architects use to draw lines. He poured blue or red paint into it and moved it along the blade, resulting in parallel lines. The effect was completely unpredictable. →→

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Zdzisław Jurkiewicz  
**155 Reds on a Dark Background**

from the *Final Paintings* series  
1979, acrylics on canvas



→ Drawing horizontal lines, he deliberately introduced small disturbances, resembling rippled water. The titles of the paintings indicated the number of painted stripes. The concept was an attempt to reach a self-analytical study of painting, to explore reflections on the language of art. This is what he wrote about it: “The final painting was to contain the whole painting experience. That’s why it was so precious, so unattainable – like a perfect utopia.” The artist eventually discontinued the series, realising that each time the “final” painting turned out to be only partial and temporary.

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# Ilya Kabakov and Joseph Kosuth

## Ilya Kabakov

(b. 1933) A leading representative of the Moscow conceptual movement of the 1960s and 1970s, based in the United States since the 1990s. In the mid-1980s, he became famous for his total installations, depicting the mentality and condition of man dominated by ideology. His works combined a variety of media – drawing, sculpture, painting, poetry and music – creating a dramatic experience affecting all the senses. Kabakov's work is deeply rooted in the Soviet social and cultural context in which he spent a large part of his life, but it has a universal dimension. Since 1988, he usually works with his wife, Emilia.

## Joseph Kosuth

(b. 1945) An American artist, a pioneer of world conceptual art and installation art. His work from the 1960s was based on the language and strategies of appropriation. In his practice, Kosuth consistently explores the role of language and meaning in art. He presented his first conceptual works in 1967; two years later he became the American editor of *Art and Language*. His almost forty-year research into the relationship between language and art has taken the form of installations, museum exhibitions, public commissions and publications.



Ilya Kabakov,  
Joseph Kosuth

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## *Corridor of Two Banalities*

1994, installation (fragment)  
wood, paper, paint

A joint work by two leading representatives of the conceptual trend in contemporary art, designed specifically for the exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. It consisted of one hundred and twelve used tables and the same number of chairs. The tables were arranged in pairs in the rooms to form a long, uninterrupted row running through the centre of all the gallery spaces on the ground floor of the Castle. A line was drawn in the middle of the tables; on one side the countertops were painted grey, the other half left untouched. →

# Ilya Kabakov and Joseph Kosuth

## *Corridor of Two Banalities*

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→ The grey zone belonged to Kosuth, its tops were covered with screen-printed quotes from statements by famous politicians, philosophers and writers (e.g. Stalin, Rousseau, Trotsky and Wałęsa). On his side, Kabakov pasted printouts of colour collages combining iconographic motifs of Soviet propaganda with typescripts of letters sent by tenants of Moscow public housing to the police and courts, denouncing fellow tenants. The table tops were an area where the famous and the common people could apparently meet: as if they were sitting on opposite sides, facing each other, but unable to hear each other. The audience moved on both sides of the tables, along the installation, reading the texts of this "double monologue". The rooms were in partial shade, the light coming from low-hanging dim light bulbs, illuminating only the surface of the tables and the texts.



The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the National Collection of Contemporary Art programme.



# Koji Kamoji

(b. 1935) A painter, who also makes drawings, objects and installations. Japanese by birth, from 1953 to 1958 he studied at the Musashino Academy of Fine Arts in Tokyo with professors Saburo Aso and Choonan Yamaguchi. In 1959, he came to Poland and enrolled in the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, where he graduated in 1966 in the class of Professor Artur Nacht-Samborski. Kamoji is the winner of the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Critics Award (1975) and the Jan Cybis Prize (2015).

In Kamoji's work, Far Eastern origins are intertwined with Central European practices and experience. The artist is a visual poet who can change reality through a minimalist gesture and spiritual focus.

His works resemble the conciseness and brevity of a haiku, in which Japanese poets perpetuated the mood of transience. "I am not talking about building something new," he says, "but finding and preserving the things we forget and the world we are moving away from. I would like to find a form to obtain their presence."

In his works, Kamoji uses raw materials: plywood, stones, metal rods, aluminium, paper and water. Early on, he made highly textural, expressive paintings, which quickly gave way to geometrical works that were sparing in terms of form and colour. Next, he took to producing relief compositions made of wood, with the next step being to go out into the third dimension and embrace the form of installation. Japan, where he grew up, still resonates strongly in each of his works, where he incorporates the symbolism of nature.



Koji Kamoji  
*Reed Boats*

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1997, installation; aluminium

The work consists of polished aluminium sheets and forms cut out of it resembling a reed boat. The artist refers to his memories of a childhood spent in Japan, playing by the river, but it is also a reflection on the passage of time and what remains in us. "When I was a child, I made little boats out of reed leaves: there were two kinds. Some had sails, some didn't. I used to release them from the bank of the river where I lived. The wind and currents carried them away," he said in an interview. The work is also inspired

by minimalist Zen gardens, reflecting an Eastern approach to the mystique of the landscape in which the artist grew up. Kamoji's installations usually require a separate room to house the work. These works are not only to be seen, they also allow you to get in touch with your inner self. The aura of the place is important: the artist willingly carries out his works in spaces that are not indifferent to him and have a perceptible, specific atmosphere.



# Tadashi Kawamata

(b. 1953) The artist behind projects and performances at the intersection of art and architecture, which he considers socially useful. In 1984, Kawamata received his doctorate from Geidai (Tokyo University of the Arts), where he subsequently taught from 1999 to 2005. Since 2007, he has been associated with the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Informed by architecture and urban planning, his work is born where these fields meet, incorporating strategies of design, performance and DIY construction practices. It is often associated with the trend of deconstruction, a direction aimed against the traditional understanding of architecture. In many projects, Kawamata uses recycled materials and creates from the remains of what can be found on the margins of high-class architecture.

He implements projects all over the world and their scale and nature vary greatly, from intimate, temporary interventions on the margins of urban spaces, known as field works (which he has continued since 1984), to complex concepts of reconfiguring entire cities. In Toronto, he used old boards to create an architectural fill-in between historic buildings (1989); in Barcelona, he built a bridge between the modern building of the Museum of Modern Art and a defunct housing estate under demolition (1996); amid the fields near Alkmaar, the Netherlands, helped by patients from a therapeutic centre for substance-addicted persons, he built for them a long wooden passage-way leading to the city (1996–2000). After the tsunami that hit Japan in 2011, Kawamata made *Under the Water*, which was impressive in its spectacular size. Created from used furniture, the installation alludes to powerful waves, giant walls of water that suddenly appear on the surface of the oceans.

Tadashi Kawamata  
***Reconstruction***

(Design for the Revitalisation of the 19th-Century Cellars in the Outer Courtyard of the Ujazdowski Castle)

2001—2003,  
 model; plywood, polyester foam



This is a scale model for Kawamata's design for the renovation of the 19th-century cellars in front of the Ujazdowski Castle, which used to be

a water reservoir, a part of the water and sewage system of the Ujazdowski Hospital. The artist's intervention, originally conceptual, initiated the

process of the further renovation and adaptation of the cellars. The artist tried not to disturb the historical character of the place, transforming it only

to the extent that was necessary. The changes were limited to piercing the entrance to the cistern, widening the passages between its rooms, building stairs and insulating the raw, brick interior by lining the floor with boards. The whole location was covered with a glass gable roof. The underground architecture prepared in this way was intended as an active space for creative activities. Kawamata's project, where artistic action meets the art of conservation, pointed to the mutual relations between historical, artistic and aesthetic values. It is also worth noting that it was Kawamata's first permanent installation, joining others in the immediate vicinity of the Ujazdowski Castle, where installations by outstanding contemporary artists, Polish and foreign, were planned to be situated.

# Marek Kijewski

(1955–2007) A sculptor. From 1981, he studied in the Faculty of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating in 1985 in the class of Professor Jerzy Jarnuszkievicz. A co-member, along with Mirosław Bałka and Mirosław Filonik, of the art collective *Neue Bieriemiennost*. From 1996, he worked with Małgorzata “Kocur” Malinowska (1959–2016) under the label Kijewski/Kocur, defining the strategy or creative method they used as SSS: surfing, scanning, sampling.

Kijewski explored the possibilities of contemporary sculpture, experimenting with various aesthetics, ways of creating narratives, building images and their contexts in the space of postmodern culture. Right after graduation, he created figurative sculptures associated with the New Expression movement. At the end of 1987, his work began to lose its expressiveness and figurative form in favour of contemplation, mystical inquiries and abstraction. After a period of simplifying the form, the artist's sculptures gradually lost their physical form, making works with the use of light.

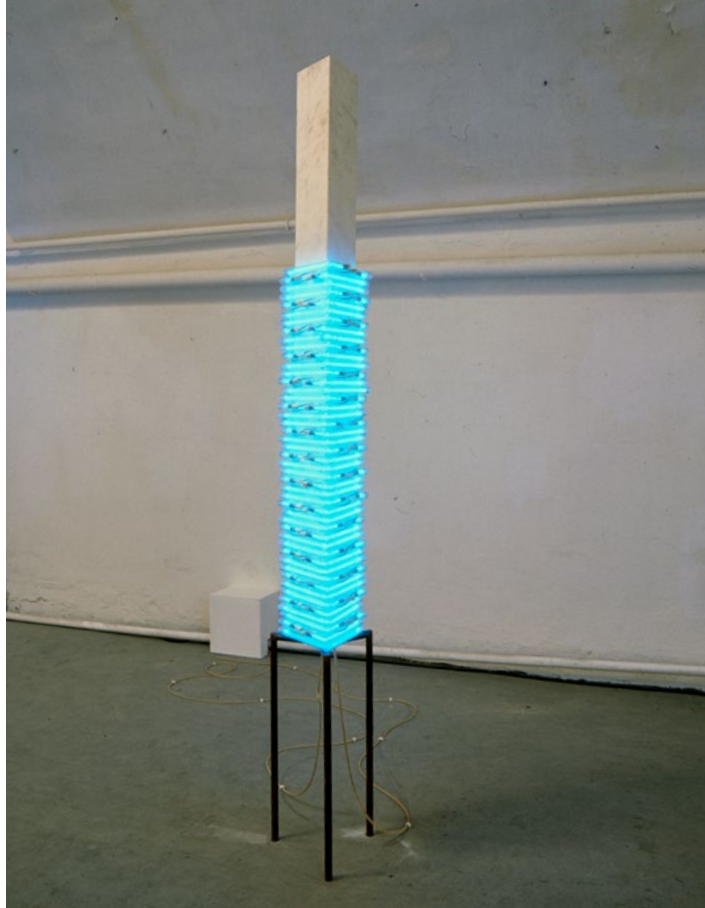
In the mid-1990s, Kijewski expanded his field of interest to include broadly defined contemporary visual culture, mainly popular, starting to create works using non-artistic materials, often taken from everyday life (*Portrait of John Cage*, with beer cans, a marble lamb, condoms and rubber; *I'm Pregnant*, with walnuts, plywood and rubber; *Queen Midas Looking for Bugs Bunny*, with Lego bricks, concrete, 24K gold and rubber). The broadening of the field of interest went hand in hand with a continuation of themes from high culture, traces leading to the canons of world culture, references to philosophy and religion, as well as formal references to classical sculptural forms. Surprising combinations of materials, forms, themes and traditions from the repository of high- and low-brow culture comprise an extremely original, subjective and at the same time common to all of us, dictionary of meanings that make up the contradictory spirituality of the era.

Marek Kijewski  
*Prime Order*

1992, sculpture; mixed media  
(Greek marble, steel, sodium glass, argon, text)

The sculpture comes from Marek Kijewski's solo exhibition *Prime Order*, held at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1992. In neon lights, the artist evoked the mystical nature of Eastern Christianity and in simple forms of Greek marble, he referred to the beginnings of sculpture. This work is characterised by its simplicity and a synthetic approach. Kijewski has been using light elements in his art since 1989, first with fluorescent lamps and later with neons. The light deprived the sculptures of physical weight and also opened them to interpretations leading to metaphysics. From 1992 onwards, text became an integral element of many of Kijewski's subsequent shows. At first, it was one text for the entire exhibition, a fragment on the colour of light from Pavel Florensky's *Iconostasis and Other Sketches*. Later, different works were provided with individual descriptions.

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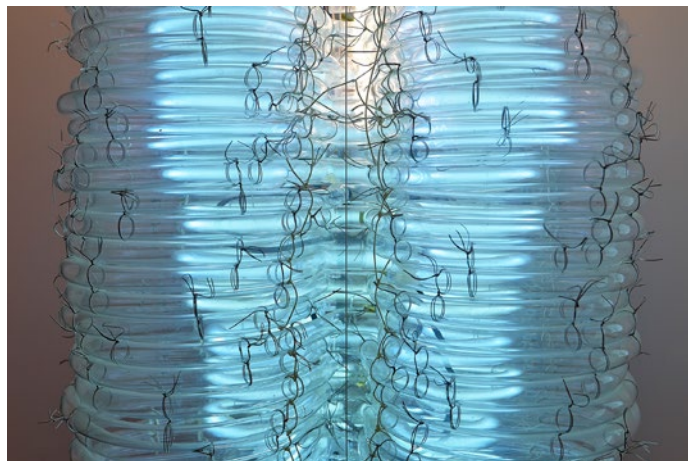
Marek Kijewski

## Herm

1994, sculpture; mixed media (sodium glass, argon, angel's trumpet, thornapple, lard, gum)

Glass tubes emit white and blue light, spreading in accordance with the three-part division of the rings and the core of the glass sculpture. The pillar of light is "lifted" by the angel's trumpet – one of the hidden structural elements. The work takes viewers into the ancient world, as it can be interpreted as a modern version of

the ancient Greek herm, a stone post erected at the crossroads in honour of Hermes, the protector of travellers, merchants and thieves. The *hermae* were used as landmarks or identification marks, as well as marking roads and borders. It was believed that they would ward off evil spirits and enemies and protect against adversity.



Marek Kijewski  
*Flint from Siberia*

1995, sculpture; mixed media (feathers, amanita muscaria, psilocybe polonica, sodium glass, argon, rubber)

The work comes from Marek Kijewski's solo exhibition *Positive* (Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, 1995). It is one of the artist's many projects conceived in a spirit of fun, humour and imagination. It resembles a large, psychedelic fly agaric, held in the air by blue glowing corrugated neon tubes. Kijewski constructed many works from materials that are not typical for sculpture, such as hard candy, Lego bricks, fluorescent lamps and resin, which he supplemented with materials reminiscent of the symbolism of pre-modern societies – fur, feathers, animal horns, gold and psychoactive plants (hemp and thornapple).



Marek Kijewski

## *Fred Flintstone of Knossos*

1995, sculpture; concrete, peacock feathers, polyurethane foam, Haribo raspberries, paint, bull horns, silicon)

Holidays in Crete inspired Kijewski to make several sculptures, among them *Fred Flintstone of Knossos* (the others were *Wilma Flintstone's Tattoos*, *Queen Midas Looking for Bugs Bunny* and *King Minos the Feminist*). Fred Flintstone combines the figure of the mythical Minotaur and the character from the popular television cartoon. The artist placed the hero of contemporary mass culture in the context of the ancient Minoan culture, giving the work the form of a classic bust on a plinth. The sculpture gives the impression of a large toy for adults, but one that, despite the obvious element of humour, also carries a bitter reflection. It appears when comparing the values behind the world of Greek myths with the kitschy characters from American comics and cartoons, such as Bugs Bunny or the Flintstones. Kijewski accepted this new world and the commercialising culture, but wanted to imbue it with spiritual, shamanic and mystical values.





# Grzegorz Klaman

(b. 1959) A sculptor and creator of installations and objects. From 1980 to 1985, he studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Gdansk (currently the Academy of Fine Arts); since 1996, he has been running the Department of Intermedia at his alma mater. Co-author of numerous artistic initiatives in Gdansk, such as the Wyspa Gallery, Otwarte Atelier, the Łaźnia Centre for Contemporary Art and the Wyspa Art Institute, all of which have been highly influential in shaping Polish critical art.

In the 1980s, inspired by land art, Klaman undertook interventions in the landscape (e.g. *The Bridge*, 1983) and carried out “digging-in” performances informed by his concept of “reverse archaeology.” At that time he also carved expressive figures in wood, classified as post-painting sculpture (Anda Rottenberg’s term), such as *Man Holding a Head* (1987), *Head on a Springboard* (1987) and *Liebenspaar* (1987).

By the end of the 1980s, Klaman had gained renown as the author of aesthetically brutalist and symbolically significant monumental installations built using wooden and steel structures. Among these were *Gnosis-Altars* (1989), as well as three works – *The Gate*, *The Tower* and *The Rotunda* – created in 1990 for the exhibition *Paradise Lost* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art.

In the 1990s, Klaman’s work more and more often took up the discourse of critical art and the artist used controversial materials in his works, such as raw meat or anatomical preparations. After 2000, national symbols and topics such as collective memory, history, politics and globalisation appeared even more clearly in Klaman’s art. Many of his works referred to the history and area of the Gdansk Shipyard, explored by the artist in the context of the symbolism of this place, so strongly associated with the recent history of Poland.

Grzegorz Klaman

## *Kneeling Man in a Red Coat*

1987, sculpture; metal, wood, paint



From the mid-1980s, Grzegorz Klaman leaned towards figurative sculpture. His first monumental figures, considered part of the emerging movement of New Expression, were made of easily available materials, most often wood, pieces of sheet metal and cardboard. They combined an aspect of social contestation and a strong existential stamp. Aneta Szyłak described them as "wooden figures, cut out of a log with an axe and a saw, bearing traces of wounds inflicted with a brutal tool, marked with black and red paint to enhance the effect of 'skinning'." Carved in raw wood, the

*Kneeling Man in a Red Coat* also bears clear traces of the creative process. The artist used an axe instead of a chisel, which left visible traces of hewing, or rather chopping. This technique brought out a strong expressive value from the wood. The carved figure is kneeling on one knee, as if under the weight of the red-painted sheet-metal "coat." The polychrome layer was added in a dynamic way, by splashing paint, further enhancing the work's formal expression.

# Grzegorz Klaman

## *Flag for the Third Polish Republic*

2003, object (limited numbered edition); cardboard, canvas

In the 1990s, Klaman joined the critical-art trend that was dominant in Polish art of that decade, represented mainly by students of Professor Grzegorz Kowalski (from the later famous “Kowalnia”), such as Katarzyna Kozyra, Artur Żmijewski and Jacek Markiewicz. In Gdansk, Robert Rumas was another artist who used the critical art idiom very intensely. In the spirit of art’s contextualisation by politics and social awareness, Klaman performed an artistic operation on one of the main Polish national symbols – the flag. Starting in 2001, he made a series of *Flags for the Third Polish Republic*, in which he added a black belt to the official representation of the Polish flag. “It was not located in one place: I decided to design the wanderings of this blackness on the white-and-red flag. It was top, middle, bottom, a wedge like in the Czech flag – altogether five versions were created. What was important above all was what these colours meant: white – innocence,

heroism; red – the blood of heroes; black – the opposite of white, the dark side of our national identity. A bit like in the yin-yang symbol, black was not meant to connote negatively, but to complement the rest. I found that when verifying national stereotypes, the introduction of black colour would be a kind of self-criticism that could be a component of our consciousness. That was the motive behind the flag – it came in a series of boxes that you could buy and hang up,” explained the artist. Violating the ban on displaying the flag at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk, where his Wyspa Gallery was located at that time, in May 2001 Klaman organised a happening during which he waved the flag from the window of the university. The 2002 *Flag for the Third Polish Republic* was made in the context of the case of artist Dorota Nieznalska, who was brought to trial on charges of insulting religious feelings.



The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Signs of Time programme.

# Komar and Melamid

Vitaly Komar (b. 1943)

Alexander Melamid (b. 1945)

In the second half of the 1970s, these Moscow-born artists emigrated to Israel and they have been based in New York since 1978. They started to collaborate together as early as 1967 and from 1972 they began to sign all their works with both names, regardless of which one of them made it. They worked as a duo until the early 2000s. They started a trend in post-war Soviet art called social art – a critical, non-conformist and conceptual form of pop art, based on the appropriation of socialist realist iconography and street propaganda. Humorous, often grotesque works were created in the soc-art style: posters, paintings and banners. Both artists took part in the “bulldozer exhibition” that happened in 1974 on the outskirts of Moscow. The art of Moscow’s avant-garde artists presented there was razed to the ground by bulldozers sent by the authorities.

The most famous works by Komar and Melamid while in the United States are the project *The People’s Choice* and the opera *Naked Revolution* (1998). In the same year, the artists went to Thailand to teach elephants to paint, which resulted in the book *When Elephants Paint: The Quest of Two Russian Artists to Save the Elephants of Thailand*. In 2000, the auction house Christie’s held the first ever auction of paintings made by elephants, with the proceeds going to support the animals and their carers. In 2001, Komar and Melamid started working on their last major joint project – *Symbols of the Big Bang* – in which they explored spirituality and the relationship between mysticism and science. In 2003, they made several stained-glass works related to the latter project, planning to show them during the Moscow edition of the exhibition *Berlin-Moscow/Moscow-Berlin 1950–2000* (the Berlin edition was held at the Gropius Bau), but the Russian authorities did not allow this presentation. Komar and Melamid ceased their cooperation in 2003.

# Komar and Melamid *Poland: Most Wanted*

2001, acrylics on canvas



The work comes from Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid's exhibition *The People's Choice. Most Wanted & Most Unwanted*, held at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2001. The project *The People's Choice: Most Wanted & Least Wanted*, which was started by Komar and Melamid in 1994, deals with the criticism of the use of democratic rules and mechanisms in art. In order to find out what people in different parts of the world expect from art, the artists commissioned companies specialising in public opinion research to conduct specially developed surveys. These included about a hundred questions, starting with the age of the respondents and ending with their knowledge of painters. Each time, two paintings based on the results of these studies were then made: *Type (Most Wanted)* and *Antitype (Least Wanted)*; the former contained the features indicated by the respondents as desirable, the latter as undesirable. →>

## Komar and Melamid *Poland: Least Wanted*

2001, acrylics on cardboard



→ In this way, Komar and Melamid became acquainted with the artistic preferences of the inhabitants of many countries, including China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Kenya, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and Poland. The survey and the resulting images represent popular ideas about art. It turned out that the picture most desired by the average Pole shows a mountain landscape with a lake and blue and green colours predominate in it. The game beloved in our country is represented by roe deer and red deer. There were also people on the canvas: two men in a boat. The least desirable work, in

turn, is a geometric abstraction in violet-pink-orange hues with golden elements. The results of studies conducted in different countries turned out to be surprisingly convergent. The favourite colour of the Earth's inhabitants is blue and everywhere, except in the Netherlands, the homeland of Piet Mondrian, there is a widespread aversion to abstract art. The Chinese opted for paintings of people at work. The quasi-scientific nature of the project helped reveal prejudices and stereotypes about art, as well as exposing the absurdity of the idea of democratic art, created taking into account the preferences of the masses.

# Jarosław Kozakiewicz

(b. 1961) He works at the crossroads of visual arts, science and architecture. He creates conceptual sculptures and installations, as well as architectural designs conceived as a critique of architecture and urban planning, he has also done environmental art-inspired projects. A graduate of the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where he studied in 1981—1985 and obtained his degree in 1989, as well as The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York. He received the title of professor at the University of Warsaw, where he teaches interdisciplinary design in the Faculty of Design. Kozakiewicz is a laureate of many prestigious architectural competitions, including for the designs of the Centre for Contemporary Art in Torun (2004) and the Museum of Modern Art

in Warsaw (2007). In 2005, his proposal won the international competition for the Park of Reconciliation near the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and in 2007 his *Mars Project*, a multi-hectare earth sculpture, transforming the landscape of a former lignite mine around Lake Baerwalde in Germany, was completed. Kozakiewicz's other projects include proposals, often utopian, of ecological or symbolic projects in the fields of spatial planning (*Transfer*, 2006) or architecture (*Oxygen Towers*, 2005). In 2006, Kozakiewicz represented Poland at the Venice Architecture Biennale.

Jarosław  
Kozakiewicz

## *Pasture*

2002, installation  
wood, plastic, fabric





The work consists of a square wooden table, the top of which is covered with a green carpet, four chairs are placed on the sides of the table and miniature plastic figurines of sheep in two variants: with the head raised or lowered. Kozakiewicz presented *Pasture* in 2002 at the Arsenal Gallery in Białystok, in the exhibition *Power of the People*, which explored the idea of democracy and its functioning in the Polish context. The green, slightly rough tabletop resembles a pasture, with several dozen figures of sheep in a large circle. They are placed equidistant from each other, alternately: one nibbling grass, one looking ahead. Among the interpretative tropes of

this work there is, among others, a perverse reference to the Christian iconography of the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep, as well as a reflection on different perspectives of perceiving the world. From the chair at the table, which allows a "bird's eye view," you can see that the miniature flock of sheep "turns" in a circle. A broader perspective is therefore an opportunity to deepen knowledge about the surrounding world. *Pasture* comments on social issues, but it also evokes associations with the gaming table, the dealing of cards as a metaphor for deleting political spheres of interest.



# Jarosław Kozakiewicz

## *Geometry of the Inside*

2005, installation; model and two animated films on DVD (14'30", 4'06"), epoxy resin

*Geometry of the Inside* is an unusual design of a cinema building. The artist planned to install it in a public space, at Plac Piłsudskiego, close to Zachęta, the National Theatre and the Metropolitan office building in Warsaw. The form was rendered by recording a person's bodily movements during an eight-hour sleep. The computer recorded the changes in the sleeping position, creating a grid of lines drawn from the orifices. The image of the attractor (a term used in chaos theory, among other fields, meaning a point attraction area during a time-varying phenomenon) became the basis for designing the irregular shape of the building; Kozakiewicz effectively transformed a record of human body movement into a full-scale architectural form. In this design, the walls of the cinema are translucent, so films can be viewed from the outside and inside. When we think of the origin of the building's form, Kozakiewicz's idea of blurring the boundary between the private and the public, between sleep and reality, becomes clear to us.



# Jarosław Kozłowski

↑ Artists list 123

(b. 1945) A conceptual artist who often creates his works in the form of installations using various media, such as drawing, light, sound, photography and objects. He has also authored art books, made drawings, photographs, paintings and performances. From 1963 to 1969, Kozłowski studied at the Faculty of Painting at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Poznan (now the University of Arts), where he taught until 2019 and where he obtained the rank of full professor. From 1972 to 1990, he ran the Akumulatory 2 Gallery in Poznan, and in 1991–1993 he served as the gallery and collection curator at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw. In 2006, Kozłowski represented Poland at the Art Biennale in São Paulo. A precursor of conceptual art in Poland, he is considered a leading protagonist of this movement.

Kozłowski's conceptual work is characterised by a critical and analytical discourse with art and the mechanisms of perception, self-reflection and

correlations between the grammar of art language and the sphere of meanings. Kozłowski is the author of many works dealing with the issue of the presence of modernist traditions, as well as the social and political context of art. Reflection on language is a common thread of his early works from the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1970s, Kozłowski made purely linguistic works, exploring language games and transferring the rules governing logical sentences to reality, and vice versa. Works such as *Modal Drawings*, *Exercises in Semiotics*, *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *Ics*, or *Exercises in Aesthetics* were created during that period. In the 1980s, in a long series of works called the *Mythologies of Art*, Kozłowski deconstructed art-related myths, such as the myth of the artist, the myth of artistic autonomy, the myth of originality and the myth of value and selflessness. These were mainly works of the structure of installations, usually with sound.

In the 1990s, Kozłowski tried to enter what he called the 'third circle', an alternative art territory that is "neither myth nor reality." It is a zone where ready-made objects comprise a whole network of relations and meanings predicated on rules different than before. The installations *Sharp Objects* (1991), *Soft Protections* (1994–1995) and *Temporary Objects* (1997) were made during that time. From the late 1990s, a tendency to react to specific facts of contemporary reality became increasingly perceptible in Kozłowski's art. His largely commentatorial works ironically illustrate socio-political changes, as evidenced, for example, by the series *European Standards* and *United World*. Since 2006, Kozłowski has been working on a project called *Rhetorical Figures*, dealing, among other things, with the validity of modernist ideas.

Jarosław Kozłowski  
*Sharp Objects*

1991, installation; wood, metal, fabric, plastic





The installation consists of ready-made objects, furniture and household appliances. The artist treated these defenceless things very brutally: they were all painted with black paint and pierced with sharp scythes. However, looking at this work, we do not perceive them in terms of victims: rather, they come across as armed warriors guarding their independence. The elements of the installation have been removed from the utilitarian context of the "actual reality," but also deprived of the interpretations imposed on them by the semantics of art. The armchair refuses to allow

anyone to sit on it, the television refuses to transmit stupefying Polish Press Agency news and cheap entertainment, and the typewriter rebels against the use of the alphabet. Camouflaged and armed objects play their game with us. "They gain a different identity and with it regain their lost dignity," explains Kozłowski. However, rather than being interested in just showing these objects, it is the relations between them that seem to matter the most. Upon careful examination, the viewer will notice a tiny, unpainted fragment of the original surface on each piece of furniture.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Zbigniew Libera

↑ Artists list 126

(b. 1959) An artist who creates objects, installations, videos, photographs and performances. In the 1980s, he was a member of the Lodz-based Kultura Zrzuty art community, co-edited the *Tango* magazine, played in the bands the NAO and Sternenhoch, and actively participated in the milieu focused around Zofia Kulik and Przemysław Kwiek. Libera is considered a precursor and leading representative of the critical art movement. In an insightful and subversive way, his works conduct a discourse with traditional models of upbringing, cultural perceptions of the body and mass-culture codes, raising questions about the media manipulation of reality.

Libera made his debut in the early 1980s and his first films – *Intimate Rituals* (1984), *Mystical Perseverance* (1984) and *How to Train Little Girls* (1987) – heralded the era of body art, which began in Poland in the 1990s. His series of *Corrective Devices* (1994–1999),

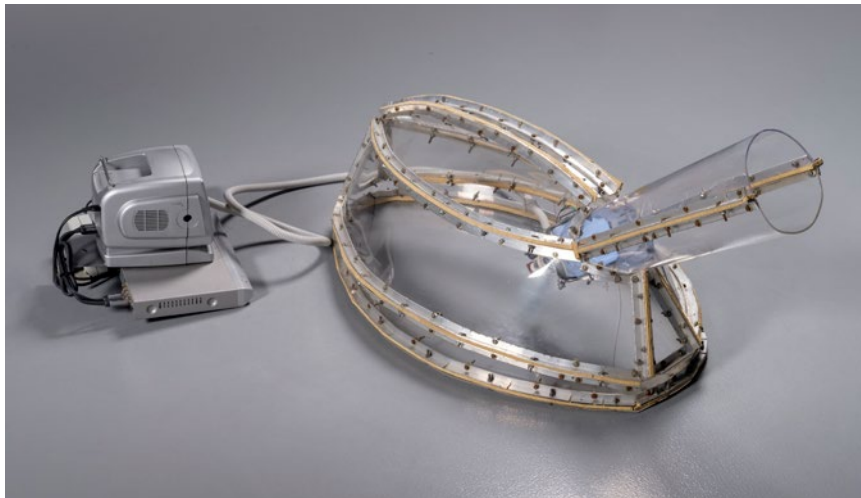
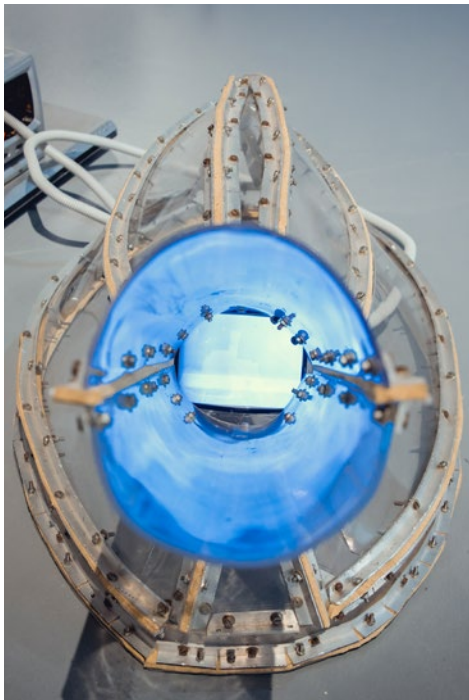
comprising objects or toys that ironically show how an individual adapts to social norms, included kits for boys: *Universal Penis Expander* and *Body Master* and for girls: *Ken's Aunt*, *You Can Shave the Baby*, *The Doll You Love to Undress* and *Birthing Beds for Girls*. Most of these works were featured in the artist's solo exhibition *Corrective Devices*, staged at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1996. Subjecting everyday objects to slight modifications and embedding them in a context foreign to them, Libera shows the role that they play in the process of socialization. The most famous of these works is doubtless *Lego. Concentration Camp*, a set of photographs and boxes of Lego bricks that can be used to build a toy concentration camp.

Libera is also interested in the iconography of contemporary culture, which shapes the viewer's visual memory and influences his perception of history. In the photographic series *Positives*

and *Masters* (2001–2003), the artist analyses the relationship between what we see and what the media makes us remember, pointing to the mechanisms that make it possible to manipulate the photographic message and fabricate any information that has the hallmarks of truth. In 2008–2009, Libera taught a class based on Oskar Hansen's idea of Open Form at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (AVU), which he called the Open Form Studio. He is also the author of the *Art Guide* TV series, which aired on TVP Kultura. The artist's more recent works include para-theatrical performances (*The Struggle Between Good and Evil*, Stary Teatr, Krakow, 2016) and theatrical scenography (*Hamlet*, dir. Maja Kleczewska, Teatr Polski, Poznań, 2019).

# The Duck

1992, video installation; acrylic glass, aluminium, cathode ray tube, TV, VHS tape



The work uses a play on words and shapes: "duck" is a colloquial name for the hospital urinal for bedridden men, as its shape distantly resembles this bird. The object is made of transparent acrylic glass; a video on a small monitor shows trickling water.

Zbigniew Libera  
*The Bather*

1991, video installation; acrylic glass, aluminium, cathode ray tube, TV set, VHS tape

A television cathode ray tube is placed on the floor, mounted on a spiral construction of transparent plexiglass plates, resembling a twisted pipe. Next to it is an uncapped VCR with coloured cables and wires leading to the cathode ray tube. The film shows a whirlpool of water flowing out of a bathtub, creating an allegory of passing, transience and death. According to Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, this work, like the video installation *The Duck*, "clashes the coldness of electronic technology with the fever of deadly matter." The title of the work comes from the jargon of funeral directors, for whom a bather is a dead man who is washed before the funeral. The work description includes a quote from Louis-Vincent Thomas's book *Anthropologie de la mort*: "Also to distance themselves from the deceased, funeral directors humorously call him 'the bather' (*le baigneur*)."





Zbigniew Libera  
*Body Master. Playset for Children Up to 9 Years Old*

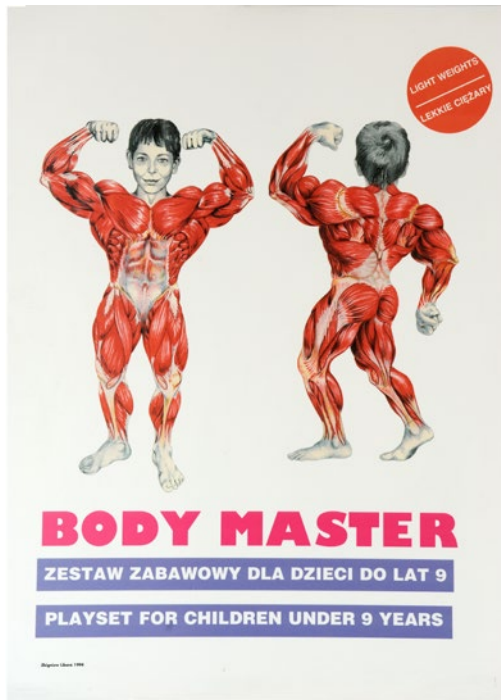
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Zbigniew Libera

## *Body Master. Playset for Children Up to 9 Years Old*

1994, installation; metal, synthetic leather, print

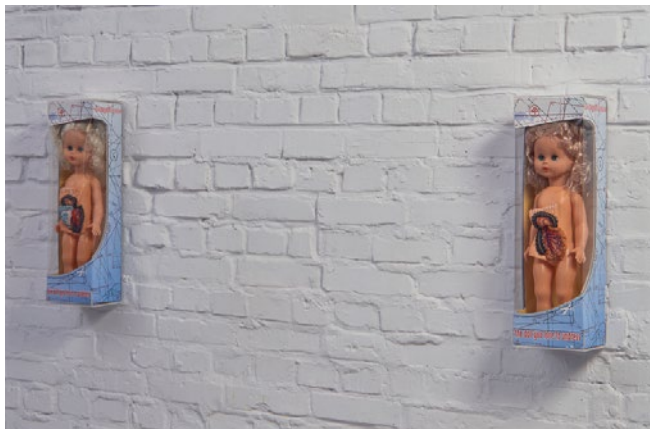


Part of the *Corrective Devices* series, *Body Master* consists of two gym machines adapted to the body proportions of a boy aged 7–9 along with an advertising board. Modelled on bodybuilding devices for adults, from which they differ only in terms of weight, the machines are fully usable. Libera's *Body Master* is designed to help several-year-old boys achieve an imaginary bodily ideal with appropriately developed musculature. The advertising board shows the media-promoted paragon: a grotesque boy bodybuilder. However, Libera's corrective device is in fact a toy and can only train the child's psyche. The work is part of the critical art trend, the artist evoking the issue of contemporary consumer culture that drives the demand for products and services to help achieve a bodily "ideal".

*Body Master* was made in two versions; the trial one is in the collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw. As the artist explained in an interview: "This is a set for children up to the age of ten, because from the age of ten you can really practice. [...] As befits a commercial product, my device will be accompanied by a kind of advertising billboard with drawings showing how the muscles of a ten-year-old could potentially develop if he used the device. The drawings are not artistic. I made them according to anatomical atlases, imagining how the individual muscles of a nine-year-old boy would transform."

Zbigniew Libera  
***The Doll You Love To Undress***

1997, object; cardboard, plastic



In 1996, Zbigniew Libera held a solo exhibition, *Corrective Devices*, at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. The artist showed works referring in form to mass-produced objects, but which he had significantly modified, giving them a critical meaning. These included *Placebo*, *You Can Shave the Baby*, *Lego. Concentration*

*Camp, Delivery Beds. Playkits for Girls and Ken's Aunt.*

In 1997, further projects from the *Corrective Devices* series were created, including *The Doll You Love to Undress*. The work had its starting point in girls' toys, mass-produced and packed in cardboard boxes with a transparent

plastic blister. The artist changed the prototype, giving it the function of an educational toy, reminiscent of anatomical models for medicine students: he "gutted" the dolls' bellies and placed plastic entrails in them, painted in the colours assigned to individual organs in medical atlases. This slightly macabre work can be interpreted as a reminder that people have no inhibitions when exposing themselves, even in the presence of witnesses. In the works from the *Corrective Devices* series, Libera draws attention to the fact that toys shape behaviour patterns from an early age, and can therefore easily become a tool of manipulation.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Richard Long

(b. 1945) A British sculptor and land artist who has also worked with drawings and ephemeral performances. He graduated from Saint Martin's College of Art in London in 1968, having studied under Anthony Caro.

Long is famous for his walks that challenge conventional notions of what art is. Since the work *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), which he presented while still a student, he has been recognised as a leading protagonist of British conceptual art. The artist walked in a straight line in a meadow near London and at the end of the action he photographed the line he had trodden in the grass. It was not the photograph that was the artwork. Nor was it the trace he left behind, which soon disappeared. It was the walking itself. In 1980, during

a seven-day tour of Wales, Long drew a line 226 miles long. The route he made in 1998, setting 33 stones – a significant 33-day walk from the Lizard to Dunnet Head – measured 1030 miles.

Long's walks verge between ephemeral sculpture and performance. Operating in nature, he has also been labelled a land artist, even if his art is more restrained, less spectacular and more private than American land art, for example. In addition to walks, arranging circles is Long's key activity. "I can make a circle of words, I can make a circle of stones, I can make a circle of mud on a wall with my hands, I can walk in a circle for a hundred miles," he said many years ago.

# Richard Long

## Stone Circle

1992, installation; stones

Richard Long's *Stone Circle* was created on the occasion of the *Collection 1* exhibition, presented at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1992. It was made according to the artist's instructions. Brought to Warsaw from the south of Poland, the stones were arranged in concentric circles in such a way that each one lay close to the next one, but did not touch it. The stones in *Open Storage* are those from the work's last presentation, as part of the *Collection 4* exhibition (2001–2005).

Arranging stones in circles or in a straight line is like recreating ancient rituals and brings to mind the megalithic structures left by our ancestors. Richard Long built his first stone circle in the Andes in 1972. Since then, working on many continents, he has been creating circles with slate, stone, wood and even pine needles.



was one of the most significant Polish art collectives of the 1980s and 1990s. Founded in Wrocław, it reached peak activity in the years 1983–1995. The group's line-up changed, but the core included Paweł Jarodzki (leader and author of the name, died in 2021), Ewa Ciepielewska, Bożena Grzyb-Jarodzka, Małgorzata Plata, Szymon Lubiński, Jacek "Ponton" Jankowski, Jerzy Koszałka and Stanisław Sielicki (died in 2019).

By definition, the members of Luxus made popular art, art that was accessible to everyone, thus dissociating themselves from the "academicism" then prevailing, which conceptual art was considered to be. One of the group's slogans was: "Attraction, not abstraction." The young artists of Luxus were admirers of the Fluxus movement and its ideas, especially the notion of art as a way of life.

The group was known for creating artistic situations embedded in urban everyday life. Their projects were a mocking reaction to the political, social and moral reality. The Luxus artists drew heavily on Western models of mass culture and pop art, advocated creative freedom, willingly used pastiche, drew on the tradition of Dadaist collages and took advantage of the possibilities offered by the stencil technique. The aesthetics of the group's work was punky, informed by a do-it-yourself philosophy and an ironic-subversive travesty of the popular iconosphere as its members' favourite strategy. Refusing to sign their works, the Luxus artists produced trashy objects, templates and collages that manifested their shared values and an ambivalent fascination with pop culture.

Luxus

## Voodoo Africa

2015, assemblage; mixed media

The work was gifted by Luxus and the Razem Pamoja Foundation to the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art after the 2016 charity auction Learning, Acting, Sharing. The assemblage, in the shape of the African continent, was made jointly by Luxus members over the course of several days as part of exhibition at the Księgarnia|Wystawa venue in Krakow. It was constructed from all kinds of damaged objects, discards, rubbish and found objects, such as toys, mobile phones and papers. The refuse collected by the artists was transformed and used to create their own story about Africa.



# Małgorzata Mirga-Tas

(b. 1978) A Polish-Roma visual artist and activist. In 2004, she graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, majoring in sculpture. Mirga-Tas is a recipient of honorary mentions at the 42nd and 44th Painting Biennales Bielska Jesień (2015, 2019), the recipient of a Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland research grant (2018), and winner of a *Polityka* Passport for visual arts (2020). In 2022, she represented Poland at the 59th Venice Biennale. Mirga-Tas is involved in numerous social and artistic projects that counteract exclusion, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Since 2011, she has organised the international artist-in-residence programme *Jaw Dikh!* in Czarna Góra, intended for Roma and non-Roma artists.

Since her student days, Mirga-Tas has tackled topics related to Roma culture and Roma history, addressing the issues of complex Roma and Roma-Polish identity as well as the transcultural and transnational experience of being a Roma. She has developed a recognisable “patchwork” painting style, combining

brushwork with the use of ornaments of ready-made fabrics. Bold juxtapositions of bright colours and the decorativeness of the materials are used to create compositions inspired by Roma culture and tradition. The artist draws from her own experience, but also from the achievements of her uncle, Andrzej Mirga, a respected ethnographer and researcher of Roma culture. Most often, she represents genre scenes from community life, but she does not shy away from traumatic topics, such as *Porajmos* – the Roma Holocaust. Mirga-Tas is the author of the world’s first monument commemorating the extermination of the Roma people during the Second World War, which was erected in 2011 in Borzęcin Dolny. Five years later, an unknown group of perpetrators destroyed the wooden monument, chopping it to pieces with axes. The artist then decided to cast the remains of the destroyed figures of Roma people from the monument in delicate materials, namely wax, porcelain and soap, in order to be able to create copies of them indefinitely.



# Małgorzata Mirga-Tas

## *Romani Kali Daj*

2017, object; acrylic, fabric, chipboard, wood

The works of Małgorzata Mirga-Tas in the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art Collection are collage paintings on canvas, objects modelled on folk shrines or the form of the partition screen, which have become the artist's hallmark.



The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the National Collection of Contemporary Art programme.

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas  
*Diłoseskro Dziwes*

2019, object; fabric, acrylic



Characteristic of her work is a patchwork-style combination of painting and fabrics, usually repurposed from second-hand clothes obtained from friends and family. Sequins, strings and fringes are also present; Mirga-Tas's attachment to ornamental forms and lines is clearly visible. All the paintings are based on simple forms.

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Małgorzata Mirga-Tas  
*Miri Phuri Daj*

2019, object; acrylic, wood, fabric, feathers



The artist works with acrylics, using intense colours, outlining shapes with a clear contour. The works from 2017–2019 depict, among other things, genre scenes from the everyday life of Roma communities, including people, animals and vegetation. Mirga-Tas likes to portray Roma women, including those from her own family, portraying them on the decorative backgrounds of screens and shrines.

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# Jarosław Modzelewski

(b. 1955) A painter who studied at the Faculty of Painting of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1975–1980) under the tutelage of Professor Stefan Gierowski. In 1982, together with five other Warsaw Academy graduates – Ryszard Grzyb, Paweł Kowalewski, Włodzimierz Pawlak, Marek Sobczyk and Ryszard Woźniak – Modzelewski co-founded Grupa, the most influential collective of the New Expression movement of the 1980s, whose members' work expressed the tensions and dilemmas of the martial-law era. Winner of the *Polityka* Passport for visual arts (1998) and the Jan Cybis Prize (2004). Until 2020, he taught a painting class at his alma mater, where he obtained the title of professor.

Modzelewski's painting evolved significantly over the years, from an almost abstract sign towards an increasingly realistic approach to the image. In the 1990s, the artist treated the subject quite conventionally, clearing the background and monumentalising the form.

The suggestive, often disturbing atmosphere of the canvases was emphasised by the sharpened range of colours. As Marta Tarabuła aptly noticed, Modzelewski's painting was deeply influenced by his studies with Professor Gierowski and the belief that "a picture must be constructed, i.e. based on an inner structure of forms: colours and shapes." To this came a fascination with the work of Andrzej Wróblewski and with the ideas of Kazimir Malevich and Władysław Strzemiński, icons of the twentieth-century avant-garde. When, in 1997, the artist changed his painting technique from oil to yolk distemper, the aesthetics of his paintings was enriched with detail, brush marks and an individual gesture. Modzelewski devotes much attention to the human figure, but he is also interested in landscapes and still life. He is counted among the most outstanding contemporary Polish artists, being sometimes called a "painter of the icons of everyday life."

# Hygiene

1990, oil on canvas



In the early 1980s, Modzelewski used cut-outs and stencils, his works featuring motifs of silhouette portraits cut out in black paper, popularised in the 18th century under the French name *silhouette*. He cut out the required shapes – usually ideograms or signs – in the form of stencils, which he then duplicated many times on canvas, something that lent his paintings a certain trait of decorativeness. Inspired by the technique of cut-out, this working method was well suited to the intense atmosphere of the time. At the end of the 1980s, Modzelewski returned to figurative scenes, also executed in a flat and decorative manner, as in *Hygiene*. In this turn to figurativeness, he was helped by finding a Soviet-era Russian-language textbook for foreigners, in which the characters in the illustrations were rendered in a socialist-realist style. Paradoxically, as Modzelewski himself recalls, it was a lesson for him in how to use the

painting language by focusing only on what needs to be expressed. The painting *Hygiene* is highly decorative and at the same time monumental. The composition is framed at the top and bottom by a rhythmic pattern of squares, with the one at the top resembling the perforation of photographic film. In addition to squares, there are also dots and stripes on the canvas, including the dominant form of a striped shower curtain. The whole scene was suspended in a black interior, or rather on a black, smooth background. This makes the composition take on a universal meaning and the protagonists of this scene – a naked man sitting on a stool and another, vaguely visible figure standing behind a curtain – become actors in a certain metaphor. So maybe this painting isn't just about taking a shower together?

# David Nash

(b. 1945) A sculptor. He studied at Kingston College of Art (1963–1967) and Chelsea School of Art (1969–1970). In 2004, he was awarded an OBE for services to the arts.

Nash works primarily with wood that has been naturally felled or cut down due to age, disease or safety reasons. He also does “sapling work”, planting trees as living, growing sculptures as part of long-term projects that last for decades. His early work includes the *Ash Dome* (1977) – twenty-two ash trees planted in a circle on a hillside in the Ffestiniog Valley, whose crowns eventually formed a monumental dome. In 1978, the artist began working on the *Wooden Boulder*, which he called a “walking sculpture”. Using a chainsaw, he carved a spherical half-tonne form from the trunk

of a 200-year-old oak tree that had been cut earlier, which he then placed on the slope of a Welsh mountain. The carved wooden ball gradually and naturally moved towards the Atlantic Ocean over many years, where it disappeared in 2015. While his work is exhibited in museums around the world, Nash’s largest-size works have been created for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield and set up in the vicinity of his home in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Wales. Nash lives in a former chapel, a building of impressive dimensions. It contains some of his oldest works, which Nash likes to remake, demonstrating his cyclical approach to time.

David Nash

## Untitled (Tree Trunk)

1991, sculpture; wood, mixed media

Both works – *Untitled (Tree Trunk)* and *The Boat* which are on view at the Open Storage – come from David Nash and Leon Tarasewicz's joint exhibition, held at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1991. All the featured objects were produced by the artist on site. The material for the *Tree Trunk* was a large rotten poplar from the Łazienki Park in Warsaw. For other works, the wood was obtained in the Wąliń Forest District (oaks, alders), in the vicinity of Leon Tarasewicz's place of residence. The poplar was subjected to the tanning process, which clearly emphasised the final form of the work. The wood burns to create deep, black, velvety surfaces that enhance the expressiveness of the work. The British artist's wood carvings are created using heavy equipment, chainsaws and burners. →→



David Nash  
*The Boat*

1991, sculpture; wood, mixed media

→ Nash usually uses fallen trees, his works developing in accordance with the nature of the materials subjected to sculptural intervention: wood speaking about its nature and the way the artist interacts with it. Nash spent much of the 1980s and 1990s travelling and holding exhibitions around the world. His motto in those years was: "Have an axe, will travel." He usually came and looked for materials near the exhibition site. From them, ideas developed, often spontaneously. "I think people find material through their temperament. I'm a sprinter, not a long-distance runner."





# Ludwika Ogorzelec

(b. 1953) A sculptor born in Chobienia in Lower Silesia. She studied at the State Higher School of Fine Arts (currently the Academy of Fine Arts) in Wrocław (1978—1983), graduating in the studio of Professor Leon Podsiadły). She continued her education at École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1985—1987) and in the studio of César, who, after seeing her work on photographs she brought from Poland, offered her a job in his atelier in 1985. This is how what she had planned as a short trip abroad turned into a longer stay. Ludwika Ogorzelec has had her studio in Paris since 1985, but due to the specific nature of her artistic programme – especially her *Crystallisations of Space* series – she creates works in various parts of the world. Most of them are site-specific sculptures, made especially for a gallery, museum or public space. Over the 40 years of her professional career, her works have been shown at more than a hundred exhibitions worldwide (she has had 73 solo shows and participated in 34 group exhibitions).

She creates original sculpture-constructions with a dense, saturated structure. She uses wood, glass, metal and (since 2001) cellophane, but the key element is the space which from which it is created. Since the start of her creative career, Ludwika Ogorzelec decided that space would be her basic sculptural material.

Her works are part of two series: *Equivalent Instruments* (ongoing since the 1980s) and *Crystallisations of Space* (since the 1990s). The latter is a direct consequence of her theoretical work and experiments with space while creating individual sculptures from the *Equivalent Instruments* series.

Ludwika Ogorzelec

## Cocoon

from the *Equivalent Instruments* series  
2004, sculpture; wood



This work was presented at Ludwika Ogorzelec's solo show *Parisian Tensions* at the Roi Doré gallery in Paris in 2010. It is one of her latest wood sculptures created as part of the *Equivalent Instruments* series. In *Cocoon*, suspended in space, one can find references to the spherical form that Ludwika constructed in 2000 in Le Punxes gallery in Barcelona, in an installation from the *Crystallisations of Space* series, as well as to the work *Reconciliation* from the Fiorella Lattuada gallery in Milan (2001).

Artist's autonomous creative path was inspired by a task given by Professor Leon Podsiadły in her fourth year of studies, the subject of which was "balance." It started a series of mobile sculptures *Equivalent Instruments*. In these works, Ogorzelec harmoniously combines meanings taken from the objective world and the subjective world – the world of nature and that created by man (machines, instruments, literature, dance). The artist analyses the issues of meaning and absurdity and looks for a moment of equilibrium.

# Roman Opałka

(1931–2011) A painter and installation artist. He studied at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Lodz from 1949 to 1950 and for the next six years at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating in 1956 in the class of Professor Edward Kokoszka. He participated in the São Paulo Art Biennale (1969 and 1977) and the Documenta in Kassel (1977); in 1995 he represented Poland at the Venice Biennale. He was the recipient of the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Critics Award in 1970, the Kaiser Prize in 1993; in 2009 he was awarded the Commander rank of the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* in France and the Gloria Artis Gold Medal for Merit to Culture in Poland. In 1977 he settled permanently in France.

Opałka is one of the most internationally famous and recognised Polish artists. In the second half of the 1950s, inspired by matter painting, he experimented with an abstract and monochrome idiom in paintings he called *Chronomes*

(1959–1963). *Phonemes* (1963–1964), *Greek Alphabet* (1965) and spatial objects from the *Pillowers* and *Integrations* series (1964–1966) followed. In 1965, Opałka started a monumental project that he would continue for the rest of his life and that would bring him global recognition: counted paintings. Originally titled *1965/1–∞*, the project was based on the idea of progressive counting on canvas. After a few years, the artist called this work-in-process *Opałka 1965. From One to Infinity* and from then on made nothing but paintings and drawings filled with linear compositions of numbers. His counted paintings are called *Details* and the drawings he made when he was unable to paint are called *Travel Cards*. Opałka's goal was the utopian idea of depicting the passage of time, as well as the complete fusion of art and life. The first counted painting, written with numbers from 1 to 35,327, is in the collection of the Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz.

The numbers were painted with white pigment on a grey background. In 1972, the artist began the process of whitening the background of the paintings so that each subsequent one was one per cent brighter than the previous one. Four years earlier, he started a series of self-portraits, taking one photo a day. He is always dressed the same, wearing a white shirt. In 1972, he also began recording his voice reciting each painted number in Polish. By the time of his death in 2011, he had written over five million numbers (over thirty-eight million digits); the last recorded is 5,607,249.

Roman Opalka  
***Abstract Composition***

1964, oil on canvas



In the first half of the 1960s, Opalka painted abstract, monochromatic compositions with a clear texture. The furrowed, dense matter of the canvases was striking in its sophistication and expressiveness. The artist arranged his output in series, producing *Phonemes* in grey-black tones and abstract oil paintings with a thick texture, titled with Greek letters: *Kappa*, *Lambda*, or *Omicron*. From 1963 through 1965, Opalka painted *Abstract Compositions*, modelled in relief using a wide palette knife, just like the work in the Collection. The artist covered the canvas with a layer of paint and scraped it with a wide palette knife, creating characteristic "slats" on the surface.

Bożena Kowalska called them "fugues" or "studies for one tool." They are characterised by a rich scale of chromatic nuances within a restrictively limited colour gamut. The rhythmic arrangement of the vertical stripes of the composition introduces organisation and order. Light refracts on the relief "slats," creating a subtle chiaroscuro on the surface of the canvas. Simultaneously concave and convex composition fields suggest the spatial depth of the image. The contemplative character of Opalka's *Abstract Compositions* distinguishes them from the classic works of matter painting, such as those by Antoni Tàpies and Albert Burri, which are usually more dramatically expressive.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Włodzimierz Pawlak

↑ Artists list 149

(b. 1957) A painter, performer, creator of sculptures and objects, poet, art theoretician and educator. He studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1980–1985) and was one of the founders of the artist collective Grupa (with Ryszard Grzyb, Paweł Kowalewski, Jarosław Modzelewski, Marek Sobczyk and Ryszard Woźniak), which was active from 1982 to 1992. Pawlak actively participated in the independent art movement of the 1980s. From 1986 to 2006 he lectured at the Faculty of Industrial Design of his alma mater, obtaining the title of associate professor. Laureate of the Jan Cybis Prize in 2017.

Pawlak is the author of iconic canvases, almost pictorial metaphors, perfectly capturing the dense, repressive political and social context of the 1980s (including the series *Pigs*, *The Red Bus Goes*

*Around the World*, *The Road from Hell to Hell* and *Poles Forming the National Flag*, the latter being one of the most significant post-1989 Polish paintings). The artist did not shy away from bitter existential reflection either. At the end of the 1990s, he abandoned figuration in favour of a kind of dialogue with the classics of the Constructivist avant-garde, in particular Kazimir Malevich and Władysław Strzemiński.

Pawlak devoted himself almost entirely to reflection on the form, colour and texture of the image, regularly intertwining his artistic practice with the thoughts of an art theoretician. In series such as *Didactic Tables* and the later *Notes on Art*, *The Logical Space of the Image*, *The History of Colour* and *The Colour Line*, Pawlak considers the theoretical problems of painting, presenting

his own reflections on the history of art, as well as an artistic interpretation of its most important theoretical trends. In 2012, he produced a series of works, *The Anatomy of an Airplane*, a reaction to the Smolensk crash in 2010. Pawlak's magnum opus are his *Diaries*, where he applies a thick layer of paint (usually white) on the canvas in stripes, creating horizontal bulges, resembling a relief. Then he draws lines in it with a pencil, symbolising the passage of time. Each painting is marked with a consecutive number and the year of creation.

# Włodzimierz Pawlak

## *Dictionary of Symbols*

1989 (painted over in 1990), oil on canvas

*Dictionary of Symbols* is classified as part of the *Didactic Tables* series (1987–1988), where, using ideographs, symbols, charts and maps extracted from pattern books and encyclopaedias, Pawlak presented a conceptualised history of culture and art (e.g. *Greek and Egyptian Sculpture*, *In the Circle of European*

*Culture*, *Terminological Dictionary of Fine Arts*). *Dictionary of Symbols* consists of six canvases, painted white and nailed together (with boards on the edges). Pawlak painted them over in the spring of 1990, just like some of his other, older paintings, which critics interpret as a farewell to this phase of his artistic past. The

concept of painting over canvases had already appeared in Pawlak's work earlier, in his 1985 graduation project, called *Painted-Over Pictures*, where it alluded to the then-official practice of painting over anti-government slogans appearing on the walls. Pawlak planned to paint over the paintings in the presence of the graduation

committee, though this ultimately did not happen.



# Wojciech Prażmowski

↑ Artists list 151

(b. 1949) A photographer, the author of photo books and an educator. He studied at the Škola Vytvarna Fotografie in Brno from 1972 to 1974. A professor at the National Film, Television and Theatre School in Lodz, a member of the Association of Polish Art Photographers (since 1977). Prażmowski practices creative photography and is the author of photo-objects. His work is an important phenomenon in 1990s art, when artists used archival photography to problematise memory and history.

Prażmowski first embraced the medium in the 1970s, devoting himself to metaphorical photography. He used old post-cards and family photos, altering them in the darkroom by, for example, superimposing multiple images to produce a unique montage. He developed the *Family Album* series using this method.

This was experimental artistic photography, exploring new artistic possibilities, and it quickly brought him wider recognition. The *First World Exhibition of Broken Photographs* (1989) at the Association of Polish Art Photographers' Mała Gallery in association with the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw marked a turning point in his approach to photography. Here, Prażmowski ingeniously experimented with staged photography, using family and anonymous photographs.

In the 1990s, he began to create photo-objects that could be presented as standalone artworks or used for "staged photography." Those from the first half of the decade are an example of photography perceived as a medium of memory and transience. At that time, Prażmowski built small objects

using photographs and documents, combining classic bromine photography with natural materials. In 1995, he began working on the series *Hommage à...*, dedicated to outstanding artists of the 20th century (Warhol, Grass, Kurosawa, Wajda, Hitchcock, Bulhakov). At the end of the 1990s, he turned towards documentary photography, the most outstanding example of which is the series *White-Red-Black*, depicting Poland during the post-Communist transition era. Since the beginning of the 21st century, Prażmowski has been using a combination of colour photography and documentary photography. In the project *The Local Miłosz* (2011), he visually reconstructed the places in Lithuania where the Nobel Prize winner, Czesław Miłosz, stayed in his early years.

Wojciech Prażmowski  
***Aunt Hanka's Letters***

1991, photo-object; black and white photography  
 on a bromine substrate, string



*Aunt Hanka's Letters*, carefully bound with string, are not real letters – they are photographs of letters, copies of them torn into smaller pieces and put together in a compact bundle. Prażmowski recreated these letters, turning them into a photo-object. This is one of the artist's first works of this type from a large series produced in the 1990s. Years later, Prażmowski

recalled: "I made like a package, tying it up so that it would not slip away. A bit like a small child imagining how to stop time: you need to fasten, preferably someone's photographs, with the image of that person, tie it with a string or wire and it won't fall apart, won't escape. And maybe I did just that on that extremely banal note." Prażmowski's "objectified" photographs are a nostalgic story about passing, about preserving the memory of departing loved ones. The letters of the titular Aunt Hanka are embellished by beautiful calligraphy, further enhancing the work's aesthetic value – which is also something that the artist wanted to emphasise.

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.



Wojciech Prażmowski

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## Letters from Portugal

1994, photoobjects; black and white photography on a bromide base, string

Starting in the 1970s, Prażmowski began collecting old, unsuccessful photographs intended to be thrown away. Years later, they became the material for his photo-objects and collages. Working on *Letters from Portugal*, as well as on other three-dimensional objects, the artist filled them with those damaged, unsuccessful prints that were to be

discarded. Transformed into objects, photographs lose their ephemerality, marking their presence in the real world. Prażmowski's photo-objects always refer to the experience of history, time, and transience, constituting a testimony of a distinctly melancholic tone, an attempt to evoke a world that no longer exists.

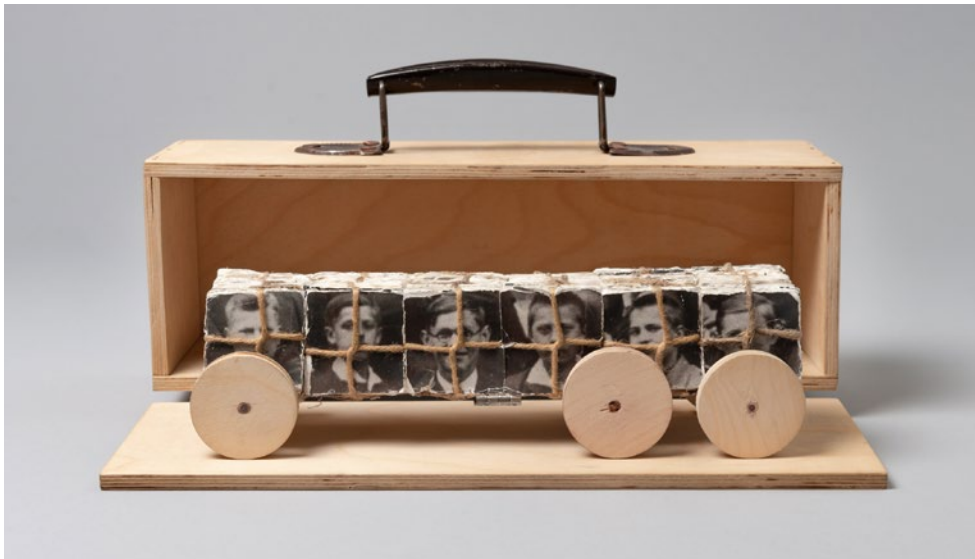


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# Wojciech Prażmowski

## *School Trip*

1992, photoobject; black and white photography on a bromide base, string, plywood



In *School Trip*, Prażmowski recalls a real-life story from 1934: his late father's school trip to Krakow. Prażmowski used single archival photos from the family album and a class

photo of his father's friends in a format resembling ID photos. He placed them side by side in a specially made, simple object that evokes associations with a train. Referring to private

stories, he evokes an event from the past to look at the phenomenon of duration in time.

Prażmowski was significantly influenced by the work of Tadeusz Kantor; it was from him that he learned the meaning of unimportant objects, those of the "lowest rank," that were used to create new worlds. The theme and form of *School Trip* bring to mind iconic performances by Kantor's Cricot 2 Theatre, such as *Wielopole*, *Wielopole* or *The Dead Class*.

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# Katarzyna Przeważńska

↑ Artists list 155

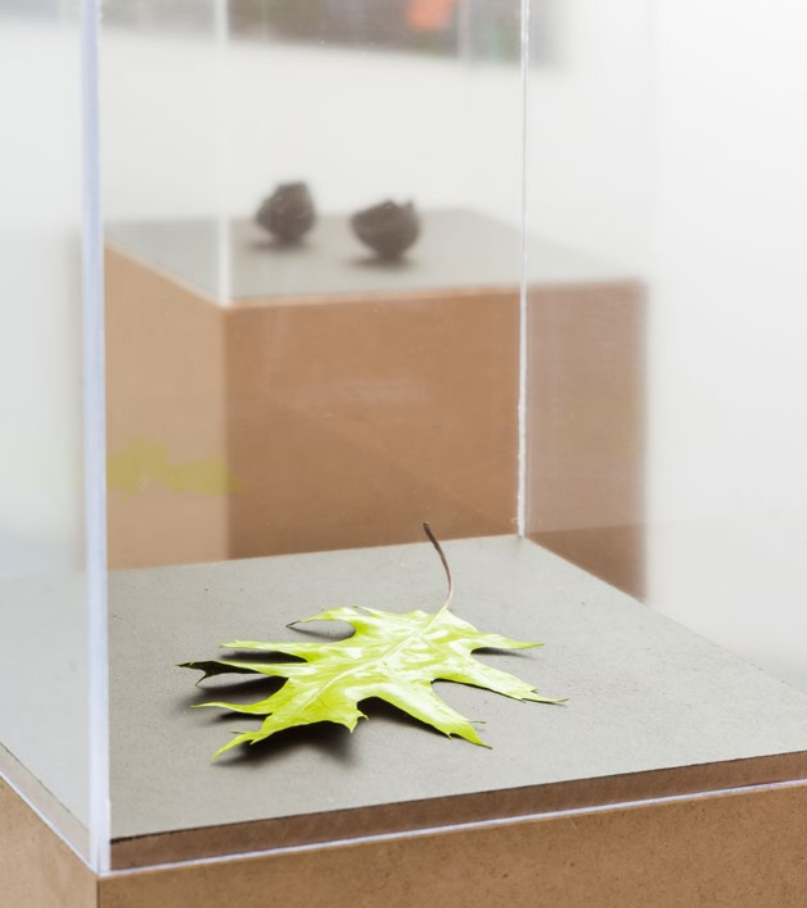
(b. 1984) An artist who works with architectural interventions, installations, objects and paintings, in which she often uses natural materials: rocks, minerals and plants. She holds a degree in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where she studied from 2003 to 2009. One of her works is on permanent display at the Bródno Sculpture Park in Warsaw. A member of the artistic and design collective Czosnek Studio.

In her practice, Przeważńska often references nature and architecture. She has the ambition to combine both of these areas in the pursuit of improving the quality of life, trying to make her art useful. She is inspired by vernacular architecture and the twentieth-century classics as much as by geological phenomena and vegetation processes.

Przeważńska studied painting, but rather than painting pictures, she creates painterly interventions that are a physical manifestation of colour. Using a characteristic colour range – a combination of plant colours and synthetic colours used in contemporary architecture and design – Przeważńska's projects reflect a keen interest in the intersection of art, architecture and nature, as well as a sentiment for modernist utopias of a universal, aesthetic order of the world.

References to the precursors of modernism, in particular Johannes Itten and the Bauhaus colour analysis, are discernible in Przeważńska's work. In her graduation project, *5 Wrzeciono Street Apt. #145* (2009) and, for example, in *Natural Selection* (2011), she combined a visual organisation

of space with its functional sensual experience. In an intervention at Bródno Park (2010), Przeważńska used pigments to mark cracked asphalt, flagstone gaps and places where grass broke through the pavement. In 2015, she designed a model of the Polish parliament, replacing the unfortunate colours and worn floors and upholstery in the Conference Room in the belief that the state cannot function efficiently if the place where key decisions are made is not an aesthetically designed to be a people-friendly interior.



Katarzyna Przeważska  
***The Leaf***

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2011, object; leaf, acrylics

Some of Przeważska's works are so fragile that they may fall apart in the palm of your hand. One of them is *The Leaf* – a dry oak leaf covered with intensely green acrylic paint. This simple procedure preserves and revives a delicate element from the natural world, situating it on the border between nature and culture and turning it into an unnatural object of art, while still leaving it a leaf. These permeations take place on both sides – Przeważska's abstract, intellectual design is based on real colours borrowed from the organic world. A careful observer of nature, the artist chooses the best from it, offering the viewer perfect solutions: the most human-friendly combinations of colours, shapes and materials.

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# Joanna Rajkowska

(b. 1968) An artist who works with sculptures, photographs, drawings, objects and installations, often working in public spaces. She studied art history at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (1987–1992) and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow in the class of Professor Jerzy Nowosielski (1988–1993). Winner of the *Polityka* Passport for visual arts (2007). In 2010, Rajkowska received the Culture Foundation Grand Prize for her artistic achievements.

Rajkowska is a versatile artist who uses diverse media, adapting the language of artistic expression to the requirements of the particular message. She deals with important social topics, being interested in the relationship between man and the environment, between people, as well as aspects of corporeality and psyche, which feature prominently

in her art. She is the author of numerous highly personal, even exhibitionist works, such as *Satisfaction Guaranteed* (2000). At the 2012 Berlin Biennale, Rajkowska presented the controversial project *Born in Berlin*, where she showed a film from her pregnancy and the birth of her daughter, Róża, including her first contact with the world. Her most famous project is *Greetings from Jerusalem Avenue* (2002) – a palm tree at the Rondo de Gaulle public square in Warsaw, which has become one of the capital's hallmarks. This work and the *Oxygenator* (2007) took the form of social sculptures in the public space of Warsaw. *Rosa's Passage*, created in Lodz in 2014, is a work with a strong personal aspect related to the artist's daughter. The walls of the courtyard buildings were tightly covered with pieces of small, irregularly cut mirrors, the mosaic

illustrating the path that the girl went from not seeing to seeing; it was an attempt to show the vision of the world of Róża, who struggled with a very serious eye disease.

Rajkowska's multi-faceted public projects and social sculptures arouse emotions and activate city dwellers and the meanings contained in them are revealed only after their integration with the environment. These are open-ended works, conducive to the emergence of spontaneous relationships between people, closer contact, shared thoughts and impressions, i.e. everything that creates additional meanings and adds immense value to Rajkowska's work.

## Joanna Rajkowska *Satisfaction Guaranteed*

2000, installation; plastic, metal

In 2000, Joanna Rajkowska's solo exhibition, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, was held at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. It was an ambitious project, consisting of a series of products: six carbonated drinks in 0.33 litre cans, along with cosmetics: soap, perfume and vaseline. All bear a logotype on carefully designed packaging and were produced using modern manufacturing methods. Rajkowska's products were deceptively similar to actual consumer goods and were suitable for use: the drinks could be drunk, the soap was soapy, the perfumes fragrant. However, the composition of these products was highly unusual as the ingredients used to produce them came from the artist herself, her own body: DNA, brain matter, breast gland extract, vaginal mucus, cornea of the eye and endorphins are all found in the composition of the six different drinks. For the vaseline, Rajkowska's saliva

was used, the perfume contained her pheromones and the soap her fat. The drinks have refreshing properties, stimulate erotic sensations and relieve pain, but far more serious effects can be expected too: they soothe the feeling of lack and boredom, and even transform the genotype.

The project was based on the principle of artistic fiction. However, this is extremely realistic fiction. Rajkowska gathered everything that is most intimate and dearest: her childhood, loved ones, everyday life, fears and experiences and finally her body. She then converted it into a commodity, an instant-use consumer product. The Collection includes one module from the installation: a refrigerator with six types of canned beverages, topped with the *Satisfaction Guaranteed* project logotype.

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.









## *The Oxygenator*

2007, temporary public installation at Grzybowski Square in Warsaw

preserved object:  
the oxygen condenser

*The Oxygenator* is an artificial pond-like reservoir with an area of 140 square metres and a depth of 1 metre, located in downtown Warsaw. Its edges were covered with decorative greenery and colourful laminate seats, specially designed by Michał Kwasięborski, were placed around it. The pond was equipped with a special air ozonizing apparatus that made the water bubbly and a delicate mist floated over the surface of the pond. Rajkowska's intention was to integrate the local community, and that was perfectly achieved: the local residents accepted the square's transformation and willingly visited this enclave of clean air in the metropolis.

Rajkowska deliberately chose Grzybowski Square as the project site: it is located in the former



Warsaw Ghetto and is a regular stop-point for the numerous Jewish groups touring memorial sites in Poland. Nearby buildings include a synagogue, the Catholic Church of All Saints, Communist-era tower blocks and corporate skyscrapers. "The unresolved trauma and inability to cope with the tragedy of the Ghetto – the tragedy of the Jewish community – and our own Polish tragedy,

are all hovering over Grzybowski Square," Rajkowska stressed. In her opinion, public spaces are often an area of conflict that is not fully disclosed, but which existence is felt. In installing *The Oxygenator*, however, it was not her intention to rile the sides of the conflict or bring about a confrontation, quite the opposite: the picturesque pond was supposed

to make staying together in this space more pleasant.

*The Oxygenator* was dismantled in the autumn of 2007, due to the coming winter, but the city officials declared that it would return to Grzybowski Square in the spring. Ultimately, however, despite support from the local residents, Rajkowska's work was not included in a new master plan for the square.

# Robert Rumas

(b. 1966) A sculptor and creator of objects, installations, interventions and photographs; a curator, the author of exhibition and theatre-set designs. He studied at the Faculty of Painting of the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Gdansk from 1987 to 1991. As a curator and exhibition set designer, he has worked with the Wyspa Gallery in Gdansk, the State Art Gallery in Sopot, the Baltic Sea Cultural Center in Gdansk, the Łaźnia Centre for Contemporary Art in Gdansk, the National Museum in Warsaw and the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw.

Rumas is considered a representative of critical art. In his early works, he addressed the problem of the contemporary identity of Polish society, based on the traditional role of religion and the Catholic Church, as well as other elements that comprise the Polish national mythology, such as patriotism or ethnic themes. He was interested in

the problem of society as an object of manipulation in the context of concepts related to religion, nation and race. Rumas' later work is bound up closely with social codes, stereotypes and mass-culture fetishes that define the collective imagination. The junction of private and public space, where both realities overlap and interpenetrate, creating a living, constantly changing commons, has been the subject of many of his projects. From 1998, Rumas embarked on an urban-intervention project called *Urban Manoeuvres*, which he implemented in many cities in Poland and abroad (until 2004). In 2009, Rumas, together with Daniel Muzyczuk, organised the exhibition *Gone to Croatan*, which tackled the problem of social exclusion in an unconventional way. Another project, *Allocation* (2007), referred to the displacement of capital and labour in the context of a post-Communist country and specifically the Polish post state-farm village. In 2006, he made his first stage

design for the play *Don't Be Surprised When They Come to Burn Your House Down* by Paweł Demirski. Later, Rumas was intensely engaged in work for theatre, collaborating with directors such as Michał Zadara, Agnieszka Błońska and Marta Górnicka.

Robert Rumas

## Las Vegas: Roly-Poly

1996/2013, sculpture; epoxy resin, metal  
one of the four versions of Las Vegas Madonnas



Rumas started working on this piece in 1996, when he was still firmly rooted in the idiom of critical art. The trivialisation and ideologisation of the Catholic religion, its depletion of spiritual content, was a frequent theme of his art in the 1990s. In the series *Las Vegas Madonnas* (1994–1999), which consisted of various-sized figures of Madonna shedding tears in the form of coins, Rumas criticised the commercialisation of religion, the devotional market and the entanglement of faith in the political and economic machine.

This *Las Vegas Madonna* represents a popular statue of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, which is mainly venerated by throwing coins at her. The artist made an epoxy resin cast in the style of mass-produced figures from devotional shops and stylised it,

attaching coins to the surface. The Blessed Virgin cries tears made of coins embedded in transparent resin. Gold discs flow down her robes and face, decorating the Madonna standing on a golden, spherical base made of, among other things, penny coins. The work exposes the glitz and shallowness of the religious language of images, showing the degradation of a religious symbol. The title of the sculpture suggests that religious kitsch and entertainment kitsch go hand in hand and also, more broadly, that business and advertising thrive under the guise of religious worship. Finding fault with the Church's financial interests, Rumas draws, among other things, on the tradition of the Reformation, a conflict that has continued in the Christian world for centuries.

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Robert Rumas  
*Las Vegas: Roly-Poly*



# Ursula von Rydingsvärd

(b. 1942) A German-born American sculptor with Polish-Ukrainian roots. After spending her early childhood in refugee camps, she moved with her family to the United States in the early 1950s and has been based in New York since 1975. She studied art at the Universities of Miami and Berkeley, and in 1975 graduated from Columbia University in New York, where she received a Master of Arts degree. In 1991, she received an honorary doctorate from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.

Von Rydingsvärd is considered one of the most important contemporary sculptors. She is famous for her monumental sculptures made of precisely machined cedar beams. She became interested in cedar as a sculpting material at the end of her studies at Columbia University and has been consistently working with it ever since. She also works with bronze and polyurethane resins. Abstract in form, von Rydingsvärd's sculptures draw inspiration from nature, from non-European cultures (Africa, Australia, Oceania) as well as from traditional folk art

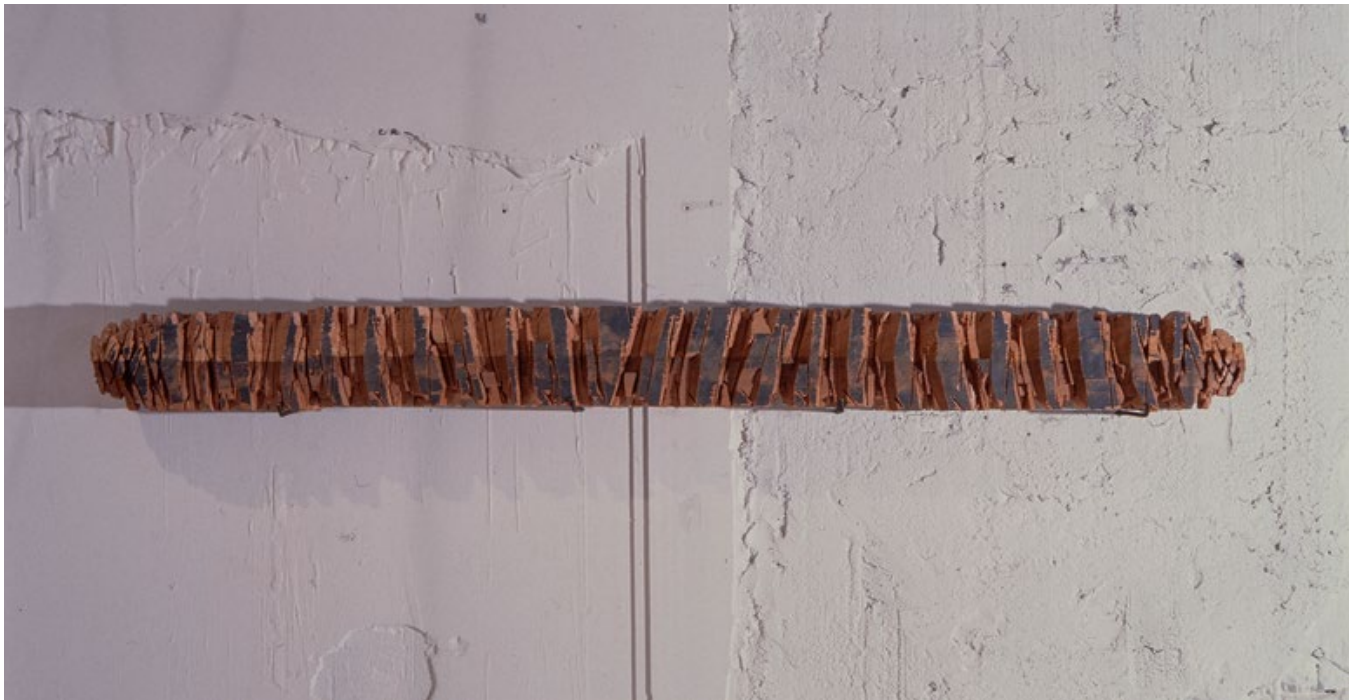
(especially the southern-Polish mountain region of Podhale, where the artist's family came from). Her art is objective and highly universal, although many of her works are based on memories and associations related to the country and culture of her ancestors. This is evidenced by the Polish titles of many of her works: *Urszulka*, *Oj dana*, *oj dana*, *Maglownica*, *Elegantka*, *Zakopane*, *Umarleś*. In the 1990s, the artist created several iconic works, such as *Ene Due Rabe* and *Land Rollers* at the Storm King Art Centre and *Ślepa Gienia* at the Denver Art Museum. Some of them bring to mind natural creations: fossils, rocks, canyons, sea waves, e.g. *Skip to My Lou* (1996), *Ogromna* (2009), *Ocean Voices* (2011–2012) and *Scientia* (2016).

Ursula von Rydingsvärd

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# *Untitled*

1992, sculpture; cedar wood, graphite



Ursula von Rydingsvärd  
***Pin Striped Rollers***

1992, sculpture; cedar wood, graphite



Both works on view at the Open Storage – *Untitled* and *Pin Striped Rollers* – come from Ursula von Rydingsvärd's solo exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art (1992–1993). They were produced by the artist on site in Warsaw.

Von Rydingsvärd does not prepare any models or sketches for planned projects, instead working directly with the material, guided by her intuition. With large objects, she makes many decisions already during processing, drawing lines with a pencil directly on the wood. Each cedar beam contains a record of hand scoring, cutting and gouging. One by one, the beams

are added and modified – chopped, sanded and chiselled. She uses wood that has previously been machine-cut into four-by-four-inch pieces, which she glues and assembles, multiplying the modular structure of the object. Finally, she covers the surface of the sculpture with a graphite patina. The sculpting process is very important to von Rydingsvärd; she compares it to composing jazz music. In the case of monumental objects, the process sometimes lasts for months and its record is highly significant in the way her sculptures are received.

# Wilhelm Sasnal

(b. 1972) A painter and illustrator, the author of comics, posters, music videos, structural films, “amateur” 8 mm tape recordings and feature films. One of the founders of the Ładnie Group (1996–2001), co-editor of the *Famous Magazine on Tuesday* [*Słynne Pismo we Wtorek*]. Sasnal studied architecture at the Krakow University of Technology (1992–1994), then painting at the Academy of Fine Arts there (1994–1999). Winner of many prestigious awards, including the Grand Prix of the Bielska Jesień Painting Biennale (1999), the Pegaz Award (2003) and the Vincent Award (2006). In 2008, *Krytyka Polityczna* published a monographic book devoted to the artist (*Sasnal. Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej*).

Wilhelm Sasnal is recognised by critics as the leading Polish painter of his generation. His early work from the period of the Ładnie Group featured themes transferred to canvas directly from the areas of banal everydayness, TV and computer screens, glossy magazines and advertising leaflets. Sasnal produced a kind of chronicle

of the contemporary; painting objects that were immediately recognisable due to their status and gained the rank of signs of the times. He turned everything that interested him into painting: the effects of mass media on society, the private lives of people in Poland, the reception of historical events and the functioning of narratives about the cultural past. He was fascinated by the study of the limits and the possibilities of representation, processes of seeing and other modes of perception; he himself said that he was a realist painter.

Sasnal often embraces a synthetic style, reducing the painted shapes to a simple sign. His painting is modern, elegant and formally sophisticated; these are film-like freeze-frames, contextless narrative fragments that, taken together, would form the basis for an epic story about our times. A single detail or an important historical event can serve as a pretext for making a picture. Sasnal's work is discursive, drawing on the achievements of pop art, photorealism, abstract art, minimal art, gesture painting and even surrealism. He has consistently tackled difficult topics related to Polish history and Polish national identity (Cardinal Wyszyński, President Narutowicz, WWII partisans, Catholicism), Holocaust trauma (the series *Maus* and *Shoah*), politics and collective memory (*Borowski*, mural at the Warsaw Uprising Museum). Alongside his painting, Sasnal makes films that were long

considered marginal to his oeuvre. Together with his wife, Anka Sasnal, he has directed several full-length films, such as *It Looks Pretty from a Distance* (2011), *Parasite* (2013), or *The Sun, the Sun Blinded Me* (2016). Sasnal's position in the art world has become so significant that his works have entered the canon of new European painting. In 2006, the renowned art magazine *Flash Art* published a ranking of the 100 most promising young artists from around the world, in which Wilhelm Sasnal took first place.



Wilhelm Sasnal  
*Untitled (Concert)*

2001, oil on canvas



This painting dates from the Ładnie Group period when Sasnal did simple, quick pictures painted from photographs, often depicting scenes from his own and his friends' life. The music show has been painted flat, in silhouette; the aesthetics of the canvas make it almost poster-like and the tonal range is limited to yellow and black, with just a touch of white. The lower part of the canvas is dark and heavy, the silhouettes of the people gathered at the concert shown from the back and merging with each other. The stage is invisible, immersed in a yellow colour, as if in strong spotlights. Two figures stand out in the foreground, rendered in greater detail than the rest. On the left, a girl with her back uncovered bathed in yellow light, on the right, a boy with his neck marked with yellow paint. This is possibly the artist with someone close to him.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art,  
deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Wilhelm Sasnal

## *Untitled*

2000, oil on canvas

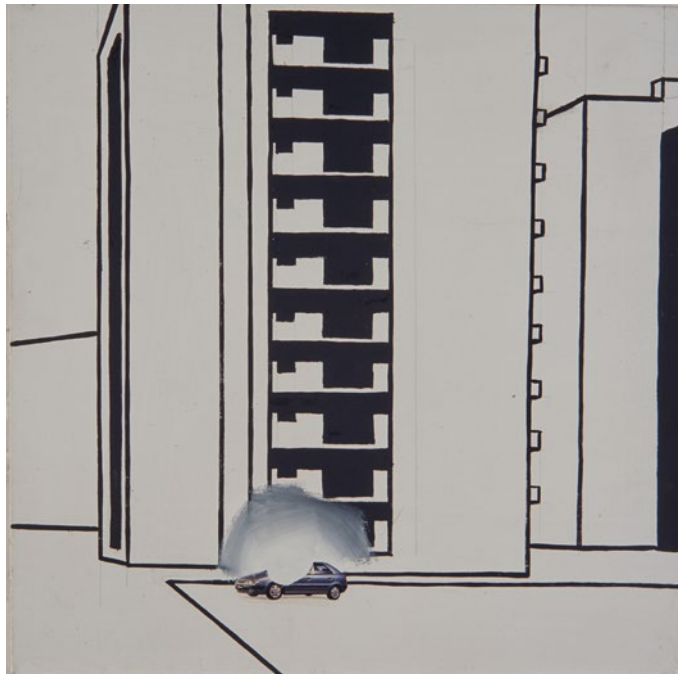
This piece is part of a series of works exploring the theme of disasters and accidents, depicting car crashes and bomb attacks. Almost the entire canvas is filled with geometric forms of apartment blocks, painted linearly with black paint. The architecture, although highly simplified, is associated with a typical block of flats. No individual features, distinguishing inscriptions or signs. The composition is austere, the technique drawing-like. The painting gesture was limited to a minimum. In the foreground, in front of a block of flats with plastic balconies, there is a blue car, from which

billows of grey-blue smoke rise. It is the only patch of colour in the painting, giving it dynamism.

Sasnal draws on the vast universe of images that bombard everyone from everywhere in the era of the digital revolution. In his works, the viewer finds quotes, echoes, after-images of fragments of reality processed by the media, the common and the sublime. He often works based on materials depicting an already processed reality: photographs, films, press reproductions and internet files.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw



# Jadwiga Sawicka

(b. 1959) A visual artist; her work is most firmly rooted in painting, but she also makes installations, sculptures, objects, photographs (in collaboration with Marek Horwat) and public artworks. From 1979 to 1984, Sawicka studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow in the Faculty of Painting, graduating in the class of Professor Jerzy Nowosielski. She was awarded the Jan Cybis Prize (2013) and the Katarzyna Kobro Award (2015).

Sawicka once described what she does as a “search for form to comment on emotions.” Painted or photographed clothes – forms for the human body – were such a form for her. In 1994–1995, she created small acrylic paintings on paper, depicting items of clothing (skirts, trousers, slippers). In the mid-1990s, she made installations in which she combined various kinds of matter: meat, flowers, black foil. Due to the impermanence of the works, she began

to photograph them and exhibit them as photographs. At that time, she also produced plasticine sculptures depicting clothing items. From 1997, a new way of imaging appeared in Sawicka’s work: objects and texts began to appear separately. There are canvases depicting individual pieces of clothing on pastel backgrounds and parallel paintings in which the artist painted, letter by letter and on similar backgrounds, sensational messages quoted from newspapers (*He’s Killing Again; The Doctor’s Trial; Thief, Thief*). In the “written” paintings, words are taken out of context, poorly divided, without diacritical marks, sometimes unexpectedly cut off, which increases the viewer’s anxiety and disorientation. In the late 1990s, Sawicka began making large-format prints with black letters on a fleshy pink background. The characteristic pink is most often associated with femininity, but also with the body and corporeality, which the artist introduces in her works very discreetly,

symbolically. One of those, *Converting, Taming, Training* [*Nawracanie, oswajanie, tresowanie*], appeared in 1998 on billboards in several Polish cities as part of the AMS Outdoor Gallery project. The black capitals on a pale pink background, used during this period of her work, became a characteristic feature of many of Sawicka’s works, not only paintings. The artist used this motif, placing it on boxes, packaging, pencils, stickers, tapes, and loosely hanging streamers illuminated with light hoses or light bulbs. In recent years, self-referential themes have appeared in Sawicka’s art: she makes works about painterly matter, designs art-book covers and exercise books for painters, as well as producing entire libraries of books, such as on art or on food. Some of these libraries are highly emotional, their titles featuring words like “tears,” “hallucinations of love,” or “broken heart.”

## Bra

1999, sculpture; plasticine

Sculptures made from colourful plasticine (a dark-pink bra, a pair of black pants and a blue blouse) are part of a series of works depicting elements of clothing, produced by Sawicka in the years 1997–1999. In the mid-1990s, Sawicka took up the subject of the body. Not directly, but through clothes, these special body covers. The artist represented clothes in various media: plasticine sculpture, painting and photography. Plasticine has a certain lack of limitations inscribed in its characteristics. While kneading, in a few minutes you can freely change the shape you are working on. It is also a very sensual material, susceptible to transformations, subject to the work of the artist's hands, with which she meticulously models the creases left by the absent body. Made of plasticine and deprived of the context of the person who would wear them, the clothes remain unowned and become abstracted symbols, costumes, carriers of coded meanings, free from literalness and realistic banality.



Jadwiga Sawicka

## *Blue Blouse*

1999, sculpture; plasticine



## *Trousers*

1999, sculpture; plasticine



# Skirt

1999, oil on canvas



Sawicka also painted images of clothing: skirts, jackets, trousers, First Communion dresses and shoes. The clothes in her canvases are shown centrally on monochromatic backgrounds, emphasised like portrait subjects. Most of them look used, some are clearly creased or crumpled. The painted clothes are empty, devoid of a human being and bring to mind the question of the characters who may have worn them, although their identity has not been revealed anywhere. Sawicka tried to extract clothes from everyday life, from the function and context assigned to them, from personal history. She showed them in an abstract way, as forms that were once filled with content, but have been deprived of it. Sawicka believes that clothing can be treated as a means of social pressure, as it is present at the junction of what is personal and what functions in public. It covers, but also decorates, idealises the image. It is an expression of individual taste, but it also signals one's property status, being a major cultural and social code.

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The acquisition of the Jadwiga Sawicka's works: *Bra*, *Blue Blouse*, *Trousers* and *Skirt* for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.

# Janek Simon

(b. 1977) A multimedia artist and the creator of interactive installations, videos, objects and performances; a cultural activist. He studied psychology and sociology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (1996–2001). Winner of the Deutsche Bank Foundation Award – Views (2007). From 2008 through 2012, Simon ran the non-commercial art space Goldex Poldex in Krakow.

In his practice, Simon combines the ideas of conceptual art with modern technologies, a sense of humour and an anti-globalist worldview. He is an avid traveller, carrying out projects in Madagascar, South India and Africa. He calls this work “anthropogeography” and is most interested in observing culture in its global aspect through the prism of social research, being informed by

postcolonial theories, the history of science and political ideas and the practice and ethics of DIY culture. Simon is an artist who does most of his work on his own, learning the necessary skills each time. Simon himself has constructed 3D printers with which he prints his sculptures and writes software for his projects.

Simon made his debut in 2002 at the Novart.pl festival in Krakow with the work *Carpet Invaders*, a computer game. A year later, he showed *Departure*, a film in which the towers of Krakow’s churches fly up into the sky like rockets. As part of the *Polish Year in Madagascar* project (2006), he tackled the problem of cultural colonialism. In 2007, in an exhibition accompanying the Views competition, Simon showed, among other works, *Krakow Breads* – loaves of

bread attached to small insect-like robots that crawled around the gallery. In 2012, he invited a group of Polish artists to organise an exhibition in a utopian community in southern India. The film *Auropol*, which he later made, tells the story of their stay in the commune of Auroville. In 2013, he initiated a project to produce a remake of Andrzej Wajda’s legendary *Ashes and Diamonds* in Nigerian Nollywood. Since 2016, he has been working on the series *Polyethnic*, where he uses a 3D printer to render hybrid figurines combining ethnic motifs from various cultures of Asia, Africa, South America and Europe – the artist’s fantasies about new global folklore.

Janek Simon

## *Chinese Calculator / Little House*

2006/2018, installation; altered calculator, wooden structure



This work was inspired by a real event. In 2000, Simon went to China on the Trans-Siberian Railway. In Manzhouli, near the Russian border, he exchanged money at an open-air market; as it turned out later, he fell victim to a scam – the money-changers used a fixed calculator that tipped the calculations in their favour. Simon recreated this cheesy Chinese calculator a few years later in order to build a model of the house where he spent his childhood holidays, according to its computations.

A mountain cottage – a motif that lends the work an autobiographical aspect – has been represented in the form of a deformed mock-up. Reconstructed using the scam calculator, the model has a solidly curved body with distorted structural joints; embracing the “true” results from the device – Simon built a false house. The work can also be interpreted more broadly as a metaphor for memories that, after many years and no longer closely adhering to events and facts, become their distorted version.



# Slavs & Tatars

An art collective founded in 2006 by Tel Aviv-based Polish artist Katarzyna Korczak and Paris-based Iranian American Payam Sharifi. They are interested in semantic and cultural links between the East and West in Eurasia, i.e. the region “east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China.” The group, which over the years has been joined by other international artists, implements its projects using a variety of media and combining various disciplines, from sculptures to performative lectures, from installations to publications. Particularly noteworthy in those is a broad range of cultural messages concerning a mutual sphere of influence between Slavs and the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Slavs & Tatars’ artistic and discursive projects explore faith, religion and cross-cultural understanding. In books, exhibitions and performances, they reflect on mentalities, myths and traditions through academic research, polemic and a simple sense of humour. Each project is

accompanied by a publication that complements the installations and objects, many of which are created using traditional craft and artistic techniques.

Slavs & Tatars began as a “book club”, sharing rare publications on anthropology and linguistics with a growing group of friends. Over the past five years, they worked mainly on two projects dealing, respectively, with the complexity of the Caucasus area (*Kidnapping Mountains, Hymns of No Resistance*) and the unexpected common heritage of Iran and Poland, i.e. the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the fall of Communism in 1989 (*Friendship of Nations: Polish Shi’ite Showbiz, 79.89.09, A Monobrow Manifesto*). Currently, the collective is working on its third series, *The Faculty of Substitution*, about mystical protest and the revolutionary role of sanctity and syncretism.

## Slavs & Tatars

# *Kitab Kebab* (Kapuściński–Orbeliani)

2012, installation; books, kebab spit

In the Turkish language, the word *kebab* means meat roasted on a spit; it can be mutton or beef, but definitely not pork. In Poland, kebab has become a very popular fast food, even more so than the hamburger. Despite its origin, it is liked and accepted even by the most xenophobic and anti-refugee strata of Polish society. The objects from the *Kitab Kebab* series are sets of specially selected books, impaled on a skewer used to prepare kebabs. This treatment of books may suggest that they are perceived as a special kind of food and, like food, should be properly served and then digested. Acquiring knowledge is not limited to analytical intellectual work, it also requires the right approach, emotional attitude and time, i.e. digestion.

The books selected for installation are not a random set. In this case, these are the books of Ryszard Kapuściński, a well-known Polish reporter who described postcolonial transformations in Asia, Africa and South America, as well as the disintegration of the Soviet Union, along with the publications of Sulchan-Saba Orbeliani, a Georgian poet and traveller who lived at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, described his travels through Persia and Western Europe and is considered one of the fathers of modern Georgian language. In the foreground is Kapuściński's book *The Kyrgyz Dismounts*, one of his early works, in which he presents cultural and civilisational changes in the Soviet Union in Central Asia. These are areas where Western influences, mediated by the Russians, mingle with Islamic and Turkish ones, as well as those of the indigenous cultures, which is a topic of particular interest to Slavs & Tatars.



The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.

# Mikołaj Smoczyński

↑ Artists list 179

(1955–2009) A painter, photographer, draughtsman, performer and creator of objects and installations. He studied at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Lodz (1974–1975) and in the Institute of Artistic Education at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (1975–1979). After graduation, he completed an academic internship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the class of Professor Ryszard Winiarski. From 1979, almost until his death, he worked as an educator in the Faculty of Arts of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin.

Smoczyński is renowned for his site-specific installations and black-and-white creative photography, evoking associations with abstract painting. In his works, he focused on the specific nature of the medium and on considerations related to place and space. The essence of his art lies in the individual experience captured in relation to reality in the

process of transformation. Smoczyński took up installation as a consequence of painting, which had become spatial. The artist decided to record these changing states of space, for which photographic documentation was best suited. For some time he made installations in the studio that were meant only for the camera (*Secret Performance*, 1983–1993). Smoczyński's first monumental installation was made in 1987 (*Transfer*). These types of projects were created in the process of exploring space and the reality of the place determined the final result. In 1990, Smoczyński created his first site-specific work from the series *Pictures*. The artist created them directly on the walls, using a similar technique each time: he glued a blank canvas to the wall, then tore it off along with the layers of what was underneath and hung it in the gallery like giant paintings, with the "archaeological" side facing out. From 1992, he also made

installations in which he became a constructor of spaces, as he no longer wanted to transform what was already there, but rather to create new constructions. The Suprema greenboard, an actual building material, served as the medium. Its colour and texture are susceptible to the process of solidifying light within the structure, and light is a fundamental factor in all of Smoczyński's works. He was able, unlike any other artist, to feel the essence of the place where he installed his works, its character. His interventions emphasised its architectural logic or brought out nuances, the poetics of a particular space. This was also the case with *Milestones. Project for Cistern*, made in 2006 at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art.

## Mikołaj Smoczyński *Untitled*

1991/1992, installation; concrete

From the early 1990s, Mikołaj Smoczyński used handmade concrete elements of geometric shapes in his installations. Their forms and sizes were dictated by the specific nature of the installation each time. They affected the colour, mass and the simplicity of the shape and material, creating the impression of elements coming from some unfinished building. In 1993, Smoczyński staged one of his largest presentations at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. The exhibition opened with an elongated hall in the form of a passage, with a frieze of concrete coffers attached to the walls on both sides. At that time, the artist used two types of concrete objects: full tiles and their negatives, i.e. "drawers." The installation consists of seventeen similar forms. In the original arrangement, all the tiles except one were

placed one behind the other against the wall, on which, on the vertical axis of the collected tiles, another similar object hung alone, at a height of 180 cm. Smoczyński's objects and installations have their own autonomous persuasiveness and it is difficult to describe them in terms of meaning. They are strongly related to the architecture of the place, but when looking at them, it is impossible to forget that the artist trained as a painter. The smudges and stains on the wall, painted by Smoczyński with paint that was created after mixing a small amount of cement with water, play an important role in this work.



Mikołaj Smoczyński

## Change of Ratione Loci (*Hanger Paintings*)

2006, object; mixed media, plywood, wood



Smoczyński's work was always characterised by intellectual discipline and informed by the conceptual practices of the 1970s. This trait is also present in his late works – abstract compositions and installations that incorporated objects removed from

their functionality, such as burnt light bulbs, lemons splashed with lime or wooden hangers for clothes. At the end of his life, Smoczyński once again returned to painting, but this time he constructed the picture as an object, creating assemblage compositions in

shallow rectangular plywood boxes. Some of them he filled with dark charcoal drawings, in others he created abstract, mainly circular compositions from wooden hangers mounted in the middle.

In the *Hanger Painting* from the Collection, where there are two circles of slightly different sizes next to each other, the subtle curvature of the hangers is inscribed with straight lines here and there, creating unfinished polygon figures. In two places, the hangers form a more piled mass and under the upper edge on the right side, the artist fixed a narrow spatula vertically. Smoczyński also arranged old hangers directly on the walls of the gallery in the form of undulating arrangements. Smoczyński's *Hanger Paintings* were created on plywood from the early 2000s, similarly to charcoal and pencil drawings on wooden boards. The series created in these two media also include *Stigmatic Drawings* (2008) and *Tablets* (2008), made in charcoal and pencil on plywood.

# Marek Sobczyk

↑ Artists list 182

(b. 1955) A painter, graphic designer, the author of objects, theoretical and literary texts; an educator. From 1975 to 1980, he studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the class of Professor Stefan Gierowski. He was a member of the collective Gruppa (1982–1992) and until 1988 published theoretical texts in their art magazine, *Oj dobrze już*. From 1990 to 2004, he worked in a partnership with Piotr Młodożeniec, the artistic group called Zafryki. From 1991 through 1996, together with Jarosław Modzelewski, he ran a private School of Art in Warsaw. Sobczyk is a laureate of the Jan Cybis Award for 2012.

In his painting, Sobczyk says that he absorbs “the conceptual and semantic potential of conceptual art”; he was also interested in a “certain potential of genetics,” namely “combining and crossbreeding elements that are not necessarily generically compatible and seeing where it leads.”

There is a lot of philosophising in his mature painting, important are the substantive assumptions regarding the subject matter of the paintings, which the artist often composes as small theoretical treatises. With his art, he creates reflex points, a field for reflection, formulating issues to be processed in painting. Sobczyk made his debut on the wave of the Neue Wilde generation and Expressionism, which reigned supreme in 1980s’ painting. However, his tendency to philosophise and his erudition made him the most discursive painter of all the Gruppa members. His early works are dominated by figural compositions with rich colours and painterly texture. The paintings are characterised by the accumulation of various topics, references and symbols concerning the changing reality (religious, social and political issues). From the 1990s, they began to feature decorations and ornaments; sometimes Sobczyk even refreshed his old works with

decorative motifs. Between 1994 and 1998, Sobczyk and Jarosław Modzelewski jointly painted two series of pictures (they were exhibited at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1998).

Marek Sobczyk’s painting is a monumental undertaking (he has been working on a project called *Brain Research in Poland* since 1979). In his work, he explores the ontology, axiology, aesthetics and metaphysics of art. He is sometimes a critical, ironic and perverse artist, producing hypothetical paintings, complex and multi-layered, but at the same time concrete and universal. He implements many projects at the same time: *Sexreligionpolitics* (since 1999), *Table: What? Who? – With What? With Whom?* (since 1998), *Discourse Monuments* (since 2008), *Around the Word “Atheism”* (since 2009), and since 2012, he has been working on the film project *Wisława* (with Mateusz Falkowski).

Marek Sobczyk

## *The Most Valuable Is Focused Around the Individual*

1988, oil on canvas



Sobczyk's paintings are puns, extensive in terms of content and meaning, in which the artist combines many threads, associations and subtexts. They represent what is characteristic of his works – mysterious content and ambiguous symbolism, often seasoned with a peculiar sense of humour. His early paintings were created as a commentary on the current socio-political situation, but home, family and private matters were also an inspiration. Asked to describe the mental structure on which the painting from the Collection was based, Sobczyk drew attention to a specific story, as well as to more universal reflections. Festive atmosphere, the

Christmas tree, a dog with cataracts seeking a home, who, taken from an ad at the child's request, defecated under the tree. The tree, vegetation, layers or levels and meanings that stack on top of each other. A tree structure resembling a nervous system, a spinal column from which the branches of nerves depart. The painting being large, more than two metres high, the hieratic composition takes on monumental features. It is painted in a flat manner, with the Christmas tree and the dog suspended on a neutral, grey-blue background.

(b. 1969) A sculptor and performer who also makes videos. After graduating from the Antoni Kenar High School of Fine Arts in Zakopane, he went on to study at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1988–1993). In 2019, Stańczak represented Poland at the Venice Art Biennale.

Stańczak studied in the class of Professor Grzegorz Kowalski, the famous Kowalnia, together with Paweł Althamer, Katarzyna Kozyra and Artur Żmijewski. In the 1990s, Kowalnia students were behind one of the most interesting artistic phenomena in Polish art, known as critical art. While still in Zakopane, Stańczak met Władysław Hasior, who worked with ordinary, easily available objects of great expressive power. In a solo exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1996, Stańczak showed, among other things, selected graduation-project works and

other sculptures made of transformed everyday objects. In the 1990s, he turned a kettle (*Misquic*, 1992) and a bathtub (*Mixquic*, 1994) inside out and scraped off the top layer of a nightstand (*From Second to Third*, 1992) and a chair (1993) with a chisel. A little later, Stańczak treated a couch (1995) and a bookcase (1996) in a similar way. The sculptural chisel became something like a scalpel in his hands, with which he peeled off the outer coating of objects, revealing their constructions. Interpretations of works from this series focused on the metaphysical aspect of the sculptural gesture, allowing us to penetrate the essence of things and discover their internal structure.

In 1996, Stańczak disappeared from the art world for some time. However, he did not stop working creatively: he drew, kept notes and made sketches. In 2013, he met Paweł Althamer, who invited him to create a new

piece for the Bródno Sculpture Park – the figure of an angel. Stańczak's *Guardian Angel* is three metres high and stands on a tall plinth. It is a traditional sculpture, made of wood and covered with gilded metal. In 2019, Stańczak represented Poland at the Venice Art Biennale with the work *Flight*. The show's only element was the bulk of a 15-metre private aeroplane turned inside out. The inverted aircraft was positioned in such a way that the cockpit and passenger seats could be seen from the outside, while the wings of the machine were rolled up inside.



## Roman Stańczak

# Misquic

1992, sculpture; aluminium, wax

The work comes from the individual exhibition *Sixty Three Kilograms* presented at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1996. In 1992, while still a student at Kowalnia, Stańczak made a sculpture by cutting and then turning an ordinary aluminium kettle inside out. Turning ordinary everyday objects inside out was Stańczak's principal artistic idea and practice at that time. It was an effective analytical tool and triggered complex existential, poetic and even metaphysical narratives. Inversion brought to mind a metaphor of death, spirituality and going to the other side. As the artist himself said: "This is the idea of a *mixquic*, a reversal, like in the Mexican city of Mixquic, where on the Day of the Dead people bring food and drink to the graves and dance all night. However, the most important thing is the very matter of the objects.

I know a lot more about it now than I did then. I'm looking for the spirit in it, but it is an action full of powerlessness – the spirit is elusive, it keeps slipping away. In this sense, inverting is about hope."

Grzegorz Kowalski reads this work from a completely different perspective, seeing in it a symbol of the fading world of real socialism with its widespread poverty and small communities. The kettle, so common and indispensable in those days, was turned inside out and became useless. With this strong gesture of inversion, Stańczak points to the arrival of new times. An emerging affinity between Stańczak's idea of "degraded sculptures" and Tadeusz Kantor's notion of "reality of the lowest rank" offers an interesting interpretative trope too.

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The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.



# Henryk Stażewski

(1894–1988) A painter and art theoretician, a pioneer of avant-garde art; the creator of theatre-set designs, interior designs, posters and ceramics. He studied at the School of Fine Arts in Warsaw from 1913 to 1920, under the tutelage of Professor Stanisław Lentz. He co-founded the “Blok” Group of Cubists, Constructivists and Suprematists, as well as the collectives Praesens and a.r. From 1924, he often visited Paris, where he was active in the circles of the international groups Cercle et Carré and Abstraction-Création. Stażewski organised Kazimir Malevich’s first exhibition outside of Russia (at the Polonia Hotel in Warsaw, 1927). Together with Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński, he co-founded an international collection of contemporary art, which became the nucleus of the Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz (1931). After the war, he was associated with the milieu of the Krzywe Koło gallery in Warsaw and was one of the founders of the Foksal Gallery (1965). At the Venice Biennale in 1962, he exhibited some 30 metal reliefs, for which he received an honourable

mention. In 1972, Stażewski won the Gottfried von Herder Prize, awarded by the University of Vienna.

Stażewski was the most eminent and consistent representative of geometric abstraction in Polish art. He had great authority and brought together successive generations of artists around him. Stażewski’s work from the interwar period shows strong links with constructivism and neo-plasticism. After the war, he continued his investigations into geometric abstraction, creating formally diverse works. He strove for art that was completely objective, universal and subject to discipline. He crossed the boundaries of traditionally defined painting, enriching it with texture and three-dimensional elements. From the late 1960s, he mainly created reliefs. With time, Stażewski softened his rigorous beliefs and one can find a note of lyricism in the very sophisticated tonal palette of compositions from the later years of his life.

Henryk Stażewski  
**Relief**

1973, acrylics, wood



In the second half of the 1950s, relief appeared in Stażewski's work and became his main form of expression for almost twenty years. At first, the artist created reliefs as monochrome, white or with copper elements. In the 1960s, he started covering them with a "printing raster," which activated their surfaces through optical vibration. In the late 1960s, vivid colours appeared in Stażewski's reliefs. Contrasting combinations of strong colours produce effects similar to those achieved in Op-Art.

The reliefs were most often built on a square base, on which the artist placed compositions of smaller squares. The painted

reliefs from the 1970s were energised by the disruption of their geometrical structure and the sudden negation of the principle of a regular compositional rhythm. The relief from the Collection belongs to the category of Op-Art illusion. The use of illusion in Stażewski's work is connected with the issue of the perception of vision and the impact of colours on the sense of sight. The artist contrasts here the real space, i.e. a fragment of the relief physically placed in front of the background, with a fictitious space, the illusion of depth appearing as a result of the juxtaposition of cool and warm colours.

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Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw

# Haim Steinbach

(b. 1944) Active in the areas of objects, installations and photographs. Born in Israel, he has been based in New York since 1957. Steinbach studied at the Pratt Institute and then at the Yale School of Art (graduating in 1973). His work has been presented at Documenta 9 and the Sydney Art Biennale in 1992, the Venice Biennale in 1993 and 1997, the Lyon Art Biennale in 2000 and La Triennale in Paris in 2012.

For more than four decades, Steinbach has been exploring the psychological, aesthetic, cultural and ritual aspects of collecting and arranging ready-made objects. These objects come from various social and cultural contexts and are arranged in a way analogous to the arrangement of words in a poem or musical notes in a score. In his work, Steinbach draws on the concept of display as a form emphasising the importance of objects and raising the awareness of the presentation. At Documenta 9,

he exhibited a set of items belonging to Jan Hoet, the director of Documenta. The practice of appropriating ready-made objects made many critics point to the links between Steinbach's work and Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades. Steinbach's art, however, is not limited to the selection and presentation of objects, but also explores contemporary consumer culture and people's psychological attachment to things. His earlier installations consisted of handmade shelves and items borrowed from friends or found at flea markets. In the 1980s, the artist photographed many objects in the homes of relatives and friends and years later exhibited them in the form of black and white paintings. In the same decade, Steinbach introduced a standardised wedge-shaped shelf, made of plywood and finished with coloured laminate, into his installations; he also began displaying items bought in stores. From the 1990s, Steinbach introduced wardrobes, containers and

drawers to his work, as well as large-scale installations, using scaffolding and steel shelves, among other things.

"We communicate through objects as much as through language," says the artist. "We see objects, we feel emotions about them and we experience those emotions when we touch them." Steinbach's project progresses towards exploring collecting as a psychological state of mind.

***Untitled (three  
corner cabinets  
with objects for  
a six sided room)***

1992, installation; mixed media,  
wood, porcelain, plastic

**Cabinet A**

mannequin torso, cups  
with breasts and penises

**Cabinet B**

Captain Hook's prosthesis,  
hall jugs

**Cabinet C**

chamber pot



Haim Steinbach

*Untitled (three corner cabinets with objects for a six sided room)*



Steinbach's work comes from the group exhibition *Translation* and was produced with the intention of placing it in the tower of the Ujazdowski Castle. It consisted of three simple cabinets, including two without doors, plus an assortment of ready-made items selected by the artist. The cabinets were placed in the corners between the windows. The objects intended for them were sent by the artist from the United States.



The functions of the objects related to the basic methods of storing, consuming and secreting fluids. The only item Steinbach ordered in Poland was a traditional chamber pot. For the cabinets, the artist provided detailed sketches and descriptions for carpenters, mentioning that "the style and manner of the work should stem from local traditions of artistic and serial carpentry. The cabinet should be made of standard, smooth pine



boards, 2 cm thick." In the show's catalogue, curator Kim Levin mentions two misunderstandings while working on Steinbach's installation: an exchange of faxes about the complex shapes, dimensions and arrangement of the cabinets, which were to be made according to the artist's instructions, failed to produce the desired end result; there was also the case of the wrongly chosen chamber pot. The artist asked for a traditional

chamber pot and not a gilded Art Deco object. Kim Levin incorporated these misunderstandings into the exhibition's underlying idea, namely that of translation.

Steinbach's installation had a personal touch: it was inspired by his childhood fantasies about Poland, shaped by his grandfathers' stories about the country. Steinbach often referred to the structures he built for the objects presented at exhibitions as "frame devices." The prototype wedge-shaped shelf, which he designed as a universal way to display his work, is a structure that uses a geometric arrangement based on three angles – 90, 50 and 40 degrees – of a triangle. The shelf is a device because it functions like a spirit level or a musical instrument and can be enlarged or reduced in proportion to the three angles of its cross-section and in relation to the objects on it.

(b. 1952) A painter, draughtsman, educator, exhibition designer and graphic designer. He studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1973–1978), graduating in the class of Professor Tadeusz Dominik. From 1984 through 1992, Susid ran the young-art gallery called Galeria Młodych. He won the Jan Cybis Prize in 2011.

Susid has developed his own visual-verbal language, through which he formulates a commentary on reality. The essence of his painting is a short text combined with a pared-down artistic form: material that the artist organises into a message disciplined by the geometry of the canvas frame. Susid's image-words punctuate our habits and vices with accuracy and distance, playing a brilliant game with contexts and presenting the viewer with sometimes blunt and ironic, sometimes poetic and philosophical reflections. Susid's paintings work like posters, where words are used not only to convey specific content,

but also act as an artistic sign. The artist very consciously plays out the mutual relations between word and form on the image plane, which builds the essential content of his paintings.

Susid made his debut in the early 1980s, when the wave of New Expression flowed through painting and the Neue Wilde came to the fore. At that time, he painted on large sheets of paper, applying paint with a wide brush, but also using charcoal, pencil and crayons. Already at that time, his paintings incorporated stencilled texts, commenting on the depicted scenes and images. In the mid-1980s, the expressive form slowly began to disappear from Susid's paintings and a language of geometry, informed by the constructivist and avant-garde tradition (Malevich, Strzemiński), took over. What remained, however, were the texts – composed between abstract forms and universally recognisable signs or symbols, more laconic now, corresponding to the conciseness of the simple artistic form and

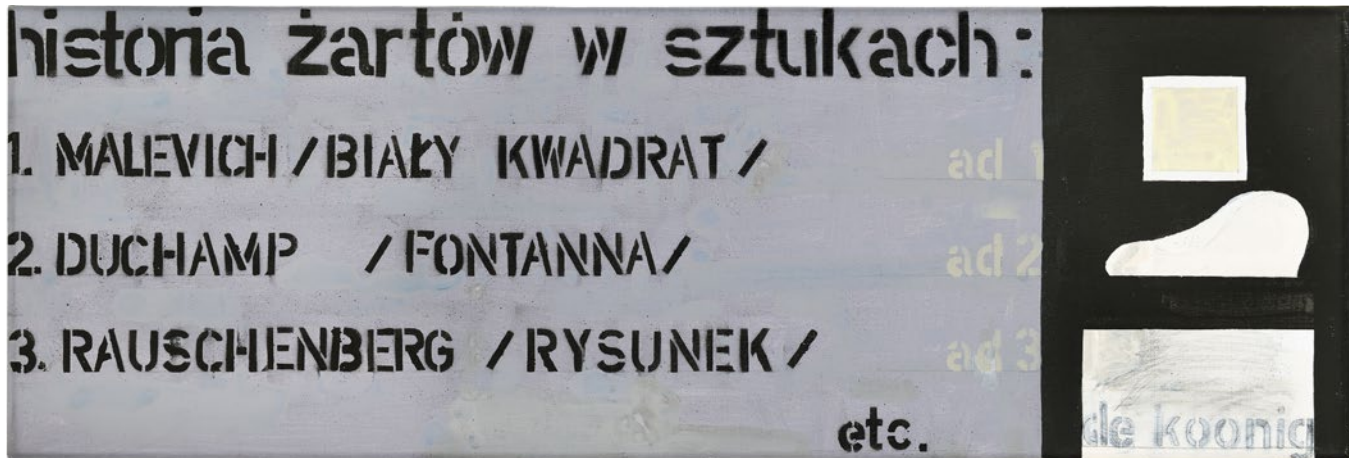
constituting an intelligent commentary on current reality.

Around the year 2000, he started making “papering” works, which is how he refers to paintings in which he repeats selected words many times. They have a chance to resonate well, become established and the recipient can reflect on their meaning, topicality and truth. This preservation is combined with a simplification of form, the paintings showing planes of colour, colourful stripes. In 2010, inspired by a quote from the diary of the dancer and choreographer, Vaslav Nijinsky, “I don't know why, but aeroplanes destroy birds,” Susid made his first “colour alphabets.” For the paintings in this series, he selects different colour sets, in which each letter of the alphabet has its own colour or shade. The colour code is explained on the side or at the bottom of the painting.

Paweł Susid

*Untitled (History of Jokes in Art)*

2000, acrylics on canvas



The work points to the process that took place in art, leading to the release of imaging from all its hitherto limitations, with narration and objectivity at the forefront. Mentioned here are Kazimir Malevich with a white square, Marcel Duchamp with the

*Fountain* and Robert Rauschenberg, who erased a drawing of his friend, the painter Willem de Kooning. In his works, Susid goes beyond the gallery discourse; he addresses the ordinary viewer and wants to engage in a dialogue with them. But he does

not neglect art experts either, ironically winking at them. He deliberately introduces a theme of fun in order to provoke a discussion among viewers about the status of art in modern times.





Paweł Susid

*Untitled*  
 (When They Lose Faith  
 in the Newer Things,  
 It Pushes Them Back  
 to Believe in the Old)

2004, acrylics on canvas

This topic concerns timeless  
 issues, bordering on ideology,  
 metaphysics and the sacred.

# Untitled (Colours Already Used by Artists)

2005, acrylics on canvas



Susid deals with strictly painting issues here, pointing to the colours or colour combinations characteristic of some artists. He mentions a specific shade of cool green by Paolo Veronese. He was an Italian painter of the mature Renaissance, a representative of the Venetian school of colour painting, who liked this shade of green so much that it was later named after him. Yves Klein, a French post-World War II painter, also had a favourite colour, ultramarine, which he patented as International Klein Blue. IKB is an extremely intense, bright blue, obtained according to a recipe that Klein developed himself.

*Untitled (Except the Court Ones,  
Artists Sympathized With the Proletariat)*

2006, acrylics on canvas



The proletariat is understood here as a historical social class with limited access to material and cultural goods, as well as a specific lifestyle and aesthetic taste. Artists not connected with court circles usually lived in poverty themselves, so social sensitivity and left-wing views dominated in their circles.

# Maciej Szańkowski

↑ Artists list 196

(b. 1938) A sculptor who creates small- as well as large-scale works, from monuments to small medallic forms. Szańkowski uses his own intermedia techniques, producing sculptures that connect with architecture and the landscape. After attending the State Secondary School of Fine Arts in Zakopane (1952–1957), where he was a student of Antoni Kenar, Antoni Rząsa, Barbara Zbrożyna and Tadeusz Brzozowski, he studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the class of Professor Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. From 1982 to 2003, Szańkowski taught a sculpture class at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Poznań, where in 1991 he was awarded the title of professor. In the years 1996–2008, he taught as a full professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

Szańkowski's work is located at the junction of the constructivist tradition, geometric abstraction and conceptual art. The artist admits that he is not attached to any material and the medium in which he works gives him inspiration mainly through its construction and technological possibilities. He works with great ease with such diverse materials as iron, aluminium, stone, wood, bronze, ceramics, concrete, paper and natural elements. He is interested in sculptural practices that lead to the creation of a work united with its setting. From the 1970s, Szańkowski has been implementing the concept of "place" in his works, whereby the sculptural object was organically connected with the living environment. Often it was a single piece, as in the case of the stone *Window*, which Szańkowski placed in the mountain landscape of Maribor in 1977. Other metal and stone works by the artist

merged with the urban spaces of Berlin, Vienna, Bochum and Warsaw. In the 1980s and 1990s, the artist created spatial structures using the linear form of a bent iron rod or rope stretched on wooden masts. In these works, he used – in contrast to geometric linearity – biomorphic lumps of field boulders. In 1993, Szańkowski completed the Memorial of the Victims of Communist Terror 1944–1956 in Służew, Warsaw. In 2002, one of his sculptures was installed in Bletchley Park near London to commemorate the breaking of the Enigma code.

Maciej Szańkowski  
*The Way: Imago Mundi*

2000, installation; millstones (sandstone), platforms (polychrome wood)



Szańkowski's work is characterised by its economy of the simplest forms and their mutual relations. The planes leaning towards each other with the marked line of converging roads meet in a collision of two stones rolling

towards the middle. The suggestion of potential movement inherent in this composition gives it dynamism, even though the arrangement of its elements remains in static balance. The problem of the mutual interaction of

solids/forms in space appears in almost all of this artist's works. Bożena Kowalska, an art critic, has stated that Szańkowski's work is known for the motif of elements approaching each other, separated by a thin stream of air or light. This gives the impression of the mutual attraction of forms, tension between them, striving to close the narrow gap separating them. The image of the world (*imago mundi*) evoked in the title, reflecting the cosmic order, was juxtaposed in its second part with the idea of the way, of movement through space, serving as a kind of supplement to the notion of place, present in most of Szańkowski's works. The work was featured in the artist's solo exhibition *Nine Spaces* at the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko in 2001.

# Andrzej Szewczyk

(1950–2001) An avant-garde artist, painter, active with objects, drawings and spatial installations, a poet and educator. From 1974 to 1978, he studied art education at the University of Silesia in Cieszyn, where he would later lecture. The classes he taught would have a profound influence on many students and subsequent artists, art historians, curators and friends. Szewczyk started making art at the end of the 1960s and flourished in the next decade as conceptual art made great strides. For him, it was an intense period of creative exploration and attempting to define his own understanding of art, as well as a rebellion against artistic practices popular at the time. Szewczyk tackled issues of visibility, the meaning of painting and the creative gesture. He admired the achievements of the abstract expressionists. By the late 1970s, issues related to writing, especially the writing of images, derived from the tradition of icon-painting (“writing”) had become foregrounded in his work. He combined painting, drawing and writing, equally employing these techniques in the creative process. During that time, he produced

series of works on paper, sheets, scrolls, manuscripts, books covered in a linear order with ink spots outlined with thin contours, pictures-boards, pictures-objects. In 1981, Szewczyk began creating compositions with scraps of crayons, pistachio shells and wooden blocks glued on to boards and canvases, covered with encaustic wax, paint and lead, like pictures-boards of a painter’s writing. Their titles usually hearken back to literary works, reflecting a network of cultural references and fascinations, as well as indicating the artist’s erudition. His works are usually portrait orientation, reminiscent of a sheet of paper. Szewczyk treated art as a continuous process, in the course of which he tested the limits of artistic form and expression. A permanent exhibition of his works is on display at the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia in Cieszyn.

Andrzej Szewczyk  
*Memorials of F. Kafka's  
 Letters to F. Bauer*

1981–1984, object; wood, lead

In the 1980s, characteristic oak and lead panels appeared in Andrzej Szewczyk's work. These formed the basis of the series *Memorials of F. Kafka's Letters to F. Bauer, Diaries* (1981–1993), or *Libraries* (from 1987). The artist poured liquid lead into holes in wooden blocks and left round stamps on various surfaces, similar to the old letter seals. On the wooden form, a record was created, like a code: the characters, arranged in lines, resemble a kind of unknown writing. Critics have referred to these practices as "lead writing," which also brings to mind the art of icon painting.

In *Memorials of F. Kafka's Letters to F. Bauer*, Szewczyk, who often incorporated references to literary figures in his works, was inspired by the biography of Franz Kafka and specifically the writer's relationship with Felice Bauer. Kafka was engaged to this Berlin secretary for half a year, but had already

maintained a lively correspondence with her between 1912 and 1917. The relationship between the two was tumultuous. Kafka broke off the engagement and renewed it, as if he was afraid of this relationship, but made repeated attempts to resume intimate contacts. The lead "writing" on the panel in the *Memorials* reflects the weight of the words that Kafka's letters to his beloved were written with.

Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, deposit of the City of Warsaw



# Radek Szlaga

(b. 1979) A painter, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts (now the University of Arts) in Poznan, where he studied painting (2000–2005). Co-founder of the artist collective PENERSTWO, with which he has been identified since 2007. He is a laureate of the Young Art Compass for 2012.

Szlaga's work is multithreaded, digressive, full of contradictions and labyrinthine narratives. His paintings resemble dense visual palimpsests that record the process of the artist's consciousness. They are a reflection of the mythology that Szlaga creates and constantly updates, looking at it through the prism of culture and pop culture, literature, movies, music, or art itself (autobiographical themes, the mythology of an ancestral family who emigrated to Detroit from the small village of Ochotnica at the foot of Szlagówka Mountain, play an important role here). They are also a way of telling the story of his generation, which includes modernism, rock music, structuralism, the philosophy of Jean Baudrillard, colonialism and so on. Among this variety of references, there are

topics that Szlaga is particularly interested in and that recur in his work: identity, painting as a medium and the relationship between centre and periphery. These motifs and threads are deformed and hybridised in the studio, serving as an inspiration while at the same time being subjected to the process of degradation.

The lack of a hierarchy of sources is very clear in Szlaga, both at the level of artistic strategy and of technique. He often repaints older works. Images that are usually distant from each other in terms of time, theme, or form become a new, multi-layered whole. One method of joining them is sewing. He picks out the worst parts of those old, never-finished paintings and sews them together, using a sewing machine his father gave him. He calls this method chop 'n' sew, making reference to the chop 'n' screw music of black ghettos in the southern states of the USA.



# Radek Szlaga

## *They Respect Nothing*

2010, paper, oil, canvas

The painting comes from the *Freedom Club* exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2012. Szlaga's *Freedom Club* project was initiated with a show at the West gallery in The Hague in 2011, and in its next instalment he explored the issue of freedom in its various aspects. The paintings, drawings and installations shown at the Ujazdowski Castle also featured autobiographical and religious themes, motifs of terrorism and emigration, as well as portraits of the artist's family members, the Polish countryside and America, grand narratives and their underbelly, the world shown on a micro and global scale. These stories swirled in Szlaga's pictures, intersecting and mutating in a dynamic process of transformation. The multiplicity of narratives, of protagonists, their creolisation or even bastardisation, corresponded to a wide range of various artistic techniques and styles.

The work from the Collection is one of the components of the stories that Szlaga told in *Freedom Club*. It is also a copy of a copy of another painting, processed many times by the artist using various media (photo, slide, printout and finally painted over again with oil paint). At that time, strongly informed by Baudrillard, Szlaga was interested in iconoclasm, the nature of the image, as well as its wear and tear during the increased circulation in the media tsunami of images. In the iconographic layer, we see a small Fiat, chickens and the Polish countryside. Szlaga evokes images remembered from childhood, alluding to the history of his own family. The paint drips in streams, the contours blur. Meanings too.



The acquisition of the work for the Collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the Regional Collections of Contemporary Art programme.

# Tomasz Tatarczyk

↑ Artists list 202

(1947–2010) A painter, draughtsman and graphic artist. He studied at the Warsaw University of Technology (1966–1972) and at the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1976–1981), where he graduated in the class of Professor Jan Tarasin. From 1980 through 1988, he worked as an assistant at his alma mater. He had scholarships from the Kościuszko Foundation and the Batory Foundation in the United States, as well as the Rockefeller Foundation in Italy. For his work, he was awarded the Merit Award at Art-Quest in Los Angeles, the Grand Prix of the International Drawing Competition in Wrocław, as well as the Jan Cybis Prize for 2008.

A house in Mięcmierz, a village on the Vistula river near Kazimierz, in which the artist lived for many years, came to play an important role in his work. Nature and landscape were his natural environment and inspiration. He developed an original idiom of painterly dialogue with nature, creating radically restrained and mesmerising canvases. A modest set of motifs is repeated many times: roads, closed

gates, saws, sharp tools, hills, gorges, water and boats floating on its surface, or a dog wading in it. Tatarczyk was a master of reduction, striving for synthesis and order in the composition, which is why he eliminated all unnecessary details. However, as Lech Karwowski pointed out, the ascetic nature of Tatarczyk's canvases is misleading: "His ability to synthesise draws together the topics of the book and the gate, the Passion iconography, the work of the German Romantics and modernist painting."

Tatarczyk's paintings are executed in a flat, two-dimensional manner. When working with oils, he used a narrow brush and applied the paint in impasto. This allowed him to refine the surface of the canvases in a very intricate way. Even in the 1980s, other, mostly dark, colours appeared in his work and later Tatarczyk would confine himself to an ascetic palette of white, black, grey and sometimes dark brown.

Tomasz Tatarczyk  
*Untitled*

2005, oil on canvas

A boat on the river is one of the most frequent motifs in Tatarczyk's paintings. The artist shows it from various perspectives, sometimes in the distance, sometimes so close that only a fragment of it is visible in the picture. But it is always the same boat from Mięćmierz, an ordinary punt, though painted without benches, without unnecessary details, rather like from a dream, with a clear symbolic meaning. Is it Charon's boat, not so much a boat as a coffin? Tatarczyk's contemplative work is a story about all aspects of life, its duration and passing, the proximity of death. Without resorting to complicated symbolism, the artist directs his reflections towards crossing to the other shore, the final one for all of us. A schematically painted empty black boat, ready for crossing, drifts on the water. Using an ascetic, almost monochromatic colour palette in greyscale, Tatarczyk reduced his paintings to a universal sign, a metaphor of human fate. The texture of the canvas,



characteristic of this painter – dense, fleshy and expressive – is noteworthy. Tatarczyk used the impasto painting technique, thanks to which his

paintings are vibrating, sparkling and look a bit like reliefs.

# Małgorzata Turewicz-Lafranchi

↑ Artists list 204

(b. 1961) A sculptor, painter who also makes drawings and carries out installations. From 1980 to 1985, she studied at the Faculty of Interior Design of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the classes of Professor Andrzej Dłużniewski and Professor Henryk Wiśniewski. Her graduation project, *The Holiday*, dealt with the aesthetic and philosophical meanings of ceremonies and holidays. From 1985 to 1986, she studied at the Swiss Freie Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft at the Goetheanum in Dornach. Since 1994, she has been living and working in Switzerland.

Turewicz-Lafranchi often draws on science and philosophy in her work; she is particularly interested in game theories, the theory of chaos and order, topology, mathematics of natural forms, phenomenology and Leibniz's monadology. She also stresses the role that anthroposophical writings and the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner played in her personal

growth. Initially, Turewicz-Lafranchi drew and painted a lot, later three-dimensional objects appeared in her work. She made large tempera drawings on grey paper and formally synthetic, symbolic paintings. The shapes depicted on them were similar to the sculptures that came later. The artist calls these early works "choreographic drawings," conveying in a synthetic way the dynamics of the gesture signalling the appearance of spatial objects in them. Turewicz-Lafranchi then smoothly moved on to creating three-dimensional forms.

Characteristic of her art is the unconventional use of industrial materials, a minimalist style and the tension between sensual experience and intellectual construction. The artist creates her works mainly from three materials – copper, brass and steel – thus referring to the theory of the elements: fire, air and water, which was a pre-scientific way of explaining the natural reality. The

critic Jolanta Ciesielska described her works as "objects-monads." They are cool and synthetic in form, but also filled with a palpable emotional charge, characteristic of a poetic message. In 2015, Turewicz-Lafranchi's solo exhibition, *Handiworks*, took place at the Academy of Arts' Zona Sztuki Aktualnej in Szczecin, featuring objects made of materials traditionally used by the artist, created in Switzerland in the years 1993–2005.

Małgorzata Turewicz-Lafranchi

## *As Above, So Below*

1991/1992, object; metal, brass tape, wood

*As Above, So Below* comes from Turewicz-Lafranchi's solo exhibition under the same title at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art (1992). At that time, interested in spiritual aspects of life, the artist was looking for inspiration in alchemical sciences, initiation rituals, fairy tales and philosophy. The work's title, borrowed from the philosophy of Hermeticism, indicates the inseparable relationship between matter and spirit. The object resembles a music stand or a magazine rack; it is a form open to the space above itself, and thus to the universe and its spirituality. When creating this work, Turewicz-Lafranchi was inspired by the canopies worn during festive processions, for example Corpus Christi, which symbolically mark a sacred space. The golden tape emphasises the work's metaphysical aspect.

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Małgorzata Turewicz-Lafranchi  
*Light from Above*

1992, installation; metal

In the 1990s, Turewicz-Lafranchi often used the symbolic triad of metals – copper, silver and gold – in her works, indicating the hierarchy of the stages of initiation in alchemy. Inspired by Egyptian ritual headgear, the forms of the objects symbolised the three levels of initiation. The artist was interested in basic cognitive structures, the study of elementary spiritual energies, scientific and secret knowledge, an organic way of thinking and acting. Critics find in her art an intellectual and esoteric aspect of Neo-Romanticism, close to the ideas of the avant-garde. The work was featured in the exhibition *Places, Non-Places* at the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Ororisko in 1992.

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# Tomasz Wilmański

(b. 1956) The author of artists' books, visual poetry, concrete poetry, performances, sculptures, installations and drawings. He studied sculpture at the State Higher School of Fine Arts (now the University of Arts) in Poznan from 1977 to 1982. Since 1982, he has been running his own gallery – AT – in Poznan. From 1983 to 1987, he and Cezary Staniszewski ran the RR gallery in Warsaw. He is one of Poland's few initiators of exhibitions of artists' books as well as visual, concrete, sound and cyber-poetry. In 1990, at the AT gallery, he initiated a series of exhibitions called *The Book and What Next*, where he presents artists' books, visual and audio poetry and net art by various artists (nineteen editions have taken place so far). He is the author of many theoretical writings on artists' books and visual poetry. Since 2013, he has been teaching a course on artists' books at the Faculty of Artistic Education and Curatorship at the University of Arts in Poznan.

Wilmański's field of artistic interests includes, above all, artists' books, visual poetry (for example, computer lettering animation) and sand pictures (mandalas). He started making books in the 1980s. Those were unique handmade objects. Later, he would often accompany artistic statements in the form of video projections, objects, or drawings with books he had made, as in *Repentance* (2009), or *HOME-OM* (2011). Sand paintings, inspired by the Tibetan Buddhist ritual of mandala-building, form an important element of Wilmański's work. He calls them secular mandalas; they are iconographically and thematically subordinated to the idea of art and the specific message of the given project.

## *Beetle Buzzes in the Reeds*

1991, sound installation; wood, metal, cassette recorders

The work comes from the group exhibition *Hearing Art*, which took place at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1992. The installation consists of three wooden objects painted black, their geometric forms alluding to abstract architecture. Inside each there is a tape recorder playing words in a loop – one says “beetle”, another “buzzes,” in the third “in the reeds” (*chrząszcz brzmi w trzcinnie*, a famous Polish tongue-twister). To hear the discreet sound coming from inside, put your ear to the object. In this work, Wilmański used various media that complement each other and constitute integral elements of the whole, combining two spheres of perception – visual and aural. A (box-shaped) book object with a drawing in the style of geometric architectural iconography was also created for the show. The box contains three cassette tapes with the recorded words: “beetle,” “buzzes,” “in the reeds.”





# Ryszard Winiarski

(1936–2006) A painter and educator who also made objects and set designs. He studied (1953–1959) in the Faculty of Precision Mechanics at the Warsaw University of Technology. In 1960, he began studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the Faculty of Painting, where he graduated in 1966. Already in his graduation project – *Event, Information, Image* – Winiarski made reference to mathematics, probability calculus and the concepts used therein. In 1981, he took over teaching a course on Painterly Issues in Architecture and in the Human Environment at his alma mater, where he also served as vice-rector (1985–1987 and 1987–1990). In 1990, he received the title of professor. Winner of the Jan Cybis Prize for 1995.

Winiarski was a precursor of conceptual art; he is also counted among those artists whose work balances on the borderline between art and science. His concept of art was inspired by mathematics,

primarily by probability calculus, with his works being basically records of functions of a random variable. The artist often accentuated this, calling his paintings “attempts at the visual presentation of statistical distributions.” They were the result of a combination of factors of chance and programming. With this strategy, he negated the very idea of the painting as a reflection or expression of the author’s individuality. Winiarski’s idea was art that cannot be assessed from the point of view of aesthetic values, but its sense can be explained rationally and logically. As early as 1966, Winiarski appeared at the 1st Symposium of Artists and Scholars in Puławy with works inspired by the calculus of probability, in which he used black and white squares, which soon became the hallmark of his work, as did the dice.

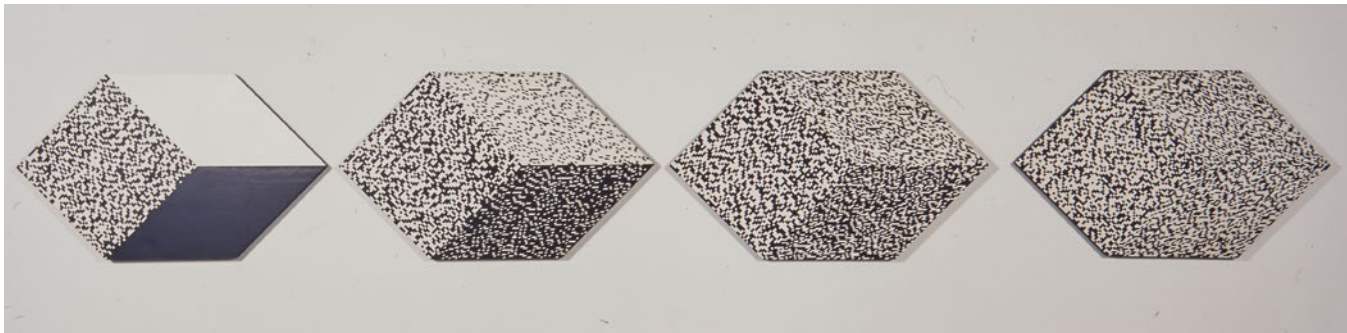
Winiarski consistently pursued his own artistic agenda and the chosen method

allowed him to differentiate techniques as he made three-dimensional, relief and kinetic objects. In 1971, at the Golden Grape symposium in Zielona Góra, he used collections of square mirror tiles in his compositions for the first time to capture the variability of the image and to introduce viewers to it. In 1972, he adapted one of the rooms of the Współczesna Gallery in Warsaw into a “gaming room,” which initiated a series of experiments and exhibitions in Poland and abroad, in which the artist tried to transform the viewer into an authentic partner and co-creator of a work of art. Starting from the first half of the 1980s, Winiarski began to turn to intuition and emotions, resulting in restless, dramatic forms appearing in his work. In 1984, he formulated the concept of “geometry in a state of tension.” In 1987, the first of a series of *Geometry, Or a Chance for Meditation* installations was created, incorporating bricks or lit candles.

# Ryszard Winiarski

## *Statistical ABCD Set. Random Variable – Playing Dice*

1976, acrylics on canvas



Winiarski eventually decided to narrow down and precisely define his area of interest in art. He wanted to clear the image of all subjective and emotional elements in favour of objective mechanisms. For this, he used neutral events such as a coin toss, a dice roll or mathematical tables of random numbers. In the case of the *Statistical ABCD Set*, the tool for organising a certain order on the image plane – the dice – also became the

visual model for a series of four works. On subsequent canvases, the fields of the cube's walls become more and more dense. The four images are filled with white and black 1x1 cm squares, treated as equivalents of zeros and ones in mathematics. The distribution of points on the image plane is the result of rolling the dice and mathematical calculations. The final effect depends on chance, but it was the artist who defined the initial

precepts of each "programme" and thus influenced the overall dynamics of the composition, introducing ordering elements to it. As he himself explained: "When starting to build a picture or an object (I actually call them 'areas' more often, because I'm not sure if the term 'picture' applies), I first of all set the rules of conduct, the rules of the game, and then I invite chance to participate in the process... On the surface or in space,

a specific game takes place, subject to the laws of the logic of chance. As the number of programmes increases, the rules of the game become more complicated, the random variable is faced with more and more tasks and so the areas go from the simplest to the more complex."

# Winter Holiday Camp (WHC)

This was an artistic experiment conducted by an international group of artists and activists, exploring the prospects of transformation of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in terms of democratic practices. The project was initiated by Paweł Althamer, who in turn was inspired by the teaching practice of Janusz Korczak. In the original version of the project, the idea was to shake the recipients out of a passive attitude, to activate them through play and improvisation. The castle was to be handed over to children to stimulate the imagination of adults. A project conceived in this way would suspend the internal order of the institution, anarchise it, temporarily replacing all employees with children. However, influenced by the experience gained during the 7th Berlin Biennale, Althamer changed the project and decided to open *Winter Holiday Camp* to community activities. Together with Artur Żmijewski, they invited Noah Fischer and Occupy Museums activists to

cooperate. A working group of artists and social activists from Poland, New York, New Orleans, Berlin, Mexico, Madrid, Budapest and Buenos Aires was formed. The *WHC* project, which was discussed on an ongoing basis, was modified and its goal became to transform the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art into a democratically managed institution. All the employees of the institution, management, spectators and invited children were to take part in the project. At that time, there was a period of growing conflict between the staff and the director, and the artists wanted *WHC* to become a kind of respite for the employees from the growing stress.

Production began in the spring of 2013 and the project was scheduled to be accomplished in the winter of that year at the Ujazdowski Castle. Due to the poor financial situation of the institution in November 2013, director Fabio Cavallucci removed *WHC* from the agenda.

However, the College of Curators of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art decided that the project and the international collaboration should be continued; gallery rooms that stood empty after the *British British Polish Polish* exhibition ended were to be used for that purpose. At the end of 2013, spontaneous and improvised artistic activities began there, lasting many days, including the joint painting of a large partition wall in one of the galleries. Ultimately, the collective painting that was created there, through the work of artists, adult viewers and children, was accepted into the Collection, as were many small works created during the joint painting.



# Winter Holiday Camp

2013/2014, project in process, painting in three parts,  
double-sided painted wall hardboard and drywall, oil, canvas

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# Jan Wyżykowski

(b. 1956) A painter and performer, the author of theoretical writings on painting, literary texts, dramatic works and films. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating in 1981 in the painting class of Professor Jan Tarasin and the sculpture class of Professor Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. Since the late 1980s, he has been conducting continuous studies on the rudiments of the painting medium and its language, particularly the perception of colour and the structure of the image.

After graduating from the academy, Wyżykowski completed two structuralist studies and, based on them and applying his own theory of harmonic scales, he painted synthetic images of concavity and convexity, which he showed in the solo exhibition *Harmonic Scales* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1992. From 1995 through 2003, Wyżykowski abstained from exhibiting his work. During that

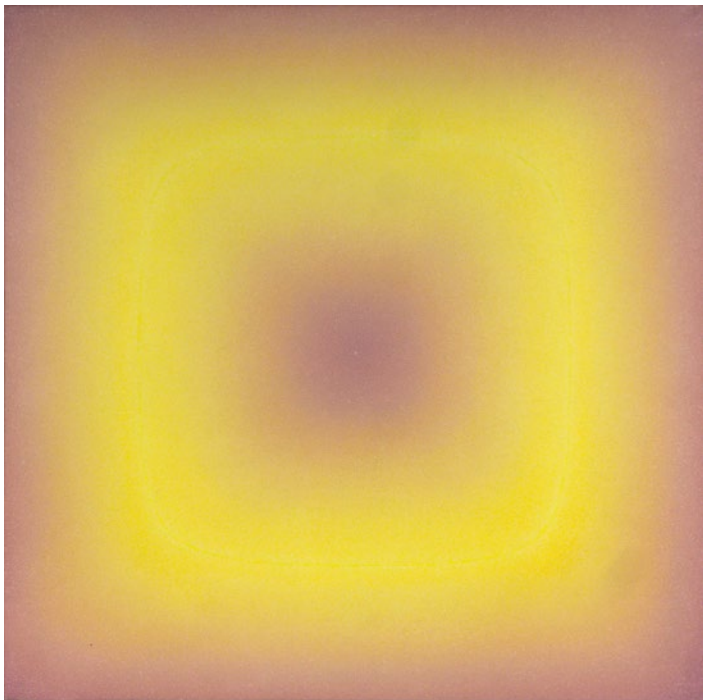
time, he studied the theory of the colour channel in the retina, colour models, as well as engaging in visual-theatre work and writing dramas. In 2004, while analysing the problem of the spatiality of the canvas, he discovered the reflexive perspective and the model of broken colours (“reflexive perspective” is a term coined by Wyżykowski referring to a successful attempt to show three planes taking into account the rectangular plane of the picture). The theories he formulated dealt with numerous artistic issues and their artistic implementations – over several series of paintings – became almost mathematical constructions. At the same time, they directed the author towards a spiritual experience. Wyżykowski collaborated many times with the mathematician Cezary Suski. In 2007, he made a series of performances about painting and painters, which he dedicated to, among others,

Cézanne, van Gogh and Strzemiński. In 2010, Wyżykowski resumed a project started in his youth called *New Structuralism*, creating structures based on a study from the 1980s. He considers the year 2011, when he finished working on the structures, to be a breakthrough for him. In 2016, he published an experimental novel *The Sphere*, the third part of which is the *Compendium of Painterly Issues*.

Wyżykowski’s output is organised into series, each devoted to a different issue, resulting in a variety of forms. The artist continues to study form and colour, creating figural and spatial compositions that are the result of his many years of research into the nature of painting and the possibilities inherent in the image.

Jan Wyżykowski  
*Conical Concavity*

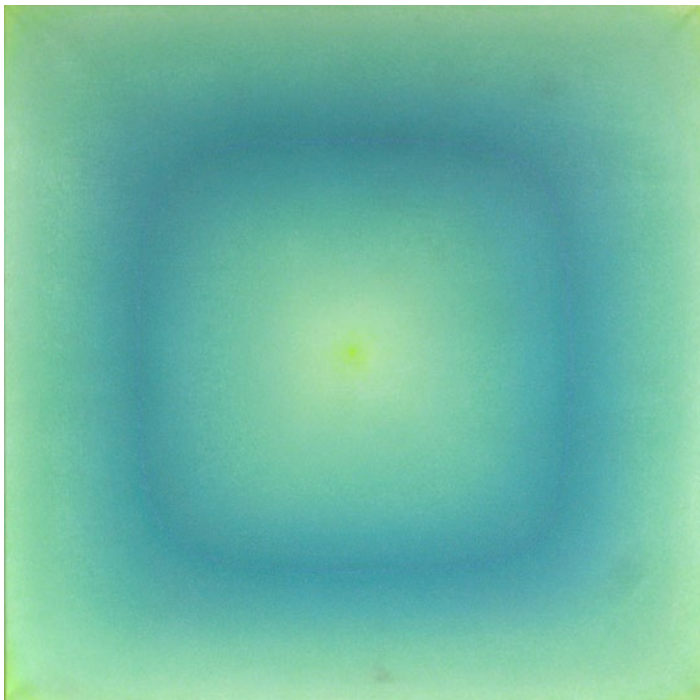
1992, oil on canvas



In the early period of his work, Wyżykowski explored structuralism and the theory of colours, which he used in further research on the effects of concavity and convexity in painting. These investigations yielded synthetic abstract paintings, which he showed in the 1990s in solo and group exhibitions. Harmonic Gamuts (HG) are various colour sequences selected by the artist, in which the light pole tends towards convexity and the dark pole to concavity. Wyżykowski searched for such sequences on flat models in the shape of a circle, using pure colours from the classic colour wheel. On a background of pure colour, he applied a structure of dots, also of pure colour, but different from the background. After squinting to cause a blurring effect, the pure structure unifies to broken colours (dirty ones, such as browns), each time differently, depending on the place on the colour wheel.

Jan Wyżykowski  
*Conical Convexity*

1992, oil on canvas



Broken colours shape different HGs. Of course, the latter reveal their principle when transitioning from one zone to another on the image plane. The simplest construction of presenting HG sequences is concentric, but based on ovals rather than concentric circles: the closer to the edge of the image, the larger the oval and more rectangular, the closer to the centre – the smaller and rounder; only in the centre is a small, regular circle-shaped field revealed.

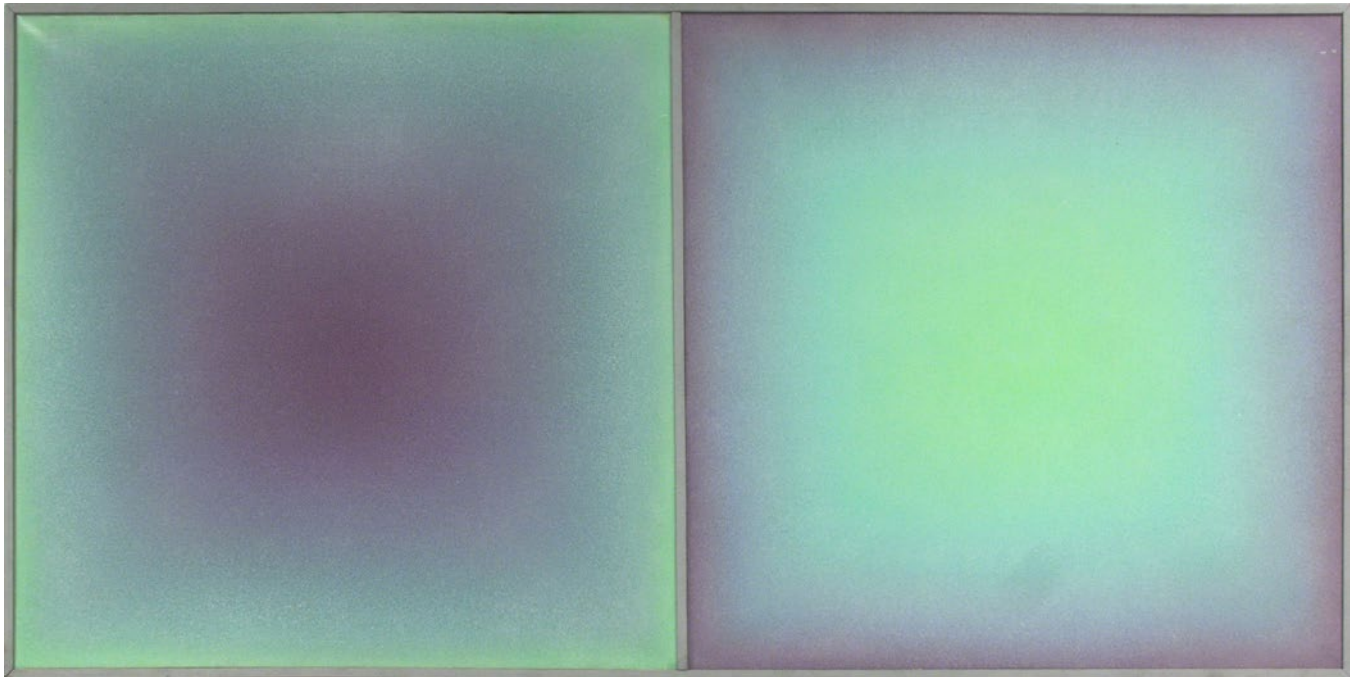


Jan Wyżykowski

# *Concavity, Convexity*

1992, oil on canvas

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# Krzysztof Zarębski

(b. 1939) A performer, painter, sculptor and stage designer. From 1962 to 1968 he studied at the Faculty of Painting and Graphic Arts of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (in the classes of Professor Jan Wodyński and Professor Stefan Gierowski). He is a former member (1983–1991) of the New York-based artist collective Rivington School.

Zarębski was one of the pioneers of performance art in Poland. His work revolves around themes such as transience, biological processes, memory and eroticism. After graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts, he painted in the style of new figuration, which was en vogue at the time. His canvases also featured everyday items such as spectacles, taps, or shower heads, which he combined with simple geometric shapes and abstract colour fields. Even then, he tried to go beyond the painting plane, for example by hanging colour filters in front of the paintings to obtain different colour combinations. From 1971, Zarębski began staging performances and happenings, all the time remaining faithful to his painterly imagination. These were plastic performances, environmental sculptures, which he often recorded on photographs and on film.

In 1972, Zarębski developed the concept of “spheres of contact,” which would underpin many of his later actions. For his works, he used animate matter (moss, grass, leeches and fish) and inanimate matter (pigments, gramophone tapes or records, ice and mud) and tried to combine them in the right way, bringing them into direct contact with the human body. In his activities, bodies – models or his own – played an important role.

Zarębski opened up scope for imagination by using surprising juxtapositions, for example by placing grass on the piano keyboard or filling it with sand, into which he then stuck whistles (1975). A frequent prop in his works was a magnetic tape with recorded music. However, the artist did not recreate it, but hung the tape on a string and “sounded” it, setting it in motion with the help of fans, pasted it on paper, displaying it like a painting, or embedded it in a block of ice (*Freezing Sound, Dialogue*, 1974). The year 1975 marked the beginning of a very important period for Zarębski (lasting until 1981), when he entered into cooperation with the director and playwright Helmut Kajzar. They worked together as part of what they called the meta-everyday theatre, i.e. one that went out beyond the stage, into the foyer, the cloakroom and into the street. These were often performance-style street actions.

In 1981, Krzysztof Zarębski left with his family for the United States, where he spent martial law. He has been living and working in New York since then. Compared to his earlier, ephemeral, para-theatrical appearances, in his American period of work there was a clear shift of emphasis; the object, sculpture, installation, i.e. matter and three-dimensionality, became very important to him. He still likes to use found objects, which he transforms into assemblages.

Krzysztof Zarębski  
*Arm and Spoon*

1995, assemblage; acrylic glass, metal, pvc, synthetic wax



In the 1990s, Zarębski created objects constructed from ready-made everyday objects, some of them in a truly Dadaist spirit. These were small and rather fragile assemblages, like the two works in the Collection, currently on display at the Open Storage — *Arm and Spoon* and *Black Square*.

Many of the objects used for assemblages had already been used by the artist in performances, including spoons, turntable arms, tapes, vinyl records, cans, artificial nails, vibrators and telephone headsets.

*Arm and Spoon* is a spoon connected to the tonearm of a turntable and a broken half of an LP record covered with synthetic wax; the whole thing is mounted on a piece of broken glass.

## Black Square

1996, assemblage; vinyl record, can, acrylic glass, tape, self-adhesive tape

*Black Square* consists of three fragments of a broken gramophone record arranged on a acrylic glass plate in the shape of a square, on which rests a heavily crushed beverage can. The composition is framed by simple pieces of gramophone tape, secured with transparent foil. Zarębski embedded some parts of his assemblages in acrylic glass to store the memory of touch or sound. The objects used are not ordinary everyday artefacts, but have a specific symbolic meaning for the artist. For example, gramophone records mean ephemerality, the past time and tapes – memory.

In both works, themes deeply rooted in the artist's work can be observed: the use of sound media as a symbolic record of music and the introduction of fragments of found and interconnected objects as specific "contact zones" defined by the artist. By combining and modifying objects and their parts, Zarębski creates a completely new object, which is not only a visual representation of things. The aesthetic value of the resulting object is also important to him: he admits that he tries to make his ugly finds beautiful again. He also adds a pinch of humour, sometimes irony.



# Monika Zawadzki

(b. 1977) A visual artist and graphic designer who also works on sculptures, objects, installations, paintings and videos. She studied at the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the studio of Professor Rafał Strent, graduating with honours in 2002. She earned a doctor's degree in 2011 at her alma mater. Applied design is an important part of her artistic work. As someone who works with visual identity and layout, and as an art director, she co-edited the periodicals *DIK Fagazine* (2005-2013) and *K MAG* (2008-2011). From 2003 to 2007 she ran the non-commercial ZOO Gallery in Warsaw.

Zawadzki's practice is socially engaged, her works providing reflection on harm, poverty, aggression and brutality. Prominent themes include relations with nature and civilisation, the problem of identity creation, represented by shapes devoid of individualism, the question of the Other (mainly shown in the form of animals) and social exclusion. The artist criticises the idea of anthropocentrism, opposes excluding other species from the natural community

and denying them subjectivity. By identifying the Other with the animal, Zawadzki equates them with a human being and affirms various aspects of love, going beyond its traditional understanding. One of the important issues taken up by the artist concerns the relationships between people, between people and animals and finally between the food ladder and metabolism, including inanimate matter. These themes dominated her solo exhibition *Cattle* at Zachęta (2014).

Zawadzki has developed a characteristic visual language of expression based on repetitive modules, which she uses in graphic designs and three-dimensional art. Her works offer concise messages in a limited range of colours (black and white, sometimes she also makes objects from transparent acrylic glass), often creating extensive spatial installations.

Monika Zawadzki

## *Begging Sculpture*

2011, sculpture; epoxy resin, metal, polystyrene



Both works on view at the Open Storage – *Poverty* and *Begging Sculpture* – are fragments from the installation *Untitled Three Sculptures One Mural* from the group exhibition *The World Unrepresented. Documents of the Polish Transformation after 1989* from the *Post-document* series presented at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2012.

*Begging Sculpture* presents a monumental, standing leg, in the upper part of which a hand has been mounted, stretched out in a gesture of begging. *Poverty* consists of several identical hand-shaped modules arranged in a looped, self-locking system in the form of an open cube. Both works are black. At the exhibition, the sculptures were accompanied by the mural *Green Island*, depicting a super-sized figure of a man shown in four positions – from upright to lying down.

## Poverty

2011, sculpture; epoxy resin, metal, polystyrene

Zawadzki's spatial works, sparing in form and ambiguous in content, deploy conventionality and abbreviation, along with a dose of irony. Her simply shaped sculptures have an aesthetic typical for this artist, derived from her graphic designs; they are geometric forms referring to the human or animal body, usually made of epoxy resin and painted black. From various modular elements, Zawadzki constructs amorphous beings, conglomerates.



# Jakub Julian Ziółkowski

↑ Artists list 224

(b. 1980) A painter who also creates drawings, sculptures, objects and installations. He holds a degree in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, where he graduated in 2005 in the class of Professor Leszek Misiak. In 2013, his paintings were presented as part of the main exhibition *Palazzo Enciclopedico* at the Venice Art Biennale.

Although Ziółkowski practices rather traditional genres of painting – landscapes, still lifes, portraits, nudes – he has definitely distanced himself from the earlier generation of painters who appeared on the Polish art scene around 2000. He has never shown any great interest in the existing reality, or the world processed through the media. He understands art as an autonomous sphere saturated with its own codes

and motifs, rich in ready-to-use styles. He looks for inspiration in his own head and in the artistic tradition, including, but not limited to, surrealism, metaphysical painting, non-European cultures, Hieronymus Bosch, Giorgio de Chirico, Alfred Kubin, James Ensor, Otto Dix and Pablo Picasso. Integrating this extensive eclecticism is the artist's imagination, for whom his own paintings are the most important reference. Ziółkowski seems to be in constant dialogue with his own work and the visions he creates allude to territories of dreams, desires, subconscious fears and anxieties. His canvases are full of tiny details, a kind of *horror vacui* approach. These are often dense structures with elaborate narratives unfolding like storybooks.

In 2007, Ziółkowski made his first sculptures (for the exhibition *Demi Volte*) and he transferred some elements from his paintings into the third dimension. There were surreal objects cut out of shiny acrylic glass, wooden machines and mysterious portraits. In 2013, as part of the exhibition *Raw Thoughts*, the artist showed objects resembling scenographic models. In recent years, an interest in religious symbolism and objects of worship has appeared in his work. He also began collaborating regularly with the artist Hyon Gyon, who draws inspiration from Korean shamanism and transcendental energy practices.



# Genesis

2013, oil on plywood



The painting presents a representative set of motifs for Jakub Julian Ziółkowski: fancifully distorted human bodies, surrealistic monsters and a seascape – the whole thing brings to mind the atmosphere of the works of Hieronymus Bosch. Bizarre creatures gathered on the shore of the sea, on the surface of which you can see a shoal of eyes watch, somewhat bored, a figure emerging from the water. This grotesque creature has feminine sexual characteristics and its rather revolting naked body is covered with dense protrusions resembling small penises. Coquettishly pinned bows hang from its almost bald skull. This creature strides ashore, holding a one-eyed, one-legged creature in its hand. Ziółkowski creates imaginary worlds on canvas, which are at the same time alien but strangely familiar, as if the stuff of nightmares.

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# U–jzdowski

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