

U-jazdowski

Making New Worlds Instead of Forgetting About It

Selected video works from
the collection of the
Ujazdowski Castle Centre
for Contemporary Art



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20/09/2024—19/01/2025

exhibition

Making New Worlds Instead of Forgetting About It

Selected video works from
the collection of the Ujazdowski Castle
Centre for Contemporary Art

Artists

Wojciech Bąkowski, Piotr Bosacki,
Karolina Breguła, Rafał Bujnowski,
Hubert Czerepok, Oskar Dawicki,
Izabella Gustowska, Heidrun Holzfeind,
Zuzanna Janin, Christian Jankowski,
C.T. Jasper and Joanna Malinowska,
Marcus Kaiser, Andree Korpys
and Markus Löffler, Anna Konik,
Dominik Lejman, Norman Leto,
Zbigniew Libera, Anna Molska,
Dominika Olszowy, Franciszek Orłowski,
Tony Oursler, Agnieszka Polska,
Karol Radziszewski, Joanna Rajkowska,
Józef Robakowski, Konrad Smoleński,
Piotr Wyrzykowski, Marek Zygmunt,
Alicja Żebrowska, Artur Żmijewski

The title of the exhibition is borrowed from a featured work by Wojciech Bąkowski, a highly subjective and unique piece of art. The metaphor in this poetic phrase, along with a certain literalness, aptly captures the possibilities of art, especially video art. Additionally, these words resonate interestingly with the current moment at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, which is gathering strength and energy for a new opening.

The International Collection of Contemporary Art, the foundations for which were laid in the early 1990s under the leadership of Director Wojciech Krukowski, largely stems from the institution's programme of temporary exhibitions. It serves as a kind of archive of the Centre's ongoing activities over the past thirty years. This is a key factor that defines the unique interdisciplinary nature of the collections gathered at Ujazdowski Castle.

In the exhibition *Making New Worlds Instead of Forgetting About It*, we present over 30 works from 1973 to 2018, which constitute the core of our video art collection. The vast majority of these are videos, but there are also computer-generated works and traditional reel films.

Video art, or more broadly, media art, was introduced to the programme of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in the early 1990s. Piotr Krajewski, one of the organisers of the WRO Media Art Biennale, emphasises the Centre's pioneering role in showcasing this type of work in Poland. A 1992 promotional brochure for the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art talks about the Film/Video Centre's permanent programme, led by curator Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, which "presents classic works of avant-garde film and explorations of contemporary video art artists in cyclical programmes."

In a 1996 brochure, Kluszczyński's programme has been renamed the Media Art Laboratory, and is described as consisting of "exhibitions of the most interesting works of interactive art and video installation; presentations of the achievements of the most outstanding creators of media art; lectures and meetings with media artists; festivals and reviews of video and computer art." Starting with the exhibition *Collection 3* in 1996, the next three editions of the collection exhibition always featured video works, which constituted an important part of the narrative about contemporary art.

Media art underwent dynamic transformations in connection with the spread of new technologies. Digital pixels were now workable alongside electronic signals, and digital image manipulation could be used instead of analogue editing. Video quickly became a medium eagerly used by artists of various disciplines, not only those involved in filmmaking, as it gave them greater opportunities to comment on the themes they were dealing with. The new technical possibilities enjoyed by artists working with new media were also reflected in works that systematically enriched the collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art.

Video art from the Ujazdowski Castle's collection has never before been presented in a standalone exhibition, but now we have decided to take on that challenge. This is a good opportunity to look at how works created over several decades using video technology are received today in a world where screens are filled with TikTok or YouTube clips, on phones or computer screens. The fact that video is practically everywhere and that we use it freely in our surroundings undoubtedly influences the way we experience art works in this medium when displayed in a gallery. It also highlights the democratic ethos of

video art, which is a form of art that can be made at a relatively low cost and is highly accessible.

All of the works selected for this exhibition have been presented at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art before. Many of them were produced in-house as part of programming projects over the years. However, this is the first time they are presented together in such a diverse and comprehensive selection. The variety of themes explored by the artists, as well as the different approaches to similar ideas, makes the exhibition dynamic and strongly imbued with various meanings. The juxtaposition of films shown on monitors, large-scale projections, installations and objects creates new contexts in the spaces of the gallery. Various affinities can be seen, some more obvious than others. The works either harmonise with each other or create tensions, but they always inspire us to search for multiple meanings in their immediate surroundings.

The exhibition heavily features works of a narrative-analytical and critical nature, addressing themes such as corporeality and its representation in media, existential reflection with a metaphysical tinge, the passage of time and memory, both individual and collective history, as well as identity and social issues. The pieces demonstrate the wide range of possibilities offered by the video medium, from documenting performances, through art films, collages, video objects, video installations to multi-channel projections, as well as short- and full-length films resembling documentaries or reports.

In addition to the works installed in the gallery spaces, films from the collection are also shown in special screenings in our cinema.

The exhibition and the cinema screenings feature works by Wojciech Bąkowski, Piotr Bosacki, Karolina Breguła, Hubert Czerepok, Oskar Dawicki, Izabella Gustowska, Heidrun Holzfeind, Zuzanna Janin, Christian Jankowski, C.T. Jasper and Joanna Malinowska, Marcus Kaiser, Andree Korpys, and Markus Löffler, Anna Konik, Dominik Lejman, Norman Leto, Zbigniew Libera, Anna Molska, Dominika Olszowy, Franciszek Orłowski, Tony Oursler, Agnieszka Polska, Karol Radziszewski, Joanna Rajkowska, Józef Robakowski, Konrad Smoleński, Piotr Wyrzykowski, Marek Zygmunt, Alicja Żebrowska and Artur Żmijewski.

Curator

Ewa Gorządek

Ryszard W. Kluszczyński

Experimental Film, Video Art and New Media Art at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, 1990—2001

I took on the role of film and video art curator in January 1990, just as the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art began its operations under the leadership of the new director, Wojciech Krukowski. I held that position until 2001. During that time, video art, in the context of the global art scene, still held the status of radical underground art form. It only began to emerge in the artistic mainstream from the mid-90s onwards, and even later in Poland. The prominent presence of video and audiovisual experimentation at Ujazdowski Castle as early as the beginning of the 1990s is therefore evidence of the progressive nature of its programme.

The first presentation took place in April 1990 and featured both videos and reel films, including those by Andy Warhol. In those early days, I focused on the significant connections between experimental film and electronic video art. It was precisely because of this that not only the first programme but many subsequent presentations combined works from both media. I believed that the boundaries between them were slowly disappearing. Soon, as video's position in the art field and its relationships with other artistic media evolved, my curatorial scope expanded to include multimedia art. Increasingly, audiovisual works such as interactive

installations, VR (virtual reality) and internet-based art used video, which absorbed film and at the same time became a transmedial and cross-genre form. As a result, from the mid-1990s onwards, the programme of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art has increasingly featured works from the field of new media art that used video as a means of expression. These included works by artists such as Simon Biggs, Christopher Hales, Agnes Hegedüs, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Simon Robertshaw, Jeffrey Shaw, Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau, and Grahame Weinbren.

The goals of my curatorial work in that period can be summed up in three points. Firstly, I was driven by the desire to present the diversity of moving-image art (film, video, new media) to Polish audiences and to showcase its place in contemporary art. In addition to the works of the artists mentioned above, the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art showcased the creations of many other experimental filmmakers and video artists from all over the world – Kenneth Anger, Kjell Bjørgeengen, David Blair, Patrick Bokanowski, Vera Frenkel, Jean-François Guiton, Derek Jarman, Joana Jonas, Jeff Keen, David Larcher, Malcolm Le Grice, Toshio Matsumoto, Michael Scroggins and Shelly Silver. The exhibitions featured both individual artist profiles and works from selected countries (e.g. Germany, USA and the UK) as well as selected genres (such as video performance art).

Secondly, the Centre regularly presented works by Polish artists. In April 1991, I organised the *Środek Europy* [Centre of Europe] festival, which featured

Polish avant-garde films and video – from the works of Stefan and Franciszka Themerson to the latest projects by young artists, complemented by programmes from Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, curated by invited experts. I subsequently curated exhibitions and presentations of many artists, including Anna Baumgart, Izabella Gustowska, Barbara Konopka, Zbigniew Libera, Zygmunt Rytka, Józef Robakowski and Maciej Walczak. I also organised a major retrospective of the Workshop of the Film Form in 2000. In my position as curator, I included works by Polish artists in international exhibitions. It is worth noting that video works – both by Polish and foreign artists – were also featured in projects by other curators: Milada Ślizińska and Marek Goździewski.

Thirdly, I curated and presented programmes of Polish works at international venues: art centres, museums, film and video festivals. I showcased films and video works by Polish artists in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Japan, Canada, Latvia, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, Hungary and the UK, among other countries. This helped avant-garde film and video works by Polish artists become part of the institutional art circuit both in Poland and abroad.

Video Artworks

1

Karolina Breguła *Video Camera*

2007
video, 45'46"



Karolina Breguła's *Video Camera* records a for-camera performance showing the imperfection of language as a form of communication. The artist makes simple gestures that facilitate the understanding of the video camera's operating instructions, read off-screen in a dozen or so European languages. This humorous work shows how much more informative the language of gestures recorded on video is than the same lines spoken in national languages. Breguła's work is formal in nature, dealing with the medium itself, where video is both the means and the object of analysis; the artist herself is also both the subject and the object of artistic expression. In 2007, Breguła won third place with this film in the Samsung Art Master competition for "a witty commentary on the intersection of technology and art, created using simple means."

2

Karolina Breguła *Leaving*

2013
video, 2'

Formally alluding to the Lumière brothers' film *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* (1895), Breguła's *Leaving* is dedicated to the employees of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. The "remake" was shot at the northern, official entrance to the building. The footage shows the following people leaving one after another: the head of the trade union, staff members of the documentation, production, accounting and promotion departments, curators, coordinators, assistants and cleaners. The director is the last to leave the castle, closing the door behind him. *Leaving* is a commentary on the conflict between the then director and the staff of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, as a result of which many employees lost their jobs or resigned. The film is entirely staged, recording a special type of performance and standing out as one of few works that raise and problematise the issue of work in a cultural institution, and of "art workers" in general.



Karolina Breguła

(b. 1979) a multimedia artist, filmmaker, and academic. She holds an MA in Photography from the Film, Television and Theatre School in Łódź, where in 2016 she earned her PhD at the Department of Cinematography

and Television Production. She currently runs the Social Film Workshop at the Faculty of Media Art at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, where she is an assistant professor.

3

C.T. Jasper Joanna Malinowska *Charge*

2017
video, 4'33"

C.T. Jasper and Joanna Malinowska's film premiered in 2017 at the exhibition *Late Polishness* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. It was shot on the hills in the Pomeranian town of Przywidz, with more than 30 extras taking part. It deals with the famous hussar wings, one of the popular Polish national symbols, made of cardboard for the film. The artists freed the wings from their military context and showed them in a neutral, almost idyllic situation, as a metaphor of connection between man and bird. The typically Polish soundscape, with the sounds of insects and birds, plays an important role in the work. The video's duration – 4 minutes and 33 seconds – is a nod to John Cage's famous composition.



C.T. Jasper (b. 1971), **Joanna Malinowska** (b. 1972)

Multimedia artists living and working in the United States and Poland. They have been making joint projects since 2015, the year they represented Poland at the Venice Biennale.

C.T. Jasper is the Chair of Sculpture at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture in Philadelphia and Joanna Malinowska teaches at Cornell University in Ithaca.

4

Zuzanna Janin *Fight*

2001
video, 9'07"

Femmage à Ana Mendieta



marked with different colours, and the opponents wear identical white outfits. There seems to be no winner or loser in this duel and the struggle is not a one-off clash. Boxing as a metaphor for life, the fight for the position of female artists in the male-dominated art environment – these are just some of the obvious interpretative tropes of this work.

Zuzanna Janin

(b. 1961) a visual artist, sculptor, author of installations, performances, objects, photographs and video installations. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1987, earned her PhD in Fine Arts from the University of Arts in Poznań in 2016, and her postdoctoral degree in Art from the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk in 2020. She participated in the Biennale of Sydney

Zuzanna Janin *Ring*

2001–2012
sculpture, 120 × 400 × 400 cm
From the Anna Pawelak collection

Zuzanna Janin presented *Fight* as part of her solo exhibition *I Love You Too* in 2001 at the Zachęta – National Gallery of Art. The actual filming was preceded by several months of boxing training, after which the artist faced off against heavyweight boxer Przemysław Saleta. Unlike in a sports ring, here the corners are not

(1992), the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art (1999) and a group exhibition at the Romanian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011). She was recognised as Best Artist of ArtVilnius'16 and a laureate of the *50 Bold Women 2018* award. In 2018, she founded the international Maria Anto and Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven Art Award.

5

Franciszek Orłowski
The Kiss of Love

2008—2009
video, 1'28"



The Kiss of Love documents a performative project in which the artist offered to exchange clothes with homeless men from Poznań, and later incorporated the garments received in his works. This action was an attempt to establish a deeper relationship with people pushed to the margins of society. The unconventional act of exchange required entering the intimate space of another person, crossing physical and emotional boundaries.

Franciszek Orłowski

(b. 1984) an artist and performer specialising in video art, installations and participatory projects. He graduated from the Faculty of Intermedia at the University of Arts in Poznań, earning his degree in 2010 under the supervision of Prof. Mirosław Bałka and Prof. Piotr Kurka.

6

Alicja Żebrowska
Exertising

2004
video, 11'50"

Exertising documents Alicja Żebrowska's performance, staged in 2004 as part of the 10th City of Women Festival in Ljubljana. In order to play the role of Super Dustcard Diva, the artist took a job for one day at the Ljubljana Municipal Company SNAGA. During the performance, she walks around the city in a diva costume, does cleaning work, recites sanitary reports, performs magnet therapy and biostimulation treatments with an infrared lamp, creates an urban sculpture from waste, and takes part in a photo session at the largest municipal landfill. The film and the performance itself confront art with everyday social practices.



Alicja Żebrowska

(b. 1956) a visual artist, sculptor, performer, author of videos and video installations. She graduated with a degree in Sculpture from the Institute of Arts of Maria Curie-

Skłodowska University in Lublin in 1981. In 1992, she earned a post-graduate degree in the class of Prof. Wander Bertonni at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna.

7

Artur Żmijewski

from the *Selected Works* series*Barbara*2012
video, 15'*Helena*2012
video, 15'*Zofia*2012
video, 15'

Three women, Barbara, Helena and Zofia, are the protagonists of three films from the collection of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, part of Żmijewski's *Selected Works* (2006–2012)

series. The main subject of the videos is work, in this case physical work of low social prestige: Barbara is a tram driver, Helena cleans houses and Zofia is a hotel maid. The structure of all the pieces is the same: the artist accompanies each woman with a camera around the clock, recording what is happening in their private and professional lives. All three work in low-paid jobs that do not provide any opportunities for personal growth, which, in a sense, makes them socially disadvantaged. The *Selected Works* series (selected by the artist, but the title also refers to a phrase often used in artistic résumés) can be considered another statement by Żmijewski on the issue of exclusion, which preoccupied him at the time.

Artur Żmijewski

(b. 1966) a visual artist, the author of films, objects, installations and photographs, a curator and author of publications in the field of contemporary art. He studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating in the class of Prof. Grzegorz Kowalski in 1995. One of the prominent representatives of the critical art move-

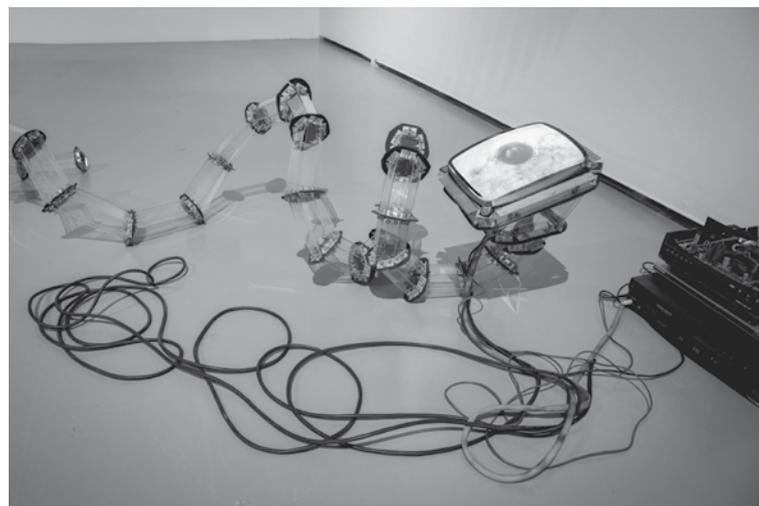
ment in Poland, he was associated for many years with the periodical *Krytyka Polityczna*. In 2005, Żmijewski represented Poland at the 51st International Art Biennale in Venice, where he showed the film *Repetition*; in 2012, he was the curator of the 7th Biennale of Contemporary Art in Berlin.

8

Zbigniew Libera

*The Bather*1991
video installation, 50 × 280 × 130 cm

The title of Zbigniew Libera's video installation comes from the jargon of funeral home workers, who affectionately refer to a dead body being washed before burial as a "bather." A television picture tube, connected to a spiral structure made of transparent acrylic glass plates fastened by metal strips, displays an image of a drain into which water is pouring. As Ryszard W. Kluszczyński notes, the work's austere technological appearance and the theme of transience it raises "clashes the coldness of electronic technology with the fever of mortal matter."



Zbigniew Libera

(b. 1959) an author of objects, installations, videos, photographs and performances. In the 1980s, he was an active member of the Łódź scene, where he was associated with the independent art movement, including the collectives Strych and Kultura Zrzuty. At the same time, he co-founded the music groups NAO and Sternenhoch, as well as the

magazine *Tango*. He is considered a precursor and one of the leading representatives of the critical art movement. His works offer penetrating and subversive comments on the traditional model of upbringing, the cultural perception of corporeality and the codes of mass culture, raising issues about the manipulation of reality by the media.

9

Konrad Smoleński

Drawing

2001
video performance, 3'21"



Made in 2001, Konrad Smoleński's *Drawing* is a for-camera performance dealing with the author's personal struggles related to artistic and educational pressures during

his studies. Half-naked, maintaining a dispassionate facial expression, Smoleński flagellates himself and apologises to his drawing teachers for his laziness, repeating the mantra: "I didn't attend drawing classes." His statements, uttered in a monotonous voice, are filled with negative evaluations of himself: "I've been lazy," "I've been unsystematic," "I've let my professor down."

Konrad Smoleński

(b. 1977) a multimedia artist and graduate of the University of Arts in Poznań. He is the author of installations combining sound, video and performance art in which the energy of punk rock meets minimalist aesthetics. His works, often based on live sound manipulation, explore the boundaries between rock music and

contemporary art. The artist received the Views Deutsche Bank Foundation Award (2011) and represented Poland at the 55th Venice Biennale of Art (2013). He is a co-founder of the sound and performance project BNNT and the artistic collective PENERSTWO.

10

Anna Molska

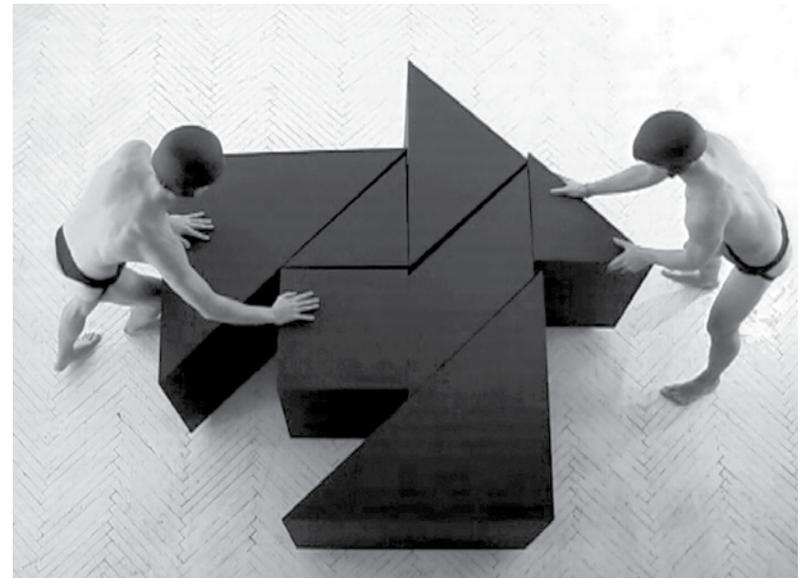
Tanagram

2006—2007
video, 5'18"

The characters in Anna Molska's *Tanagram* – athletic models in helmets and pads – arrange black blocks resembling scaled Chinese tangram puzzles on a white floor. One of the first figures arranged is a black square, evoking associations with the work of Kazimir Malevich. In addition to this allusion to Suprematism, the work includes references to avant-garde Russian theatre scenography, Alexandrov Ensemble songs, and quotes from a Russian-language textbook. The work can be read as a commentary on utopian art projects that were supposed to introduce order and tame chaos.

Anna Molska

(b. 1983) a visual artist mainly working with the medium of film. She studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw from 2003 to 2008, earning her degree in Prof. Grzegorz Kowalski's Studio of Audiovisual Space. She was twice among the laureates of the Samsung Art Master competition, winning an honorary mention in 2003, and the 2nd prize in 2004.



11

Piotr Wyrzykowski

Runner

1993
video, 5'58"

Runner is a video collage. In the centre of the image is the runner, the artist himself. Although he is in motion, he remains a fixed element of the frame, made possible by a device specially constructed for this work. The surroundings change and the silhouette of the running artist himself is also transformed, the figure being sometimes divided into fragments, partially blurred, or in places obscure. By manipulating the S-VHS tape, Wyrzykowski introduces cross-media effects, in-frame windows, transmission disruptions, etc. Groundbreaking technology was used to record reality and to transform it.



Piotr Wyrzykowski aka Peter Style

(b. 1968) a visual artist, performer and stage designer, the author of videos, multimedia performances, interactive installations, online and public projects. He studied interior design in 1989–1991 and then painting in 1991–1995 in the Intermedia Class of Prof. Witosław Czerwonka at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, where he earned his

master's degree. He currently works as a lecturer at the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. He is a co-founder and artistic director of the collective C.U.K.T. (Central Office of Technical Culture), which pioneered the use of internet reach for artistic activities (*Wiktoria Cukt Presidential Campaign*, 2001).

12

Dominik Lejman

Air-Conditioned Room (Breathe Deep)

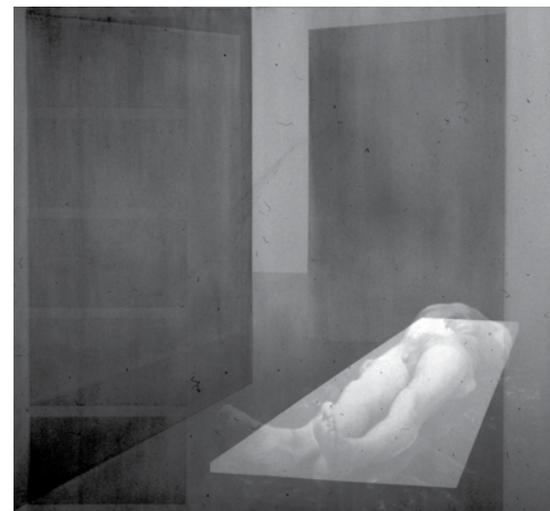
2000
painting
acrylics on canvas
230 × 230 cm
video projection

The purchase was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland from the Foundation for the Promotion of Culture as part of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage's National Collection of Contemporary Art programme.

Air-Conditioned Room (Breathe Deep) is one of Lejman's first works to combine painting with video. A video is subtly projected onto a monochromatic, abstractly painted canvas, introducing the dimension of time and adding slight movement to the painting. The image recorded on the video shows the dead body of a naked man lying on a pedestal resembling a catafalque. The figure's position evokes associations with *The Dead Christ* by the Italian painter Andrea Mantegna. The materiality of the paint and the ephemerality of the video image are equal layers of the work, together building deeper meanings.

Dominik Lejman

(b. 1969) a visual artist and educator, who combines painting with video projections, creates video murals and large-scale projection works. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk and the Royal College of Art in London. Since 2005, he has run the 2nd Painting Studio at the University of Arts in Poznań. He is a winner of the *Polityka* Passport award (2001) and the Berlin Art Prize (2018).



13

Marek Zygmont *Element I, II, III*

2000
video performance, 37'33"

The films *Element I, II, and III* were made as part of the *Beyond Postmodernism* project initiated by Marek Rogulski. Zygmont's contemplative and symbolic work takes the form of a trilogy, but its sequences can also be viewed separately. The blue of the water, the calm, monotonous soundtrack, the view of the artist sitting in a meditative pose at the bottom of the pool – these are the main motifs of the three films shown in a loop. The meditating figure initially emerges rhythmically to replenish the air in his lungs, while in the middle sequence he uses technology and achieves his experience without needing to pause to swim to the surface. *Element III* is not a record of the authentic course of events, like the two previous parts, but a digital montage, where at the end of the meditation the artist's figure "dissolves" in the water, as if in an ocean of consciousness. The recording of the video performance *Element I, II, III* is a breakthrough for the artist, demonstrating that technology and art can serve as tools for personal growth.



Marek Zygmont

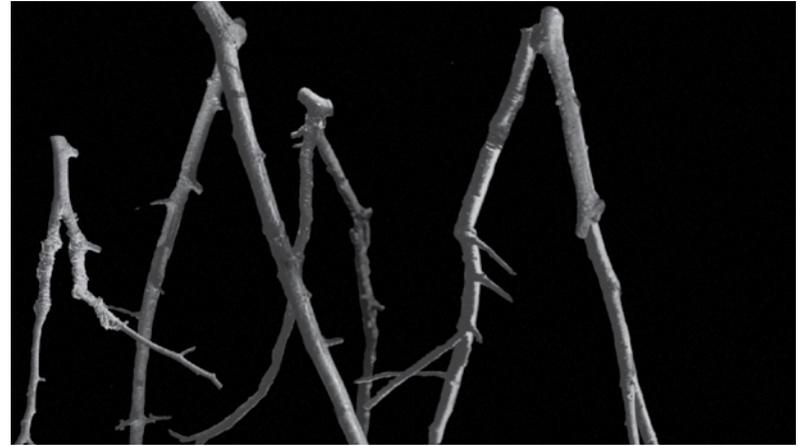
(b. 1975) a performance artist, the creator of multimedia installations, videos, film art forms and documents, as well as a designer of exhibitions and multimedia for theatre scenography. He studied architecture at the Gdańsk University of Technology, graduating in 2002. Since 1995,

he has been creating projects that blend art, technology and philosophy. Drawing from Buddhism, he places both himself and his audience in situations where experience and choices contribute to the development of the individual's awareness.

14

Agnieszka Polska *Five Short Videos*

2012
5-channel video installation, 3'



Five Short Videos is a five-channel video installation consisting of three-minute film shorts, surreal animations depicting a hypnotising beauty in their visual language. The abstract interplay of objects moving to the rhythm of monotonous, looped music, as if in a dream, encourages the viewer to find their own relevant meanings among the images.

Agnieszka Polska

(b. 1985) a visual artist, the author of animated films, videos, photographs and feature films. In 2023, she directed her own theatre play – *The Talking Car*. She studied at the Faculty of Arts of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (2004–2005), at the Faculty of Graphic Arts of the Academy of Fine

Arts in Kraków (2005–2010), and the University of the Arts in Berlin (2008–2009). Winner of the Preis der Nationalgalerie award (2017) and the Film Award (2013) granted by the Polish Film Institute, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and the Wajda School.

15

Tony Oursler *Spectre*

1999
video installation, 10'52"

The installation uses an object from the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. SZMb 2306 MNW.

Tony Oursler created *Spectre* for his exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 1999. The work consists of a table, an object resembling a doll and a small video projector. Trapped under the table, brought to life by sound and a colour video projection with a female face projected onto a head made of a white pillow, the doll evokes anxiety and kindles the imagination. Oursler's works examine the relationship between the individual and visual technology, exploring the psychological and social aspects of the impact of media on human consciousness.

Tony Oursler

(b. 1957) an American multimedia artist, a pioneer of new media art. His work combines video, sculpture, installation, performance art and painting. Oursler graduated from the California Institute of the Arts in Santa Clarita in 1979.



16

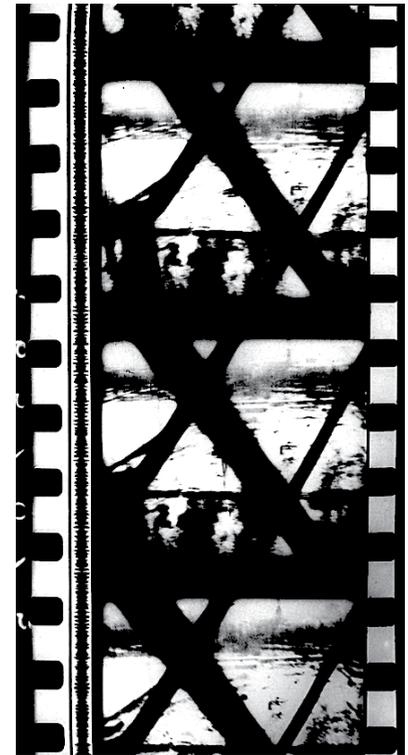
Józef Robakowski *I Am Going*

1973
video performance, 3'

The video performance *I Am Going* was made during Józef Robakowski's activity at the Workshop of the Film Form. It opens a series of what he called "biological-mechanical recordings." In the 1970s, Robakowski explored the relations between the human body and technology. In *I Am Going*, a camera, attached to Robakowski's body, records his monotonous climb up the stairs of a parachute tower. The film, shot in a single take, reflects the real-time action without any editing.

Józef Robakowski

(b. 1939) a multimedia artist, considered an icon of Polish experimental film. His oeuvre includes films, photographs, videos, drawings, installations and conceptual projects. He studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and at the Faculty of Cinematography of the National



Film, Television and Theatre School in Łódź, where he was a lecturer in 1970–1981 and again from 1995. The co-founder of many experimental art groups, including the Workshop of the Film Form. He was the curator of the Exchange Gallery and the originator of the Katarzyna Kobro Award.

17

Wojciech Bąkowski

Making New Worlds Instead of Forgetting About It

2010
video, 5'30"

In *Making New Worlds Instead of Forgetting About It*, Bąkowski combined digital images with animated photographs and a disturbing soundtrack. The actual visual material is relatively humble, limited to subtle, computer-generated textures and images familiar from the immediate surroundings: a view from a window, a flying bird and a bathroom door. The film's atmosphere may suggest that inner experiences have been translated here into visual, aural and digital compositions. The world presented is incoherent, dominated by a sense of isolation that arouses a desire to escape. However, the lyrical subject decides to continue creating new worlds, opposing the mood of resignation. Bąkowski draws here on the aesthetics of early analogue video.



Wojciech Bąkowski

(b. 1979) an author of animated films, a graphic artist, poet and creator of audio performances and alternative music. He studied at the Audiosphere Studio and the Animation Studio of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań. A co-founder of the artistic collective Penerstwo and leader of the music

bands KOT, Niwea, Czykita and Gerda (together with Jan Piasecki); a member of the PINKPUNK association. In 2009, Bąkowski won the Views Deutsche Bank Foundation Award, and in 2010 he was awarded the *Polityka* Passport.

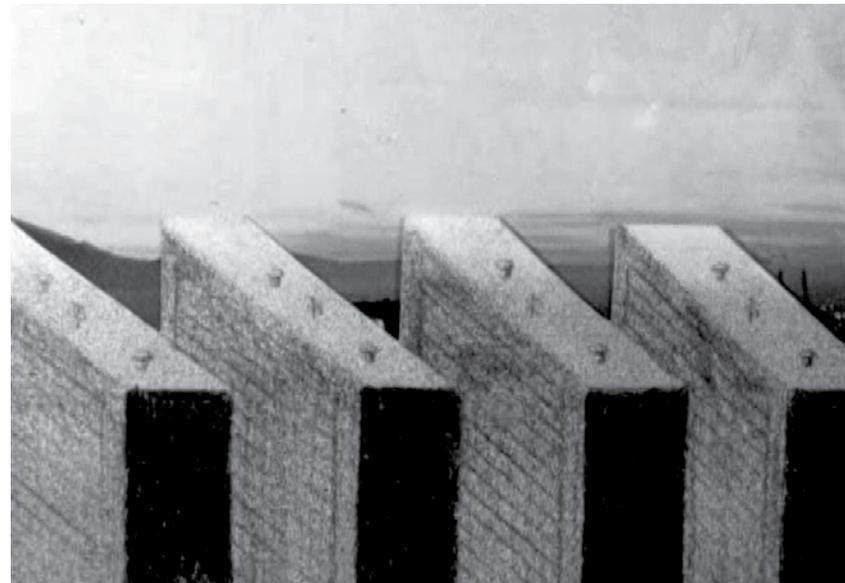
18

Wojciech Bąkowski

Spoken Movie 2

2008
video, 8'08"
collage, 50 × 50 cm

Spoken Movie 2 is one of the six *Spoken Movies* that Bąkowski created between 2006 and 2011. The entire series displays a combination of animated film with verbal narration. The artist alludes to the tradition of Polish animated-film, but at the same time clearly distances himself from it. *Spoken Movie 2* was made out of a fascination with "human talk." The lyrical subject and observer – a disabled person riding public transport – conducts an incessant monologue consisting of a series of loose associations, repeated phrases and peculiar vocalisations. When recording the soundtrack for this film, the artist stood on his head to obtain the appropriate sound of the voice.



19

Norman Leto *Buttes-Monteaux 1*

2008
video, 10'

Buttes Monteaux 1 is a computer animation that Norman Leto first showed at the exhibition *Song Buttes Monteaux with the Music Video*



and *Three Oil Paintings* at the Nova Gallery in Kraków in 2007. The artist used animation and editing techniques to create a hypnotising vision in which reality and fiction interpenetrate. Made in the convention of a music video, the work consists of three parallel tracks: music, visualisation, and text appearing at the bottom of the screen. The post-grunge atmosphere of the song, performed by the artist and his friends, is emphasised by a poster with Cobain's hair, appearing in several shots in the film. The minimalist, computer-created interiors show paintings that were displayed in the gallery during the show, as well as shapes generated and controlled by crowd-behaviour simulation software. The work touches on purely existential issues, indicating the confusion of modern man, the lack of authenticity.

Norman Leto (aka Łukasz Banach)

(b. 1980) a visual artist, writer, filmmaker and multimedia artist renowned for projects combining art, science and technology. He created a fictional artist who soon became his alter ego and artistic pseudonym.

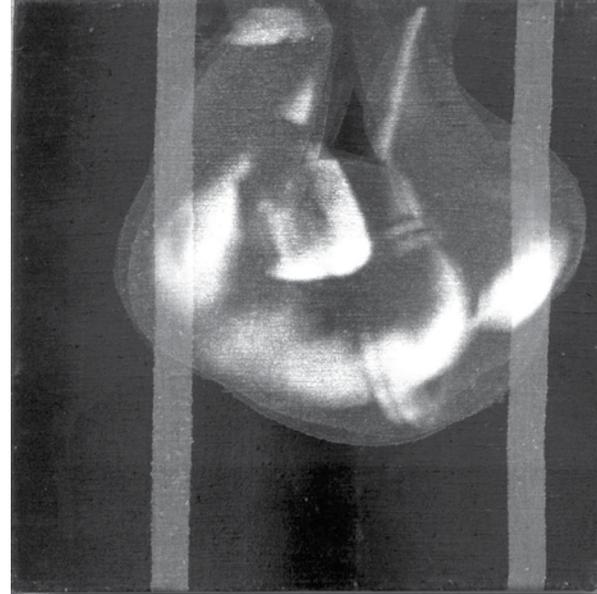
Leto's debut exhibition took place in 2007 at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art. He is the author of the full-length films *Sailor* (based on his eponymous novel) and *Photon*.

20

Dominik Lejman *Airbag*

1999
painting, acrylics on canvas, 32×32 cm
video projection, 1h33'37"

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



The painting depicts a man suspended by his arms and legs, with a car airbag placed between his knees. His breathing and movement are quite limited, due to the tight, unnatural position he is forced to assume. A slight movement of the body allows us to recognise what has been painted and what is being projected. The figure in the painting comes alive for a moment, tries to liberate himself, to break free. This is impossible, because his movement is limited by two airbags – the one he is holding in the image recorded on video tape, and the one painted on canvas.

Dominik Lejman

(b. 1969) a visual artist and educator, who combines painting with video projections, creates video murals and large-scale projection works. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk and the Royal College of Art

in London. Since 2005, he has been running the 2nd Painting Studio at the University of Arts in Poznań. He is a winner of the *Polityka* Passport award (2001) and the Berlin Art Prize (2018).

21

Dominika Olszowy

Wanda Wanton

2015
video, 9'14"

Wanda Wanton is a mockumentary that asks questions about the boundaries between destruction and creation, and about the way society sees artistic practices that transgress social norms. The eponymous Wanda Wanton is a mysterious teacher from Wieliczka who, at night – perhaps possessed by the spirits of the ancient Vandal tribe – indulges in acts of destruction, calling them “acts of art”. It is possible that Olszowy’s alter ego – Wanton – expresses the belief that art can emerge from acts of vandalism. This prompts reflection on whether vandalism can be perceived as an act of freedom and a way to free oneself from the imposed social order. Olszowy uses humour and irony to ask questions about creativity and social expectations towards art.



Dominika Olszowy

(b. 1988) a visual artist working with video, installations, performance, stage design and costume design. She graduated from Prof. Marek Wasilewski’s class at the Faculty of

Intermedia of the University of Arts in Poznań (2012). Winner of the Views Deutsche Bank Foundation Award (2019) and the ING Polish Art Foundation Award (2018).

22

Oskar Dawicki

Game Worth the Candle

2006
video, 8'21"

Game Worth the Candle is styled after teleshopping TV. Dawicki touts *Hide*, a painting by Rafał Bujnowski, offering it for sale for 7,000 euros, in a package with a promotional film for an additional 2,500 euros. The value of the work is confirmed by art-market experts: Anda Rottenberg, Jarosław Suchan and Adam Szymczyk. To sell a single work, Dawicki uses an advertising format targeted at a wide audience, in the most expensive medium, i.e. television, which gives the undertaking a touch of the grotesque.

Rafał Bujnowski

Hide

2004
painting, oil on canvas
40 × 60 cm



Oskar Dawicki

(b. 1971) a performance artist, the author of objects and videos. He studied painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (1991–1996), where he graduated in the class of Prof. Lech Wolski. From 2001 through

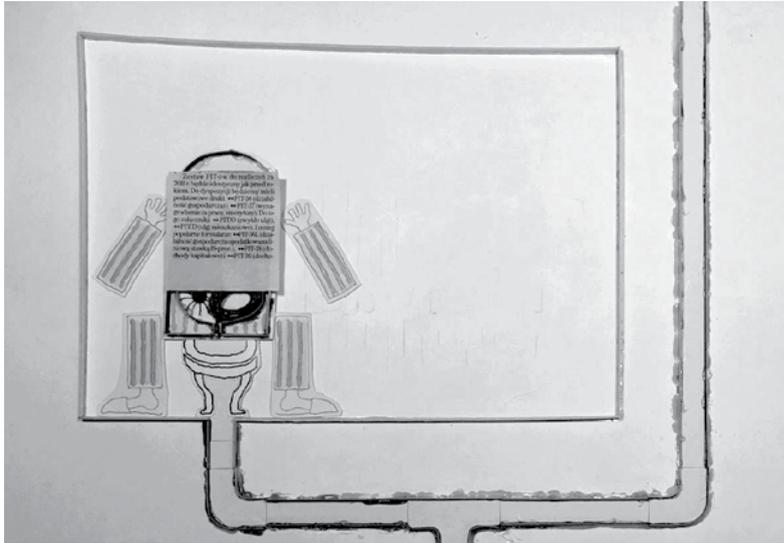
2010, he was a member of the artist collective Azorro. His life inspired a book by collaborating curators Łukasz Gorczyca and Łukasz Ronduda. He is also the main character in the feature-length film *Performer*.

23

Piotr Bosacki *Utter Rubbish*

2011
video, 7'
collages, (5×) 50 × 50 cm

Piotr Bosacki's animation *Utter Rubbish* is about absurdities. The first story concerns the artist's chain of dependencies and obligations, presented by a character dragging a string of objects behind him. The second is a surreal story about intestinal parasites that leave the human body to lead a second life in sewage pipes. The conventionality of the plot and the artistic means employed give this macabre, absurd, grotesque story an intriguing power.



Piotr Bosacki

(b. 1977) a visual artist, the author of film animations, books and objects, as well as a composer. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań and the Fryderyk Chopin State School of Music in Warsaw; co-founder of the Penerstwo artist collective and KOT, a music band.

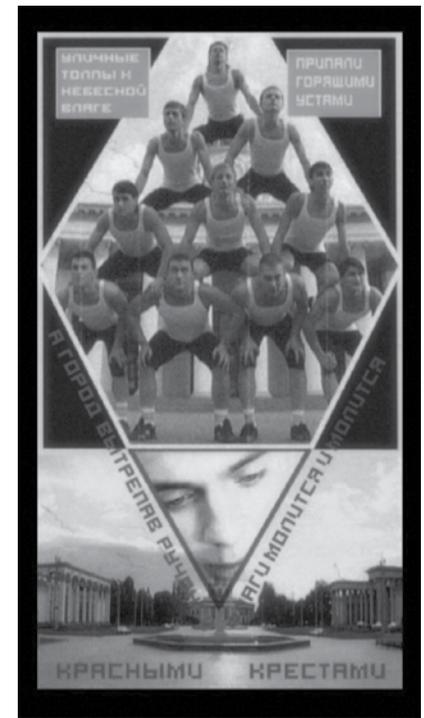
He has authored a book *Traumtagebuch* (2010). His *Dracula* (2010) won the audience award in the Independent Cinema Competition at the Polish Film Festival in Gdynia. Bosacki lectures at the Department of Intermedia at the University of Arts in Poznań.

24

Piotr Wyrzykowski *Comunnostalgies*

2004
video installation
videos, 1'38", 2'59"
lightboxs,
103 × 75 × 10 cm,
103 × 79 × 10 cm,
103 × 74,5 × 10 cm

The work was shown at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2005, at the collective exhibition *Beyond the Red Horizon*, which presented works by artists from Poland and Russia. It is an installation consisting of three lightboxes and two monitors with video projections. Incorporating elements from the constructivist collages of the Soviet avant-garde artist Alexander Rodchenko and the poems of Vladimir Mayakovsky, Wyrzykowski has juxtaposed them with footage of gymnastic arrangements (pyramids) performed by athletes from a circus school and elements of the gritty reality of the former Soviet Union, such as exercises in an outdoor gym constructed of steel elements, resembling a scrapyard. The work was shot in Kiev.



Piotr Wyrzykowski alias Peter Style

(b. 1968) a visual artist, performer, and stage designer. He studied interior design in 1989–1991, and then painting from 1991 to 1995 in Prof. Witosław Czerwonka's Intermedia Studio at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, where he graduated. He currently works as

a lecturer at the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. A co-founder and artistic director of the collective C.U.K.T. (Central Office of Technical Culture), which pioneered the use of the internet for artistic activities (*Wiktorija Cukt Presidential Campaign*, 2001).

25

Christian Jankowski
Heavy Weight History

2013
video, 25'46"

Christian Jankowski
Heavy Weight History (Ludwik Waryński)

2013
photograph, 140 × 186 cm

Heavy Weight History was created for Christian Jankowski's exhibition at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in 2013. The artist invited powerlifting champions to take on the challenge of lifting the Warsaw monuments of Ludwik Waryński, Willy Brandt, the Mermaid, Ronald Reagan and Brotherhood of Arms, with their struggles being commented on by sports journalist Michał Olszański. The athletes' efforts illustrate the burden of history, which requires extraordinary strength to face. The project addresses the issue of symbolism of monuments in public space and their impact on our perception of history. Olszański's commentary encourages reflection on whether historical monuments bring the past to life, or rather make it heavy and dead.

Christian Jankowski

(b. 1968) a German artist whose practice combines video, photography, installation and performance art. Jankowski studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg. In 2016,

he was the curator of Manifesta 11, becoming the first artist to hold this position. He is the winner of the Heiland Foundation Award (2013) and the Finkenwerder Art Award (2015).



26

Karol Radziszewski
Fag Fighters: Prologue

2007
video, 14'30"

Karol Radziszewski
Fag Fighters: Prologue

2007
photograph, 75 × 100 cm

Fag Fighters: Prologue begins Karol Radziszewski's series of films about a fictional gay fighting squad. In it, the artist records his grandmother in the process of weaving a pink balaclava for him. Radziszewski challenges stereotypical views about homosexuals, showing them as aggressive, violent people. Part of the work is a colour photograph showing the artist sitting in a pink balaclava next to his grandmother.



Karol Radziszewski

(b. 1977) a visual artist, the author of films, photographs, paintings, installations and interdisciplinary projects. He graduated in Painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 2004. Winner of the Samsung Art Master competition and the *Polityka* Passport award. An LGBT activist, he

is the publisher and editor-in-chief of *DIK Magazine* and founder of the Queer Archives Institute, an organisation whose goal is to collect, study and share queer archives, especially those from or related to Central and Eastern Europe.

27

Hubert Czerepok *Reaching the Stars*

2011
video, 25'05"

Made using archival materials from the National Hydrological and Meteorological Institute, Czerepok's film tells the story of Polish meteorological rocket prototypes tested in the 1960s and 70s. Recorded using amateur equipment in research institutes and on missile ranges near Lake Rożnowskie, in the Błędów Desert, as well as in former German military bases near Łeba and Ustka, the footage is accompanied by a soundtrack designed by the artist. The 1960s documentary-film style commentary and the music, evoking the atmosphere of educational films from the times of the Polish People's Republic, introduce a sense of uneasiness.



Hubert Czerepok

(b. 1973) a visual artist, filmmaker and educator working with diverse media, including video, installation art, photography and drawing. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań, graduating in 1999 from

the classes of Prof. Izabella Gustowska and Prof. Jan Berdyszak. He is a lecturer at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, where he runs the Studio of Experimental Film.

28

Izabella Gustowska *Day of the Eclipse: Tea Time*

2000
mobile video installation
9'36", 3'51"

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



Day of the Eclipse: Tea Time is part of Izabela Gustowska's series *Relative Similarities II – L'amour passion* (2000–2002).

The work's central element is a large, oval-shaped, mobile object, resembling an antenna or

a space probe, which serves as a screen. Made of metal rods and transparent acrylic glass, the structure moves in a slow, pendulum-like motion. The screen displays projections of tea accessories – a cup, a teapot, a sugar bowl, a spoon. The image keeps morphing, taking the shape of a breast or a stylised lily. Everyday objects intertwine here with images of the body.

Izabella Gustowska

(b. 1948) a visual artist, a pioneer of feminist art, the author of paintings, graphics, photographs, videos, installations and performances. In the years 1967–1972, she studied at the State Higher School of Fine Arts

(currently the University of Arts) in Poznań, where she later worked for many years as a teacher, obtaining the title of professor. She is a laureate of the Birgit Skiöld Memorial Trust Award (1984).

Artur
Żmijewski
RCPA

2000
video, 7'

The work premiered at the collective exhibition *Scene 2000* at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in

2000. The artist invited former conscripts, soldiers of the Representative Company of the Polish Army, to participate in the project. In the first part of the film, dressed in borrowed uniforms and with mock weapons, they perform a representative drill to the sounds of martial songs, marching in parade formation by the Berling Army monument. In the second part, the same men appear in a ballet hall filled with mirrors. Undressed, initially only in boots and four-cornered caps, and later completely naked, but still with rifles, they perform the same exercises as in the open air. Their bodies, stripped of military costume and context, become free and delicate again. The men pick up on the atmosphere of joyful fun in the hall, exposing their nudity, which reveals their weakness and fragility, completely contrary to the stereotype of masculinity.



Cinema screenings

Artur Żmijewski

(b. 1966) a visual artist, the author of films, objects, installations and photographs, as well as a curator and author of publications in the field of contemporary art. He studied at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, graduating in the class of Prof. Grzegorz Kowalski in 1995. A prominent representa-

tive of the critical art movement in Poland, he was associated for many years with the periodical *Krytyka Polityczna*. In 2005, Żmijewski represented Poland at the 51st Venice Biennale, where he showed the film *Repetition*, and in 2012 he was the curator of the 7th Biennale of Contemporary Art in Berlin.

Anna Konik

Under a Placid Sky

2018
film, 89'

The purchase was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland from the Foundation for the Promotion of Culture as part of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage's National Collection of Contemporary Art programme.

Anna Konik's documentary film presents the history of Dobrodzień, a town in Upper Silesia, through the prism of the experiences of its diverse community. Anna Konik, whose parents were repatriated from the pre-war eastern provinces, intertwines the fates of Jews, Germans and Poles into one narrative. The story is told through the micro-histories of the residents, archival photos and documents. The camera slowly records architecture and nature, lending the work an intimate feel. The central figure is the artist's mother, suffering from dementia, a metaphor for the collective loss of memory. The work touches on the subject of transience, the repression of painful memories and gaps in history. The artist tries to fill the void left after traumatic experiences, restoring forgotten images and words, thus creating a universal story about memory and identity.



Anna Konik

(b. 1974) an interdisciplinary artist whose work includes video installations, art films, para-documentaries, photographs and drawings. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the classes of Krzysztof M. Bednarski (1996–1997) and Prof. Grzegorz Kowalski, where she graduated in 2000. She completed post-graduate studies in the studios of

Prof. Inge Mahn and Gunter Eiserman at the Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weissensee (2001–2002). In 2012, she earned a PhD in Fine Arts. Since 2022, she has been assistant professor at the Faculty of Animation and Intermedia at the University of Arts in Poznań, where she currently runs the Experimental Film Studio.

Joanna Rajkowska

Oxygenator

2007
video, 18'05"

Joanna Rajkowska's *Oxygenator*, produced by the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art on a grassy patch at Grzybowski Square in Warsaw, was on view from July through September 2007. The film documents the work on the project, its implementation and subsequent reception.

A pond was created in the middle of the green area, with an area of approximately 140 square metres and 1 metre deep, planted with greenery, ornamental shrubs and water lilies, equipped with special devices for ozonating the air and generating fog. The pond was surrounded by seats designed by Michał Kwasięborski.

Grzybowski Square in the centre of the city has a traumatic history. It is a place where the old and new architecture mingle. On the one hand there is a synagogue, All Saints' Church and uniform apartment blocks – once symbols of modern, post-war Warsaw, while on the other there are gleaming office high-rises and luxury apartment buildings. Local residents pass by but do not know each other.

Rajkowska's *Oxygenator* was an attempt to create a virtually perfect place, an enclave of clean air, where residents could meet and spend time together.



Joanna Rajkowska

(b. 1968) the author of objects, films, installations, public actions and interventions, as well as sculptures and photographs. From 1988 to 1993, she studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, where she earned her degree in the

class of Prof. Jerzy Nowosielski. From 1987 through 1992 she studied art history at the Jagiellonian University. In 2007, she won the *Polityka* Passport award for *Oxygenator* and other public projects.

Heidrun Holzfeind

Behind the Iron Gate

2009
video, 55'

Behind the Iron Gate documents the life of a Warsaw housing estate built between 1965 and 1972 on the ruins of the Small Ghetto. Heidrun Holzfeind, an Austrian artist who was a resident at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, recorded its everyday life, conducting interviews with the residents of the blocks and employees of the services located there, filming scenes in stairwells, in apartments, hallways, shops and their surroundings – parking areas, lawns and playgrounds. She also found fragments of films and TV series from the 1970s in which the housing project appears. Holzfeind captured discussions about the changes taking place in social life and about the adaptation of modernist architecture to the contemporary needs of the residents. In addition, she recorded the realities of life in a housing estate in the centre of the capital in a unique way, avoiding journalistic bias, aestheticisation, or sentimentalism, offering an insightful image of social and architectural changes.



Heidrun Holzfeind

(b. 1972) an Austrian video artist. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and Central Saint Martins in London. Her work focuses on architecture and social contexts. Holzfeind is valued for her insight and unique approach to urban and social issues.

**Marcus Kaiser,
Andree Korpys,
Markus Löffler**
Supersam

2002
video, 12' 47"

Warsaw's Supersam was the first supermarket in socialist Eastern Europe. Opened in 1962, designed by Jerzy Hryniewiecki, Maciej Krasiński and Ewa Krasińska, the building quickly gained recognition as an architectural icon of late modernism. In 2002, three German artists in residence at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art – Marcus Kaiser, Andree Korpys, and Markus Löffler – made a documentary about Supersam, featuring personnel who had been associated with the store for 40 years. The staged pseudo-interviews, in fact ready-made statements prepared by the artists, were contrasted with shots of everyday life in the store and the employees' ordinary activities: cutting meat, counting money, sharing jokes during lunch breaks. Experimenting with the documentary format, the film became a nostalgic memento of the iconic place after Supersam was demolished in 2006.



Marcus Kaiser

(b. 1966) a German visual artist and photographer. He studied sociology, photography and media art at the HfG Karlsruhe, at the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, and has conducted research at the Caspar David Friedrich Institute at the University of Greifswald. Since 2012, he has taught photography and the history of photography at the Department of Design at the THWS Würzburg-Schweinfurt.

Andree Korpys (ur. 1966)
Markus Löffler (ur. 1963)

an artist duo from Bremen. They studied photography and film at FH Bielefeld in Germany (1989–1993) and completed postgraduate studies at HfG Karlsruhe at the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe (1993–1996). They were lecturers at the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg (2007–2009) and have been teaching at the Academy of Arts in Bremen since 2009.

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