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# PRODUCING HERITAGE

## KAROLINA J. DUDEK AND SŁAWOMIR SIKORA<sup>1</sup> TALK TO BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT<sup>2</sup>

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**SS: Let us begin with simple questions: how do you define heritage? What are its most important features, and why has it turned to be such a key issue today?**

**BGK:** On the one hand, when we hear the word 'heritage', we generally know what it means. It is something from the past that is of value. I personally, however, think of heritage differently: for me heritage is something that is new. There are many elements of culture that we would not call 'heritage'. However, when a certain danger to them appears: people stop telling stories, sing songs, organize celebrations, namely when these cultural practices cease to be general, attempts are made to preserve them or boost them, or revive them, and precisely as a result of such activities, something new is produced: that is heritage.

**SS: And what is the difference between 'heritage' and 'tradition'?**

**BGK:** I believe we should distinguish the use of these words in everyday life from the sense that we give them as academics, or specialists professionally dealing with heritage. There is no academic discipline that is called 'tradition' and there no academics that cultivate it, yet as scholars we use the term. However, when people belonging to a community are asked about their holidays, a definite dish, or a culinary practice, there is high chance that they will respond: *it is our tradition*. If someone says so, he or she actually wants to say: *We appreciate what we have been doing for so long, it is ours, it has been passed from generation to generation*. This is how people generally understand tradition, yet there are still some understandings typical of specific cultures. For example, in Hebrew, there is tradition understood as *halaha* and as *minhag*. *Halaha* refers to the Jewish law, while *minhag* to Jewish customs. Some customs are so important and so powerful that they are treated as if they were the law. Both in mediaeval and contemporary Hebrew there is a word for *tradition*, namely *masoret*, however it means something

different. Thus 'tradition' is something which works in everyday life, in living communities. Instead, 'heritage' is something that we know first of all thanks to UNESCO and its efforts meant to protect both tangible and intangible heritage, world heritage, which is a relatively new concept as heritage of mankind.

**SS: Could we thus say that heritage is that something which appears when culture becomes an issue to analyze, a challenge for the people living in it?**

**BGK:** Yes, I do believe that heritage is a means of cultural production in which something new that refers to the past is produced. This kind of cultural production surprises and begins to act at definite moments. Such a situation takes place when a feeling appears, either within the community itself, or outside it, that for various reasons a certain set of precious cultural practices is becoming a thing of the past. This may be happening as the younger generation is no longer interested in certain practices. This may happen due to a sudden boom in tourism: the community that has to adjust to it moves more and more away from the tradition regarded as valuable. There may be a case when a certain cultural practice ceased having economic justification, as it lacks market or public. We might come across a situation that nobody can speak the language of the tradition, or nobody can understand it, or that the younger generation does not want to learn certain activities, since young people do not want to spend their time weaving baskets or textiles. Sometimes, tradition finds it impossible to survive emigration, dispersion or migration, or changes occurring in the environment: natural resources becoming exhausted, extinction of certain species that are of basic importance for a certain cultural practice. Therefore, when similar challenges emerge, attempts are often made to identify such cultural practices, define their scope, subsidize them, create new conditions or other means to preserve them or revive.



1. Lecture by Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett *Materializing History: The Role of Intangible Heritage at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews*, part of the official opening of the 'Images of Cultural Diversity and Heritage. NAFA Film Festival' Project, 21 September 2015, the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

**SS: And what role in the process of creating heritage is played by museums, particularly ethnographic museums? And how has this role changed over the last century?**

**BGK:** Looking from a historical perspective, ethnographic museums for a long time used to collect tangible heritage, and obviously non-material, too. However, within the very discipline some major changes occurred, particularly following the fall of colonial empires. Everything changed when the colonies: British, Belgian, French, and German gained independence. Also native communities in the countries in which white settlers were the creators of the country, became more active: in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. Political mobilization of the American Indians, Maori, Aborigines and other native peoples went hand in hand with the activities related to their own culture. Native communities began saying: *your ethnography is our heritage, your ethnography is our patrimony, you are showing our patrimony in your museums, and you are making ethnography out of it, which for us is a problem.* Ethnographic museums found themselves under a tremendous pressure, and the whole situation led to their transformation. Simultaneously, in anthropology knowledge production gradually transferred from museums to universities, this happening throughout the whole twentieth century, and anthropology was becoming more and more an academic theoretical discipline, to a growing degree interested in social organization, systems of beliefs, non-material legacy, and far

less dependent on museum collections. Museum collections became the materialization of the outdated version of the discipline: they testified to the history of anthropology and ethnography, distanced from their then field of interest. In this way ethnographic museums found themselves between the crisis related to the discipline's condition (structuring of new theories moved to university), and the crisis related to the issues connected with patrimony (native communities demanded the return of their things). Such a challenge affected ethnographic or anthropological museums, like Amsterdam's Tropenmuseum, or the ethnographic department at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In a sense, they became heritage museums, as they have a greater responsibility towards the peoples whose objects they have in their collections. The museums had to change their attitude and activity modes.

All this testifies to a far more general change in the paradigm which took place in museums: they started being more focused on the visitor than on the collections. Previously, curators had cared first of all for protecting the collection against the visitors; today a museum has first of all responsibility towards the public: both the community who have provided the collection items, as well as those who come to see the collection. Thus the source communities, the visitors, and the collections, establish a totally new relation. The changes began in the 1960s and gained momentum parallel to the appearance of new museology in the 1970s. The Te Papa Tongarewa Museum in New Zealand can serve as a perfect example.



2. Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett guides participants in the 'Visual Anthropology and European Cultural Heritage' Conference and in the Polish edition of the NAFA festival organised within the framework of the 'Images of Cultural Diversity and Heritage. NAFA Film Festival in Warsaw' Project around the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

It is not so long ago that the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, started their attempts to revive the Maori tongue and regain their rightful place in the history of New Zealand, all this in compliance with the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. It was in the course of those activities that the New Zealand national museums: the National Art Gallery, full of British, but also New Zealand art, and the Dominion Museum, in which not only natural history was on display, but also that of the Maori and peoples of the South Pacific, found themselves on the firing line. Such a division of work between institutions may have been acceptable in the 1930s, but not today. The decision was made to raise a new museum, join all the collections, and thoroughly reorganize the national museum. Under the new realities, the Maori would be able to speak of their heritage using their own language, their own terminology and categories. In this context the term patrimony seems more adequate than heritage.

**KJD: I would like to be a bit provocative... How is the process that you have just described visible in Polish ethnographical museums? Or maybe their situation is different in the sense that we have not had colonies? How have they been changing?**

**BKG:** I would say that what I have been talking about refers to *Völkerkunde*, ethnology, namely to non-European peoples. What can be seen in the majority of Polish ethnographic museums, is, though obviously not only, part

of the European *Völkerkunde* history. Basically, this is part of a national project, a way of structuring a nation through searching what is native for it, and placing the heart of the nation in the regions considered to be the least tarnished by international currents of the European civilization. An extremely interesting ethnographic museum can be found in Switzerland's Neuchâtel. It is one of the most radical European ethnographic museums, at the same time being one of the most self-reflective and self-critical as for curator practice. There are also interesting examples from Poland. I remember a cycle of posters issued by Warsaw's National Ethnographic Museum. A group of people, not looking very Polish – more Asian or African – were photographed wearing Polish folk costumes and this was striking, since it showed how the image of Polishness is constructed. To what extent the type of the body wearing a costume is a part of it? Can a Vietnamese man or woman living in Poland stand a chance of becoming a Pole in view of the definition of Polishness so deeply rooted in the landscape or in the language, and in the folk dress – the definition that is obviously a nineteenth-century invention. Another good example can be seen in Erika Lehrer's exhibition *Souvenir, Talisman, Toy* with the motif of 'a Jew with a coin'. The Exhibition, opened for two weeks at the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Cracow's Kazimierz District during the 2013 Jewish Culture Festival, was interesting, because it juxtaposed contemporary figurine with historic objects from the Museum's collection. It made visitors critically think of the omnipresent and controversial cultural form;





3. Participants in the 'Images of Cultural Diversity and Heritage. NAFA Film Festival in Warsaw' project creating their own prints on a printing press

however, it did not focus directly on the Museum itself, and its foundation, though it had such a potential.

**KJD: And is the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews a kind of an ethnographic museum?**

**BKG:** I personally consider it more a museum of social history, of multidisciplinary character. It is not a frequent case: you do not have only historians working here, but also an anthropologist, a folklorist, ethnomusicologist, sociolinguist, social psychologist, literary scholar, art historian, philosopher, sociologist – we are a multidisciplinary institution. I would also say that our peculiar feature is to apply the layer of ethnography, not actually preparing ethnographic exhibitions. The observation: *This is ethnography!* most frequently has a disrespectful connotation. I can recall a conversation with one of our donors, and it was at the onset of our work. *What discipline do you represent?*, he asked. *Anthropology*, I replied. *Oh, I know what this exhibition will look like! There'll be headdresses and wigwams!* This goes to say that our donor was expecting an 'ethnographic' exhibition, which for him meant *Fiddler on the Roof* and *shtetl* – yuck! In other words, to say that *something is ethnographic* is as if to say *it will be ethnokitch*. *Ethnographic* does not sound good, which obviously does not please me, as we do not think of ethnography in this way, for us it is far more modern.

**KJD: And how does the Polin Museum use material and non-material resources in its narrative of the history of Polish Jews?**

**BKG:** Firstly, for many reasons our greatest resource is the intangible heritage. As we know from history of museums, they have concentrated on tangible heritage. However, without the non-material heritage, the material one is merely matter that does not matter. Museums have always found it difficult to share the intangible heritage: music, conversations, different-type shows, or simply thoughts. The most obvious way would be to show material culture related to those shows, or masks and costumes, and today also resorting to photographs, audios, and videos. There are many examples of live shows staged in museum galleries. There obviously exists a multimedia record which is in itself an object. However, photography, video, and audio should not be regarded as merely reality's epidermis that has been successfully taken off it. Documentation creates a totally new type of an object. In a sense, multimedia documentation is obviously entirely different from written ethnography, yet it does not differ so much from it radically in the sense that each time we deal with an object created by ethnographers. Historically speaking, ethnography was associated with the process of writing culture, ethnography produced a written text, and culture was constructed while the text was being written.



4. Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett guides participants in the 'Images of Cultural Diversity and Heritage. NAFA Festival in Warsaw' project around the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Thus regardless of whether the means of expression are writing, drawing, photography, video or audio recording, ethnographic objects are created. Literally speaking, ethnography objects are created, so they are 'objects' produced by ethnographers. Museums to a high degree work resorting to documentation. The question is if they are able to work using the material that in its majority constitutes the record of intangible heritage.

Intangible heritage constitutes an extremely important part of our history. There are entire historical periods, for instance in the mediaeval gallery, spanning the period: 963–1507, which is over 500 years, from which there are almost no artefacts directly related to Jews, made by Jews, or for Jews; we have nothing apart from Jewish tombstones, actually very scarce, and coins featuring Hebrew inscriptions, which are not numerous, either. Tombstones and coins are extremely important objects, however a narrative on almost 6 centuries can hardly be structured around few preserved Jewish tombstones and several tiny coins with Hebrew inscriptions on. We have to tell the story which begins with a trip of several merchants in order to show that by the end of this long period the centre of the world of Ashkenazi Jews had shifted from Western Europe to the lands that our Museum is talking about. How did it happen? Just the coins and tombstones will not suffice to give the answer, I have to resort to documents, of a very particular type: statutes, contracts,

tax registers, maps, travel accounts, as well as letters which rabbis wrote to each other: *shayles un tshuves*, namely questions and advice. The rabbis' correspondence is extremely interesting, since in essence it is a collection of legal cases. The material contains the earliest testimonies of Jewish life on the Polish soil. Why? The beginnings of the history that the Museum talks about is inseparably linked with the international trade routes and people who covered them back and forth, while the rabbis in Western Europe were greatly concerned for the Jewish merchants travelling so far away from any organized Jewish community. They were wondering what those people were doing in the 'Wild East'? Whether they obeyed the Jewish religious law? Was their conduct appropriate? It was concern that hid behind the letters sent to Jewish religious authorities in the Rhineland. A Jew, living in the 'East', coming across a passing Jewish merchant might, for example, ask him: *Listen, we have a spring here, yet water in it is hot, not cold, while springs usually have cold water. We would like to know whether this water can be used for ritual washings?* Or a merchant might have observed something of concern to him and would write to the rabbi in the Rhineland: *I am greatly worried, since I have observed that Jews walk on Shabbat with their swords, and they even take them out. Does this not violate Shabbat?* And it turns out that according to the Jewish law arms can be carried on Shabbat. These kinds of letters and answers



were collected in manuscripts, and thanks to them we can reach everything we know of the Jewish life on those territories at that time. This is precisely the material I would consider intangible heritage.

In this case it is not important if we show the genuine document or not – in many a case the original manuscripts do not exist, and we have to base ourselves on their later versions. However, it is not the matter of the materiality, the original substance, real physical objects, but what they ‘contain within’, what they tell us, and what they show. If we displayed the genuine object, it would not convey its contents to the visitors, since the majority would not be able to read it. Besides, in an open code only one page could be shown, while the texts are generally devoid of illustrations. I would, however, be extremely willing to present the *Mahzor Worms*, thirteenth-century prayer book from Worms. The illustrated Hebrew manuscript contains the oldest existing, full and legible, sentence in Yiddish. Its words form a blessing for the man who carries that prayer-book into the synagogue. It was not until I saw the original that I understood what the sentence actually meant. The *Mahzor Worms* is a huge and extremely heavy code, while the cantor for whom it had been made was an old man. I feel extremely emotional about that object. The possibility to see its original triggered a chain of associations that a facsimile possibly would not have permitted, though it could have allowed to imagine the size and weight of the object.

**KJD:** Therefore the material tells us a lot about the non-material. Could you give us some other examples?

**BKG:** It is interesting how customary practices, that is the intangible heritage, was recorded. Let us take the example of the *Shulhan arukh*, a brief code of Jewish law related to the Shabbat, holidays, kashrut, and many aspects of everyday life. The version of interest to us was first published in Cracow in 1578–80. The genuine text by Joseph Caro reflected the customs of Sephardic Jews: the practices of the Jews descending from the Iberian Peninsula: Spain and Portugal. When this code of Jewish Laws reached Poland, Rabbi Moses Isserles, called Remuh (this being his name acronym), looked at it and said: *We do not follow exactly the same ways. In compliance with the Sephardic Customs there are dates, whereas here, in Poland, we have apples.* The remarks added by Rabbi Moses Isserles to the Code reflect the Ashkenazi customs of Polish Jews, which he called *mappah*, literally a ‘table cloth’ for the *Shulhan arukh* of Joseph Caro, the latter signifying a ‘laid table’. The text thus reflects customary practices, non-material by definition, even if they refer to material culture. The Code, together with Remuh’s remarks, has served as the guide to Jewish religious life up to now. Interestingly, the Remuh Synagogue has been preserved in the Cracow Kazimierz District, which had served as the Jewish quarter before WW II.



5. Almost 400 people from all over the world participated for 2 years (2011–2012) in the reconstruction works of the roof and polychrome of a synagogue in Gwoździec, including an international team of students, historians, architects and artists dealing with classical wooden handicraft under the leadership of Rick and Laura Brown from the Handshouse Studio in Massachusetts

(Photos: 1 – M. Starowieyska; 2–5 – K.J. Dudek)

**KJD: You have spoken of various types of texts and objects, you have also described the relation between the material and non-material. Still, the Gwoździec Synagogue is yet another type of a museum object?**

**BKG:** The Gwoździec Synagogue Project is the best example. First of all, the tangible heritage has been destroyed, it does not exist. Meanwhile, the intangible heritage, that is embodied knowledge, can be recovered only when the object is built. I did use *built* not rebuilt or reconstructed, or copied. I would like to emphasize that during the Project's implementation it was not a copy that was made, or a reconstruction, neither was it restoration, since it was none of these things, but a totally new type of an object was created. The effect is not potential, it is real. The effect is not simply a new object, but the object of a new type – its value is related to non-material heritage, recovered thanks to it having been built with the use of traditional tools, techniques, and materials. It is not of merely cognitive value, something you can learn from documentation: drawings, photos, paintings, verbal descriptions, measurements, etc.; it is knowledge which is also physical and embodied. The Mission of Handhouse Studio who cooperated with us on the Project is 'recovering old objects'. I would define their approach as Japanese in a way. It reminds of what has been happening with the Ise-Jungu, the Ise Grand Shrine which is 800 years old, but at the same time not older than 20, since every two years it is demolished for it to be raised anew. This is the only way allowing to transfer the knowledge how to build it, and it is the knowledge that is valued more than the genuine material, namely wood, which would sooner or later be damaged. At one point UNESCO's World Heritage List contained only buildings raised in durable materials, such as stone, since it was the genuine material that determined the identity and authenticity of the monument. Therefore, wooden structures (if the wood was not genuine), or made of clay or straw, never stood a chance of reaching the List. The acknowledging of intangible heritage has been of great impact for many communities, monuments, and cultural practices that otherwise would have never reached the World Heritage List. The Japanese case is one of the best examples, and I believe that our Gwoździec Synagogue is something alike – it is our Ise Grand Shrine.

**SS: Would you agree that it is something related to mediation – not representation, but mediation? You sometimes use the term.**

**BKG:** Mediation is an extremely important concept for my thinking. I am indebted to my friends: Jeffrey Shandler and Faye Ginsburg who have dedicated much time to the concept of 're-mediation'. They deal with transformation, to which the process of changing the medium for something is added, this something precisely undergoing re-mediation. For many years Jeffrey Shandler and I ran the workshop *Jews, Media, and Religion* at the Center for Religion and Media at New York University. At one point we were holding a conference dedicated to Anne Frank. What interested us were the medial embodiments and re-mediations of her image, of her story, and everything associated with her. We published a set of articles titled: *Anne Frank Unbound:*

*Media, Imagination, Memory*. However, as for Gwoździec, I would use a different word. I would most probably call it 'reversed engineering'. The point is that a thing is dismantled in order to be reassembled again, and while this is done, to be understood. It is a different way of thinking. A way of going in thinking beyond the post-Modernist problem, namely Baudrillard's simulacrum, representation, or that *it is not what it seems to be*, everything is representation, and everything is constructed. I would like to find a different paradigm and a different language. Gwoździec, indeed, is an excellent place to rethink some of these assumptions anew.

**SS: So let us now ask one more question related to difficult heritage. Is it simply a part of heritage, or is it something totally apart?**

**BKG:** A very good question, since 'heritage' as a word usually has positive connotations. Heritage means some added value. To call something 'heritage' means to add this value to it, and also to undertake steps to transfer, preserve, defend, and protect this value. So difficult heritage...

**KD: Is it something painful?**

**BKG:** Yes, and this is a bit of a paradox, and a bit of a contradiction. Let us take several examples: my hero may be a villain for you. 'Your' Khmelnytsky and 'my' Khmelnytsky may not necessarily be the same person. Khmelnytsky is in Ukraine a national hero, yet for different reasons than he is a hero in Russia; meanwhile in Poland he is regarded as a rogue; he is even a greater scoundrel to Jews. 'Your' Dmowski and 'my' Dmowski are not the same, since the man respected for his role in the struggle for independence of Poland, was at the same time anti-Semitic. He may constitute part of 'your heritage', but certainly not 'mine'. Thus when there is more than one system of values: positive or negative, when value systems are different, or even contradictory, then heritage becomes 'difficult heritage'.

**SS: And how would you define Auschwitz?**

**KD: This is something we are unanimous about, but which is painful. We preserve it to remember about something horrid. What word would you use in this case? Bad heritage? Since heritage is something positive, something we are proud of.**

**BKG:** I wouldn't call it heritage. You are right – we would find it most peculiar to be calling xenophobia 'heritage'. 'Legacy' is something different, since legacy can contain a grain of evil which we inherit. The word 'legacy' refers to inheritance, regardless of whether it is wonderful or terrible. Therefore when we say *xenophobia is a nineteenth-century legacy*, we do not imply any positive values, but more the fact that subsequent generations inherited such an attitude. The word 'legacy' serves as a means to explain that a certain attitude has been inherited, transferred to us. Legacy may be bad, evil. I would not call the Holocaust heritage. I would not apply this term to describe Auschwitz. However, when we talk about legacy, then it is different – it is a more complex thing. It would be the best to think about bad heritage in



terms of relations, bearing in mind that the attitude to events, phenomena, senses, and to approaches may be different, it may vary, or be contradictory. This can be, for instance, seen in ethnographic museums, in their colonial history and the changing attitude towards the objects in their collections and in their displays.

**SS: And how about Communism?**

**BKG:** What an interesting point! Is it legacy? Heritage? This is the matter of judgment. The Palace of Culture can serve as a very good example here. Shall we keep it or get rid of it? This is the difficult heritage! And it is not merely the question that some love it and others hate. The very same people who consider Communism a scourge, can regard the building as iconic in the Warsaw skyline, a part of Warsaw's history – what has been the worst and the best in it at the same time. We might be unable to see it as it was perceived back then, when it was being raised. Tours showing the Communist architecture in Warsaw are able to find some value – a new kind of value – in the architectural

expression of those tough ambiguous times. Some kind of a 'love-hate' relationship. The periods that we reject, all the time continue a part of our history. However today we are at a different point, and can reject the worst aspects of that history, while continuing to live amidst its tangible remains, incorporating them into our present; or maybe we could take on an opposite attitude and simply erase all traces. This is an option we have, too. What do you think?

**SS: I agree with you.**

**KD: When we were writing the Conference's programme and invitations to submit papers on 'Visual Anthropology and European Cultural Heritage', we sometimes had difficulties finding appropriate words to name the phenomena we meant. Similarly now, during our conversation, it has not been easy.**

**BKG:** No, and additionally Polish and English do not always correspond. They are not always exactly translatable in an equivalent way.

**Abstract:** The conversation deals with the heritage understood as a particular form of cultural production which forms something new but which at the same time refers back to the past. What is the difference between heritage and tradition? What is legacy and difficult

heritage? Insightful look at those terms draws interesting conclusions. Analysed examples are taken from the Jewish, the Maori, the Aboriginal and the Japanese culture. The article also raises the questions of the difficult history of the Nazi period of that of the Polish People's Republic.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, anthropology, tradition, ethnographic museums, Polish ethnographic museums, intangible heritage, embodied knowledge, Jewish community, Jewish culture.

**Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> The interview was conducted as part of the international *Images of Culture and Heritage Variety Project*, composed of the following segments: *Conference Visual Anthropology and European Cultural Heritage*, the 35<sup>th</sup> NAFA Film Festival, and the Exhibition *Today's Difference and Variety. Around Wedding Photography*. Fragments of the interview were published in the Festival Catalogue. Project Partners: Warsaw University, University of Bergen, and Nordic Anthropological Film Association. Financed by EOG, with funding from Island, Liechtenstein, and Norway, as well as domestic funds, <https://nafa2015.pl/>.
- <sup>2</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Chief Curator for the Core Exhibition at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. Professor Emeritus of Performance Studies at New York University. Author of: *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage; Image before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864–1939* (with Lucjan Dobroszycki); and *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times* (co-edited with Jonathan Karp). The study she edited: *Writing a Modern Jewish History: Essays in Honor of Salo W. Baron* won the National Jewish Book Award. The book *They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust*, written together with her father Mayer Kirshenblatt, has also won several awards. In 2008, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett was awarded by USA's Foundation for Jewish Culture for her outstanding accomplishments; she also won the Mlotek Prize for Yiddish and Yiddish Culture. In 2015, she received an honorary doctoral degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary; Poland's president honoured her with the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland. She sits on the Board of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, as well as those of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Vienna Jewish Museum, and Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow.

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# RIJKSMUSEUM IN AMSTERDAM. HISTORICISM AND (ANTI) MULTIMEDIAILITY

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Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum has lived three development periods which can be approximately presented as follows: the First Rijksmuseum 1863–85; the Second Rijksmuseum ca 1940–95; and the Third (New) Rijksmuseum (Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum) 2003–13.

The first one was founded in The Hague in 1800, to be transferred to Amsterdam in 1808, where it was initially housed in the former Town Hall (Royal Palace), and later moved to the Trippenhuys. In 1885, the Museum moved to a building raised in neo-Renaissance style, designed by Pierre (Petrus Josephus Hubertus) Cuypers, winner of the 1863 contest, the construction spanning 1876–85.

The seat of the First Rijksmuseum raised in the era of the 'national revival' of the Dutch played three symbolical functions. Firstly, it was to be the National Palace of Art and History, this architecturally rendered by the forms of a grand palace building featuring Dutch neo-Renaissance. Secondly, it was the Sanctuary of Art and History, namely a church-cathedral of a quasi-church structure in the central part of the building made up of the vestibule (Great Hall), as if it were a narthex, Gallery of Honour as a huge nave with lateral chapels, and a space marked out like the high altar chancel to display Rembrandt's *Night Watch (Militia Company of District II under the Command of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq)*. What must have influenced the design was the architect's Catholicism, which together with the very concept of a 'national museum-church' aroused controversies of the institution's critics and polemicists. Thirdly, and finally, Rijksmuseum was to serve as and actually was at the time a symbolic Gate to the City. Located on the southern boundary of the historic Amsterdam (beyond which there were meadows and suburban development), it firmly clutched the mediaeval and seventeenth-eighteenth-century city with its 'emblematic heraldic' nineteenth-century

'national' architecture, forming an axis from the edifice of Industry to that of History and Culture. The other analogical city gate from the north, i.e. from the harbour, was to be found in the Central Railway Station building (Centraal Station), also raised by Cuypers. The Museum was to unfold the story of the national history of the Dutch by exposing art perceived as a symptom of history. It combined great painting with sculpture and scarce objects of exquisite artistic craftsmanship. The curtains, palms, and columns enhanced the impression of palace interiors, whereas stained glass and frescoes in the stairways, vestibule, and the Gallery of Honour, brought forth the effect of a sacral interior.

During WW II (which was the time when, indeed! would you believe that? New works were bought and the exhibition was densified!), as well as in the post-WWII period, up to the 1990s, i.e. in the course of the Second Rijksmuseum, thorough changes occurred and some acute problems emerged. The edifice as such was the source of different problems, since its technical condition was deteriorating, The roadway on the building's axis declined. A functional entry and hall were missing, and so was adequate storage space for the growing collection; this situation only worsening with time. Therefore, new interior partitions were introduced, while the courtyards were covered with makeshift display compartments. As a result of the alterations and renovations, the display space had lost its clear layout, a true labyrinth was created, while visitors were getting lost in the museum. New aesthetics of Dutch and international Modernism considered the decoration and architecture from Cuypers's era as outdated and overwhelming the displayed works. In order to change this, nineteenth-century frescoes and decorations were painted over, creating an austere interior of white walls. What had the greatest impact, however, was the change of the narration concept introduced in the



1. The Rijksmuseum in the years 1885–1905, a postcard from 1905

1950s–70s. Cuypers’s national history was replaced with the history of art, history of artists and artistic schools, namely with the evolutionary history of art. It was convenient to show it in separate branches: separately history of painting, and separately history of sculpture, as well as of artistic craftsmanship. Therefore the display was divided into a great gallery of sixteenth- to seventeenth-century painting occupying mainly the second floor together with the Gallery of Honour, and a smaller gallery placed on the first floor with sculptures and craftsmanship pieces, completed with the examples of late mediaeval and early Renaissance painting.

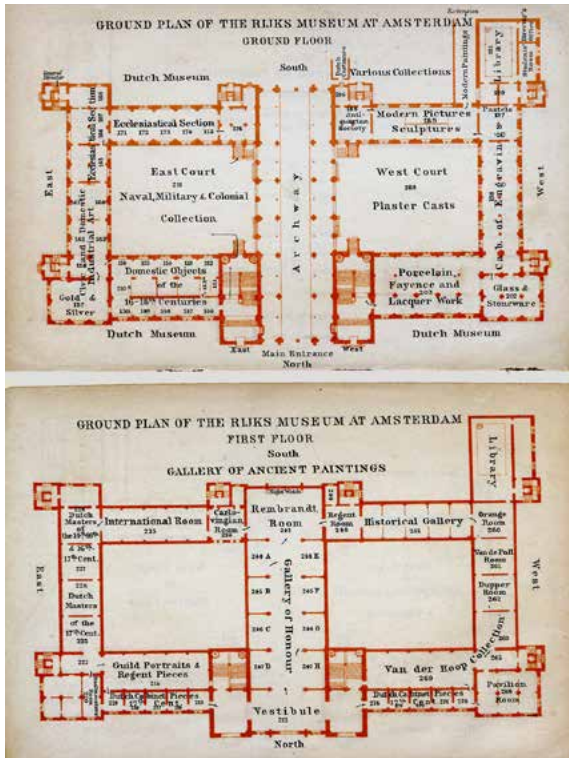
In 2003, when the works on the New Rijksmuseum were initiated, secondary partitions were pulled down, and simultaneously demolished was the until-then narrative. From that time onwards Museum’s modernization was conducted, this implying a thorough remodeling and conservatory renovation of the historic main building and the lateral ones. Planned for five years, the process lasted ten. The grand opening was held in 2013, on 13 April: Queen’s Birthday (*Koninginnedag*, national holiday in the Netherlands). The works had consumed the multiple of the originally assessed costs, the total final figure standing at EUR 375 million, of which 45 million provided by sponsors, who obviously (falsely) claimed to be ‘national’: Philips, ING, BankGiro Loterij. The rest of the sum had been provided by the state with a government fund called Millenium Gift. Within 8 months since the opening, the new Museum was visited by 2.2 million individuals, whereas in 2003–2013 when only a temporary display, exposing the most precious works of the collection was held in Prince Philip’s Wing,

Philipsvleugel (currently dedicated to temporary displays), the visits totaled 8.5 million, amounting to around 800.000–900.000 annually. This goes to say that contrary to the expectations, the figures did not show an abrupt growth in the interest in the new institution. The exuberant costs of the New Rijksmuseum are therefore not justified by the ticket revenue, as much as by the contribution to the Netherlands’ annual GDP. This share is said to amount to EUR 5.5 million, though the figure actually shows the overall income from tourism, all over the country for a tourist who has visited Amsterdam, thus including everything he or she has spent in every museum, at the Concertgebouw, any cultural institution, but also in the Red Light District, on prostitutes, in cafes and pubs, in hotels. The tourist may have come to see, let us say, a football match, however the Riiksmuseum will also include his/her spending in its contribution to the public GDP. Since it is supposedly the Riiksmuseum that generates the inflow of tourists into the Netherlands!\*

The New Rijksmuseum displays only 8.000 exhibits out of one million that it boasts in its collection. This shows that an acute cut in their number was made versus that of the exhibits shown in the Second Rijksmuseum. Such a number resulted from long-lasting negotiations, or more strictly speaking, a fight between the coordinator of the construction of the new display and the collection’s curators. The shown exhibits come from the period spanning 1200–2000. As the display surface has remained unchanged versus the former one, amounting

\*The data presented in the paper are derived from the Rijksmuseum websites, the institution’s Annual Reports, and occasional publications.





2. The Rijksmuseum in the years 1885–1905, ground floor plans with *porte cochère* and the first floor plans with the Great Hall-Vestibule, the Gallery of Honour and the *Night Watch* Room (plan from an old guide)

to 14.500 sq m (for the sake of comparison, Le Grand Louvre covers 60.000 sq m), theoretically and statistically speaking one exhibit is ‘entitled’ to the surface of 1.8 sq m.

The New Rijksmuseum was designed by two Spanish architects: Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz, as well as the famous French designer Jean-Michel Wilmotte. The Antonio duo: Cruz and Ortiz, both graduates from Madrid Escuela Superior de Arquitectura, have been professionally active since 1971. Apart from the Rijksmuseum, their most famous accomplishment is the *Nuevo Estadio Atlético de Madrid*, a football pitch planned for 2017, in the hope that Madrid would host the Olympic Games in 2020 or 2024. Other well-known designs by their team include the *Santa Justa Railway Station in Seville* (1991); *Huelva Bus Station* (1994); *Cartuja Stadium and Public Library* (1999) in Seville; *Expo 2000 Spanish Pavilion in Hannover*; *Basel SBB Railway Station* (2003); and a city stadium in Madrid (2012). Jean-Michel Wilmotte, in his turn, has won fame for designing a part of the new Grand Louvre [Le Grand Louvre: Aile Richelieu, Aile Rohan, Pavillon des Sessions (1993–2000), Département des Arts Premiers (2000)]; Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar (2008); three new galleries (e.g. Galerie des Impressionnistes) at the Paris Musée d’Orsay (2012); or the Exhibition ‘Indians from the Prairie’ at the Paris Musée Quai Branly (2014). The architecture designed by both Antonios, as well as the display setting and the display system designed by Wilmotte are of exceptional beauty, noble, and attractive, untarnished by excessive spectacular character, *grandiosità* or grandiloquence, with no trace of aesthetical

mannerism. A beautiful setting for beautiful objects – and although their accumulation within beautiful architecture and equally beautiful décor, as remains to be seen below, can bring certain dangers to the ideological message of the Museum, the Rijksmuseum is nevertheless a specimen of the highest aesthetical sophistication.

The Third Rijksmuseum is redefining its position in the city’s urban layout: both in the real and symbolical topography. Throughout the previous century a drastic change of the situation occurred. Soon after the opening of the old Museum, a totally different neighbourhood emerged from the south: a luxurious residential district was raised, and a massive square – Mueumplein, a green square, was formed, with large edifices of major cultural facilities to surround it: the Concertgebouw (1888), Stedelijk Museum (1895), and the Van Gogh Museum (1973, new wing 1999). In 1896, the area was within the borders of Amsterdam. The old Rijksmuseum remained open towards the old town (it is there that the entrance for visitors was located), while closed from the side of this new urban space. The new Rijksmuseum is open in this new direction. One can speak of a symbolical reorientation of the building: facing the south had become at least equally important as facing the north. In the post-WWII period, and particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, Mueumplein turned into a public social venue, a kind of a meadow city platform: it was here that young people would meet to have fun and beer, it was here that popular events were held. The authors of the New Rijksmuseum decided to benefit from this extensive field of informal social activity of Amsterdam residents. They put forth the concept of a town square – square as a kind of the approach to the Museum, accessible also from the south along the modernized passageway on the building’s axis. The concept was to eliminate the border between the Museum and the City at this point, both architecturally and socially (cultural events in the town square). However, initially the concept was not as pro-social as it might seem. The original structure design assumed, actually, to place the Museum’s main entrance from the passageway under the edifice, this implying eliminating any city traffic there, bike lanes included. Such an idea caused a substantial social outcry, criticism that the decision had been made without consulting the residents, and neglecting their needs; critical opinions also spoke of dividing the living city tissue into two halves, and of artificial museumification of the city’s living space. For a moment, the Rijksmuseum became the synonym of violence of the authorities over the life of the ‘people of Amsterdam’. The protest was effective: the design had to be thoroughly changed to reflect the ‘will of the people’, and the bike lane under the building was retained. The cyclists won, thank goodness!

The major assumption of the 2003–13 renovation was the ‘return to the roots’: to the patriotic and historic concept of Cuypers; the ‘new-old’ museum is to constitute its continuation, only adjusted to the contemporary needs and museum assumptions. The very obligatory route (essentially resulting from the inter-space communication) leading to the display halls makes us realise this idea: from the passageway on the ground floor, through the stairways and the vestibule on the first floor, to the grand Gallery of Honour, with its ‘presbytery’ featuring today Rembrandt’s *Night Watch*. Along

the way, we are obliged to see the meticulously restored stained-glass windows and frescoes from the times of Cuypers. It is only afterwards that visitors are able to freely choose the galleries they want to visit on subsequent floors.

The above motto of the 'return to history' shows a new apologetic approach to nineteenth-century historicism and patriotism, and truly speaking nationalism, all this free of the reservations of Modernism. Even some dozen years ago this ostentatious nationalism would have been impossible in the Netherlands, and had anyone ventured it, they would have outlined it shyly with much embarrassment. Whereas now, the New Rijksmuseum proclaims itself the museum of national history as showing the glory of the Netherlands and the Dutch. Incidentally, this is to an extent justifiable, since versus other national museums, its imminent feature used to be and is again now the fact that from the beginning it combined the profiles of a historical museum and of an art one. On the other hand, this ideology negates everything that happened between the First and the Third Museum: a long and deep process of society's modernization, of transforming the national paradigm into the civil one (this actually more in line with the tradition of Dutch society in the seventeenth century), of cosmopolitanization and globalization. And most likely it is not accidental (actually, by no means it is!) that the modernization of the Rijksmuseum in 2003–13 coincided with the term of office of the centre-rightist and conservative-liberal Prime Ministers: Balkenende and Rutte. As seen in this context, the New Rijksmuseum, though not

admitting it, has been a result of the Dutch rightist cultural policy; it is a strictly political world-view product.

Departing from this position, the New Rijksmuseum proclaims the aspiration to construct the history of the nation in which art is to play one of the key roles, not only as an illustration of certain historical tendencies, but also as the basic element of Dutch identity. What is to be the essence of the Dutch people, of 'Dutchness' in general, is art, particularly painting, mainly that from the Gold Age, the age of Rembrandt and Vermeer. This clearly constitutes a return to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historiosophic thinking (as known, for instance, from the writings of Conrad Busken-Huet, Peter Lodewijk Muller, Petrus Johannes Blok, and later Frederik Schmidt Degener as well as Johan Huizinga) that both Rembrandt and lesser masters embody the 'Dutch soul', or more strictly, the soul of Dutchness, and are what has been the best in the history of the Dutch. This sounds a bit as if someone said that 'Germanness' found expression in philosophy and music, 'Polishness' in dramas, 'Italianness' in opera and obviously cuisine (consider it a purposeful exaggeration, please!).

The need to construct history can be read in the *Vision* and *Mission*, Museum's programme documents. The *Vision* is expressed in one sentence: *The Rijksmuseum links individuals with art and history*. Sounds like a vague cliché so typical of the visions of today's museums. Significant possibly is the fact that it does not speak of art history, yet separately of art and, equally, of history.



3. The Gallery of Honour in the Rijksmuseum in 1897



4. The Rijksmuseum, exhibition in the atrium in 1949

The *Mission* is defined more clearly: *At the Rijksmuseum, art and history take on new meaning for a broad-based, contemporary national and international audience. / As a national institute, the Rijksmuseum offers a representative overview of Dutch art and history from the Middle Ages onwards, and of major aspects of European and Asian art. / The Rijksmuseum keeps, manages, conserves, restores, researches, prepares, collects, publishes, and presents artistic and historical objects, both on its own premises and elsewhere.\**

The last sentence does not seem problematic; contrariwise, it sounds obvious; though, interestingly, the research, academic activity, traditionally associated with a traditional museum curator/custodian ethos, seems to be placed far on the list. The ethos depreciation will be revealed further on. Of more importance, however, are the first two sentences. They do impose on the display a historical narrative, perceived as the story of the Dutch nation, its history and art. Only the second place is taken by the 'aspects' of the European and Asian art (not history any more, but art). History and art of the Dutch – starting from the Middle Ages (which in itself

\* Bold emphases by the Author.

is a bizarre concept, since there were no Dutch people as a nation at the time; neither was there a defined Dutch ethnic or cultural community) is separated from European history and art. Dutchness versus European character or universalism. What is worse, the history of the Dutch is also conceptually separated from Asian civilization – the history of East Indian colonization is extracted from the history of the Netherlands, just as the history of Holland is extracted from the history of Asian countries. And regrettably, this is in line with the traditional, colonial and post-colonial discourse which deprived 'aboriginal', 'native', 'primitive' (etc.) civilisations of their history, leaving them exclusively with the aesthetic quality of their artefacts, functioning seemingly outside history. The motif of colonial expansion does appear in the display, however in side galleries only. While the motif of sea glory and overseas sailing and trade freely dominates the central galleries. Therefore, the New Rijksmuseum is, and do pardon my exaggeration again, the symptom of thinking in the categories of colonial imperialism.

Let us, however, return to historicism in the museum narrative. History is 'told' by paintings and artefacts selected not in view of their artistic quality, but in order to illustrate definite historical topics. This is expressed by the rhetoric of



the descriptions of the rooms and exhibits. As well as by the thematic order of the rooms (see below the description of the layout of the Golden Age gallery on the second floor). The ideological dimension of the exposition – the concept of a national museum as a museum of the history of a nation, and additionally the mixing of art pieces with artefacts, make an individual art work be treated not so much as an aesthetic object, as the expression of the ‘spirit of the times’, symptom of the era, historical ‘record’. In a way, while focusing on the educational role of the museum as an instrument of historical propaganda, the New Rijksmuseum pretends to be a museum of visual culture (a consequence of the Visual Culture Studies), ruled by the principle of an equal cognitive value of all the visual objects. This is a false pretence though, since only art pieces and artefacts of the highest artistic profile are displayed, namely the most exquisite paintings and sculptures, the most refined examples of artistic craftsmanship, the most expensive ship models. In this very way the narrative of the history of the **nation** proves to be false, since the sixteenth- to nineteenth- century exhibits rank among the circle of luxurious products for the top, limited patrician and city elite of former Dutch society.

The content of this display story is not made up of the course of events and historical phenomena, it is not history in its ‘ups and downs’, but a clearly emphasized ‘glory of the nation’, glorification of the ‘national’ history, while, as has already been said, any shameful topics: colonization, slave trade, and slave labour systems in the early capitalist manufacturing in the sixteenth-seventeenth century, etc., have been pushed to the side galleries.

In the statements made by managers, programme authors, and authors of the display, in promotional leaflets and YouTube videos, definite narrative slogans are reiterated. First of all *history in relation with art, national history* – see *Mission: Dutch art and history from the Middle Ages onwards (restoring the Rijksmuseum to the Dutch)*, namely the restoring to them their history (national history). Another one being: *playful simplicity and museum ‘open’ to the audience* (Dutch and international, as stated in the *Mission*).

There is no other way of reacting to *playful simplicity* than with *Obviously!*, since the Museum is targeted at a wide public. However, on the second thought doubts arise. Was the history of the Netherlands and Holland really was so simple and can be told in simple terms? Is it truly so that the narrative expanded in the display rooms is simple? Is it not so that one needs to know Dutch history well in order to understand it? And secondly, is art in the history of the Dutch so simple that it can be presented in simple terms without limiting meanings, contexts, interpretation? And what is *playful* in simplicity, namely simplified knowledge? As will be seen below, in the analysis of the system of exhibit descriptions – comments in the Rijksmuseum galleries (see the Vermeer case) are simplified to the point of being boring. Simple descriptions – plain, not extremely expressive works.

*Open Museum?* Is it truly so...? Theoretically, the New Rijksmuseum, instead of one visiting route, offers thematic rooms and galleries. The principle proposing potential freedom of choice and the possibility for the visitors to shape their interests individually is supposed to rule here. There is declarative Museum’s unoppressiveness on the public.



5. The Rijksmuseum, exhibition premises in 1973/1974





6. The Museumplein with the Rijksmuseum edifices (at bottom), the Van Gogh Museum and the Stedelijk Museum (left) and the Concertgebouw (background)

However, the transfer from the passageway and the atria via the stairs and the vestibule, to the Gallery of Honour is obligatory, while the other routes have also their visit direction chosen arbitrarily (chronological). This arrangement allows to see the adjustment to mass tourism and the way of using museum collections: the majority of visitors do not follow any designed alternative route (due to the lack of time), but immediately run to the *Night Watch* at the Gallery of Honour. Others can choose optional additional routes. Essentially, it is not an open museum, since in every variant, along each route, one version of history is imposed, one reading of it is forced, no questions are asked, no alternatives proposed. The Museum proclaims: things were as we show them to you. In subsequent rooms in labels, and captions, an unhesitant interpretation can be read, peremptory and uninviting any doubts. This is an intellectual discourse, authoritarian and unwavering, a historiographic abuse of the public. And it is found at the Rijksmuseum as a dominating cultural institution: thanks to its position (financial possibilities as well as the power of the education and promotional machinery) it appropriates the concept of history and the nation.

Should not all this be treated simply in the categories of consumptionism of culture regarded as a tourist product, *playful and simple*, or even in the categories of 'McDonaldization' of culture? I do not feel a certainty in this respect, yet a reluctant suspicion.

\* \* \*

Let us now follow one of the suggested visiting routes. To begin with, the route contains what is obligatory for



7. The Rijksmuseum, a corner side cabinet from the exhibition on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor devoted to the overseas expansion of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> century



8. The Rijksmuseum, passage on the ground floor

everybody. First, the passageway with glazed windows, where revolving doors open and lifts are located. This is the entrance to the Museum, placed on both sides of the passage, leading to atrial courtyards, with glazed roofs and lit with lamps placed on an attractive grid structure. In one of the atria, information desk is found, and so are pylon gates leading to a gallery, and a display of nineteenth-century bronze casts of ancient and modern sculptures (more or less as it was in Cuyper's times). The other atrium houses a cafeteria containing a souvenir shop, mimicking a bookshop, with a proper bookshop further on, on a lowered basement storey. In the spatial hierarchy of the functional rooms one cannot help seeing the reversed order from before the commercialization era: science and knowledge, tourism, food consumption. In-between the atria there is a spacious low passage with the ticket office and cloakrooms. It is also there that women wait in line for the toilet, while men enter gents' lavatories freely: unfortunately, this down-to-earth, yet fundamental functional problem, has not been solved smoothly (however, is there a museum in the world where it has?). In this respect, the **modern** museum, (as it describes itself in advertising announcements) is not modern, and not even post-modern: it remains patriarchal. Which is neither funny, nor marginal.

From the first atrium we can pass, either using the lift or mounting the gala stairs, to the vestibule (Grand Hall) on the first floor. from which one can enter the Gallery of Honour. Here we can see the new obligatory painting canon of the Golden Age, the seventeenth century. This canon is to be the measure of anything else displayed in the edifice. The painting of the period is meant to express what is the most

'Dutch', and not the late mediaeval sculptures by Adriaen van Wesel or twentieth-century works by Mondrian or Rietveld.

At the end of the gallery we enter the 'high altar presbitery' with Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, actually mounted not as it was originally placed, reaching the floor, thus on the beholder's level, but hung with the upper edge inclined, so following the nineteenth century manner. At this point it is hard to tell which is displayed: Rembrandt's painting or the historical display and the cult of the 'ultra-Dutch Master' of the nineteenth century. It seems that the latter. Which again manifests the apologetic attitude of neo-historicism.

There are portraits of shooting companies by other painters to the side of Rembrandt's work. Behind the Rembrandt 'sanctuary', there is an isolated and therefore not visited by numerous public, gallery of seventeenth-century sculpture, mainly terracotta *modelli* and *bozzetti*.

From the 'sanctuary' one can freely continue the visit. You can return to the entrance atria and choose one of the galleries. Or wonder to the sides: left or right, to the gallery of the seventeenth century. The fact that the display of the Golden Age is to be found on the same floor as the Gallery of Honour seems logical: both here and there the world of Rembrandt, Vermeer, and other Dutch Masters is presented. The display of this floor continues with the display of the Gallery of Honour canon. However, it also testifies to the arbitrary (this does not go to say that inappropriate) choice of the emphases. Which, as has been pointed on many occasions before, coincides with the glorification of the seventeenth century as the century of pride of the Netherlands and the Dutch.

Let us thus follow this route. The thematic sequence of rooms and cabinets is as follows. In the first wing: 1) William



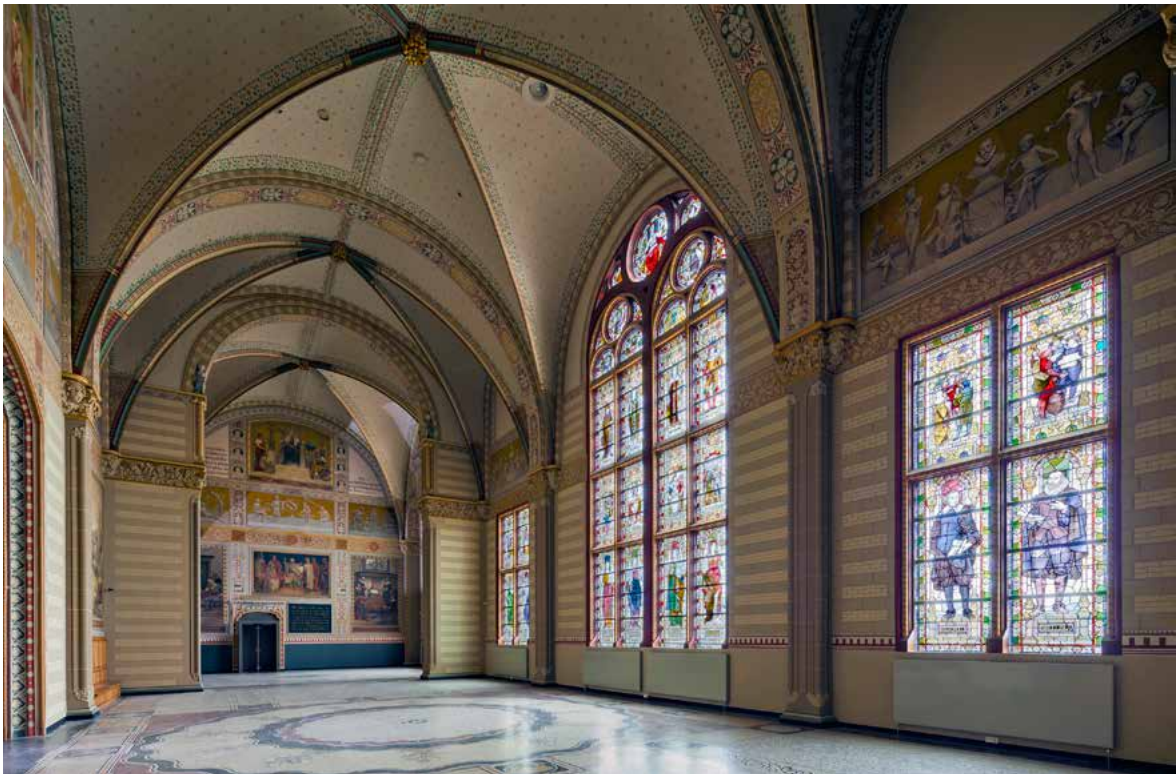


9. The Rijksmuseum, the atrium with an entrance to a gallery

of Orange, birth of the Republic and Mannerism in art; 2–3) Cabinet of curiosities and cabinet of Mannerist tapestries; 4) inflow of the Flemish into the Republic and Flemish influence on economy, politics, and art; 5) Hugo de Groot, and the antagonism between the Remonstrants and counter-Remonstrants (the Arminians against the Gomarists); the era of Johan van Oldebarnevelt and Maurice of Orange; 6) Hendrick Avercamp and realism in art; 7) cabinet of prints and drawings from the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the seventeenth century; 8) young Rembrandt and his times; the rule of Frederic Henry, Prince of Orange: Peace of Westphalia, 1648; 9) history of the early overseas expansion, landing on the Far Lands; 10–14) cabinets with drinking vessels and cabinet painting. A break here and passage to the other wing, to the other side of the Gallery of Honour, yet in order to keep the chronology of the narrative and follow room numbers, one has to pass through the Gallery again. Since the display is not continued straight ahead, behind the vestibule, but obliquely, on the opposite side of the Gallery of Honour. Here come subsequent topics: 15) historic model of the William Rex from 1698 and the power of the Dutch war fleet, particularly during the Anglo-Dutch

wars; 16) numismatic cabinet; 17) Jan Both and Italianate landscape; 18) the sculptor Artus Quellinus and decoration of the Amsterdam Town Hall (partially shown in the sculpture gallery behind the *Night Watch*), portraits by Bartholomeus van der Helst; 19) a rich city house and its furnishing; 20) poppenhuizen – dolls' houses; 21) another cabinet of prints and drawings, this time from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the seventeenth century; 22) the era of William of Orange and Delftware; 23) the French in the Republic and the influence of the French court culture; 24–28) small sculpture pieces and cabinet painting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the seventeenth century. As can be seen from this brief scheme, the discourse of political, social, and economic history mixes and interlaces with segments of the history of Dutch art. The question remains, however, if it does so coherently, and if such narrative course is understandable to an ordinary visitor...?

The ship model of the 'William Rex' ranks among the favourite exhibits (as can be judged by the turnout at its tab on the Museum website, and tweets and Facebook entries); similarly popular is the real plane displayed in the twentieth-century gallery – both exhibits being far more popular



10. The Rijksmuseum, the Great Hall – vestibule to the Gallery of Honour on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor

than the works by Mondrian, van Doesburg, or Rietveld. Besides Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, they are among the most popular exhibits at the Rijksmuseum. In a way, these are the Amsterdam equivalent of the 'must see' triad at the Louvre: *Venus of Milo*, *Nike of Samotraca*, and *Mona Lisa*. These hyper-exhibits enjoy far greater popularity than everything else, including Vermeer. Hence another rhetorical question: Is this an unreal (or maybe created) triumph of needs and goals of commercialized tourism?

In these rooms we can see everything together: paintings, sculptures, decorative panels and bas-reliefs, furniture, pottery and glass vessels, 'Delft porcelain' (Delft-type faience), goldsmithery pieces, prints, arms. It is an attractive combination, and extremely evocative, allowing to imagine the colourful period. Additionally, as stated above, all these pieces are highly artistic, sophisticated and costly, and with no exception truly beautiful. Therefore, this mixture of matters, techniques and genres, formats and scales, textures and shines, has a purpose: both historical and aesthetical. It is slightly overwhelming, however. It is excessively impressive and excessively crams the objects. As mentioned above, each exhibit is entitled merely to 1.8 sq m of surface. Between the display cabinets, or between them and the paintings on the wall, there is sometimes less than 1.5 m distance, the latter being the standard for the visitors' circulation safety. Therefore the works cannot be studied separately, without the context of other pieces, without their intrusive closeness. Such contemplation has been eliminated beforehand, together with opting for the historical narrative, a not the history of art perspective. It was a conscious choice: I am

not judging whether a good or a bad one, but conscious. Regrettably, the historical contexts of the works that are next to each other do not always harmonize; contrariwise, sometimes a false note can be heard. So when the joyful



11. The Rijksmuseum, the Gallery of Honour on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor





12. The Rijksmuseum, the *Night Watch* Room on the first floor



13. The Rijksmuseum, a room with a model of the 'William Rex' ship



14. The Rijksmuseum, an exhibition area on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor – the 17<sup>th</sup> century

drunkard, the fiddler from Gerard van Honthorst's painting, outstretches his arm with a cup towards the beholders raising it, and the viewers have a display cabinet behind their back with exquisite silver vessels by the goldsmith Adam van Vianen, the inevitable conclusion is that the latter served exclusively to drink alcohol from. Meanwhile, they were only specimens of great splendour, jewels in court or patrician tableware culture, decorative objects, symbols of power and wealth, certainly not functional vessels. And here is the resulting terrible misunderstanding...

Moreover, the accumulation of display cabinets, essential for exhibiting numerous small or delicate objects of artistic craftsmanship, makes the visitor, if looking further into the room, see subsequent glass surfaces overlap. The viewer finds it unpleasant to the sight and distracting. Although Wilмотte designed the cabinets higher than the level of human eyes, the effect of superposing glass panels remains optically painful.

At this point we are faced with the choice of galleries on various storeys, while their vertical arrangement is not consistently chronological (which has resulted from placing the seventeenth-century gallery on the *piano nobile* to the sides of the Gallery of Honour), and so the storey below, the first floor, presents the history and art of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, while the twentieth century is displayed only on the attic storey. On that level there is no communication between the two above-atrium wings, which causes a strictly mechanical and arbitrary split in the narrative into two periods: 1900–50 and 1950–2000, as if there had been a real chronological division between

them (other than the political and cultural split of WW II). In one wing in turn, ground floor houses the chronologically earliest gallery of the art of the Middle Ages (predominantly fourteenth-fifteenth century) and the Renaissance (mainly early), which actually is not a historical display, but a more conventional (beautiful and very interesting!) display of art, not only Netherlandish, but also French, Franco-Flemish, and Italian, the latter presented quite richly.

The ground floor of the other wing houses the so-called special collections, for which the display principle is different: here you can see an accumulation of arms, ship models, ceramic, glass, goldsmitheries, musical instruments, clothes and fashion specimens, with no objects selected for display on the walls or in separate display cabinets.

An important collection of the Rijksmuseum is displayed in a separate building, of a distinct form and of a different display concept: the Asian Pavilion. This separateness is symptomatic. Typical of the new (?) rightist-conservative world view of a (part) of Dutch society. And to a certain degree, safe for its identity, as it safely separates the problem of the old colonialism and its durable results from the history *mainstream*, shown in the main building. Both histories: of the nation within the borders of its historical country and state (federal republic of a province, later kingdom) and the history of its colonial expansion, are to remain separated. The Asian Pavilion, though its separation was to serve as a peculiar anti-colonialism gesture: *We, the Dutch, do not integrate this collection with the main display, since we respect the identity and sovereignty of the former colonies*, does not explain how the 'Oriental' collection ended up in



15. The Rijksmuseum, a room with *The Merry Fiddler* painting by Gerard van Honthorst and Adam van Vianen's silverware

the Netherlands and in Amsterdam; neither does it explain that its objects are mainly the result of colonization around Indonesia and attempts at economical colonization of Indochina, China, and Japan. Cuttingly said, the Pavilion is for Asians, while the main building for the Dutch (and the 'white' tourists). Asians are not, after all, 'genuine' Dutch, although today Indonesians constitute a substantial part of substantial impact of society in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Asian Pavilion, in its turn, is exceptionally beautiful as for its architecture and display, emanating high aesthetical refinement, though ideologically remaining controversial.

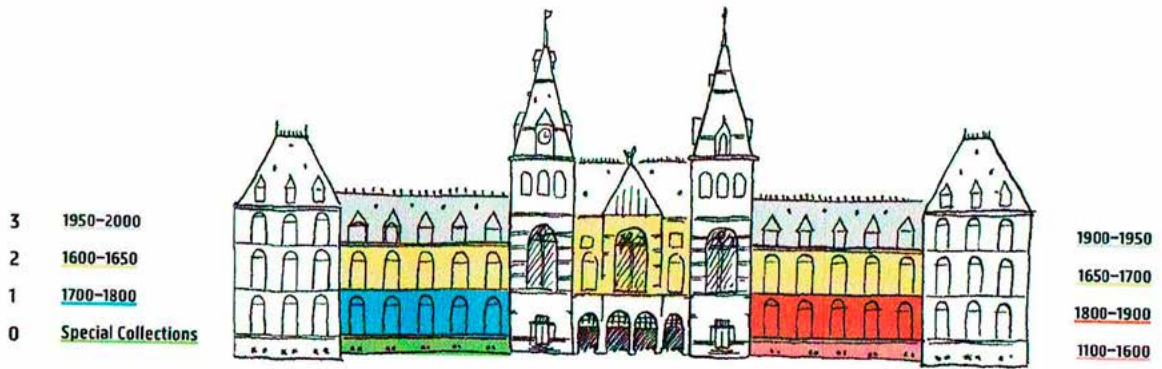
\* \* \*

Let us return to the main building and its historical narrative. A special visual identification (by Irma Boom) has been designed for it, with a peculiar font called simply 'Rijksmuseum' (by Paul van der Laan of Bold Monday). This does not really serve the purpose, since in the system of labels and inscriptions in the galleries, a crack can be seen

in the narrative logic, namely in the story of history. Quite simply, with admirable inconsistency versus the display's ideological assumptions, the need to provide any comments explaining historical contexts has been rejected.

Object labels follow the scheme: information on: what is it? namely the title comes first; then follows the author; then: where the object was made: centre, date; next: from what: material, technique, sizes. Below, a text description is featured. Finally, at the bottom of the label: information how it was acquired, accession number. This scheme reversing the usual: author/title order is symptomatic, as it signals that the display does not care so much about the history of styles, artistic execution – history of art, but the history of objects, developing motifs of the political and social 'national' history of the Dutch. The provided descriptions comply with two rules: firstly, they cannot exceed the 60-word count; secondly, they have to concern only what is present in the painting or object, no external context of the work is allowed, merely its content. Such is an exemplary label for *The Milkmaid* by Johannes Vermeer





16. The Rijksmuseum, a plan of galleries on particular floors

(I am quoting only the English version; the labels obviously are bilingual: Dutch and English):

The Milkmaid / Johannes Vermeer, c. 1660 / Oil on panel, 45.5 cm × 41 cm.

*A maidservant pours milk, entirely absorbed in her work. Except for the stream of milk, everything else is still. Vermeer took this simple everyday activity and made it the subject of an impressive painting – the woman stands like a statue in the brightly lit room. Vermeer also had an eye for how light by means of hundreds of colourful dots plays over the surface of objects.* Below the information on provenance and accession number is provided.

This kind of extra-contextual information, in this and

many other cases, is pointless. Someone (Museum curator, together with educator) describes to the beholders what they can see for themselves. The description contains the obvious: 'a rose is a rose is a rose': *A maidservant pours milk, entirely absorbed in her work. Except for the stream of milk, everything else is still. Vermeer took this simple everyday activity...* etc. Beholders can see all this for themselves, and find it out from the painting, therefore there is no point in describing it! Such kind of a text treats the beholder, colloquially speaking, as an idiot, a blind simpleton; what is more, in this supposedly non-oppressive 'open' museum such a text is precisely oppressive, as it imposes on the visitor the manner of viewing the work.



17. The Rijksmuseum, the gallery of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the attic – a room with a plane



18. The Rijksmuseum, special collections, a collection of weapons

The principle of such an extra-contextual description seems even less appropriate in the case the eighteenth-century dolls' houses, loved by visitors. There we can read, for example: *Dolls' house of Petronella Dunois, anoniem, c. 1676*

Various objects in this dolls' house are marked with the year 1676, which was probably when it was largely completed. It was made for Petronella Dunois (1650–1695), a wealthy orphan who lived with her sister in Amsterdam. The dolls' house contains a peat loft, a linen room, a nursery, a lying-in room, a reception room, a cellar, a kitchen and a dining room.

By rejecting the historical context, the label leaves the most important, and therefore the most interesting issues unexplained: that they were the most expensive artistic objects in the Netherlands in the seventeenth-eighteenth century (we know how much they cost: 30.000 to 50.000 guilders); that they were commissioned by grown-up women, already married, who belonged to the highest wealthiest elite of the Dutch patricians; it does not explain why their execution went on for some dozen years (since the lady clients would take years equipping them with miniature utensil and miniature paintings); why some are inhabited by figures, and others are not; what purpose they served (they were, by no means, meant for playing with, but were objects of 'performing' and demonstrating power of the woman at home).

The scheme imposed on the curators by top-down decisions of the promotional and educational department communicating

with the public eliminates the traditional role of the curator as a middleman, interpreter, teacher, exegete of a work of art. A curator does no longer decide what should interest the beholder. Promotion, education, and management take the priority here. In the information system multimedia are neglected in an ostentatious and programmatic way. There are no computer screens or any other digital communicators in the galleries. Only applications to download on private tablets, smartphones, and i-pads are permitted. The only exception to the anti-multimedial and anti-digital attitude is to be found in some computer screens in several rooms with the special collection: where the accumulation of exhibits makes it impossible for individual labels to accompany the objects, it was necessary to computerize their identification and description. The second exception are the holograms with the ship models recreating moving figures of the sailors and crews.

Rejection of the multimedia in the display – how was such a decision motivated? It is not necessarily surprising, and it can even be welcome. Particularly by us, Poles, who enthusiastically, with a 30-years' delay, wholeheartedly embraced the multi-media and the interactivity. Let me just recall our new multi-media and reconstruction museums (staging museum), for example in Warsaw: the Warsaw Uprising Museum, Fryderyk Chopin Museum (analogue and multi-media), Copernicus Science Centre, Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Museum of Warsaw's Praga District





19. The Rijksmuseum, the Asian Pavilion, design by Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz

– branch of the Museum of Warsaw (analogue and multimedia), Polish History Museum (planned); in Gdansk: Museum of WW II and the European Solidarity Centre; in Cracow: Historical Museum of the City of Cracow and its branches: Underground of the Main Market Square and Schindler’s Factory; furthermore the Upheavals Dialogue Centre, a branch of the National Museum in Szczecin (analogue and multimedia); Porta Posnania Interactive Heritage Centre of the Cathedral Island in Poznan; ‘Mill of Knowledge’ Modernity Centre in Toruń; Historic Silver Mine in Tarnowskie Góry; Multi-media Museum on the Cliff in Trzęsacz; Interactive Museum of the Teutonic State in Działdowo; Interactive BOILER ROOM of the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź; Multi-media Museum in Opole Lubelskie; Glass Heritage Centre in Krosno; Nature and Forest Museum – Białowieża National Park, and many others. They clearly outnumber new or planned ‘analogue’ museums, such as: Silesia Museum in Katowice; Wrocław Contemporary Museum; in Cracow: Museum of Contemporary Art together with its branches: Bishop Erazm Ciołek Palace and European Centre for Polish Numismatics at the Emeryk Hutten-Czapski Museum; in Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, new galleries at the National Museum: Mediaeval Art, Faras, Nineteenth-Twenty-First Century Art; the planned Gallery of Ancient Art, or finally the Museum of Warsaw.

Interestingly, this aversion of the Rijksmuseum to the multimedia is nothing unique in the West. Let us recall

here the more outstanding examples of new ‘analogue’ museums worldwide: Le Grand Louvre in Paris; Louvre-Lens; Louvre-Abu Dhabi in Dubai (planned, analogue with the accompanying multimedia apparatus); Musée Quai Branly in Paris; Staatliche Museen in Berlin: Bode-Museum, Altes Museum (ancient collection), Neues Museum (Ägyptisches Museum); Jüdisches Museum in Berlin (analogue with multimedia setting); New Museum in New York. And it is not true that multimedia is essential in museums of (pure content) message, i.e. historical ones, thus supposedly doomed to resort to the virtual, while museums of artistic collections have the luxury of not applying it, since they display attractive works of art.

I suppose the intentions of the non-multimedia and non-virtual New Rijksmuseum, though not exposed in a separate manifesto, are as follows. Digital virtuality essentially contradicts the very presentation of historical monuments, the material history to be experienced through real objects. These, if displayed within the multimedia, generally disappear amidst the multitude and under the pressure of multisensual and persuasively overwhelming virtual experiences. The constructed virtual reality obscures the historical, material, and object reality. The latter reality thus becomes something non-existent, unreal: the material testimonies to history yield ground to the created impressions. Multimediality evokes simulacrum.





20. *The Milkmaid*, painting by Johannes Vermeer with a plate in the Gallery of Honour



21. The Rijksmuseum, a doll house (*poppenhuis*), Petronelli Dunois, c. 1676, in the Gallery of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

(Photos: 1, 2, 6, 15, 17, 20 – public domain;  
3-5 – Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Collection Historical Archive;  
7-14, 16, 18, 19, 21 – Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, public domain)

The borderline between an object and its *simulacrum* – reproduction, imitation, reconstruction, visual substitute becomes blurred (to recall here the famous concept by Jean Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, 1981). Simulacra are meaningless images, existing for their own sake. Multimedia museums form displays of simulacra. While the actual historical objects set against multimedia themselves turn into simulacra images, of the very kind that forms the arrangement effects. Is this just the function meant for display elements, including historical objects at a historical museum?

Additionally, what occurs is the decontextualization of the history narrative. Signifying doubts in the persuasive power of a historical object, simulacrisation of the display strips the object of its historical sense, its real historical context (contexts). It turns it into a mythical, legendary, anecdotic, episodic object in history, detached from its historical background. The context is bestowed upon it in an artificial, arbitrary and secondary way, additionally from the outside, by a multimedia equipment.

Multimediality causes absolute textualization of the narrative: history is seen only as a text. Even image narratives in displays suggest a textual story. A depreciation of a historical object hushed by text occurs. Narrative with the use of image and text corresponds with the narratological concept of history: fictionalization of history takes place, history being treated as a plot, uninterrupted and continuational. Meanwhile, creating history as a fluid, progressive, linear, and developing sequence of events and

processes is essentially a mythopoetic activity, since history is neither complete nor fluid; it has been preserved in snatches, remnants, secondary reports. History shown in such museums pretends to form an uninterrupted narrative, while it is essentially shown as a discontinuous set of sequences, episodes, events, and characters. This contradiction between the structuralist narratology of Claude Lévy-Strauss and history as chaos of 'shreds' of Walter Benjamin; in the multimedia museums what dominates is the Lévy-Strauss-type analysis and myth reconstruction (this most prominently illustrated on the Polish scene by the Polin Museum and the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising). An impression is created that the display: narrative and myth-creating, ranks among historical fiction.

Multimediality and digitality kill 'auraticity'. They definitely kill the 'aura', in Walter Benjamin's understanding being the effect of 'authenticity' and 'genuinity' of a historical object which is lost in the era of modern technology and in 'civilizational reproduction'. Multimediality and multisensority of the media in a display are symptoms of the loss of the value of testifying to history.

For quite some time critical views on multi-media, interactive, multisensory, and virtualized displays have been voiced. Glenn Lowry, director of New York's MoMA, in 1997 spoke quite emphatically about a loud, cacophonous entertainment show that everybody has good fun experiencing. Similarly, Victoria Newhouse, an architecture critic said in her *Towards a New Museum* essay that entertainment could constitute a desired alternative for a museum-mausoleum, however with an unproper attitude it can quickly transform into vulgar commercialization which degrades art. Interestingly, Polish voices are completely different, being apologetic of the idea of multimediality. The latter can be well exemplified by Michał Niezabitowski, Director of the Historical Museum of the City of Cracow and its branches: Underground of the Main Market Square and Schindler's Factory, who says the following about the institutions he runs: *When creating the display, we were consistently determined to subdue it to one word: narrative. An artefact has become for it an actor, which together with the stage and multimedia set, as well as the choreography*

*of sound and movement, create a grand dramatic spectacle.*

Museum professionals, museologists, and curators point out to one more aspect: the modern character of the multimedia technology is short-lived – they are the ones that grow old the fastest, become outdated and anachronic. Helen Featherstone (*Content and Visitor Researcher*, 2015) says that a museum cannot base its attractiveness on touchscreens when the majority of visitors carry their own in their pocket. It has to attract visitors with something material and unique, something they could not find anywhere else; inasmuch as the use of new technologies can obviously enrich and add spice to the message, it should not constitute a goal in itself.

In the new tendencies observed in world museums and display practice, multimedia are falling in disfavour. This can be clearly seen in the New Rijksmuseum shaped as a museum ostentatiously anti-multimedial. The very same tendency can also be found in the layout of temporary exhibitions. The recently held exhibitions, e.g. *Leonardo da Vinci* (2011/12) and *Rembrandt: The Late Work* (2014/15) at London's National Gallery (on their occasion only regular analogue films were promoted on the National Gallery Channel, YouTube, or general-circulation TV). This is sometimes accompanied by a tendency to discontinue offering audiobooks.

The lack of multimedia in the Third Rijksmuseum is thus justified for methodological and practical reasons. And we actually happily welcome it. In this anti-multimedial and anti-digital rigourism there is, however, a striking logical crack. The defence of the one-time and self-contained character of these beautiful objects in their authenticity 'aura' clashes with the display assumptions: the historicism of the narrative meant to present national and social history of the Dutch of the past; the open discourse on them, a discourse that is clear and acts with playful simplicity. The objects in question, arbitrarily deprived of their historical context (see: the labels), and lacking an ample textual comment, are unable to bear the load of the narrative. They are but illustrations to historical issues, not a comment on them; they do not pose questions, do not formulate doubts, thus, as such and of their own accord, they are unable to establish a true discourse with beholders.

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**Abstract:** The article analyses the exhibiting principles of the modernised Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (2003–2013), and constitutes a polemic and critical view of them and the way they have been implemented.

The main assumption was 'a return to the roots', to the patriotic and historical concept of the first Rijksmuseum by Pierre Cuypers (designed in 1863, built in 1876–1885); this 'new-old' museum is supposed to be a continuation of this idea which has been adapted to contemporary needs and the museum's principles. In the idea of 'a return to the roots' one may observe a new and apologetic approach to 19<sup>th</sup>-century historicism and patriotism, *de facto* nationalism. The new Rijksmuseum is being promoted as a museum of national history, understood as praise for the Netherlands and the Dutch. In reality, from the very beginning it combined the profile of a historical museum with that of a museum of art.

However, this ideology contradicts everything that happened between the first Rijksmuseum and the New Rijksmuseum – a long process of modernising society, transforming a national into a civic paradigm, of cosmopolitanisation and globalisation. In this context the New Rijksmuseum is a product of Dutch right-wing cultural politics, of a purely political world-view. It proclaims the desire to construct the history of a nation in which art is to play a key role, as an illustration to historical tendencies, but also as an essential element of the Dutch mentality, of 'Dutchness' in general, and the painting of the Dutch Golden Age, the times of Rembrandt and Vermeer in particular. It is a return to the historiosophic way of thinking from the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that both Rembrandt and the lesser masters are materialised forms of the 'Dutch soul' or the soul of Dutchness.

*Vision and Mission*, documents by the Rijksmuseum, impose a historical narrative, understood as a story about the history and art of the Dutch nation, on the exhibition. The “aspects” of European or Asian art are relegated to second place. This story is not supposed to tell the bright and dark sides of its history, but clearly to emphasise the ‘nation’s glory’, a glorification of the ‘national’ history. Dutch history and art are separated from that of Europe and conceptually kept apart from Asian civilisation; the history of East Indian colonisation is isolated from the history of the Netherlands and the history of the Netherlands from the history of Asia. Regrettably, this is in line with the traditional, colonial and post-colonial discourse which deprived ‘aboriginal’, ‘native’, ‘primitive’ etc. civilisations of their history, leaving them exclusively with the aesthetic quality of their artefacts. The thread of colonial expansion is present only in side galleries; the New Rijksmuseum is therefore a symptom of iconic colonial imperialism. This is additionally deepened by the distinctiveness of the collection exhibited in a separate building, the Asian Pavilion, where the exhibition does not reveal the fact that the collection is mainly the result of colonisation in the area of Indonesia and attempts at the economic colonisation of Indochina, China and Japan.

The ideological dimension of the exhibition – the concept of a national museum as a museum of the history of a nation – as well as the relocation of artistic objects and artefacts, cause an individual work of art to be considered not as an aesthetic object but as an expression of “the spirit of the age, a symptom of the era and a historical ‘document’”. At the same time, the New Rijksmuseum pretends to be a museum of visual culture (Visual Culture Studies) which is ruled by a principle of equal cognitive value of all objects – a false pretence, since it is mainly works and artefacts of a superior artistic class which are exhibited. As a result, the narration concerning the fate of the *nation* becomes false itself, as the 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century objects are luxury products for the narrow, patrician and aristocratic elite of old Dutch society.

Although the Rijksmuseum is advertised as an open museum where the visitor may choose various routes and follow any historical threads, on each route it imposes – through the interiors’ names, inscriptions and captions

– a single version of history, and it does not ask questions or propose alternatives. It imposes an interpretation which is dogmatic and discourages any doubts.

The system informing about exhibition rooms manifestly and deliberately ignores multimedia. This distrust of multimedia, digital interactivity and virtuality corresponds to a trend in new museology in Europe and America. There are numerous reasons for this. Digital virtuality formally contradicts the presentation of historical monuments itself, the material history experienced by real objects. Multimedia evokes simulacrum; historical objects framed in multimedia become simulacra, the same as all the effects of arrangement. This ‘simulacrisation’ of the exhibition deprives any given historical object of its sense, its pure historical context, which is attributed to it in an artificial, arbitrarily and secondary way, also by multimedia appliances. Multimedia provokes the complete textualisation of narration: history is exclusively perceived as text, as a discontinuous set of sequences, episodes, events and people. Multimedia museums are dominated by analysis and reconstruction of the myth. There is an impression that a narrative and myth-creating exhibition forms part of *historical fiction*. Multimedia and digitality kill the ‘aurativity’, the effect of the ‘authenticity’ and ‘originality’ of a historical object which is lost in the era of cutting-edge technology and the ‘civilisation of reproduction’. The multimedia and multisensority of media within an exhibition are symptomatic of this loss of value of historical testimony. The lack of multimedia in the Rijksmuseum III is thus justified by methodological and practical reasons. Nonetheless, there is a glaring logical crack in this rigour. The defence of disposability and autonomy of the magnificent objects appearing in their ‘aura’ of authenticity contradicts the exhibition’s assumptions: the historicism of narration which is intended to present the national and social history of the historical Dutch people with an open, legible and appealing discourse about them (*playful simplicity* – a slogan proclaimed in the Rijksmuseum). Those objects, deprived in an arbitrary way of their historical context and a vast textual commentary, will not bear this narration. There is nothing more but illustrations to historical problems, without comments upon them; they do not ask questions or express doubts; consequently, they are unable to enter into a genuine discussion with visitors.

**Keywords:** Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, simulacrum, nationalism, multimedia museum, digital museum.

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# UPHEAVALS. SUGGESTION FOR A NEW HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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*Historical narrative museums are shaping today the image of Polish museology, emphasizes Robert Traba in his paper during the First Congress of Polish Museologists in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Although not frequent, they are the ones that attract the attention of the public and the media. The success of the five largest narrative museums is impressive. Traba also points out to the fact that on one museum only, namely the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising, since the institution's establishment over 10.000 press items have appeared. It can be added that in 2015 the Museum was visited by or held events attended by 630.000 people.*

*Whence did the success come? Narrative museums fill in the narrative gap in Poland's cultural memory, thus they respond to double social need caused by the current politics and time-serving need for a new story of the history of twentieth-century Poland,<sup>2</sup> says Traba. They are also an important tool in historical policy whose goal is to construct the community of imagination, and to propose a language in which, to use the definition of Dariusz Gawin, one of this policy's creators, people will feel at ease, and which will help them to express that they are proud of being together.<sup>3</sup>*

Over the recent decades narrative museums have become a serious challenge to all museology. Much is written about their success, the ability to draw public opinion's and decision-makers' attention. They enjoy popularity with visitors, even those who have not visited museums before. However, these institutions are, often justifiably, criticized. The list of objections is long, but constitutes a topic for a separate paper. Certainly, their establishment provokes reflection on museums' condition and their future, and I mean here all museums, not just narrative ones. It instigates questions on the function of historical museums (and not only), and the way it is exerted; also the debate, as Krzysztof Pomian wrote in 'Le Débat' in 2013, whether the past should be staged, or whether museums should focus on genuine objects from the past.<sup>4</sup> The debate it inspired is interesting, forcing e.g. rethinking of

the role of the museum exhibit (and its definition). However, as Pomian warns, the dichotomy that results from such questions is but apparent, since today museums are forced to seek compromise, and that is what they are doing. Thus what seems the most essential today is asking about the principles on which the compromise is reached.

The Dialogue Centre Upheavals in Szczecin (further on Upheavals or CDP) launched on 25 January 2016, serves as a good pretext for the debate on narrative museums. Its example can illustrate the dilemmas faced today by creators of such museums. Upheavals relate to the local history. According to its authors, the purpose of the Museum is to construct the sense of identity of the citizens dwelling in the Region. At the same time, however, the institution has a character that goes beyond the Region and talks about the events that were crucial for the history of whole Poland. CDP is dedicated to the history of Szczecin spanning 1939–89, first of all in the political dimension. Yet it tells a very particular story, focused on the opposition to the Communist authorities, and reminding of their victims. Not only did this motif become a vital part of the Museum narrative, but due to the Museum's location in today's Solidarność [Solidarity] Square, in the vicinity of the former Communist Party Voivodeship Committee building, at the place where in December 1970 there were protests and street fights resulting in 16 casualties, CDP also plays a commemorative role.

The Upheavals are meant to talk about the past, connect the local with the national, be a monument, an institution where memory is deposited, but at the same time it is a modern museum with all its functions, learning included. The raising of the new building was to help to redefine the character of this part of the city, and to give it a new urban layout. Finally, CDP's creators had to respond to all the challenges related to the idea of a narrative museum, bearing in mind the Polish experience in their establishment, and the controversy that they have raised. All these certainly require



1. The Dialogue Centre Upheavals, designed by Robert Konieczny

a more in-depth analysis; meanwhile in the present paper they have only been outlined.

## Location

*We were looking for an idea concentrating on the interesting and dramatic history of this spot,*<sup>5</sup> explains Robert Konieczny, the building's designer; in 2009, his KWK Promes Studio won the architectural competition to design CDP's seat.<sup>6</sup> The construction started in 2012. Solidarności Square was a challenging location. Until recently undeveloped, yet with some remnants of old architecture, this including the Gothic Church of SS Apostles Peter and Paul, the Baroque Royal Gate, and the monumental police building from the early twentieth century. In 2005, *The Angel of Freedom*, monument by Czesław Dźwigaj, and commemorating the Victims of December 1970 (repeating, unfortunately, all the faults and limitations of the sculptor's other works) was unveiled in the Square. Additionally, in a direct vicinity the building of the Mieczysław Karłowicz Philharmonic was raised. All in white, designed by the Spanish Barozzi Veiga Studio, it soon joined the range of the city's landmarks, the 'icon' of Szczecin, and was considered one of the most outstanding architectural accomplishments of the last 25 years in Poland. Moreover, in 2015 it won the prestigious European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture. Mies van der Rohe Award.

Under all these circumstances, Konieczny emphasizes, the only choice was to step back and become a 'supporting actor'. The Square had to be preserved, while the surrounding historic buildings, as well as the Philharmonic Hall, exposed.

Also the Monument of December 1970 Victims was to remain unchanged. In other words, the Square was to be developed, without buildings being raised at the same time. As a result, Robert Konieczny sums up, a hybrid of a *quarter and a city square* was created, *which on the one hand closes the space as compact development, on the other preserves the values of open public space. We have hidden most of the cubic capacity underground.*<sup>7</sup>

The raised building is grey like its concrete, minimalist, very economical, almost austere, deftly using the play of light, e.g. thanks to the revolving panels at the entrances to the building, which having been shut form a wall with delicate spaces allowing for the light to penetrate the building interior. The overground part of the building has been limited to offices and the entrance hall communicated with the café and cloak room. The remaining spaces: display rooms and the conference hall, have been placed underground. The building's roof is at the same time the undulating square, with flat terrain left before the Philharmonic Hall, the Church, and the remaining Square surface, resembling historic development.

*The Authors, giving up on excessive expression, have focused on a precise, logical, rational facility, thus creating an ideal background to the past events, and at the same time a contemporary spot,* emphasized the architect Piotr Śmierzewski in 'Architektura'.<sup>8</sup> There have been more voices similarly appreciative of the solution proposed by Konieczny with an 'invisible' building constituting an integral part of the plot. In 2016, the Dialogue Centre Upheavals was awarded the European Prize for Urban Public Space.





2. The Dialogue Centre Upheavals, view from the Solidarity Square

However, despite all those endeavours, antagonisms over the building have been unavoidable. They paradoxically relate to what Konieczny's design is most admired for: creating contemporary space friendly to the residents. The square with undulating surface quickly attracted enthusiasts of, for example, roller skating and cycling. Yet, should the place where tragic events once took place serve recreation? *Indeed, it is a spot of commemoration, but not a cemetery. Tragic events took place here, which does not mean that similar places should be excluded from life, was the Architect's explanation in his interview for the Szczecin supplement to 'Gazeta Wyborcza'. And he added: we have created a central urban square for Szczecin residents. I have realized that there aren't all that many such squares in the city. I wanted both elderly citizens, who associate the square with the tragic events, and young people to use it.*<sup>9</sup> Finally, the vision of Solidarność Square as a special place have won, and the National Museum introduced a ban on using bikes and roller blades there.<sup>10</sup> One might say: this was but a minor problem, and the Museum's decision might be underestimated. However, together with it, the greatest accomplishment of that project was questioned: creating friendly public space for city residents, while a city and its spaces have been one of the hottest public debate topics, not only in Poland.

### The story of the past

As said above, the Dialogue Centre Upheavals is to be the story of the most important events in the history of Szczecin, beginning with its incorporation into Poland, relocation of its German citizens, through the developments of December 1970, the August 1980 strikes, and the foundation of Solidarity, up to martial law, and the 1989 breakthrough. The Exhibition, though, begins earlier, with the city under the Nazi administration and WW II ravages.

The whole Exhibition has been divided into four sections, these subsequently focused on subsections.<sup>11</sup> The visiting begins with the part titled: *Genesis – Outsider Among His Own People*; then it follows through *December 1970/January 1971 – Unhumbled City*, and *August 1980/*

*December 1981: the Way do Freedom*, the whole ending with *August 1988/June 1989: the End and the Beginning*.

The shape of the Upheavals display results from the assumptions made in which overall collective experience dominates over individual one. The backbone of the whole of the display is to be found in the 'upheavals' featured in the institutions' name, this going to say as it was described in the Exhibition's assumptions: *moments in history which a) 'shed a totally new light on everything that has been well known to us (Karl Schlägel); b) are related to the awakening of the resistance awareness of the opposition against the political regime in a broader sense (not individually, but collectively).*<sup>12</sup> The consequence of such assumptions was the display emphasis put on the antagonism between the authorities and the citizens in Communist Poland, and even earlier. Among the individuals opening the Exhibition is the Catholic priest Carl Lampert, murdered by the Nazis in 1944. Other events, quite naturally, remain overshadowed by this one.

The divisions applied throughout the Exhibition are quite obvious and understandable. However, in its concept certain incoherence can be observed, this visible in, among others, the way of leading the narrative. In the first part, what seems to dominate are individual stories, often related to definite presented objects, actually well selected. Later, with the exception of the events of December 1970, it is the collective story that comes to the fore.

In fact, dominant in the display is political history. Other histories: economic, social, not to mention the history of culture, are present only in separate spotlights. Obviously, one can find out that it was in Szczecin in 1958 that the Dave Brubeck Quartet's tour began, and in 1962, the memorable Festival of Young Talents was organized. Of much impact is also the map of the industry in the city and the whole Region, headed by the Adolf Warski Shipyard (excellent model), but also other major enterprises of key importance for the development of Szczecin and workers' movement, such as the Gryfia Repair Yard, Chemitex-Wiskord Chemical Plant, Polmo, or Police Chemical Plant. However, the detailed economic indexes reflect only the Gierek era, meanwhile the economic results and life standard had played a crucial role

in the workers' protest in 1970, as well as in the final defeat of Communism in the late 1980s.

Furthermore, missing elements of another kind can be pointed to. On the one hand the Exhibition conveys much information on the city residents' ethnicity in the first post-WW II years, on their culture, even their customs (the 'Migrations' section ranks among the best in the display), however there is far less information on social (or class, to use a different language) divisions among the population inflowing into the city from 1945 onwards. Similarly little information can be found as for the Communist regime's policy for relocations and location of specific institutions. These are important issues, since the knowledge on that topic would allow to better understand how Szczecin differed from the remaining 'Recovered Territories'. A visitor to the Upheavals will only get to know fragments of the city's history. A fuller picture can be acquired by visiting another local branch of the National Museum: City History Museum in Szczecin. However, it can be easily assumed that many individuals will only visit the institution in Solidarności Square.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, these are not the only critical observations as for the presented narrative.<sup>14</sup> The other missing element is the problem of the legitimization of the Communist authorities, the explanation what they were rooted in, since not only in the power of the military and secret police. This element is important inasmuch as it better accounts for the political history of Communist Poland, of protests against the Communist regime, and of formation of the dissident movement. Of similar impact is the open posing

of the question of the attitude to Communist Poland, thus the attitude to the political system of the time. The debate over the biographical note on Piotr Zaremba, the first Polish mayor of Szczecin in 1945–50, placed in the Exhibition, was really symptomatic.<sup>15</sup> This example clearly demonstrates how ambiguous the memory of Communist Poland is, but also how collective memory, often institutionalized, differs from individual, private memory, based on recollections.

The outstanding French historian Pierre Nora wrote of the 'second memory', of a different remembering, of an emotional, sensitive, and painful attitude to the past. *Today, he emphasized, the responsibility to remember makes everyone his or her own historian.*<sup>16</sup> This implying the challenge to make the vision of the past shared or agreed on. This is what narrative museums often want to achieve, showing history in individual views, through individuals, and their fate.

Meanwhile, could all those omissions and excessive generalizations have been avoided? It was difficult, but the manner of presenting certain issues should be given a second thought. On the other hand, however, it should be borne in mind that one of the most important tasks of the Museum was to commemorate the December 1970 victims. The room dedicated to them is the most important one at CDP. A very interesting solution has been applied in it: it is the only space in white, which emphasizes that it is unique and exceptional, while also reflecting graveness and respect. Here the focus is on the victims, the visitor can see their faces, their mementoes, and does not have to painstakingly trace facial features of the important protagonists amidst overwhelming



3. The Dialogue Centre Upheavals, a section of the exhibition, a stone star from the *Monument of Gratitude to the Soviet Army* in the foreground

darkness, which is often the case in narrative museums (unfortunately, the majority of the authors of narrative museums are of the opinion that only dark rooms allow to render emotions that accompany the stories of the past).

Irrespective of all the above doubts, however, it has to be emphasised that the whole Exhibition has been meticulously prepared. The exhibits are not crammed, the public are not being dazzled with one curiosity after another. *One of the deadly sins of Polish museum spaces, next to trivial pseudo-theatrical scenographies, which here the authors have given up upon, too,* writes Czesław Frejlich on the Upheavals, *is an enormous number of objects and the enormous amount of information that only blur the message.*<sup>17</sup> It is not like this at CDP.

Much of the factual material has been contained in infoboxes. It is still extensive, particularly the texts are. This may hinder the perception of the whole, which has sometimes raised a reproach to the authors. Nonetheless, the abundance of material can also be judged as an advantage, similarly as the academic character of the texts, since, as remarked by Piotr Policht in his extensive analysis of the Szczecin Exhibition, it may also show respect for the visitor. Also details are of importance, adds Policht, *each text features bibliography, which means that it is not presented as the revealed truth.*<sup>18</sup>

Last but not least, let us emphasize that CDP's authors have succeeded in showing intriguing objects, sometimes not fully obvious, such as a stone star, in 1992 stripped off the Szczecin Monument of Gratitude to the Soviet Army, or an anonymous portrait of Bolesław Bierut which only upon a closer inspection can be seen as composed of the text of Poland's 1952 Constitution.

## Place of art

*The Centre's authors have taken a very close look at the institutions being created in the meantime, and were able to learn a lesson both from their successes, and failures; giving an important say to art in their narrative,* comments above-quoted Piotr Policht. This very decision has made the Upheavals not only significantly stand out among the so-far created narrative museums, but also introduce a significant novelty to historical museology.

It is true that works of contemporary art have earlier appeared in narrative museums. However there they have merely been one of the exhibition elements, usually quite inferior, although the European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk (ECS) has composed the *Re-Construction of 16 December 1981* (2011) by Dorota Nieznalska into its permanent exhibition, this being a reconstruction of the genuine Gate 2 of the Gdansk Shipyard rammed by a tank during the Shipyard's pacification following the introduction of martial law.

An interesting example can be found in the Katyn Museum, launched in autumn 2015, which, similarly as the Upheavals, combines commemorative and museum functions. Its arrangement has been prepared by Jerzy Kalina, one of the classics of Polish art. He rejected the attempt to recreate the past. He did not raise any scenography, as is often the case in narrative museums, but he consistently applied the language of contemporary art, emphasizing what constitutes the power of the Katyn Museum, namely genuine exhibits (it preserves about 30.000 objects from the tombs in Katyn, Kharkiv, Mednoye, and Bikovnya). Maybe not everyone is convinced by Kalina's display concept, but, for example, the extremely expressive placing of the items extracted from the Katyn tombs, separately, in clay-made 'reliquaries' must be appreciated. Each object, spotlighted, becomes a story of its own.

In the most frequent practice, however, artists' works can either be viewed in temporary exhibitions or beyond the permanent one. The Museum of the Warsaw Uprising has commissioned murals from artists, meant to create the 'Art Wall' in the Freedom Park adjacent to the Museum's buildings. The list of artists' names included, e.g., Edward Dwurnik, Bartek Materka, Wilhelm Sasnal, and the Twożywo Group, but also Stasys Eidrigevicius or Papcio Chmiel (!). Really varied, not always accomplished works were created. Near ECS, in turn, monumental *Gates* by Grzegorz Klaman have been placed; it is an installation made up of two components: *Gate 1*, echoing a ship's bow, and *Gate 2*, echoing Vladimir Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International*.

In the case of CDP a different choice has been made. Art, both historic works, as well as those purposefully commissioned, are a full-bodied segment of the Exhibition. Works, though not numerous, are really exposed. Some of



4. Robert Kuśmirowski, *Room of executions/Solitary confinement unit*, the Dialogue Centre Upheavals

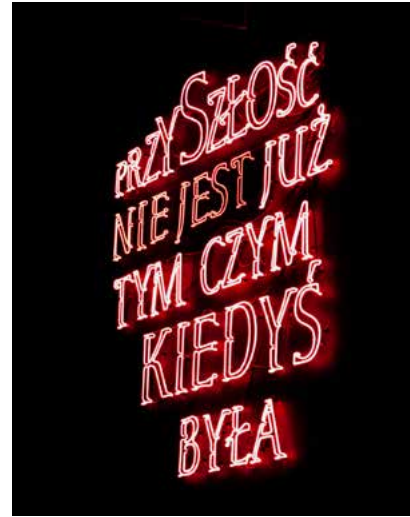


5. Tomasz Mróz, *Want a sweet – go to Gierek*, the Dialogue Centre Upheavals





6. Grzegorz Hańderek, Michał Libera, *Black*, the Dialogue Centre Upheavals



7. Hubert Czerepok, *The future is not what it used to be*, the Dialogue Centre Upheavals

(Photos: M. Wojtarowicz, National Museum in Szczecin)

them impress with their scale. The exhibition is opened with a monumental, extremely realistic photographic collage by Kobas Laksa *Das Ende des Traums/End of Dreams, Stettin'45* showing the Red Army seizing the ruined city. Robert Kuśmirowski's *Execution Room/ Seclusion Room* shows a prison cell from the Stalinist period rendered with minute detail. Watching this room, one can have an illusion that Kuśmirowski who is an illusion master, has brought an authentic historic interior to the Museum. *Mr Gierek Will Give You a Candy if you Ask Him Kindly* by Tomasz Mróz, in its turn, is also a hyperrealistic presentation of Fiat 126, the symbol of the 1970s, with a family 'cramped' inside.

Some artists works collected at CDP complement the Exhibition, illustrating the past. Others are a peculiar commentary, upsetting the story, causing concern. The record of the 'Europe' Movement Academy's action from 1976 is possibly the best summing up of the Gierek era, the unreality of that period, the apparent slogan of openness and turning to the West, backing which there was censorship, lack of freedom, and the progressing economic degradation. *Easter 1981* by Teresa Murak aptly conveys the optimism of the first Solidarity movement.<sup>19</sup>

The Upheavals display authors have radically rejected scenography ideas<sup>20</sup> which together with the upcoming of the new media, have dominated the thinking of a new modern historical museum. This opens a new field to discussion on a narrative museum. Interestingly, the authors of the display propose getting away from the definition of a 'narrative museum', proposing the term 'informative museum'.<sup>21</sup>

With the presence of art works there is, however, one major question connected: what place should art take in historical museums? What functions should it play? Should it serve as a commentary? Illustration? Should it arouse emotions? The CDP's example shows that different strategies are possible. One cannot but agree with Karol Sienkiewicz that for art the presence in such a museum is quite a peculiar situation. The artists lose their feeling of autonomy, their

works become inscribed into a historical narrative they have hardly any way of impacting; all they can add is subtleties. Despite his doubts, Sienkiewicz adds: *Art, however, plays a very important role. It brings about a break, it makes you pause, reflect, it provides a different kind of experience.*<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it introduces an element of a dialogue, discussion, even a dispute to the display. Actually, not always intended. A good example in this respect is *The Block of Flats* by Grzegorz Hańderek and Michał Libera who were very suggestive showing a typical grim oppressive estate of a block of flats in an attempt to render the hopelessness of the 1980s. However, today, as the architecture of late Modernism is more and more appreciated, the work seems anachronic. Despite all the criticism: low craftsmanship quality of many settlements from Late Communism, lack of resources for infrastructure meant to accompany the blocks or the greenery, the work of Hańderek and Libera speaks more of certain ideological imagination, than of reality of the prefabricated estates.

The American-Mexican writer and philosopher Manuel DeLanda compares history to non-linear piled-up layers. It is only an intervention, their arrangement that gives a certain sense to history. The sense, however, is not ultimate. Each time we modify it to suit our needs. And it is frequently artists who propose a revision, as they are often able to critically, if not iconoclastically, look at history. Over the last 25 years, it has been them who have tackled the issues either overlooked or left unsaid.

CDP's displays closes with Hubert Czerepok's neon, reminding Anatole France's thought that the *future will be such as you have seen it*. The words mark out the outline of the map of Poland. Jacques Le Goff in his book *History and Memory* recalls the 1952 manifesto of the 'Annales' magazine claiming that history cannot logically separate the research into the past from the research into the present and the future.<sup>23</sup> Czerepok adds that talking about it is always entangled in the present, it is even subordinated to it.

**Abstract:** The Dialogue Centre Upheavals (later CDP or Upheavals) in Szczecin, which opened in January 2016, may be an example of the dilemmas faced today by the creators of historical narrative museums. Devoted to the fate of Szczecin in the period 1939–1989, it is intended to construct the inhabitants' identity and at the same time tell the history of this city in a broader Polish perspective. It is also supposed to commemorate the victims of the December'70 protests.

Building the CDP re-defined the character of this part of

the city and introduced a new urban order. The design of the building managed to blend the idea of a public square and city buildings. However, the creators of the permanent exhibition at Upheavals departed from the scenographic solutions which dominate Polish art museums. Instead, they chose modern art to be an integral part of it, a solution which is a novelty in historical museology. Works by among others Hubert Czerepok, Robert Kiśmirowski and Kobasa Laksy complement the exhibition, and also illustrate or comment upon the past.

**Keywords:** Dialogue Centre Upheavals, historical museum, narrative museum, modern art in historical museum, commemoration of December'70.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> R. Traba, *Epoka muzeów? Muzeum jako remedium, muzeum jako mediator* [Museum Era? Museum as Remedy, Museum as a Mediator], in: *I Kongres Muzealników Polskich* [The First Congress of Polish Museologists], NCK, Warszawa 2015, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Opinion voice published in *Pamięć jako przedmiot władzy* [Memory as an Object of Power], Warszawa 2008, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> K. Pomian, *Musées d'histoire: émotions, connaissances, idéologies*, 'Le Débat' 2013, No. 5 (177), pp. 47-58.

<sup>5</sup> R. Konieczny, *Centrum Dialogu Przelomy – projekt wyjątkowy* [Dialogue Centre Upheavals: a Unique Design], <http://muzeum.szczecin.pl/robert-konieczny-centrum-dialogu-przelomy-projekt-wyjatkowy.html>

<sup>6</sup> Authors of the competition design of KWK Promes: the architects Robert Konieczny, Dorota Żurek, Katarzyna Furgalińska.

<sup>7</sup> R. Konieczny, *Centrum Dialogu...*

<sup>8</sup> P. Śmierzewski, *Spektakularna przestrzeń – o Centrum Dialogu Przelomy* [Spectacular Space: on Dialogue Centre Upheavals], 'Architektura' 31 March 2016, [http://architektura.muratorplus.pl/krytyka/spektakularna-przestrzen-o-centrum-dialogu-przelomy-piotr-smierzewski\\_5906.html](http://architektura.muratorplus.pl/krytyka/spektakularna-przestrzen-o-centrum-dialogu-przelomy-piotr-smierzewski_5906.html). A whole series of articles on CDP have been published in 'Architektura', e.g. by Lech Karwowski, Piotr Wysocki, and Tomasz Żylski.

<sup>9</sup> *Architekt o Centrum Dialogu Przelomy: To miejsce pamięci, ale nie cmentarz* [The Architect on DCP: This is a spot of commemoration, not a cemetery] [Ewa Podgajna talks to Robert Konieczny], 'Gazeta Wyborcza Szczecin' 22 Jan. 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Already after the paper had been completed, the Museum liberated the regulations for the Square users (currently only 'fast aggressive riding and skating' are banned).

<sup>11</sup> Authors of the permanent Exhibition: the architect Michał Czasnojc (Redan); the artists: Piotr Wysocki (curator of the artistic segment), Roman Kaczmarczyk; authors' cooperation on part of KWK Promes: the architects Robert Konieczny, Mariusz Pawlus, Michał Lisiński, Aneta Świeżak.

<sup>12</sup> *Założenia do scenariusza ekspozycji Centrum Dialogu 'Przelomy'* [Assumptions for the Display Scenario of the Dialogue Centre Upheavals], Szczecin 2011, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Although educational scenarios included in the methodological guide that accompanies the CDP's permanent Exhibition make reference to the full history of Szczecin, showing the city from varied perspectives. See: E. Szumocka, *Szczecin moje miasto – widzę, działam, czuję* [Szczecin, My City – I See, I Act, I Feel], Szczecin 2015.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Karol Sienkiewicz pointed out to a marginal presence of women in the Exhibition. This also applies to the artists whose works have been placed in the display. See: K. Sienkiewicz, *Przelomy – Szczecin* [Upheavals – Szczecin], <https://sienkiewiczkarol.org/2016/03/02/przelomy-szczecin/>

<sup>15</sup> M. Maciejowski, *Debiut Centrum Dialogu Przelomy i brązownicy pierwszego prezydenta* [Debut of the Dialogue Centre Upheavals and Glorifiers of the First Mayor], 'Magazyn Szczeciński' (supplement to 'Gazeta Wyborcza') 18 March 2016, L. Karwowski, *Problem rzetelności historycznej* [The Issue of Historical Reliability], 'Magazyn Szczeciński' (supplement to 'Gazeta Wyborcza') 25 March 2016.

<sup>16</sup> P. Nora, *Between Memory and History: Les Linux de Mémoire*, P. Mościcki (transl.), 'Archiwum' [Łódź] 2009, No. 2, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> C. Frejlich, *Dialog czy monolog – o Centrum Dialogu Przelomy* [Dialogue or Monologues: on the Dialogue Centre Upheavals], 'Architektura' 31 March 2016, [http://architektura.muratorplus.pl/krytyka/dialog-czy-monolog-o-centrum-dialogu-przelomy-czeslawa-frejlich\\_5907.html](http://architektura.muratorplus.pl/krytyka/dialog-czy-monolog-o-centrum-dialogu-przelomy-czeslawa-frejlich_5907.html)

<sup>18</sup> P. Policht, *Dobra zmiana? O Centrum Dialogu Przelomy w Szczecinie* [A Positive Change? On the Dialogue Centre Upheavals in Szczecin], 'Magazyn Szum' 23 February 2016, <http://magazynszum.pl/krytyka/dobra-zmiana-o-centrum-dialogu-przelomy-w-szczecinie>

<sup>19</sup> Apart from the artists mentioned in the paper, also works by Xawery Dunikowski, Edward Dwurnik, Henryk Stażewski, and Wojciech Zasadni, have been incorporated into the Exhibition.

<sup>20</sup> The predilection for scenographic solutions, often derived from the distant past of theatre or film, causes that narrative museums are sometimes compared to the old panoramas, and their naïve attempts at creating the illusion of reality.

<sup>21</sup> R. Kaczmarczyk, *Projektowanie muzeum informacyjnego* [Designing of an Informative Museum], in: *Miasto sprzeciwu – miasto protestu* [City of Opposition, City of Protest], Szczecin 2015, pp. 61-64.

<sup>22</sup> K. Sienkiewicz, *Przelomy – Szczecin...*

<sup>23</sup> J. Le Goff, *Historia i pamięć* [History and Memory], A. Gronowska, Joanna Stryczyk (transl.), Warszawa 2007, p. 63.

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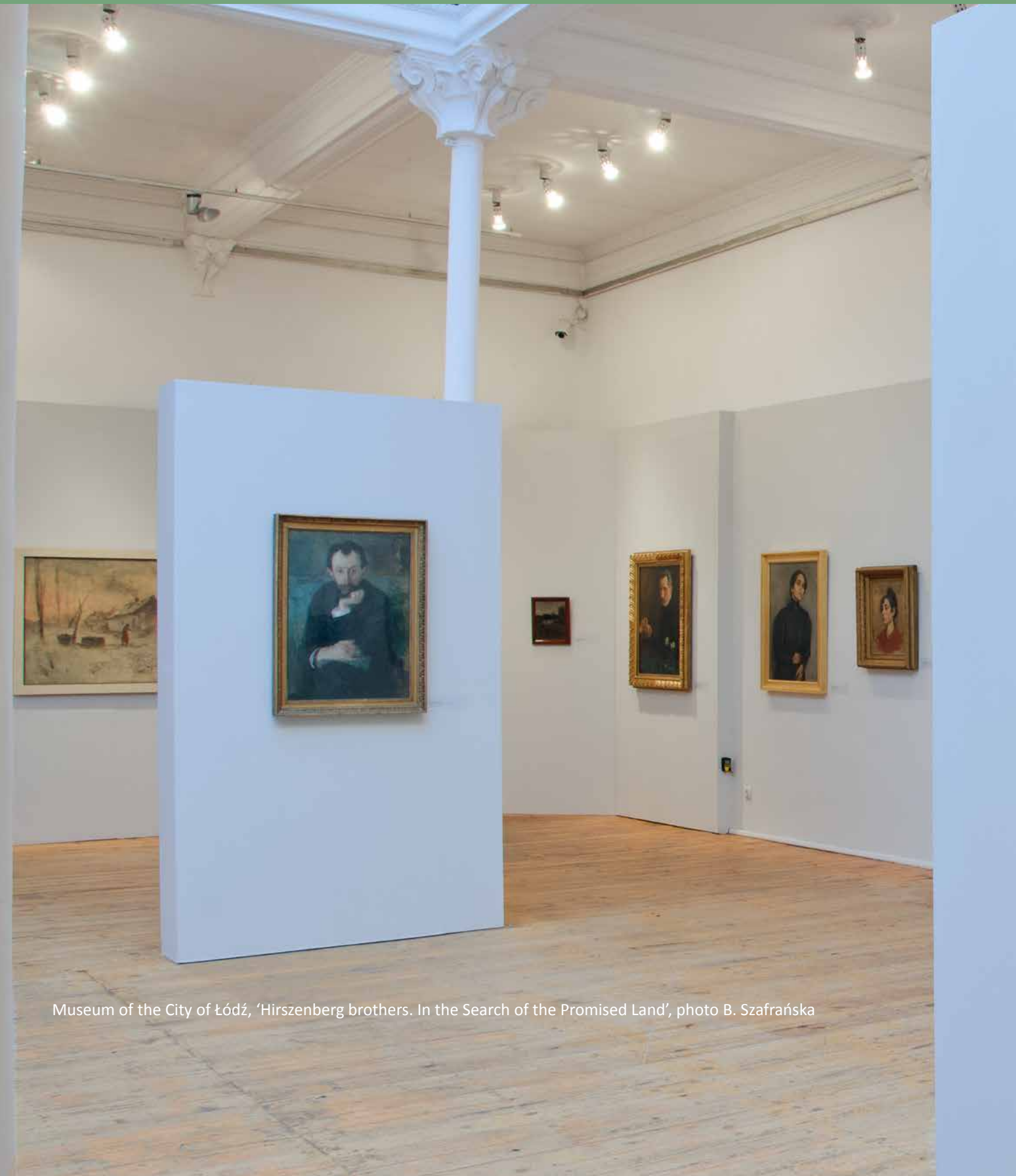
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Museum of the City of Łódź, 'Hirszenberg brothers. In the Search of the Promised Land', photo B. Szafrńska

# MINORITY/MAJORITY. SOCIETY/COMMUNITY



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# MUSEUMS, MIGRATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MUSEUM WORK

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## Foreword

The role of museums in society has expanded significantly in the last decades: from temples of knowledge to forums for debate and discussion, from repositories of objects to people-centred institutions with social responsibilities and functions. This shift reflects an ongoing trend to democratise museums and make them more accessible to wider audiences and more responsive to the public's changing needs, in particular the interests of local communities, whose composition has changed in recent years to include migrants and people of different ethnic backgrounds.

With annual migration flows to the EU as a whole projected to increase from about 1 043 000 people in 2010 to 1 332 500 by 2020, the question of how cultural institutions can contribute to effective integration and dialogue has become more relevant than ever. Funders and society at large expect museums to play their part in facilitating the integration and peaceful coexistence of newcomers, with financial resources being made available, also at the EU level, to support them in this effort.<sup>1</sup>

Many questions can be raised as to whether it is right and appropriate to charge museums with these responsibilities and whether this would push the boundaries of their work too far and give the social function an exceedingly prominent role over the traditional conservation and educational tasks museums already fulfil. But this discussion seems to be already obsolete in the light of the growing body of evidence on good practices available at the European level.

Certainly, each museum has the possibility to define its own mission and identify the target groups of its activities. Using Mark O'Neill's definitions,<sup>2</sup> some fall within the 'elitist model', where practices of collecting, research and display

are carried out for their own sake. Others reflect the 'welfare model', where services such as education, marketing and outreach are designed in response to democratizing pressure, but still with an elitist attitude. Others still embrace the 'social justice model', where engagement with people is recognised as being the responsibility of all staff and is strategically integrated into the museum structure. In the latter case, museums see themselves as rooted in society and, like all social institutions, they feel the responsibility to contribute to social cohesion.

Museums who engage in intercultural activities are more likely to belong to this third category, or at least aspire to do so. At the European level, there are many examples of how museums interpret their role as promoters of cultural diversity and agents of social change. This essay aims to illustrate some of them, as well as to discuss some underpinning theoretical issues and methodological approaches.

## Key concepts and methodological approaches

There is an abundance of literature on museums and cultural diversity, on heritage and intercultural dialogue. Numerous toolkits,<sup>3</sup> guidelines<sup>4</sup> and handbooks<sup>5</sup> have been published as well as recommendations issued by international bodies, such as the Council of Europe<sup>6</sup> and UNESCO.<sup>7</sup>

All of them start out by acknowledging the role of museums as key spaces not only to the transmission of culture, but also to strengthening mutual understanding and dialogue. Reference is made to Clifford's definition of museums as 'contact zones'<sup>8</sup>, *neutral spaces, where differences and mutual difficulties of understanding, habitually experienced*

as limits and sources of conflict, become something valuable: 'new opportunities for active citizenship'<sup>9</sup>. Concepts such as 'culture', 'identity' and 'cultural diversity' are analysed, discussed and defined. But most important of all, the notion of 'intercultural dialogue' is critically reviewed and assessed.

Simona Bodo's lucid analysis identifies three main ways in which museums interpret their responsibility in promoting intercultural dialogue:

- encouraging a better knowledge and greater recognition of 'other' cultures, i.e. informing the autochthonous public about 'other' cultures which have traditionally been misrepresented or made invisible in museums;
- integrating 'new citizens' in mainstream culture by helping them to learn more about the country's history, language, values and traditions;
- promoting cultural self-awareness in migrant communities through 'culturally specific programming' (e.g. development of 'compensatory' or 'celebratory' exhibitions, involvement of communities in the interpretation/preservation of collections, etc.).

According to Bodo, these approaches, although valuable in creating the conditions for the encounter and exchange of culturally different practices, still tend to see 'heritage' as something static, a cultural patrimony received once and for all. They keep 'majority' and 'minority' communities apart and consider intercultural dialogue as a goal or predetermined outcome, rather than as an interactive process.<sup>10</sup>

Intercultural dialogue, instead, is a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or world views. Among its aims are to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices, to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices, to foster equality, and to enhance creative processes.<sup>11</sup> For museums, which traditionally used to exclude those who don't belong to mainstream culture, it means partnering with new audiences and recognizing them as interlocutors, collaborating with other players in the community, experimenting with new operational models and adopting a more open and participatory approach to the creation of cultural content.

## Reinterpreting collections

Choosing an object, whether exceptional or ordinary, to be part of a museum collection is a deliberate action which grants special status, the reasons for the selection often becoming part of a narrative which throws light on the history of the collection and the meaning of the artefact itself.

*Museums tell many stories* is the name of an EU-funded training project carried out in 2005–2007,<sup>12</sup> whose title points to the fact that objects in museums have indeed one or more stories to tell about the culture that produced them and the contexts from which they originate, but also on their meaning in contemporary societies, depending on how they are exhibited, interpreted and communicated.

In order to open up new perspectives, visitors are often invited to add their own personal stories to the narrative provided by the museum. This is the case, for example, with the Neukoelln museum in Berlin,<sup>13</sup> which centres its activity on an exhibition titled *99 x Neukoelln*, which

features 99 objects intended to represent the multicultural identity of the neighbourhood. The individual objects and their respective social and cultural-historical context are illustrated at computer terminals, where visitors are invited to contribute their own stories under the *My story* section.<sup>14</sup>

Museums wishing to take on an intercultural approach should re-examine and re-assess existing collections using different perspectives and taking into account the viewpoint of individuals and communities.

One widely-applicable example is offered by the *Collective Conversations* project initiated by the Manchester Museum in 2004. In 2001 the museum had set up a Community Advisory Panel to (...) *debate, identify and articulate the needs and interests of diverse communities to create a culturally inclusive representation in the Museum*. When the Advisory Panel expressed concern that the collection was largely under-used by the surrounding local communities and lacked important information regarding its history and community context, the museum responded by setting up a programme with the objective of working collaboratively with communities and academics to explore the meaning of objects – most of which were in storage – and to share stories, beliefs and opinions about them.

It consisted in organising a series of 'conversations' with diverse groups and individuals—local migrant communities, researchers, people who culturally identify with particular objects, etc.—which were filmed and made available both on YouTube<sup>15</sup> and on screens in the gallery space.

In 2007, a designated space to record these live conversations—a fully equipped studio called the Contact Zone—was set up, with a layout recalling the atmosphere of a campfire around which stories are told. Since then, the Museum has continued to collect stories, adding new interpretations and perspectives to its collections and integrating these narratives in its exhibits.

## A to Z: From archaeology to ethnography to natural science to zoology

There is no museum type which *per se* is more suitable for fostering intercultural dialogue or undertaking multicultural activities, with the exception, perhaps, of migration museums which are specifically set up to acknowledge the contributions of migrants to their host societies.<sup>16</sup> Many ethnographic museums in Europe have recently changed their names to *World museums* (Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam<sup>17</sup>) or *Museums of World Culture* (Varldskulturmuseet in Gothenburg<sup>18</sup>) to underline their role as forums for *encounters that help people feel at home wherever they are* and as intermediaries of intercultural dialogue. Ethnographic museums, by the very nature of their collections, represent the multiplicity of cultures in the world and can certainly use them to *function as a platform for dialogues and reflection, where many different voices can be heard and controversial and contentious topics discussed – a place where people can feel at home and reach across borders*, as the mission statement of the Museum of World Culture reads.

Even if these museums possess collections made up of objects to which migrant communities could immediately relate to since they concern their country of origin, it

would be wrong, however, to think that they are in a better position to engage in intercultural activities. As shown by the Manchester Museum, when given the chance to select objects as a focus for one of the Collective Conversations, migrant communities don't always opt for the ones representing their culture of origin.

It is interesting to note however, how displays and environments conforming equally well to intercultural aims have been created within very different types of museums.

The Youth Museum Schoeneberg, in one of Berlin's district museums, set up a permanent exhibition called *Villa Global – the Next Generation*, which consists of 14 rooms personally designed and furnished by people from different countries of origin and cultural backgrounds to showcase the diversity of Berlin's population. Entering the rooms triggers a very intimate experience which puts visitors in direct contact with individuals through the objects they have chosen to represent their identity, but also with their personal stories and beliefs.<sup>19</sup>

An art museum, like the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen, has used its spaces to engage a group of young refugee children from the Red Cross Asylum Centre with art, offering them a place for contemplation but also supporting their capacities for communication and reflection, as documented in the report *Traveling with art*.<sup>20</sup>

Elsewhere, artworks of religious subject matter are used to stimulate discussions with the public on various aspects of the different faiths. At the Hamburger Kunsthalle, works depicting stories from the Bible, some of which can be found in the Torah and Quran as well, inspired a series of events on interreligious dialogue.<sup>21</sup> At the Museo Diocesano in Milan, digital tools have been developed and co-designed with

users to facilitate the understanding of the figurative and iconographic language of religious paintings to non-Christian or non-Catholic visitors.<sup>22</sup>

Science museums are also no exception when it comes to intercultural engagement. The Museum of Natural History of the University of Parma, which owns a rich collection of African animals from Eritrea and Congo, developed a programme to involve citizens of African origin to become chief protagonists in the reinterpretation of museum collections through storytelling and musical performances. In collaboration with the Googol Association, it also set up a mobile planetarium to show which animals can be identified in southern hemisphere constellations and to make comparisons between African and European cosmology. That project was called *Animals in heaven and earth*.<sup>23</sup> A list of projects and initiatives which museums can stage to reach out to new citizens would indeed be very long.<sup>24</sup> Worth mentioning here are language courses,<sup>25</sup> in which museums partner with schools or educational institutions. Doing so, they offer themselves as resources to teach the local language to newcomers, using their collections to trigger memories or cultural reference points while simultaneously conveying features of the local culture, art and history. Other types of projects include ones where individuals of a foreign background are trained to become museum mediators to plan and guide visits for their own communities in their mother tongue,<sup>26</sup> or to develop new narratives in the museum, exploring the relationship between their personal biographies and the biographies of the objects.<sup>27</sup> In my opinion, an exemplary project – one that started from an apparently simple idea but proved very effective and could be replicated in any museum – was undertaken by the Archaeological and Ethnological



1. Project *Animals in heaven and earth*, Museum of Natural History of the University of Parma





2. Project A Brera anch'io

Museum in Modena (Italy) in collaboration with local institutions involved in the development of immigration and integration policies and with cultural mediators. The project, called *Choose the piece*,<sup>28</sup> aimed to promote knowledge of local history and heritage among young migrants through the 'adoption' of museum objects. The museum partnered with a local adult education and training institute where young immigrants attended Italian language courses. Their first contact with the museum as a repository of local history happened through a guided tour. The museum staff had selected thirty objects which they deemed particularly relevant and meaningful to the history of the city in that period, and, out of these, participants were invited to select a piece according to their taste, interest, emotions. They were also asked to write down the reasons for their choice

**Abstract:** The role of museums in society has expanded significantly in the last decades: from temples of knowledge to forums for debate and discussion, from repositories of objects to people-centred institutions with social responsibilities and functions. This shift reflects an ongoing trend to democratise museums and make them more accessible to wider audiences and responsive to the public's changing needs, in particular the interests of local communities, whose composition has changed in recent years to include migrants and people of different ethnic backgrounds.

along with a short biography, which led to further analysis and discussion under the guidance of the museum staff and the teachers. The symbolic adoption of the objects occurred during a ceremony where participants received a certificate in which they were named as the guardians of the chosen objects and pledged to protect them and disseminate knowledge about them. The project was documented by a professional photographer and the pictures were used to illustrate an Intercultural Diary which was distributed by the mayor to the citizens of Modena during an official ceremony, thereby promoting a new image of migrant citizens to the whole community.

*Choose the piece* took place between 2008 and 2010 as a pilot project. Since then, the Museum has continued to collaborate regularly with migrant groups, engaging them in projects which take advantage of museum collections to explore different subjects (thus far *Streets, Land, Modena-Tirana round trip*), inviting them to contribute with their ideas, perspectives, life stories and even materials: documents, pictures, etc., which are later used for the production of the intercultural diary.

To date, however, the most radical example of commitment to intercultural dialogue is offered by Jamtli in Northern Sweden, which is offsetting the local housing shortage by currently building a small village with 13 houses on the estate of the Open Air Museum to accommodate migrant families with the objective of creating a bond between them and the museum.<sup>29</sup>

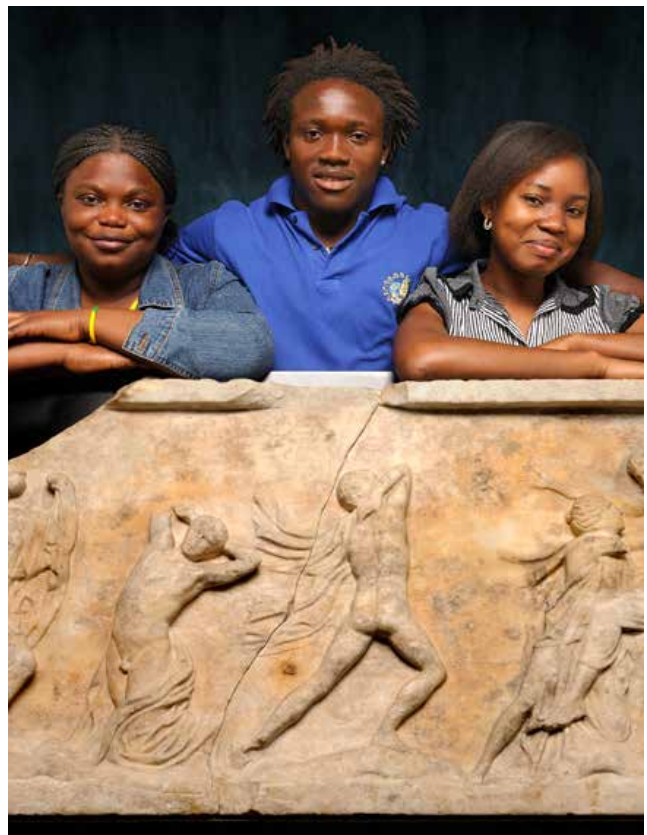
## Conclusions

I would like to conclude by underlining the fact that intercultural dialogue is above all an encounter with others. As I have tried to show, there are many examples of good practices, numerous research projects which have been carried out successfully, and endless resources from which museum professionals can draw to design programmes and activities suitable for their own institutions.

No matter the type and size of the museum, the human factor is crucial in this area and museum staff should be prepared and trained appropriately. An attitude of openness and flexibility among the staff is essential, as are a disposition to active listening and a sensitivity to contexts.

As Diana Walters points out, *Interculturalism should (...) be embraced as an opportunity for self-reflection and personal growth. It is effectively an opportunity for an encounter, and like any good conversation, it is best when the journey is more important than the destination.*<sup>30</sup>

With annual migration flows to the EU as a whole projected to increase from about 1 043 000 people in 2010 to 1 332 500 by 2020, the question of how cultural institutions can contribute to effective integration and dialogue has become more relevant than ever. Funders and society at large expect museums to play their part in facilitating the integration and peaceful coexistence of newcomers, with financial resources being made available, also at the EU level, to support them in this effort. Many questions can be raised as to whether it is right and appropriate to charge



3, 4, 5. Portraits of participants of the project *Choose a piece*, Archaeological and Ethnological Museum of Modena



Guidelines for good practice for activities of intercultural mediation

1. Considering intercultural dialogue as an interactive, bi-directional and dialogical process.
2. Embracing a dynamic, dialogical notion of 'heritage' as a set of cultural objects – both material and immaterial – that should not only be preserved and transmitted, but also re-negotiated and re-constructed in their meanings.
3. Responding to the growing diversity of the museum audiences by working with all types of collections – i.e. not being dependent on the immediate or superficial relevance of objects or documents to specific cultures and communities.
4. Encouraging cross-cultural discussions, debate and understanding between mixed groups.
5. Developing intercultural attitudes and skills such as the ability to question one's own points of view, the awareness of one's own multiple identities, and an openness to individuals and groups with different cultural, ethnic, or religious backgrounds.
6. Focussing on process and methodology as well as on the acquisition of new interpersonal, social, civic and intercultural attitudes and skills.
7. Involving the target audience in planning the initiative.
8. Working and committing long-term with audiences, through the inclusion of community voices in planning, interpretation, documentation and display.
9. Producing didactic material for a wider audience.
10. Training additional museum staff in intercultural matters.
11. Promoting interdepartmental co-operation or cross-sector partnerships to maximise the broader social impact of projects, and to ensure that a range of different competencies and skills are developed.
12. Building the outcomes of intercultural activities into the institutional fabric of the museum, ensuring legacy, progression and institutional change

Museums and Intercultural Dialogue <http://online.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/libri/pdf/LEM4rd-report-museums-and-intercultural-dialogue.pdf>



Paleolitico / Palaeolithic

**“Venere di Savignano”**  
*Palaeolithic superior.*  
 23,000-24,000 anni fa.

La “Venere di Savignano”, recuperata nel 1925, è stata datata sulla base di confronti stilistici con numerose statuette femminili trovate in varie parti d’Europa. I grandi glutei, il seno, le cosce, il ventre sono realizzati con forte senso plastico che testimonia il particolare interesse di queste popolazioni per la riproduzione e la fertilità.

**“Venere di Savignano”**  
*Upper Palaeolithic.*  
 23,000-24,000 years ago.

The “Savignano Venus”, uncovered in 1925, was dated on the basis of stylistic comparisons with numerous statuettes in the female form found in various parts of Europe. The rounded buttocks, bust, thighs and abdomen reveal a high degree of stylisation that suggest a marked interest on the part of these people in reproduction and fertility.

 Repubblica Dominicana Dominican Republic Ethana Fortuna Espinosa anni / age 20 “Alito a Modena con la mia famiglia. Quando avevo finito il liceo vorrei studiare legge e diventare avvocato.” “I live in Modena with my family. When I’ve finished high school I’d like to study Law and become a lawyer.”	 Marocco Morocco Karima Janouli anni / age 19 “Ho incontrato e sposato mio marito qui a Modena e il mio bambino, di pochi mesi, è nato al Policlinico.” “I met and married my husband here in Modena and my little boy was born at Modena General Hospital a few months ago.”
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6, 7. Intercultural Diary 2010, project *Choose the piece*, Archaeological and Ethnological Museum of Modena

(Photos: 1 – N. Franchini; 2 – Pinakoteka di Brera; 3-7 – P. Terzi)



museums with these responsibilities and whether this would push the boundaries of their work too far and give the social function an exceedingly prominent role over the traditional conservation and educational tasks museums already fulfil. But this discussion seems to be already obsolete in the light

of the growing body of evidence on good practices available at the European level.

This essay aims to illustrate some of them, as well as to discuss some underpinning theoretical issues and methodological approaches.

**Keywords:** museums, migrations, cultural diversity, national minorities, ethnical minorities, religious minorities.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See the Creative Europe Call [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/news/20160310-refugee-integration-projects\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/news/20160310-refugee-integration-projects_en)
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- <sup>6</sup> Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue, 2005 [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/CulturalConvention/Source/FARO\\_DECLARATION\\_Definitive\\_Version\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/CulturalConvention/Source/FARO_DECLARATION_Definitive_Version_EN.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> UNESCO Recommendation on the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society, 2015 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/recommendation-on-the-protection-and-promotion-of-museums-and-collections/>
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- <sup>11</sup> This definition is taken from the *Sharing diversity* project of the ERICarts Institute, <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/intercultural-dialogue.php>
- <sup>12</sup> <http://abc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/istituto/progetti/progetti-europei/musei-e-beni-culturali/museums-tell-many-stories>
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- <sup>14</sup> <http://www.museum-neukoelln.de/blog/?cat=55>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/user/ManchesterMuseum> and <http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/community/collectiveconversations>
- <sup>16</sup> For more information, see the website of the international network of migration museums <http://www.migrationmuseums.org/> and [http://www.network-migration.org/pr\\_migration\\_museum\\_eng.php](http://www.network-migration.org/pr_migration_museum_eng.php)
- <sup>17</sup> [www.wereldmuseum.nl](http://www.wereldmuseum.nl)
- <sup>18</sup> <http://www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/varldskulturmuseet>
- <sup>19</sup> <http://www.jugendmuseum.de/villa-global.html>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://www.rodekors.dk/media/1626037/Traveling-with-art-report.pdf>
- <sup>21</sup> <http://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/programmformat/kunst-im-interreligiosen-dialog>
- <sup>22</sup> The project has been developed within the framework of the European project MeLa-European Museums in an age of migration and is documented in the publication *Designing Multivocal Museums. Intercultural practices at Museo Diocesano, Milano*, [http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/upl/statics/Designing\\_Multivocal\\_Museums.pdf](http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/upl/statics/Designing_Multivocal_Museums.pdf)
- <sup>23</sup> The project was developed as one of the thirty pilots addressed to young adult learners within the framework of the Grundtvig funded project MAP for ID – Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue <http://online.abc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/h3/h3.exe/apubblicazioni/t?NRECORD=000096016>
- <sup>24</sup> Just for Italy, an English-language overview of projects is available on the ISMU *Heritage and Interculture* website <http://patrimoineinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze.php>
- <sup>25</sup> In the UK, the programme is called ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages and has been delivered by many important museums, such as the British Museum and the Geoffrey Museum, which have also developed useful didactic materials available online: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/adults\\_and\\_students/esol\\_programmes.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/adults_and_students/esol_programmes.aspx) and <http://www.geffrye-museum.org.uk/learning/online-resources/esol-resources/>
- <sup>26</sup> <http://patrimoineinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php?id=28>
- <sup>27</sup> <http://patrimoineinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php?id=98>
- <sup>28</sup> *Choose the piece* is one of the thirty pilots addressed to young adult learners within the framework of the Grundtvig funded project MAP for ID – Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue. Selected practices from Europe <http://online.abc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/h3/h3.exe/apubblicazioni/t?NRECORD=000096016>
- <sup>29</sup> See the article 'Investing in sustainable intercultural dialogue at Jamtli' by the museum director Henrik Zipsane [http://www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu/4/home\\_67295.html#pr\\_135418](http://www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu/4/home_67295.html#pr_135418)

<sup>30</sup>D. Walters, *Thinking about intercultural learning. Some starting points in Museums and Intercultural Dialogue*, LEM Report, <http://online.abc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/l/libri/pdf/LEM4rd-report-museums-and-intercultural-dialogue.pdf>

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# PARTIZIPATIVE MUSEUMSARBEIT IM FHXB FRIEDRICHSHAIN- KREUZBERG MUSEUM IN BERLIN

## PARTICIPATORY WORK IN THE FRIEDRICHSHAIN- KREUZBERG MUSEUM IN BERLIN

**Martin Düspohl**

Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum

**Abstract:** The article discusses the possibilities of participatory work in a museum and its risks. The Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum in Berlin served as an example. The author struggles to answer some questions: what are the consequences of a museum's management and curators totally or partially ceding their decisive rights to their target groups? If the audience decides (at least in part) on the exhibition's content and display, does it mean a devaluation of professional expertise? Can a museum, as an institution which is (usually) financed from public funds, gain greater acceptance through participation and inclusion practices, and

thus increase its level of legitimacy? The above issues have been discussed with regard to the models devised and already tested by Nina Simon, a theorist from California. She has identified four various types of participatory work in a museum which are distinguished by the level to which the decisive instance cedes its interpretative sovereignty. The models have been tested in recent years using a trial and error method in the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum. It is also important for museum staff to set their objectives related to a given form of participation and the way of controlling the process jointly and in advance.

**Keywords:** participation, inclusion, interpretative sovereignty, audience, target groups.

Wenn von partizipativer Museumsarbeit die Rede ist, wird häufig ein Schema von Nina Simon herangezogen,<sup>1</sup> um deren verschiedene Ausprägungen „idealtypisch“ zu beschreiben. Sie lieferte in der Tat eine sehr brauchbare Systematik – und ich nutze sie hier, um partizipative Formen der Museumsarbeit im Berliner FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum in den vergangenen 20 Jahren vorzustellen.<sup>2</sup>

Nina Simon unterscheidet contributive, collaborative und

co-creative Formen der Museumsarbeit mit Zielgruppen sowie eine weitere Form, die sie „hosted projects“ nennt. Diese Begriffe beschreiben auch den Grad der Steigerung der Teilhabe der Zielgruppen, ohne damit jedoch qualitative Maßstäbe zu setzen. Das heißt, die weitestgehende Form partizipativer Museumsarbeit nach Simon, bei der das Museum Nutzergruppen seine Räume und Ressourcen überlässt und sie ansonsten unbehelligt arbeiten lässt – sie





1. Das Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum am Kottbusser Tor in Berlin-Kreuzberg

1. Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum by Kottbusser Tor in the district of Kreuzberg in Berlin

nennt diese „hosted“ – ist nicht unbedingt diejenige, von der sie meint, sie sei die erstrebenswerteste. Alle Formen partizipativer Museumsarbeit, auch die, bei der die Besucher nur in Teilprojekten kooperieren, die Entscheidungs- und Deutungshoheit aber bei den Museumsprofessionellen bleibt, haben aus der Sicht von Simon ihre jeweils eigene Bedeutung und ihren Wert.

Das Kreuzberg-Museum für Stadtentwicklung und Sozialgeschichte, heute Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum, ist noch relativ jung: 1991 eröffnet als eines von 12 Berliner Stadtteilmuseen musste es anfangs den Mangel ausgleichen, keine nennenswerte eigene Sammlung aufweisen zu können. Diese Ausgangssituation, in leeren Räumen starten zu müssen, erwies sich aber auch als Chance und erzeugte die Notwendigkeit, die Beteiligung der Stadtteilbevölkerung von vornherein zum Prinzip zu machen. Denn beim Aufbau der Sammlung war man auf die Mithilfe der Bevölkerung angewiesen. Sachspenden, Fotos, Dokumente usw. zur Stadtteilgeschichte mussten eingeworben werden.<sup>3</sup> Außerdem gab es für Kultur- und Museumsarbeit in den Westbezirken Berlins nach der politischen Wende kaum noch öffentliche Mittel. Die Museumsmacher/innen in Kreuzberg versuchten deshalb an stadtentwicklungspolitischen Förderprogrammen teilzuhaben, die auf die Aktivierung der Bevölkerung für die Belange des Gemeinwesens setzten und so die „Selbsteilungskräfte“ heruntergekommener Stadtteile evozieren wollten. Der Bezirk Kreuzberg war zum Zeitpunkt der politischen Wende 1990 der ärmste West-Berlins mit sehr geringen Haushaltseinkommen und hoher

Arbeitslosigkeitsrate. Das Museum, bzw. sein Förderverein, hatten, wenn sie solche Fördermittel in Anspruch nehmen wollten, nachzuweisen, dass und wie viele Bürger/innen an der Planung, Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Projekte aktiv beteiligt waren, d.h. nicht nur als Besucher/innen.

So wurde in den späten 1990er Jahren ein Ausstellungsprogramm gestartet, mit dem das Museum offensiv auf die unmittelbare Nachbarschaft des Museums zugeht und bald auch versuchte, sie als Produzenten von Museumsausstellungen zu gewinnen: Das waren vor allem die erste und zweite Einwanderergeneration aus der Türkei und Palästina sowie eine bunte links-alternativ orientierte Bevölkerung, die in den studentisch geprägten Bewegungen der 1970er und in den Häuserkämpfen der frühen achtziger Jahre sozialisiert worden war. Alle Ausprägungen und Typen partizipativer Museumsarbeit, die Nina Simon später identifizierte und die unter dem Stichwort „new museology“ in USA, England und Frankreich dort schon gängige Praxis waren, sind dabei ausprobiert und durchlaufen worden. Das geschah mit vielen Irrwegen, in ständigem „learning by doing“, bei hohem Risiko und noch höherem Zeitaufwand, aber auch viel Spaß und mit Genugtuung, wenn etwas gelang – auch wenn es vielleicht nicht das war, was die Beteiligten – jeder auf andere Weise – sich vorher vorgestellt hatten. Ich schildere jetzt vier Beispiele aus der Ausstellungs- und Museumsarbeit mit Zielgruppen, die vorher nicht zu den Museumsbesuchern zählten: die Projekte „Zeit der Tinte“ (1998), „Wir waren die ersten... Türkiye'den Berlin'e!“ (2000), „Wagenburg-Leben in Berlin“ (2008) und „Ortsgespräche“ (2012).<sup>4</sup>

### „Zeit der Tinte“

Es begann mit einem Fehlstart: Das Ausstellung „Zeit der Tinte – Mürekkep Zamani. Kalligraphien und Buchdruckkunst aus osmanischer Zeit“, die erste, die das Kreuzberg-Museum dezidiert für, aber nicht mit der überwiegend türkeistämmigen Bevölkerung der Nachbarschaft organisierte (1998) und die demzufolge auch nicht in das Schema von Nina Simon passt, könnte man als ein gut gemeintes Projekt der „Kulturvermittlung“ beschreiben, das scheitern musste. Es hatte folgende Prämissen: Das Kreuzberg Museum wollte Kunst- und Kulturtraditionen vorstellen, die – so vermuteten die Museumsleute – den Interessen der türkei- und arabischstämmigen Nachbarn mehr entsprachen als vorherige Ausstellungen wie z.B. „Kindheit in Berlin nach dem Krieg“ oder „Die Zerstörung Kreuzbergs aus der Luft am 3.2.1945“ oder „Juden in Kreuzberg“, die sie kaum besucht hatten. Deshalb wurde eine Ausstellung zur Geschichte der osmanischen Kalligraphiekunst in Angriff genommen. Ein Istanbul Sammler hatte dem Kreuzberg-Museums angeboten, im Rahmen eines Kulturaustausches zwischen Istanbul und Berlin seine Sammlung wertvoller Kalligraphenwerkzeuge aus osmanischer Zeit in Berlin zu zeigen.

Das Museum für islamische Kunst im Pergamon-Museum unterstützte bereitwillig mit Kalligraphien aus seiner Sammlung befand es sich doch selbst zur gleichen Zeit in einer internen Debatte darüber, wie die hervorragende Präsentation islamischer Kunst im Pergamon-Museum auf der Museumsinsel außer dem überwältigenden Interesse

bei Besuchern aus dem In- und Ausland auch bei den in Berlin lebenden 150 000 Muslimen größeres Interesse finden könnte. Eine temporäre Verlagerung der Exponate aus osmanischer Zeit von der Museumsinsel in den unmittelbaren Lebensraum dieser Zielgruppe (Kreuzberg, Kottbusser Tor) erschien dem damaligen Direktor Volkmar Enderlein und der Kuratorin Gisela Helmecke als eine Erfolg versprechende Strategie, Schwellenängste abzubauen und neue Publika zu erschließen, und das korrespondierte mit der Idee des Kreuzberg Museums die türkisch-arabische Nachbarschaft mit einem Ausstellungsthema anzusprechen, das ihr vermutlich/vermeintlich näher lag. Eine Anzahl der schönsten und wertvollsten Kalligraphien aus der Zeit vom 14. bis 19. Jahrhundert vornehmlich aus dem osmanischen Kulturraum gelangte aus den sicheren Depots in das Museum im Fabrikgebäude am Kottbusser Tor, das sich ungeheuer anstrengen musste, die konservatorischen Auflagen zu erfüllen. So entstand die bis heute vielleicht schönste und – auf die Versicherungssumme bezogen – wertvollste Ausstellung des Kreuzberg-Museums, aber sie zog eine Enttäuschung und ein Problem nach sich: Das von den Veranstaltern so sicher erwartete Publikum blieb – weitgehend – aus. Die Ausstellung erreichte nicht mehr als 1000 Besucher. Grund war die Fehlannahme, Zugangsbarrieren zu Kunst und Kultur ließen sich überwinden, wenn nur die Wege verkürzt werden, die „Kunst“ in den Stadtteil kommt und kein Eintritt verlangt wird, eine Auffassung, die bereits im ‘Kultur für alle’-Konzept

von Hilmar Hoffmann<sup>5</sup> viel zu optimistisch vertreten wird, sie greift zu kurz, weil sie den Adressaten Defizite unterstellt („Sie schaffen es nicht bis zum Pergamonmuseum...“) statt deren eigenen kulturellen Ressourcen, Potentiale und Interessen zunächst auszuloten und sich dann daran zu orientieren. In kulturmissionarischem Eifer hatten wir versäumt, die Community rechtzeitig einzubeziehen, für unser Vorhaben zu werben und uns beraten zu lassen, wie Zugänge beschaffen sein müssen. Stattdessen verhielten wir uns kulturalisierend („Menschen aus der Türkei interessieren sich für kalligraphische Kunst“) und wir glaubten, dass die selten gezeigte Kunstwerke – flankiert von Plakatwerbung und Flyern – ganz automatisch Magnetkraft entwickeln würden. Zugänge zur Kunst sind aber eben nur einem sehr kleinen Teil der Bevölkerung „mit“-gegeben, das ist bei der migrantischen Bevölkerung nicht anders als bei der deutschstämmigen.

Die Ausstellung wurde trotzdem noch ein Erfolg, allerdings nicht in der beabsichtigten Form, die reiche orientalische Kalligraphietradition als Kunsttradition zu vermitteln, sondern in vorher nicht intendierten Weise: Nach etwa drei Wochen Ausstellungslaufzeit erschienen im Museum nachmittags erstmalig Gruppen muslimischer Kinder und Jugendlicher mit ihren Religionslehrern, sie nutzten das Museumsangebot als Ergänzung des nachmittäglichen von den Moschee-Gemeinden selbst organisierten Koranunterrichts. Auf diese Zielgruppe waren wir weder vorbereitet noch hatten wir sie eingeladen. Ihr Zugang war nicht das Interesse an „Kunst“, sondern



2. Kalligraphie aus osmanischer Zeit

2. Calligraphy in the Ottoman era, Berlin State Museums / Museum of Islamic Art / Inv. No. Hs.Or.65439

an Religion – in Bezug auf die Exponate eigentlich der viel direktere. Sie wollten den religiösen Gehalt der kalligraphisch gestalteten Texte entziffern und deuten, denn natürlich verbargen sich hinter der Ornamentalschrift häufig Koran-Suren – ein für sie nicht einfaches Unterfangen, weil die Texte zwar in osmanisch-türkischer Sprache – für die Jugendlichen also durchaus verständlich – verfasst, die Schrift wie bis 1928 üblich aber aus arabischen Schriftzeichen bestand, die für sie nicht zu lesen war und mit der auch die Religionslehrer Schwierigkeiten hatten. Einer der zufällig damals beschäftigten vom Arbeitsamt vermittelten Museumsaufsichten, der selbst sehr gläubige und religionskundige Palästinenser Abdallah El Hage Moussa erwies sich in dieser Situation als Glücksfall. Er las den türkisch-sprachigen Besuchern die Texte laut vor, die er selbst nicht verstand, aber sie! Das Stadtteilmuseum wurde nach und nach zum temporären Lernort für muslimischen Religionsunterricht (der zu diesem Zeitpunkt in den öffentlichen Schulen noch nicht durchgesetzt worden war). Damit nicht genug: Die Lehrer der Koranklassen stellten fest, dass wir Kreuzberger Museumsmitarbeiter recht wenig über den Koran, den Islam und die Bedeutung der kunstvollen Schriften, die wir als Kunstwerke ausstellten, wussten. Bei ihren nächsten Besuchen mit Schülergruppen brachten sie Broschüren über den Islam in deutscher Sprache mit, die sie in größerer Anzahl im Eingangsbereich des Museums auslegten. Als nun Bezirksverordnete diese Druckschriften in der Auslage des Museums fanden, befürchteten sie eine Gefahr für die religionspolitische Neutralität des Staates und richteten umgehend eine kritische parlamentarische Anfrage an das Bezirksamt, den Träger des Museums. Die Geschichte muss hier enden, sie ging noch endlos weiter, aber das Thema sind partizipative Museumsausstellungen. Unbeabsichtigt war aus der Ausstellung „Zeit der Tinte“ sowohl eine religionspädagogische Veranstaltung geworden als auch ein Zankapfel über den Umgang mit den Werbeschriften islamischer Organisationen. Partizipation hatte sich nachträglich eingestellt...

In Konsequenz des Experimentes „Zeit der Tinte“ organisierte das Museum ein Jahr später das Projekt „Wir waren die ersten...“ über die Migrationserfahrungen der ersten Einwanderergeneration aus der Türkei seit den frühen 1960er Jahren; den besonderen Anwerbebedingungen in Westberlin geschuldet waren die Protagonisten vornehmlich Frauen aus der Türkei.

### „Wir waren die ersten...“ Türkiye'den Berlin'e

Hier wählten wir ein völlig anderes Vorgehen – nach der Systematik von Nina Simon ein „co-creatives“. Wir wollten die Niederlassungsgeschichte von Kreuzbergerinnen aus der Türkei ausstellen, eine Ausstellung über die erste Generation machen, die seit 1964 nach Westberlin gekommen war und vor allem in Betrieben der Elektro- und Textilindustrie gearbeitet hatte. Das war insofern kein einfaches Unterfangen, als es dazu im Museum weder hinreichend persönliche Kontakte zu Zeitzeugen noch geeignete Exponate noch einen Forschungsstand gab. Für das Ausstellungsprojekt „Wir waren die ersten... Türkiye'den Berlin'e“ (2000) suchten wir deshalb Kontakt zu dem benachbarten Gemeinwesenzentrum Kotti e.V. und kooperierten mit ihm.

Gemeinsam wurden Einwanderer und Einwanderinnen aus der Türkei als Zeitzeugen sowie migrantische Experten für einzelne Aspekte der Einwanderungsgeschichte als Ausstellungskuratoren gewonnen, die zusammen mit dem Museum und dem Nachbarschaftsverein Kotti e.V. eine zweisprachige Ausstellung konzipierten und realisierten. Außerdem erstellten im Rahmen eines Biographie-Workshops des deutsch-türkischen Begegnungszentrums der Arbeiterwohlfahrt, den die Künstlerin Fatma Hermann leitete, ältere türkische Migrantinnen autobiografische Berichte mit Fotos, Texten und Exponaten, die ebenfalls in der Ausstellung präsentiert wurden. Die Migrantinnen hatten insgesamt große Gestaltungs- und Entscheidungsspielräume bei der Auswahl der Inhalte und der Exponate der Ausstellung. Es konnte eine Vielfalt von Objekten zusammengetragen werden: Schriftstücke, private Fotos, persönliche Erinnerungsstücke, Materialien aus Gewerkschafts- und Verbandsarbeit, Plakate, Kunst, Literatur, immaterielles Erbe wie Musik, Tonbänder. Die Objekte vermittelten im Zusammenhang mit den Erzählungen der Migrantinnen individuelle Lebensgeschichten, die sich zu einer Kollektivgeschichte zusammenfügten. Das Museum übertrug die Autorenschaft an diejenigen, deren Geschichte erzählt wurde. Die gute Vernetzung des Museums im Bezirk, auch in der migrantischen (vor allem türkeistämmigen und arabischen) Bevölkerung sorgte für hohe Besucherzahlen bildete eine Vertrauensbasis für weitere Projekte. Aber völlig problemlos verlief diese Kooperation aus folgenden Gründen nicht:

- Die nachbarschaftlich basierte Arbeit sprengte fast den Rahmen der Institution „Museum“. Mit Räumen, Einrichtungsgegenständen, Teeküchen und Geschirr für nachbarschaftliche geselligen Arbeitstreffen und später die Zusammenkünfte mit Ausstellungsbesuchern ist ein Museum in der Regel nicht gut ausgestattet. Es wurde improvisiert bis das Museum für die neuen ehrenamtlichen Mitarbeiter/innen eine „Aufenthaltsqualität“ bekam.
- Einmal zum „Stadtteiltreffpunkt“ geworden, war es später gar nicht so einfach, die neuen Freunde „wieder loszuwerden“. Es konnte auch vorkommen, dass die Zeitzeugen, nachdem sie ja dem Museum in vielerlei Hinsicht bei der Zusammenstellung der Ausstellung geholfen hatten, nun ihrerseits Hilfe brauchten, z.B. beim Ausfüllen von Rentenansträgen – ein selbstverständliches Geschäft auf Gegenseitigkeit... Die vorher eingegangenen Kooperationen mit den Nachbarschaftszentren erwiesen sich nun als sehr hilfreich.
- Kulturell bedingte Konflikte und Missverständnisse werden hier nicht im einzelnen ausgeführt. Bei ihrer Bewältigung, die nicht in jedem Fall gelang, erwiesen sich Projektmitarbeiter/innen aus der zweiten Generation als „Mittler“ außerordentlich hilfreich.
- Sachliche Differenzen. Die Umkehrung der Perspektive auf Arbeitsmigration – nicht erzählt aus dem Blickwinkel der Aufnahmegesellschaft sondern aus dem der Betroffenen – bedeutete auch, dass manche historische Zusammenhänge in einer irritierenden Form bzw. mit einer persönlich gefärbten Note in der Ausstellung veröffentlicht wurden. Nicht alles, was über den Geschichtsverlauf der Anwerbezeit (1961 bis 1974) in der Ausstellung behauptet wurde, hätte einer historisch-wissenschaftlichen Überprüfung standgehalten. Manches war widersprüchlich, aus der Perspektive der





3. Filiz Taskin und Gültekin Emre bei der Sichtung von Materialien für die Ausstellung „Wir waren die ersten... Türkiye' den Berlin'e“

3. Filiz Taskin and Gültekin Emre viewing objects for the exhibition 'We were the first... – Türkiye' den Berlin'e'



4. Vesalet Akilli vor der von ihr erstellten illustrierten Biografie

4. Vesalet Akilli and the illustrated Biography she created

Erlebnisgeneration aber „stimmig“. Diese Widersprüche auszuhalten und im Streitfall die kontrovers diskutierte Version auch unkorrigiert zu veröffentlichen, war für das Museumspersonal eine Herausforderung. Mit dem Argument, dass – um mit Nina Simon zu sprechen – die Deutungshoheit in co-kreativen Projekten bei den Partizipierenden liegt und nicht qua hierarchischem Handeln durch das Museum einfach ausgehebelt werden kann, wurden die Texte so veröffentlicht, wie sie geschrieben worden waren, und konnten dann während der Ausstellungszeit mit dem Publikum weiter diskutiert werden...

- Die gezeigten Ausstellungsstücke waren fast alle Leihgaben aus Privatbesitz und konnten nicht in den Fundus des Museums überführt werden. Die Archivsituation im Museum ist – was Objekte angeht – im Hinblick auf die Migrationsgeschichte des Bezirks so unbefriedigend wie vorher. Obwohl dem Museum seit dieser Zeit der Ruf vorauseilt, es habe viel zur Einwanderungsgeschichte gesammelt, muss es auf Nachfrage an die privaten Leihgeber verweisen.

- Der Vorwurf „Gastarbeiternostalgie“ – insbesondere auch von der zweiten Generation geäußert, wurde nicht

- ganz zu unrecht erhoben. Das Museum reagierte darauf mit der Folgeausstellung „Wir waren die nächsten...“, in der die Erfahrungen der erwachsenen Kinder der Interviewpartner/innen im gleichen Ausstellungsumfeld hörbar und sichtbar gemacht wurden. Die Elterngeneration blieb mit ihren Erfahrungen in der Ausstellung präsent – wurde aber „an den Rand gerückt“, so dass auch Vergleiche ermöglicht wurden.

- Die Ausstellung „Wir waren die ersten...“ blieb durch die separierte Darstellung einer spezifischen Bevölkerungsgruppe einer eingeschränkten und stereotypen Sichtweise verhaftet: Migration wurde als

Sondergeschichte isoliert und nicht als integraler Bestandteil von Stadtgeschichte präsentiert. Aus heutigem Verständnis heraus wäre eine solche Ausstellung im Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg-Museum nicht mehr möglich.

Das daran anschließende partizipative Ausstellungsprojekt, auf das ich hier nicht näher eingehe, „Geschichte wird gemacht“ (2003) zur Stadtentwicklung, Sanierungsgeschichte und behutsamen Stadterneuerung nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, an dessen Vorbereitung sich etwa 100 Stadtteilbewohner meist aus dem deutschstämmigen alternativen Milieu fast zwei Jahre lang aktiv beteiligten, war nach den Termini von Nina Simon „collaborativ“ organisiert, d.h. die grundsätzlichen Entscheidungen und die Deutungshoheit verblieben beim Museum, was zu Enttäuschungen bei einigen Partizipierenden führte, weil das vorher nicht klar genug kommuniziert worden war. Diese Ausstellung ist im Kern nichtsdestotrotz bis heute Teil der Dauerausstellung des Museums.

## Wagenburg-Leben in Berlin

Ein Projekt, das wohl am ehesten dem Typ eines „hosted projects“ in der Systematik von Nina Simon entspricht, also die autonome Organisation von Ausstellungen in Museumsräumen unter Nutzung dessen Ressourcen durch „museumsfremde“ Gruppen, war die Ausstellung über Leben in Wagenburgen: 2008 wurde meinen Kolleginnen Ulrike Treziak und Ellen Röhner von Wagenburg-Bewohnern gefragt, ob sie im Museum eine Ausstellung zusammenstellen könnten: Junge Menschen hatten sich mit ihren Bauwagen z.T. im Schatten der Berliner Mauer niedergelassen und belebten eine in der Berliner Innenstadt bis dahin wenig bekannte Form des naturnahen Siedlungswesens mit geringem Komfort und viel Freiraum. Das halbnomadische und häufig auch halblegale Leben in



5. Blick in die Ausstellung „Wir waren die ersten...“: Unter Friseurhauben werden Interviews mit in Deutschland geborenen erwachsenen Kindern der ersten Arbeitsmigranten\_innen aus der Türkei in zwei Sprachen präsentiert

5. View of the exhibition 'We were the first...' – bilingual interviews with the children of the first Turkish immigrants, who grew up in Germany, presented under helmet hair-dryers

diesen innerstädtischen Freiräumen fanden viele Menschen befremdlich und undurchschaubar, zum Teil hatten sich die Wagenburgler aber auch selbst eine Art Außenseiterrolle kultiviert – wollten am Rande der Gesellschaft ihr eigenes Leben führen. Aus deren Kreisen kam die – in der Szene nicht unumstrittene – Idee, Wagenburgkultur einmal im Museum zu repräsentieren. Ralf Marcault, der in der Wagenburg „Kreuzdorf“ in Kreuzberg wohnte, in Paris zum Ethnologen ausgebildet worden war und als Fotograf künstlerisch arbeitet, war einer der Koordinatoren des Projektes, zwölf in Berlin ansässige Wagenburgen gestalteten jeweils einen eigenen Ausstellungsteil. Das Museum stellte technische Unterstützung und eine Ausstellungsetage zur Verfügung. Dort arbeitete tagaus tagein während der Vorbereitung ein internationales Handwerker- und Kuratorenteam, transportierte Sperrmüll heran, bedeckte den Boden mit Rindenmulch, bearbeitete Metall mit Flex und Bohrmaschinen, dass die Funken nur so stoben. Verständigungssprache war Französisch und Englisch. Anfangs skeptisch, musste ich bald zugeben, dass selten die Zusammenarbeit in einem Projekt so reibungslos, so harmonisch im Umgang und so verbindlich funktionierte. Es gelang den Wagenburgler in phantasievoller Weise und mit hohem ausstellungstechnischen Aufwand, einen Eindruck von ihrer Lebensauffassung, ihrer Geschichte und ihrer ästhetischen Praxis zu vermitteln. Die Ausstellung wurde zu einem immensen Publikumserfolg. Anscheinend war es vielen Besuchern ein Bedürfnis zu erfahren, was in den

Wagenburgen eigentlich vor sich geht. Konflikte gab es, als ich als Museumsleiter versuchte, das Prinzip der autonomen Arbeitsweise („hosted“) zu durchkreuzen und Tipps gab für strukturierende Elemente, die m.E. in die Ausstellung einfließen sollten. So brachte ich z.B. einen großen Berlin-Stadtplan mit und bat die externen Kuratoren, die Standorte der 12 Berliner Wagenburgen dort einzuzichnen und sie dann im Eingangsbereich aufzustellen, damit Besucher sich orientieren können. Das stieß auf vehemente Ablehnung, hatten doch die Wagenburg-Bewohner keinerlei Interesse daran, ihre Adressen bekannt zu machen, um nicht ständig von Neugierigen aufgesucht zu werden. Nichtsdestotrotz fand ich die Berlin-Karte mit Verzeichnung der Wagenburgen-Standorte später im Eingangsbereich wieder, allerdings zerschnitten, zerrissen, und in neuer Form wieder zusammengesetzt, so dass man weder Berlin noch die Lage der Wagenburgen wirklich identifizieren konnte. Die Karte war verschlüsselt worden, sie täuschte Orientierung vor, gab sie aber nicht, sie war zum Gegenstand einer kreativen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema Auffindbarkeit geworden.

### „Ortsgespräche“

Als letztes möchte ich das aktuelle Ausstellungsprojekt des Friedrichshain Kreuzberg-Museums vorstellen: „Ortsgespräche“. Stadtgeschichte als Migrationsgeschichte – Teil der Dauerausstellung des Museums, die Migrationsgeschichte nicht mehr isoliert und 'getrennt'

von der sonstigen Stadtteilgeschichte thematisiert. Sie entspricht dem Typus eines „contributory project“, bei dem die Teilnehmer/innen ihre persönlichen Meinungen, Geschichten und Objekte in einem vom Museum kontrollierten Prozess in die Ausstellungsproduktion einbringen, also zwar „Input“ liefern, aber nicht über dessen Verwendung und Präsentation mitbestimmen. „Ortsgespräche“ trägt aber auch „collaborative“ Züge, weil die Prozesssteuerung über einen Beirat erfolgte, der regelmäßig tagte und sich aus Personen zusammensetzte, die bei vorangegangenen Ausstellungsprojekten als Externe mitgewirkt hatten oder als interessierte Stadtteilbewohner für die Mitarbeit in diesem Gremium angesprochen worden waren. Letztendlich lagen die konzeptionellen Vorgaben und Entscheidungen bei den beiden Kuratorinnen Frauke Miera und Lorraine Bluche. Sie stellten jenseits von nationalen oder ethnischen Zuschreibungen die Frage ins Zentrum, wie Gesellschaft sich durch Migrationsprozesse verändert und was das gemeinsame „Wir“ ausmacht. Um diesen Ansatz zu operationalisieren, rückte die Ausstellung Orte ins Zentrum, an denen sich Migrationsgeschichte einerseits und gesellschaftliche Veränderungsprozesse im Kontext von Migration andererseits kristallisieren, kurz „Erinnerungsorte der Migration“.

Im Mittelpunkt der Ausstellung stehen daher die aktuelle und historische Interaktion zwischen Menschen unterschiedlicher Herkunft einschließlich der jeweils ansässigen Bevölkerung. Das Interesse gilt hierbei dem Miteinander, Nebeneinander und Gegeneinander der unterschiedlichen Akteure in verschiedenen zentralen Lebensbereichen. Letztlich ging es also um die Frage der Integration im Sinne von Kommunikation und Wechselbeziehungen verschiedener Akteure einer Gesellschaft, nicht im Sinne einer einseitigen Anpassung der Neankömmlinge bzw. Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund an eine als relativ statisch gefasste „Mehrheitsgesellschaft“. Es war zu fragen, was die verschiedenen Akteure und Gruppen, die aufnehmende Gesellschaft ebenso wie die Neankömmlinge und ihre Nachkommen, zur Ausgestaltung eines Miteinanders beitragen. Wo entstehen Konflikte? Wie werden diese verhandelt, gelöst oder ausgehalten? Wann und wie kommt es zu Eskalationen von Konflikten? Wie

funktionieren Strategien der Deeskalation? Unter welchen Bedingungen gelingt ein Miteinander in Kooperation oder schlicht in gegenseitiger Ignoranz? Wo entsteht Neues? Wo wird Altes neu entdeckt, bewahrt, modifiziert oder aufgegeben. Einige Antworten auf diese Fragen geben in der Ausstellung die Erzählungen von 43 interviewten Stadtteilbewohnern aller Generationen mit und ohne Migrationshintergrund. Sie berichten über Orte im Bezirk, mit denen sie sich in besonderer Weise verbunden fühlen.

## Gelungene Partizipation?

Was macht gelungene Partizipation aus? Bedeutet die Beteiligung von so genannten Laien immer die Erweiterung von Wissen oder geht damit eine „Entprofessionalisierung“ des Museums einher? Wie viel Entscheidungs- und Gestaltungsspielraum will und soll das Museum sinnvoller Weise abgeben? Welche neue Gestalt soll das Museum perspektivisch haben? Damit hängt auch die Frage nach den Motiven für eine partizipative Museumsarbeit zusammen bei den Museumsakteuren zusammen. Tatsächlich liegen der Arbeit des Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museums als einem inklusiven (Nachbarschafts-) Museum verschiedene Prämissen zugrunde, z.B. der Wunsch zur sozialen und kulturellen Integration der Stadtteilbewohner beizutragen, aber natürlich will es auch neue Besuchergruppen für sich zu erschließen. Für die Arbeit und Reflektion in den Museen ist es wichtig, sich differenziert mit der eigenen Vorgehensweise auseinanderzusetzen, sich die Frage zu stellen, mit welchem Ziel welche Methode angewandt wird, und diese transparent zu machen. Vor dem Hintergrund der Praxiserfahrungen des Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museums lassen sich durchaus weitere Triebkräfte benennen. Dass die Chance, öffentliche Fördermittel zu erhalten, steigt, wenn ein Museum partizipativ arbeitet, wurde bereits erwähnt. Ein weiterer Aspekt ist, dass Partizipation, zugespitzt formuliert, auch bedeutet, von der Expertise ehrenamtlicher Arbeitskräfte zu profitieren, die aus eigenen Mitteln nicht zu finanzieren wäre. Und schließlich kann auch der Wunsch nach Sicherung der eigenen hegemonialen Rolle in sich verändernden Stadt- und Kulturlandschaften Museumsverantwortliche dazu



6. Ausstellung „Wagenburg Leben in Berlin“

6. Exhibition 'Life in residential cars in Berlin'



7. In der Ausstellung „Wagenburg Leben in Berlin“

7. In the exhibition 'Life in residential cars in Berlin'





8. In der Ausstellung „Ortsgespräche“

8. In the exhibition 'Local calls'



9. Audio-Spaziergänge auf einem Stadtplan mit i-pod

9. Audio-trips around the city map with an iPod

(Photos: 1, 6-9 – E. Röhner; 3, 4, 5 – FHXB Museum; 5 – I. Scheel)

bringen partizipative Vorgehensweisen einzuschlagen. Das hat die Museumstheoretikerin Nora Sternfeld<sup>6</sup> kürzlich bei

einer Tagung im FHXB Museum angemerkt.

**Abstract:** Im vorliegenden Aufsatz werden am Beispiel des FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museums in Berlin Chancen und Risiken partizipativer Museumsarbeit diskutiert. Welche Konsequenzen hat es, wenn Museumsdirektoren und -kuratoren ganz oder teilweise Entscheidungskompetenzen an die Zielgruppen abtreten, die sie erreichen möchten? Wird ihre Expertise entwertet, wenn über Inhalte und Gestaltung von Ausstellungen – zumindest teilweise – das Publikum entscheidet? Oder kann das Museum als (in der Regel) öffentlich finanzierte Einrichtung im Wege von Partizipation und Inklusion mehr Akzeptanz und Legitimation bekommen? Diese Fragen werden diskutiert

unter Heranziehung eines Strategie-Modells, das die kalifornische Museumspraktikerin und -theoretikerin Nina Simon entwickelt hat. Sie identifiziert vier verschiedene Ausrichtungen partizipativer Museumsarbeit, die sich im Grad der Abgabe von Entscheidungskompetenz und Deutungshoheit unterscheiden, aber jeweils für sich Sinn machen. In der Ausstellungstätigkeit des Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg-Museums wurden in den vergangenen Jahren diese Modelle praktisch erprobt – allerdings im „try and error“-Verfahren. Wichtig ist, dass sich die Museumsverantwortlichen im Vorhinein darüber verständigen, welche Ziele sie mit Partizipation verbinden und wie sie den Beteiligungsprozess gestalten wollen.

**Keywords:** Partizipation (Beteiligung), Inklusion, Deutungshoheit, Publikum, Zielgruppen.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz/California 2010, im Internet verfügbar unter <http://www.participatorymuseum.org> (zuletzt geöffnet am 12.1.2017).

<sup>2</sup> Für Anregungen, Hinweise und auch einige Formulierungen danke ich Frauke Miera und Lorraine Bluche. Vgl.: Martin Düsphol, Frauke Miera und Lorraine Bluche: *Partizipation im Berliner Kreuzberg Museum. Erfahrungen und Perspektiven*, in: *Das Partizipative Museum. Zwischen Teilhabe und User Generated Content. Neue Anforderungen an kulturhistorische Ausstellungen*. Hrsg. von Susanne Gesser, Martin Handschin, Angela Janelli und Sybille Lichtensteiger, Bielefeld 2012, S. 156 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Diese Form des Sammelns hat in der jüngeren Vergangenheit verstärkt Bedeutung gewonnen. Vgl. Léontine Meijer-van Mensch und Elisabeth Tietmeyer: *Participative Strategies in Collecting the Present*, Berliner Blätter, Heft 63/2013.

<sup>4</sup> Zu den bisherigen Ausstellungen des Museums siehe: <http://www.fhxb-museum.de/index.php?id=13>

<sup>5</sup> Hilmar Hoffmann: *Kultur für alle – Perspektiven und Modelle*, Frankfurt a.M. 1981.

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. <http://aalto-fi.academia.edu/NoraSternfeld> (zuletzt geöffnet am 12.1.2017).

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# AUDIENCE OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM

**Beata Nessel-Łukasik**

The Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejów

The immense differentiation of the types of museums in Poland, their surrounding and directions of activity is the reason why in each case one might seek other criteria of success.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of institutions conducting studies on the museum public admit that one of the most important arguments confirming the development of a given institution is the number of museum visitors increasing from year to year.<sup>2</sup> The avalanche-like growth of the public recorded in the course of the last decade, both on a national scale<sup>3</sup> and in statistics kept by particular museums<sup>4</sup> is undoubtedly an asset in activities intent on promoting museums and contributing to their development. In many instances, however, it does not result in knowledge about the increasingly numerous public. Consequently, the answer to the question posed for years among museum curators: whom are museums intended for? Continues to give rise to numerous controversies.<sup>5</sup>

## Beyond the museum threshold

It is difficult to unambiguously determine who actually comprises the public. Particular authors of publications on this subject propose extremely different categories spanning from the most general, such as: guest, visitor, client, consumer or individual recipient<sup>6</sup> to more profiled descriptions created by taking into account the needs of a given group, distinguished upon the basis of marketing studies concerning the segmentation of the participants of culture.<sup>7</sup> All these factors are the reason for the emergence of increasingly differentiated concepts about persons touring Polish museums. As a rule, attention is drawn to certain dominating groups among museum visitors, such as children, schoolchildren, families, senior citizens or simply adults or else to those types of recipients of the offer proposed by a given institution whose *characteristic feature is a specific lifestyle, interests, and way of spending leisure time*.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, despite an increasingly wider spectrum of research dedicated to the museum public – individuals or organized groups<sup>9</sup> – one of the perspectives still remains outside undertakings realised in this domain.

Studies envisaged as a source of knowledge about the public do not take into consideration the potential public, i.e. persons who could have crossed the museum threshold but for various reasons did not do so.

## Not only visitors

The existence of this group was recently recalled by, i.a. Krzysztof Mordyński, who, while analysing the space of the museums as such as well as that of their closest surrounding, declared that *the public is not tantamount to visitors alone*.<sup>10</sup> This observation, which for Mordyński constitutes a pretext to take a look at museums from the viewpoint of their relations with the location and town-planning substance, into which particular institutions have been included, can be recognised as a successive statement provoking a closer examination both of the persons who find themselves in the museum and those who pass it by. Who are the people who prefer other ways of participating in culture (home, domestic, recreation-sport) than institutionalised ones? Does their path towards the museum really include so many barriers that they cannot enter the museum? Perhaps apart from the question of the accessibility of the museum infrastructure or the expenses, time, or lack of education, which allows the development of certain competences and interests, there is something else that constitutes an obstacle for widening the circle of the public by introducing new groups of people, unknown to museum curators? How are museums to be inscribed into something that particular persons experience as 'culture'?<sup>11</sup> Perhaps if the museum staff were to go beyond the white cube<sup>12</sup> – an idea popularised in Polish museum studies in recent years within the domain of open air exhibitions and education undertakings – or the possibilities offered by present-day social media and the virtual world were to pertain also to studies intensifying knowledge about the public? Could the correct direction for museums denote that apart from joining efforts aimed at enlarging the number of the participants of culture they would become increasingly involved in the democratisation of this particular domain of social life?<sup>13</sup>



## Participants of culture and museums

In his book: *Nauka czy rozrywka. Nowa muzeologia w europejskich definicjach muzeum*, Mirosław Borusiewicz wrote: (...) Among all the reasons for not going to a museum one could include, predominantly, fear of the unknown and of necessary intellectual effort or the inability to successfully tackle the intellectual requirements of a visit, absence of



1. Groups of visitors in front of the Castle Museum in Łańcut

interests exceeding daily existence, and an excessively low level of education. The most frequently declared reasons for not going to a museum include a lack of time, but it seems that this is not the cause of giving museums a wide berth.<sup>14</sup> What other reasons are there that more than 60% of the participants of culture do not go to museums?<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, knowledge about the potential public is still much too small to be able to determine the motive. Museums, which gradually develop methods and instruments of verifying the level of attendance that constitutes a certain instrument of controlling their activity, still restrict their undertakings concerned with a closer acquaintance with the public and limit them mainly to the circle of persons who had visited a given institution, took part in an event organized by it, or benefitted from an offer on the net. But persons who find themselves in the proximity of a museum are not only visitors or users of Internet portals. They comprise also certain communities, which could become interested in the museum not so much as a place for storing, accumulating, and accessing its collections, but also as a space of certain relations. There remains the question: are museums already prepared for this?

## Community of experiences

Studies concerning the practices of participation increasingly firmly stress treating culture as a realm in which *old social relations are cultivated and new ones are built*<sup>16</sup> Museums



2. People enjoying the urban park around the Castle Museum in Pszczyna



3. Audience research by the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówek during an open-air presentation of the 'Path to Independence' Exhibition in Olsztyn

that co-create the panorama of culture are thus one of those places where, apart from statutory activity, the institution increasingly strongly broadens the educational offer, making it possible – although sometimes this is *only ostensible participation that looks good in statistics but is socially barren* – to create space for something more than *going to museums*.<sup>17</sup> In order for this to happen it would be necessary to expand studies dealing with the museum public. This translation of the idea of the democratization of culture and the openness of institutions to all visitors would call for viewing the museum in a wider context transcending statistics, marketing or education. It would entail museum experts coming out of the museum in order to meet persons who are still not members of the public and with whom they are not as yet acquainted. Certain museums have already decided to pursue this direction.<sup>18</sup> In several cases such a resolution was the outcome of the need for the emerging institutions to get to know their potential public (e.g. the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówek), or around which new public spaces have been established (e.g. the Miasteczko Wilanów residential estate near the King Jan III Palace Museum in Wilanów). In the majority of institutions, however, such an affirmation of a community spirit and an *inclusion of everyone into the space of being among others and with others*<sup>19</sup> does not result in studies on the public and is still limited to widening that public by including, i.a. the participants of such multi-sensual events as the Long Night of Museums, organised in Poland since 2003.

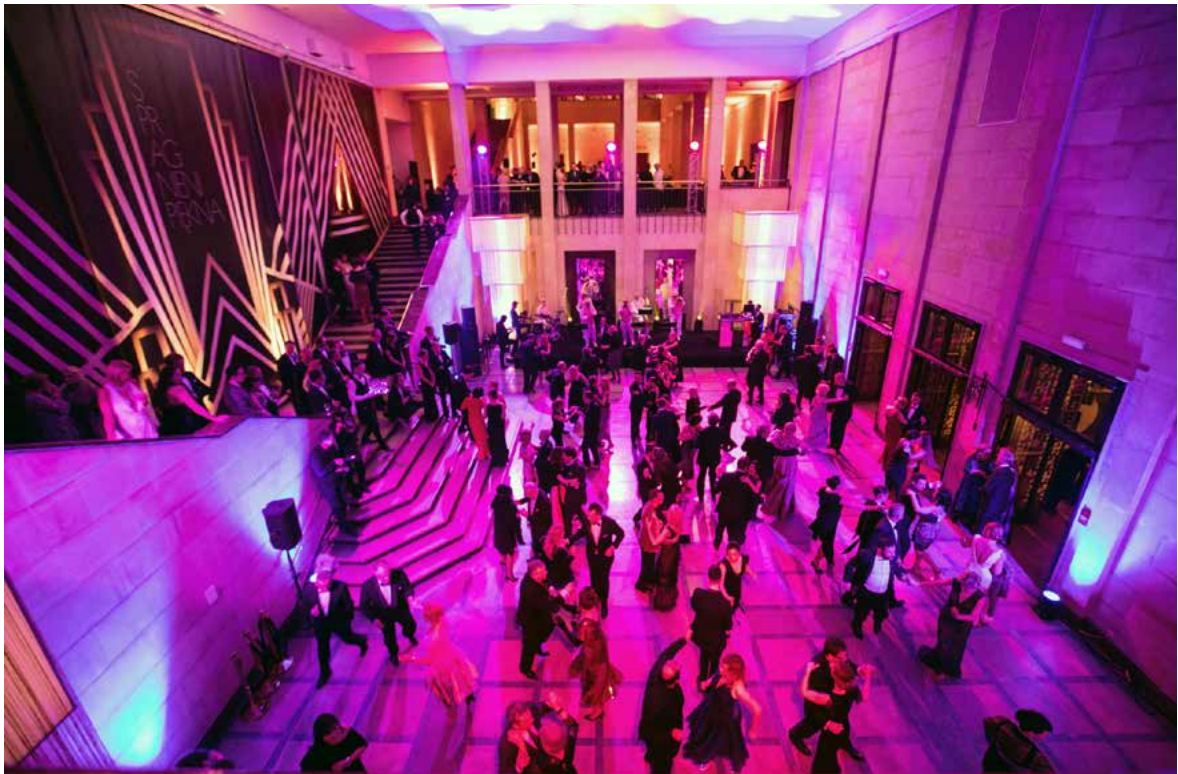
### Development of the audience

Concentrating attention on museum visitors does not signify the absence of possibilities for the introduction of a new perspective for research dedicated to the museum public. Ideas leading to the enhancement of the museum-visitor relations, and developed after becoming grounded in new museology not only in theory but also in museum praxis,<sup>20</sup> are an excellent base for expanding the range of studies. The gradual exploitation of heretofore points of reference concerning non-participation and including, first and foremost, the most popular arguments, such as lack of time, means or knowledge, makes it possible to pose new questions, i.a. those involving the absence of the representation of concrete milieus among the museum public. Thanks to this approach, undertakings aimed at rendering museums accessible to, i.a. groups of the disabled<sup>21</sup> or families with small children<sup>22</sup> have become intensified in the course of recent years. All this, however, does not lead directly to a solution of the fundamental question, namely, that the recorded rise in museum attendance becomes accompanied by an *essential change of socio-professional groups and the level of the visitors' education*.<sup>23</sup>

### New directions

It follows from trial studies dealing with the museum public and conducted by the National Institute for Museums and





4. 'Craving for beauty', a charity ball on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Association of the Friends of the National Museum in Warsaw

Public Collections (NIMOZ) by resorting to qualitative methods applied among employees of 12 institutions representing assorted types of Polish museums,<sup>24</sup> that widening this circle of recipients has become a key topic for the development of the activity of those museums. As a consequence, this might mean that particular institutions have already created space for meetings and joint undertakings aimed at defining not only who are the members of the public of a given museum but also at determining who is absent among that public. More, those several score meetings with museum experts and milieus cooperating with them, held in assorted parts of Poland as part of trial studies conducted from July to September 2017, made it possible to gather sufficient material for formulating conclusions. The latter confirm the need to expand the discussion about the growth of the audience and the necessity of creating and applying new methods enabling the removal of barriers hampering access to the museum. The expansion of research instruments<sup>25</sup> and the objectives of conducting such activity<sup>26</sup> as well as widening the domain in which they are realized, appear to be of key significance for escalating reflections on this topic. In the course of in-depth individual interviews as well as focusing interviews conducted in institutions taking part in the trials, emphasis was placed in particular on the last question, i.e. pertaining to the 'potential public' or community existing outside the museum. This is why evoking those two issues appears to fully confirm the need to take into consideration in the course of the development of the museum public not only the rising numbers of persons who crossed the museum threshold but also to widen the impact exerted by the museum within groups that still remain

outside that institution. Then, that which has been already discussed in the case of studies on participation in culture, where certain practices are understood *not so much in the perspective of the consumption of the products and events of the 'culture industries'* but rather as a series of mutually linked competences: *communication with the closest and further circle of acquaintances, the transfer of information, finding and selecting information, the skill of joining an organisation (even on the most fundamental and minimal level such as the negotiation of the forms and purposes of participation)*<sup>27</sup> will be able to find its expression also beyond the museum threshold.

### Theory in practice

Naturally, there arises the question asking how to expand the range of museum studies on the public. Are courses on the methodology of research<sup>28</sup> and the creation for the museum experts of a simple toolbox, whose particular elements could be used by institutions representing assorted types of museums, sufficient? Observing the activity of institutions with different profiles and functioning on a daily basis in extremely diverse environments (large cities, parks, local milieus, etc.) one can say that there already exists a foundation for embarking upon such studies. Nonetheless, in order to be able to develop them and to deepen knowledge gathered upon the basis of statistics and elementary information about the public of a given institution yet another fundamental issue appears to be essential, namely, in-depth reflection about the goals of





5. Prospective audience research by the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówek during the Night of Museums on Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Warsaw



6. Children's room 'At King Maciuś I's place' in the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw

all those undertakings. Only then, after verifying assorted barriers owing to which the declared openness of museums does not always result in their accessibility for particular potential groups of the public, will it become possible to create a cohesive range of activity within a given museum. It is also then, after testing the degree to which both time<sup>29</sup> and the museum infrastructure<sup>30</sup> or the range of its heretofore activity<sup>31</sup> prove to be an obstacle along the path leading towards the museum, will it be feasible to define the reason why after the removal of barriers of this sort in the case of the, i.a. local community there still emerges the problem of its non-participation in the life of the museum.

### First step

At the end it is worth noticing that apart from the above-described types of barriers that appear between the museum and its public, there exists yet another extremely important criterion – the level of relations linking a given institution with persons crossing its threshold. Visits in more than ten museums taking part in trial studies conducted by NIMOZ confirmed that a highly important role in the life of a given institution engaged in widening its public is played by all those who visit it not only once in a lifetime but who create a milieu of persons who return and in time even become actively engaged in the activity of the institution. They can include both persons interested in the development of their professional (teachers, guides, animators of culture), educational (young people, students, University of the Third Age students) or social competence (volunteers, social activists, collectors) and persons who for many other reasons decided to take an active part in that, what is happening on the other side of the museum threshold, sufficient for a closer and more intensified link to emerge between them and the institution. It is exactly in this way, by means of the close and more frequent cooperation of certain milieus with the museum, that one of the fundamental and often unnoticed barriers for the development of the museum public vanishes. The place of passive consumption and superficial and shallow relations is taken by a *conscious and proud introduction of own culture into social circulation*.<sup>32</sup>

Today, the creation of extremely diverse communities (volunteers, co-workers or societies of friends of the museum as well as other milieus concentrated around this type of institutions) appears to be very important precisely in view of the striving of museums towards widening the circles of their public. The creation of a milieu of this sort around a museum enables building unusual social relations, which not only exert a positive impact on attendance but, first and foremost, popularise among the potential public the idea of the museum as a meeting place not only for individual visits and not always planned and carefully thought out. Hence, at the end it is worth asking not only who is absent on the threshold of the museum but also with whom among the group of the 'uninterested' would it be possible to establish in-depth relations so that he would not only expand the group of the museum public but also become a member of successive milieus concentrated around the museum. For museum curators the construction of such communities would facilitate the creation of a certain



7. Exhibition 'Treasures of the Sieradz collectors' in the Regional Museum in Sieradz organised by groups collaborating with the museum



8. Participants of the *Museum meets* project carried out by the Royal Łazienki Museum in Warsaw (1<sup>st</sup> prize in the category of museum educational project, in the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the 2017 *Wierzba* Mazovian Museum Event Competition)

(Photos: 1-3, 5, 6 – B. Nessel-Lukasik; 4 – M. Ozdoba; 7 – K. Antczak; 8 – P. Czarniecki)



network and reaching the potential public, with whom they are still unfamiliar.

Summing up, one could say that thanks to the rising interest of museum curators in the public visiting their institutions work on projects of activity considered increasingly from the point of view of the needs of the museum public as well as on widening the circle of that

public by means of new groups is becoming feasible. Quite possibly, in time it will result not only in winning more profound knowledge about the museum public but, predominantly, in popularising access to museums also in new domains, allowing the establishment of closer relations between the museum and its public.

**Abstract:** Polish museums are increasingly conducting research into their audiences. Results of statistical analyses and evaluations of educational activities help museum professionals to learn more about the people visiting their museums. However, it is essential to broaden the scope of research, to differentiate the methods and tools used, and above all to systematise the work and adapt it to the requirements and reality of how institutions with various profiles function. Therefore, the question arises: how can such research be carried out on a national scale? What is the best way to support museums which function daily in different surroundings so that their audience research translates to the programme they offer, and thus help them broaden the range of their visitors in the future? At the stage of the initial long-term programme for researching museum audiences which the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections conducted in 2017, it was already possible

to gather material which allows for the determination of directions of activities which, in turn, will help answer the above-mentioned questions in the following years. On the basis of this programme, we can conclude that having introduced the idea of a museum which is open and accessible to various groups, it is now time to turn theory into practice. Apart from keeping statistics, museums should broaden their scope of research in terms of their audiences, and look at the audience in a broader perspective, not just in terms of their presence and the diversity of activities. Only then, after they have repeated the question 'who constitutes the museum's audience, and who is absent from them?', would it be possible to determine what is indispensable to deepen the relation between a museum and its audience. Nevertheless, it will be clear whether museum professionals opt for such steps and try to learn whom they still have not met in the museum once broader research has been carried out.

**Keywords:** participation in culture, audience research, prospective audience, social relations, democratisation of culture.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> K. Pomian, *Muzeum: Kryteria sukcesu*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2009, no. 50, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> This article was written in the course of trial research conducted by NIMOZ in 12 selected museums, with the participants – representatives of assorted institutions and persons cooperating with a given museum (volunteers, guides, collectors, *et al.*) – stressing the significance of statistics in summing up their activity.

<sup>3</sup> According to information published by the Supreme Audit Office (NIK) attendance in Polish museums in 2014 grew by more than 10 mln compared to 2007. Out of a total of 30.6 mln visitors as many as 13.7 mln toured free-of-charge. *Informacja o wynikach kontroli. Budowanie muzeów w latach 2007–2015*, <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,11329,vp,13678.pdf> [accessed on: 14 August 2017].

<sup>4</sup> In her Ph.D. dissertation: *(Re)konstrukcje muzeum w kulturze współczesnej. Studium socjopedagogiczne* Aneta Kamińska presented the example of the Lubusz Land Museum, which from 2010 registers a growing number of visitors, <https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/bitstream/10593/12882/1/Kami%C5%84ska%20Aneta%20-%20%28Re%29konstrukcje%20muzeum...%20doktorat.pdf> [accessed on: 14 August 2017].

<sup>5</sup> D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzeum: fenomeny i problemy*, Universitas, Kraków 2015, p. 136.

<sup>6</sup> E. Nieroba, *Muzeum empatyczne. O zmieniającej się roli odbiorcy kultury we współczesnym świecie w opinii muzealników*, in: *Muzea w kulturze współczesnej*, A. Ziębińska-Witek, G. Żuk (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu M. Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2015, p. 162.

<sup>7</sup> The effects of such studies devised in 2016 for the following Warsaw museums: the Chopin Museum, the Museum of Polish History or the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, were presented, i.a. at the 'Kulturomania' seminar held on 20 January 2017, depicting the museum public as a complex composed of the following groups: folk traditionalists, the aspiring mainstream, the withdrawn, compulsive homesteaders, hunters of knowledge, consumers of institutional culture, the sensual, and proper conformists.

<sup>8</sup> J. Hajduk, Ł. Piekarska-Duraj, P. Idziak, S. Wacigga, *Lokalne muzea w globalnym świecie: poradnik praktyczny*, Małopolski Instytut Kultury, Kraków 2013, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> Among the institutions, which in 2017 took part in the NIMOZ 'Museum Statistics' programme as many as 68 admitted that they had conducted such studies in 2016.

<sup>10</sup> K. Mordyński, *Muzeum, gość i przestrzeń. Potrzeby muzealnych gości a funkcje i sposoby kształtowania pozaekspozycyjnej przestrzeni muzealnej*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, p. 102.

<sup>11</sup> *Kierunek kultura. W stronę żywego uczestnictwa w kulturze*, W. Kłosowski (ed.), Mazowiecki Instytut Kultury i Sztuki, Warszawa 2011, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> The process of perceiving not only the art gallery but also the museum as a 'white cube' was recently discussed by J. Byszewski in his article: *Muzeum jako wyzwanie (po konferencji 'Muzeum w przestrzeni edukacji otwartej')*, in: *Muzeum w przestrzeni edukacji otwartej*, 'Biuletyn Programowy NIMOZ' 2012, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> E. Caillet, *Polityka zorientowana na publiczność muzealną*, in: *Edukacja muzealna. Antologia tłumaczeń*, M. Szelaż, J. Skutnik (ed.), National Museum in Poznań, Poznań 2010, p. 275.

<sup>14</sup> M. Borusiewicz, *Nauka czy rozrywka. Nowa muzeologia w europejskich definicjach muzeum*, Universitas, Kraków 2012, p. 145



- <sup>15</sup>R. Drozdowski, B. Fatyga, M. Filiciak, M. Krajewski, T. Szlendak, *Praktyki kulturalne Polaków*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu M. Kopernika, Toruń 2014, p. 160.
- <sup>16</sup>Such statistical data are presented by T. Szlendak, *Formy aktywności kulturalnej*, in: R. Drozdowski, B. Fatyga, M. Filiciak, M. Krajewski, T. Szlendak, *Praktyki kulturalne...*, pp. 159-160.
- <sup>17</sup>*Kierunek kultura...*, p. 46
- <sup>18</sup>Museums attempting to get to know not only their visitors but also the 'potential public' include the King Jan III Sobieski Museum Palace in Wilanów (research from 2012) or the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejów (research from 2014-2017).
- <sup>19</sup>*Obieg kultury na Mazowszu*, [http://www.mazowieckieobserwatorium.pl/media/\\_mik/files/265/raport-mik-02-best.pdf](http://www.mazowieckieobserwatorium.pl/media/_mik/files/265/raport-mik-02-best.pdf) [accessed on: 14 August 2017].
- <sup>20</sup>G. Janus recently wrote about the significance of the second museum revolution, a new museology, which in the 1970s changed the manner of thinking about the museum as no longer a *guard of the collections (...)* but their administrator, whose task is the popularisation of knowledge, and increased the importance of museum education while the need to become more closely acquainted with the public became essential, in: *Muzeum i ludzie*, in: *Laboratorium muzeum. Społeczność*, Muzeum Warszawy, Warszawa 2015, p. 13. Today this transformation of the social role of museums appears to be the most prominent point of reference in a discussion about the current and potential public.
- <sup>21</sup>Much has changed from the viewpoint of the museum programme infrastructure and offer; thus not only such institutions as the National Museum in Warsaw, but also lesser ones, such as the Castle Museum in Pszczyna, have prepared a concrete offer addressed to people with special needs resulting from their handicaps.
- <sup>22</sup>In many existing institutions a programme addressed to families with children has become a separate and extremely important category of activity, which resulted both in creating a concrete offer, introducing exposition solutions (e.g. at the Regional Museum in Stalowa Wola or the Emigration Museum in Gdynia), or even outright new types of museums (e.g. the Museum for Children at the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw).
- <sup>23</sup>E. Caillet, *Polityka zorientowana...*, p. 277.
- <sup>24</sup>In June 2017 a trial programme of studying the museum public was prepared by NIMOZ and NIK staff members as well as a team of sociologists. Workshops involve the selection of 12 institutions representing different types of museums, in which individual interviews, expanded by conversations with the directors, as well as focused group interviews involving the workers and co-workers of a given institution, were conducted. The analysis of the collected material will become a basis for the creation of a several years long programme of studying the museum public and training intended for museum curators.
- <sup>25</sup>The most frequent and usually the only instrument applied in studies on the museum public is the survey, making it possible to become acquainted with the demographic data of the visitors and the level of their satisfaction with touring a given museum.
- <sup>26</sup>The fundamental purpose of the studies are statistics and marketing undertakings, which often lead to determining channels and forms of communication with the public.
- <sup>27</sup>*Spacerowicze, nomadzi i sieciowi łowcy okazji*, A. Nacher (ed.), Małopolski Instytut Kultury, Kraków 2013, p. 71
- <sup>28</sup>Since 2018 the NIMOZ training offer includes also pertinent workshops.
- <sup>29</sup>In this case time denotes not only opening hours but also the amount of free time at the disposal of the individual visitor.
- <sup>30</sup>Infrastructural barriers may consist of, e.g. the absence of a marked approach to the Museum, a parking site, a driveway for the handicapped, a lift, a place for wheelchairs, etc.
- <sup>31</sup>In this instance the basic obstacle in reaching a museum is the lack of information about its seat and the activity conducted therein or the absence of a suitable offer addressed to a given group, such as a guide speaking a given language or a programme adapted to the needs of, e.g. families with small children.
- <sup>32</sup>*Kierunek kultura...*, p. 46.

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Garden of Musée du Quai Branly, photo J. Kurek



# MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS



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# LEOPOLD BINENTAL AND THE HISTORY OF HIS COLLECTION

**Krzysztof Dubiński**

The Witkacy Institute in Warsaw

**Ewa Katarzyna Świetlicka**

National Museum in Warsaw

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*In 2002–2003 I experienced an extraordinary antiquarian adventure while seeking Frederic Chopin's manuscripts scattered across the world, organising their purchase or mediating in obtaining them for the collections of the National Library in Warsaw. Thanks to sponsors' donations it was possible to purchase several letters and drawings by the composer in the USA and Poland, but funds for several valuable mementos could not be acquired.<sup>1</sup> Upon each occasion the name of Leopold Biennial emerged in the background of the process of determining provenance – Krzysztof Dubiński.*

*The exhibition 'Raphael's Ware. Istoriatto Maiolica from Polish Collections' was presented at the National Museum in Warsaw from March to May 2010. I had the honour of being the exhibition commissar and the scientific editor of an accompanying catalogue.<sup>2</sup> The most valuable exhibits described in the catalogue include Renaissance plates from the collection of Janina and Leopold Binental – Ewa Katarzyna Świetlicka.*

Leopold Jan Binental was born on 10 January 1886 in Kielce in a prosperous Polish-Jewish family. His father (Chaim) Henryk Binental, married to Franciszka born Guranowska, came into a fortune in real estate. At the beginning of the twentieth century Henryk Binental moved to Warsaw. In 1902 he purchased for not quite 10 000 roubles the suburban settlement of Dąbrówka-Leonówka in the commune of Jabłonna and there opened a yeast-based spirits distillery. The enterprise flourished and the factory and its environs became known as Henryków from the name of its owner (today this is part of Białołęka, a right-bank district of Warsaw). Henryk Binental became well-known among the Jewish entrepreneurs of Warsaw and during the inter-war period he opened, together with his sons – Mieczysław, Józef, and Aleksander – Warszawskie Zakłady Przemysłowe WYROBU DROŻDZY PRASOWANYCH, SŁODU I SPIRYTUSU S.A., which remained under their control to the outbreak of the war and became the base of the welfare of the whole Binental family.<sup>3</sup>

Leopold Jan Binental was the only member of the family who did not become involved in business ventures and

chose an entirely different life path and career. His father very early noticed Leopold's artistic talent and interest in the humanities, and ensured him a sound education. At the beginning of the century he sent Leopold to France, where the latter began studying music and musicology at the Paris Conservatory while simultaneously studying law at the Sorbonne; he graduated from both schools with excellent results. In Paris Leopold met the very young Janina Heilpern, who had set off to France to pursue her love of painting. Upon their return home they married in January 1908 – Leopold was 22 years old and Janina – 19. Their only child, daughter Krystyna, was born in January 1911.

Probably after returning from Paris Leopold Binental started working as a teacher and taught the violin at, i.a. the private music school of Zofia Iwanowska-Płoszko. He also took an active part in the life of the Warsaw musical milieu and joined, i.a. the Warsaw Union of Musicians. At the same time Leopold was a member of the Polish Art Club, in which he assumed the function of chairman of the music section.<sup>4</sup>

After the outbreak of the Polish-Bolshevik war Leopold



joined the Polish Army as a volunteer, and when the hostilities ended he was verified by the Ministry of Military Affairs in the rank of second lieutenant of the reserve. At the end of 1919 he received the post of a senior clerk at the Ministry of Culture and Art, but managed to stay behind a ministerial desk for only three years.<sup>5</sup> As a professor at the Fryderyk Chopin Music Academy, functioning under the aegis of the Warsaw Music Society (WTM), he dedicated himself to teaching the violin. Up to 1939 Leopold also held a chamber music class. As a musicologist he chaired the scientific-publishing section of the WTM dealing with the popularisation of the accomplishments of great Polish composers, past and contemporary.

The 1920s and 1930s were a time of success. In 1925 Leopold Binental became the organiser and *spiritus movens* of the Polish Music Festival in Paris, which presented the greatest Polish composers from the sixteenth century to the present, as confirmed by information in the Parisian press: *The evening of 11 June, when contacts so dear us were renewed, was a veritable triumph (both moral and probably financial) for all those who had been its busy organisers. Right next to conductor Młynarski mention is due to Mr Binental, just as ardent and energetic as a spokesman for the Polish cause in France as he had been in the past as a spokesman for the French cause in Poland* (Raymond Charpentier,

*'Comoedia'* 16 June 1925).<sup>6</sup> The ovations, which awarded the performance given by the Polish musicians, coincided with the success of the authors of the Polish pavilion at the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Paris.

In October 1926 the Society for the Promotion of Polish Art Abroad (TSSPO) was established under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. The prime objective of the Society was the establishment of contacts with art centres abroad and the propagation of Polish art. Leopold Binental became a member of the TSSPO board and during the founding assembly was additionally elected secretary of a three-person executive board.<sup>7</sup> The fact that he was entrusted with this office was the consequence not only of appreciation for his organisational skills, extremely useful for the realisation of the TSSPO 'propaganda-promotion' goals, but also his high professional rank, which meant that the doors of foreign cultural institutions were wide open. Thanks to numerous trips to, i.a. France, Germany, and Switzerland Binental proved to be an excellent organiser, curator, and propagator of exhibitions dedicated to Polish musical life abroad.<sup>8</sup>

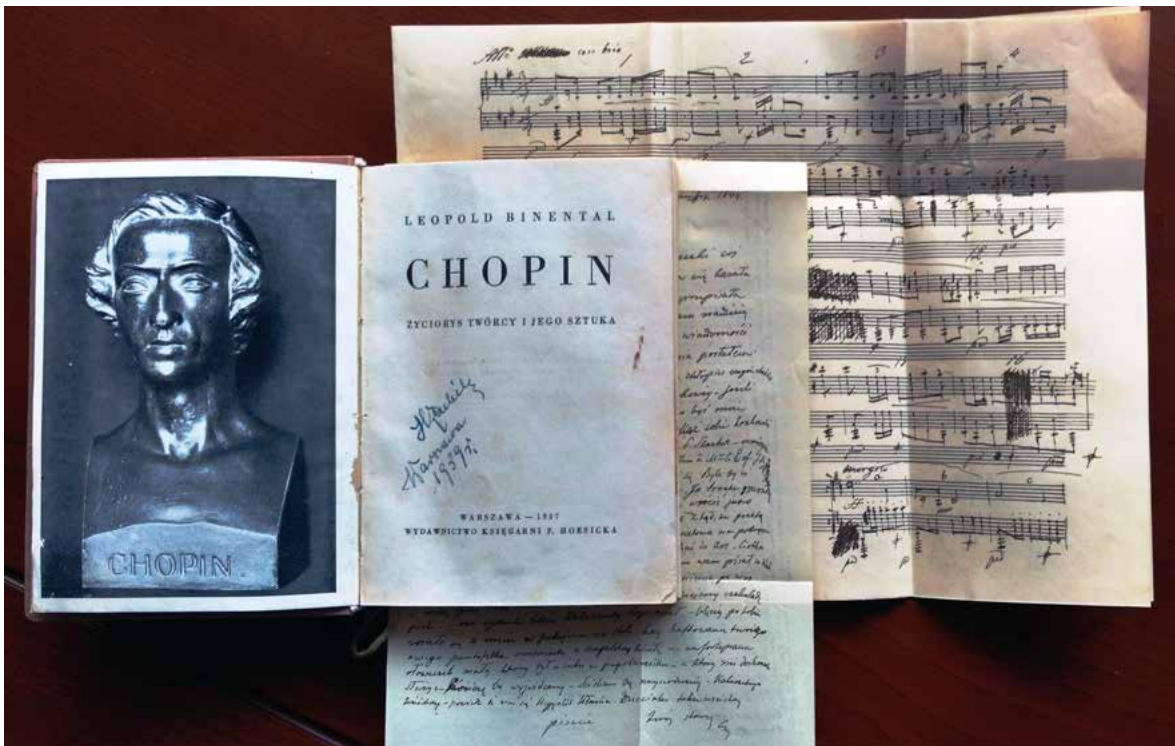
Throughout the entire inter-war period Binental wrote and published a good deal, and the bibliography of his works is composed of several books and numerous articles



Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, sygn. 1-K-12123-5

1. Ballet company with Emil Młynarski, Director of the National Opera in Warsaw, after arriving in Paris for the Polish Music Festival in 1925. Shown: Emil Młynarski, Director of the National Opera in Warsaw (standing in the middle), Leopold Binental – organiser of the Festival, Halina Szmolcówna, Janina Kanińska, Henryka Kamińska





2. Leopold Binental, *Chopin. His biography and works*, Published by F. Hoesick's Bookstore, Warsaw 1937

in professional periodicals as well as in the popular Polish and foreign press, chiefly French and German. From 1924 uninterruptedly to 1939 he was the music critic of 'Kurier Warszawski'.

His truly great passion – as man of letters, scholar, and collector – was the *oeuvre* and biography of Frederic Chopin. Binental devoted much time and energy to seeking new, unknown sources pertaining to the great Romantic. He rapidly gained the reputation of a competent and much-valued expert on Chopin, and his European position was substantiated by a monograph about Chopin published in Warsaw in 1930. Its translation into the French appeared four years later in Paris as volume CXIV of the renowned series *Maîtres de la musique ancienne et moderne*. The publication was distinguished by a French Academy award, and Binental was granted the Officer's Cross of the Légion d'Honneur for his work and organisational activity in Polish-French cultural cooperation. In 1937 the Hoesick publishing house issued a second, expanded edition of the book: *Chopin. Życiorys twórcy i jego sztuka*.<sup>9</sup>

The album: *Chopin. W 120-tą rocznicę urodzin. Dokumenty i Pamiątki*, containing 110 photographic reproductions showing Chopinesque mementos, prints, drawings, hand-written music scores, the composer's letters and correspondence addressed to him, was published in 1930 and this time too prepared by Binental. In his auteur introduction Binental stressed: *About 95% of the objects collected in this work are presented for the first time, including heretofore totally unknown ones of essential value as evidence*. Binental supplemented the extensive collection of illustrations with notes and footnotes of great value for musicologists.<sup>10</sup>

In the following year the Warsaw Music Society, which for some time had been buying and collecting Chopin-related manuscripts and souvenirs, embarked upon the initiative of organising their exhibition at the National Museum in Warsaw (MNW) as an event accompanying the Second International Chopin Piano Competition. The initiator was Leopold Binental, who also conducted a basic selection of Chopin-related artefacts, influenced their exposition, and prepared a catalogue supplementing the exhibition, published in Polish and French.<sup>11</sup> In March and April 1932 Chopin mementos were displayed at the National Museum in Warsaw. The MNW archive preserved the information that on 9 April 1932 Leopold Binental *presented an introduction*: On the exhibition of Chopin mementos at the National Museum, *preceding a concert of Chopin's music performed on the master's piano*.<sup>12</sup> Leopold Binental appeared to be tireless in his mission of propagating the person and works of Frederic Chopin. In the summer of 1932, together with Czesław Chowaniec, director of the Polish Library in Paris, he organised in the Library building an exhibition of Chopin manuscripts, prints, drawings, and mementos. He was also the co-author of a carefully prepared catalogue issued in French.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, a German version of the Binental album was published in Leipzig.<sup>14</sup>

The great efforts of the Warsaw Music Society intent on a worthy celebration of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Frederic Chopin, the success of the initiative of the International Chopin Competition, as well as, *toutes proportions gardées*, Leopold Binental's activity as a man of letters and organiser were the reason why at the beginning of the 1930s the cultivation of the Chopin tradition became

a truly national issue. These undertakings also enjoyed state patronage. The Frederic Chopin Institute (further as: IFC or Institute), created in 1934, replaced the Chopin section functioning at the WTM and up to that time involved in the protection of the composer's mementos. The Institute began collecting autographs, books, scores, gramophone records, and photographs for the beginnings of a future museum, library, phonotheque and phototheque; it also issued the periodical 'Chopin'. In 1937 it undertook work on the publication of *Dzieła wszystkie Fryderyka Chopina*. The list of the initiators and founders of the Frederic Chopin Institute includes leading names in the world of politics of the period: Prime Minister Janusz Jędrzejewicz, two successive ministers of foreign affairs: August Zalewski and Józef Beck, together with outstanding representatives of the world of music: Emil Młynarski, Stanisław Niewiadomski, and Karol Szymanowski. The group of initiators and founders included also Leopold Binental, who became a member of the Institute board and took on the functions of its secretary. His duties included supervision over the Museum Archive Commission set up at the Institute in the autumn of 1934 in order to obtain and purchase Chopin memorabilia.

The establishment of the Polish Frederic Chopin Institute echoed widely across Europe. Soon two offers of selling large Chopin collections were addressed to Warsaw. The first was made by the French musicologist Edouard Ganche, a great admirer of Chopin's music and a man of significant merits for the popularisation of the Chopin tradition in France. *The Edouard Ganche collection was regarded as the most copious in France and the Polish press compared it to the collections of Princess Michalina Czartoryska, also Chopin's student, donated by her to the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Cracow.*<sup>15</sup>

In July 1935, after analysing the Ganche offer, the Institute board decided not to accept it. There were two reasons: the high price of the collection and the fact that at the same time there appeared an offer regarded as much more valuable. Presumably, Leopold Binental's opinion expressed at the board session proved to be decisive.

Upon receiving news about the establishment of IFC, in the autumn of 1934 Tadeusz Brzeziński (father of Zbigniew), the Polish consul in Leipzig, was approached by representatives of Breitkopf & Hartel (B&H) offering 49 autographs and authorised copies of works by Frederic Chopin, 13 letters written by the composer, and three daguerreotypes with his likenesses from the last years of his life. B&H was the first German publisher of the works of Chopin and in 1843 it purchased from the composer his manuscripts, which, after publication, were placed in the firm's archive. The first to examine this collection in the basement of the B&H seat was Leopold Binental in the company of Consul Brzeziński, with the former acknowledging that the purchase of the collection should be of prime importance for IFC. Negotiations went on for two years, with the Germans asking 115 000 marks and the Institute being unable to collect such a sum, even with the support of a state donation. Binental, however, drew attention to the fact that some of the handwritten sheet music ascribed to Chopin might not possess such an attribution, thus inclining B&H to greater flexibility in the negotiations. Ultimately, in the first half of 1937 the price

was lowered to 100 000 marks, a sum for which the Ministry of Religious Denomination and Public Enlightenment bought the Leipzig collection.

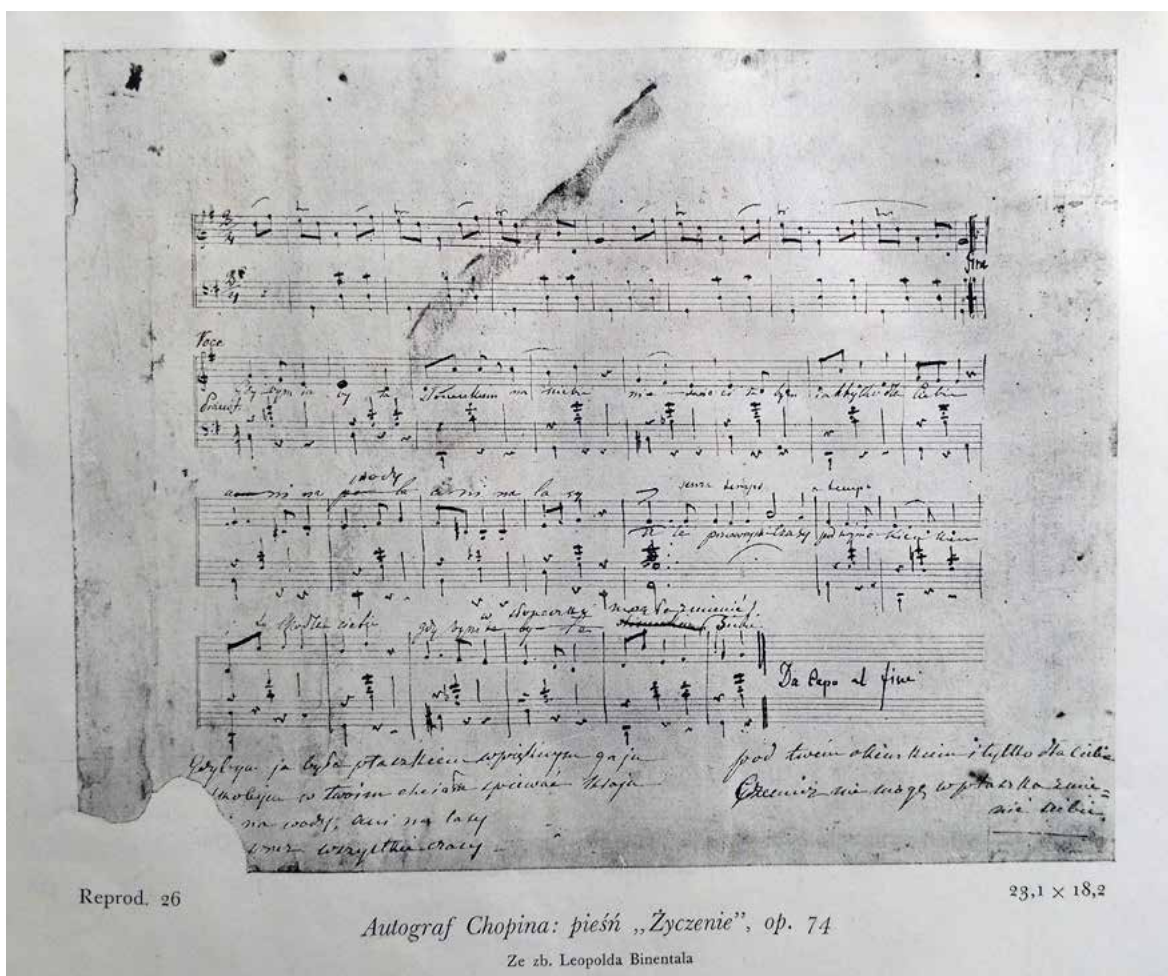
In July 1937 Leopold Binental and Czesław Chowaniec arranged a successive exhibition at the Polish Library in Paris: 'Frederic Chopin, George Sand et leurs amis' to mark the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the relationship of the titular figures. The display featured Chopiniana brought over straight from Leipzig; after the exhibition the entire collection purchased from B&H was presented to the National Library in Warsaw (9 January 1938).<sup>16</sup>

Fascinated by the Chopin memorabilia Binental also collected them. His private collection of the composer's autographs and souvenirs was regarded by the musicology milieu as one of the most valuable. It encompassed predominantly autographs and memorabilia bought from Maria and Laura Ciechomska, the granddaughters of Ludwika Jędrzejewiczowa, Chopin's sister. Here we find pencil drawings by Chopin with a droll annotation: *In the course of a second week of boredom*, an autograph of the song: *The Wish*, op. 74, with words by Stefan Witwicki, letters: Chopin's to Józef Elsner of 14 December 1831, Robert Schuman's to Chopin of 8 September 1836, Felix Mendelssohn's to Chopin with annotations by Schumann, also of 8 September 1836, Eugene Delacroix's to Chopin (no date), Franz List's to Chopin of 26 February 1843, Henri Berlioz's from 1839, Chopin's to his family of 1848 as well as a printed programme of Chopin's first concert in Paris, held on 13 January 1852, a water colour showing the salon in Chopin's last apartment at 12 Place Vendôme, and the first printed biography of Chopin written by Franz List and with a handwritten dedication by the author.<sup>17</sup>

Such was the Binental private collection of Chopiniana in about 1930; in the following years the owner probably continued to expand it. While publishing a French edition of Chopin's letters (1933) Henryk Opieński recorded a letter written by the composer to Wojciech Grzymała (8 October 1839) as belonging to Binental.<sup>18</sup> Without doubt we may assume that at the end of the 1930s Chopiniana in his possession constituted a valuable collection. Although it is difficult to presuppose that such an experienced music expert did not keep an inventory of his purchases or a catalogue of his collection there is no information about such documentation and no traces of its existence.

Musicologists might find it highly surprising that apart from Chopiniana Binental owned also a unique and precious collection of ancient and old art testifying that he was a sophisticated and much more all-sided collector. The diversity of the collection, which contained monuments belonging to assorted worlds of the arts, was a symptom of great aesthetic sensitivity. On the other hand, collecting Chopiniana possessed predominantly a sentimental and historical value, derived from patriotic motifs generated by Romantic tradition. Collecting ancient and modern art, for all purposes inaccessible in pre-war Poland, was evidence of a great passion and a zealous quest for beauty. At the time the market value of this collection was much higher than that of the Chopin memorabilia.

Despite the fact that little is known about the beginnings and development of the collection we may presume that it was created consciously and supplemented with genuine



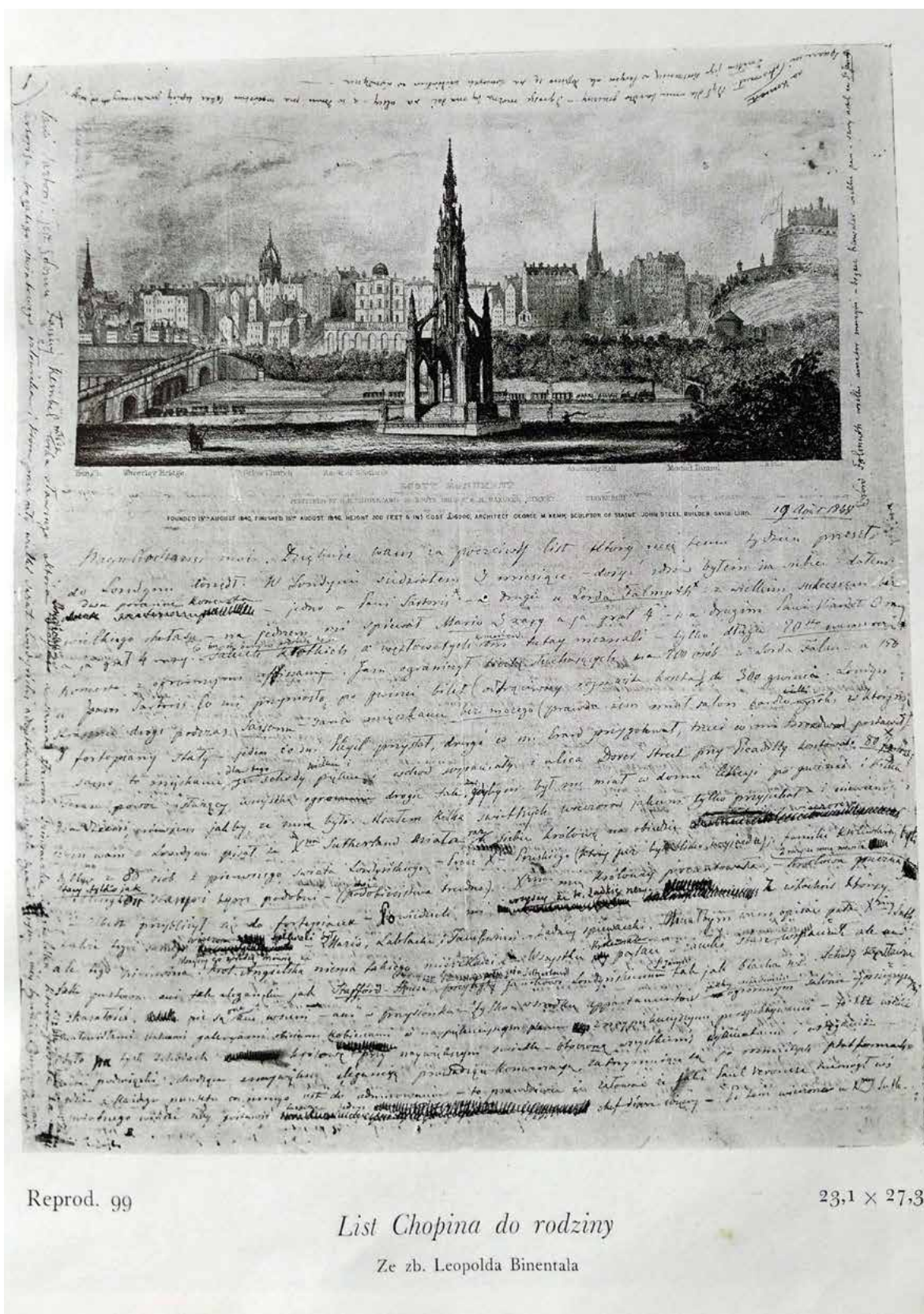
3. Fryderyk Chopin, manuscript of the song *Wish*, opus 74, from the collection of L. Binental, lost after 1939 – after L. Binental, *Chopin. On the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Documents and Mementoes*, Published by the Władysław Łazarski Publishing House, Warsaw 1930

expertise. Judging by the preserved monuments it was extremely cohesive and indicated a collector with a keen eye and precise artistic preferences. Nevertheless, just like the Chopiniana, the collection was never classified and systematised. Quite possibly, Binental inherited part of it from his father, or perhaps it was formed entirely by him.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of the source of financing it remains a fact that both men enjoyed considerable opportunities in this field. Extensive contacts with art and antiquarian milieus as well as frequent voyages enabled Leopold to enlarge the collection, the most productive being trips to Paris and Frankfurt, where a market flourishing since the nineteenth century offered arts and crafts, mainly majolica, unavailable in Poland. Purchases made in West Europe did not exclude the possibility of buying artworks on the Warsaw antiques market, which at the time was developing at an extremely swift rate.

The Binental collections were composed of ancient, Middle Eastern, and modern European ceramics, mediaeval sculpture and fabrics, gold artefacts, and Judaica. Ancient monuments were dominated by Attic pottery and ushabti figurines, well known and appreciated by archaeologists, as evidenced by their inclusion into *Corpus Vacuum Antiquorum* by Edmund

Bulanda and Kazimierz Bulas in 1936.<sup>20</sup> Twenty Attic vessels described in the pre-war *Corpus* as: 'Collection de M. Leopold Binental/ 15, rue Hoza' comprised, alongside the Majewski, Choynowski, and Branicki museum collections, a collection sizeable for its time. Modern ceramics were dominated by Italian Renaissance majolica, with a much smaller number of Baroque majolica.<sup>21</sup> The core of the Renaissance collection was composed of plates and apothecary jars (*albarelli*).<sup>22</sup> The most valuable monuments were two crespinas<sup>23</sup> from Faenza with a *quartieri* decoration (a division into panels), a depiction of the *Madonna and Child*, and a portrait of a man with the inscription: IULIO on the middle medallion. The collection was supplemented with vessels from Urbino with an *istoriato* decoration (in a narrative style referring to the literary *storia*). A true embellishment of the collection was a plate featuring the Nativity scene, dated 1543 and attributed to Francesco Durantino employed in the Guido da Merlino workshop. The most prominent *albarelli* were jars from Faenza, including a sixteenth-century vessel with the likeness of St. John, signed by Virgiliotto Calamelli, owner of one of the largest majolica workshops in the sixteenth century. The Binental collection also included





Reprod. 99

23,1 x 27,3

List Chopina do rodziny

Ze zb. Leopolda Binental

4. Fryderyk Chopin, letter to his family, 19 August 1848, from the collection of L. Binental, lost after 1939 – after L. Binental, *Chopin. On the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Documents and Mementoes*, Published by the Władysław Łazarski Publishing House, Warsaw 1930



5. Binental's 'antique' collection – Table after E. Bulanda, K. Bulas, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Pologne 3, Collections diverses (Varsovie, Wilanów, Poznań, Wilno etc.)* Cracow 1936, pl. 1



6. Plate, *The Birth of Christ*, Urbino, decoration – Francesco Durantino, workshop – Guido di Merlino, 1543, maiolica, diameter 28 cm, National Museum in Warsaw

three seventeenth- and eighteenth-century majolica pieces with religious scenes, originating from Castello d'Abruzzo, a renowned centre producing *istoriato* pottery: a plate with a decorative border featuring an acanthus and putti, and with an Ecce Homo scene modelled on a graphic work by Raphael Sadeler I (1560–1632) after a canvas by Jacopo Ligozzi (1547–1627), frequently attributed to the multi-generational Gentili workshop. The two remaining objects are a pilgrim's flask with the likenesses of St. Francis and St. Dominic, executed in the Grue family workshop, and a plaquette with *The Baptism of Christ* scene. Middle Eastern pottery was represented by, i.a. plates from Iznik – a sixteenth-century manufactory belonging to the sultans of Turkey – whose majority was decorated with the characteristically Turkish motif of four flowers: tulip, carnation, rose, and hyacinth. Some of the ware, described as: *several valuable Kubatschi-type plates from the sixteenth century*, were displayed at 'The Orient in Poland' exhibition held by the Society for the Protection of Monuments of the Past in 1926 in the Baryczka town house in Warsaw.<sup>24</sup> Much more modest was the collection of fabrics and Judaica, of a private and ritual character, and of mediaeval religious sculpture (a bust of a female saint, the head of Christ, a figure of a male saint).

At the time of the outbreak of the Second World War both valuable collections were kept at the Warsaw home of Janina and Leopold Binental in 15 Hoża Street. It is quite possible that a fragment of the Chopiniana collection belonging to Laura Ciechomska was also stored here. For many years Binental

maintained close relations with Maria and Laura Ciechomska, the granddaughters of Chopin's sister, Ludwika Jędrzejewiczowa, from whom he bought the majority of his Chopin collection, as did Artur Rubinstein. The sisters trusted him totally and made memorabilia from their collection available for publication and reproduction. His was an extremely large collection, containing, i. a. the autographs of ten letters by Chopin and 285 letters addressed to the composer, 39 letters written about Chopin by assorted contemporaries, autographs and handwritten copies of compositions by Chopin and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, a collection of drawings and watercolours executed by Chopin, Teofil Kwiatkowski, and George Sand, and five portraits by Ambroży Mieroszewski.

Laura Ciechomska, who after her sister's death in 1932 became the sole owner of the collection, lived near the Binentals in 24 Wspólna Street. Already during the wartime battles waged for the capital she became ill, was hospitalised, and died. The fate of the Chopiniana kept at her home remains an unresolved puzzle. Presumably, they were not destroyed.<sup>25</sup> *I am not certain whether aunt kept the numerous Chopin memorabilia at her home. They were under the care of Mr Binental – musician and expert on Chopin. Quite possibly they were at his home. From the beginning of the war I had no contact with him and searched for him unsuccessfully. It is said that he died* – Ludwika Ciechomska, Chopin's grandniece, stated in the mid-1960s.<sup>26</sup>

Janina and Leopold Binental survived the siege of the capital city in their Warsaw apartment without suffering any





7. Plaquette, *Baptism of Christ*, Castelli d'Abruzzo, 18th c., maiolica, dimensions 21,5×33,5 cm, National Museum in Warsaw

losses. After the capitulation of Warsaw they did not change their place of residence and during the first months of the occupation there were no obstacles for Ludwika Ciechomska to establish contact with Leopold. She thus must have begun her search much too late, when Binental was no longer in Poland.

An attempt at following and documenting the wartime story of Binental was made by the Frederic Chopin Museum (MFC). In 1966 the Museum obtained an account by Krystyna Iłowiecka-Hoffman, M.D., whose parents were pre-war friends of the Binentals. It follows from a note presented to the Museum on 15 June 1966 that thanks to help rendered by Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Janina and Leopold Binental received a Swiss visa and left Warsaw in April 1940. *The ultimate destination towards which Prof. Binental was making his way was, however, Paris, where his daughter, Krystyna Binental, student at the Academy of Fine Arts, lived (...). About two months later we received via the Swiss Red Cross a postcard from Geneva, saying more or less: We arrived without mishap, tomorrow on our way to Kryisia. Several days after this card arrived Germany occupied France.*<sup>27</sup>

Departure from Poland took place in extremely difficult conditions. Zbigniew Drzewiecki summed it up in a single sentence: *After the outbreak of the last war Binental experienced the whole agony of Gestapo repressions, but managed to leave for France.*<sup>28</sup> In May 1940 the Binentals reached France and there resided together with their daughter. We know nothing about the conditions in which they lived or about the means of their subsistence. Fragmentary reminiscences by Krystyna Binental show that until 1944 they stayed in a Polish Red Cross shelter. After

the fall of France a network of such hostels and camps emerged, and when German authorities disbanded the Polish Red Cross the homes were entrusted to Groupement d'Assistance aux Polonais en France (GAPF). The living conditions in these centres were very harsh.<sup>29</sup> The head of Groupement d'Assistance was Prof. Zygmunt Lubicz-Zalewski, historian, literary critic, and an acquaintance of Binental; thus Leopold and his family could have counted on a slightly more bearable fate. A second edition of Binental's book about Chopin memorabilia and documents was issued in Stockholm in the middle of 1940 and fees owed to the author may have reached him or he might have had at his disposal also some sort of bank savings.

At the end of 1943 the majority of Polish hostels were closed. Janina and Leopold Binental were most probably selected by the Gestapo amongst the mass of Polish refugees and arrested as Jews. Krystyna Binental managed to evade the Germans. Her parents, however, were sent to the camp in Drancy from which Jews from France and Western Europe were transported to death camps, mainly Auschwitz-Birkenau. It follows from documentation received by MFC from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum that Leopold Binental was brought to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau on 30 March 1944 in the seventieth transport from Drancy. He was given the inmate identification number 176137 and in October was moved to the Waffen SS Hygiene Institute from which basically no one returned to the world of the living. There is no other information or data about Janina Binental, who might have died already before reaching the death camp.<sup>30</sup>





8. Plate with floral motifs, Turkey, Iznik, 16-17th c., quartz ceramics, diameter 29,2 cm, National Museum in Warsaw

The story of Leopold Binental has a dramatic ending. Nonetheless, his biography contains blank pages, which still cannot be filled to the end and which pertain to the fate of his collections, of such great value for Polish and European culture.

Naturally, when Krystyna Illowiecka-Hoffman presented her account to the Frederic Chopin Museum she was asked whether she knew what could have happened to the Chopin memorabilia collection; she was certain that the Binentals left it in Poland. *It is absolutely impossible for them to have risked in those conditions taking anything more than what the German authorities allowed (not even furs were permitted).* She also knew that prior to his departure Binental deposited his collections at the National Museum in Warsaw. *Upon numerous occasions the professor said to my parents that he was pleased that he managed to place his collections at the National Museum, where they might survive the war (...)* At my family home we often wondered whether that, which Prof. Binental regarded as the most important in his collections had safely survived at the National Museum until the end of the war.

Prof. Hanna Wróblewska-Strauss was inclined to assume that Binental regarded the Chopin mementos to be the most important part of his collections and that this was what he deposited at the National Museum in Warsaw. The search for such a deposit did not produce results and the National Museum declared that its objects did not contain Chopiniana from the Binental collection. The information offered by Dr Illowiecka-Hoffmann about the museum deposit, however, proved to be true.

Krystyna Binental, who after the war lived in Paris, discovered in the documents of her parents, which survived in Warsaw, a deposit receipt from September 1939, issued by the National Museum in Warsaw. On 2 December 1947 she requested in a letter addressed to the Museum to

be informed *what collections of my late father, Leopold Binental, were found at the National Museum in Warsaw.* The letter describes the history of her family after leaving Poland: *My late parents arrived in France in May 1940. Then, together with me, they spent four years in a Polish Red Cross shelter. In 194(?) we were deported into the mountains to another, tiny hostel and in March 1944 arrested by the Gestapo. Thanks to the sacrifice made by my mother I survived, but my parents were transported to Poland and murdered in Oświęcim.*<sup>31</sup>

Three months later, Krystyna Binental, residing at 26 rue Rousselet, received from the directors of the National Museum in Warsaw the following information: *Up to now objects from the Ancient Art collections have been found [...]. As regards decorative art objects we shall be able to check only after unpacking the rest of the chests, which will take place in the course of several weeks.* In a further part of the letter Prof. Stanisław Lorentz explained the circumstances of delaying work on the Museum collections and wartime losses. The correspondence ended on this letter.<sup>32</sup>

Upon the basis of other documents preserved in the Archive of the National Museum in Warsaw it is impossible to at least partly reconstruct the course of Binental's activity focused on protecting his collections immediately after the outbreak of the war.

On 15 September 1939 the Binentals decided to deposit at the National Museum in Warsaw the artworks kept at their home in 15 Hoża Street.<sup>33</sup> On 8 March 1940 Dr Stanisław Lorenz, director of the Museum, asked in a letter addressed to Prof. Binental for personal contact regarding the deposits. This request was probably connected with the situation in which the Museum found itself when it was ordered by the Germans to fulfil the function of a great storeroom of works of art. The meeting certainly took place and a week later the Museum received a written statement in which Janina and Leopold Binental confirmed the contents of the verbal agreement about *presenting the deposit made earlier on 15 September 1939 as property of the National Museum.* In Binental's letter we read: *In accordance with a verbal agreement between us and the Director, made in mid-September last year and conducted at the time of presenting chests containing the collections to the Museum, we wish to confirm in this document the contents of that agreement, i.e. to clearly state that we are presenting the contents of the mentioned chests to become the property of the National Museum in Warsaw. We thus ask the Director to receive the contents as a whole, or, if he were to consider it appropriate, to conduct a selection of the objects according to his opinion and to include them into the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw.*<sup>34</sup> Many years after the war (1989–1991) the contents of this agreement became a basis confirming the acquisition of ownership rights to the Binental deposit by the National Museum in Warsaw.<sup>35</sup>

Monuments of art from the Binental collection were sought for such a long time because together with other collections they had been taken by the Germans to Cracow. After the end of the war and the reclamation campaign conducted in 1945–1948 it became possible to verify the archival lists prepared by the then directors of the National Museum in Warsaw upon the order of the



9. 'East in Poland' exhibition organised by the Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments of the Past, Warsaw 1926

German authorities. The earliest to be found was *Greece* (1946), followed (the early 1950s) by the remaining part of the collection. Out of a total of several score monuments the majority returned to Warsaw. Some were destroyed or damaged. Today, they are part of several collections at the National Museum in Warsaw.

Apparently, Krystyna Binental accepted the explanation offered by Prof. Lorentz and took no further steps concerning the art collection created by her parents. In 1948 she met in Paris the sculptor Maria Albin Boniecki, whom she married; on 13 March 1957 they boarded in Cherbourg the British liner *Queen Elizabeth* to leave Europe permanently and to settle down in the USA.<sup>36</sup> They lived in Denver and after 1964 moved to Tulsa (Oklahoma), where they successfully pursued sculpture, painting, and graphic art. Both died in 1995.

If we were to recognise the fate of the Leopold Binental art collection as explained then the sole unresolved puzzle is what happened to the collection of Chopin memorabilia. With all certainty Binental attempted to secure it just as carefully as in the case of the art collection. Quite possibly, he hid or deposited not only his own collection but also part of the memorabilia belonging to Laura Ciechomska, which he kept at his home.

Assorted suppositions and rumours circulated amidst musicologists. Many years after the war such hearsay was described by Jerzy Waldorff: *Having entrusted his Chopiniana to the known publisher Mieczysław Idzikowski, in 1933 co-founder of the Chopin Institute, in 1940 Binental managed*

*to successfully leave together with his wife to France where, however, the Germans captured him and brought him back to Poland, although not to Warsaw but to Oświęcim, where the Binentals were murdered as non-Aryans.*<sup>37</sup> In 1972, when Waldorff's book appeared in bookstores, Mieczysław Idzikowski, an esteemed expert on Chopin and Chopin-related iconography, was 74 years old and of very ill health. He died two years later. Neither during his lifetime nor after his death did any sort of a premise, which could confirm the veracity of the Waldorff account, emerge.

Other hypotheses are just as probable. In the dramatic months at the turn of 1939 Binental could have sold the whole collection, or its part, in order to guarantee funds for living in occupied Warsaw and to finance preparations for departure and a journey to Switzerland. He could have used the collection as a bribe in his contacts with the Gestapo or officials of the German occupation authorities. Perhaps he took the risk of concealing up to twenty pages of paper covered with tiny handwriting in his and his wife's hand luggage? And if he did manage to smuggle them into Switzerland then it could be that selling them enabled the Binentals and their daughter to survive four years in occupied France. Despite all, the least probable appears to be the hypothesis that the collection was irretrievably destroyed since from time to time Chopiniana, whose provenance appears to be linked with the Binental collection, emerge on the antiques market.<sup>38</sup>





Reprod. 17

22,2 × 29,8

*Chopin w wieku młodzieńczym*

*malował Miroszewski*

*Ze zb. Marji Ciechomskiej*

10. Ambroży Miroszewski, *Portrait of young Fryderyk Chopin*, 1829, oil on canvas, before 1939, in the possession of Maria Ciechomska, lost – after L. Binental, *Chopin. On the 120th anniversary of his birth. Documents and Mementoes*, Published by the Władysław Łazarski Publishing House, Warsaw 1930

(Photos: 1, 9 – NAC Archives; 2 – private collections; 6, 8 – P. Ligier; 7 – Stefan Mielezkiewicz)



The fate of the Binental Chopiniana remains a historical mystery that will continue to draw the attention of musicologists and historians. The destiny of the art collection saved during the war turned out to be much more fortunate. Despite damage and partial destruction the preserved majority presents high artistic and historical value essential for Polish and world museology. This is why the name of Leopold Binental

– outstanding musicologist, experienced collector, and violinist enamoured of the music of Frederic Chopin – who perished in the Holocaust inferno, shall be long remembered.

The authors express their gratitude to Marta Markowska from the Genealogy Department at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute for finding biographical material concerning the Binental family.

**Abstract:** Leopold Jan Binental (1886–1944) was a musicologist and journalist, and an indefatigable promoter of Frederic Chopin's compositions and researcher into his life story in the inter-war period. He wrote and published a great deal in professional periodicals as well as in the national and foreign popular press, mainly in France and Germany. Until 1939, he was a regular music critic for 'Kurier Warszawski'. He was thought to be a competent and respected Chopinologist, and his reputation in Europe was confirmed by the monograph Chopin published in Warsaw (1930 and 1937) and in Paris (1934) and the album Chopin. On the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Documents and mementoes (Warsaw 1930 and Leipzig 1932) presenting Chopin's mementoes, prints, drawings, handwritten musical notes and letters. He initiated and co-organised famous exhibitions about Chopin in the National Museum in Warsaw (1932) and the Polish Library in Paris (1932 and 1937). He was Executive Secretary on the Management Board of the Fryderyk Chopin National Institute created in 1934. Binental amassed a private collection of Chopin's manuscripts and

mementoes which is highly regarded in musicological circles. He also collected works of art; his collection comprised ancient, Middle Eastern and modern European ceramics, medieval sculpture and tapestries, goldsmithery and Judaica. After the outbreak of war in autumn 1939, Binental took certain steps to secure his collections. Three chests with ceramics and works of art were deposited in the National Museum in Warsaw. However, it is not known what happened to the collection of Chopin's objects. At the beginning of 1940, Binental and his wife managed to leave Poland and reach France, where his daughter lived. In 1944 he was arrested by Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz from which he did not return. After the war, at the request of his daughter Krystyna, some of the works of art deposited in the collections of the National Museum were found. With her approval, they are currently to be found in public collections in Poland, although the fate of his Chopin collection remains unknown. Every now and then, some proof appears on the world antiquarian market that the collection has not been damaged, despite remaining missing.

**Keywords:** Leopold Binental, Frederic Chopin, Fryderyk Chopin National Institute, maiolica, Chopin's manuscripts.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> 'Biuletyn Informacyjny Biblioteki Narodowej' 2003, no. 1/164/, p. 63; M. Nałęcz, *Nieznany list Chopina darem dla Biblioteki Narodowej*, 'Biuletyn Informacyjny Biblioteki Narodowej' 2003, no. 2/165/, pp. 18-19.
- <sup>2</sup> E. K. Świątlicka, *Ceramika Rafała. Majolika istoriato ze zbiorów polskich*, National Museum in Warsaw, Warszawa 2010, p. 270.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Gazeta Kielecka' 18 June 1899, no. 48, p. 3; P. P. Obolewski, *Dwory ziemiańskie na terenie parafii Białotarsk w latach 1918–1939*, p. 364; K. Guttmejer, *Krajobraz warszawski czyli o dawnej gorzelni drożdżowej w Henrykowie*, 'Magazyn Urbanistyczno-Architektoniczny' September 2001, no. 120, p. 9, <https://architektura.um.warszawa.pl/content/krajobraz-warszawski-nr-120>; 'Czas' 16 December 1923, p. 4.
- <sup>4</sup> PKA, established at the turn of 1916/1917, was an art-culture institution with Modernistic leanings. Its prime purpose was the organisation of exhibitions of contemporary painting. One such event was attended by Binental's wife, Janina (January 1917, Polonia Club in Warsaw), cf. H. Kubaszewska, *Polski Klub Artystyczny*, pp. 542-544, in: A. Wojciechowski, *Polskie Życie Artystyczne w latach 1915–1939* vol. 2, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich PAN, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1974.
- <sup>5</sup> S. Łoza, *Czy wiesz kto to jest?*, Warszawa 1938, pp. 47-48.
- <sup>6</sup> *Festival de Musique Polonoise le 11 juin 1925 au Theatre National de l'Opera/Festiwal Muzyki Polskiej w Wielkiej Operze Paryskiej 11 czerwca 1925 r.* (fascicle containing more important reports from Parisian dailies, p. 6, 18, 20, <http://sdl.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=1610978drom=publication>)
- <sup>7</sup> The TOSSPO board included also, i.a. T. Boy-Żeleński, G. Fitelberg, K. Frycz, J. Iwaszkiewicz, E. Młynarski, L. Różycki, L. Sziller, W. Skoczylas, A. Szyfman, K. Szymanowski, and E. Wittig. Cf. A. Wojciechowski, *Polskie Życie Artystyczne...*, p. 160.
- <sup>8</sup> Binental arranged exhibitions of Polish art shown abroad together with Henryk Opieński (1870–1942), composer and musicologist. 'Gazeta Olsztyńska' 18 June 1927, no. 138, p. 2; 'Gazeta Wągrowiecka' 19 July 1927, year VII, no. 84; 'Orkiestra. Miesięcznik poświęcony krzewieniu kultury muzycznej wśród orkiestr i towarzystw muzycznych w Polsce' June 1932, no. 6 (21), year III.
- <sup>9</sup> L. Binental, *Chopin*, Drukarnia W. Łazarskiego, Warszawa 1930; L. Binental, *Chopin*, Les Editions Rider, Paris 1934; L. Binental, *Chopin. Życiorys twórcy i jego sztuka*, Wydawnictwo Księgarni F. Hoesicka, Warszawa 1937.
- <sup>10</sup> S. Łobaczewska *Chopin. W 120-tą rocznicę urodzin. Dokumenty i Pamiątki*, 'Lwowskie Wiadomości Muzyczne i Literackie' 1930, no. 12, p. 3; S. Berlit, *Chopin. W 120-tą rocznicę urodzin. Dokumenty i Pamiątki*, 'Muzyka' 1931, no. 1, pp. 42-43; L. Bronarski, *Chopin. W 120-tą rocznicę urodzin. Dokumenty i Pamiątki*, 'Kwartalnik Muzyczny' 1930/1931, no. 12/13, pp. 403-405.
- <sup>11</sup> L. J. Binental, *Katalog I Wystawy dokumentów i pamiątek chopinowskich zorganizowanej przez Warszawskie Towarzystwo Muzyczne i Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie: marzec - kwiecień 1932*, Warszawa 1932.

- <sup>12</sup>MNW Archive, Folio 'Wystawy', no. 476, p. 66.
- <sup>13</sup>L. Binental, Cz. Chowaniec, B. Monkiewicz, J. Sienkiewicz, *Frederic Chopin. Exposition de tableaux, gravures, manuscrits, souvenirs (1810-1849)*, Paris, Bibliothèque Polonaise, 22-30 juin 1932.
- <sup>14</sup>L. J. Binental, *Chopin. Dokumente und Erinnerungen aus seiner Heimatstadt*, Leipzig 1932.
- <sup>15</sup>H. Łaskarzewska, *Z Lyonu do Krakowa. Historia kolekcji chopinianów Eduarda Ganche'a*, p. 7, [http://nimos.pl/upload/wydawnictwa/cenne\\_bezcenne\\_utracone/2011\\_3/chopin.pdf](http://nimos.pl/upload/wydawnictwa/cenne_bezcenne_utracone/2011_3/chopin.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 8. Cf. *Rękopisy i pamiątki chopinowskie zakupione przez rząd polski*, 'Chopin' 1937, no. 1, p. 55; L. Binental, Cz. Chowaniec, 'Frederic Chopin George Sand et leurs amis', *Exposition à la Bibliothèque Polonaise*, Paris, July-October 1937, Paris 1937.
- <sup>17</sup>L. Binental, *Chopin. W 120-tą rocznicę urodzin. Dokumenty i Pamiątki*, Warszawa 1930, rep. no 10, 26, 35, 36, 67, 68, 74, 75, 79,80, 99, 108 , with the information: *Ze zb. Leopolda Binental*.
- <sup>18</sup>H. Opieński, *Frederic Chopin. Lettres*, Paris 1933, item 136.
- <sup>19</sup>These two sources can be explained by the fact that the faience plate came from the collection of Mattias Bersohn, who died in 1908, when Leopold was barely 22 years old. It is thus highly probable that it belonged to his father.
- <sup>20</sup>*Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* (CVA) was an international project initiated in 1919 by Eduard Portier; its participants included also Polish scholars entrusted with working on collections of ancient ceramics in Poland. Cf. E. Bulanda, K. Bulas, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Pologne 3, Collections diverses (Varsovie, Wilanów, Poznań, Wilno, etc.)*, E. Bulanda (ed.), Varsovie-Cracovie 1936, pp. 1-3, Pologne 108-110.
- <sup>21</sup>Majolica is a term describing faience products made of dark ochre clay, covered with white zinc glaze and decorated with a palette of five colours (cobalt, green, yellow, purple and ochre). It differs from porcelain due to its composition of the mass and technology. Majolica was produced in Italian enterprises from the fifteenth to the twenty first century.
- <sup>22</sup>*Albarell* – a slender cylindrical jar narrow in the middle and used for keeping ointments. *Albarell* were produced on a mass scale in Italian majolica enterprises. Their decorations reflect the artistic tendencies of a given ceramics production centre.
- <sup>23</sup>*Crespina* – a plate on a low stand, with an undulating fluted ridge inspired by the vessels produced by goldsmiths. The production of *crespina* was the specialisation of Faenza – the main centre of majolica production in the sixteenth century.
- <sup>24</sup>Kubatschi (Kubachi) – a variety of Persian ceramics, whose name comes from the town of Kubachi in former Dagestan (today: Russia). Quoted after: 'The Orient in Poland' (exhibition at the Society for the Protection of Historical Monuments), 'Tygodnik Ilustrowany' 25 September 1926, no. 39, p. 644.
- <sup>25</sup>Four letters written by Chopin and belonging to Ludwika Ciecchomska appeared in Munich in 1966. Fearing that they might disappear once again they were purchased, without enquiring about their provenance, by Artur Rubinstein for the collections of the Polish Chopin Society. In turn, in 1976 a portrait of Izabela, Chopin's sister, painted by Ambroży Mieroszewski and until September 1939 at the home of Ludwika Ciecchomska, appeared as a prop in an East German TV series *A Wedding Every Week*. For political reasons the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland did not attempt to determine the fate of the painting and to regain it. After the fall of communism and the Democratic Republic of Germany it proved impossible to discover any traces of the canvas. Cf. W. Kalicki, *Siostra Fryderyka*, 'Magazyn Gazety' 28 October 1999, pp. 20-21.
- <sup>26</sup>'Express Wieczorny' 14 April 1966, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>27</sup>We owe information about the account by K. Iłowiecka-Hoffmanowa to Professor Hanna Wróblewska-Strauss. Fragments of this account cited in the article come from a letter from H. Wróblewska-Strauss to K. Dubiński (1 July 2001, the KD archive). It has been impossible to find the original version of the account, once in the collections of MFC.
- <sup>28</sup>Z. Drzewiecki, *Wspomnienia muzyka*, PWM, Kraków 1971, p. 92.
- <sup>29</sup>M. Nossowska, *Z dziejów pomocy polskim żołnierzom i uchodźcom przebywającym we Francji w czasie II wojny światowej*, 'Ślupskie Studia Historyczne' 2010, no. 16, pp. 132-135.
- <sup>30</sup>From 12 April to 11 June 1944 inmate Leopold Binental no. 176137 was noted in the documents of the KL Auschwitz III-Buna hospital, and on 15-25 October 1944 in the documents of SS-Higiene Institut-KL Auschwitz III Fuerstengrube, cf. <http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/informacja-o-wiezniach/>
- <sup>31</sup>Archive MNW 320/39, Folio 'Donations B', pp. 42-43.
- <sup>32</sup>Archive MNW 320/39, Folio 'Donations B', p. 48.
- <sup>33</sup>The MNW collections contain a deposit receipt no. 758 and a copy confirming that Dr Stanisław Lorentz, director of the National Museum in Warsaw, received three chests labelled: 'Deposit of Leopold and Janina Binental', signed by the head of the National Museum Chancellery Jerzy Halicki, M.A., MNW Archive 320/39, Folio 'Donations B', p. 46.
- <sup>34</sup>MNW Archive 320/39, Folio 'Donations B', p. 44.
- <sup>35</sup>Archiwum MNW 320/39, Folio 'Donations B', p. 47.
- <sup>36</sup>*Passenger List*, Queen Elizabeth, no. 166290, item 1-2, copy in the KD archive.
- <sup>37</sup>J. Waldorff, *Ciach go smykkiem*, PWM, Warszawa 1972, p. 278.
- <sup>38</sup>In 2002 a letter of 8 October 1839, presumed lost and addressed by Chopin to Wojciech Grzymała, which H. Opieński situated in the L. Binental collection, was purchased in the USA for National Library collections. Its Binental provenance was not confirmed and ultimately it was accepted that during the inter-war period the letter had been kept at the Czartoryski Museum in Cracow, probably as a temporary deposit included into the collections. It has been impossible to determine when and in what circumstances it had been taken out of Poland. Its post-war history also remains unknown. 'Chopin in the World' 2002/16, p. 24; correspondence of Dr Mariola Nałęcz (Printed Music Collections at the National Library) with Krzysztof Dubiński, May-June 2002, KD Archive; 'Ruch muzyczny' 23 June 2002, no. 13, p. 3.

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# CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM IN THE INTER- -WAR PERIOD AND AFTER THE WAR – BETWEEN PRAGMATISM AND IDEA

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*Modern art is not merely one more style. Modern art is the negation of everything that used to be before [...].*<sup>1</sup> The manifesto of the revolutionary artists, that was the guideline to their art and the idea of creating an international generally accessible art collection, expressed both determination, and a kind of helplessness versus the reality. It seems that such definitions continue to characterize Polish museums, particularly those presenting contemporary artistic output. However, merely a year after the 'a.r.' Group had published its communication, i.e. in 1931, two essentially important events took place: the donating of the 'a.r.' International Collection of Modern Art to the Julian and Kazimierz Bartoszewicz City Museum of History and Art in Łódź, and the launch of the essentially quite traditional Museum of Contemporary Art in Vilnius. The first transformed into an iconic phenomenon, the latter fell into oblivion. Ironically, following WW II, under Communism, the concepts of collecting contemporary art were the resultant of both above tendencies: attempts to go beyond the scheme, and staying rooted in tradition, actually the latter unquestionably dominating in Polish museums.

The two concepts of collecting illustrate well the two ways of Polish public collecting of contemporary art. In the case of the 'a.r.' Group's collection, which did not only contain outstanding works of art, but in which the very collecting process served as an example of artistic activity,<sup>2</sup> what strikes is the aspiration to widen the cognitive horizons of beholders through Avant-garde art.<sup>3</sup> The grounds for the Vilnius Museum, in turn, were to be found in history, serving as the substructure for the contemporary.<sup>4</sup> Thanks to it, the art presented in exhibitions gained an appropriate context,

and legitimized the local artistic circles. For the record, let us briefly outline the historical conditionings that had impact on the creation of both collections.

In a short text on organizing museum activity in independent Poland published in 1922, Mieczysław Terter claimed that the purpose of museums is to *Collect, contemplate, multiply artistic collections [...], properly conserve them, inventory them, and scientifically catalogue them, locate them appropriately and in a planned way, facilitate the viewing of the collected works, as well as their studying, and to encourage the widest general public to benefit from those collections [...], yet at the same time to serve contemporary art and to contribute to its development (such was the idea behind the Musée moderne etc. of Stanislaus Augustus).*<sup>5</sup> Further on, Terter points to the necessity of a planned activity aimed at collecting works of a high artistic profile that could *duly fulfil the task of representing Polish culture outside the country.*<sup>6</sup> As far as regulations are concerned, the Polish state allowed for this type of activity on the grounds of the Directive of the Ministry of Art and Culture (MKiS) of 1919, in which the regulation assigning the supreme role to the state in the protection of contemporary art can be read.<sup>7</sup> In real life, however, following the incorporation of MKiS into the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightening (MWRiOP) in 1922, and soon after that its reduction from the Department of Art into one of the MWRiOP departments (1930), the state's effective capacity for collecting contemporary (modern) art was limited, to say the least. Neither was the Institute of Art Propaganda, created at the instigation of the culture-committed

individuals (1930), rich enough to have any impact on contemporary art collecting.<sup>8</sup>

Under the circumstances, Władysław Strzemiński's decision to build up a collection without any material guarantees from the state should not surprise anyone. The need to collect high-profile Avant-garde art resulted not only from his personal artistic preferences, the awareness of the social role art plays, but also from the need to oppose the argument of the 'non-Polish' character of contemporary searches in art and the flooding of mediocre works representing the banner of *the praiseworthy Polishness that would produce Polish art out of the Polish spirit and body*.<sup>9</sup>

The questions related to the International Collection of Modern Art, recently tackled in the monograph on the Łódź museum,<sup>10</sup> have been quite thoroughly analyzed, therefore for the purpose of the present paper let us only emphasize that accepting the 'a.r.' Group's deposit was not so obvious for the public used to academic art.<sup>11</sup> Thankfully, many formal problems related to it could be overcome thanks to the efforts of Przemysław Smolik, a columnist and bibliophile, councillor at the Education and Culture Department of the Łódź Municipality who supported the idea. Finally, on 15 February 1931, a contract concerning 21 artworks was signed between the Department of Education and Culture of the Łódź Municipality and the 'a.r.' Group representative Władysław Strzemiński. With the course of time, though not without difficulties, it was expanded by artists and subsequent museum directors. Incorporating Avant-garde works into the existing collection did not mean, however, that it dominated – the transformation of a historical museum into an artistic one, and a peculiar 'mythologization' of the collection nowadays, was a gradual process of the collection being tamed, and it growing into the city tissue. Furthermore, of substantial importance was the role of Marian Minich and Ryszard Stanisławski who decided to 'take up the challenge' of Strzemiński's concept and of the later management of the Łódź institution, who aptly benefitted from the Museum's artistic potential.<sup>12</sup>

The history of the Vilnius Museum of Contemporary Art, despite the artists cooperating with the city administration, took on a totally different course. The driving power for its establishment was the presence of the artistic circle affiliated mainly with the Stephen Bathory University (USB) in Vilnius and the painful lack of display surface dedicated to the most recent art. The University resumed its activity in 1919, clearly identifying its artistic programme which focused on the protection of the mementoes of the past, and promoted contemporary artistic activity based on this legacy.<sup>13</sup> The dissonance between such a vision of art and modernity was forcibly demonstrated by the failure of the Paris exhibition of Polish art, organized on behalf of the government Committee of Propaganda by the Dean of the USB Faculty of Fine Arts Ferdynand Ruszczyk and the Warsaw sculptor Edward Wittig (1921).<sup>14</sup> This experience, however, did not alter the direction promoted by the Vilnius University. Neither was this attitude changed due to the *Exhibition of New Art* organized by Witold Kajruksztis and Władysław Strzemiński (1923).<sup>15</sup> Just contrariwise, in the local press the exhibition was defined as *a display of 'future art', since [...] these squares, rectangles, circles do not merit the name of artistic output*.<sup>16</sup> Still, this tangle dislike in



1. Władysław Strzemiński – artist painter, location photograph (1932), 'Illustrated Daily Courier' Concern Fond

the text did not mean the turning away from modernity, yet it resulted more from a different understanding of it. Polish culture during the partitions more frequently and more consciously would resort to literature than fine arts. The situation slightly improved after Poland had regained independence, yet cultural activity was still more associated with cultivating tradition, protection of monuments, and cultivating national mythology than supporting modern art.<sup>17</sup> Only few individuals were able to go beyond this horizon.

Contrary to Warsaw, Cracow, or Lvov, Vilnius did not have any structures to promote art; the Vilnius Society of Artists was launched only in 1920. In reaction to the situation, an institution was established, which despite being set deeply in past, with its very name expressed the conviction that it was extremely updated. The Vilnius Museum of Contemporary Art (1931) would not have been established had it not been for the strong support of Stefan Kirtiklis, the acting Vilnius Voivode, and Dr Stanisław Lorentz, who together with the organizational committee<sup>18</sup> assigned a temporary venue for the institution in the guardhouse of the Representative Palace. Ultimately, the collection was to be housed in the former edifice of the Vilnius Town Hall, at the time awaiting restoration.<sup>19</sup> The adopted collecting strategy essentially copied the scheme implemented in the collections of the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts; the Vilnius collection was to represent art from the last fifty years, with a particular emphasis on the regional artistic circle, which was clearly emphasized in the opening address of Stefan Kirtiklis who stated that *art reflects both the city's soul, as well as the pulse of its life, therefore a permanent museum of contemporary art is really needed in Vilnius as expression of the Vilnius artistic life of today*.<sup>20</sup> According to the organizers' intentions, the new institution was to present contemporary achievements of Vilnius artists and organize temporary exhibitions, however, as stated by Stanisław Lorentz, the Museum exists, but has actually frozen, not having developed any more serious activity.<sup>21</sup> As much as the main goal of the concept adopted by Tadeusz Dobrowolski at the Silesian Museum (1929) was to emphasize the identity of Silesia with the help of contemporary artistic output,<sup>22</sup> the strategy assumed by



2. Representative Palace (formerly Bishops) at pl. Napoleona 8 in Vilnius, group: 'Illustrated Daily Courier' group

the Vilnius Museum was of political character. Such an attitude somehow coincided with the aspiration of the artists to make art subdued to the central state authorities, which would thus transfer the responsibility for the material support to the artists and artistic output quality onto the executive organs of the centrally controlled administration.<sup>23</sup> As suggested by Iwona Luba, the grass-root demand for the state authorities to assume the responsibility for the artists' well-being and provide them with regular (propaganda) artistic commissions, expressed the fascination with the model of artistic patronage used in Fascist Italy or Soviet Russia.<sup>24</sup>

The central running of culture that a substantial number of pre-WW II artists fought for in vain, was successfully implemented in Communist Poland. The process fully completed only in 1949 with the establishing of the network of the Offices for Art Exhibitions with the central office in Warsaw and the introduction of the doctrine of Socialist Realism. These were preceded by artistic circles demanding, apart from providing a living to the artists, also founding of a Gallery of Contemporary Art whose basic task would be to organize artistic life in Poland.<sup>25</sup> These were not accidental demands. As pointed to by Marcin Szeląg, the official cultural policy from the very onset embraced collecting contemporary art., though the implementation of this task was neither that easy, nor obvious.<sup>26</sup> Already in 1945, the first purchases for the planned Museum of Contemporary Art were made,<sup>27</sup> and systematic acquisitions for the gallery or museum presenting contemporary art were continued, enriching the collection of the newest art.<sup>28</sup> This was in a way a consequence of the decisions adopted at the Congress of the Delegates of the Association of Museums in Poland



3. Jerzy Nowosielski, *Big Triangles*, a gift from the Krzywe Koło Modern Art Gallery for the National Museum in Warsaw





4. Stefan Gierkowski, *LXXXVIII*, a gift from the Krzywe Koło Modern Art Gallery to the National Museum in Warsaw

(Nieborów 19–21 September 1946), during which the newest artistic output was promoted as the basis of the museum collections on the Recovered Territories.<sup>29</sup> As a peculiar *pars pro toto*, works were begun on marking out galleries dedicated

to today's art within the already existing institutions, obviously as long as it fitted within the artistic categories of the time. Such galleries, initially admitting realistic tendencies, were opened already in the 1950s, e.g. in Cracow (1951) or Warsaw (1952), in order to later become sections exclusively dedicated to contemporary art, e.g. in Poznan (1957) or Warsaw (1958). The acquisition for the collections came most frequently from exhibitions complying with the state's official cultural policy, often based on the local artistic milieu.<sup>30</sup>

It was not coincidental that the concept of collecting works in the Vilnius Museum and the post-war galleries seemed alike. The above institutions aspired to consolidate the vision of art promoted by the given circle, to implement official policy, and, what is also of significant importance, to strengthen the potential of regional artists. Contrary to Vilnius, however, where there operated the Vilnius Society of Independent Artists, in post-WW II Poland until the 'thaw' period the official cultural policy dominated. Moreover, the 'borderlines for the contemporary' marked out in the above-mentioned galleries, reaching the early twentieth century, and in some cases even earlier, were closer to those of the Vilnius Museum than to the ones promoted by the 'a.r.' Group's collection. However, this does not go to say that in post-war Poland there was no truly updated vision of a museum of contemporary art. As justly observed by Marcin Szeląg, a permanent lack of such an institution and the determination to establish one, became a kind of a *topos* for the post-WW II artistic circles. Both the activity of the artists themselves and the critics, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, reflect this attitude.



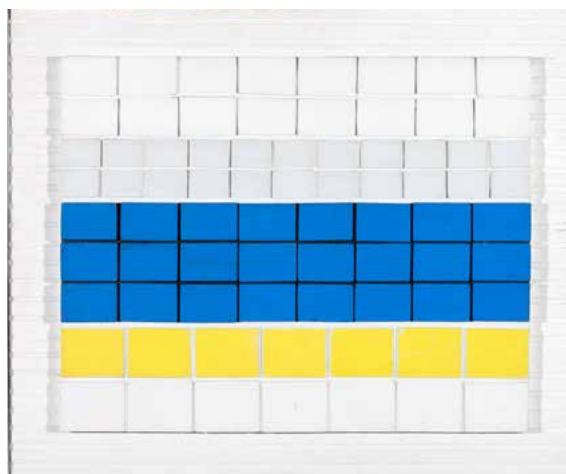
5. Zbigniew Dłubak, *Ammonites*, a gift from the Krzywe Koło Modern Art Gallery to the National Museum in Warsaw



6. Stefan Gierkowski, *XLV*, a gift from the Krzywe Koło Modern Art Gallery to the National Museum in Warsaw

The artist to particularly consolidate the idea of establishing a Gallery of Contemporary Painting (Contemporary Museum) was Marian Bogusz. Being extremely active as an exhibition organizer and animator at the Krzywe Koło Club and Gallery (1955), he aimed at expanding the influence of contemporary art and confronting it with reality.<sup>31</sup> As he wrote in 1957, *the author* [of the exhibition held at the Krzywe Koło Gallery], *following consultancy with the Art Council, donates one art work for the collection of the Museum of Modern Art. The donated piece is deposited with the Museum of Modern Art in Łódź*<sup>32</sup> The ideal implementation of the concept was found in the plein-air workshops held cyclically as of 1963 in Osieki (and Koszalin). That very year, on behalf of the Gallery, Bogusz made two gifts: the first one, bigger (35 works by Polish artists) for the National Museum in Warsaw, and the second one (13 pieces by Polish and foreign artists) for the Museum in Koszalin.<sup>33</sup> As observed by Hanna Kotkowska-Bareja, the decision was prompted by the fear that the activity of the Club and the Gallery would be banned, and it would not be possible to create a collection of the displayed works. The donation actually coincided with the policy of art collecting of both institutions which were not obliged to consult the ideological content of the presented pieces with the Ministry.<sup>34</sup>

Around that very time, another Polish artist Piotr Potworowski, perceived the collecting of contemporary art as going 'beyond the museum'. In his letters to Zdzisław Kępiński, who began to think of forming 'Gołuchów Collection', Potworowski emphasized the need to build such space that would allow a full impact on the public.<sup>35</sup> Although Kępiński's plans failed, that syndrome of 'going beyond' the valid standards, became more and more present in the reflection on collecting contemporary art. This was visible in the strategy adopted by Kajetan Sosnowski and Bożena Kowalska for the Gallery 72 in Chełm Lubelski, currently the Wiktor Ambroziewicz Museum of the Chełm District, where space was demarcated for the purpose of the gallery, run as of 1973 by the art critic Bożena Kowalska. Her strategy as a Collection Curator was identical with the programme she presented in her book of a meaningful title *Polish Avant-garde in Painting 1945–70*.<sup>36</sup> A less strict approach to building a collection was displayed by the curators of the National Museum in Wrocław or the Leon Wyczółkowski Museum in Bydgoszcz, however in the case of the latter two collections, high artistic quality of the work was the admittance criterion. A total shift to the contemporary was, in turn, proposed by Jerzy Ludwiński in the unfulfilled concept of the Current Art Museum (1966), which with time evolved into the Centre for Artistic Research (1971).<sup>37</sup> In both cases, the goal of the institution proposed by the critic was to bring it closer to art; *its specificity would not consist in limiting the range of problems, but just the contrary: in extending it onto the issues previously not considered*.<sup>38</sup> In this way Ludwiński rejected the traditional model of a retrospective museum for the sake of an institution cooperating with the latest art. The programme to be implemented by the Museum of Current Art was independent of traditional solutions and based on the cooperation with artists and critics whose theoretical presentations and artistic undertakings were to constitute the essence of the Museum's operations. This activity was to be completed with the cooperation with



7. Henryk Stażewski, *White Relief*, a gift from the Krzywe Koło Modern Art Gallery for the National Museum in Warsaw

(Photos: 1 – Illustration Archive, 1-K-5315, NAC; 2 – Illustration Archive, 1-U-7761, NAC; 3–5, 7 – K. Wilczyński courtesy of the National Museum in Warsaw, 6 – Z. Doliński courtesy of the National Museum in Warsaw)

scholars and technicians, collecting of documentation, also in the form of art pieces, as well as with the teaching and publishing activity. In a later concept of the Centre for Artistic Research, Ludwiński rejected the traditional solution applied to presenting art, focusing on the documentation ('living' archive) and creating a convenient venue for its coming to being: 'game field', allowing for a free development of art.<sup>39</sup>

Collections of contemporary art at state institutions, both in the interwar period and in the first two decades of Communist Poland, being engage in political, economic, and social issues, came across many obstacles. Despite these, however, examples of activities can be found that approximated the outlined goal. On the one hand, it meant fitting in with the already existing context, using the already existing artistic background, which in the lack of specified collecting strategy implied the pressure of the local circles. Additionally, a wide range of interests was bound to make such a museum secondary to the already existing institutions, copying their systems, most frequently at the expense of the collection quality. The other extreme was taken over by 'visionary' collections, original ones, whose strategy had been generally outlined before the institution was founded. As a result, few were actually implemented. Some remained only in the form of a concept, some having been incorporated into the earlier existing collections, lost their independence. All these institutions and concepts allow to distinguish two above-described dominating trends in collecting contemporary art by Polish museums, regardless of historical turbulences, accidental donations, or transfers by the ministries. Among them, particularly in the post-WW II period, examples of institutions that wanted to benefit from both systems can be found. In each and every single case, however, the concepts consolidated the image of the Museum of Contemporary Art as a mythical temple of free / Polish art. This is the vision that today's institutions have to overcome.

**Abstract:** Contemporary art collecting in Polish museums cannot boast a long tradition; its true beginnings date back to the interwar period. The concept of collecting artworks devised at that time are best reflected by the avant-garde International Collection of Contemporary Art by the 'a.r.' group, as well as the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius which is rooted in Polish tradition and politics. The latter tendency influenced the practice of collecting in Poland after 1945. The idea of building a Museum of Contemporary Art cultivated by post-war authorities and artists did not come to fruition, becoming rather a dream

of artistic freedom. They were replaced by galleries in already extant artistic museums which, with time, have become more and more specialised. During the first two decades of the Polish People's Republic several innovative ideas and undertakings were brought up, e.g. gifts from the Krzywe Koło Gallery to museums in Warsaw and Koszalin, as well as Piotr Potworowski's idea of going 'outside the museum'. These laid the ground for contemporary art collecting and its documentation in the 1970s, including by the Centre for Artistic Research in Wrocław, and Gallery 72 in Chełm Lubelski.

**Keywords:** contemporary art, museum, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> cc. collecting, public collecting, interwar period, the Communist period.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Fragment of the 'a.r.' Group's communication No. 1, 1930.
- <sup>2</sup> Interesting examples of artistic activity on the verge between collecting and museums, mainly after 1945, were collected by e.g. James Putnam, see: J. Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium*, London 2001.
- <sup>3</sup> One of the inspirations for completing an Avant-gard collection was e.g. the Moscow collections of modern art of Sergei Shchukin opened to the general public by the collector; A. Turowski, *Komentarz do korespondencji Władysława Strzemińskiego* [Comment on Władysław Strzemiński's Correspondence], 'Rocznik Historii Sztuki' 1973, Vol. 9, p. 278.
- <sup>4</sup> This is what Karol Estreicher, among others, pointed to; see: J. Poklewski, *Polskie życie artystyczne w międzywojennym Wilnie* [Polish Artistic Life in Inter-War Vilnius], Toruń 1994, p. 76.
- <sup>5</sup> M. Treter, *Organizacja zbiorów państwowych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Organization of State Collections in the Republic of Poland], Warszawa 1922, pp. 25-26.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>7</sup> B. Mansfeld, *Sprawy muzealne u progu II Rzeczypospolitej* [Museum Issues at the Onset of the Second Polish Republic], 'Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Zabytkoznawstwo i konserwatorstwo' 1980, No. 9 (112), p. 158.
- <sup>8</sup> They were, among others: W. Jastrzębowski, W. Skoczylas, K. Stryeński, J. Warchałowski, or above-mentioned M. Treter, see: K. Kubalska-Sulkiewicz, *Instytut Propagandy Sztuki* [Institute of Art Propaganda], in: *Polskie życie artystyczne w latach 1915-1939* [Polish Artistic Life in 1915-39], A. Wojciechowski (ed.), Wrocław 1974, pp. 556-560; J. Sosnowska, *Materiały do dziejów Instytutu Propagandy Sztuki* [Materials for the History of the Institute of Art Propaganda] Warszawa 1992.
- <sup>9</sup> T. Cieślowski (Jr), *O sztukę, w której duch się tłumaczy* [For the Art in Which the Spirit is Self-Explanatory], 'Pion' 21 July 1934, quote after W. Strzemiński, *Blokada sztuki* [Blockade of Art.], 'Gazeta Artystów: tygodnik artystyczno-społeczny' 1934, Year 1, No. 4, p. 1; also see: I. Luba, *Utworzenie Międzynarodowej Kolekcji Sztuki Nowoczesnej „a.r.” – kontekst polski* [Forming of the 'a.r.' Group's International Collection of Modern Art – Polish Context], in: *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi: monografia* [Museum of Art in Łódź], A. Jach, K. Słoboda, J. Sokołowska, M. Ziółkowska (ed.), Łódź 2015, Vol. 1, pp. 16-35.
- <sup>10</sup> *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi: monografia...*, Vols 1, 2.
- <sup>11</sup> *The point is that modern art has not developed in Poland, since it lacked the transitory period. There were no roots for artists, neither was there a ladder for the public.* 26 April 1930; *Now at the Łódź Municipality there is a problem with excessive modernity they had not expected; concern, and the wish to postpone the issue* [of museum's opening] *until the election approaching in October* [...], 10 July 1930 – *Listy Władysława Strzemińskiego do Juliana Przybosa* [Władysław Strzemiński's Letters to Julian Przyboś], A. Turowski (prep.), 'Rocznik Historii Sztuki' 1973, Vol. 9, pp. 240-241, 246.
- <sup>12</sup> P. Kurc-Maj, *Jakie muzeum? – uwagi na temat historii Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi do 1950 roku* [What Kind of a Museum? – Comments on the History of the Museum of Art in Łódź until 1950], in: *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi: monografia...*, Vol. 1, pp. 124-175.
- <sup>13</sup> In Artur Górski's address on USB's inauguration quoted by 'Tygodnik Ilustrowany', a deep ideological programme was presented: *In this feeling of the divine freedom Poland has been purified and returned to its altar*, this followed by the criticism of the Avant-garde: *As seen against these beautiful words, how do we then see our contemporary 'expressionisms' and 'utursisms' which, regretfully, are full of self-adoration.*, 'Tygodnik Ilustrowany' 1920, No. 43, pages unnumbered.
- <sup>14</sup> *The decision was made to 'dazzle' in Paris and display as if all: specimens of folk art and our old painting until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. up to the latest time and include the greatest possible number of artists - M. Treter, Ujemne przykłady polskich wystaw zagranicznych i płynąca stąd nauka* [Negative Examples of Polish Foreign Exhibitions and Henceforth Derived Lesson], 'Sztuki Piękne' 1933, Year 9, No. 4, p. 129; also see: I. Luba, *Duch romantyzmu i modernizacja. Sztuka oficjalna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* [Spirit of Romanticism and Modernization. Official Art of the Second Polish Republic], Warszawa 2012, p. 255.
- <sup>15</sup> J. Ładnowska, J. Janik, *W 70 rocznicę Wystawy Nowej Sztuki: Wilno 1923, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź 15 czerwca – 11 lipca 1993* [On the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Exhibition of New Art.: Vilnius 1923, Museum of Art, Łódź 15 June – 11 July 1993], exhibition catalogue, Łódź 1993.
- <sup>16</sup> Ironically, calling the Avant-garde 'future' art can be regarded as accidentally visionary. 'Przegląd Wileński' 1923, No. 12, p. 5; quoted afet *Polskie życie artystyczne...*, p. 102.
- <sup>17</sup> I. Luba, *Duch romantyzmu i modernizacja...*, particularly Parts I and II.
- <sup>18</sup> Next to Kirtikis and Lorentz, also Józef Folejowski, Jerzy Hoppen, Ferdynand Ruszczyk and Ludomir Słędziński were founders, see: F. Ruszczyk, *Dzienniki. W Wilnie 1919-1932* [Diary. In Vilnius 1919-32], E. Ruszczyk (selection, arrangement, introduction, afterword), Warszawa 1996, p. 567, [entry dated 9 March 1931, endnote 1].



- <sup>19</sup>S. Lorentz, *Album wileńskie* [Vilnius Album], Warszawa 1986, p. 93.
- <sup>20</sup>'Słowo'; 16 June 1931, No. 135, quote after F. Ruszczyk, *Dzienniki...*, p. 579, [entry dated 14 June 1931, footnote 1].
- <sup>21</sup>S. Lorentz, *Album wileńskie...*, p. 93.
- <sup>22</sup>I. Luba, *Utworzenie Międzynarodowej Kolekcji...*, pp. 31-32.
- <sup>23</sup>*Memoriał Rady Naczelnej Związków Zawodowych Polskich Artystów Plastyków, dotyczący organizacji spraw plastyki w Polsce, złożony na ręce Pana Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego* [Memorandum of the Supreme Councils of the Artists' Trade Unions, Related to the Organization of Fine Arts in Poland, Submitted to the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment], 'Głos Plastyków' 1934, Nos 9-12, pp. 152-153.
- <sup>24</sup>I. Luba, *Duch romantyzmu i modernizacja...*, p. 43.
- <sup>25</sup>*Do Ob. Ministra Kultury i Sztuki Władysława Kowalskiego w Warszawie (Memoriał)* [To Citizen Minister of Culture and Art Władysław Kowalski in Warsaw (Memorandum)], 'Przegląd Artystyczny' 1946, No. 1.
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- <sup>32</sup>M. Bogusz, *Galeria Staromiejska* [Old Town Gallery], 'Życie Literackie' 1957, No. 39 (297), supplement to 'Plastyka' p. 7.
- <sup>33</sup>See: *Dar Galerii Sztuki Nowoczesnej Krzywe Koło dla Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie, 10.03.1963, Dar Galerii Sztuki Nowoczesnej Krzywe Koło dla Muzeum w Koszalinie, 10.04.1963* [Gift of the Krzywe Koło Modern Art Gallery for the National Museum in Warsaw, 10 March 1963, Gift of the Krzywe Koło Modern Art Gallery for the National Museum in Koszalin, 10 April 1963], in: *Galeria Krzywe Koło* [Krzywe Koło Gallery], J. Zagrodzki (ed.), catalogue of a retrospective exhibition, July-September 1990 at the National Museum in Warsaw, Warszawa 1990, p. 80; see: M. Szelaż, *Kolekcjonowanie sztuki aktualnej – Koszalin i Chełmno* [Collecting of Current Art – Koszalin and Chełmno], in: *Awangarda w plenerze: Osieki i Łązy 1963–1981. Polska awangarda II połowy XX wieku w kolekcji Muzeum w Koszalinie* [Avant-garde in Plein-air: Osieki and Łązy 1963–81. Polish Avant-garde of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the Collection of the Koszalin Museum], 'Koszalińskie Zeszyty Muzealne' 2008, Cycle A, p. 103.
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- <sup>38</sup>J. Ludwiński, *Muzeum Sztuki Aktualnej we Wrocławiu (1966)* [Museum of Current Art in Wrocław], in: J. Ludwiński, *Epoka błękitu* [Era of the Blue], Kraków, Otwarta Pracownia 2003, p. 90.
- <sup>39</sup>*It was actually to be the first 'game museum' worldwide. Earlier no one had done anything like this, Later Pontus Hulten, Director of the Stockholm Moderna Museet intended to do the same. [...] His programme was identical with mine, [...] Only his was four yours newer*, quote after *Sztuka zmierzcha do różnorodności* [Art of the Dusk Towards Variety], in: J. Ludwiński, *Epoka błękitu...*, p. 297. Jakubowicz's tape-recorded interview with Jerzy Ludwiński.

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# THE LIMITS OF PARTICIPATION IN A MUSEUM?

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Since the end of the twentieth century museums all over the world have been changing dynamically in terms of the attitude towards their audience. Their attention has been increasingly centred around the viewers, and their needs have become the museum managements' priority. The word 'viewer' no longer means a museum guest. The visitor becomes an active participant in the museum's activity (the very 'viewing' of an exhibition often requires the visitor's participation), and even its co-creator.

Museums as well as other cultural institutions and organizations willingly resort to the word 'participation' in order to define the activities they undertake or the adopted ideology. This certainly has been one of the key words characterizing museum transformations occurring in the 2010s; at the same time it has been a buzzword, overused in an everyday discourse. The concept of a 'participatory project' sounds sophisticated in PR communications, yet a relatively small number of projects can actually be described with the name.

However, regardless of the terminology, museums have been turning into steadily friendlier institutions, more accessible and open to various audience groups. Paraphrasing the title of the 2016 exhibition hit of the National Museum in Warsaw (more on that below), more and more goes at a museum. On the other hand, however, it is known that not everything does, and every participatory practice, independently of how flexible the scenario is, has to stay within certain limits.

## Research problem and methodology

The goal of the article is to identify meanings attributed to museum participation by individuals heading museums and implementing participatory programmes as well as the reflections on the limits of freedom of the individuals participating in the museum programme.

The methodology includes a comparative analysis of some participatory practices implemented by museums.

Literature analysis and empirical research were conducted for the need of the Report for the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art, the latter serving in turn as the grounds for the study titled *W poszukiwaniu nowej roli muzeum* [In Search of a New Museum Role] (Katarzyna Jagodzińska and Jan Strycharz (ed.), being prepared for publication). For the purpose of the present paper a brief survey has been conducted among museum management in order to verify how participation is understood. Due to an insignificant number of respondents (28), the survey serves merely as a contribution to a more thorough investigation.<sup>1</sup>

## What is participation?

There is an extensive literature on the concept of participation, which links it in particular with democratization processes. The purpose of participation is essentially to reduce the distance between the state and citizen, to consolidate the trust in formal institutions, to extend the interest in the public sphere, and to strengthen the sense of agency sense of perpetration.<sup>2</sup> Participatory projects are nothing new in museums, though they have widely resounded in the twenty-first century, mainly due to Nina Simon, an advocate of a participatory museum. In 2010, the Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History published her book *The Participatory Museum*, containing practical guidelines as for cooperation with different public groups, and ways for museums to open to cooperation and participation. For herself the participatory model was the means to save the Museum which was in danger of being closed down. Her attitude proved successful; she has been sharing her experiences with museum staff worldwide through the book, her blog, and workshops. In her understanding, a participatory museum is [...] *a participatory cultural institution as a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content. Create means that visitors contribute their own*



ideas, objects, and creative expression to the institution and to each other. Share means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their visit. Connect means that visitors socialize with other people – staff and visitors – who share their particular interests. Around content means that visitors’ conversations and creations focus on the evidence, objects, and ideas most important to the institution in question.<sup>3</sup> According to Simon, if people can actively participate with cultural institutions, those places become central to community life.<sup>4</sup>

In Poland, many years earlier the participatory method had been implemented in culture by the creators of the Laboratory of Creative Education (LET) active within the framework of the Ujazdów Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, namely Janusz Byszewski and Maria Parczewska. LET implements the concept of active culture, introduced into the artistic practice by Jerzy Grotowski, one of the greatest reformers of theatre in the twentieth century. The LET philosophy can be summarized with the following set of juxtapositions: *instead of popularizing, we deal with participation; we do not speak of a spectator, a passive recipient, yet of an active participant of workshops, cooperation, of a creator; a workshop has substituted for a museum class; interactive methods using new media have substituted for a lecture; a commentary of an art historian is completed with subjective opinions; a monologue with a dialogue; a guide turns into a museum or gallery animator, and initiator of active undertakings: the dominating opinion can be enriched with multiple perspectives: the information sphere is complemented with multi-sensory experience, templum is being replaced by forum.*<sup>5</sup>

Among the elements essential for effective cultural education Byszewski has included the local character, activity, topicality, and freedom: *Apart from that all, cultural education should first of all be active. Active meaning that its recipients have to participate in something, We call it participatory education. What is more, it has to be topical. [...] Cultural education should be touching on the problems that are important and not invented as detached from the realities, or what would even be worse, imposed.*<sup>6</sup>

The concept of the ‘participatory museum’ refers to the museum character, not type. Such a museum tries to make the broadest possible range of public get involved in the programme, overcoming the passive way of visiting, for the sake of participating in the process and shaping the process. Participation does not mean education or learning, however the participation formula enables gaining experience, skills, and knowledge.

The results of the survey sent out to museum executive directors have demonstrated that the understanding of the concept: ‘participatory museum’ is first of all related to participating, commitment, and co-creation (the key words are presented in Table 1). The greatest number of people have claimed that the participatory museum implies active participation of visitors, it involves in activity, or that it is co-created by visitors. Other respondents related the co-creation activity precisely to work on the museum programme (*a museum in which an important role on the level of co-creating plans and programmes is played by a broadly-conceived public* [#11]), and also to the work on

**Table 1.** Key words mentioned by respondents to the question: What is a participatory museum for you? (the question was answered by 33 people, although the number outlined in the list is greater as some people provided complex answers and mentioned several features)

co-production	7
type of the museum that encourage visitors to take an active part in its activity	4
active participation in the implemented projects	3
active participation in the social life	2
kind of museum involving the viewer	2
dialogue	2
partnership	2
voluntary participation in the museum’s activity	1
using social innovations	1
place where people can exchange different opinions	1
museum where you can discuss with others	1
museum equipped with new technologies and serve as a facilitator	1
museum open to suggestions of other people	1
visitors friendly	1
focus on social needs	1
informed involvement	1
gives an opportunity to participate actively	1
viewer can be the subject of discussion	1
have a contact with visitors	1
multidimensional collaboration covering fields related to museum’s activity	1
influence the programme	1
co-planning exhibitions and their implementation	1
invites to initiatives	1
visitor is an active creator of the exhibition space	1
visitor is a partner who contribute to the museum development	1

the exhibition itself (*museum in which a visitor becomes an active creator of display space* [#13]). Moreover, claims have appeared that such a museum is a partner for the local community, and that a participatory museum co-participates in public life. One of the respondents has pointed out to the fact that a participatory museum centres its activity on social needs: *A participatory museum establishes relations with society, violating the stereotypical paradigm of the museum. It is no longer the museum exhibits (work on them), but the public. Museum exhibits, conveying experiences, emotions, authenticity, help to shape man, ‘heal’ his social deficits. A participatory museum is a place where the man of ‘today’ spends time with the man of ‘yesterday’ in*

the present experience conveyed by the museum exhibit. Museum professionals animate this relation, enrich it with their experience, and negotiate its meanings. They interpret the past and create the future. A participatory museum is the place of a medium and a mediator. It is a museum of debate [#19]. In compliance with another statement: *A museum should be a place of a true encounter of various points of view and sensitivities, and it should encourage resourcefulness, if you want to become a particle of contemporary life, you should not remain in the ex cathedra position, but become a quality co-participant of public life, as well as a factor important for individual development, and these functions cannot be performed otherwise than through partnership* [#34]. This characteristics brings a participatory museum closer to a critical museum that Piotr Piotrowski was trying to implement at the National Museum in Warsaw, where he served as the Director in 2009–10.<sup>7</sup>

The respondents associated participatory museum with an open museum. However, among the answers there were also such that manifested a not fully correct understanding of the concept. According to these, a participatory museum, is:

- conscious participation where visitors have to pose themselves questions and find their own answers within the offered display [#31];
- catering to the needs of the visitors [#28];
- a museum friendly to visitors [#20];
- a museum enabling active participation in museum activities (educational activities, shows, workshops, contests, artistic programmes, etc.) [#10].

Obviously, the above are the features that a participatory museum should display, however, they do not constitute its essence and a participatory museum should not be reduced just to them. What is more, a participatory model is, unjustifiably, associated with museums that are specifically profiled. This understanding can be seen in the following statements:

- *there is a stronger rationale for participatory museums in contemporary facilities which do not have to delineate borders and protect architecture* [#32];
- *participation in the case of museums and art galleries differs from that in historical museums. It seems to me that in the first case the space for participation is larger, in the latter it can just be one of many elements* [#16].

The majority of the surveyed considered their museum to be participatory or aspiring to be participatory through the activities they were implementing (22 said 'yes', 8 said 'hard to say', and only 5 responded 'no'). Interestingly, in the question and request to find the definition that best characterizes an individual coming to an exhibition at a museum, the majority picked passive concepts: recipient and visiting; no one has chosen the definition proposed in the response options: (programme) co-creator (set of chosen answers in Table 2).

The survey also contained a question related to a potential threat resulting from introducing a participatory model in a museum. The majority responded they did not see any threats, however the ones mentioned included:

- *excessive interference in tasks' implementations that might lead to the change of museum' profiles or commercialization* [#30];
- *apparent activities, infantilization* [#25];
- *introduction of a wrongly conceived participation, namely*

*the kind which essentially assumes visitor's physical activity and limits itself to it. Thus the assumption that it is sufficient to apply an appropriate format: workshop, game, interactive game, for actual participation to*

**Table 2.** Answers to the question: Which term best describes the place/ position of a person who comes to visit an exhibition at your museum? (27 answers given)

recipient	9
partner	8
participant	5
visitor	5
co-creator (of the programme)	0

*come to existence. It is often a case that in this kind of public activity only the scenario that has been decided beforehand is implemented, therefore public creative participation is but illusionary* [#22].

The first two observations are of a negative character: participation is treated as interference in the current (serious?) museums' activity and the danger of making it shallower. In my understanding, this is a wrongly understood participation. The third commentary draws attention to 'forced' activities, in which through the application of appropriate tools participation is forced, and it is artificial, since it is designed beforehand.

The majority of respondents opted for the necessity to outline the participation limits. When describing the reasons for the need of the limitations, the respondents most frequently pointed to the safety of the collections. They considered it an essential condition for museums to open to different types of activities. Two individuals drew the attention to the fact that museum employees needed to control the process in which the visitors participated (verification/consultation [#24], *participants cannot be 100 per cent free to create projects* [#13]. As for delineating the framework and the possible limitation of museum visitors' freedom there also appeared a commentary related to a museum as the subject: *It is not convenient for politicians. They would like to see museums as stable institutions, passive towards what is around. They should rather show things (artefacts), and not include/encourage the public to converse, debate over important social topics* [#35].

## Participation in museums: selected projects

The survey results demonstrated that the projects participatory in character are well understood and participated by museum directors and individuals implementing programmes, however the inventory of museum programmes did not confirm that this model is often resorted to in museum practice. The danger in this respect can be found in perceiving all the elements of a museum programme as participation (one of the answers to the question: what shows that a museum is of a participatory character, is as follows: *This fits perfectly well with the museum's entire educational programme assuming participation in activities, workshops,*

*seminars for different age groups, starting with children and up to senior citizens* [#33], which can be compared with the perceiving of the whole of museum's display and publication activity as education.

Therefore, regardless of their number, participatory projects in Polish museums and art centres boast a long tradition, however their scale and frequency have been insignificant. They were first implemented by the above-mentioned LET in the early 1990s (e.g. the *4 x Pieróg, Namely Power for Imagination* – see Table 3). Other museums followed suit, and so did other cultural institutions and organizations, particularly since LET ran workshop classes for animators of culture, museum specialists, librarians, teachers, young artists, tutors at orphanages, community centres, psychologists. It was on the LET philosophy that the educational activity of the Museum of Art in Łódź was based. The Museum's participatory projects also were of social character (e.g. Jeans Gallery, see Table 3), as well as educational and display character (e.g. *ms3 Re:akcja*, 2009). The Wrocław Contemporary Museum implements participatory projects as part of the social activity programmes, also those involving visitors in artistic projects (*Self-service Museum*, see Table 3). Off-site educational and social activities based on the participatory principle have been undertaken by the Ethnographic Museum in Cracow. (e.g. *Free Museum at Wolnica, Kazimierz Collective*, and *10 Rakowiecka Str.*; see Table 3). It is by no means a complete list, but merely several examples of varied-character projects implemented by institutions of different type.

In many a case the projects are off-site, and are usually related to some rehabilitation activities in the museum's surroundings, or can be held at locations that are not associated with any activity of the institution. Participatory projects take on the form of either educational or display activities, and it is most often the institutions' educational departments that deal with their elaboration and implementation.

An exceptional project, not just in Polish museology, but on the international scale, can be found in the '*Anything Goes Museum*' implemented in 2015–16 by the National Museum in Warsaw (MNW).<sup>8</sup> Its goal was to have the main temporary exhibition prepared by a group of junior curators. The Project was participated by in total 69 children aged 6–14, divided into 6 team. Each team worked on its own display shown in their individual room, all of which composed into a large temporary exhibition. Preparations went on for 6 months and included weekly meetings, each taking about 4 hours. It was, therefore, a long-term project, consisting in a systematic work with a definite group of individuals.

The concept of such a working model is not new, however it had not been implemented on such a scale. MNW tackled the Exhibition with the same professional standards as any other: it was prepared by teams of specialists in different areas who gave life to the children's vision. The '*Anything Goes Museum*' derives models from the British Young Tate Project and other long-term programmes targeted at young audiences implemented by British museums.

The goal of the Young Tate was to establish a platform for young audiences of the Tate Gallery who, through a series of meetings, debates, workshops and creative tasks, could

influence the creation and adjustment of the Museum's programmes to their needs and expectations.<sup>9</sup> A group of individuals aged 14–25 (this is the age group that least frequently visits museums, apart from coming in organized parties) was formed within the Museum's space, acting with their peers in mind, encouraging them to participate in the Museum's programme. The Young Tate at the Tate Liverpool was launched in 1994. Initially the size of the group was planned for 30 participants, with the assumption that following the initial meetings the number would decrease by half. The condition for being a group member was to participate in at least one meeting a month, with any more involvement considered voluntary.

During each reunion a talk was given by a member of the Museum staff, the group would visit the building, also the spaces inaccessible to visitors. Thanks to the fact that the meetings were often held at the time when the Museum was closed to visitors, the atmosphere of some uniqueness, some kind of an elitist club that not everybody could be part of was created. A group was established within the Young Tate, and its goal was to prepare an exhibition. They met one afternoon a week for 12 months. Fourteen participants volunteered to take part in it, and they acted as junior curators. The purpose was to make the twentieth-century Tate Gallery collection friendlier to the young audience. The group selected the Exhibition's topic and title: *Testing the Water: a Collection display selected by Young Tate*;<sup>10</sup> they subsequently chose the works, authored catalogue texts and descriptions, as well as captions on the gallery walls; they also proposed the layout. The Museum emphasized that the Exhibition opened in 1995 was prepared complying with the same high standards that had to be met by any other display put up by the Museum.

The experience of working on the exhibition with the Young Tate was repeated in 2011 when within the *Youth Art Interchange Phase II* European Project the group mounted the Exhibition *A Sense of Perspective*.<sup>11</sup> That very year the Young Tate transformed into the Tate Collective. They hold weekly encounters which are participated by 10–17 individuals. The group members decide what they would like to focus on in the given year, while the Museum staff help them to implement their plan. On the occasion of the Exhibition *Glam! The Performance of Style* (2013) they put up a musical event (held off-site). The group worked out the whole programme and dealt with its implementation: from negotiating with the institution whose venue was to be used, through financial issues, printing of materials, preparation of the hall, up to the ticket sale.

The work on the Exhibition at the National Museum in Warsaw was of a similar character: the children picked the topic (six topics in total: *A Forest, Dance of the Minotaur, The Ghost Room, Playing the Hero, Treasure Throve, Changes*); they selected the works for the Exhibition, created descriptions, considered the layout, recorded audio guides. The only difference was that the Polish curators were far younger and the group much larger. Bożena Pysiewicz, Deputy Head of the MNW Education Department and coordinator, explained what the Project gave its participants: *Participating in the Project they were able to get to know a museum institution, a museum collection, particular objects, but first of all to get to know themselves and other children.*



**Table 3.** A selection of participatory actions undertaken by Polish museums and the Centre for Contemporary Art. Descriptions are taken from *W poszukiwaniu nowej roli muzeum*, K. Jagodzińska and J. Strycharz (ed.), in preparation [2016]

Institution name, project title	Date, place	Project description
Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski w Warszawie – Laboratorium Edukacji Twórczej: 4 x Pieróg – czyli władza dla wyobraźni [The Centre for Contemporary Art. Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw – Laboratory for Creative Education: 4 x Pieróg – power to the imagination]	1990–1993 (summer) out the head office CSW Pieróg countryside near Siedlce	Project was realized in Pieróg village nearby the Centre of Creative Works in Chlewiska. Marta Parczewska Laboratory for Creative Education curator explains that it was an exclusive place only for high art. She also stated that authors who visited the place, had not entered the Centre. <sup>1</sup> Initially, the project was aimed to work with children, however with time it welcomed whole families. Thanks to stay in the countryside villagers had become friends with animators and decided to participate in the project. As a result, the exhibition of villagers' works was created. They had to create a work using wooden panels (divided into 4 stages: childhood, youth, adulthood and old age). Each family was supported by artist specialised in a chosen technique. Exhibition was presented in the Regional Museum in Siedlce. The project in Pieróg aimed at change but not necessarily fundamental one. As Parczewska claims: <i>it must take years to make some changes. [...] there were some important moments in Pieróg. For residents that situation was really enjoyable and significant. [...] especially it had impact on children who learned many things and discover their strengths [...].</i> <sup>2</sup>
Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław: Samoobsługowe muzeum – [The Museum of Contemporary Arts. In Wrocław: Self-service museum]	Since 2012, in the museum head office	Under the project an enormous panorama was created to which earlier prepared elements of the landscape could be attached. It was located on the second floor of the museum. Magnetised elements could be moved and stack in the form of collage. According to the statement: <i>Manipulation of tremendous collage can symbolize freedom and fun simultaneously inciting a reflection on a visual work structure and essence of the painting.</i> <sup>3</sup> In 2014 <i>Uzewnętrzniaacz</i> [The Extender] had been presented to visitors. According to Magdalena Skowrońska educational programme curator it was the installation that simultaneously composed image and music by touch and body movement. <i>Installation was an instrument in which change of picture location had changed the colour of sounds. What is more, a person playing with 'Uzewnętrzniaacz' [The Extender] had a task to pick one from the shells presented in the panorama and create a snail from the cut-out, abstract elements. Project release in 2015 was dedicated to senses which had been involved in a way that visitors could feel like in a shelter. (there the temporary head office is located) 'W Ziemi' [In the Earth] is an installation that turns off the sight sense and create a space to experience things in a different way – using touch, smell and sound. Covered in dark and immersed in the ground we can listen to the legends, fairy tales and tame the 'Pomruk' [Murmur] which furry silhouette will put on the magnetic board.</i> <sup>4</sup>
Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi: Galeria Dżinsów [The Art. Museum in Łódź: Jeans Gallery]	2014, out the head office Łódź	The project was realized in the local on Wschodnia street, 1 km away from the head office ms <sup>2</sup> and 750 km <sup>2</sup> away ms <sup>1</sup> . The street and the neighbourhood is not very popular because of social and economic problems. <i>The Jeans Gallery</i> was opened in that place – 'the shop' with trousers from sponsors. Nevertheless, trousers could only be exchanged for creative work which everyone could join during the daily workshops organized for children at the age 7–12. A constantly expanding collection of children works was presented to the audience of Festival of Four Cultures Łódź under which the project was implemented. On the last day, children who participated in the project received jeans. As Leszek Karczewski, the director of education department writes that project focused on social aspect. When organizers of the workshops noticed that children are hungry, decided that everyday there will be a soup. <sup>5</sup> In consequence of the project implementation, employees of education department have begun to exert influence on the authorities in the <i>City Hall in Łódź to create children's day centre. 'Jeans Gallery'. We treat this as a prototype which will let diagnose children's needs who live on Wschodnia street. Also, we see it as a way in which temporary measure should be transformed into permanent daily work.</i> <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Maria Parczewska, curator of the Creative Education Laboratory operating at the Center for Contemporary Art at Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, carried out on October 23, 2013 by Katarzyna Jagodzińska.

<sup>2</sup> 4 x Pieróg talks with Małgorzata Muszańska to Janusz Byszewski and Maria Parczewska, in: M. Parczewska, J. Byszewski, *The Museum as social sculpture*, Center for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw 2012, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Opening of the Self-service Museum, <http://muzeumwspolczesne.pl/mww/kalendarium/wydarzenia-specjalne/otwarcie-samoobslugowego-muzeum-rita-baum-play-number-concert/> [access: 23.04.2016].

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Magdalena Skowrońska, curator of the educational program of the Wrocław Contemporary Museum, carried out on November 27, 2015 by Katarzyna Jagodzińska.

<sup>5</sup> L. Karczewski, *Art or soup. Social responsibility of museum education*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2015, No. 56, p. 163.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, s. 164.

Institution name, project title	Date, place	Project description
Muzeum Etnograficzne im. Seweryna Udzieli w Krakowie: Wolne Muzeum na Wolnicy. Kolektyw Kazimierz oraz Rakowicka 10 [The Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków: Free Museum on Wolnica. Kazimierz Collective and Rakowicka 10]	2013–2015, out the museum head office: Kraków	<p>Project <i>Wolne Muzeum</i> [Free Museum] on Wolnica was located in Kazimierz where the museum head office is situated. It was implemented in 2013 in cooperation with Centre of Prevention and Social Education PARASOL. The project aimed at children's activating children and young people who got familiar with their surroundings and took actions to make changes. According to the statement, actions were designed so that the decisions related to them were made by the participants themselves. Furthermore, it has on purpose to make participants authors of some undertakings. Under the project the series of workshops and field games was held. Also, one of the courtyards in Kazimierz was reactivated. <i>The idea was based on the observation of our immediate surroundings – says Anna Grajewska. The courtyard was chosen during interviews with children participating in the program. A majority of children lived in that tenement house. We also wanted it to be a courtyard in a tenement house without entry phone/intercom.</i><sup>7</sup></p> <p>Project has been continued in the next years – in 2013 the project started <i>Rakowicka 10</i> implemented under the Citizens for Democracy Programme, financed from the EEA Funds. In the first year, activities were implemented with the aim of renovation of the room in the Isaac Centre 5. <i>The result is a space for relaxation and fun. It was designed together with the children participating in the project. They were the originators and executors of the main elements of the room equipment. We have created a laboratory space in which we periodically add new elements. Moving from an idea, through a project, to the implementation of specific solutions teaches the difficult art. of negotiation. What is more, it develops creativity and strengthens the sense of power.</i><sup>8</sup></p> <p>In the second stage of the programme, <i>the Playground</i> at Piekarska Street. The starting point for its origins were surveys and interviews with residents, asking them about their needs: <i>the neighbourhood's biggest problem is the lack of well-developed areas green, where you can rest, meet your neighbours and hide from the hustle and bustle. There is also a lack of places where school-age children can meet and play – the only one The playground in the district attracts mainly preschoolers and younger children with their parents – can be read in the press release.</i><sup>9</sup></p> <p>The garden opened in November 2015. His project was based on the ideas of children, that were worked out during the workshop. The building blocks are natural materials, such as wood, gravel, sand, cones, wicker and vegetation.</p>

For six months children meet with curators and get some knowledge of art. They want to gain this knowledge. They become friendly with some selected objects, and begin to consider them as their own: they have selected them, they have liberated them from storage rooms. They have found them, and have taken care of them. This is a very personal relationship with a monument.<sup>12</sup>

The Project coordinators emphasize that the Exhibition is neither infantile nor for children only, but for everybody, with children having proposed their perspective on MNW collections. This perspective is not burdened with the knowledge of history of art, canons, aesthetics, but based on a fresh outlook and interpretation not referring to the knowledge of history or art.

In compliance with the original concept of Agnieszka Morawińska, MNW Director, the Exhibition was meant to be a kind of a pilot project to be followed by other Polish museums. This is to be facilitated by documentation at respective working stages (video and audio materials available on the Museum website; the catalogue published already when the Exhibition had been launched,<sup>13</sup> which allowed to include in it documentation of the Exhibition's opening, a colloquium dedicated to creating the Exhibition). *Children in our institutions*, claimed Morawińska, *are a kind of pariahs: they constitute the largest segment of the museum audience, yet at the same*

*time museums are very traditional institutions that have not been conceived as institutions for children. They come to museums where paintings are hung too high, where they cannot peep into display cabinets, where when creating the museum narrative nobody actually thought of little viewers. Therefore I thought of asking the young audience who are never allowed to do anything – as each museum visits begins for them with bans and information: 'Kids, this is a museum, you cannot run here, you cannot shout, you cannot touch things', what they might want to see in a museum, and what they would like to show to others.*<sup>14</sup>

### Are there limits/if any, then where?

The survey results testify to a positive attitude of the respondents to the idea of a participatory museum, as well as to quite a good awareness of the meaning of the concept in museum practice. This, however, does not go to say that the model is often implemented by museums. Only selected institutions have decided to resort to them. Interestingly, they do it in different formats: exhibitions as the largest and most complex projects are rare; it is by far easier to implement participatory actions as a part of other type of programmes accompanying exhibitions, usually as single-time events.

On the Polish ground the National Museum in Warsaw

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Anna Grajewska, coordinator of the education department of The Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków, carried out on December 1, 2015 by Katarzyna Jagodzińska.

<sup>8</sup> Rakowicka 10, [http://etnomuzeum.eu/viewItem,rakowicka\\_10.html](http://etnomuzeum.eu/viewItem,rakowicka_10.html) [access: 23.04.2016].

<sup>9</sup> Press release: Unusual GARDEN OF FUN at ul. Piekarska, The Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków, 29 October 2015.



1. Visit to the Cabinet of Coins and Medals, the *Anything Goes Museum* project, the National Museum in Warsaw



2. Visit to the Warehouse of Ceramics, the *Anything Goes Museum* project, the National Museum in Warsaw



3. Visit to the Warehouse of Sculpture in the Królikarnia, the *Anything Goes Museum* project, the National Museum in Warsaw



4. Visit to the Warehouse of Textiles, the *Anything Goes Museum* project, the National Museum in Warsaw

has created a model of working with an outsider, a non-professional in regard to museum collections. It has opened up to non-conventional ideas, and taken the risk first of all by letting children into storage rooms, allowing them to make their choices (surprising at times), registering their sincere statements that finally became part of the display. *'The Anything Goes' Museum* has become an advertising motto drawing attention to the (new?) museum outlook. Obviously, it is not, since it cannot be, space of total freedom. The limitations on freedom can be found if only in the collection safety, which in the context of working on this Exhibition meant the limitations on exhibit choice (for conservation reasons not every exhibit selected by the children from the storage room could be displayed), or determined the Exhibition's layout. The way work was carried out on the Exhibition fulfilled a definite scenario which offered freedom of choice and expression, however within the framework as defined by the Museum.

It is at this point that the limits of participation spoken about in the paper's title appear. Leszek Karczewski running the Education Department at the Museum of Art in Łódź has justly claimed that participation should consist in cooperation of everybody with everybody, and should not only be limited to the participants of the activity who are inscribed into

frameworks of the educational scenario: *Real participation is an activity understood as an activity conducted with its participant, not for them or about them [...].*<sup>15</sup>

The peculiarity of a museum does not allow, however, for the equality and freedom of all the parties interacting: *The principle of the equality of partners in the participation process does not leave room for the peculiar character of an institution possessing a collection, as this would mean that the power of the institution would be annulled. At the same time [...] a museum as an institution holds a key position within the network of the distribution of knowledge, competences, skills, attitudes and values, not leaving any room for participation.*<sup>16</sup>

Karczewski presents museum as a space of exclusion: *Museum is hardly space of freedom. It is, like no other space, that of exclusion: due to what it shows, and what it does not show; how it shows, and how it does not show; due to who for, and who not for, etc. The exclusion occurs through texts, security regulations, qualified guardian of the display. Neither can one speak of democratic educational processes when one knows everything, knows the scenario, knows what can potentially be created (or at least what shall certainly not be created). [...] Within the framework of an educational situation the museum hierarchy: museum*



– addressee should stop having any impact. The point is to construct such a workshop in which the addressee can take over the responsibility, or co-responsibility can be assumed for him/her.<sup>17</sup>

It certainly is not easy, since in such a situation neither the course of action, nor its final effect can be foreseen. A full participation in a museum is out of question (if it is actually possible in any field). However, is it essential in order to achieve the educational and social goals? Not really.

It seems that the positive attitude of people running museums to the idea of the participatory museum often does not go hand in hand with thinking of their own as a participatory one (despite the declaration made in the survey). As if the predominant thinking was that such a model would be more effective elsewhere, in a museum of a different profile. What remains is the question whether the implementation of single, if only small participatory projects, entitles to using the label of a 'participatory museum'? In my view, it does not. Such an activity method should stem from the institution's strategy. Programmes encouraging to cooperate, co-create, and to a certain degree also assume shared responsibility, should be the implementation of such a strategy, and should not really play the role of a ready-made tool that will be attractive in PR communications.

The exhibitions and social projects presented in the paper stem from such strategies, or are conceived through

a more thorough reflection on museum's identity. Although differing in scale and character: some involve even a dozen museum staff members or so for several months and take over exhibition space, others are implemented off-site, last briefly, several days, or maybe even hours, a generalizing statement can be ventured that they might lead to both social change and to the change in the functioning of the museum itself: management, exhibition creation practice, education or communication. Allowing non-professionals to make programme-related decision, involving them in the process of creating museum strategies, treating them as equal partners, e.g. a consultant, is for the museum itself (similarly as for a 'visitor') a lesson that can be learnt for the sake of future programme and organizational activities. And so, for example, the MNW Project could be an attractive experiment for the visitors showing in which way individuals who are not art historian see museum collections, and who make interesting juxtapositions, not based on chronology, technique, or values, but on the topics tackled by the artists, colour sets, or emotions. For the museum staff: the management, custodians, curators, educators, it is an experiment showing how a group, on everyday basis being outside the processes that take place behind museum's closed doors, get to know the processes, and begin shaping them their way. And last but not least, for young curators this is a unique experience connected both with becoming



5. Press conference with participation of children-curators, the *Anything Goes Museum* project, the National Museum in Warsaw



6. Book with projects by a group of curators, the *Anything Goes Museum* project, the National Museum in Warsaw



7. Photograph of children-curators, the *Anything Goes Museum* project, the National Museum project in Warsaw



8. Recording children's statements concerning the 'Anything Goes Museum' exhibition, the National Museum in Warsaw

acquainted with a museum institution, as well as learning how to debate, express oneself, reach a compromise, learn teamwork, and acquire many new competences.

The limits of participation in a museum are not merely marked out by collections, but are first of all created by the museum as such (individuals managing museum teams) which fears the change in operation philosophy assuming greater opening to the visitor and a real dialogue, not just merely transmission of information and knowledge. The

implementation of activities of a participatory character is, after all, one of the strategies to carry out changes in museum's operations. Graham Black, author of *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-first Century* claimed that *today people do not agree to stay passive recipients of what they are offered by governments, companies, or cultural institutions like museums*.<sup>18</sup> Change is thus necessary. And participation introduced in museum programmes is certainly the strategy form that is worth applying. It benefits both the visitor and the museum.

**Abstract:** Over the last dozen years or so, museums all over the world have changed dynamically in terms of their attitude towards their audience. Their attention is centred more and more around the viewers, and their needs have become the management's priority. The word 'viewer' no longer means the guest of a museum. The visitor becomes a participant in the museum's activity, and even its co-creator. In Great Britain, projects based on the idea of the audience co-creating the museum programme are being conducted, for example the Tate Gallery, which has been running the Young Tate programme (later the Tate Collective) for young audiences since the mid-1990s. In the USA, the idea of participation in museums has been popularised by Nina Simon whose participation helped the Museum of

Art and History in Santa Cruz. In Poland, practices involving viewers have successfully been used, for example, by the Museum of Art in Łódź, and on an unprecedented scale – the National Museum in Warsaw in their 'Anything Goes' project curated by children. However, we know that not everything is allowed in a museum, and that each participatory action – irrespective of the flexibility of the scenario – needs to be kept in line. The aim of this article is to identify the significance of museum participation as defined by people who run museums, and to reflect upon the limits to the freedom of participants in a museum programme. The methodology comprises a comparative analysis of a selection of participatory actions chosen by various museums, as well as a survey carried out among those who run museums.

**Keywords:** participation, participatory museum, viewer, co-participation, co-creation, anything goes.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Sent out to directors of 46 museums (10 state ones, 8 state-co-run ones, 26 run by local governments, and 2 by legal entities). The whole of the survey was answered by 28 individuals (the first question: 'What is a participatory museum to you?' was responded by 33 individuals), representing respectively: 8 state museums, 8 state-co-run museums, and 17 local government-run museums. They all represent different type of collections: artistic, historical, ethnographic, varied, residential, technological, ethnographic. The responses were given by: directors in 13 cases, vice-directors in 8 cases, and by another survey-assigned individual in 7 cases. The survey was answered online on 21 March-9 April 2016 using the SurveyMonkey Platform.
- <sup>2</sup> P. Poławski, *Technologie partycypacji* [Participation Technologies], in: A. Przybylska and A. Giza (ed.), *Partycypacja obywatelska. Od teorii do praktyki społecznej* [Citizen Participation. From Theory to Social Practice], Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, Warszawa 2014, p. 30.
- <sup>3</sup> N. Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz 2010, pp. ii-iii. At <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/read/> [accessed 10 Aug. 2018]
- <sup>4</sup> N. Simon, *The Participatory...*, p. ii.
- <sup>5</sup> J. Byszewski, *Muzeum jako rzeźba społeczna* [Museum as a Social Sculpture], in: J. Byszewski, M. Parczewska, *Muzeum jako rzeźba społeczna* [Museum as a Social Sculpture], Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski, Warszawa 2012, p. 11.
- <sup>6</sup> J. Hągmajer, *Nie trzeba być utalentowanym, żeby być twórczym* [You Don't Need to Be Talented to be Creative], interview with Janusz Byszewski, Warszawski Program Edukacji Kulturalnej [http://www.wpek.pl/wpek,3,1634.html?locale=pl\\_PL](http://www.wpek.pl/wpek,3,1634.html?locale=pl_PL) [accessed: 16 April 2016].
- <sup>7</sup> P. Piotrowski, *Muzeum krytyczne* [Critical Museum], Dom Wydawniczy REBIS, Poznań 2011.
- <sup>8</sup> All the photos in the paper present various stages in the work on the 'Anything Goes' Museum Exhibition at the National Museum in Warsaw, 28 February – 8 May 2016. It has been so far the largest-scale participatory project implemented by a Polish museum.
- <sup>9</sup> Information on the Young Tate's activity from the conversation with Lindsey Fryer, head of the Educational Department at Tate Liverpool held on 18 March 2013 by the Author in relation to the preparation for the book *W poszukiwaniu nowej roli muzeum* [In Search of a New Museum Role], K. Jagodzińska, J. Strycharz (ed.), being prepared for publication.
- <sup>10</sup> The exhibition was accompanied by the catalogue: *Testing the Water: a Collection Display Selected by Young Tate*, Tate Gallery Liverpool, London 1995.
- <sup>11</sup> The exhibition was accompanied by the catalogue: *A Sense of Perspective*, Tate 2011.
- <sup>12</sup> Talk with Bożena Pysiewicz, Deputy Head at the Educational Department, MNW, held on 16 Jan. 2016 by Katarzyna Jagodzińska in preparation for the book: *W poszukiwaniu nowej...*
- <sup>13</sup> The Exhibition is accompanied by the book: *W Muzeum wszystko wolno* [Anything Goes' Museum], M. Bukowska (ed.), Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, Warszawa 2016.
- <sup>14</sup> Statement of Agnieszka Morawińska, MNW Director, during the Seminar *How Did It Happen that Anything Goes in the Museum?* held by MNW on 18 April 2016.
- <sup>15</sup> L. Karczewski, *Kłopot z partycypacją. Nowa muzeologia i agoniczna demokracja* [Problems with Participation. New Museology and Agonic Democracy], in: *Cultural Education as a Public Project?*, M. Kosińska, K. Sikorska, A. Skórzyńska (ed.), Galeria Miejska Arsenał, Poznań 2012, p. 103.
- <sup>16</sup> L. Karczewski, *Edukator, instytucja, twórczość* [Educator, Institution, Creativity], in: *Zawód: curator* [Your Job: Curator], M. Kosińska, K. Sikorska, A. Czaban (ed.), Galeria Miejska Arsenał, Poznań 2014, p. 572.

<sup>17</sup> Talk to Leszek Karczewski, head of the MSŁ Educational Department, held on 27 September 2013 by Katarzyna Jagodzińska in preparation for the book: *W poszukiwaniu nowej...*

<sup>18</sup> G. Black, *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-first Century*, Routledge, London, New York 2012, p. 3.

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Exhibition „Flucht in die Bilder? Die Künstler der Brücke im Nationalsozialismus“ / 'Escape into Art? Die Brücke Painters in the Nazi Period', Brücke-Museum in Berlin 14 April – 11 August 2019, photo N. Ash, © Brücke-Museum Berlin, courtesy of the Brücke-Museum

# MUSEUM EXHIBITS PROVENANCE STUDIES



Informational text on the wall, likely a label or brochure, providing details about the exhibition or the artifacts.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff



Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Kammendes Mädchen, 1919

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# PROVENANCE STUDIES IN POLAND\* (PART 1)

**Maria Romanowska-Zadrożna**

National Institute for Museums and Public Collections

Throughout different periods of the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Republic of Poland due to the suffered wars, invasions, or partitions, it was necessary in peace treaties or missions on a foreign territory, to undertake efforts to restitute rights to private or national property. With time, the activities forced by the situation, initially conducted in the sphere that actually lacked any deeper theoretical support, in the late nineteenth century led to isolating a peculiar methodology, the format for the description of the sought documents or objects, and finally scholarly reflection. Pursuing the rights, identification of objects and their history, effort to restore the property looted by invaders, or merely the memory of the goods that were lost in a natural way, shaped the basis for not only formal or 'quiet' requisition practices or antique searches, but also for what we call today provenance studies. These, an essential tool of every requisition, in the popular understanding have become identified with them to such a degree that such understanding seems to dominate over the autonomous provenance studies whose goal is to find out the history of an object with its legal and cultural affiliations, confirming or alternatively questioning the authenticity and the proper status.<sup>1</sup> The skill to identify objects or whole collections, placing them within the context of or in relation to old collections, yet first of all, documenting of those connections and property rights, based on consistence, diligence, and the understanding of the purpose, were decisive for the success or failure of historical requisition missions. As it is known, the first envoys of the Polish Kings: John II Casimir Vasa and John II Sobieski, were not extremely successful when, following the 'Swedish Deluge', they tried to implement the provisions of Article 9 of the Peace Treaty of Oliwa confirming the rights of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to all the archives and the Royal Library taken by the Swedes from the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> The books and the documents were essential for the proper functioning of the state. For this very reason still in the summer of 1789, Father Jan Chrzyciel Albertrandi, a former Jesuit, a historian and librarian, at the time the Gniezno and Warsaw Canon, went on such a mission as instructed

by King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski.<sup>3</sup> His trip did not yield any expected outcomes, however the manuscript he produced: *Iter Sueticum, the effect of earnestly conducted preliminary researches and analyses, only partly published in the nineteenth century, contained the register of the items he recognized as manuscripts of Polish provenance, which he ascertained through his scholarly search.*<sup>4</sup>

As for practical results, what proved far more effective were the unofficial endeavours of Prince Adam Czartoryski. In 1810, he sent Felicjan Biernacki, a trusted librarian, on a mission to Sweden; Biernacki, just like an effective diplomat, was able to win the favour of both the influential Chancellor and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Wawrzyniec Engeström, and the librarians in Stockholm and Uppsala, to return home with an abundant harvest.<sup>5</sup> In the nineteenth century, there were still trips made to Sweden;<sup>6</sup> in Swedish archives and libraries studies, which proved extensive and detailed, were conducted to search for objects and collections that had reached Sweden as the result of the Northern Wars.<sup>7</sup> However, the academic expedition to Sweden, whose goal was to retrace and describe the most precious manuscripts, incunabula, and prints of Polish provenance, was organized by the Academy of Learning only after years of preparatory works, namely in 1911, this actually following the example of Moravian activity from half a century before.<sup>8</sup> Ludwik Birkenmajer, Eugeniusz Barwiński, and Jan Łoś participated in it, while the report containing the descriptions of 205 manuscripts was printed in 1914.<sup>9</sup> An important research into library collections of Polish provenance in Sweden was later conducted just before WW II by Czesław Pilichowski,<sup>10</sup> while following the war by Adam Heymowski and Józef Trypućko,<sup>11</sup> and has recently been carried out by Michał Spandowski.<sup>12</sup> This concisely outlined collective portrait of scholars searching in Swedish collections for objects from Poland would be far from complete without two important individuals, namely Henryk Bukowski and Zygmunt Łakociński. A January insurgent, political exile, and owner of an antique shop (from 1870), Bukowski passionately searched for items that came from Poland or were Poland-affiliated among those offered





1. Book with a supralibros of Władysław IV Vasa from the collection of the National Library in Warsaw, after *Orzeł i trzy korony. Sąsiedztwo polsko-szwedzkie nad Bałtykiem w epoce nowożytnej (XVI–XVIII wiek)*, Warsaw 2002, pp. 183–184, pos. II. 80



2. Per Krafft the Elder, *Portrait of John Baptist Albertrandi* from 1790, after *Orzeł i trzy korony. Sąsiedztwo polsko-szwedzkie nad Bałtykiem w epoce nowożytnej (XVI–XVIII wiek)*, Warsaw 2002, p. 183, pos. II. 80

to him for sale, which he would buy and donate to Polish academic and cultural institutions. In the 1960s and 1970s, the art historian Łakociński published his research into works of Polish provenance in Swedish collections, in order to provide, as he claimed, invaluable portion of information on the peregrinations and annihilation of Polish monuments, in order to show their history in Sweden.<sup>13</sup>

The Swedish lesson was extremely important for the development of Polish historical research, particularly provenance studies, though in view of the practical outcome, namely requisition, it remained far from impressive. It was not, however, either wasted or the only lesson. Following the third partition, the partitioning powers systematically looted Polish treasuries, archives, and libraries, displacing priceless objects and historic collections, mainly from the royal ones. Slowly, but inevitably, the awareness was growing of the consequences of the loss of material heritage, with which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its peoples were losing an essential factor of community and identity consolidation. Caring for national mementoes was becoming important. A substantiated provenance of a book or an object, also legendary, added value to the objects, and prestige to the collections. Therefore, in the first Polish museums in Puławy and Wilanów, next to the most exquisite works of European art, mementoes of Polish monarchs and personalities of the national life were lovingly collected, to

be in due course proudly displayed. The Temple of the Sybil, i.e. the temple of national mementoes, and of the crucial element of its furnishing, namely the Royal Casket, founded by Izabella Czartoryska in Puławy, enjoyed a growing fame. The desire to preserve the testimony to the former grandeur of the nation and the state, made the exiles dispersed throughout the world turn into wonderful patrons of art and sciences, great but also modest collectors, most willing to purchase and collect Polonica.

However, from the very first years of the loss of sovereignty, in order to save the material particles of heritage, not just good will, broad knowledge, and passionate sentiment were needed, but also some daring acts. In 1795, such were risked by Tadeusz Czacki when the Crown Archives, the royal collections, and the Załuski National Library were liquidated, and when they were transported to the capital of the Russian Empire. While they were unpacked in St Petersburg, he would fish out the most precious specimens of the old Polish collections, and resorting to all the possible means: legal and illegal, he would acquire them for his own collection at Poryck, preserving them in this way for the homeland and native science.<sup>14</sup> Thanks to these unofficial ‘quiet’ requisitions, and Czacki’s fascination with the history of Poland, as well as his passion for national mementoes (among them relics of the bones of Boleslaus the Brave), invaluable illuminated

manuscripts have survived in Polish collections, thanks to having lived in their history that important, as much as brief, Poryck episode.

Throughout the partition period, the memory of the ancestors' legacy consolidated the need to cooperate in committees and associations tracing, documenting, conserving, and popularizing monuments connected with Polish culture. The works of the then established numerous associations: dealing with sciences, fine arts, tourism, among them particularly the Society for the Protection of the Monuments of the Past (TONZP), continue to provide knowledge and inspiration to Polish and not only Polish academics.<sup>15</sup> In the atmosphere of a patriotic revival inspiring commitment to the work for the nation, priceless documenting works were created, such as Edward Chwalewik's *Polish Collections*, serving as a compendium of Polish collections, both domestically and abroad, whose first edition took place in 1916,<sup>16</sup> the second in 1926–1927,<sup>17</sup> and the last in 1991.<sup>18</sup> Ewa Manikowska called it *the most important and to-date the only comprehensive attempt at dealing with the phenomenon of Polish collecting*, at the same time pointing to the dual character of the work: on the one hand listing the losses the Polish people suffered in WW I,<sup>19</sup> on the other the manifestation of the *national culture roots*, shown from the perspective of the phenomenon of Polish collecting.<sup>20</sup> However, when mentioning these two aspects, it cannot be overlooked how Chwalewik attempted to substantiate the provenance of the most valuable works and collections. Undeniably, the list in its early version served as a tool the author applied, and which he developed when negotiating Article 9 of the Peace of Riga within the Special Mixed Committee; beyond that date, Chwalewik did not renounce his research into collections.<sup>21</sup>

The crowning of the *works of the Requisition Committee [...] and their logical consequence*<sup>22</sup> was seen by the contemporary in the monumental *Gallery of Stanislaus Augustus* by Tadeusz Mańkowski published in 1932.<sup>23</sup> This is precisely how five years prior to its publication Ludwik Bernacki, Director of the National Ossoliński Institute in Lvov described the work in his letter to Edward Kuntze, chairman of the Polish Requisition Committee, asking the addressee to support the efforts to win a subsidy from the National Culture Fund to publish the work. Its preparation was a project that required quite substantial financing by the author, as well as diligent studies, first of all laborious provenance research whose proof can be found in Mańkowski's file that has been preserved.<sup>24</sup>

In the inter-war period, information on provenance, if only in an abbreviated form, formed part of a standard description of objects both in the catalogues of collections and exhibitions, as well as of auction houses. However, in Poland the mentions of the object provenance bore a peculiar significance in view of the experience of Polish history and reality, of the memory of the loss of many collections, of the newly regained independence, and the lesson learnt in the course of requisition activities. The notes recalled mainly the donors, less rarely the source of the purchase; meanwhile, in the background the heated discussion on the shape of Polish museology was conducted, and the interest in the national heritage did not weaken. When in 1930 information on museums



3. Royal Casket symbolically placed on the cover of *Wzory sztuki średniowiecznej i z epoki odrodzenia po koniec wieku XVII w dawnej Polsce* wydane przez Alexandrę Przedzieckiego i Edwarda Rastawieckiego, Warsaw 1860–1869

was published in 'Nauka Polska', special attention was paid to the degree to which the collections were orderly arranged and catalogued.<sup>25</sup> A series of catalogues of the most precious works kept at the largest Polish museums, with information on their provenance and acquisition, were published.<sup>26</sup> Articles dealing with old, important or new private collections were released in periodicals.<sup>27</sup> Donors eagerly made their donations, collectors offered their collections for sale, exhibitions of new acquisitions were made, all these being reflected in the record and in inventories. Władysław Tomkiewicz could not expect that when starting his research into the Polonica in Germany, when collecting on cards material on painting, sculpture, militaria, and decorative art, several or some dozen years later, following the end of WW II, he would provide arguments in the debate on alternative requisition.<sup>28</sup>

In 1939, at the moment of the outbreak of WW II, Polish art historians and museum professionals entered a tough, devastating time of German occupation. They had to face extraordinary challenges, but were sustained by their requisition experience and the tradition of Polish provenance studies, and at least on the level of recording the events and objects they were ready to prevent the looting conducted by the Reich functionaries. Already in November 1939, at the instigation of the former Minister of Industry and Commerce Antoni Olszewski, a clandestine Requisition and Compensation Committee was formed,





4. The third level of the *Royal Casket*, photograph by S.S.Komornicki 1939, after E. Czepielowa, Z. Żygulski Jr., *Losy Szkatuły Królewskiej z puławskiej Świątyni Sybilli*, 'Valuable, Priceless, Lost' 1998, issue 2 (8), p. 18, il. 10

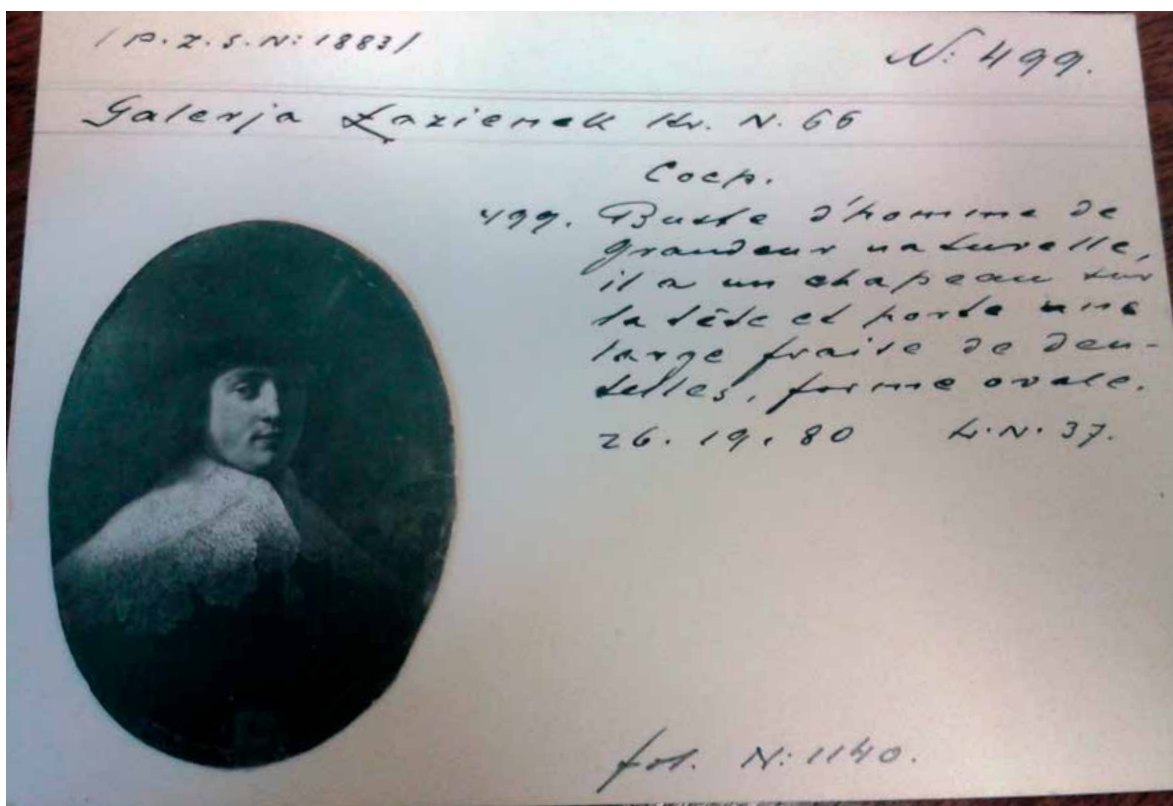
this in mid-1941 incorporated into the Government Delegation for Poland as a Department of Liquidation of War Losses. Olszewski, who in 1921–22 had headed the Polish Delegation for the Mixed Commissions: of Re-Evacuation and Special in Moscow, which negotiated the mode of the return of the works of art looted from Poland by Soviet Russia, and the possible alternative requisition for the damaged goods, was aware of how urgent it was to promptly register war losses and later looting. He grouped around him a number of outstanding specialists, museum professionals, art historians, librarians, and archivists, perfectly familiar with the then Polish collections, also private and Church ones.<sup>29</sup> The efforts undertaken in the 'struggle for cultural heritage', both within Poland and in exile, focused on collecting information, secretly transferring it abroad, and having it published there.

Thanks to the constant inflow of reports, Karol Estreicher, heading the Office for Requisition of Cultural Losses at the Ministry of Congress Works at the Polish Government in Exile, worked out a model file of war losses. With time, the Allies derived from his experience.<sup>30</sup> The *Cultural Losses of Poland*<sup>31</sup> published by Estreicher in 1944, has to date been used by Polish and foreign scholars as the source of provenance studies, and finally 60 years later had its Polish edition.<sup>32</sup> After the war the documentation collected in Poland and abroad: conservators' notes, event diaries, reports, publications, and questionnaires on war losses,

sent out by the Ministry of Culture and Art, allowed to carry out requisition activities, and to elaborate and publish catalogues of losses by the Office for the Requisition and Compensation.<sup>33</sup> The documentation of the period found in the Archives of Modern Records is used for both research and requisition.

After WW II, the Communist authorities and their agencies were quite nonchalant about property rights. Landowners with their estates being parcelled out<sup>34</sup> were losing the wealth accumulated through generations, this including the remains of collections that had been amassed over centuries, which, as Bolesław Bierunt described in his radio address of 31 December 1944, *had been selfishly possessed by landowners*.<sup>35</sup> The former German and abandoned property, including the furnishing of the churches on the Western and Northern Territories, were transported to the Museum Repositories of the Ministry of Culture and Art established by the General Authorities for Museum and Collection Protection. Subsequently, from the repositories they were transferred to museums, offices, or other storages. In 1954, the Central Museum Repository of the Ministry of Culture and Art was founded; it operated until 1976 in the Kozłówka Palace. It was there that next to the purchased works of contemporary artists, also the remains from the closed down repositories were transferred. The objects that resulted from the repatriation of the lost Eastern Borderlands and the cultural heritage





Nr. 1895. wymiarowy z galerji Ła-  
zienek Nr. 20. Exmilitaria w Peters-  
burgu. (N. Kataloga Erms. 1842.) -  
Reprodukowany w r. 1928 - zrod-  
lony i opisany do Jan. Zbiornik  
Pamiętny pod N: 1883. - Nr.  
1929/30 na wystawie reprodakcyjnej  
w Nowybranie - reprodukowany -  
w katalogu wystawy. -  
Reprodukowany w *Utworach 2 w  
Kunst. Rembrandt. T. II. r. 1909  
str. 195. -*

5. and 5a. Note from a register of paintings from the collection of Stanisław August written by Tadeusz Mańkowski: *Portrait of a young man* from the work-  
shop of Rembrandt (face) together with provenance described (reverse)

26. ZAMEK KR. WARSZAWA.

✓ 190	✓ 442	✓ 1168	✓ 1765	201	
✓ 191	✓ 443	✓ 1169	✓ 1766	1081	nieznajca nr 37.C
✓ 192	✓ 560	✓ 1170	✓ 1896		
✓ 193	✓ 867	✓ 1171	✓ 1897		
✓ 196	✓ 868	✓ 1172	✓ 1898		
✓ 197	✓ 869	✓ 1173	✓ 1899		
✓ 423	✓ 870	✓ 1174	✓ 1971		
✓ 424	✓ 979	✓ 1175	✓ 1972		
✓ 425	✓ 1011	✓ 1176	✓ 1973		
✓ 428	✓ 1157	✓ 1177	✓ 1974		
✓ 429	✓ 1158	✓ 1178	✓ 1975		
✓ 430	✓ 1159	✓ 1179	✓ 2130		
✓ 432	✓ 1160	✓ 1180	✓ 2235		
✓ 433	✓ 1161	✓ 1181	2249	4-7.	
✓ 435	✓ 1162	✓ 1182			
✓ 436	✓ 1163	✓ 1183			
✓ 437	✓ 1164	✓ 1184			
✓ 438	✓ 1165	✓ 1185			
✓ 439	✓ 1166	✓ 1186			
✓ 441	✓ 1167	✓ 1187			

6. Note from a register of paintings from the collection of Stanisław August written by Tadeusz Mańkowski: a list of paintings from the Gallery of Stanisław August which were housed in the Royal Castle in Warsaw during the war

that were property of individuals or institutions from the countries occupied by Germany in the course of WW II, were brought to museums as requisition. According to Lidia Karecka, only a part of the monuments brought as a result of the requisition campaign came from the pre-war collections of Polish museums.<sup>36</sup> Some artworks, although previously belonging to Polish collections, would return unidentified.<sup>37</sup> In source literature we can find numerous mentions of works of art that were lent to various offices, but disappeared together with the Minister leaving the office, or were presented as gifts to the Comrades from fraternal nations without the necessary formalities. There were also cases when returned works that were brought to museums were not ticked off, or upon their return they were listed in inventories under a new number.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, pre-war and war deposits were entered into inventory books, which obviously increased the chaos, and for many works could mean the loss of their history. Let us use here as an example the history of a part of the collection of the Poznan Society of the Friends of Learning (PTPN), gathered at the Mielżyński Museum, the part that had been deposited at the Greater Poland Museum in Poznan in the 1920s and 30s. According to Dorota Suchocka, the works taken over by the Museum after WW II, entered a temporary inventory, run in 1945–51, and from 1951 they were entered into the Museum inventory proper. Despite assigning inventory numbers of the National Museum in

Poznan to these pieces, which *did not reflect the actual state of things [...], the objects preserved to this day are [...]* PTPN property, except for several which disappeared during the war and were later purchased in the antiquarian market by the National Museum in Poznan.<sup>39</sup>

Following its establishment in April 1950, the DESA state-run enterprise dealing with trade in art and antique pieces on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Art, was used to sell in the market works that came from repositories, but *did not have any museum value*. Today doubts are often raised whether some of the works registered today as lost, did not ‘pass’ through that institution.

The peculiar attitude of the Communist authorities to property rights and the war, as well as post-war relocation of hundreds of thousands of art works and objects of artistic craftsmanship did not benefit the provenance research. It was never, however, forgotten that such studies were essential and indispensable in the workshop and environments of art historians or historians. What prevailed, was the trivial truth that works created collections, while collections, in their turn, were telling the story of the works. The symptoms of remaining faithful to a good workshop in this respect can be observed in many studies, if only to mention the publications of Zdzisław Żygulski Jr., Bożena Majewska-Maszkowska, or Andrzej Ryszkiewicz.<sup>40</sup> Ryszkiewicz even elaborated a card catalogue of collectors, containing a characterization of collections and their



Nr inw:	Dział: MALARSTWO
Nr Fund: 222.	Szkoła: Holenderksa
Kliska: 75.	Autor: Goyen, Jan van (1596-1656)
Fot: 1.	
Zamek: II.p. Gabinet w baszcie duńskiej	Opis: Krajobraz z zamkiem na wzniesieniu nad wodą.
Magazyn:	Sygn: V.G.1651 (na wodzie pod łódką)
Fundacja	Techn: Olej.na desce
L. hr. Pinińskiego	Wym: 62.5 x 85.
1934.	Stan zach: Szpara wzdłuż spojenia desek.

Uwagi: Według prof. Morelowskiego jedno z najlepszych dzieł tego malarza.-Wystawiony na wystawie mistrzów dawnych we Lwowie w 1911r.-Repr.w kat.te. wyst.Nr.23.Repr.w kat.Zbior.Wawel.Str.31.

7. Registry note of the painting from the donation by the Leon Piniński Wawel Foundation in the National State Collections in Wawel

bibliography. It is now kept at the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections (NIMOZ) and shared online.<sup>41</sup> The collections' catalogue from the 1970s and 1980s, elaborated by Bożena Steinborn, were extremely meticulous, and precise in provenance ascertainment. In the mid-1980s, a multi-volume publication titled *Materials for the History of Residences*, a monumental compendium on residences on the Eastern Borderlands by Roman Afanazy started appearing.<sup>42</sup> The publication containing a large number of invaluable information on old artistic collections prompted the effort to extend and gain a more in-depth knowledge of the history of collecting in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Republic of Poland, as well as of the provenance of objects that came from historic collections. A number of precious papers on the topic have been published, to name only those by Konrad Ajewski,<sup>43</sup> Ewa Manikowska,<sup>44</sup> or Katarzyna Mikocka-Rachubowa.<sup>45</sup>

Following the transition period started in Poland in 1989, which occurred throughout all East-Central Europe, the states which eagerly wanted to embrace freedom, as well as their museum institutions, suddenly faced a series of major claims, mainly by the descendants of the Jewish Holocaust victims. The transformation inspired them with hope to resolve the questions of material losses their relatives had suffered as a result of the Holocaust. In many countries, Poland included, the question of war plundering was resumed, liberating the previously restricted provenance studies. Such studies began to serve as tools

helpful in justifying or questioning claims. In the museum activity in the USA and almost all over Europe they gained priority importance; also in Poland, more attention was paid to them. In June 1990, the position of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad was established, and the Bureau to serve it was subsequently founded.<sup>46</sup> Polish experts: lawyers, librarians, archivists, art historians, museum professionals, and specialists in many other spheres focused on the period of WW II, lootings, the relocation of cultural goods, and liquidation of war losses. Similar issues in relation to other states gradually became subject of subsequent symposia and conferences held in Poland and worldwide, and participated by Polish experts.

The ground for high-level meetings and binding international agreements was prepared by two large international conferences: *The Spoils of War* in New York in 1995 and *In Nazi Gold* held in London in December 1997. In the New York Conference proceedings, the papers by Jan Pruszyński<sup>47</sup> and Wojciech Kowalski<sup>48</sup> were also published; Wojciech Kowalski participated in both events as Poland's representative and took the floor in both. In New York and in London the positions of respective nations were presented, and so were their war and post-war experiences with respect to the losses and their liquidation; furthermore, basic concepts and questions essential for further work were agreed. In view of the increasing wave of claims and conducting of a broad provenance research with respect to the art works of unknown provenance



MUZEUUM NARODOWE W WARSZAWIE

INWENTARZ

nr	Opis	Wzrost	Podobnie	UWAGI
1316	Karol Wilhelm Jessen von F... malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316
1316a	Fryderyk Leopold Buchner, 1770-1800 malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316a	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316a
1316b	Karol Wilhelm Jessen von F... malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316b	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316b
1316c	Fryderyk Leopold Buchner, 1770-1800 malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316c	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316c
1316d	Karol Wilhelm Jessen von F... malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316d	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316d
1316e	Fryderyk Leopold Buchner, 1770-1800 malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316e	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316e
1316f	Karol Wilhelm Jessen von F... malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316f	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316f
1316g	Fryderyk Leopold Buchner, 1770-1800 malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316g	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316g
1316h	Karol Wilhelm Jessen von F... malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316h	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316h
1316i	Fryderyk Leopold Buchner, 1770-1800 malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316i	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316i
1316j	Karol Wilhelm Jessen von F... malow. 1770-1800 w stylu polski w kolorze ciemnym, na podłożu białym na płótnie. 100 x 100 cm. nr 1316j	1770-1800		Wzrost 1770-1800 nr 1316j

*precyzyjnie  
pochodzenie do P.P.U.  
DESA na podstawie  
zdjęć T. S.*

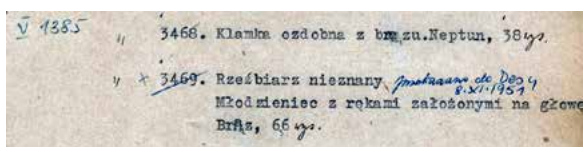
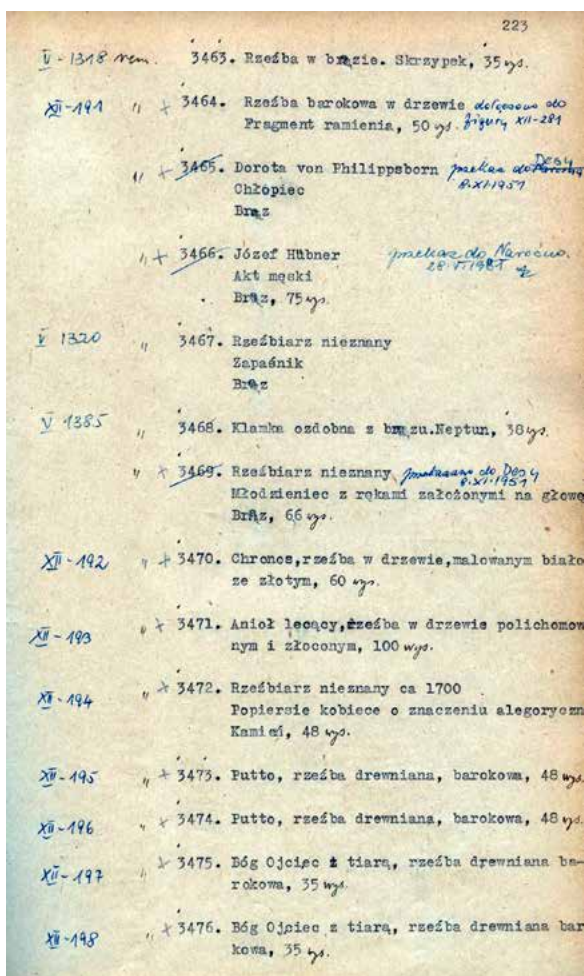
8. and 8a. Page from inventory book of the National Museum in Warsaw, with some object crossed out and additional notes about their transfer to DESA and a detail of the page

in museum collections the real breakthrough was the 1998 Washington Conference which directly tackled the question of the property lost during the Holocaust. During the Conference the principles defining the framework for handling *the works of art confiscated by the Nazis and not restored* were formulated.<sup>49</sup> Two similarly important conferences on the *property lost in the Holocaust* were held in Vilnius in 2000<sup>50</sup> and in Prague and Terezin in 2009.<sup>51</sup> Their concluding declarations were also signed by the Polish government.<sup>52</sup> The Terezin Declaration urged to facilitate the process of the restitution of Jewish property taken over after WW II. Another important claim was the call to preserve the integrity of the collection of objects left after the prisoners in martyrdom museums established on the places of former German concentration camps spread throughout Europe. There had been cases

of heirs claiming the restoration of objects that once belonged to prisoners or were produced by them, e.g. drawings. The Conference proceedings included the addresses of Władysław Bartoszewski<sup>53</sup> and Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz.<sup>54</sup> The meeting in Prague had been preceded by three international conferences organized by the Centre for Documentation of Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II Victims,<sup>55</sup> founded by the Czech Academy of Sciences in 2001. Those had been organized every two years in Brno (2003)<sup>56</sup>, Cesky Krumlov (2005),<sup>57</sup> and Liberec (2007)<sup>58</sup>, and their focus was documentation, identification, and restitution of cultural goods of the victims of WW II. Those conferences too were participated by Poland's representatives.<sup>59</sup>

Similar meetings on war losses, their documentation, and restoration, were organized by ministries of culture and of foreign affairs. In April 1998, the Symposium *Aftermath of the War* was held by the Warsaw Section of the Art Historians Association and the Bureau of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad. It served as the opportunity to remind of the great losses of large collections and the collections of Polish aristocracy, of which many had ceased to exist.<sup>60</sup> Only one paper by Magdalena Sieramska spoke of the losses of Jewish cult art: it provided information on the size of the looting, destruction, and transport direction; it also presented the post-war history of some objects, for example from the no longer extant Warsaw Mathias Bersohn Museum.<sup>61</sup> The fact that in 2002, the USA regained a sixteenth-century silk Persian tapestry from the private collection of the Czartoryski Prince in Cracow<sup>62</sup> prompted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to organize a conference on provenance studies in the context of war losses; this was held at the National Museum in Warsaw and the Czartoryski Prince Museum in Cracow. A certain historically conditioned dissonance was then revealed. The experience of USA citizens who had never suffered any war occupation or looting differed significantly from that of Poles who had painfully suffered both. This also caused a different view on the looted art works. It was an extremely moving discovery for American museum professionals that their museums could feature objects that had once belonged to Holocaust victims or Polish aristocracy. One of the Conference speakers was Anna Walsh, co-author of the text book on provenance studies,<sup>63</sup> who presenting it shared her experience as for research into history of museum exhibits of unknown provenance conducted by The American Association of Museums (currently The American Alliance of Museums). Polish researchers, in turn, presented the methods they used to ascertain the history of a work lost from a Polish collection. At that stage what they were doing consisted mainly in restoring the memory of Polish war losses, which consisted in reconstructing after many years the work of their senior colleagues from the occupation years and the post-war activity of the Bureau for Requisition and Reparations, not thinking as yet of checking museum resources for works of unknown provenance.

Indeed, still some time had to pass before the issue of provenance research was undertaken in Poland, and before the Forum for Dispersed Cultural Heritage was



9. and 9a. Page from a registry of the National Museum in Wrocław, with some objects crossed out, and additional notes about their transfer to depository in Narożno palace or to DESA (and a detail)

established at the Museum Committee of the Art Historians Association at the instigation of Cieślińska-Lobkowicz.<sup>64</sup> Inspired by the individuals involved with the Forum, the

Stefan Batory Foundation held international conferences and symposia in 2003–5. The debate was focused not only on the problem of war losses, but also of art works taken over by the Communist authorities following the war; moreover, the question of so-called orphan works in museum collections was raised. The conferences yielded three publications: 1. *Displaced Cultural Assets. The Case of Western Europe and the Problems of East-Central European Countries in the Twentieth Century*, dealing with property looted or displaced during WW II, as well as the situations and legal regulations in East-Central European Countries following 1989;<sup>65</sup> 2. *Cultural Heritage and Property Issues: the Experience of Central Europe after 1989*, on property of art works taken over by the state under Communism, and comparisons to the solutions valid in different countries, dealing with the property of private individuals, social organizations, Churches, and religious associations;<sup>66</sup> *Property and Cultural Heritage* dedicated to the ownership issues of cultural heritage in Poland and Europe following 1989 and the questions of reprivatization.<sup>67</sup>

In the atmosphere of the debate on orphan works,<sup>68</sup> the called for legal obligation to conduct provenance research,<sup>69</sup> as a result of the resolutions of the Prague Conference in 2009, Tomasz Merta, Deputy-Minister, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, founded a Team of Experts in Polish museums to research Jewish assets, which concluded its works in 2011.<sup>70</sup> The team worked out a set of useful guidelines and information for the individuals who would be willing to study provenance of works in the context of the lost Jewish property, a questionnaire that would allow the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage to realize the extent of this phenomenon, and a letter – message to museum professionals, motivating them to conduct such research. According to the initial plans, the materials were to be sent out to museums, and finally they were published in the ‘Muzealnictwo’ Annual No. 53<sup>71</sup> as well as on the NIMOZ website<sup>72</sup> for easy access by anyone concerned.

A major caesura in provenance studies is marked by 2010 when the National Museum in Warsaw decided to establish the position for a professional to conduct provenance studies, while a post-graduate programme including provenance studies was launched at Warsaw University. Moreover, the number of published papers dedicated to such studies has increased: they deal both with methodological and legal issues. This, however, will be the topic of the second part of the present article to be published in ‘Muzealnictwo’ No. 58 in 2017.

**Abstract:** The article complements the article *Provenance Studies in Europe and the USA* published in issue 56 of the ‘Muzealnictwo’ Annual in 2015. Emphasis is placed on the historical conditioning of Polish provenance studies stimulated by restoration activities in various periods of Polish history, from the Swedish invasion till WWII, and the post-war period of liquidating its effects. Provenance studies have autonomous aims and characters; nevertheless, their application in restoration activities have led them to be perceived as

a way of claiming rights to lost heritage and the process of recovering it. Polish history and traditions regarding seeking objects looted in Poland by foreign armies and administrations have resulted in marking clear differences in comparing American and Polish attitudes towards the goals and methodology of provenance studies. Museum professionals from the USA – a country which since proclaiming its independence has not experienced any invasions, and thus any looting by any foreign state – have stated with regret that American museum collections

might have received objects which had lost their history and identity as a result of Germany's criminal policies and war operations in 1933–1945. Faced with potential claims, they elaborated methods of provenance studies on works of unknown origin. Those solutions have become a model which was later popularised worldwide, something which is confirmed by the effects of international conferences and the agreements concluded therein. However, for Polish museum professionals, studying provenance has become above all a tool for documenting wartime losses from Polish museums and proving their potential claims. Attempts to solve problems resulting from the post-war

displacement of works of art and scattering historical collections, i.e. issues connected with the so-called post-court and church property, moved to museum and post-Jewish institutions after the war, fell by the wayside. A proof of the compromise being achieved between these two approaches, and a breakthrough in thinking about these collections, was the appointment in Poland of a Team of Experts on provenance studies in Polish museums regarding post-Jewish property, whose task was to draw up guidelines for museum professionals researching the property of Holocaust victims as well as to prepare a questionnaire to assess the scale of the phenomenon.

**Keywords:** provenance studies, war losses, requisition, restitution of cultural goods, team of experts, provenance, conference.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The present paper is the continuation and completion of the article: M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Provenance Studies in Europe and the USA*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2015, No. 56, pp. 224-238. For the sake of remembering, in the ICOM ethics code, Stanisław Waltoś defined provenance as: *full history of an object, also containing information on the history of its ownership title, from the time of its making or discovering, thanks to which its authenticity and proper state can be ascertained* – S. Waltoś, *Kodeks etyki ICOM dla muzealników [ICOM Code of Ethics for Museum Professionals]*, Wolters Kluwer Polska, Warszawa-Kraków 2009, p. 32.
- <sup>2</sup> In 1660, Gotfryd von Schröer, in 1680–82 Colonel Jan Bernik; the actual results of the unofficial mission of Józef Andrzej Żałuski in 1730 are unknown – E. Barwiński, L. Birkenmajer, J. Łoś, *Sprawozdanie z poszukiwań w Szwecji dokonanych z ramienia Akademii Umiejętności [Report on the Search Conducted in Sweden on Behalf of the Academy of Learning]*, Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków 1914, pp. XII, XIII; C. Pilichowski, *Straty bibliotek i archiwów polskich podczas szwedzkiego 'Potopu' 1655–1660 [Losses of Polish Libraries and Archives during the Swedish 'Deluge' 1655–50]*, in: *Polska w okresie drugiej wojny północnej, 1655–1660 [Poland During the Second Northern War 1655–60]*, Vol. 2, Debates, PWN, Warszawa 1957, pp. 451-479; M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Grabieże szwedzkie w Polsce (2) Próby rewindykacji i prowadzone badania, [Swedish Looting in Poland (2) Attempts at Requisition and Conducted Research]*, *Cenne, Bezcenne/Utracone'* 2005, No. 4 (45), pp. 31-33.
- <sup>3</sup> Albertrandi accompanied the envoy Jerzy Michał Potocki – Z. Anusik, *Misja polska w Sztokholmie w latach 1789–1795 [Polish Mission to Stockholm in 1789–95]*, Łódź 1993, Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego; C. Pilichowski, *Straty bibliotek i archiwów...*, p. 476; E. Barwiński, L. Birkenmajer, J. Łoś, *Sprawozdanie z poszukiwań...*, pp. XIII, XIV; M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Grabieże szwedzkie w...*, p. 32.
- <sup>4</sup> Albertrandi takes a great credit for making a copy of the documents and books found in the libraries – E. Barwiński, L. Birkenmajer, J. Łoś, *Sprawozdanie z poszukiwań...*, s. XIII, XIV.
- <sup>5</sup> C. Pilichowski, *Straty bibliotek i archiwów...*, pp. 476, 477; E. Barwiński, L. Birkenmajer, J. Łoś, *Sprawozdanie z poszukiwań...*, pp. XIV-XVII.
- <sup>6</sup> See e.g.: A. Przeździecki, *Szwecja, wspomnienia jesienne z roku 1833 [Sweden, Autumn Memoirs from 1833]*, Drukarnia Łątkiewicza, Warszawa 1836, E. Tyszkiewicz, *Listy o Szwecji [Letters about Sweden]*, Wilno 1846, J. Zawadzki (with the use of Albertrandi's manuscript).
- <sup>7</sup> E. Barwiński, L. Birkenmajer, J. Łoś, *Sprawozdanie z poszukiwań...*, p. XIX.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, See: B. Dudik, *Forschungen in Schweden für Mährens Geschichte*, Carl Winiker, Brünn 1852.
- <sup>9</sup> They were accompanied by Aleksander Birkenmajer, and at their destination supported by Isak Gustaf Collijn, Director of the Uppsala University Library, *Ibid.*, pp. XIX-XXVII.
- <sup>10</sup> C. Pilichowski, *Straty bibliotek i archiwów...*, pp. 451-479.
- <sup>11</sup> J. Trypućko, *Bibliografi över svenska polonica 1918–1939*, Slaviska institutionen vid Uppsala Universitet, Uppsala 1955; *idem*, *Polonica vetera Upsaliensia. Catalogue des imprimés polonais ou concernant la Pologne des XV<sup>e</sup>, XV<sup>e</sup>, Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala 1958*; See: *The Catalogue of the Book Collection of the Jesuit College in Braniewo Held at the University Library in Uppsala*, Vols. 1-3, J. Trypućko (introd., manuscripts, incunabula), M. Spandowski (ext. a. compl.), M. Spandowski, S. Szyller (ed.), K. Diehl (transl.), Biblioteka Narodowa, Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, Warszawa, Uppsala 2007
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup> Z. Łakociński, *Polonica svecana artistica*, 'Rocznik Historii Sztuki' 1962, Vol. 3, pp. 219-261; *idem*, *Magnus Stenbock w Polsce. Przyczynek do historii szwedzkich zdobyczy w czasie wojny północnej [Magnus Stenbock in Poland. Contribution to the History of Swedish Spoils During the Northern War]*, St, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wydaw. PAN, Wrocław 1967; Z. Łakociński, *Polonica svecana artistica*, 'Źródła do Dziejów Sztuki Polskiej', Vol. 17, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1979.
- <sup>14</sup> P. Bańkowski, *Archiwum Stanisława Augusta. Monografia archiwoznawcza [Stanislaus Augustus' Archive. Archival Study Monograph]*, PWN, Warszawa 1958, pp. 82-91; J. Zathej, *Katalog rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Kórnickiej [Catalogue of Mediaeval Manuscripts in the Kórnik Library]*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wydaw. PAN, Wrocław 1963, pp. XXXIV, XXXV.
- <sup>15</sup> If only for the invaluable collection of TonZP photographs, kept at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw – See: *Archiwa wizualne dziedzictwa kulturowego. Towarzystwo Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości [Visual Archives of Cultural Heritage. Society for the Protection of the Monuments of the Past]*, E. Manikowska, P. J. Jamski (ed.), IS PAN, Warszawa 2014; *Polskie dziedzictwo kulturowe u progu niepodległości. Wokół Towarzystwa Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości [Polish Cultural Heritage at the Threshold of Independence. On the Society for the Protection of the Monuments of the Past]*, E. Manikowska, P. [J.] Jamski (red.), MKiDN, IS PAN, Warszawa 2010.
- <sup>16</sup> E. Chwalewik, *Zbiory polskie, archiwa, biblioteki, gabinety, galerie, muzea i inne zbiory pamiątek przeszłości w ojczyźnie i na obczyźnie w zestawieniu alfabetycznym według miejscowości [Polish Collections, Archives, Libraries, Cabinets, Galleries, Museums, and Other Collections of the Mementoes of the*



*Past in Homeland and Abroad Presented Alphabetically as for Locations*], subsidised by the J. Mianowski Assistance Fund for Individuals Working in the Field of Science, Warszawa 1916.

- <sup>17</sup>Idem, *Zbiory polskie, archiwa, biblioteki, gabinety, galerje, muzea i inne zbiory pamiątek przeszłości w ojczyźnie i na obczyźnie w porządku alfabetycznym według miejscowości ułożone* [Polish Collections, Archives, Libraries, Cabinets, Galleries, Museums, and Other Collections of the Mementoes of the Past in Homeland and Abroad Presented Alphabetically as for Locations], Wydaw. J. Mortkowicza, Warszawa 1926–27.
- <sup>18</sup>Idem, *Zbiory polskie, archiwa, biblioteki, gabinety, galerje, muzea i inne zbiory pamiątek przeszłości w ojczyźnie i na obczyźnie w porządku alfabetycznym według miejscowości ułożone* [Polish Collections, Archives, Libraries, Cabinets, Galleries, Museums, and Other Collections of the Mementoes of the Past in Homeland and Abroad Presented Alphabetically as for Locations], KAW, Kraków 1991.
- <sup>19</sup>Almost on every page the following notices can be found: *robbed by the Honvéds, destroyed during the world war, destroyed by the Bolsheviks, artistic collections almost entirely destroyed by the Bolsheviks, plundered at the end of 1917 and finally devastated by the Ukrainians: in the 1918 fire of precious Polish prints; old china and glass broken by the Moskals; destroyed by Austrian troops; etc.* – *Ibid.* pp. 111, 115, 116, 121, 132, 133, 135, 138.
- <sup>20</sup>E. Manikowska, *W stronę muzeum narodowego. Kolekcje i budowa polskiej tożsamości kulturowej na progu niepodległości* [Towards a National Museum. Collections and Consolidation of Polish Cultural Identity at the Threshold of Independence], in: *Miłośnictwo rzeczy. Studia z historii kolekcjonerstwa na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku* [Love of Things. Studies in the History of Collecting on the Polish Soil in the Nineteenth Century], K. Kludkiewicz, M. Mencfel (ed.), NIMOSZ, Warszawa 2014, pp. 69–70.
- <sup>21</sup>He continued them even during the German occupation, and donated the surviving handwritten notes from 1935–54 to the National Library in Warsaw, Ms. 10505 I – E. Chwalewik, *Zbiory polskie. Kartoteka uzupełnień* [Polish Collections. Completion Files], Vol. 1, [p. 1.], 1935–42, *Zbiory polskie: Kartoteka uzupełnień* [Polish Collections. Completion Files], Part. 2, [p. 1.], 1935–54.
- <sup>22</sup>Letter of Ludwik Bernacki, Director of Ossolineum, dated 29 July 1927 to Edward Kuntze, Head of the Polish Requisition Committee, after: E. Manikowska, *W stronę muzeum...*, pp. 74–75.
- <sup>23</sup>*Galerja Stanisława Augusta* [Stanislaus Augustus' Gallery], T. Mańkowski, with the contribution of Z. Batowski, K. Brokl, M. Morelowski (elab.), Wydaw. Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, Lwów 1932.
- <sup>24</sup>The file is kept at the Inventory Department of the National Museum in Warsaw.
- <sup>25</sup>S. Herbst, *Muzea i zbiory o charakterze muzealnym w Polsce* [Museums and Museum-Like Collections in Poland], in: *Materiały do spisu instytucji i towarzystw naukowych w Polsce. Suplement do t. VII* [Materials for the List of Scientific Institutions and Associations in Poland. Supplement to Vol. VII], 'Nauka Polska' 1930, Vol. XII, p. 87.
- <sup>26</sup>If only from the series *Muzea Polskie* [Polish Museums]: F. Kopera, *Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie. Wybór i opis cenniejszych zabytków* [National Museum in Cracow. Selection and Description of the Most Precious Monuments], Drukarnia Narodowa, Kraków 1933 (first edition Kraków 1923); M. Gumowski, *Muzeum Wielkopolskie w Poznaniu. Wybór i opis celniejszych zabytków oraz wybitniejszych dzieł sztuki współczesnej* [Greater Poland Museum in Poznań. Selection and Description of More Appropriate Monuments and More Outstanding Works of Contemporary Art.], Drukarnia Narodowa, Kraków 1924; B. Gembarzewski, *Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Wybór i opis cenniejszych zabytków i dzieł sztuki* [National Museum in Warsaw. Selection and Description of More Valuable Monuments and Works of Art.], Drukarnia Narodowa, Kraków 1926.
- <sup>27</sup>E.g. M. Walicki, *Nowa kolekcja warszawska* [A New Warsaw Collection], Arkady, Warszawa 1938, Fascicle 5, pp. 241–48; idem, *Ocalone dzieło zbieracza* [Collector's Preserved Work], Arkady, Warszawa 1936.
- <sup>28</sup>Władysław Tomkiewicz's material. *Polonica w Niemczech* [Polonica in Germany]. Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Cat. No. III-280.34.
- <sup>29</sup>Por. J. Pruszyński, *Dziedzictwo kultury Polski. Jego straty i ochrona prawna* [Poland's Cultural Heritage. Its Losses and Legal Protection], Kraków 2001, Zakamycze, Vol. 1, pp. 450–451; A. Eberhardt, M. Gniazdowski, T. Jaskułowski, M. Krzysztofowicz, *Szkody wyrządzone Polsce podczas II wojny światowej przez agresora niemieckiego. Historia dociekań i szacunków* [Damage Inflicted on Poland During WW II by the German Aggressor. History of Inquiries and Estimates], in: *Problem reparacji, odszkodowań i świadczeń w stosunkach polsko-niemieckich 1939–2004* [Question of Requisition, Compensation, and Benefits in Polish-German Relations], Vol. 1, *Studia*, W.M. Góralski (ed.), Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2004, pp. 15, 44; P. Majewski, *Wojna i kultura. Instytucje kultury polskiej w okupacyjnych realiach Generalnego Gubernatorstwa, 1939–1945* [War and Culture. Institutions of Polish Culture in the Occupation Realities of the General Government, 1939–1945], Wydaw. Trio, Warszawa 2005, pp. 105–107; P. Majewski, *Wojenne raporty o stratach dóbr kultury* [War Reports on the Losses of Cultural Goods], in: *Straty Warszawy 1939–1945. Raport* [Warsaw's Losses 1939–45 W. Fałkowski (ed.), Miasto Stołeczne Warszawa, Warszawa 2005, pp. 328–330, 334–343; K. Ajewski, T. Zadrożny, *Straty muzeów i kolekcji artystycznych Warszawy w latach 1939–1945* [Losses of the Museums and Artistic Collections in Warsaw in 1939–45], in: *Ibid.* pp. 565–607; N. Cieślińska-Lobkowicz, *Walka w obronie polskich dóbr kultury w czasie wojny i okupacji hitlerowskiej* [Struggle to Defend Polish Cultural Goods During the War and Nazi Occupation], 'Kronika Zamkowa' 2008, Nos 1–2 (55–56), pp. 159–177; M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Dokumentacja polskich strat wojennych i rewindykacje po 1990 roku* [Documentation of Polish War Losses and Requisition Following 1990], in: *Grabież i niszczenie dziedzictwa kultury polskiej* [Plundering and Destruction of Polish Culture Heritage], W. Kaczmarek (ed.), Muzeum Historyczne m. st. Warszawy – oddział Muzeum Woli, Warszawa 2009, pp. 35–36.
- <sup>30</sup>W. Kowalski, *Udział Karola Estreichera w alianckich przygotowaniach do restytucji dzieł sztuki zagrabionych w czasie II wojny światowej* [Contribution of Karol Estreicher to the Allies' Preparation for the Requisition of Art Works Looted During WW II], 'Muzealnictwo' 1986, No. 30, p. 27.
- <sup>31</sup>C. Estreicher, *Cultural Losses of Poland. Index of Polish Cultural Losses during the German Occupation, 1939–1944*, London 1944.
- <sup>32</sup>K. Estreicher, *Straty kultury polskiej pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1944 wraz z oryginalnymi dokumentami grabieży* [Cultural Losses of Poland during the German Occupation 1939–1944 with original documents of the Looting], Pałac Sztuki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, Kraków 2003.
- <sup>33</sup>See: M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Dokumentacja polskich strat...*, p. 41 footnote 41; *eadem*, *Introduction*, in: *Straty wojenne. Malarstwo polskie. Obrazy olejne, pastele, akwarele artystów polskich i w Polsce działających utracone w latach 1939–1945 w granicach Polski* [War Losses. Polish Painting. Oil Paintings, Pastels, Water Colours of Polish Artists and Active in Poland, Lost within Poland in 1939–45], Vol. 2, A. Tyczyńska, K. Znojewska (elab.), MKiDN, Departament Dziedzictwa Kulturowego, Warszawa 2012, pp. 13, 14, footnote 15.
- <sup>34</sup>Decree of the Polish Committee of National Liberation dated 6 September 1944 on Implementing Agrarian Reform, Journal of Laws 1944 No. 4. Item. 17.
- <sup>35</sup>AAN, DRRP, 2002/III/45, Reports, information on KRN, PKWN, p. 15, after: A. Łuczak, *Utracone decorum. Grabież dóbr kultury z majątków ziemiaństwa polskiego w Wielkopolsce w czasach okupacji niemieckiej w latach 1939–1945* [The Lost Decorum. Pillage of Cultural Goods from the Estates of the Polish Landed Gentry in Greater Poland during the German Occupation in 1939–45], Warszawa-Poznań 2011, p. 274.

- <sup>36</sup> L.M. Karecka, *Akcja rewindykacyjna w latach 1945–1950. Spór o terminologię, czy o istotę rzeczy* [Requisition Campaign in 1945–50. Dispute about the Terminology or about the Essence of Things], 'Ochrona Zabytków' 2002, Nos. 3-4, pp. 406-407. Lidia Karecka (today Kamińska) resumes the topic in the most recent issue of 'Muzealnictwo': L.M. Kamińska, *Powojenne składowiska przemieszczanych dóbr kultury w Polsce. Przyczynek do szerszego opracowania* [Post-War Repositories for Relocated Cultural Goods in Poland. Contribution to Broader Elaboration]; 'Muzealnictwo' 2016, No. 57, posted at [www.muzealnictworocznik.com](http://www.muzealnictworocznik.com).
- <sup>37</sup> A typical example of a painting of unidentified provenance is *The Adoration of the Magi*, mentioned in the previous article, by a German painter of an unknown name – M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Badania proveniencyjne w Europie...*, pp. 143, 144.
- <sup>38</sup> R. Olkowski, *O badaniu proveniencji muzealiów* [On Studying the Provenance of Museum Exhibits], 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, No. 53, p. 27.
- <sup>39</sup> D. Suchocka, *Wstęp* [Introduction], in: *Katalog dzieł malarstwa, rysunku lawowanego i rzeźby ze zbiorów poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk* [Catalogue of Painting Works, Wash Drawings, and Sculpture from the Collection of the Poznan Society of the Friends of Learning], D. Suchocka (ed.), Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, Poznań 2008, p. 8.
- <sup>40</sup> E.g. Z. Żygulski Jr., *Dzieje zbiorów Puławskich. (Świątynia Sybilli i Dom Gotycki)* [History of the Puławy Collections (Temple of the Sybil and the Gothic House), 'Rozprawy i Sprawozdania Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie' 1962, No. 7, pp. 5-265; B. Majewska-Maszkowska, *Mecenat artystyczny Izabelli z Czartoryskich Lubomirskiej 1736–1816* [Artistic Patronage of Izabella Lumbomirska née Czartoryski], Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1976; A. Vetulani, A. Ryszkiewicz, *Materiały dotyczące życia i twórczości Wojciecha Gersona* [Materials Related to the Life and Oeuvre of Wojciech Gerson], Wydaw. Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1951; A. Ryszkiewicz, *Początki handlu obrazami w środowisku warszawskim* [Beginnings of the Trade in Paintings in the Warsaw Circles], Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1953; *Idem, Kolekcjonerzy i miłośnicy* [Collectors and Enthusiasts], PWN, Warszawa 1981; *Idem, Na tropach obrazów francuskich w Polsce* [Tracing French Paintings in Poland], PWN, Warszawa 1981.
- <sup>41</sup> M. Soltysiak *O 'Katalogu Kolekcjonerów Polskich XIX i XX wieku' autorstwa Profesora Andrzeja Ryszkiewicza* [On the 'Catalogue of Polish Collectors of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries' by Professor Andrzej Ryszkiewicz], 'Muzealnictwo' 2014, No. 55, pp. 131-134.
- <sup>42</sup> B. Steinborn, *Catalog of Dutch painting collections*, National Museum in Wrocław, Wrocław 1973; eadem, *Catalog of painting collections of Romanesque countries*, National Museum in Wrocław, Wrocław 1982.
- <sup>43</sup> R. Aftanazy, *Materiały do dziejów rezydencji* [Materials for the History of Residences], J. Baranowski (ed. A.), Vols. 1-11, IS PAN, Warszawa 1986–1993.
- <sup>44</sup> K. Ajewski, *Zbiory artystyczne i galeria muzealna Ordynacji Zamojskiej w Warszawie* [Artistic Collections and Museum Galleries of the Zamoyski Entail in Warsaw], Zamoyski Museum in Kozłówka, Kozłówka 1997; *idem, Zbiory artystyczne Biblioteki i Muzeum Ordynacji Krasieńskich w Warszawie. Losy, ludzie, znaczenia* [Artistic Collections. Libraries and Museums of the Krasieński Entail Museum in Warsaw. History, People, Meanings], Wydaw. Neriton, Warszawa 2004.
- <sup>45</sup> E. Manikowska, *Zbiór obrazów i rzeźb Artura i Zofii Potockich z Krzeszowic. Ze studiów nad dziewiętnastowiecznym kolekcjonerstwem w Polsce* [Collection of Paintings and Sculptures of Artur and Zofia Potocki of Krzeszowice. From the Studies in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Collecting in Poland], 'Rocznik Historii Sztuki' 2000, No. 25, pp. 145-199.
- <sup>46</sup> K. Mikocka-Rachubowa, *Pałac w wołyńskim Romanowie i jego rzeźby* [The Palace in Volhynia's Romanów], 'Biuletyn Historii Sztuki' 2013, No. 1(75), pp. 37-67.
- <sup>47</sup> Currently the works and tasks of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Cultural Heritage Abroad is continued by the Department of Cultural Heritage and Wartime Losses at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.
- <sup>48</sup> J. Pruszyński, *Poland, The War Losses, Cultural Heritage, and Cultural Legitimacy*, in: *The Spoils of War. World War II and Its Aftermath. The Loss. Reappearance, and Recovery of Cultural Property*, E. Simpson (ed.), Harry N. Abrams, New York 1997, pp. 49-52.
- <sup>49</sup> W. Kowalski, *World War II Cultural Losses of Poland: Historical Issues Or Still a 'Hot' Political and Legal Topic?*, in: *The spoils of War...*, pp. 235-236.
- <sup>50</sup> [http://nimoz.pl/upload/Badania\\_proveniencji/Zasady\\_Konferencji\\_Waszynngtonskiej.pdf](http://nimoz.pl/upload/Badania_proveniencji/Zasady_Konferencji_Waszynngtonskiej.pdf).
- <sup>51</sup> In Vilnius Poland was represented by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Poland's Ambassador to Vilnius and those of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, with the Deputy Minister Tomasz Żurowski, Undersecretary of State and at the same time Government Plenipotentiary for the Cultural Heritage Abroad, together with the Director of the Department of National Heritage Franciszek Cemka.
- <sup>52</sup> The Polish delegation was headed by Minister Władysław Bartoszewski, Prime Minister's Plenipotentiary for Dialogue, prisoner at the Auschwitz German Concentration Camp. Other members of the Polish delegation were: Deputy Minister of Culture and National Heritage Tomasz Merta, Undersecretary of State; Anna Perl, Deputy Director for the Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad; Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrzej Kremer, Undersecretary of State; Wojciech Kowalski.
- <sup>53</sup> Polish translation of the Vilnius and Terezin Declaration available at NIMOZ website: [http://nimoz.pl/upload/Badania\\_proveniencji/Deklaracja\\_Wilenska\\_2000.pdf](http://nimoz.pl/upload/Badania_proveniencji/Deklaracja_Wilenska_2000.pdf), [http://nimoz.pl/upload/Badania\\_proveniencji/Deklaracja\\_Terezinska%2C\\_2009.pdf](http://nimoz.pl/upload/Badania_proveniencji/Deklaracja_Terezinska%2C_2009.pdf) [accessed: 1 April 2016]. English version of the Terezin Declaration: <http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/program/conference-proceedings/declarations/> [accessed: 20 Aug. 2020]
- <sup>54</sup> W. Bartoszewski, [Address], in: *Holocaust Era Assets Conference Proceedings*, Forum 2000 Foundation, Prague 2009, pp. 218-222, available online at: [www.claimscon.org/forms/prague/looted-art.pdf](http://www.claimscon.org/forms/prague/looted-art.pdf) lub [www.claimscon.org/forms/prague/Judaica.pdf](http://www.claimscon.org/forms/prague/Judaica.pdf)
- <sup>55</sup> N. Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, *The Obligation of the State or a Hobby of the Few. The Implementation of the Washington Principles in Poland*, in: *Holocaust Era Assets Conference Proceedings*, Prague 2009, pp. 979-993.
- <sup>56</sup> The Polish translation of the name given after: H. Koenigsmerková, *Muzeum Sztuki Dekoracyjnej w Pradze a badania zbiorów pod kątem dóbr kultury należących do ofiar II wojny światowej* [Museum of Decorative Art in Prague and Collection Investigation in View of the Cultural Goods Belonging to WW II Victims], 'Muzealnictwo' 2013, No. 54, p. 81.
- <sup>57</sup> *The Lost Heritage of Cultural Assets. The documentation, identification, restitution and repatriation of the cultural assets of WWII victims*. 20.-21. November 2003 <http://www.cdmp.cz/en/mezinarodni-konference-v-brne/> [accessed: 1 May 2016].
- <sup>58</sup> *Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage. Documentation, identification and restitution of cultural property of the victims of World War II*. 22.-24. November 2005 <http://www.cdmp.cz/en/mezinarodni-konference-v-ceskem-krumlove/> [accessed: 1 May 2016].
- <sup>59</sup> *Restitution of Confiscated Art Works – Wish or Reality? Documentation, identification and restitution of cultural property of the victims of World War II*. 24.-26. October 2007. <http://www.cdmp.cz/en/mezinarodni-konference-v-liberci/> [accessed: 1 May 2016].
- <sup>60</sup> They were participated by representatives of both government departments: MKiDN and MSZ, as well as Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowitz as independent scholar.

- <sup>61</sup>Por. M. Kuhnke, *Pokłosie wojny [The Aftermath of the War]*, 'Cenne, Bezcenne/Utracone', 1998, No. 2, p. 3.
- <sup>62</sup>M. Sieramska, *Z problematyki strat wojennych żydowskiej sztuki kultowej [From the Problems of War Losses of Jewish Cult Art]* – see Kuhnke, *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- <sup>63</sup>*A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*. Volume III, Oxford University Press, London – New York 1939, p. 2199; Volume VI, Oxford University Press, London – New York 1939, Pl.1090,1091.
- <sup>64</sup>N.H. Yeide, K. Akinsha, A.L. Waish, *The AAM Guide to Provenance Research*, American Association of Museums, Washington 2001.
- <sup>65</sup>The Forum brought together art historian who insisted on introducing provenance studies for the works of unknown provenance. It ceased to exist after several years.
- <sup>66</sup>*Przemieszczone dobra kultury. Przypadek Europy Zachodniej i problemy państw Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej w XX wieku [Displaced Cultural Assets. The Case of Western Europe and the Problems of East-Central European Countries in the Twentieth Century]*. G. Czubek, P. Kosiewski (ed.), Warszawa 2004.
- <sup>67</sup>*Dobra kultury i problemy własności. Doświadczenia Europy Środkowej po 1989 roku [Cultural Goods and Property Issues: the Experience of Central Europe after 1989]*, G. Czubek, P. Kosiewski (ed.), Warszawa 2005.
- <sup>68</sup>In the Conference proceedings papers authored by the following were published: Andrzej Dąbrowski, Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz, Dorota Folga-Januszewska, Dariusz Grot, Urszula Grygiel, Agnieszka Jaskanis, Paweł Jaskanis, Krzysztof Kornacki, Piotr Kosiewski, Edyta Kotyńska, Hanna Łaskarzewska, Zbigniew Pietrzyka, Andrzej Rottermunda, Bożena Steinborn, Władysława Stępnia, Wojciecha Suchockiego, Mirosław A. Supruniuk, Magdalena Tarnowska, Stanisław Waltoś, Krzysztof Zamorski. See *Własność a dobra kultury [Property and Cultural Assets]*, Czubek, P. Kosiewski, Warszawa 2006.
- <sup>69</sup>D. Folga-Januszewska, A. Jaskanis, *Problemy własności zbiorów w muzeach polskich. Ilościowa skala problemów własności [Collection Property Problems. Quantitative Scale of Property Problems]*, in: *Własność a dobra kultury*, pp. 57-69, debate pp. 71-85.
- <sup>70</sup>D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzea w Polsce 1989–2008. Stan, zachodzące zmiany i kierunki rozwoju muzeów w Europie oraz rekomendacje dla muzeów polskich [Museums in Poland 1989–2008. State, Occuring Changes, Museum Development Directions in Europe and Recommendations for Polish Museums]*, MKiDN, Warszawa 2008, [http://www.nck.pl/files/muzea\\_raport.pdf](http://www.nck.pl/files/muzea_raport.pdf) [accessed: 2 May 2016].
- <sup>71</sup>Piotr Kosiewski was elected Chairman; all the Team members showed strong commitment, however Bożena Steinborn had a particularly inspirational input. Initial plans had it that the Team of Experts for the provenance research into Polish museum exhibits in view of former Jewish property, following the end of this stage of works, was to transform, and added new members with additional competences, would turn into a Team for Provenance Research, serving with factual assistance to museums in their investigation of museum exhibits.
- <sup>72</sup>Z. Bandurska, D. Kacprzak, P. Kosiewski, M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, B. Steinborn, M. Tarnowska, *Badania proveniencyjne muzealiów pod kątem ich ewentualnego pochodzenia z własności żydowskiej [Studies on Museum Exhibits from the Viewpoint of Their Possible Origins as Part of Jewish Property]*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, No. 53, pp. 14-26.
- <sup>73</sup><http://nimosz.pl/bazy-danych/baza-wiedzy-1/badania-proweniencji> [accessed: 1 May 2016].

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# PROVENANCE STUDIES IN POLAND\* (PART 2)

**Maria Romanowska-Zadrozna**

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Systemic-economic transformations of 1989 resulted in a breakthrough in numerous dimensions of our social, cultural, and scientific life. That which for many had been until then unattainable, such as conducting surveys in foreign libraries, galleries or museums, finally became real after obtaining financial support. It became possible to intensify, expand, and sometimes – in the history of art, library studies, and museology – to open new domains of research and supplement heretofore quests with comparative studies enabling a detailed definition of the attribution and provenance of artworks. In successive decades the rapid development of the Internet and activities connected with the digitisation of databases and Internet services provided new and effective research instruments, made possible access to numerous rare sources, and became a useful and quick platform for the exchange of information. Foreign scholarships and research grants, as well as participation in international conferences, symposia and sessions intensified the exchange of thoughts and indubitably affected changes of expectations, research standards, and publications. Joining the European Union in 2004 not only deepened the described phenomena but also altered prevailing conditions. Polish representatives started to take part in work conducted by European commissions by co-creating Community law and obligating themselves to its implementation in the domestic system, reflected in the functioning of museums in Poland. Participation in the undertakings of such international organisations as ICOM compels to accept in museology earlier devised norms and designated good practice, provenance studies being regarded as one of them.

One of the topics of meetings and conferences, mentioned already in earlier articles,<sup>1</sup> were museum objects of unknown origin. This problem was also broached in Poland, mainly at conferences organised by the Stefan Batory Foundation.<sup>2</sup> At that time they became the object of the reflections

and research of Dorota Folga-Januszewska and Agnieszka Jaskanis,<sup>3</sup> and several years later were recalled as an essential problem by the first of those two authors in her *Muzea w Polsce 1989–2008. Stan, zachodzące zmiany i kierunki rozwoju muzeów w Europie oraz rekomendacje dla muzeów polskich*, one of the 'Reports on the State of Culture' of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.<sup>4</sup> Folga-Januszewska established that in 2005 only 67% of museum resources had a documented origin and 33% comprised 'orphaned works'.<sup>5</sup> Although they had been included into ownership inventories and it is even known from where they had been brought or handed over to a museum, little or actually nothing was established about their previous owners and history.<sup>6</sup> The latter were mentioned within the context of an act on obligatory research on, and publication of the provenance of works accumulated in public museums, recommended by Stanisław Waltoś.<sup>7</sup> The act in question imposed the necessity of conducting provenance studies, and as one of four acts *rendering possible an efficient functioning of museums and exchange of collections*<sup>8</sup> was proposed by a group of experts at the Council of Europe in their Mobility of Collections programme as part of priority activity within the range of museology in 2008-2013. Such a regulation would have indicated *the courses of activity in a situation of supervision over heritage of unknown origin, the manner of acting in relation to claims, the principles of publication, and eventual initiation of returning illegally owned works*.<sup>9</sup> The introduction of this regulation was to become a condition for the application of two other postulated acts: on protection against confiscation and on state guarantees for entitled cultural institutions.

The necessity of conducting provenance studies, even if in a restricted form, was sanctioned in the Polish legal system by the Act of 5 August 2015 on Amendment of the Acts Regulating the Conditions of Access to Certain Professions (Dz.U. 30 September 2015, item 1505), which

\* Part one of this article was published in: M. Romanowska-Zadrozna, *Badania proveniencyjne w Polsce (Część 1.)*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2016, no. 57, pp. 136-148 and on: [www.muzealnictworocznik.com](http://www.muzealnictworocznik.com); both parts continue and supplement the article: M. Romanowska-Zadrozna, *Badania proveniencyjne w Europie i Stanach Zjednoczonych*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2015, no. 56, pp. 224-238.

in article 5 introduces changes into the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996 (Dz.U. 2012, item 987). The changes in question concern the legal protection of mobile objects of historical, artistic or scientific value loaned from abroad for a temporary exhibition organised on the territory of the Republic of Poland (chapter 4.a, art. 31.a–31.e, in the amended Act on Museums). The Act imposes the obligation of making sure that a mobile object of historical or scientific value, on loan from abroad for a temporary exhibition organised on the territory of the Republic of Poland, can be subjected to legal protection. This procedure encompasses above-mentioned legal protection connected with, i.a. checking whether the object is not mentioned in databases of lost cultural goods as stolen or taken out of the country contrary to the law or is a sought wartime loss. There are two registers in Poland with legal reassertion in acts: *Krajowy wykaz zabytków skradzionych lub wywiezionych za granicę niezgodnie z prawem*, kept by the National Institute of Museology and Collection Protection (NIMOZ), and the recently created *Krajowy rejestr utraconych dóbr kultury*. Essential importance is attached to *Baza obiektów utraconych w wyniku II wojny światowej* conducted by the Division of Looted Art in the Department of Cultural Heritage Abroad and Wartime Losses at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (MKiDN). Among significant foreign stolen property registers mention is due to the Interpol database: *Stolen Works of Art*.

The requirement to maintain suitable diligence is contained also in Directive 2014/60/EU, which became binding in the European Union on 19 December 2015.<sup>10</sup> Another, earlier Directive 93/7/EEC required that a Member State seeking the return of a historical monument proves the ill will of the owner.<sup>11</sup> It also introduced contact points indicated by governments of the Member States.<sup>12</sup>

The domain of NIMOZ encompasses servicing so-called museum immunity, conducting a contact point dealing with Directive 2014/60/EU, and communication with other European contact points in the IMI system (information exchange system on the domestic market), procedures of permits for a permanent transit of historical monuments abroad, and coordination of two programmes of the Minister of KiDN, including the 'Museum collections' programme. All those activities require checking information about the object in the mentioned domestic bases and even laboriously following its fate. Information about 'museum immunity' and the export of monuments abroad, programmes of the Minister of KiDN and *Krajowy wykaz zabytków skradzionych i wywiezionych za granicę niezgodnie z prawem* are on the Institute's website: [www.nimoz.pl](http://www.nimoz.pl). The database publishes material for studying the provenance of museum objects within the context of lost former Jewish property. Information about the contact point and module pertaining to cultural goods within the MI system are foreseen. They do not, however, exploit the entire sphere of the activity of this institution.

An important undertaking conducted by NIMOZ involves a long-range project known as *Museum Statistics*. Initiated in December 2013 its purpose was to gather reliable information about museums, thus enabling the observation of the state of Polish museology. The participation of museum institutions (state, Church, self-government,

schools of higher learning, and private) in the project is voluntary. During the first year questionnaires were sent to museum institutions, but as of 2014 they are filled in online. According to persons involved in the realisation of the project, about 15% of Polish museums participated in the first two years. Although the project gains popularity from one year to the next – in 2015 already 197 museums responded to the questionnaire – the collected data are rather fragmentary and comprise estimates; nevertheless, they should be treated as material obtained from a representative, albeit incomplete, group of museums. They can demonstrate the scale of the phenomenon, chiefly in a percentage relation. The first survey collecting information about the year 2013 was of a pilot nature, and although *the gathered outcome was so incomplete that it cannot provide a foundation for reliable analyses* it enabled an evaluation of the project, while experience obtained in this way provided bases for rebuilding the structure of the questionnaire and rendering the questions more precise. In the following years the content of some of them changed and became more detailed due to the introduction of additional sub-points or else they were omitted, mainly in order to simplify the questionnaire. Data interesting from the viewpoint of questions connected with provenance research can be found in sections concerning collections and their list as well as digitisation.

In 2014 the questionnaire was expanded by means of additional detailed problems concerning provenance, for instance, by asking the question: 'Are procedures concerning provenance studies focused on objects purchased by the museum mandatory in museum documents?'. Out of a total of 101 institutions, which decided to respond, 68, i.e. more than 67% of the respondents said: 'yes'. Amidst undertakings made in order to establish the provenance of the purchased object mention was made, as a rule, of activities resulting from the workshop of an art historian, i.e. checking whether the object features ownership signs – 70%, whether the offered object was not redesigned or displays traces of the removal of marks and signs of ownership – 60%, as well as checking information about the history of the object in pertinent literature and specialist press – 61%. A written declaration of the offer-maker about the origin of the presented object also turned out to be essential for 65% of the museums. Checking the object in databases of lost cultural goods and requesting help from state institutions in determining the legality of its provenance are practised more rarely – 31% and 12%, respectively, of the museums undertook this type of activity.

Among the museums that filled in the questionnaire only 34.7% included the office of the main inventory-keeper. A much more universal solution was the functioning of an inner purchase commission or another advisory body involved in obtaining collections – more than 67% of all museums. On the other hand, in the case of the question: 'Does the museum possess devised methods of inner quality control of the archiving, protection, management, and availability of evidentiary and visual documentation of the objects and of regulating copyright and ownership rights to objects within the range of examining provenance and copyright?' out of a total of 78 institutions only 12 answered: 'yes' (slightly more than 15%)



1. Satirical drawing sent to NIMOZ in 2014 as a commentary to a questionnaire prepared by the Institute

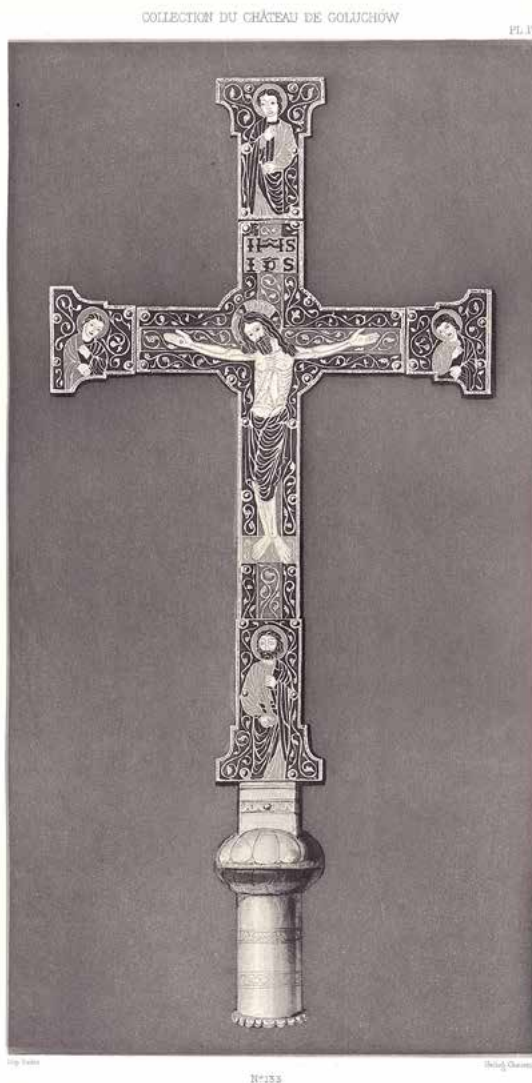
and out of those 10 institutions declared that they contain a post responsible for control.<sup>13</sup>

A concrete person assigned for this task was employed on a full-time basis only by the National Museum in Warsaw, which up to now had not taken part in the *Museum statistics* project. In March 2010 it created a post for examining the collections' provenance. The duties of this employee include studying the history of collections with particular attention paid to the 1939–1945 period, the establishment of the provenance of those historical monuments, which though recorded in inventory management books have no definite origin, introducing order into records of monuments in the Museum inventory in connection with a change of their legal status, and cooperating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ) and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in the case of discovering monuments comprising the Museum's war looses. In other museum institutions, lacking an independent post connected with the examination of the provenance of art works, such duties are part of the work performed by the main inventory clerks, custodians, and heads and keepers of departments, including the Documentation and Scientific Information Department and even the Purchasing Committee. As a rule, these functions are fulfilled by employees of the Inventory Department together with substantive employees or by the latter *to a degree permitted by time, i.e. in time free from the more urgent issues of the department*. Nonetheless, the majority of museums, in which there is no such post, do not feel the need for its establishment; as usual, the main obstacle is a lack of financial means. If those museums were to receive funds intended for the creation of a post dealing with research on collection provenance then in accordance with

their declarations they would readily establish it. It was also postulated to settle the financial problem in a systematic manner, as is the case in Germany and Austria. Such a post would be situated within the structure of the institution or be distinct. This could be the position of an independent specialist or, as one of the directors proposed, even a section dealing with provenance in the Main Inventory Department.<sup>14</sup> A post relating to provenance was opened at the beginning of 2017 within the structures of the National Museum in Szczecin, but up to this moment it remains vacant due to a lack of funds.

It follows from an analysis of the cited range of the duties of a specialist studying the provenance of the collections at the National Museum in Warsaw that extremely strong emphasis was placed on becoming acquainted with the history of the Museum since the latter makes it easier to determine the provenance of museum objects gathered for years. Studies dedicated to the history of the Museum collection make it possible to perceive information concerning particular museum objects in a different light. Take the example of the Museum of Greater Poland in which part of the resources of the Mielżyński Museum in Poznań, the property of the Poznań Society of Friends of Sciences, was deposited and was not part of the foundation basis of the Museum of Greater Poland, which should seek its beginnings rather in the Kaiser Fredrich Museum zu Posen. This is the reason why it contains donations made by German collectors and deposits of the Berlin Gallery.<sup>15</sup> In the case of the Wawel State Art Collection objects belonging it could change institutions, but the owner remained the same – the Republic of Poland. Another example – only thanks to knowledge of the contents of a document of





2. Processional cross from Limoges found at a dumpsite, originally from the collection in Gołuchów (illustrations from É. Molinier, *Objets d'art du Moyen Age de la Renaissance*, Paris 1903, pl. IV)

22 April 1920, establishing the Army Museum in Warsaw, can one understand the duality of assigning the resources of this institution: part of the collection belongs to the Polish State and part to the Magistrate of the capital city of Warsaw.<sup>16</sup> If we were unaware of this fact, then the information that scientific publications described the Museum as the Fourth Department of the National Museum in Warsaw would cause quite a consternation.<sup>17</sup> The tasks of the person holding the post examining the provenance of the collections thus include not only arranging the collection and inventories in order so as to determine the origin of the museum objects; he should also apply his knowledge to searching for wartime losses whose number in the age of the Internet and rapid information exchange is increasing.

Understandably, one would like to intensify the process of seeking artworks and their restitution. This purpose is served by assorted fora. In November 2014 the Minister of Culture

and National Heritage, together with the International Cultural Centre, organised in Cracow a conference: 'Looted-Recovered. Cultural Goods – the Case of Poland'. Papers read by foreign and Polish speakers as well as those presented at accompanying workshops<sup>18</sup> mentioned, apart from descriptions of wartime losses, property restitution and successes won in this field, also questions pertaining to provenances studies within the context of wartime losses. An account of the conference, written on the spot, was published by Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz in 'Krytyka Polityczna'.<sup>19</sup> A month later, in mid-December, the 'The Robbed Art – in Search of Cultural Property Lost during World War II' conference took place in Salzburg. The co-organisers of the event were the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Vienna, the University of Salzburg, and the Archive of the City of Salzburg, with the support of the mayor. The discussion focused on the role played by Fischhorn Castle<sup>20</sup> in its capacity as a repository during the Second World War in reference to the fate of Polish artworks. The conference recalled and discussed the case of a procession cross from Limoges, originating from the Czartoryski collections in Gołuchów, which, together with other monuments taken after the Warsaw Uprising, was stored in the Castle interiors, and then for several decades all traces of its existence vanished.

The problem of provenance studies was presented in literature in assorted contexts. Already in 1957 library experts devised the principles of such studies,<sup>21</sup> although attempts at describing them appeared earlier upon the occasion of presenting works referring to provenance research,<sup>22</sup> because, as Maria Sipayłto noticed: *The pursuit of some branch of knowledge or simply a certain type of research is, as a rule, preceded by their methodology; it is not strange, therefore, that publications of provenance material as well as works based on them considerably preceded all reflections about this method.*<sup>23</sup> Methods of provenance studies became the topic of library science lectures and courses. Graduates implemented their knowledge in praxis by creating alphabetical catalogues and provenance indices, with whose assistance they attempted to study the reception of a given work or sociological problems.<sup>24</sup>

Although in Polish history of art it is difficult to unambiguously indicate a publication describing the methodology of studying the origin of an artwork, in collection and exhibition catalogues provenance has obviously always had a reserved place in scientific notes.<sup>25</sup> Eminent scientists and excellent teachers headed by Professor Jan Białostocki made sure that this should take place. The opening of frontiers, the expansion of international cooperation, and the possibility of a rapid exchange of information produced collection catalogues meticulously prepared anew, such as those describing the collections of the National Museum in Wrocław.<sup>26</sup> Bożena Steinborn, an undisputed museum authority, regards the two-volume work by Dorota Juszcak and Hanna Małachowicz about Polish painting to 1900 in the collections of the Royal Castle in Warsaw as a model of a *catalogue raisonné*.<sup>27</sup> Steinborn considered this publication to be a point of departure for reflections on a presentation of collections in *catalogues raisonnés*, which, i.a. describe the history of a given work reaching as far into the past as possible.<sup>28</sup>

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3. Note from the online auction catalogue by Doyle in New York describing a chalice with the inscription *Sumptibus Monasterii Sieciechowiensis A. D. 1608*

Publications about wartime losses expanded predominantly wartime history to the last documented trace. In turn, in texts about regained works of art provenance occupied a significant part of the account, since the artworks in question were returned thanks to their proven origin.<sup>29</sup> In collection monographs we come across information about the date of the purchase of a given artwork, the person it had been purchased from or who donated it, and about the place of its exposition or storage. The origin of objects was presented in various methodological aspects as well as within the context of applied or postulated legal regulations. In the case of the article by Roman Olkowski one may speak about a methodical work focused on arranging the collection in order.<sup>30</sup> In my article published two years ago<sup>31</sup> I drew attention to the close relation of the documented origin of a given work with its value as well as to assorted threats and abuse in this domain. The methodology of provenance studies concentrated on wartime losses became the topic of a text by Katarzyna Zielińska<sup>32</sup> and a training publication by the same author, written together with Anna Lewandowska and Karolina Zalewska.<sup>33</sup> Magdalena Palica drew attention to the modern and insufficiently appreciated potential of the Internet in research of this kind.<sup>34</sup> This author applied a specific, electronic research method in creating a universally available *Silesian Art Collections* database, accumulating information about pre-war collectors from this region, their

collections and works of art belonging to them: a total of 64 collections and 478 work of art.<sup>35</sup> Upon this occasion it is worth mentioning the work by Zofia Bandura about archival sources connected with art museums in old Wrocław.<sup>36</sup>

The scope of the interest of Polish researchers encompasses also the difficult and complicated problems of former manorial property,<sup>37</sup> post-war repositories,<sup>38</sup> so-called degenerate art,<sup>39</sup> archaeological objects, including those obtained from illegal excavations,<sup>40</sup> martyrology heritage,<sup>41</sup> and even attempts, rather exotic for the domestic reader, made by Indians to regain from museums the ashes of their ancestors.<sup>42</sup> Attention was drawn to the possibility of falsifying provenance by using documents connected with taking monuments abroad, attempts at the legalisation of works of art originating from crime,<sup>43</sup> or even the semantic meaning of the term 'reclaimed' and the purposefulness of its use, with the reclamation of described objects as the point of departure.<sup>44</sup> Information about origin makes it possible to regain a stolen object.<sup>45</sup> Attempts at persuading about the purposefulness of provenance studies are made also on antiques fora.<sup>46</sup>

An author dealing with provenance studies and such affiliated topics as reprivatization, the property of Holocaust victims, Judaica, German looting at the time of the Second World War, and reclamation, is the oft-mentioned Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz, historian and art



4. Provenance inscription on the reverse of the base of a chalice stolen in 1994, which contributed to its identification in 2014 and retrieval in 2015

critic active on the international forum, who publishes her articles in: 'Muzealnictwo', 'Kronika Zamkowa', 'Tygodnik Powszechny', and 'Gazeta Wyborcza', the serial publication: 'Zagłada Żydów: studia i materiały', and abroad. Member of The European Shoah Legacy Institute, within which she conducted the *Provenance Research Training Program* in Vilnius. Her article about the necessity of foreign museums returning illegally obtained works of art<sup>47</sup> introduces us to legal problems connected with the purchase for museums of exhibits not checked from the viewpoint of their provenance. Olgierd Jakubowski described how to minimise the threat of a museum purchasing for its collections a historical monument originating from theft, illegal archaeological excavations, illicitly brought over from another country, a forgery, or a wartime loss.<sup>48</sup> Iwona Gredka, analysing the purchase of objects in accordance with the interest of a museum and the regulations of binding law, warned against unconscious fencing committed by museums.<sup>49</sup> Problems dealing with provenance studies, the application of provenance standards in the case of objects in collections, conflicts between the owner and the possessor, and the expiration of claims – all have been presented in a publication applying a research technique consisting of focused group interviews, used in studies conducted to determine quality.<sup>50</sup> Separate discussions were conducted with three groups: representatives of collectors, monument protection organs, and subjects managing cultural institutions or conducting cultural activity.

Each discussion was attended by two moderators – a lawyer and a sociologist. The point of departure were entries on provenance in *Kodeks Etyki ICOM dla Muzeów*.

Up to now, legal aspects within the context of provenance studies could come down to moral-ethical guidelines and the thoroughness of the workshop of the historian of art, although already the UNESCO Convention of 1970 on the means of prohibiting and preventing of the illegal import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property,<sup>51</sup> which Poland ratified in 1974, indicated the necessity of the special duties of museums and antiquarians purchasing works of art. At present, legal regulations are entering this sphere with harsh injunctions and indispensable requirements. In article 34 the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996 (Dz. U. 1997, no. 5. item 24) appealed only to the honesty of the museum expert. *Kodeks Etyki ICOM dla Muzeów* mentioned the essence of good practice in the chapter: *O pozyskiwaniu zbiorów*, with point 2.2. on the important ownership title and point 2.3 discussing origin and obligatory diligence, which consists of the obligation to determine the full history of an object or item from the moment of its discovery or production.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, two international documents – the UNIDROIT Convention (art. 4.4.), still not ratified by Poland, and the mentioned EU Directive 1014/60/EU (art. 10.) impose upon the possessor, whose ownership is undermined, the duty of exercising *due diligence* while acquiring an object. Only in such a case may he receive compensation for the reclaimed artwork.

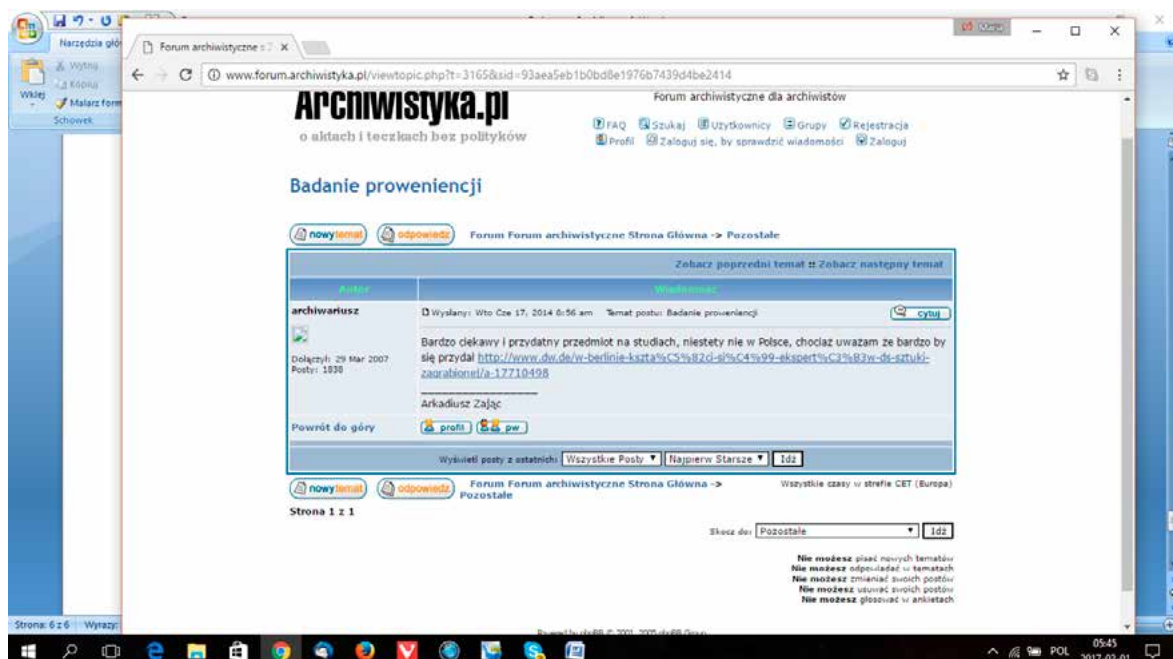


Earlier, however, he must present all the circumstances of the purchase, including provenance documentation and whether he consulted an accessible register of stolen cultural objects. Recall that the Act of 5 August 2015 on Amendment of the Acts Regulating the Conditions of Access to Certain Professions introduced changes into the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996 on the legal protection of movable objects of historical, artistic or scientific value, on loan from abroad for a temporary exhibition organised in the Republic of Poland, and imposed the duty of making sure whether the above-mentioned object has not been stolen or exported contrary to the law or is a sought wartime loss. It thus foresees necessary procedures connected with checking whether the object in question is not mentioned on domestic databases of lost cultural property and the Interpol database. A project of an act on the restoration of national cultural property, intent on implementing Directive 1014/60/EU in the Polish legal order, also contains regulations extremely essential for provenance studies and enjoining subjects dealing with a turnover in monuments to keep special books containing precise information about sold works of art and expert opinions pertaining to them.<sup>53</sup> The establishment and expansion of registers, including an official state one, is postulated by an entry in a United Nations resolution introducing international directives concerning the prevention of crime and the promotion of penal liability in the domain of illegal trade in cultural goods and other affiliated misdemeanours.<sup>54</sup>

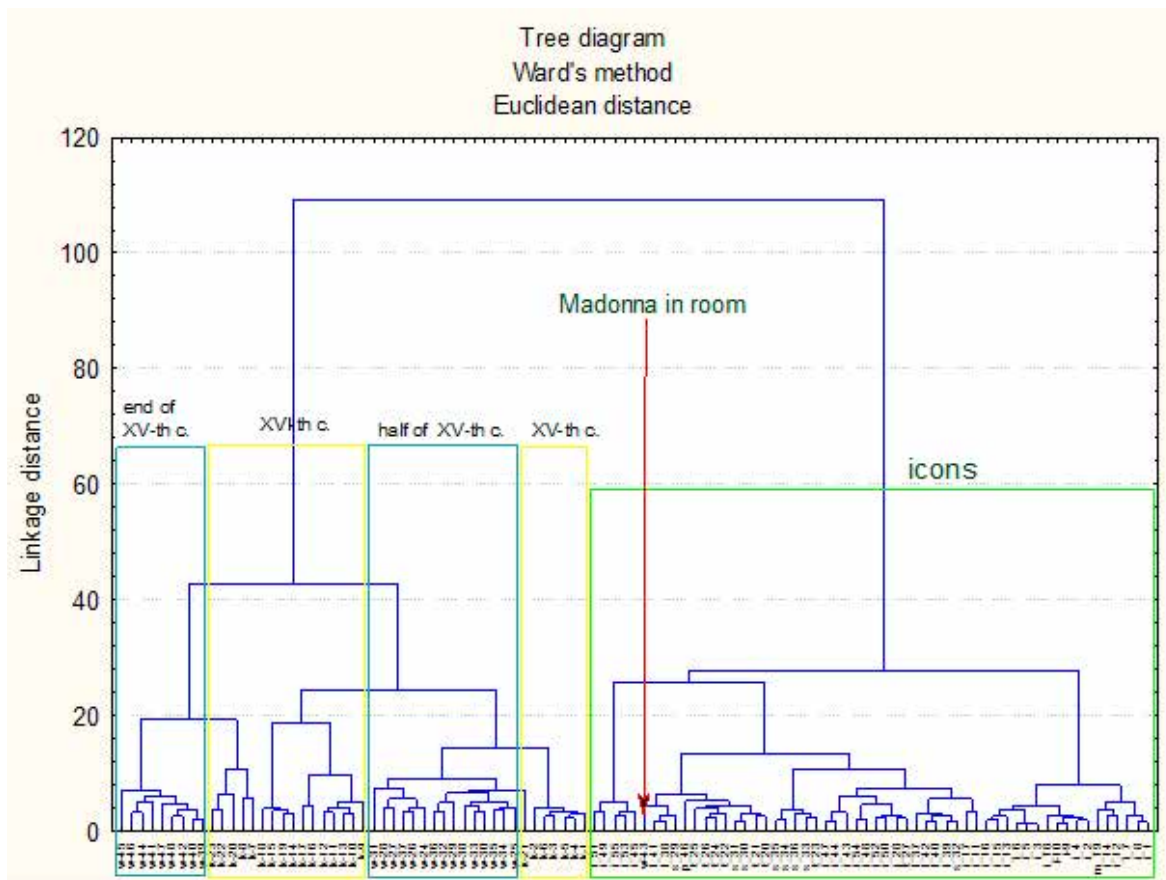
Growing legal requirements and restitution challenges are the reason why provenance studies are slowly becoming part the curriculum not only of courses in library studies, as has been the case in the past, but also in the history of art. At the University of Warsaw students could learn, as part of

studies on graphic art, about ‘The provenance of drawings and the history of collecting graphic art’. Unfortunately, this subject is not offered in any current didactic cycle. Permanent courses on provenance, however, have been introduced into the post-graduate curriculum of museology courses at the University of Warsaw, and are held since 1994.<sup>55</sup> For two years NIMOZ has been conducting workshops for museum experts. Nonetheless, in contrast to the USA, the United Kingdom, and Germany no Polish school of higher learning offers special courses in this field. For the past five years the Free University of Berlin has been conducting two-semester courses in provenance studies addressed to historians of art and archivists. Students carry out surveys in archives and become acquainted with the activity of auction houses. They also deal with paintings stolen from Jewish collectors during the National Socialism era, and follow the complicated fate of one of the ‘entrusted’ works. Furthermore, they learn how to analyse and understand documents, which cannot be properly deciphered without a working knowledge of history.<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting that Polish students of museology and archive studies enquire about the availability of such independent courses.

Due to the dynamic development of technology, conservators and researchers supporting them started to show interest in provenance studies and actually have much to offer in this domain. Their proposals include new research methods involving the application of latest instruments, such as electronic technologies, which make it possible to solve problems of dating, authorship and, sometimes, the provenance of historical monuments. Interest in those methods and their use in provenance studies is declared by, e.g. the employees of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń,<sup>57</sup> which acts as a coordinator of the Polish Distributed



5. Statement at an archivists’ forum – a post about provenance studies: *a very interesting and useful subject at university, unfortunately not taught in Poland, even though I believe it would be very useful* (print screen)



6. Graph presenting the analysis of condensation for ceruse deriving from icons, panel paintings of the Lesser Poland, Silesian or Gdańsk School, after <http://www.fizyka.umk.pl/~erihs/index.php/neutronowa-analiza-aktywacyjna/>

Research Consortium for Heritage Science. The Consortium, created upon the initiative of universities, academies, research institutes, and museum conservation ateliers has at its disposal a scattered and unique infrastructure for studying historical objects by means of physico-chemical methods offered to conservators, historians of art, museum curators, and archaeologists.<sup>58</sup> One of the applied methods is neutron activation analysis, which enables a detailed characteristic of the material used for executing a work of art. The method in question consists of a thorough analysis of trace elements, thus making it possible to, i.a. determine the history of the given object, and was first used in archaeological studies to establish the provenance of pottery. Today, it is applied for many other materials, including pigments, ores, alloys, and such stones as marble or sandstone, or alabaster.<sup>59</sup> In Poland the offered technique was used for, i.a. examining the provenance of a figurine of the so-called Jackowa Madonna from Przemyśl<sup>60</sup> and the pigments of icons from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

Provenance studies are an inseparable part of efforts restoring a work of art for public presentation. Take the example of a publication on the conservation of a painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder from the Wawel collections. In 2004–2012 the forgotten and extensively damaged canvas was examined and subjected to thorough conservation carried out

by Ewa Wilkojć, who described it in: *Chrystus błogostawiający dzieci Lucasa Cranacha st. w zbiorach Zamku Królewskiego na Wawelu w świetle badań i działań konserwatorskich*. One of the chapters is dedicated to provenance studies.<sup>62</sup> The presence of a conservator at establishing the history of a painting and confirming its identity is, unfortunately, insufficiently appreciated. Copies of pre-war 1:1 photographs cut into pieces and placed on a found painting provide evidence for the confirmation or negation of the identity of a given artwork.<sup>63</sup> In other cases, conservation documentation is capable of confirming the authenticity of a painting upon the basis of 'paintbrush handwriting', which, for all practical purposes, cannot be forged and can be compared more to papillary lines than to handwriting.

Hopefully, postulates made by museum curators concerning additional funds for conducting and organising provenance studies as well as supporting museums with systemic solutions will be heard. The heart of the matter is for problems connected with studying the history of objects and determining their origin not to give rise to doubts and anxiety, and for errors in the recognition of objects not to take place, although some are committed even by the best European institutions with magnificent traditions.<sup>64</sup>

It can be said that provenance studies in Poland are becoming increasingly significant and that interest in them



7. Paintbrush visible in a pre-war photograph; section of the painting by Julian Fałat *Before hunting in Rytwiany*

(Photos: 4 – T. Zadrożny; 7 – National Museum in Warsaw)

is also growing, as is the number of publications directly or indirectly pertaining to them. It could be that the specificity of Polish history is the sole reason why we still so often understand the tasks of those studies and their range slightly differently than, e.g. museum professionals in the United States. For the latter the problem is restricted even in its terminology to former Jewish property and thus it becomes easiest to treat homogeneously phenomena taking place in the public sphere. The extent to which provenance studies and post-graduate courses are organised in Poland still remains insufficient. Their programme meets with the interest of the participants, chiefly museum professionals. The number of publications, conferences, and exhibitions on the history of Polish collecting and historical as well as contemporary art collections, with attention paid both to losses and holdings as well as the role played in society, is also on the rise.<sup>65</sup> Here the significance of provenance studies is almost tangible. Contemporary technical accomplishments in the domain of computing and conservation favour the development of such studies. Introduced legal regulations no longer only urge and appeal for good will and ethical undertakings but delineate norms, which enjoin to make

the effort of analysing and verifying data pertaining to the origin of objects. This is true especially whenever a museum institution intends to purchase a certain object or to borrow one from abroad for an exhibition; regulations oblige it to check whether the offered or loaned museum exhibit does not have concealed legal faults and whether it originates from theft or illegal transference or is outright a wartime loss; this means that for their own sake museums today cannot avoid provenance studies. One of the unresolved questions is that of the knowledge and skill of people conducting such studies, their reliability and required range of studies since due to their universality and legal compulsion as well as the direct availability of popular databases there might appear a routine automatization of the process as well as the reduction and superficiality of quests.

As if in response to postulates formulated by museum curators – and due to an indubitable appreciation of the value of research on the history of objects – in November 2016 they appeared for the first time in the programme of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.<sup>66</sup> For the time being it only refers to Polish wartime losses but, as one can find out from the strategic objectives of the programme premises,



the long-range task [...] is to create among the employees of cultural institutions the need to examine the origin of objects not only in the context of wartime losses, but also in the case of new purchases and the existing collections of the institutions.<sup>67</sup>

We may hope, therefore, that with the financial support of the authorities and suitable regulations the postulates made for so many years by museum curators and numerous milieus associated with culture will finally come true.

**Abstract:** This article continues the first part of Provenance studies in Poland published in issue 57 of the 'Muzealnictwo' Annual in 2016, and complements the text published two years ago, which was more general and focused on the situation in the USA and Europe. It presents diverse aspects of the topic, through statistical analysis of the situation in our museums and discussing works by Polish authors who tackled the problem of methodology, including first texts on library science and war losses, so-called orphaned works and property of Holocaust victims, and the post-war situation which contributed to the work's loss of its origin. The article also draws attention to the legal aspects of purchasing artworks without due diligence, as well as to the verification of museum exhibits' origin before obtaining legal protection for those works which are to be placed under so-called museum

immunity. In the literature on provenance studies when examining the provenance of artworks, the increasing role of digital tools, such as the internet or digitisation, has been noted. Attention has also been drawn to the contribution of conservators and their innovative methods which may help determine the origin of an object. Another aspect raised in the text is the issue of the theoretical preparation to conduct provenance studies as well as the education which is already standard in library science faculties, but still a long-awaited subject for students of art history and archiving. Although NIMOZ has already organised day-long workshops for museum professionals, and the University of Warsaw has conducted academic seminars lasting several hours, there is still a long way before reaching the two-term studies offered at the Berlin Open University.

**Keywords:** provenance studies, war losses, requisition, restitution of cultural goods, provenance.

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Conference 'The Spoils of War' 1995, Washington 1998, Vilnius 2000 and Prague-Terezin in 2009. Cf. M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Badania proveniencyjne, czyli habent sua fata artis opera*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, p. 13; Z. Bandurska, D. Kacprzak, P. Kosiewski, M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, B. Steinborn, M. Tarnowska, *Badania proveniencyjne muzealiów pod kątem ich ewentualnego pochodzenia z własności żydowskiej*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, p. 14; M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Badania proveniencyjne w Europie...*, pp.144-142; M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Badania proveniencyjne w Polsce (Część 1)*, p. 144.
- <sup>2</sup> M. Romanowska-Zadrożna, *Badania proveniencyjne w Polsce (Część 1)*..., p. 141.
- <sup>3</sup> D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzea w Polsce 1989–2008. Stan, zachodzące zmiany i kierunki rozwoju muzeów w Europie oraz rekomendacje dla muzeów polskich*, MKiDN, Warszawa 2008, [http://www.nck.pl/files/muzea\\_raport.pdf](http://www.nck.pl/files/muzea_raport.pdf) [accessed on: 2 May 2016], [http://www.kongreskultury.pl/library/File/RaportMuzea/muzea\\_raport\\_w.pelna\(l\).pdf](http://www.kongreskultury.pl/library/File/RaportMuzea/muzea_raport_w.pelna(l).pdf) [accessed on: 31 January 2017].
- <sup>4</sup> D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzea w Polsce 1989–2008. Stan, zachodzące zmiany i kierunki rozwoju muzeów w Europie oraz rekomendacje dla muzeów polskich*, MKiDN, Warszawa 2008, [http://www.nck.pl/files/muzea\\_raport.pdf](http://www.nck.pl/files/muzea_raport.pdf) [accessed on: 2 May 2016], [http://www.kongreskultury.pl/library/File/RaportMuzea/muzea\\_raport\\_w.pelna\(l\).pdf](http://www.kongreskultury.pl/library/File/RaportMuzea/muzea_raport_w.pelna(l).pdf) [accessed on: 31 January 2017].
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17. The basis was composed of questionnaires prepared by Dorota Folga-Januszewska in cooperation with the Department of Heritage MKiDN under the auspices of the ICOM National Committee Poland.
- <sup>6</sup> Frequently, this state of things was caused by the absence of archival and source material about collections in the possession of museums, the lack of documentation pertaining to appropriated collections, e.g. former German property or alleged former Jewish property, the loss of inventory books, the ambiguity of records, and the classification of museum objects in the course of a continued although not completed reprivatization, *ibidem*, p. 17.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11, 55.
- <sup>8</sup> The acts in question concerned: protection against confiscation, state guarantees for entitled culture institutions, study and publication of the provenance of works collected in public museums, access to public collections, *ibidem*, p. 11, 55.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56.
- <sup>10</sup> Directive of the European Parliament and Council 2014/60/EU of 15 May 2014 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from a member state, changing the (European Union) regulation no. 1024/2102 (changed version), art. 10.
- <sup>11</sup> Council Directive 93/7/EEC of 15 March 1993 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State, art. 9.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, art. 4.
- <sup>13</sup> At this stage I would like to thank Ms. Katarzyna Figiel for reading the fragment of the text about the *Statystyka muzeów NIMOZ* project and her comments.
- <sup>14</sup> Upon the basis of an e-mail survey addressed to selected museum institutions.
- <sup>15</sup> *Zbiory Sztuki. Muzeum Wielkopolskie w Poznaniu*. Katalog zbiorów, N. Pajzderski (introduction), Greater Poland Museum, Poznań 1939, p. 7
- <sup>16</sup> *Zasady ustalania stosunku pomiędzy projektowanym Muzeum Wojska a miejskim Muzeum Narodowym ze strony Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych – Archiwum Kancelarii Muzeum Wojska* I 341, 4.3, resolution no. 4030, cf. R. Matuszewski, *Dzieje = History*, in: R. Matuszewski, J. Kozimor, *Ograbione muzeum. Straty wojenne Muzeum Wojska w okresie II wojny światowej = Plundered and Rebuilt. The Polish Military Museum during the Second World War and After*, Polish Army Museum in Warsaw, Warszawa 2007, pp. 17-20.
- <sup>17</sup> This ownership dualism was the reason for including the Army Museum on the list of museums and collections published in: 'Nauka Polska' both as a separate unit and as the Fourth Department of the National Museum. Cf. E. Baranowicz, *Muzea i zbiory o charakterze muzealnym*, 'Nauka Polska' 1927, no. 7, p. 151,152.

- <sup>18</sup>The conference was accompanied by workshops conducted by willing museum curators invited to the conference. The workshops are continued as part of courses organised by NIMOZ. In 2016 the material of the courses was published and rendered available on: [http://nimos.pl/upload/wydawnictwa/ABC\\_Prowienienca\\_internet.pdf](http://nimos.pl/upload/wydawnictwa/ABC_Prowienienca_internet.pdf) [accessed on: 1 May 2016]./ABC\_Prowienienca\_internet.pdf [accessed on: 1 May 2016].
- <sup>19</sup>N. Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, *Co z dziełami sztuki zrabowanymi Żydom?*, 'Krytyka Polityczna' 8 December 2016, <http://www.krytykapolityczna.pl/en/artykuly/kultu-ra/20141208/polska-musi-zmierzyc-sie-z-tematem-dziel-sztuki-zrabowanych-zydom> [accessed on: 1 May 2016].
- <sup>20</sup>The meeting was accompanied by an animated film based on *Dziennik Fischhornu* by Bohdan Urbanowicz.
- <sup>21</sup>M. Sipayłto, *O metodzie badań provenienicyjnych starych druków*, B. Bieńkowska (ed.), 'Z Badań nad Polskimi Księgozbiorami Historycznymi' 1975, fasc. 1, pp. 9-30.
- <sup>22</sup>K. Piekarski, *O zadaniach i metodzie badań provenienicyjnych*, 'Przegląd Biblioteczny' 1929, year III, fasc. 3, pp. 388-415 (article-review of R. Kotula, *Właściciele rękopisów i starodruków zbiorów wielkopolskich Z. Czarneckiego*, Lwów 1929); K. Piekarski, *Książka w Polsce XV i XVI w. Kultura staropolska*, Kraków 1932; B. Kocowski, *Zadania i materiały badań provenienicyjnych w zakresie starych druków*, Warszawa 1951, cf. M. Sipayłto, *O metodzie badań...* pp. 9-10.
- <sup>23</sup>M. Sipayłto, *O metodzie badań...*, p. 9.
- <sup>24</sup>H. Juszcakowska, *Nowa Heloiza J.J. Rousseau w polskich bibliotekach XVIII wieku. Próba zastosowania badań provenienicyjnych do zagadnień recepcji dzieła*, B. Bieńkowska (ed.), 'Z Badań nad Polskimi Księgozbiorami Historycznymi' 1975, fasc. 1, pp. 31-61.
- <sup>25</sup>Cf. the history of the paintings in: G. Bastek, G. Janczarski, A. Ziemia, *Serenissima. Światło Wenecji. Dzieła mistrzów weneckich XIV-XVIII wieku ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie w świetle nowych badań technologicznych, historycznych i prac konserwatorskich*, MNW, Warszawa 1999.
- <sup>26</sup>B. Steinborn, *Katalog zbiorów malarstwa niderlandzkiego*, Wrocław, 1973 (with translations into the French; second bilingual edition 2006); B. Steinborn, *Katalog zbiorów malarstwa krajów romańskich*, MNW, Wrocław 1982 (with translations into the French; second bilingual edition 2012).
- <sup>27</sup>D. Juszcak, H. Małachowicz, *Malarstwo polskie do 1900. Katalog zbiorów*, Royal Castle in Warsaw, Warszawa 2007; review in: 'Kronika Zamkowa' 2008, no. 1-2/55-56/.
- <sup>28</sup>B. Steinborn, *Katalogi, których nam brak*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2008, no. 49, p. 389, <http://muzealnictworocznik.com/resources/html/article/details?id=43291> [accessed on: 31 January 2017].
- <sup>29</sup>Articles about reclaimed historical monuments were published in the periodical: 'Cenne, Bezcenne/Utracone', issued since 1997.
- <sup>30</sup>R. Olkowski, *O badaniu provenienicy muzealiów*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, pp. 27-37.
- <sup>31</sup>R. Olkowski, *O badaniu provenienicy muzealiów*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, pp. 27-37.
- <sup>32</sup>K. Zielińska, *Stan wyższej konieczności, czyli o potrzebie badań provenienicyjnych dzieł sztuki*, 'Cenne, Bezcenne/Utracone' 2015, no. 3-4 (84-85), pp. 30-33.
- <sup>33</sup>A. Lewandowska, K. Zalewska, K. Zielińska, *ABC Podstawy prowadzenia badań provenienicyjnych*, 'Szkolenia Narodowego Instytutu Muzealnictwa i Ochrony Zbiorów' 2015, no. 9.
- <sup>34</sup>M. Palica, *Problem badania provenienicy dzieł sztuki – przypadek Dolnego Śląska*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, pp. 38-43.
- <sup>35</sup>For the purpose of the project Magdalena Palica established the Rariora Artis Foundation, <http://www.slaskiekolekcje.eu/> – on her website she recommends a twin project: *Warszawa kolekcjonerska* dedicated to collectors from the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century; information about the project was published on 5 March 2014. The proposed link: <http://warszawakolekcjonerska.com> is not active.
- <sup>36</sup>Z. Bandurska, *Archivalien derehemaligen Breslauer Kunstmuseen*, 'Berichte und Forschungen. Jahrbuch des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa' 2004, Band 12.
- <sup>37</sup>L. M. Karecka, *Mienie zwane podworskim w Muzeum Narodowym w Warszawie*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, pp. 44-57.
- <sup>38</sup>L. M. Kamińska, *Powojenne składnice przemieszczonych dóbr kultury w Polsce. Przyczynek do szerszego opracowania*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2016, no. 57, pp. 149-155.
- <sup>39</sup>S. P. Kubiak, *O badaniu i muzealnych prezentacjach twórczości czasów zwyrodniałych na marginesie krakowskiej wystawy 'Polowanie na awangardę. Zakazana sztuka Trzeciej Rzeszy'*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, pp. 65-76.
- <sup>40</sup>M. Sabaciński, *Muzealniki na rozdrożu. Głos w sprawie przekazywania muzeom znalezisk archeologicznych z amatorskich odkryć*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, pp. 93-99.
- <sup>41</sup>O. Jakubowski, *Przestępczość przeciwko dziedzictwu martyrologicznemu związanemu z Holocaustem - zarys zagadnienia*, in: *Przestępczość przeciwko dziedzictwu kulturowemu. Diagnoza, zapobieganie, zwalczanie*, M. Trzcziński, O. Jakubowski (ed.), Katedra Kryminalistyki Wydziału Prawa, Administracji i Ekonomii Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2016, pp.103-113.
- <sup>42</sup>A. M. Dittwald, *Walka plemion indiańskich o zwrot szczątków przodków i kulturalnego dziedzictwa. Przykład restytucji z Ameryki Północno-Zachodniej*, 'Muzealnictwo' 2012, no. 53, pp. 77-87.
- <sup>43</sup>O. Jakubowski, *Problem możliwości wykorzystywania dokumentów związanych z wywozem zabytków i dóbr kultury do prób legalizacji na rynku antykwarycznym dzieł sztuki pochodzących z przestępstwa*, 'Opolskie Studia Administracyjno-Prawne' 2011, no. VIII, pp. 53-59.
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- <sup>58</sup>The Consortium includes: the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, University of Science and Technology in Cracow, the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, Institute of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology in Warsaw, the Jerzy Haber Institute of Catalysis and Surface Chemistry, Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow, the Robert Szwalski Institute of Fluid-Flow Machinery, Polish Academy Gdańsk, LANBOZ-National Museum in Cracow, National Centre for Nuclear Research in Świerk, Warsaw University of Technology, Cracow University of Economics, the Jagiellonian University, University of Warsaw, University of Wrocław, <http://www.fizyka.umk.pl/~erihs/index.php/nasi-czlonkowie/> [accessed on: 31 January 2017].
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# STRUGGLE FOR THE SO-CALLED RECLAMATION OF CULTURAL GOODS FROM VILNIUS AFTER WORLD WAR II\*

**Roman Olkowski**

The Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejów

During the inter-war period Wilno (today: Vilnius) was a dynamic centre of Polish culture.<sup>1</sup> Pride of place went to the **Stefan Batory University** (USB), heir to the magnificent tradition of the Wilno Academy and, at the same time, a modern scientific centre revived thanks to a decree issued by Marshal Józef Piłsudski on 28 August 1919. Particular importance was attached to the University's Faculty of Fine Arts,<sup>2</sup> established by the eminent artist Ferdynand Ruszczyk, with the following professors as lecturers: Jerzy Hoppen, Ludomir Sleńdziński, Benedykt Kubicki, Tymon Niesiołowski, Bronisław Jamontt, Stanisław Horno-Popławski *et al.* The University Library was composed predominantly of *Leleweliana* – the Joachim Lelewel collection totalling (in 1939) 377 000 volumes and 12 000 manuscripts,<sup>3</sup> presented by the Polish State to the Library collections in 1926.<sup>4</sup>

One of the most significant from the viewpoint of the collections was the **Eustachy and Emilia Wróblewski State Library** (BPW)<sup>5</sup> with an extensive collection created by Eustachy Wróblewski, containing mainly publications on medicine and entomology, supplemented by his wife, Emilia and son, Tadeusz, who added works on pedagogics,<sup>6</sup> and by books purchased by, i.a. Henryk Plater (ca. 6000 volumes from the sixteenth-eighteenth century), Józef Ciechanowiecki (2749 volumes from the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century), Józef Bieliński, and a complete set of publications issued by the Polish Academy of Learning (PAU).

The book collection was dominated by works dealing with law, politics, medicine, and biology, all in various languages, *Vilniana* and *Lithuanica*. In 1922, ten years after its establishment in 1912, the Eustachy and Emilia Wróblewski Library Society received a new statute and name: the E. and I. Wróblewski Society of Scientific Assistance. According to §1 of the Society's statute it was created for the purpose of *arranging and maintaining in the town of Wilno a collection of books, maps, drawings and other printed works as well as manuscripts, old acts, paintings, seals and similar collections for the sake of general, scientific, and educational benefit, and in particular to render scientific assistance to teachers and students of all scientific departments regardless of different nationalities and religions*, while § 2 stressed: *The seat of the Society is the town of Wilno and the Society collections cannot be transported from Wilno*.<sup>7</sup> A year later the library was nationalised and became known as the Eustachy and Emilia Wróblewski State Library, while collections of the Wróblewski Society of Scientific Assistance were deposited to the Polish state. In §12 of the Agreement between the Society of Scientific Assistance and the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education emphasis was placed on the fact that the Agreement had been signed only in relation to the Polish State.<sup>8</sup> In 1931 BPW had a total of 20 400 books, ca. 1400 titles of periodicals in 8400 volumes, 260 different publications in 4000 volumes, and 5800 works in

\* The term: so-called reclamation campaign is inadequate in relation to the entire gamut of activity undertaken in 1945 by the Polish government. In the described case it does not entail a return of objects to the former place of their storage but a transference of Polish property to Poland within the latter's new borders. More extensively in: L. M. Karecka, Akcja rewindykacyjna w latach 1945–1950. Spór o terminologię czy o istotę rzeczy, in: 'Ochrona Zabytków' 2002, no. 3-4, pp. 404-409; there: literature on the subject.

the *Vilniana-Lithuanica* section. The Rare Prints department included *Polonica* – 150 works from the fifteenth-sixteenth century, 730 from the seventeenth century, and 2240 from the eighteenth century as well as foreign monuments from the fifteenth-sixteenth century – 210 works, and from the seventeenth century – 1210 items. The BPW indices contained also 1450 atlases and maps, 285 albums, 2700 manuscripts, 7400 autographs, 50 paintings and drawings, 2400 photographs, and 2500 museum pieces.<sup>9</sup> The most valuable exhibits included, i.a. Masonic monuments from the collections of Jan Wolfgang, Waclaw Fedorowicz, and Henryk Tatur,<sup>10</sup> royal privileges, and material for the history of the universities of Warsaw and Wilno.

**The Society of Friends of Science in Wilno** (TPN), with a seat in 8 Lelewela Street, was another institution with significant cultural accomplishments. According to § 2 of the 1907 Act on establishing TPN its purpose was to *cultivate Polish language sciences, skills and literature, and in particular to study the country from the viewpoint of natural sciences, ethnography, history, economy, and statistics*.<sup>11</sup> The Society was the owner of a number of collections: library, numismatics (originating from, i.a. the Prince Michał Ogiński collection), natural history, ethnography, and art from, i.a. the Tyszkiewicz family, Ludwik Abramowicz, and Michał Brensztejn collections, on view at the TPN Museum.<sup>12</sup>

Pre-war Wilno was also the site of other museums, such as the Tatar Science Museum in 5 St. Michalski Lane, the Byelorussian Museum, and the Municipal Museum, opened on the eve of the war. Mention must be made of the fact that apart from the earlier listed libraries and museums Wilno had copious collections belonging to churches and many other institutions,<sup>13</sup> including the State Archive and the Municipal Archive. During World War II all those institutions were closed and their collections – scattered. Movable historical monuments comprising the property of Polish institutions and private owners were seized by the Lithuanian authorities and from 1940 kept at the Municipal Museum, later changed into the Lithuanian State Art Museum (PMS), which in 1941 received the most valuable paintings from the TPN collections. In 1943, at the time of the German occupation, part of the TPN library (4000 volumes) was moved to the Wróblewski Library. Precious incunabula were placed in the seat of the Calvinist commune board in Zawalna Street, and manuscripts were transferred to the State Archive in the former Benedictine monastery next to the church of St. Catherine. Part of the Museum collections, especially Lithuanian costumes from the M. Brensztejn collection, was transferred to the Lithuanian Society of Friends of Science on Antokol. Ultimately, the remaining TPN museum exhibits were included into PMS, and the TPN building became the seat of the Historical Institute of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.<sup>14</sup> In this way, the Polish museum – featuring the most extensive collections in Wilno – ceased to exist.

After the expulsion of the Germans from Wilno, collections amassed in the building of the Municipal Museum were examined and put in order (from July 1944 to March 1945). They were then divided into sections: I General Art Department under Prof. Jerzy Hoppen; II Lithuanian Folk Art Department, and III Historical Department – both under Lithuanian supervision; IV Old Wilno Department – *Vilniana*,

and V Library, amounting to ca. 6000 volumes. Out of a total of 1073 paintings, 641 originated from TPN and the rest from the Municipal Museum or were the private deposits of Helena Dowgiałłowa, the Romer family, and others. Particularly noteworthy were works by Bartholomew Spranger, Frans Francken, and Jacob Steveyck, and among canvases by Polish artists those by Franciszek Smuglewicz, Ferdynand Ruszczyk, Aleksander Szturman, Bronisław Jamontt, Tymon Niesiołowski, and Michał Rouba.<sup>15</sup> In November 1939 the Wróblewski Library became the Institute of Lithuanian Philology. The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences was established in the second half of 1940 and included confiscated Polish private collections and the earlier mentioned TPN library.<sup>16</sup> It later became obvious that it was impossible to convey to Poland other collections of pre-war Polish institutions, with the exception of the mementos of Eliza Orzeszkowa, secured during the war,<sup>17</sup> and part of the TPN collections.

In 1939–1944 Wilno and the entire Wilno region changed hands six times, which affected the collections of local institutions.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, territorial changes were confirmed by the Potsdam Conference, which left Wilno outside Poland. An *Agreement between the Polish Committee for National Liberation and the Government of the Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic on the evacuation of Polish citizens from the territory of the Lithuanian SRR and the Lithuanian population from the territory of Poland*<sup>19</sup> (further as: Agreement) was signed in Lublin on 22 September 1944. The evacuation of the Polish population was to be supervised by the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland for Evacuation from the Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic (LSRR).<sup>20</sup> Somewhat later, the efforts of the Poles resulted in the establishment of a **Department of Culture** (further as: Department) within the structure of the Office; the Department was to collect material for the future reclamation of Polish cultural goods to Poland. Originally, such a Department was not foreseen in the plan of the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary,<sup>21</sup> and was created only after Dr Maria Rzeuska,<sup>22</sup> subsequently head of the Department, talked to Władysław Wolski, a Minister of the Polish Committee for National Liberation (PKWN).<sup>23</sup> The Department of Culture, known also as the Culture Office or the Culture and Press Office, commenced its activity, as did the whole Office, on 1 December 1944. Its prime task was the protection of private Polish cultural goods, which, due to the evacuation of the Polish population from Lithuania, could be damaged, as well as the preparation of documentation for the future Reclamation Commission. R. Rzeuska wrote: *The organisation principles and the system of work were determined not by official means, i.e. instructions, but by the experience of current necessities and needs. (...) The Department was compelled to rely on its own forces and ingenuity*.<sup>24</sup> Officially, the Department's tasks were described in the 'Provisional' instruction issued by the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary on 31 December 1945 and signed by Ludwik Abramowicz, i.e. a year after the establishment of the Department of Culture and the Office as a whole.<sup>25</sup> Presumably, these principles were devised by the employees of the Department of Culture.<sup>26</sup> In § 23 of the instruction we read: *Competences of the Department of Culture include:*



1. View of Vilnius, 1943



2. View of Vilnius, 1943



a) repatriation from the territory of the LSRR of Polish cultural goods (books, etc.) originating from donations or purchased from private persons,

b) receiving financial donations directly from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Moscow for the purpose of the repatriation of cultural goods from the LSRR, the expenditure of those donations according to possessed instructions, and keeping suitable accounts,

b) assisting in the transportation of cultural goods to Poland by Polish repatriated persons,

c) storing cultural goods intended for repatriation from the LSRR to the moment of their transport to Poland,

d) supervision over Polish culture workers in the LSRR,

e) running an administrative office and own archive.<sup>27</sup>

In different periods the Department of Culture employed from two to ten persons: Maria Rzeuska (head), deputy heads, and heads of suitable sections: the *Vilniana* library, bookkeeping, a storehouse, transport, and a typist. Permanent employees included an expert on art and museums, whose task was to assess the artistic value, and partly the material value, of the incoming objects – a function of particular importance while making purchases. The Department began working with a two-person staff: M. Rzeuska and Halina Zalewska, later accompanied by Doc. Dr Bronisław Halicki. Throughout its entire existence the Department employed altogether 25 persons.<sup>28</sup> In numerous instances the co-workers of the Department were freelancers working free of charge. Apart from functioning at the central Office, i.e. the seat of the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary in Wilno, the Department of Culture was active also in the region of Wilno and pre-war Lithuania: Kiejdany, Kowno, Poniewież, and Wiłkomierz. Evacuation outposts of the Offices of Regional Plenipotentiaries engaged special representatives, who upon the basis of received instructions and in close contact with the Department of Culture in Wilno gathered material needed by the Department and concerning the history of libraries, archives, museums and other cultural goods of Wilno and its region.<sup>29</sup>

According to plans of the Chief Plenipotentiary Office the reclamation of cultural property from Wilno was to be entrusted to a special **Reclamation Commission**, for which the collected material were *indispensable and collecting them, once the suitable moment [reclamation] comes, could be hampered or outright impossible*.<sup>30</sup> Work was carried out to the beginning of September 1945. Attempts were made to obtain as much information as possible about each institution, *especially those whose Polishness is unquestionable*.<sup>31</sup> Literature and interviews were prepared and completed using questionnaires conceived by M. Rzeuska<sup>32</sup> and filled by persons connected with the given institution both prior to and during the war. Collecting information was the task of Dr Helena Hleb-Koszańska from the USB Library, Janina Kapuścińska from BPW, Aleksander Korbut and Józef Kojdecki – members of the museum staff, Helena Drege, associated with BPW and TPN, and Władysław Zimnicki. The systematically collected data, especially wartime, were to become an important reclamation argument in relations with the Soviet Union and the authorities of the Lithuanian SSR.<sup>33</sup> At the beginning of 1945 work began on accumulating a library (periodicals, Masonic material, albums, photographs, handwritten archival



3. Maria Rzeuska on chests packed with books by employees of the Cultural Department

material, and historical documents) pertaining to Wilno and its region as well as Polish-Lithuanian relations, which was to become a useful collection of necessary information for the Reclamation Commission. The question of reclamations from the Eastern territories was broached by Witold Suchodolski in a memorial: *Rewindykacja polskiego mienia kulturalnego z obszaru byłych województw wschodnich*, in which he stressed: *If the entire Polish population from former Eastern voivodeships wins the opportunity and right to join its nation by resettling to Central Poland or regained ancient Polish lands – so should everything that documents its centuries-long spiritual contact with the rest of the nation and represents accomplishments shared with the nation, i.e. Polish cultural goods, return to their common homeland*.<sup>34</sup> *Projekt umowy polsko-litewskiej w sprawie repatriacji zbiorów polskich z LSRR* prepared by Ministry of Culture and Art (MKiS) foresaw a reclamation of cultural goods from Wilno. The goods in question included predominantly:

a) works of Polish artists and scholars,

b) mementos of Polish monarchs, leaders, statesmen, state dignitaries, and Polish social, scientific, and art activists,

c) Polish collections as a whole, regardless of the already conducted nationalisation since they constitute unquestionably Polish cultural accomplishments,

d) statues of Poles located in the discussed terrains since they are of no interest to the Lithuanian nation,



4. Employees of the Cultural Department

e) Polish national foundations intended by their private Polish donors for the cultivation of Polish culture,

f) Polish libraries created in the years 1991–1939,

g) libraries of assorted Polish societies and libraries established by the Poles as distinct institutions regardless of the time of their origin,

h) archives concerning regions belonging to the present-day Polish State.<sup>35</sup>

Such an agreement was never signed despite the efforts of Vice-Minister of Art and Culture Leon Kruczkowski, who carried on a copious correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Moscow.<sup>36</sup>

The Department of Culture initiated activities intent on protecting Polish cultural goods by accepting objects as deposits, thus establishing contact with Polish society and winning its trust. This was an extremely important step because during the war private persons stored objects of Polish culture, the public property of assorted Polish institutions or persons, who, as a consequence of the war, found themselves either outside Wilno or were no longer alive. The deposits were accepted upon the basis of a special act, which foresaw also donations as compensation for their transport to Poland. However, M. Rzeuska recalled: *This was applied only in the case of those persons who, possessing more valuable and larger collections, could make such a donation.*<sup>37</sup> As a sign of their gratitude for transporting cultural goods across the border Janina Błażewiczowa, Helena Dowgiałłowa, Helena Montowtowa, Zofia Romer, and Jadwiga Łukowska offered individual objects to the

collections of the National Museum in Warsaw (MNW). Some of the deposits were made by third parties who, during the absence of the owners, in this fashion salvaged historical monuments. Zygmunt Wrześniowski, an employee of the Department, transferred a collection of photographic plates of landscape photographs of Wilno, Brześć, Krzemieniec, the Wilno voivodeship, and Warsaw – a total of 281 glass plates and 99 photographic films belonging to Wojciech Buyko, member of the Wilno Photo-club.<sup>38</sup> In another case a seventeenth-century canvas: *The Holy Family*, the property of Count Ludwik Choiseul of Kowno, was deposited by Michał Ukiński,<sup>39</sup> while Professor Jerzy Hoppen deposited a *golden ring, a gift from the town of Poznań to the actor Szczurkiewicz from 1926*, the property of the Society of Friends of Science,<sup>40</sup> and the Committee of custody over the artworks of Leonia Szczepanowiczowa, established in Wilno, protected the artist's legacy by presenting it to the Department. The efforts of the Department staff also made it possible to bring over to Poland, i.a. collections belonging to the Convent of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration: 20 paintings and six chests containing archival material, old prints and books<sup>41</sup> as well as 18 paintings and ten chests of archival material, the property of the Congregation of the Mission.<sup>42</sup>

The Department of Culture also accepted donations made by persons aware of the enormity of the wartime losses suffered by Polish cultural goods, often looted by the Germans. The most valuable donations were made by Jadwiga Brensztejnowa, widow of Michał Brensztejn. Apart from a vast collection of *Vilniana* and numerous objects she entrusted 21 royal documents, including parchment ones

Błażewiczowa 3

Oświadczenie.

Tekst obowiązujący w stosunku do Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie.

Niniejszym stwierdzam, że na ręce p. Pełnomocnika Głównego do Spraw Ewakuacji w Wilnie - przekazałam następujący - wymieniony również w osobnym oświadczeniu - komplet mebli czechołkowych w charakterze depozytu tymczasowego do Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie:

- 1/kantorek,
- 2/szafka oszklona.- ornamenty czarne,
- 3/stół owalny z deseniem pośrodku,
- 4/kanapa - twarde oparcie, siedzenie na sprężynach wkładane,
- 5/4 krzesła - siedzenia na sprężynach wkładane,
- 6/4 krzesła połamane,
- 7/postument z ozdobą w kolorze czarnym.

Odbiorcą mebli mogą być: Janina Błażewiczowa, Janina i Ewa Ruszczyćówny oraz p. Maria Wajse. Jako kompensatę za przewiezienie i przechowanie wyżej wymienionych mebli - ofiarowuję w formie daru następujące przedmioty:

- 1/szkic olejny "Chata" - Ruszczyca,
- 2/obraz olejny "Kwiaty" - T. Niesiołowski,
- 3/litografię - hr. Włodzimierz Potocki - pułkownik W.P.
- 4/kieszonkowy zegar skoneczny/zabyt kowy/-

Wilno, dnia 20 sierpnia 1945 roku.

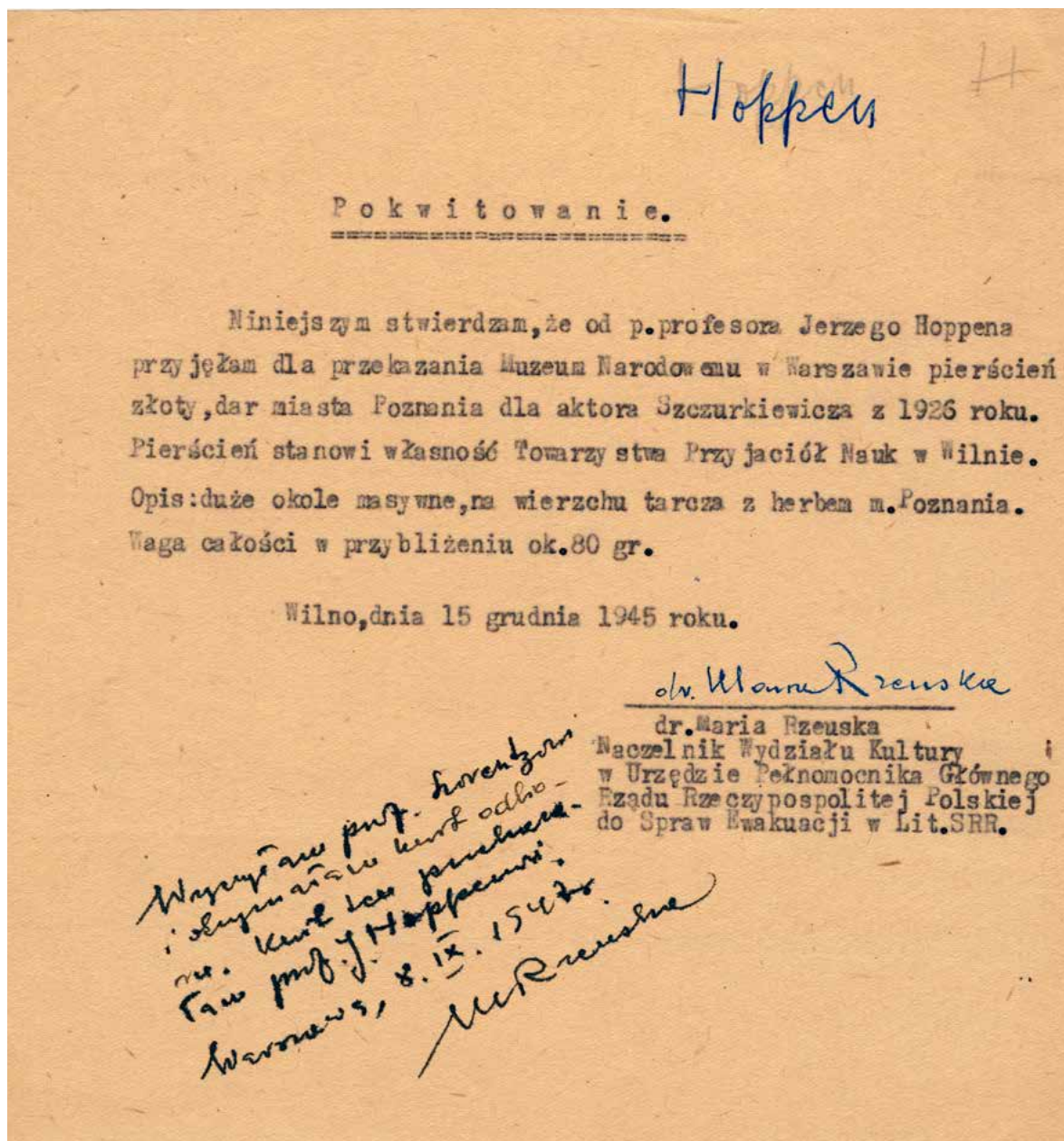
Janina Błażewiczowa



from the sixteenth-eighteenth century. Janina Reniger offered paintings and collections of family documents,<sup>43</sup> while the Górski family, living in former Lithuania, conferred paintings and several hundred examples of archival material.<sup>44</sup>

Another way of protecting cultural goods from Wilno, applied by the Department of Culture, involved purchases, although the Department started functioning without suitable financial means since the budget of the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary did not foresee *any sums, even for packing, costs of labour, and transport of works of art and libraries.*<sup>45</sup> For all practical purposes, the Department of Culture did not receive any financial assistance from the Polish government. At the time it obtained 100 000 roubles,

although Rzeuska maintained that the needs were at least ten times as large. In view of the above, on 25 August 1945 the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary turned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a request for a successive donation for the Department of Culture for, i.a. the purchase of Polish cultural goods.<sup>46</sup> Correspondence between MKiS and the Ministry of State Treasury concerning a donation of 800 000 zlotys, of which 500 000 zlotys were to be offered by MKiS and 300 000 zlotys were to be provided by the Ministry of Education, lasted for more than half a year.<sup>47</sup> The funds in question were to be presented to the Chief Plenipotentiary in Wilno through the intermediary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ). In view of the fact that this promise was not



6. Receipt from 15 December 1945 concerning the ring given by J. Hoppen

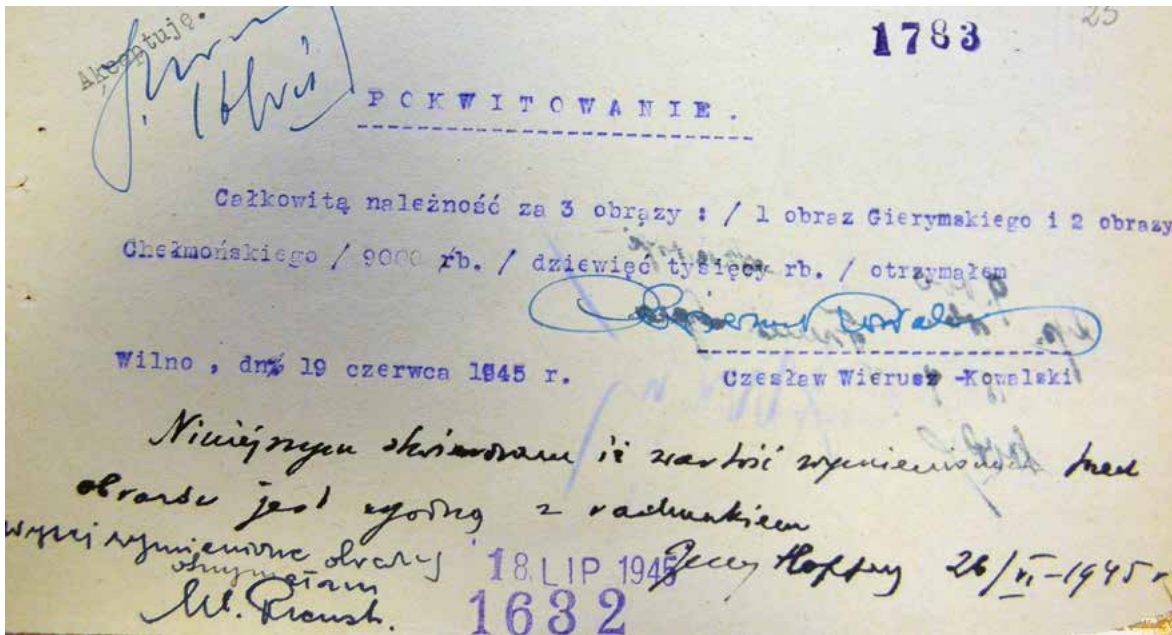
kept, the Chief Plenipotentiary enclosed in a letter of 14 December 1945, directly addressed the Ministry of State Treasury, the earlier cited *Sprawozdanie z rocznej pracy...*<sup>48</sup> and a memorial by M. Rzeuska: *Sytuacja dóbr kulturalnych polskich w Wilnie, na Wileńszczyźnie i na terenie b. Litwy, stanowiących własność prywatną*,<sup>49</sup> in which she warned: *I regard the fact that Lithuanians and Lithuanian institutions are buying up Polish cultural goods to be one of the greatest failures. Among all the social strata the gravest material situation in Wilno is that of the Polish cultural elite and the former so-called landowning aristocracy for whom almost the only way to survive the war was to sell the most valuable objects of art, science, and culture, thus diminishing and destroying whole collections, sometimes completed for centuries. (...) Forced by sheer necessity, the Poles, without any other sources of obtaining cash, sell invaluable treasures of Polish culture for all practical purposes in return for nothing, and in this way Polish society, so greatly impoverished in this domain by wartime damages, loses them for always, because a sold object sold will never be regained, in even the most favourable conditions of eventual reclamation.*<sup>50</sup> Despite the absence of donations the Department attempted to make 'on account' purchases either by resorting to loans from the Department's budget or paying the sellers due sums at a later date. The purchases made at this time included, i.a.: *Portrait of Bishop Albertrandi* by Bacciarelli, *Self-portrait* by Albertrandi, *St. Helen* by an anonymous painter, and *Portrait of the Artist's Wife* by Rustem as well as canvases by Horowitz, Gierymski, and Chelmoński, a silk shawl, porcelain, etc. Nevertheless, Rzeuska recalled: *As a result of numerous efforts and requests as well as the actually favourable attitude of the already mentioned Ambassador Modzelewski, and later Ambassador to Moscow and Rector of UMCS [University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska] Henryk Raabe, as well as Director of the Department of Schools of Higher Learning Professor Stanisław Arnold of the University of Warsaw, and director of the chancellery of the Minister of Education Józefowicz, a several times more effective assistance was received via the Embassy. Extremely notable help from the MKiS was also obtained for the purchase of works of art and museum exhibits. The sum of 500 000 zlotys, intended as a special donation from MKiS for the Department expenses is owed in the first place to the efforts and exceptionally considerate attitude of Kurowski, Vice-Minister of the Treasury and a native of Wilno. The Department received further considerable sums to be spent by means of money orders made in Warsaw also from MKiS and owes them to the kindness and appreciation of the situation on the part of Professor Dr Władysław Tomkiewicz, director of the Department of Repatriation and Compensation in the Department of Culture at the Ministry. All those persons and others who indirectly contributed to supplying the Department with financial means deserve deepest gratitude. The majority included those who protected valuable Polish cultural goods condemned to destruction and improved the Polish state of possession as regards culture, already greatly impoverished by the war.*<sup>51</sup>

Objects marked as intended for transport were delivered personally by their owners, and sometimes were reported by them or else the employees of the Department of

Culture contacted the owners. After a year of working for the Department its staff members were informed about resources of cultural goods not only in Wilno but also in the environs. *This Intelligence work called for constant excursions by foot to the town, on the average once or twice a day, as well as frequent trips with vehicular transport, which was very difficult to arrange. Car transport was one of the many daily problems of working in the Department since being granted an official car was often simply impossible.*<sup>52</sup> Another problem, which the Department of Culture was compelled to tackle, was the absence of storage space. To the end of June 1945 books and historical monuments were kept in a Department room and then in corridors in 16 Kościuszko Street. Moving to a new Department seat in 48 Wileńska Street did not help much but at least there the Department obtained a separate interior for a storeroom. The greatest problem – despite the efforts made by the Department personnel – was winning the right to arrange transport. Regarding private property the above mentioned Agreement of 22 September 1944 permitted the evacuees to convey up two tons of belongings for a single family.<sup>53</sup> It did not, however, consent to carrying *works of art and antiquities if one or the other comprised a collection or as individual examples unless they are the property of the evacuee's family, arms (with the exception of hunting rifles) and armour, photographs (apart from personal ones), plans, maps, and furniture, transported by railway or automobiles owing to difficulties caused by wartime conditions.*<sup>54</sup> Since books were not mentioned on the list of items whose transport was allowed or forbidden, eventual consent depended on the good will of the Lithuanians. Works of art could be theoretically transported as long as they were family property. *In practice the citizen encounters unsurpassable difficulties. Taking larger paintings, especially those not rolled up, into a railway carriage encountered difficulties created by the Lithuanian side and often the understandable protest of the passengers.*<sup>55</sup> Andrzej Miłosz recalled: *If objects of value for culture were transported our representative argued about them with the NKVD. Interventions also helped if they were supported by a bottle of moonshine. We had a special fund just in case to calm things down. Nevertheless, the outcomes of our efforts were rather meagre. After all, we know how many valuable Polish cultural goods were left behind.*<sup>56</sup>

Manual work connected with packing and sending off the transports was performed by Department employees, and chests were built by a carpenter specially hired by the Department while the embarkation of the chests from the Office to the train carriage and handling at the frontier were carried out by specially hired manual workers. All told, the Department of Culture dispatched 17 transports from Wilno, starting with the first transport, which left the town on 9 March 1945 and contained documentation intended for the Directorate of Museums and the Preservation of Cultural Monuments (NDMiOZ), and ending with the ninth transport, sent off on 8 May 1946 for the Ministry of Education; all were received by the National Museum – at the time the largest museum repository.<sup>57</sup> The incoming chests were stored in the underground interiors of MNW and upon numerous occasions opened either to assemble the objects or hand them over to private persons who thanks to the

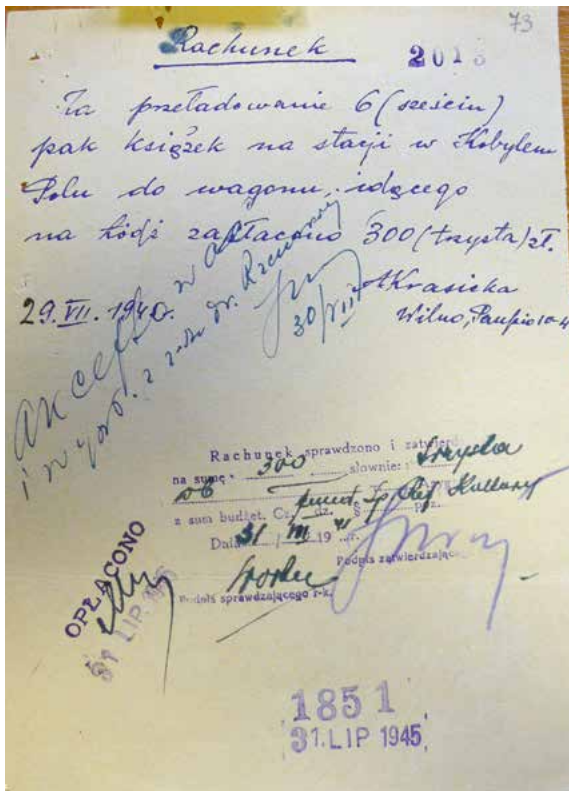




7. Receipt – a bill

kindness of the Department of Culture could in this way bring their property over to Poland. Consequently, not all objects were listed. This held true in particular for books and

archival material contained in the mentioned 17 transports and immediately presented to the National Library and the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. The documents of MNW described the Wilno reclamation as: *Transports of the Department of Culture at the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Republic of Poland for Evacuation in the Lithuanian SSR and presented to the National Museum in the name of the Directorate of Museums and the Preservation of Cultural Monuments in the 1945–1947 period.*<sup>58</sup> All told, the lists contained 1518 items,<sup>59</sup> subsequently included into the Museum collections. These were objects purchased in Wilno by the Department of Culture and entrusted by the Polish population to the Department employees. A further 470 listed deposits were in subsequent years returned to their owners and sometimes purchased by the Museum, while another part still remains at MNW as deposits.



8. Receipt for work for the Cultural Department

Apart from the mentioned 17 transports the Department also sent books to Warsaw: directly to the National Library – five transports with 18 000 volumes, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – a single transport with 1526 volumes. Moreover, a transport containing 300 volumes was delivered to meet the needs of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Moscow. Museum pieces were transported exclusively to Warsaw but book collections arrived also in other locations, by way of example, Łódź, where the emergent university received eight transports with 15 650 books, the School District Board – 3000 volumes, the Municipal Library and the School District Board in Białystok – 1800 volumes. The University of Toruń obtained three transports, and the University Poznań – a single transport with 1800 books. A total of 2750 volumes were dispatched to the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin and the Catholic University of Lublin. The needs of the Municipal Library in Olsztyn were met by a transport of 3000 volumes. The Academy





9. Car belonging to the Cultural Department

(Photos: 1, 2 – J. Bulhak, from the collection of the Józef Piłsudski Family Foundation, scan by K. Rogalska; 3-6, 9 – from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, scan by Olkowski; 7 – from the collection of AAN, photo R. Olkowski, 8 – from the collection AAN, scan by R. Olkowski)

of Learning in Cracow was presented with 2500 volumes. Altogether, in the course of two years 69 805 volumes were sent to Poland and subsequently all became the property of the institutions, for which they were intended.

This article is a study on a successive link in the so-called cultural property reclamation campaign conducted after the Second World War by the Polish administration. Apart from presenting facts it proposes to bring the reader closer

to the person and outstanding work of Maria Rzeuska and her collaborators. Despite various obstacles, these persons attempted in assorted ways to obtain cultural goods from Wilno for Poland. The article also depicts the sluggishness, indecisiveness, and absence of support on the part of the Polish authorities as well as the activity of the Lithuanian authorities objecting to handing over a centuries-old Polish cultural legacy to Poland.

**Abstract:** The article describes the so-called requisition campaign carried out in Vilnius city and region and Kaunas, Lithuania, the aim of which was to recover the cultural heritage which was supposed to stay abroad as a result of the change of borders after World War II for the Polish State and its citizens.

People connected with the Cultural Department established by the Polish Committee of National Liberation in 1944 at the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary for Evacuation in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Cultural Department carried out this activity under the Agreement between the Polish Committee of National

Liberation and the Government of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic regarding the evacuation of Polish citizens from Soviet Lithuania and Lithuanian citizens from Poland concerning the mutual repatriation of peoples.

The article aims to recall the private collections and most important cultural institutions in Vilnius from the period before 1939 which failed to be transported from Vilnius to Poland, despite the great efforts of many people. However, regardless of the result, the actions described and those who conducted them deserve to be recalled and mentioned in the subject-matter literature.

**Keywords:** Vilnius, reclamation, National Museum in Warsaw, Maria Rzeuska, museum exhibits, Vilnius collections.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> E. Chwalewik, *Zbiory polskie. Archiwa, biblioteki, gabinety, galerie, muzea i inne zbiory pamiątek przeszłości w ojczyźnie i na obczyźnie w porządku alfabetycznym według miejscowości ułożone*, vol. II, Warszawa 1927; M. Ambros, *Biblioteki wileńskie*, in: 'Ateneum Wileńskie' 1932, year VIII; E. Baranowicz, *Muzea i zbiory o charakterze muzealnym w Polsce*, in: 'Nauka Polska' 1927, vol. VII; works by M. Brensztejn: *Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Wilnie od r. 1832*, Wilno 1925, *idem*, *Informator o towarzystwach naukowych na Litwie i Rusi Białej*, Wilno 1914, *idem*, *Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk*, Wilno 1936; J. Remer, *Cuda Polski – Wilno*, Poznań 1934; S. Rygiel, H. Drege, *Biblioteka im. Wróblewskich w Wilnie 1912–1931*, Wilno 1934. More recent works include predominantly: H. Ilgiewicz, *Societates Academicae Vilnenses: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie (1907–1939) i jego poprzednicy*, Warszawa 2005, *eadem*, *Biblioteka Państwowa im. Eustachego i Emilii Wróblewskich w Wilnie (1912–1939) oraz towarzystwa ją popierające*, Toruń 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> More on this subject in: I. Kołozżyńska, *Wydział Sztuk Pięknych Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie*, in: *Ferdynand Ruszczyk 1870–1936. Pamiątnik wystawy*, Warszawa 1966, pp. 104–118 and F. Ruszczyk, *Wydział Sztuk Pięknych Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w latach 1919–1929*, Wilno 1929.
- <sup>3</sup> M. Danilewiczowa, *Straty wojenne bibliotek polskich*, in: 'Teki Historyczne' 1948, no. 1, p. 18.
- <sup>4</sup> It must be added that the USB structures included three museums – Pre-historical Archaeology and Ethnography in 11 Zamkowa Street, and Natural Sciences in 3 Zakrętowa Street: K. Lewkowicz, *Krótki przewodnik Wilno i bliższe okolice z dodaniem planów orientacyjnych oraz licznych fotografii zabytków m. Wilna*, Wilno [1938], p. 87.
- <sup>5</sup> S. Rygiel, H. Drege, *Biblioteka im. Wróblewskich...* describes the history of BPW to 1934.
- <sup>6</sup> More in: H. Drege, *Śp. Tadeusz Wróblewski jako założyciel Biblioteki im. E. i E. Wróblewskich*, Wilno 1926.
- <sup>7</sup> Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences (further as: APAN), Helena Drege Collection, call no. 68/10, p. 1.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.
- <sup>9</sup> BPW resources were described by: S. Rygiel, H. Drege, *Biblioteka im. Wróblewskich...*, p. 16. To 1939 BPW collections were certainly considerably enlarged.
- <sup>10</sup> S. Rygiel, H. Drege, *Biblioteka im. Wróblewskich...*, p. 7. *Masonica* were presented at the Wilno Iconographic Museum conducted by BPW, *ibidem*, p. 18.
- <sup>11</sup> Act on the Society of Friends of Science in Wilno, Wilno 1907, p. 1.
- <sup>12</sup> The Central Archives of Modern Records, Ministry of Culture and Art (further as: AAN, MKiS), call no. 387/191 – Catalogue of pre-historical collections, inventory of manuscripts from the TPN Library in Wilno, and a book of donations for the Society Museum.
- <sup>13</sup> The M. Karłowicz Conservatory, the Archive of the Roman-Catholic Consistory, the Archive of the Roman-Catholic Seminary, the Archive of the Roman-Catholic Chapter, the Archive of the Evangelical-Augsburg Commune, the Archive of the Wilno School District, the Archive of the Zawadzki Book Store, the Radziwiłł Archive from Nieśwież, the Tomasz Zan Library, the Medical Society Library, the Library of the Evangelical-Augsburg Synod, the III Gymnasium Library, the Central Pedagogical Library and other cultural-educational institutions.
- <sup>14</sup> AAN, MKiS, call no. 387/106 – Paper: *Materiały informacyjne dotyczące zbiorów Woj. Wileńskiego*, written by Józef Kojdecki.
- <sup>15</sup> AAN, MKiS, call no. 387/117. Paper: *Stan dzieł sztuki w Wilnie*, written by Irena Kołozżyńska.
- <sup>16</sup> AAN, MKiS, call no. 387/109. Material for the Wilno file (questionnaire) – explanations by Jadwiga Kapuścińska.
- <sup>17</sup> Today in the MNW collections.
- <sup>18</sup> My article does not discuss wartime losses and plunder committed by Soviet and German occupants during the Second World War.
- <sup>19</sup> Quoted after: *Przesiedlenie ludności polskiej z Kresów Wschodnich do Polski 1944–1947* (documents selected, prep. and ed. by S. Ciesielski), Warszawa 1999, pp. 55–62.

- <sup>20</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 58. Article 7 of the Treaty. More on repatriation in, e.g. A. Paczoska, *Dzieci Jaltę. Exodus ludności polskiej z Wileńszczyzny w latach 1944–1947*, Toruń 2003.
- <sup>21</sup>AAN, MKiS 387 /16 - *Sprawozdanie z rocznej pracy Wydziału oraz przedstawienie jego potrzeb finansowych z dnia 10.12.1945 r.*, prep. by M. Rzeuska, pp. 176-181 (further as: AAN, MKiS, *Sprawozdanie 1944-1945*).
- <sup>22</sup>Maria Aleksandra Rzeuska (1908–1982), Ph.D. in Polish philology, historian of literature, student of Prof. Manfred Kridl. At the time of the Second World War lived in Wilno. During the Soviet occupation worked as a proofreader in 'Gazeta Ludowa' (later known as 'Prawda Wileńska'). During the German occupation involved in clandestine teaching; in September 1941 arrested by the Gestapo for helping Jews and prisoners. Upon her return to Warsaw worked in the Directorate of Museums and the Preservation of Cultural Monuments at the MKiS, where she ran the Eastern Reclamations Office, and then at Warsaw University, the Institute of Literary Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences; after: M. Głowiński, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXXIV/1, Wrocław etc. 1992, pp. 87-89; M. Rzeuska was recalled also by S. Lorentz, *Album Wileńskie*, Warszawa 1986, p. 2. In certain publications her name is mistakenly spelled Rzewuska.
- <sup>23</sup>National Museum in Warsaw, Inventory Department, Reclamation Material, Wilno (further as: MNW Wilno). Department of Culture [...] *Sprawozdanie z pracy za okres od dnia 1 XII 1944 r. do dnia 11.1947 r.* (further as: MNW, Wilno, Report 1944–1947) prepared by M. Rzeuska.
- <sup>24</sup>*Ibidem*.
- <sup>25</sup>AAN, *Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Republic of Poland for Evacuation in the Lithuanian SSR* (further as: AAN, GPR), call no. 523/175, p. 24.
- <sup>26</sup>Cf. L. M. Pamińska, *Powojenne składowe przemieszczanych dóbr kultury w Polsce. Przyczynek do szerszego opracowania*, in: 'Muzealnictwo' 2016, no. 57, pp. 76-77.
- <sup>27</sup>AAN, GPR, call no. 523/175, pp. 31-32.
- <sup>28</sup>Owing to insufficient space it is impossible for this article to present in detail all the persons working in the Department of Culture; thus I shall only mention that apart from M. Rzeuska, H. Zalewska and B. Halicki they included: Zygmunt Wrzeźniowski, Stefan Rosiak, Wacława Prządowa, Irena Syrewiczowa, Wanda Popielowa, Euzebiusz Łopaciński, Walenty Paszkowski, Dorota Duszyńska-Meyer, Olgierd Bielski, Franciszek Palewicz, Ada Świąćicka, Marta Burba, Marian Niemczynowicz, Kazimierz Kadenacy, Wilhelm Kuklis, Edward Kłysewicz, Janusz Paradistał, Jan Tracowski, Prof. Jerzy Hoppen, Weronika Romanowska-Tarasewicz, Filomena Bortkiewiczowa, and Karol Lipiński. The above listed persons worked full-time in the Department of Culture. The rotation of posts in the Department was caused primarily by repatriation to Poland.
- <sup>29</sup>AAN, MKiS, Report 1944–1945, p. 176.
- <sup>30</sup>MNW, Wilno, Report 1944–1947.
- <sup>31</sup>*Ibidem*.
- <sup>32</sup>MNW, Wilno. Three questionnaires were prepared for libraries, archives, and museums. Apart from basic information pertaining to institutions essential questions concerned damage incurred by the German and Soviet occupants and the eventual scattering and state of the collections.
- <sup>33</sup>*Ibidem*.
- <sup>34</sup>AAN, MKiS, call no. 387/16, pp. 143-145.
- <sup>35</sup>AAN, MKiS, call no. 387/16, p. 169.
- <sup>36</sup>See: file-AAN, MKiS, call no. 387/16.
- <sup>37</sup>MNW, Wilno, Report 1944-1947.
- <sup>38</sup>MNW, Wilno, receipt from 1 October 1946; W. Buyko was related to Z. Wrzeźniowski.
- <sup>39</sup>MNW, Wilno, Receipt from 13 September 1946.
- <sup>40</sup>MNW, Wilno, Receipt from 15 December 1945.
- <sup>41</sup>MNW, Wilno, Receipt from 23 May 1946.
- <sup>42</sup>MNW, Wilno, Receipt from 22 May 1946.
- <sup>43</sup>According to an appendix to a Statement of 9 August 1945 the donations were to be handed over to MNW and the University of Toruń with the reservation that if Wilno were to stay within the post-war borders of Poland then the paintings would be restored to Wilno and become the property of the Society of Friends of Science.
- <sup>44</sup>MNW, Wilno.
- <sup>45</sup>MNW, Wilno, Report 1944-1947.
- <sup>46</sup>MN, MKiS, call no. 387/16, p. 133.
- <sup>47</sup>MN, MKiS, call no. 387/16, p. 118,130-135.
- <sup>48</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 175.
- <sup>49</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 182-187.
- <sup>50</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 185.
- <sup>51</sup>MNW, Wilno, Report 1944-1947.
- <sup>52</sup>*Ibidem*.
- <sup>53</sup>Art. 3, par. 2 of the Treaty, quoted after: *Przesiedlenie ludności polskiej z Kresów Wschodnich do Polski 1944-1947*, S. Ciesielski (selection, prep. and ed. of documents), Warszawa 1999, p. 56.
- <sup>54</sup>Art. 3, par. 3 of the Treaty, *ibidem*, pp. 56-57.
- <sup>55</sup>MN, MKiS, call no. 387/16, p. 184.
- <sup>56</sup>A. Miłosz, 'Lietuvis' w dowodzie, in: 'Karta' 1992, no. 7, p. 41.
- <sup>57</sup>More extensively in: L. M. Kamińska, *Wawelska i Warszawska – największe powojenne składowe przemieszczanych dóbr kultury w Polsce*, published in this issue of 'Muzealnictwo'. At the MNW the collections in question were studied by Irena Kołoszyńska, born in Wilno.
- <sup>58</sup>Complete documentation is available in the Inventory Department at the MNW, and copies – in AAN.
- <sup>59</sup>The actual number of objects is larger because they, e.g. graphic folios, were treated collectively.



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Historian, graduate of the University of Gdańsk and Post- Graduate Museology Studies at the Faculty of History at the University of Warsaw; (1995–2013) worked at the National Museum in Warsaw – (to 2012) deputy chief inventory taker, (from 2010) specialised in studying the provenance of museum exhibits, (from 2013) senior curator – head of the Collection Department at the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejów; author of numerous articles about studying the provenance of museum exhibits, the fate of Polish museum collections, and the history of the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1860–1940 and 1948.

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Photo Wojciech Staszewicz from the collection of the Walery Rzewuski History Museum of Photography in Cracow



# DIGITISATION IN MUSEUMS





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# THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE IN THE PROCESS OF DESIGNING DIGITAL SERVICES FOR MUSEUMS

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Logisfera Nova

The revolution begun by the emergence of an Internet browser and widely accessible Internet have radically changed the relations between museums and their audience. An audience member does not only use the museum offer, but also becomes its active co-creator and user. In the recent years museum strategies have been increasingly paying more attention to user experience (UX), and thanks to the application of practices characteristic of service design, the UX design can be even more effective (French 2016).

Service design as a separate discipline has been developing since the early 1990s, when it was for the first time presented by Prof. Michaela Erlhoff at the Köln International School of Design.<sup>1</sup> Its roots, however, can be sought for already in the early 1980s, when service strategy was perceived as a marketing activity. It is therefore a relatively new discipline. The very service is defined as an activity meant to satisfy a specific need of a given individual. It is not tangible, and its implementation is usually conducted over a period of time.

Within the museum context service design has not as yet become a well-rooted activity. Museums have obviously been using digital tools that may be defined as services. An example of these can be found e.g. in various kinds of digital repositories (Europeana<sup>2</sup>, Muzeum Cyfrowe<sup>3</sup>, V&A Collections<sup>4</sup>), innovatory tools allowing the public to creatively use the digitalized collections (Rijksstudio<sup>5</sup>), projects based on searching for solutions within a community, namely crowdsourcing (Heir<sup>6</sup>, Art UK Tagger<sup>7</sup>), or resorting to digital technologies for developing a new

audience-centred exhibition model (Make Your Mark,<sup>8</sup> ASK Brooklyn Museum<sup>9</sup>). What all these projects have in common is conducting an audience-focused research in order to identify the audience's needs and behaviour, mainly in the digital environment. The research results are used at every stage of the design process: both when defining the problem, searching for the solutions, and their testing. The research-based design activities allow to both collect new data, not just merely complementing the ones already gathered, but can also constitute the beginnings allowing for their verification. All this possible, since they're based on the observations of real activities, and are not merely of declarative character, thanks to which they can become a stimulus for the service modification.

In the latest *E-Museums – Sharing Museums' Collections* Project (below referred to as the *E-Museums* Project),<sup>10</sup> being prepared for the Polish museum sector, and coordinated by the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections (NIMOZ), the audience and their needs are the focus. At the stage of preparing for the Project, NIMOZ began the research into the audience, since preliminary activities had demonstrated lack of such knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

Few museums conduct online statistics and apply the collected data only to a limited extent; neither is the service design generally applied to the offer provided online. Therefore, the conducting of the research shall allow the design of the museum online service, applying the digitalised resources of Polish museums. One of the tasks shall be to

construct and initiate the nationwide Polish museum Portal providing access to the digitised collections and information on museums. The results of the undertaken activity can, however, be more widely applied in other museum projects, first of all those implemented online.

## Methodology

The activities undertaken in preparation for the *E-Museums* Project were planned and implemented in compliance with the principles of human-centred design, mainly with the use of service methods and tools which fit within that broad trend. The major goal is to satisfy the real needs of the audience. This, in turn, implies the need to thoroughly become acquainted with the users and diagnose their expectations and problems, allowing for a proposal of definite solutions.

The design process is interactive. The knowledge gained at its every stage on the one hand enables to take a step forward, yet on the other it may prompt to go back and revise the earlier worked out solutions. It is on principle the stakeholders who are involved in the design process, namely representatives of the organization for which the service is designed, as well as the users, who will be its end-users.

The design process can be divided into 4 major stages (Design Council 2007):

- Stage 1: Discover: this is the stage where user needs are identified, and so is the service environment, market research is conducted, and activities performed earlier in this sphere are characterized.
- Stage 2: Define: this systemizes the collected information, the goal being to set the nucleus of the design, a brief description of the design challenge. On the grounds of the information collected at these two first stages, the design problem is defined.
- Stage 3: Develop: this is searching for ideas, how the diagnosed problem can be solved; this is also the stage when prototypes are invented and solutions tested.
- Stage 4: Provide: this is market launching of the product/service.

It has to be emphasized that Stages 1 and 3 are divergent, in which the maximum possible data or solutions are gathered, while Stages 2 and 4 are convergent, in this sense equivalent to making design choices.

The activities implemented in the course of the design of the digital service for museums as part of the *E-Museums* Project in their majority coincided with the first two stages. The conducted activities focused mainly on the user research and that of the existing solutions. On the other hand, the elaboration of specific functionalities formed the activities of Stage 3: searching for the solutions to the defined needs and problems.

## Results of the undertaken actions

Preliminary activities<sup>12</sup> were meant to identify the current situation and respond to the question about the state of digitalization in museums run or co-run by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. They enabled the preparation of the Project bases, and planning of the essential research. The results pointed out to the fact that museums did not

have standardized digitalization processes, they shared their collections only to a limited extent, nor did they research their online users. No museum used tools of service design in sharing their collections.

### Analysis of the determinants of the demand for Project services

Preliminary analyses also demonstrated the need to identify the demand for a new service allowing to share the digitized collections. As a consequence also the analysis of the determinants of the demand was commissioned, whose results formed the study *Analysis of the Determinants of Demand for E-Museums Project Service. Trends and Strategic Position of the Undertaking* (further: *Analysis of Demand Determinants*) (Możdżeń & Strycharz 2014, 2015). The major Project-related conclusions and recommendations focused on: (1) task specificity, (2) market launch strategy and business model; and (3) specificity of the service and consumer. With relation to point 3, the service should provide easy access to attractive contents which can be transformed and used creatively by the audience, also as a form of entertainment. The major good of the service is information, therefore its quality and coherence are particularly important, similarly as providing access to it by browsing, sorting, evaluating. What matters is also the quality of the very digital platform: both as far as the proposed services are concerned, as well as the user interface design and operation mode, which have to be designed in the way offering appropriate user experience and user interaction.

### Analysis of the services providing access to digitized collections

According to the authors of the *Analysis of Demand Determinants* (Możdżeń & Strycharz 2014: 15), the key to the Project's success are the following: creation of a portal that will creatively combine digitized objects with textual, graphic, and audio elements, also animations prepared for its purposes, as well as a source code. All this has an impact on UX quality. Subsequently, at the next stage, in order to point out to the technologically and graphically best Graphical User Interface, GUI (Laine-Zamojska 2014), the analysis of the functionality of the already existing services and portals sharing museum collections was conducted, and so was the evaluation of GUI together with the applied IT solutions supporting the functionality of the selected services. Twenty-two projects were analysed, these including services or portals providing online access to the museum collections (first of all European ones, but also from the USA, New Zealand, and Australia). They are all characterized by similar features and functionalities, which allowed to conclude that a certain type of online services allowing access to cultural heritage resources had developed, the best example in this respect being: Digitalt Museum,<sup>13</sup> Europeana,<sup>14</sup> Museum Finna,<sup>15</sup> NYPL Digital Collections Beta,<sup>16</sup> Rijksmuseum Rijksstudio,<sup>17</sup> Smithsonian Institution – Collections Search Center,<sup>18</sup> and Tate Collection Online<sup>19</sup> (Laine-Zamojska 2014: 52). Worth adding to the selected projects is also Google Art Project<sup>20</sup> that has been actively developing, and its current version differs from the analysed one. Apart from the Google Art Project, they are projects popularized by internationally

renowned institutions which have been for many years conducting user research, and which have been applying the obtained results to the continued extension of their services.

### Overview of literature related to sharing information on digitised collections

The subsequent stage of the *E-Museum* Project implementation consisted in the overview of literature on sharing information on online museum collections (Koryś 2015). The analysis covered Polish academic studies, press and online articles, as well as statements of the major debate participants that could be accessed online. In the opinion of the overview's author, the topics of making information on collection accessible is dominated by technology questions related to digitizing; what is missing is the research allowing to evaluate the effectiveness of definite digitizing activities, namely first of all sharing. What is missing is research allowing to evaluate designs and the audience whose profile remains unidentified; moreover, the relation between the online and real world audience is unclear.

### User research

As a part of preliminary works for the *E-Museums* Project, a team meant to deal with the Portal and coordinated by NIMOZ was established; it was formed of representatives of museums run and co-run by MKiDN. During the meetings means allowing to research the online museum offer audiences were discussed. Museums use various type tools for their online analyses, yet/and also the data were collected and processed differently. Museums have not conducted any audience qualitative research, therefore in the preliminary works for the Project, the Portal Team did not have any in-depth knowledge who the users and audience of the museums' websites and services were. Therefore a research was commissioned to be conducted by the Polskie Badania Internetu Company (Ciemniewska & Pliszka 2015).

The goals of the research were as follows:

- to identify target groups for which digital culture resources are provided;
- to present analysis of the current/forecast needs, capacities, limitations, and planned benefits for the above target groups;
- to present the analysis of the degree of the to-date accessibility and the extent to which target groups use culture resources, particularly in view of the museum offer, and definition of the key factors having an impact on the degree of its use.

It was a two-stage research:

- quantitative research (CAWI), 21 participated by 836 internet users, with the random quota sampling prepared by Megapanel PBI/Gemius and NetTrack Millward Brown. Thanks to this the structure of the researched group fully reflects the population of Internet users in Poland (Ciemniewska & Pliszka 2015: 10). The participants responded to 15 survey questions and 8 demographics questions.
- segmentation research, participated by 672 Internet user. The survey contained 7 survey questions, 4 sets of structured survey options, and demographics questions. The collected data underwent statistical segmentation. The segmentation allowed to define features and expectations

of respective groups in view of their interest in culture and in the national museum Portal (Ciemniewska & Pliszka 2015: 10–11).

Based on the research results, segments of the potential audience of the national museum Portal were defined. The segments were identified in view of the structured survey options and presented attitudes (Ciemniewska & Pliszka 2015: 6, 68–100). Five segments were discerned, for each the service should be tailored differently; moreover, through promotion campaigns the designed interaction should differ.

The research result was taken into consideration throughout the whole process of service design and the Portal functionality creation, as well as while creating the plan for the Portal's evaluation and development, and also promotion.

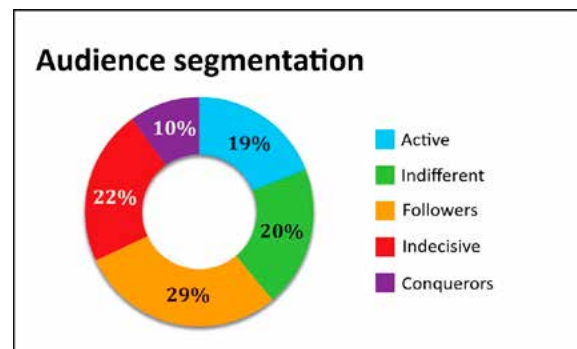
### Creation of the Polish nationwide museum Portal

The goal of the Project was to define a set of key functions of the Portal responding to the needs of various target audience groups. It was of importance to construct the design process in such a way that functions important for many groups could be defined, although it was not possible to meet with representatives of all groups. This constituted the departure point for further works, in the result of which some key functions, which should be available on the Portal, were defined. The undertaken activities were made up of the following steps: (1) formulating hypotheses in relation to the users; (2) verification of the hypotheses; (3) search for solutions and means of satisfying the defined needs; and (4) adopting the solutions in the business realities.

A series of workshops was organized, these participated by end users, museum representatives, and the Project Team. For the course of the process it was extremely important for end users to participate, since this allowed not only to verify the hypotheses, but also to acquire information on what expectations *they* have from the Portal. Separate workshops were held by the representatives of the Portal Museum Group and the NIMOZ Project Team. It was thus possible to verify the functionalities proposed by the users and to adopt the solutions to the business realities. A number of functions were elaborated that served as the basis for preparing the Portal functionalities.

### Personas: basic information on the tool

Personas are a tool serving to systematize and aggregate information on service users. The purpose for the



1. Audience segmentation



construction of personas is to specify the needs of respective groups in the context of the designed service, this including a better understanding of their motivations, goals, etc. They also facilitate communication within the Project Team (Blomquist & Arvola 2002, Cooper 1999, Grudin & Pruitt 2002, Nielsen 2002, Williams 2009).

In compliance with the methodology of service design, the elaboration of personas is in itself an iteration process. At the first stage, the work is based on the hypotheses of the experts participating in the design process. These are later verified by qualitative research set against quantitative one. Information gathered in this way is used to modify and supplement the persona descriptions. The work for the online service for museums followed this very scheme.

At this point worth emphasizing is that persona is a valuable design tool, as it also provides the possibility to diagnose the areas that require subsequent research, since the amount of collected information is insufficient for further work.

#### **Verification of hypotheses and setting them in a broader context**

In order to verify the hypotheses it is essential to specify the user features. Initially, over 50 potential user types were proposed. Among them 8 extreme ones were selected in view of 2 defined values: purpose of the service use (job or entertainment) and the expected form of the message (first of all user-friendly or predominantly credible and informative). The description of each persona allowed for data important from the point of view of the service provider, such as: demographics, the manner of using the Internet, key values, material/emotional needs, difficulties, complaints, forms of spending leisure time, career.

The verification of the elaborated personas took place during the workshops to which individuals matching the defined profiles were invited. The personas were then set in a broader context: they were joined with the groups defined in the Project audience analysis (Ciemniewska & Pliszka 2015) as supplement to the information, particularly with respect to showing needs, aspirations, and expectations, as well as motivations in the context of the service that is being designed. From among all the audience segments only the group defined as 'Indifferent' declared lack of interest in the Portal and indifference to the whole idea (Ciemniewska & Pliszka 2015: 7). Therefore all the Project efforts were focused on the remaining groups. Following the identification of their needs, a catalogue of the necessary Portal functionalities was worked out; moreover, the features that were to characterize interactions were pointed to.

The personas gave the final clarification and completion to the audience groups identified in the course of the research. In this context it was of particular importance to point out what tasks the groups wanted to perform with the use of the Portal. In order to demonstrate the importance of a persona in systemizing knowledge of the potential service users, let us present here a brief description of the chosen user archetypes with the Portal's exemplary functionalities.

One of the created personas, matching the group 'Active' users, was a blogger dealing with cultural topics. He/She actively uses the Internet, not just merely by consuming its contents, but firstly by creating it. Such activities are

cost-consuming due to e.g. participation in exhibitions or travelling to different events. He/She perceives this aspect as a certain limitation, since developing their activity is not always profit-yielding. Their difficulty is also lack of information, contents, or files which could be legally used for their work, e.g. high definition photos they might share as appropriately licensed. Thus in view of the needs of this group, the Portal should offer e.g. the possibility to conveniently download both object reproductions (photos), as well as a template of a user-friendly license the interested individual might use.

Definitely other needs were formulated by the representative of the 'Indecisive' Group: retired individuals, who use computers only occasionally. This persona visits museums only on organized trips. He/She eagerly participates in the events addressed to senior citizens, such as exhibition previews. What they appreciate in Internet portals is simplicity, user-friendly navigation, clear and simple information layout. What this group would welcome are functionalities allowing for a trip organization, e.g. by searching for museums. This group should also have the possibility of looking through the collections following curator-proposed thematic pathways.

The representative of the 'Followers' Group was a middle-aged working individual who visits museum websites when searching for a definite information item. He/She would eagerly use the Portal for scholarly and research purposes. The Portal should provide the functionality of a precise searching for objects in compliance with specified criteria.

The last of the identified groups called 'Conquerors' included e.g. lower-secondary-school students for whom the Internet is both entertainment and source of knowledge. This group users are eager to share interesting contents, and will use the Portal in order to find a specific information piece whose knowledge they are expected to have. They welcome compact contents and easy downloading options. They also care about the means to share contents on social media portals, forums, and other peer-dedicated portals. Of significant importance here is the entertainment aspect, e.g. browsing through the contents presented in the form of thematic pathways with interestingly copied objects.

Since many personas were described in age-related terms (e.g. students, senior citizens, middle-aged individuals) it has to be emphasized that it was by no means the demographics that was of key importance for their characteristics, but the ease and manner of using electronic devices, the attitude to museum services, and their needs identified in this context. The demographics enabled the Project Team to create the image of the Portal audience, this, in turn, facilitating the design process.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

As much as Polish museums create digital tools to communicate with their audience, they are not as yet experienced in creating online services that would use the digitised museum collections on a large scale. One of the major hindrances to that being the lack of knowledge of the audience, their behaviours, and expectations in relation to the digital environment. The activities launched by the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections

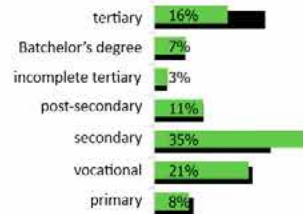
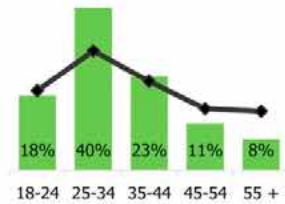
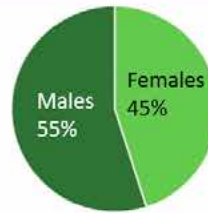
## THE INDIFFERENT

### Who are they?

Young males with secondary education, mainly living in rural areas. Not eager to take risk, they are not interested in becoming acquainted with new things, they do not travel. They are interested in electronics, motoring, and sports. Although the internet is present in their life on a daily basis, they do not use it as a tool.

### WHAT ENCOURAGES THEM TO VISIT MUSEUMS...

THEIR OWN INTERESTS, a LOWER FEE OF FREE ADMISSION, CLOSER LOCATION OR BETTER ACCESS.



— average for all the surveyed

### Attitude to life



- ✓ the family is the most important to me
- ✓ I am willing to learn something new about other countries, people, cultures
- ✓ I do not like excessive risk



- ✓ I like learning new things
- ✓ I like travelling
- ✓ I like to take matters in my own hands
- ✓ I have a lot on my plate
- ✓ I work first of all for money
- ✓ It is sometimes worth listening to the advice of others without asking questions

### Activities



- ✓ reading, downloading magazines online
- ✓ downloading files with games, music, films
- ✓ using email
- ✓ using bank services
- ✓ using e-commerce
- ✓ watching TV/films online, watching video files
- ✓ searching for health-related information
- ✓ searching for information on goods and services
- ✓ using social media

- ✓ writing on a blog or internet forum
- ✓ using a map in the telephone to locate places or navigate

He/She uses the Internet several times daily



He/She has visited a museum this year



As seen against people around: friends, family, colleagues, when do you reach for new solutions or products?



- Usually as the first
- As one of the first people, earlier than the majority
- When many people around me are using them, although as yet they are not widespread
- When the majority of people around me use them

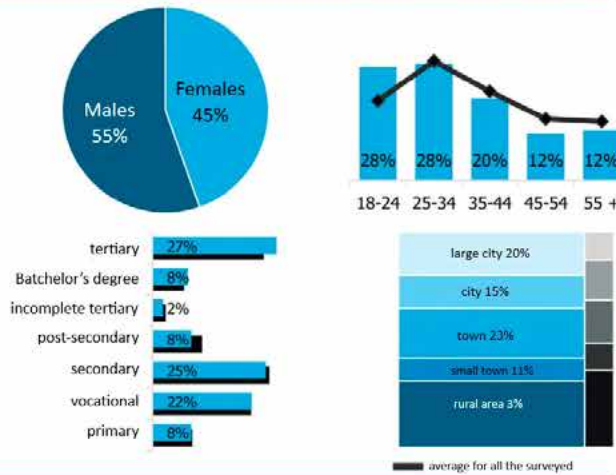
## THE ACTIVE

### Who are they?

Males, living in large cities. Very active, engaged, assuming responsibility for their actions. They want to develop and learn. Perceiving work as a source of income, they pursue their passions outside work. The Internet being their natural environment, they use its resources to the full.

### WHAT ENCOURAGES THEM TO VISIT MUSEUMS...

ATTRACTIVE OR UNIQUE COLLECTIONS;  
LOWER ADMISSION FEE OR FREE ADMISSION, AN INTERESTING EVENT, E.G. WORKSHOP, SHOW.



### Attitude to life

- ✓ the family is the most important to me
- ✓ I like learning new things
- ✓ I like travelling
- ✓ I am willing to learn something new about other countries, people, cultures
- ✓ I like to take matters in my own hands
- ✓ I have a lot on my plate
- ✓ I work first of all for money

- ✓ I have little influence on my life

### Activities

- ✓ reading, downloading online magazine
- ✓ downloading files with games, music, films
- ✓ using email
- ✓ using tourist services
- ✓ using bank services
- ✓ using e-commerce
- ✓ watching TV/films online, watching video files
- ✓ searching for health-related information
- ✓ using internet telephone, videoconferences
- ✓ auctioning
- ✓ chatting and participating in discussion forums
- ✓ searching for information on goods and services
- ✓ sharing photos or files
- ✓ using social media
- ✓ writing on a blog or internet forum
- ✓ using a map in the telephone to locate places or navigate

He/She uses the Internet several times daily



He/She has visited a museum this year



As seen against people around: friends, family, colleagues, when do you reach for new solutions or products?



- Usually as the first
- As one of the first people, earlier than the majority
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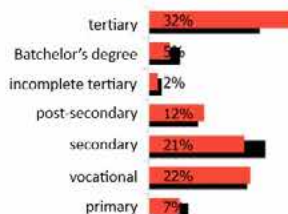
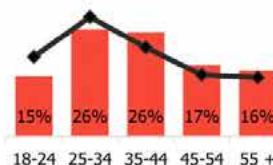
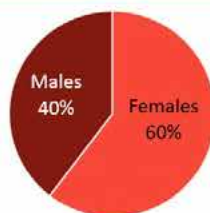
## THE INDECISIVE

### Who are they?

Mainly females, with higher education, living in large cities. Focused on themselves, they are also reserved and hesitant. They are interested in different areas: from fashion to other cultures. They are scared to take risk, and are equally mistrustful of tradition and novelties.

### WHAT ENCOURAGES THEM TO VISIT MUSEUMS...

ATTRACTIVE OR **UNIQUE COLLECTIONS**; LOWER ADMISSION FEE OR FREE ADMISSION, A **MORE INTERESTING TOPIC** OR EXHIBITION.



— average for all the surveyed

### Attitude to life



- ✓ I don't like excessive risk
- ✓ I want to achieve more than others



- ✓ I like life full of challenges, novelties, and change
- ✓ My career is important to me
- ✓ I lead a fast life, in haste
- ✓ I trust tradition: it is backed up by the wisdom of generations
- ✓ I like being in the spotlight
- ✓ I often look for thrill in life
- ✓ I like to enjoy life and not to think of the future

### Activities



- ✓ using email



- ✓ reading, downloading magazines online
- ✓ using internet telephone, videoconferences
- ✓ sharing photos or files

He/She uses the Internet  
several times daily



He/She has visited a  
museum this year



As seen against people around: friends, family, colleagues, when do you reach for new solutions or products?



- Usually as the first
- As one of the first people, earlier than the majority
- When many people around me are using them, although as yet they are not widespread
- When the majority of people around me use them

## THE FOLLOWERS

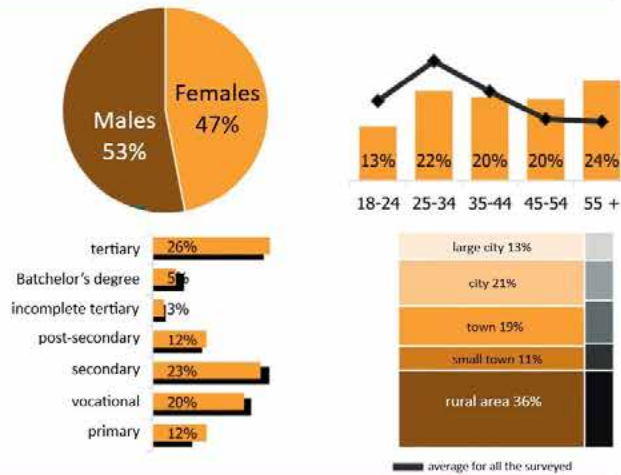
### Who are they?

Males, with higher education, living in mid-size cities. Self-confident, they represent a traditional attitude to life. They are interested in motoring and fashion.

Intensely using search engines and email, they use social media more promptly than others.

### WHAT ENCOURAGES THEM TO VISIT MUSEUMS...

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE THEIR KNOWLEDGE; LOWER ADMISSION FEE OF FREE ADMISSION; CLOSER LOCATION OR BETTER ACCESS.



### Attitude to life

the family is the most important to me  
 I am willing to learn something new about other countries, people, cultures

I easily lose my temper  
 I have little influence on my life

### Activities

using email  
 searching for information on goods and services  
 using social media

writing on a blog or internet forum

He/She uses the Internet several times daily



He/She has visited a museum this year



As seen against people around: friends, family, colleagues, when do you reach for new solutions or products?



- Usually as the first
- As one of the first people, earlier than the majority
- When many people around me are using them, although as yet they are not widespread
- When the majority of people around me use them

## THE CONQUERORS

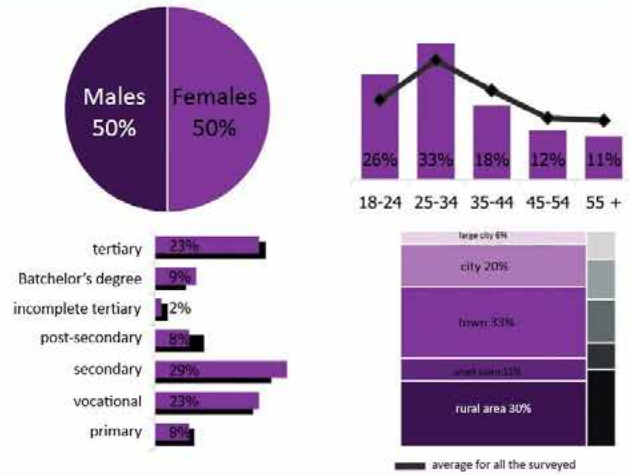
### Who are they?

Young people from large cities, interested in the world, eager to explore it. Respectful of both otherness and tradition, they however live their own life, fearless of novelties and change.

Brought up in a digitized world, they resort to its benefits more rarely than others.

### WHAT ENCOURAGES THEM TO VISIT MUSEUMS...

THEIR OWN INTERESTS; LOWER ADMISSION FEE OR FREE ADMISSION; A MORE INTERESTING MANNER OF DISPLAYING EXHIBITS.



### Attitude to life



- ✓ I like travelling
- ✓ I like to take matters in my own hands
- ✓ It is sometimes worth listening to the advice of others without asking questions.
- ✓ I like life full of challenges, novelties, and change
- ✓ My career is important to me
- ✓ I want to achieve more than others
- ✓ I often look for thrill in life
- ✓ I work first of all for money
- ✓ I lead a fast life, in haste
- ✓ I like to enjoy life and not to think of the future
- ✓ I like being in the spotlight
- ✓ I easily lose my temper
- ✓ I trust tradition: it is backed up by the wisdom of generations
- ✓ I have little influence on my life

### Activities



- ✓ chatting and participating in discussion forums



- ✓ using email
- ✓ using bank services
- ✓ searching for information on goods and services
- ✓ using social media

He/She uses the Internet  
several times daily



He/She has visited a  
museum this year



As seen against people around: friends, family, colleagues, when do you reach for new solutions or products?



- Usually as the first
- As one of the first people, earlier than the majority
- When many people around me are using them, although as yet they are not widespread
- When the majority of people around me use them

6. Audience group – The Conquerors

(All photos from: J. Cierniewska, S. Pliszka, *Analysis of the recipients of the E-Museums project. Internet users*, Warsaw 2015)



(NIMOZ) provide new knowledge in this respect, and can be used by all museums in Poland.

In the course of the *E-Museums* Project the commissioned and conducted research provided grounds for the design of a new service, namely the Portal allowing to share digitised collections. At further Project stages it is recommended to specify more accurately the proposed solutions and have them re-verified by end users. The service also requires their continuous behaviour monitoring, adjusting to their needs, and change introduction.

The results can also be used by other museums, institutions, or companies planning deployment of services for museums and their public, first of all in the form of online services. Segmentation, generally known, first of all, as customer segmentation in marketing, is also used by museums to develop their online offer. In many of the post-Conference publications (Museums and the Web<sup>22</sup> and the International Conferences on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums – ICHIM<sup>23</sup>) different aspects related to the research of user behaviour are discussed, and so is the adequate adjustment of the online offer in compliance with user segmentation (e.g. Peacock & Brownbill 2007, Haley-Goldman & Schaller 2004, Haynes & Zambonini 2007, Filippini Fantoni, Stein & Bowman 2012, Tasich & Villaespesa 2013, MacDonald 2015, Villaespesa & Stack 2015, Lisboa 2014, Coburn 2016). According to Nanna Holdgaard, there is no long-term or a large-scale research focused on the online media both from the user and museum perspective (Holdgaard 2014: 2). She is the first to have carried such an extensive research investigating the use of online media by Danish museums and behaviour of online users, This demonstrates how little we still know on the subject, and points to the great need to propose appropriate methodology, enabling acquiring knowledge of the use of digital tools by the museum sector. Obtaining appropriate results, understanding of the needs

and audience behaviour would enable the design of the service that meets their expectations.

Despite the potential benefits that might result from gaining the knowledge, it should be borne in mind that the approach applied in the research displays some limitations. It is already at the stage of defining and verifying the service users that it is essential to select the key ones. On principle, public services are addressed to wide audiences, however due to limited financing it is essential to identify groups meant to become Project target audience segments. The decision made in this respect is vital for the whole design project and may significantly influence the proposed solution. In the case of services that are not as yet extant, a significant portion of the research is of a declarative character. Lack of research allowing to confront the gained information with the actual user behaviour may to a substantial degree give a misleading image of the project, thus provide wrong assumptions for the design process. As a result, the designed service might not meet the audience needs, and will not solve the actual problems, thus failing to fulfil the institution's assumed goals.

To conclude, the knowledge of the audience is of key importance for creating new services. Museums research their audience, this knowledge is, however, related mainly to the individuals visiting its spaces in person. The knowledge of museum online offer audience is less extensive. The use of the service design methodology allows at particular work stages to gain adequate knowledge of the needs of and difficulties faced by users, and therefore also the design an appropriate solution. In the course of activities undertaken by NIMOZ, knowledge of the audience was gained, of the audience who can become potential users of the museum services that are being created. Despite all the limitations and imperfections, it is the first such extensive research of museum online offer audience in Poland which can be directly applied in designing service offer by the museum sector.

**Abstract:** The article tackles the activities undertaken and commissioned by the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections (NIMOZ) with regard to defining the audience for museums' online offer, and analysing their needs. In connection with the preparation of *E-museums – sharing museums' collections*, the national strategic project in the field of digitising and sharing the resources of museums, research on defining the needs of the museums' audience was carried out, for the first time on such a large scale. The work included verifying literature, analysing

the audience for online cultural offers, and individual workshops. Many activities used the service design methodology, since some of the effects of the project are services. In accordance with its founding principles, it is particularly important to recognise future users' needs in order to prepare a solution which is both user-friendly and meets their expectations. The results of these activities will also be used by other cultural institutions in order to deepen their knowledge about their audience, and to provide new services or products.

**Keywords:** audience research, designing services, service, user experience, UX, museum sector, audience segmentation.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Service Design – Practical Access to Service Design, <http://hci.liacs.nl/files/PracticalAccess2ServiceDesign.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Europeana, <http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>

<sup>3</sup> Cyfrowe Zbiory Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie [Digital Collections of the National Museum in Warsaw], <http://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/dmuseion>

<sup>4</sup> V&A Collections, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk>

<sup>5</sup> Rijksstudio, Rijksmuseum, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio>

<sup>6</sup> HEIR Tagger – Historic Environment Image Resource, <http://heirtagger.ox.ac.uk>

- <sup>7</sup> Art UK Tagger, <http://artuk.org/tagger/>
- <sup>8</sup> More on the application: Hellmuth et al (2016).
- <sup>9</sup> GLAMi Nomination, ASK Brooklyn Museum, <http://mw2016.museumsandtheweb.com/glami/ask-brooklyn-museum/> and ASK Brooklyn Museum, iTunes Preview, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ask-brooklyn-museum/id949540325?mt=8>
- <sup>10</sup> *E-Museums* Project is prepared by NIMOZ for the museum sector as part of the OP Digital Poland, Axis II, priority e-Administration and open government, objective 4: *Increase of the availability and the use of public sector information*. Strategic goal of the *E-Museums* is to prompt the consolidation of information society through sharing cultural resources collected in Polish museums online. The Project was prepared by the Consortium made up of: National Institute for Museums and Public Collections (Project Leader), POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Lublin Museum, Royal Łazienki Museum in Warsaw, National Museum in Gdansk, National Museum in Kielce, National Museum in Warsaw, National Museum in Wrocław, Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Cracow, Museum of Art in Łódź, Silesian Museum in Katowice, National Maritime Museum in Gdansk. More on the Project: <http://digitalizacja.nimoz.pl/programy/polska-cyfrowa>
- <sup>11</sup> Within the framework of NMOZ activities, the Project Team researched and worked with the museums that were run or co-run by MKiDN. Some research covered the digitizing process in museums. The results are as yet unpublished. As part of other activities, MNOZ, together with the museums and the Consortium designed the solutions.
- <sup>12</sup> The data were collected between autumn 2013 and spring 2014. The research covered 31 museums run or co-run by MKiDN. Initially, a survey was sent out, following which the NMOZ Team visited the museums, talked to their staff, and investigated the digitizing process. The methods applied for the research were first of all survey, interview, and observation.
- <sup>13</sup> Digitalt Museum, <http://digitaltmuseum.no>
- <sup>14</sup> Europeana, <http://www.europeana.eu>
- <sup>15</sup> Finna, <https://www.finna.fi>
- <sup>16</sup> NYPL Digital Collections Beta, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org>
- <sup>17</sup> Rijksmuseum Rijksstudio, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio>
- <sup>18</sup> Smithsonian Institution – Collections Search Center, <http://collections.si.edu/search/>
- <sup>19</sup> Tate Collection Online, <http://www.tate.org.uk/about/our-work/collection>
- <sup>20</sup> Google Art Project, <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/>
- <sup>21</sup> The investigation applied the Computer-Assisted Web Interview methodology, using WWW.
- <sup>22</sup> The first Conference: Museums and the Web was held in 1997. It is one of the largest international conferences bringing together museologists. Publications: <http://www.museumsandtheweb.com/bibliography/>
- <sup>23</sup> ICHIM were dedicated to political, legal, economic, technological, and organizational aspects related to cultural heritage. The conferences were held until 2007. Publications: <http://www.archimuse.com/conferences/ichim.html>

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Exhibition 'Anything goes museum' – Playing the Hero; The National Museum in Warsaw, photo: B. Bajerski



# EDUCATION IN MUSEUMS



# ANYTHING GOES MUSEUM, OR THE FIVE SENSES OF PARTICIPATION

Anna Knappek

National Museum in Warsaw

Smell, sight, taste, hearing, and touch. It is through these senses that people get to know the world. One of the places where they can do that is a museum. That is why it is through the sight that readers of these words get to know the project of the National Museum in Warsaw (MNW): the *Anything Goes Museum*.<sup>1</sup> The work on it was an excellent opportunity to check how far a museum wishing to implement a participatory project can (wants to?) go. The exhibition prepared by children and the events that accompanied it are also tangible (sic!) answers to the questions that many museum professionals ask themselves. Does the reason for the existence of museums, namely a genuine object, still have any meaning in the era of virtual reality? What should interesting exhibitions, intriguing exhibitions, museums accessible to visitors look like?<sup>2</sup>

## Prelude / Listening to yourself

Texts published in the recent years and dedicated to museums, their definitions, tasks, and challenges they face, unequivocally show that these venues have long stopped playing the role of 'temples of art', collecting and storing relics of the past. Currently [...] *museums fulfil many functions. They are mediators, in the course of social changes they take on the responsibility as for integration and the development of a community, and they contribute to the advancement in science and education.*<sup>3</sup> It is not only people professionally related to museums that are aware of this change. The research shows that this new role of museums is also perceived by their visitors: *Multifaceted public space, socially integrating, a platform to discuss the present day and how we can work on the ideas that have materialized and occur as exhibits in a material form. The place where people can follow shared learning and shared acquiring of the knowledge of the world, providing not merely knowledge, but also entertainment. Space that satisfies the need of a wide and varied range of the public.*[...].<sup>4</sup>

It can be clearly seen that both parties: the museum and its visitors, notice an enormous potential in the institution, but also the responsibilities it entails. This hidden potential has for many years been more and more aroused by the educational activity. Even a cursory reading of Polish museums' websites can convince us that the staged events are targeted at thoroughly differentiated groups of beholders: school visits, families with children, senior citizens, individual visitors, tourists, 'regulars', teachers, visitors with disabilities, parents with babies. The offer, as much as varied, until recently used to fit in the classical image of a museum as the 'provider' and museum visitors as 'recipients' of the proposed content. In such a relationship the museum (or strictly speaking its staff) are experts, conveying knowledge via 'carriers': objects, exhibition, educational offer. A person visiting the museum remains more a passive member of the public, overwhelmed by the abundance of his or her own ignorance, not so much a welcome visitor.<sup>5</sup> In the above quoted museum definitions, made by 'providers' and 'recipients' there appear words and phrases: 'mediation'. 'community integration and development', 'social space', 'debate platform'. This is a clear signal that both parties feel a strong need to establish a more permanent, creative, and progressive dialogue. A step in this direction is e.g. the fact that museums have been applying different teaching methods, taking into consideration various learning styles (e.g. David Kolb Method). In the recent years participatory projects have been enjoying a growing popularity: that is projects whose basic assumption is co-creation, establishing personal democratic relations among their participants (it should be remembered that these also include the institution's staff members!). The key to the project's success is for both the staff and guests to have the feeling that it is 'their place' – they will find something for themselves here and/or leave something of themselves for others. Participation forms basis of many projects recently committed to or



1. Curators of the 'Anything Goes Museum' exhibition

initiated by museums.<sup>6</sup> They have been enjoying growing popularity for the last several years, which can be best seen in the prizes awarded to such as *Topic: Art*<sup>7</sup> honoured with the Grand Prix of the 5<sup>th</sup> Warsaw Prize in Cultural Education, or the *Museum from My Courtyard*, laureate of the 2014 Sybil Museum Event in the category of education.<sup>8</sup> Implementation of participatory projects demonstrates that the readiness of both parties to try innovatory experiences allows to enjoy the flavour of novelty.

### June 2015 / Enjoy the flavour of novelty

Innovatory. Unique. Brave. These are merely several adjectives used to describe the *'Anything Goes' Museum* Project. Together with its kick-off, the National Museum in Warsaw opened up an entirely new chapter in its own history. Since its onset in May 1862, the Museum has presented to the public over 600 temporary exhibitions.<sup>9</sup> All of them had been put together by experienced curators, renowned for their academic accomplishments. The *'Anything Goes' Museum* Exhibition was prepared by children and opened on 27 February 2016. The Project was coordinated by the MNW Education Department.<sup>10</sup>

An open recruitment process<sup>11</sup> allowed the National Museum in Warsaw to gain 69 young Curators: boys and girls aged 6–14, from Warsaw and the closest suburbs. Some of them had earlier participated in workshops and activities organized by museums, for others it was their first contact with such an institution. Divided into six teams,<sup>12</sup> the Curators began working on the Exhibition in June 2015. The teams included children of different ages and sexes

respectively. For junior Curators used to working in peer groups (school classes) and to mixing with the children from the same neighbourhood, this situation significantly differed from their everyday experience.

The task assigned to the young Curators by the Project's originator Agnieszka Morawińska PhD, Director of the National Museum in Warsaw, was challenging, not only due to the necessity to work in an age-differentiated team. None of the kids had had any prior experience with curator's work. They were learning what a curator did, and what curator's responsibilities were as they went along when working on the Exhibition. The challenge they had to meet was the 'abstract character' of the Project. The junior Curators were able to only see the tangible effect of their months-long work, of its respective stages and decisions made actually not long before the preview, when the 600 sq m space for temporary displays had the layout mounted for respective rooms, when the exhibits selected by the children had been brought from the storage space to the Exhibition, the educational leaflets brought from the printing house, the multimedia presentations installed, and the stories of the displayed works recorded in the audio guides.

In the multi-stage process of creating the Exhibition each Curator team was assisted by a Tutor,<sup>13</sup> a person selected from among the National Museum's educators. For Tutors this was as new a situation as it was for the children. They had never been exhibition curators. Working with the same group for quite a long time, they became acquainted with the children they were assisting, thus able to adjust the course of sessions to their real needs and capacities. On the other hand, this gave the junior



Curators the feeling of security and bonded them with the Museum. The role played by the Tutors altered in accordance with the Project stages. Integrating the group, they reminded of the inevitable decision-making, and of the tasks that still remained to be fulfilled; moreover, they were there to solve conflicts. They also did their best to turn that multi-stage process of making the Exhibition into fun and adventure for the young Curators. The time they spent together allowed both parties to see each other, therefore to understand each other.

### September – October 2015 / To see, thus to understand

What have you best remembered from the whole process of preparing the Exhibition? This is the question that the sociologists focused on evaluating the Project posed to the young Curators in February 2016. The answer may both surprise and seem obvious: it was: *the Museum storage area*. Why surprise? The question was asked almost five months after the Curators had visited it. They visited those inaccessible spacious Museum storerooms, enshrouded in mystery, in September 2015. Following that visit, each of the six groups came up with their own exhibition, and selected the objects that were displayed. Subsequently, together with adult designers, they prepared the rooms' design. In mid-October, the stage related to designing the Exhibition had been completed, and the task assigned to the MNW Exhibition Department. From that moment until the end of

January 2016, the junior Curators worked on e.g. preparing educational leaflets, multimedia presentations, and other interactive elements, exhibit labels, and programmes of the accompanying events. Despite so many new and varied experiences they best recalled their visit to the storage area. This may have happened due to the impression caused by the multiplicity and variety of monuments within their arm's reach. Or maybe because in their new capacity they were allowed to touch the genuine objects just like grown-up curators, namely in special gloves. The visit to the storeroom may have also become for the Project junior participants a synonym of what is the most important in the work on an exhibition, that is freedom. In the paper dedicated to the psychological aspect of the Project, the psychoanalyst Ewa Modzelewska-Kossowska wrote as follows: *The freedom (of moving around the Museum, the freedom of choice, space for imagination to move around unbounded) given to them by grown-ups, showed to them also its less friendly face.*<sup>14</sup> When expanding on the 'less friendly face', Modzelewska-Kossowska explains: [...] *the kids came across the first limit marked out by their perception abilities and their mind capacity versus the vastness of the presented world: the multitude of eras, styles, and artistic visions. [...] On the other hand, working in a group imposed on them other natural limitations: one's own choices had to be confronted with those of others; argumentation to defend self-chosen pieces had to be sought; disappointment had to be overcome in case this argumentation could not convince others.*<sup>15</sup>



2. Tutors not only supported children at their work on the exhibition, but also cared for a good atmosphere and respite

Thus the Project allowed the children to gain better knowledge of themselves, to develop many skills and social competences. Meetings and talks with Museum staff: grown-up curators, conservators, educators, first contact staff, and volunteers, made the children experience what a museum is, and realize that its greatest strength is in the genuine character of the monuments. This was reflected in the Exhibition that displayed almost 300 objects, which 'had been liberated from the storage area', as Curators put it. The months-long work with the representatives of the most numerous visitor group in museums, namely children, made *the museum professionals depart from the routine of protecting the collections, show the children all the exhibits. [...] the grown-ups continued being surprised by the children's ideas. Both those related to the very choice of works made by the children, and those that were related to very specific expectations in relation to, for instance, Exhibition designers. [...] the kids were really satisfied when*



3. Visits to magazines were deeply remembered by young curators

*rejecting grown-ups' ideas. They wanted to be autonomous in their choices.*<sup>16</sup>

The *Anything Goes Museum* Project demonstrated how important it is in establishing the museum-visitor relation to open up space allowing a personal, emotional bond with the work. This was best demonstrated in the Exhibition that was the Project's final effect, if only in the labels prepared by the junior Curators and in the audio guide recordings. Many provided explanations for the choice of the work made references to what children knew from every-day life, e.g. *I have selected this object because I like cats very much. [...] Some of the captions made reference to emotions and feelings that a given work inspired in the children (e.g. feeling of dignity, disgust). The examples of the strongest bond with the object can be found in the labels in which the child identifies with the exhibit: I am a little shoe. I come from China. I did not feel too well in the Museum's storeroom, because*

*it is hot and dark there. A long time ago, I was worn by a rich lady. In order to put me on, she first had to tie her whole feet very strongly. Her bones became broken, distorted, and misshaped. Now the National Museum in Warsaw is my home. I take part in different exhibitions here, even in one designed by children.*<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the *Anything Goes Museum* demonstrates, not only to museum professionals, but to all the Exhibition visitors, that the children's world is a serious one. It is the world filled with questions related to fear and means of overcoming it ('The Ghost Room'); to relations between humans and animals ('A Forest'); to the changes occurring around ('Changes'); to heroism and attitudes worth following ('Playing the Hero'). They are also questions related to the connection of the past with the present ('Dance of the Minotaur'), and what is the most precious to people ('Treasure Trove'). The Exhibition was a clear signal that grown-ups should not infantilize the world of children,



4. All decisions of the group were made by voting

themselves recalling only the moments that were nice, the ones that make them consider childhood as careless, unhindered fun.

### October 2015–January 2016 / Kids have a nose

In a survey conducted in 2012 among residents of 6 cities (over 100.000 inhabitants), 58 per cent of the respondents regarded the offer of Polish museums as attractive. *The surveyed had very positive associations with a museum. For a majority of them, a museum is possibilities: of investigating more thoroughly the topics that interest them, of gaining some valuable knowledge, or of seeing and testing interesting exhibits. Only 14 per cent associate a museum with boredom.*<sup>18</sup> In the same survey the question was asked what factors could make the respondents visit museums more frequently. The largest number (68 per



cent) pointed to an interesting topic of exhibitions. The second largest group (64 per cent) chose *attractive offer, e.g. multimedia presentations or possibility of interaction*.<sup>19</sup> These two factors constituted a greater encouragement for them than a cheaper or free admission (54 per cent), encounter with illustrious art works (31 per cent), benefitting from an attractive programme for children and teenagers (24 per cent).

Museums, aware of the first two needs, try to satisfy them as much as they can. All the more so as interaction with an object makes the museum more interesting, and allows for establishing a personal relation with it. Within gallery space, it is more and more frequent that visitors can play games, use applications, expanded reality, and holograms, watch videos and 3D models. Of key importance is still the question related to the 'happy medium', retaining the balance between the genuine art work, new technologies, and visitors' expectations. Worth analyzing is

not just by watching it. Therefore, following the choice of topics that reflected their interests and the objects that illustrated them, they worked on creating a sphere of interaction of the Museum visitor with the work and display. Among the ways of a traditional interaction one can rank educational leaflets with tasks and puzzles related to particular rooms. This category of means also contains audio guides, though it has to be emphasized that the audio they contained significantly differed from the ones that can be usually heard in museums.<sup>21</sup> The recording narrators were the Exhibition Curators who talked about their emotions and impressions connected with the works, sometimes sharing with the listener their knowledge of the works. An interesting case can be seen in the fairy tale recorded by the Grey Group which connected the works from the 'Ghost Room' into one story. The task to identify the image out of over 30 on which the story is developing right now constitutes a real



5. Museums are created by people, which is why the meetings between the young curators and the museum staff were very important



6. Work on the exhibition's scenography revealed the impressive resources of creativity in the young curators

also the question whether it is only technological novelties that provide an opportunity for interaction with the exhibits (exhibition). These doubts are often expressed in texts dedicated to contemporary museums. *Despite a great enchantment with modern methods of sharing contents and the general acceptance of such a means of gaining information by a contemporary museum visitor, I wonder to what extent virtual museums or holograms are effective in widening our knowledge of the past, and to what they are merely a technological attraction.*<sup>20</sup>

The *Anything Goes Museum Exhibition* justly fits in such analyses. Still before visiting the storage area, still before the young Curators became acquainted with the Museum collection, even before they invented their own exhibition, they had known they wanted an interesting exhibition. This translated into the need to create a display that would provide an opportunity for a greater interaction with the exhibit and the exhibition itself,

challenge (and interaction!). The same group decided to place some scary prints in their room. The PVC prints also had PVC elements attached meant to cover the scary fragments of the work (such as e.g. the hat to cover the skull). Brave visitors or those who wanted to overcome their fear could uncover what is scary, while those who were not ready for it, could safely go by. The Green Group ('Changes') decided to place textile samples in the Exhibition. Thanks to this everybody could touch the textile of which the costumes displayed at the Exhibition and the painted ones were made.

The interactivity and establishing a relation were possible also thanks to the use of scenography solutions adopted for the Exhibition. In the 'Horror Room' it was mapping which consolidated the atmosphere of horror; so did a phone that rang every few minutes, with some horrifying sounds coming from the receiver. The 'Dance of the Minotaur' Room was arranged as a labyrinth, in which thanks to





7. Reproductions of 'scary' graphics helped to overcome fear

several secret and not extremely large passages, one could hide and run away. The little stairs placed by showcases with costumes in the room called 'Changes' turned it into a changing room. In the room called 'A Forest' one could hear birds' trilling.

The multimedia appeared in the Exhibition as two videos and a crossword. In the 'Dance of the Minotaur' Room a video reminding of the Minotaur myth was shown. In the 'Treasure Trove', just next to the most precious

monuments from the Museum collection, you could hear interviews with children who spoke about the things that were a treasure to them (family, friends, nature). In the 'Playing the Hero' Room what struck was an almost 6-metre long multimedia crossword whose clues were related to the works displayed in this part of the Exhibition. Once the right word was formed, an animated figure that the clue was related to, was displayed on the wall.

The junior Curators also derived something from... the



8. Measuring old costumes was made possible by stairs placed at the showcases



9. One of the biggest attractions of the exhibition was the multimedia crossword puzzle



10. The captions to the facilities attracted the attention of exhibition visitors and encouraged closer contact with the works

(Photos: 1, 3, 5 – P. Grochowalski; 2, 4, 6 – M. Jakubowski; 7 – M. Bajkowska; 8-10 – B. Bajerski)

social media. They handwrote labels for the works: full of personal reflection, impressions, and emotions that specific monuments aroused in them. They placed them on the Exhibition walls as large-size scans, keeping the genuine spelling, thus creating a real wall that every *Facebook* user is familiar with.

The ways of interaction with the object and the exhibition invented by the children display several regularities and constitute an important guideline for everyone working on improving attractiveness of their own displays. These have to, first of all, be prepared in cooperation with those who will be using them. Furthermore, the interactive elements invented by the young Curators, fitted well in the Exhibition context, completed it or developed. They served as its background. The kids decided to leave the main role to be played by the objects. Neither did they decide to reject the traditional tools known to museum visitors (educational leaflets, audio guides), yet they made them entirely their own way. The interactive elements present in the *Anything Goes Museum* Exhibition demonstrated the importance of variety, allowing to involve all the senses, including touch.

### February – May 2016 / Touch, namely on conclusions resulting from participation

It is worth looking at the at the *Anything Goes Museum* Exhibition as a metaphor of a conversation carried out for over six months between the children, their parents,

Tutors, and the National Museum staff. Thanks to it everyone got to know each other better and together worked with much commitment on creating an exhibition that differed from everything before. Just like in any dialogue, there were moments at which a compromise was essential. *In the Grey Group, in which the visitor was to be scared, initially the children wanted to hang furniture upside down, however the conservators did not allow for this, since it endangered the historic objects. Therefore a compromise was worked out: the furniture pieces were placed on sloping podiums, which made them look as if they were about to fall, and this was precisely the effect the children desired.*<sup>22</sup>

The Museum let itself be inspired by the unbound imagination and freshness the children had brought into its building. They created an exhibition demonstrating they knew what museum was, aware of its goals and purposes, and they understood that although they were free to do anything, certain activities were not possible.

In every conversation there is non-verbal communication next to words. The 'between the lines' is often more interesting than what is said aloud. The collecting of all those 'hidden' unpronounced thoughts was possible thanks to the fact that the *Anything Goes Museum* Project was almost from the kick-off evaluated by external professionals.<sup>23</sup> This evaluation shows that the kids quickly knew their way about the Museum realities, and were able to creatively apply them for their own

purposes. The parents were surprised by the scale of the Project, the fact that the children were not bored even several months into it, and that despite the intensity of the meetings, they were always eager to participate. The young Curators met every Saturday from June 2015 until February 2016 (excluding the summer holidays, holidays, and the winter break) for three hours. As they say themselves, they became involved in the Project inspired by their parents. Although 67 per cent of the kids found the Project tiring, as many as 98 per cent did not consider it a waste of time. This enthusiasm is to a large extent due to the Tutors who made sure the activities varied, and that there was a bond established between themselves and the participants.

The work on the Exhibition made the children realize *that age is not a hindrance to undertaking serious projects.*<sup>24</sup> In the course of the work the children acquired some specialized knowledge of museum work, they were able to develop their artistic skills, such as creativity and perceiving art through emotions. However, as can be seen from the research, they benefitted most within the realm of social skills. Their self-esteem consolidated, their position in the family and class strengthened, they became more open and confident with grown-ups (the latter emphasized also by the parents). They learnt how negotiation and self-presentation skills.

In the evaluation the question of the age of the kids involved in the Project (aged between 6 and 14) is present. Despite a strong integration within the team, some Curators found it difficult to communicate with younger/older team members. When asked about this aspect, the parents were not unanimous. *Half of the parents supported the proposed solution as for the children's age. 18 per cent were of the opinion that it would make sense for slightly older children to participate [namely from 10 onwards – AK].* However, some parents also suggested that such a project should be targeted at children aged at least 8 or 12 at most. Neither do Tutors agree as for the children's age. *The tension [...] depends on what is considered as the Project's goal: if it is the children's development, the age is of lesser importance. However, if it is the product in the form of a professional exhibition, children should be older.*<sup>25</sup>

The implementation of the Project involved the whole staff of the National Museum in Warsaw. All emphasize the importance of the experience they gathered in creating an exhibition for children and the 'visitor of the future'. The Project provided an opportunity not to stay settled in a groove, both as far as the perception and juxtaposition of historic objects are concerned, and the questions of multimediality in the display space. The

National Museum staff are of the opinion that the Project harmonizes with the latest museum trends, and that it enhances the prestige of the institution [the *Anything Goes Museum* Exhibition was reported on in foreign press; the Project was nominated to the 2016 Children in Museums Award – AK].

Between the preview of the Exhibition (27 February 2016) and its closing (8 May 2016), the conversation among the children, their parents, Tutors, and National Museum staff was participated by one more party, namely the Exhibition visitors. In their majority they regarded the display as interesting (97 per cent); they also perceived it as an attempt to encourage young people to visit the Museum, and to influence what it looks like. 55 per cent of the surveyed thought that the Exhibition was targeted at children, 23 per cent that more at grown-ups, while 22 per cent that it was both for kids and grown-ups. The untypical juxtaposition of exhibits was regarded by the Exhibition visitors as eye-opening.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, however, the visitors were asking: if anything goes in a museum, why cannot we touch anything? The answers were provided by the young Curator in various ways. Janek (aged 10), still before the Exhibition opening, said: *They are probably expecting some cuddly toys, teddy-bears, rainbows. [...] Instead they will see decent exhibitions, because we are decent.* It was the junior Curators who created the Exhibition and decided that genuine works were to be shown, not just reproductions or printouts. Thus it was obvious to them that the same laws would apply to their Exhibition as to any other one in a museum. When it turned out that Museum visitors treated the Exhibition as a 'playground', the Curators wrote the Visiting Rules reading: *Please, behave appropriately, as you will see true, old, and precious objects in the Exhibition [...]. How to behave in our Exhibition? 1. They are genuine, precious monuments, so DO NOT TOUCH THEM!*<sup>27</sup>

The Museum supported the above appeal, pointing out to the fact that within every space in which we happen to be there are certain rules to comply with, while the very title of the Exhibition should be understood as a metaphor: *It should not be interpreted literary. We all know that when at the theatre, one should not whistle, or eat something during an opera. Our Curators, namely the children who prepared the Exhibition, are perfectly aware of this.*<sup>28</sup>

*The implementation of the Anything Goes Museum Project and the Exhibition demonstrated how a close cooperation, dialogue defined as participation can benefit everyone. The dialogue leads to what matters most: mutual understanding, respect, trust, and friendship. It is worth while involving more and more individuals in it.*

**Abstract:** Usually an exhibition takes several years to be created. The curator responsible for it carries out queries and research, thanks to which the topic presented to the guests is presented in a broad historical and cultural context. The exhibition 'Anything Goes Museum', curated by children and organised by the National Museum in Warsaw, was created within the space of six months.

The topics chosen by the young curators (aged between 6 and 14) are universal questions about the definition of fear, the relationship between people and the world of nature, heroism, and the changes that the world constantly undergoes. The curators prepared this exhibition in an emotional way – it was an entirely novel approach to what an exhibition should look like. This experience allowed both



the museum staff and the young curators to get to know each other better and look at each other from a different perspective than usual.

This museum and educational experiment is a participatory project which fully empowered the children, who represent the most significant group of museum visitors.

**Keywords:** National Museum in Warsaw, education, temporary exhibition, Anything Goes Museum, participatory project.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Information on the Project and Exhibition together with short videos available at the National Museum in Warsaw (NMW) website: <http://www.mnw.art.pl/wystawy/w-muzeum-wszystko-wolno-wystawa-przygotowana-przez-dzieci,195.html> [accessed: 25 June 2016]. The Project has also been described in the papers published in the book *W Muzeum wszystko wolno* [The Anything Goes Museum], A. Kielczewska (ed.), Warszawa 2016.
- <sup>2</sup> Visitors are people visiting museums. The Author finds this word as rendering to such customers an appropriate status. Visitors to a museum are like visitors we receive at home: invited or unexpected, they deserve our respect and providing them with such conditions that they can feel comfortable, at ease, and always welcome!
- <sup>3</sup> *Muzea i uczenie się przed całe życie – podręcznik europejski* [Life Long Learning in Museum – European Manual (Polish edition), P. Majewski (academic ed.), Warszawa 2003, p. 25.
- <sup>4</sup> *Pozycja Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie na mapie kulturalnej Warszawy i Polski. Raport z badań* [Position of the National Museum in Warsaw on the Cultural Map of Warsaw and Poland. Research Report], p. 25. The research was conducted in Feb.-July 2014. The quoted definition synthesizes the opinion of research participants.
- <sup>5</sup> The concept of a museum as a societal communication was analysed by Magdalena Izabela Sacha in her paper *Samotność w Muzeum* [Solitude at the Museum], in: *Edukacja muzealna. Konteksty teoretyczne i praktyczne* [Museum Education. Theoretical and Practical Contexts], U. Wróblewska, K. Radłowska (ed.), Białystok 2013, p. 75 onwards.
- <sup>6</sup> The concept of the 'participatory museum' and the participatory projects it implements are thoroughly discussed by Nina Simon in her book *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz 2010, online version at <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/read/> [accessed 20 May 2016].
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.mnw.art.pl/edukacja/aktualnie/archiwum/temat-sztuka/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDPBvgBi3Ow> [accessed: 26 June 2016].
- <sup>8</sup> [http://konkursybylla.nimoz.pl/podworko\\_wystawa](http://konkursybylla.nimoz.pl/podworko_wystawa) [accessed: 25 June 2016].
- <sup>9</sup> A. Masłowska, *Kronika wystaw Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie 1862–2002* [Chronicle of the Exhibitions at the National Museum in Warsaw. 1862–2002]. Volume I 1862–1962, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, Warszawa 2002.
- <sup>10</sup> On behalf of the MNW Educational Department the Project was coordinated by Bożena Pysiewicz and Anna Knapiek.
- <sup>11</sup> Information on the recruitment for the Project was posted on MNW's website. It was sent out in the Museum's newsletter, and posted on the Museum's Facebook profile. The enrolment started as of 11 May 2015 and was on a first come first served basis.
- <sup>12</sup> The number of groups was determined by the number of rooms available within the Museum's temporary exhibition area; there are 7 of them, of which one was turned into a workshop. Thus each Curator team was given one of the 6 remaining rooms to 'develop'.
- <sup>13</sup> The Tutors: Katarzyna Szumlak (Orange Group, Exhibition 'A Forest'), Katarzyna Ampt (Red Group, Exhibition 'Dance of the Minotaur'), Maciej Marciniak (Grey Group, Exhibition 'Ghost Room'), Maria Wasińska-Stelmaszczuk (Yellow Group, Exhibition 'Playing the Hero'), Anna Kwiatkowska (Blue Group, Exhibition 'Treasure Trove'), Wioletta Cicha (Green Group, Exhibition 'Changes').
- <sup>14</sup> The project *W Muzeum wszystko wolno* subject to professional external evaluation carried out at every stage of implementation. It includes perception the project by people directly involved (children, parents, museum staff), as well as the opinion of people who visited the exhibition. Full report text is available on the MNW website.
- <sup>15</sup> E. Modzelewska-Kossowska, *Kilka słów o tym, co się dzieje, gdy w Muzeum wszystko wolno* [A Few Words on What Happens When Anything Goes at a Museum], in: *W Muzeum wszystko wolno* [The 'Anything Goes' Museum], A. Kielczewska (ed.), Warszawa 2016, p. 249.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> A. Kielczewska, B. Pysiewicz, *Czy w Muzeum naprawdę wszystko wolno, czyli o procesie przygotowania przez dzieci wystawy 'W Muzeum wszystko wolno'* [Does Really Anything Go at the Museum, Namely on the Preparation of the 'Anything Goes' Museum Exhibition by Children], in: *W Muzeum wszystko wolno...*, p. 244.
- <sup>18</sup> It is the description of a Chinese shoe from the MNW collection (accession No. SKAZsz 2589 MNW), which was presented in the 'Changes' Room in the Exhibition *The 'Anything Goes'* by the Green Group.
- <sup>19</sup> [http://www.arc.com.pl/muzeum\\_to\\_nie\\_nuda-41999398-pl.html](http://www.arc.com.pl/muzeum_to_nie_nuda-41999398-pl.html) [accessed: 29 May 2016].
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> R. Chowaniec, *Rozwój edukacji muzealnej. Od wystawiania przedmiotów w agorach i forach po hologramy i kody QR* [Development of Museum Education. From Displaying Objects at Agorae and Fora to Holograms and QR Codes], in: *Edukacja muzealna. Konteksty...*, p. 24.
- <sup>22</sup> Audios from the audio guides available at the MNW website: <http://www.mnw.art.pl/multimedia/audioprzewodniki/w-muzeum-wszystko-wolno/>
- <sup>23</sup> A. Kielczewska, B. Pysiewicz, *Czy w Muzeum naprawdę...*, p. 244.
- <sup>24</sup> This paragraph is based on the Project's evaluation conducted from September 2015 to May 2016. The full text available at the MNW website.
- <sup>25</sup> *The Anything Goes Museum Project's Evaluation Report*, p. 9.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- <sup>28</sup> Fragment of the Exhibition Visiting Rules created by the junior Curators. They were handed to everyone buying a ticket for the Exhibition.
- <sup>29</sup> Statement made by Marta Dziewulska, responsible at MNW for media communication, for the WaWaLove.pl portal <http://wawalove.pl/W-muzeum-wszystko-wolno-Kustosz-Tylko-nie-dotykac-a22341> [accessed: 25 May 2016].

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# THE ART OF CROSSING BORDERS. MUSEUM EDUCATION AND THE MIGRATION CRISIS

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Two people. One of them, although he resides in Poland, does not know what Poland looks like. He lives here but, at the same time, remains constantly abroad. He dreams of having an electric kettle, a rucksack, a tracksuit. The second visits America for the first time and during his stay shuts himself in a room with an untamed coyote. He boxes in defence of democracy. He conveys across the Iron Curtain several hundred artworks in a wooden chest on the roof of a van.

These two persons share one fact: the crossing of borders. The first is an immigrant from a centre for foreigners in Grotniki near Łódź (further as: Centre), forced to flee from his homeland, quite often together with his family. The second is Joseph Beuys, artist and activist, theoretician of art, social and political reformer.

In August 1981 Joseph Beuys arrived at the Łódź Museum of Art (MSŁ) right in the middle of the 'Solidarity carnival'. He presented a wooden chest mounted on the roof of his van and containing almost 300 artworks – about 1000 artefacts.

Although the visit paid by Beuys came as a surprise it was by no means accidental but coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Museum of Art in Łódź – the only 'open' museum behind the Iron Curtain. It was also part of the interest in the peripheries of Europe, well enrooted in Beuys' biography, and utopian dreams about a Eurasia community. Furthermore, it symbolically reinforced the Solidarity movement, which outright embodied visions of direct democracy. The *Polenrtransport 1981* artistic action crossed the borders of aesthetics, ethics, and politics.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Beuys, however, is a relevant figure not because of anniversaries. After a period of critical reinterpretations of his accomplishments from the 1980s and 1990s, in whose

wake he became a victim of partial oblivion, the problems analysed by Beuys are coming back. His undertakings prophetically captured the early stages of contemporary economic, social, and ecological crises, and today we grapple with their mature symptoms: a global crisis of capitalism, an economy based on debts or ecological questions identified as the Anthropocene age.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, activities proposed by Beuys do not merely constitute diagnoses but also embark upon therapy.

*Polenrtransport 1981* consisted of a medical diagnosis of the existence of a border between the East and the West and an attempt at treatment. Here the medication is entirely a gesture of a specific economy – that of the donation.

The latter does not deplete the symptoms of an exchange (e.g. the commodity-monetary one) – the gesture-reaction is missing. The Muzeum received a gift and Beuys got nothing in return. One might speculate whether through this act of a donation he installed his works into a collection that made it possible to interpret his *oeuvre* within the context of the avant-garde, and possibly improved his media image of a challenger of the rules of art but these were mere side effects. After all, in 1981 the Museum of Art in Łódź, situated in communist Poland, did not permit the consumption of this symbolic profit.<sup>3</sup>

The details of the formal conveyance of the *Polenrtransport 1981* gift from Federal Republic of Germany across two borders remain unclear. Nonetheless, at the time the transit of commodities and people across the Iron Curtain was restricted. Import across this particular geo-political frontier was probably ensured by granting objects packed in a wooden chest the special legal status of works of art.<sup>4</sup>



This is the way in which Beuys smuggled in a 'Coca-Cola bottle' or one of the Bruno Corà-Tee multiples<sup>5</sup> (1975). But after being extracted from a wooden chest this emptied Coca-Cola bottle, refilled with herbal tea, achieved at the Museum of Art in Łódź symbolic significance not as an *objet d'art* but as a commodity. It did not exert an impact as a work of art (in legal categories) but as a consumer commodity, fetishized due to its Western quality as an icon of capitalism within the context of both the Polish economy and communist propaganda, which perceived Coca-Cola as 'liquid imperialism'. The transformation of a Coke bottle into art enabled Beuys to smuggle it across the border between the West and the East. After crossing this frontier, however, the artwork once again became essential as a Coca-Cola bottle.<sup>6</sup>

This gesture sums up the strategy applied by Beuys, who redefined the concept of art. *Art is capital* – Beuys proclaimed while seeing in it every creative ability expressed artistically in daily work and theoretical thought. Such art lacks Modernistic autonomy and self-purposefulness, nor does it mark the author with the brand of a genius. *Everyone is an artist* – Beuys taught, regarding each person as a sculptor who does not execute marble or bronze statues but produces works whose conception *may be expanded all the way to the invisible material used by everyone*. The reason lies in the fact that art is an instrument of social change, sculpting the world in assorted ways.<sup>7</sup>

Upon the thirtieth anniversary of *Polentransport 1981* the Museum of Art in Łódź proposed instead of a special-occasion monographic exposition a *WIKIseum* project, an exhibition of sorts without art, which rendered Beuys's conception of social sculpture visible.<sup>8</sup> In *Heal the World* Karol Radziszewski – artist and curator – arranged objects and not artworks. The exposition was composed of corroding bed frames, stacked plates, and wooden blankets from a shelter, water bottles, with the sales profits to be assigned for digging a well in Sudan, chains and wellington boots used by ecological activists in their campaigns, and food rations – all borrowed for the exhibition. The Museum thus became a temporary stopover in the humanitarian circuit: three weeks later the objects were returned to the needy.<sup>9</sup> This is because sculpture as envisaged by Beuys denotes crossing the Iron Curtain border with a Coca-Cola bottle concealed under the guise of a work of art. Upon other occasions it is tantamount to crossing the border of indifference, covering someone with a blanket, offering water from a well, conducting a blockade aimed against cutting down a forest.<sup>10</sup>

The year 2016 marked the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beuys undertaking. Once again the Museum was concerned with not reducing its celebrations exclusively to symbolic commemoration, but with setting the artist's gesture in motion, sharing art crossing all borders in an act of solidarity with those for whom today crossing frontiers is extremely difficult or outright impossible. We embarked upon a discussion about the identity of those for whom the museum gate is an insurmountable barrier, those who have managed to domesticate this public space, and those on whose map it, for all practical purpose, does not exist.<sup>11</sup> For many years the Education Department has been working with groups of the 'excluded' in two Museum departments,

situated in two parts of Polesie, a former working class district of Łódź. The departments in question no longer act as inaccessible fortresses of the avant-garde, but became a place where the local residents increasingly often take part in open activities, shows, workshops, and lectures; the Museum continues developing this 'exchange with neighbours' movement.

We went on to ponder who never appears at the Museum of Art in Łódź, although physically he has a chance to find the way, whom information about our activity does not reach, and what sort of barriers produce such a situation. Although it appears to us that we had overcome the stereotype of high art and contemporary art accessible only to the educated elites, the statistical visitor at the Museum is still 'white', a representative of a uniform cultural-civilisation formation. We might even hazard the statement that cultural diversity is represented to a greater extent by on-show artists and lecturers than the public. This disproportion does not reflect, however, the demographic structure of Łódź.

According to Statistical Office data only 1% of the residents of Łódź declared a country of birth other than Poland: Germany – 24.7%, Ukraine – 14.8%, the United Kingdom – 10.1% (predominantly Polish children born in the UK), and Belarus – 9.7%. Citizenship other than Polish was confirmed by Ukrainians – 13.7%, Germans – 6.8%, citizens of India – 5.9%, Armenians – 5.6%, Russians – 5.6% and Turks – 5%. The largest self-declared ethnic minority in the voivodeship of Łódź are the Romani people – about 1 200 residents.<sup>12</sup> The list reveals a surprisingly total absence of the Vietnamese minority, otherwise extremely visible in the daily life of the town. This phenomenon is by no means specific for Łódź – it is impossible to determine the number of the Vietnamese in Poland although it is well known that they constitute the largest group of foreigners, possibly exceeding 60 000.<sup>13</sup> They remain unnoticeable in public space with the exception of eateries offering variations of Oriental food; contrary to other minorities the Vietnamese are invisible in public space, including museums.

In the course of the project diagnoses we reached the conclusion that the main problem entails a communication barrier, predominantly linguistic. If foreigners do appear in the Museum of Art then they are mainly students, *ex definitione* a well-socialised group living in Łódź, even if their stay is temporary; by relying on fluent English and the Internet they can easily obtain information about Museum events. Some, capable of communicating in Polish, obtain information from the local press. Nonetheless, the percentage of foreigners – with the exception of tourists – at the Museum appeared to be disturbingly small. We thus decided to devise communication channels that would make it possible to reach the national and ethnic minorities residing in Łódź and environs. An international summer picnic to be held in the Museum courtyard – a space to feel comfortable in, suitable for those who had never visited us – was proposed as an event initiating the project. The idea of *Sunday at the Museum* (1972–1981) was implemented by custodian Urszula Czartoryska and Director Ryszard Stanisławski by opening the Museum courtyard for events addressed to the entire town population.<sup>14</sup> We have been continuing this concept since 2013.

The anniversary of the gesture made by Beuys appeared to be the best occasion for introducing him to a new public. Talks held with potential partners, foundations, institutions, sponsors, and translators dampened our enthusiasm, forced us not to bite off more than we can chew, and in particular affected our funds. We came to the conclusion that we shall concentrate on a single concrete group and reach it outside the Museum. Before we invite someone, however, we must first set off on a journey. This was the origin of the 'Art Crossing Borders' project.

## How Far to the Border? Journey

At the time of work on 'Art Crossing Borders' the local press was flooded by a tide of articles about the Orchid Centre for foreigners, situated in the suburban locality of Grotniki. This was the exact time when the Łódź Pomaga (Łódź Helps) group was collecting used bicycles for the residents of the Centre, a venture greeted especially joyfully by the youngest Centre residents. Simultaneously, the campaign produced a tide of populist and callous comments on the Internet about obligations towards poor Polish children and not foreign ones.

The Orchid Centre in Grotniki is the only place in the Łódź area that received foreigners waiting for the status of a refugee. In accordance with binding law they can include only those persons who reach Poland as the first European Union country. The status of a refugee is the right of people staying outside their native land where they fear persecutions owing to, i.a. their race, religion, and convictions. In accord with a 2016 report addressed to the Office for Foreigners, out of a total of 1997 persons filing motions for international protection in 2016 and earlier, only 108 – 1% – were granted refugee status and a further 2% received other, less favourable forms of stay permits, i.a. supplementary protection and consent for temporary residence. In 2016 out of 1418 persons in whose cases a decision had been made only five Chechens were granted refugee status.<sup>15</sup>

Daily life at the Grotniki centre is difficult. The overwhelming majority of the several score residents are Chechens, but there are also Ukrainians, Georgians, Azeris, Tatars and other nationalities from former Soviet republics. In the course of being assigned to concrete centres in Poland they are subjected to religious segregation in order to avoid tension within the, often small, community. Grotniki is also the destination for Moslem refugees. Although the living conditions differ little from those of a countryside summer vacation in the People's Republic of Poland, there is a hall fulfilling the function of a mosque, prayer rooms respecting a division according to genders, and a kitchen for cooking Halal meals.

A single adult, without a family, is entitled to 70 zlotys pocket money a month (families with children receive 400 zlotys of additional aid); the foreigner is expected to pay for trips to Warsaw to attend hearings concerning his case (money spent on tickets is reimbursed). He may also stay outside the Centre for 48 hours. After filing a motion concerning refugee status he is prohibited to work for half a year. The Centre guarantees accommodation, food, and basic medical care. Time at the Centre is usually spent on

walks in the fenced-in grounds, daily activities, and surfing the Internet.

In connection with a declaration made by the Polish government on 1 July 2015 about its willingness to welcome 200 exiles as part of an agreement with the European Union, as well as suggestions appearing in the media that the Grotniki centre could become one of the sites for the allocation of refugees from Syria, the work performed by this institution began to give rise to intense controversies. 607 inhabitants of the local commune signed a petition calling for the closure of the Centre,<sup>16</sup> anxious about a supposed threat to safety and the 'declining level of teaching' at the John Paul II Primary School-Gymnasium complex integrating Chechen and Polish children. Conversations held with teachers the moment the school became a partner in our undertaking revealed that children of the refugees are the targets of harassment and aggression on the rising tide of animosity following sensationalist information in the media. Apart from those moments the teachers observed that Chechen children manage well in the school community, become rapidly assimilated, and find a 'common language' with their peers.

## Border formalities. Process

Already the organisation of first meetings with the residents of the Centre made us aware just how many barriers, and at how many levels, we have to overcome. Take the fact that in order to enter the Centre one needs a permit issued by the Office for Foreigners, which, in turn, asks the guardians of the institution about their opinion. Our first meeting with the Centre residents did not produce their enthusiastic reaction: they feared cultural 'colonisation' by a museum institution. We discussed the idea and asked for a meeting with them, combined with a workshop whose purpose was to get to know each other.

The first border in direct contacts that we were forced to cross was a language barrier. It turned out that we shared a postcolonial experience both with the Chechens and the scarce Centre residents from former Soviet republics – we all spoke Russian. Although almost every representative of the Museum participating in the project had childhood experiences with the Russian language, unfortunately no one spoke it to a satisfactory degree and we were joined by volunteer translators.

The objective of the first workshop was to get to know each other and for the Centre residents to get accustomed to our presence. We also wanted to talk about the very concept of a 'museum' – were the workshop participants familiar with it, what did they associate it with, have they ever toured a museum? The majority had never been to a museum and connected it with archaeology, something 'inaccessible', 'posh', and 'closed'.

The Centre residents approached us with a large dose of reserve. Instead of persuading them we decided to simply interest them in a workshop. It seemed to us that the natural recipients and first contact group would be the children, with whom we managed to establish interaction. Once we spread out our material in a wooded glade within the Centre in order to encourage them to play with us it turned out that in response to our cheeky *hi!* they fled,

shouting. We were unaware that these children spoke no Russian whatsoever and that the language itself produced a rather negative response. Since we did not want to force them to cooperate we decided to start constructing objects on our own, and left the decision about joining (or merely observing) us to the children. Somewhat later they started watching, rode up closer on their newly received bikes, approached us just to run away a moment later, and then sat down at a safe distance to finally test our reaction. They also began throwing pinecones lying nearby at us. But we changed the pinecone battle into a game and the children joined the fun. The fact that we had won over the group of children also convinced some of the mothers. They became our liaison in contacts with the youngsters and not only translated into the Chechen that, which our translators said in Russian, but their presence and conversations held with us produced an atmosphere of trust and security.

The establishment of a link was facilitated by a simple game: while throwing a ball of twine we started to create a network of connections between the players. Next, we attached the string to trees surrounding us until there appeared a spider web – a frame for an installation that we wanted to create together with the participants. In our search for a common language we decided to rouse their imagination by resorting to Russian fables. We asked the children to imagine creatures living in a magic forest, and then, with the help of such simple material as wrapping paper, brown adhesive tape, cardboard cylinders, etc., to construct the animal figures and hang them in the grove. From that moment there was no need for a lot of words. Mothers and children alike became intensely engaged in the activity: they created, i.a. an enormous paper turtle. While describing the nature of our museum, we installed the objects in space, adding brief descriptions-labels, which we made in two languages. Then, we decided to contemplate our exhibition by lying down on the grass and looking at the display against the background of the sky; we wished to install into the workshop participants the intuition that a museum can become a place for relaxation, and visits to a museum – an opportunity for creativity. After the workshop ended we talked with the women from the Centre about their experiences. They told us about a recent trip to a planetarium, which they viewed as extraordinary. This was an extremely moving conversation. The Centre residents demonstrated their amazing gratitude for the time and attention we devoted to them and for the fact that their children could try out something totally new. Such moments are unusually rewarding and a signal that we were on a good path.

Two issues appeared to be of key importance. First, preparing the Centre residents to tour the Museum of Art in such a way that it would not become an oppressive situation due to the presence of persons watching over the exposition and the binding and rather strict principles of behaviour. We were compelled to rethink the creation of a situation in which the visitors could feel comfortable and concentrate on exploring the museum and not on self-control. Secondly, work with the local community so that the latter would open itself to activity involving both the Centre residents and the inhabitants of the commune, proved to be significant. The challenge involved not only crossing own boundaries but also activity above

the barriers of the place to which we arrived. The absence of a language whose use would make it possible to explain reality and, at the same time, to impose concrete narration probably proved to be the most creative circumstance.

The Education Department of the Art Museum in Łódź prepared craft workshops for female Centre residents who longed for them and, at the same time, successive workshops addressed to children. 'Planning the planet' introduced the participants to the avant-garde conception of Unism, formulated by Władysław Strzemiński, with the assistance of work executed with coloured kissel on a ten meter-long strip of wrapping paper. Kissel, a substance of specific properties, limited the possibility of 'painting' concrete depictions and the colours became mixed up; finally, the joy of creating such a large artwork by using intense colours became a physical experience and the children bathed in the colourful slush, which slowly turned into a uniform grey texture, the target of Strzemiński's Unism.

In a subsequent phase we invited the local community to join our undertakings, starting with cooperation with the local school – one of the rare territories shared by the local inhabitants of the commune and the residents of the Centre for foreigners. The *PasmanterJa* (Me-Haberdashery) workshop was supposed to incline the children towards reflection on the perception of people through their external features and towards self-creation. We wished to reverse the situation, so that children from Grotniki would become the guests of the Centre and thus we held the workshop on its grounds. Only a small group of schoolchildren from Grotniki took part: for numerous parents the Centre still remains 'across the border', they are incapable of crossing it nor wish to allow their children to do so. We therefore repeated the experiment at school. The workshop leitmotif maintained that everyone could become whoever he wants to be, even if at present this feat seems to be impossible. Children taking part in the workshop could 'design' themselves anew by tracing their outlines on cardboard and then supplementing them with haberdashery accessories. They helped each other while working in pairs, while we tried to create Pole-foreigner couples, not always successfully. After the fun was over we displayed the works in the school corridor and then all the schoolchildren were invited to see the exhibition.

The next stage of cooperation involved inviting a whole group of children to the Museum of Art in Łódź. We wanted them to see 'Exercises in Autonomy', an exhibition of works by the Hungarian artist Tamás Kaszás, realised together with Anikó Loránt (ex-artists' collective). The exposition juxtaposed works of art presented as archaeological findings – traces of a (future) society that came into being after the annihilation of our contemporary civilization, caused by an economic and ecological catastrophe. This attempt at envisaging the future and better forms of communal life on Earth corresponded to the quests pursued by Joseph Beuys. In the course of the 'News in a bottle' workshop we followed the main ideas expounded by Kaszás – the children were supposed to imagine that they were trying to survive on an desert island. Using simple objects, supposed detritus cast onto the beach by the ocean – plastic bottles, refuse bags, paper – they constructed clothes, kitchen utensils, machinery, and musical instruments but also objects



representing the 'something beautiful' category, something to contemplate. Our fears concerning the oppressive nature of the Museum remained unconfirmed: the children freely experimented within the defined limits and faced works of art recalling familiar everyday utensils rather than stereotypical museum exhibits.

### Expanding the domain of art. Meetings

The crowning of the project was 'Sunday with a Museum', an event held on 2 October 2016, which this time we brought to the Orchid Centre in Grotniki. Together with the persons in charge and guardians of the Centre, the head of the commune, the local school, the Farmers' Wives Association, the 'Pinia' Pro-ecological Society Grotniki-Jedlicze-Ustronie, and the Museum of Cinematography in Łódź we invited the residents of Grotniki and Łódź to cross the Centre borders in an amicable atmosphere of shared merrymaking. Thanks to an agreement with the Office for Foreigners on that day entry to the Centre was unrestricted and did not call for earlier administrative procedures. We prepared an exhibition of copies of key works of art from the collection of the Museum of Art in Łódź and an accompanying guided tour. The Museum of Cinematography organised a travelling cinema showing animated films.

The festive atmosphere was completed by a joint preparation of salads, sharing dishes cooked by the female residents of the Centre and members of the Farmers' Wives Association, as well as songs and dances. This was the first time when men living in the Centre actually joined in and performed *lezginka*, a traditional Chechen dance, which ultimately roused all those present to join the fun. In this

totally spontaneous, unplanned, and non-invented moment we were the closest. Such an instant – devoid of mental and physical borders – required a long process of winning trust. It also offered us a feeling that crossing borders is an art in the entire ambiguity of the word.

Additionally, we issued an invitation to attend the 'Something beautiful' open workshop, which involved painting our dreams and reminiscences on transparent foil hanging between trees. Next to suns and smiling people Chechen children painted people killing each other, Kalashnikov rifles, and blood.

The 'Art of crossing boundaries' project meant a lot to us. We are aware of the fact that we were only paying a visit in Grotniki and that despite our intentions we did not succeed in achieving more durable cooperation. At the same time, we believe that in the face of the migration crisis and increasingly extremist social moods such projects are needed by all sides and along every border.

The authors wish to thank all who worked on the project: Katarzyna Mądrzycka-Adamczyk, Maja Pawlikowska, Małgorzata Wiktorko, Maria Wasinska, Agnieszka Wojciechowska-Sej (Education Department MSŁ), Agnieszka Ciszewska, Julia Kostarska-Talaga (Promotion Department MSŁ), Tatiana Szymańska (Education Department, the Herbst Palace Museum MSŁ), Maja Wójcik (Director for Dissemination and Promotion MSŁ), Beata Bocian (Museum of Cinematography), and volunteers: Maria Kaczorowska, Elżbieta Ludzka, Tatiana Sauko and Beata Połowińska. The authors of the article – Tamara Skalska and Leszek Karczewski – were also involved in the realisation of the *Art of Crossing Borders* project.

**Abstract:** The authors consider the social duties of a museum institution. They describe the process of the Museum of Art in Łódź implementing a social and artistic project entitled *The art of crossing borders*, which was

targeted at Chechen refugees living in the centre for refugees in Grotniki near Łódź. Joseph Beuys's philosophy of art serves as the framework for the project's interpretation.

**Keywords:** museum education, museum, participation, refugees, migration, Joseph Beuys, social sculpture, gift.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> One of us wrote about this event more extensively, see: L. Karczewski, *Przez granice, przeciw granicom*, in: *77 dzieł sztuki z historii. Opowiadania zebrane*, P. Bazyłko, K. Masiewicz (ed.), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Stowarzyszenie 40 000 Malarzy, Warszawa 2010, pp. 35-40.
- <sup>2</sup> This is the thesis of Pilva Kalham and Łukasz Zaremba: *Introduction*, in: *Joseph Beuys Outside the Box. Joseph Beuys through Contemporary Visions* [exhibition catalogue], Espoo Museum of Modern Art in cooperation with the Museum of Art in Łódź, Helsinki 2017, p. 7.
- <sup>3</sup> See: Ł. Zaremba, *A gift without debt*, in: *Joseph Beuys Outside the Box...*, p. 15.
- <sup>4</sup> A. Alisauskas, *The Joseph Beuys export economy: East-West translation in Polentransport / Parcel for Poland*, in: *Joseph Beuys Outside the Box ...*, p. 63.
- <sup>5</sup> Multiple denotes identical works of art executed by an artist copying a model object or produced by him as a series.
- <sup>6</sup> A. Alisauskas, *The Joseph Beuys export...*, p. 63.
- <sup>7</sup> J. Beuys, *Introduction*, in: *Joseph Beuys* [exhibition catalogue], The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 1979, p. 6, after: *Miejsca Rzeźby*, J. Jedliński [prep. of exhibition and catalogue], Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Warszawa 1988, p. 19.
- <sup>8</sup> *WIKIseum*, 14 October–6 November 2011, Museum of Art in Łódź, curator: L. Karczewski.
- <sup>9</sup> See: L. Karczewski, *WIKIseum*, in: 'WIKIseum' [exhibition catalogue], Muzeum of Art in Łódź, Łódź 2011, pp. 14-18.
- <sup>10</sup> More extensively on the project see: L. Karczewski, *Być jak John Malkovich. Strategie edukatora*, in: *Artysta – kurator – instytucja – odbiorca. Przestrzenie autonomii i modele krytyki*, M. Kosińska, K. Sikorska and A. Skórzyńska (ed.), Galeria Miejska Arsenał, Poznań 2012, pp. 365-378.
- <sup>11</sup> In the Polish version of this article we consistently apply feminine personal forms: the team working on 'The art of crossing borders' project was composed exclusively of women, with the exception of the co-author.

<sup>12</sup> See: *Ludność w województwie łódzkim. Stan i struktura demograficzno-społeczna*, Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011, Urząd Statystyczny w Łodzi, Łódź 2013, pp. 61-68.

<sup>13</sup> See: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wietnamczycy\\_w\\_Polsce](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wietnamczycy_w_Polsce)

<sup>14</sup> M. Madejska, *Szesnaście minut wolnego czasu. Wybrane działania oświatowe Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi w okresie PRL*, in: *Muzeum Sztuki. Monografia*, vol. 1, A. Jach, K. Sloboda, J. Sokołowska, M. Ziółkowska (ed.), Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 2015, pp. 396-436.

<sup>15</sup> *Informacja Szefa Urzędu do Spraw Cudzoziemców o stosowaniu w roku 2016 ustawy z dnia 13 czerwca 2003 r. o udzielaniu cudzoziemcom ochrony na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (t.j. Dz. U. z 2016 r. poz. 1836) w zakresie realizacji zobowiązań Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wynikających z Konwencji Genewskiej dotyczącej statusu uchodźców oraz Protokołu Nowojorskiego dotyczącego statusu uchodźcy Warszawa, marzec 2016 r.* <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/raport-roczny-ochrona-miedzynarodowa/2016-2/>

<sup>16</sup> J. Kosmatka, *Mieszkańcy Grotnik domagają się likwidacji ośrodka dla uchodźców*, 'Dziennik Łódzki' 18 February 2016.

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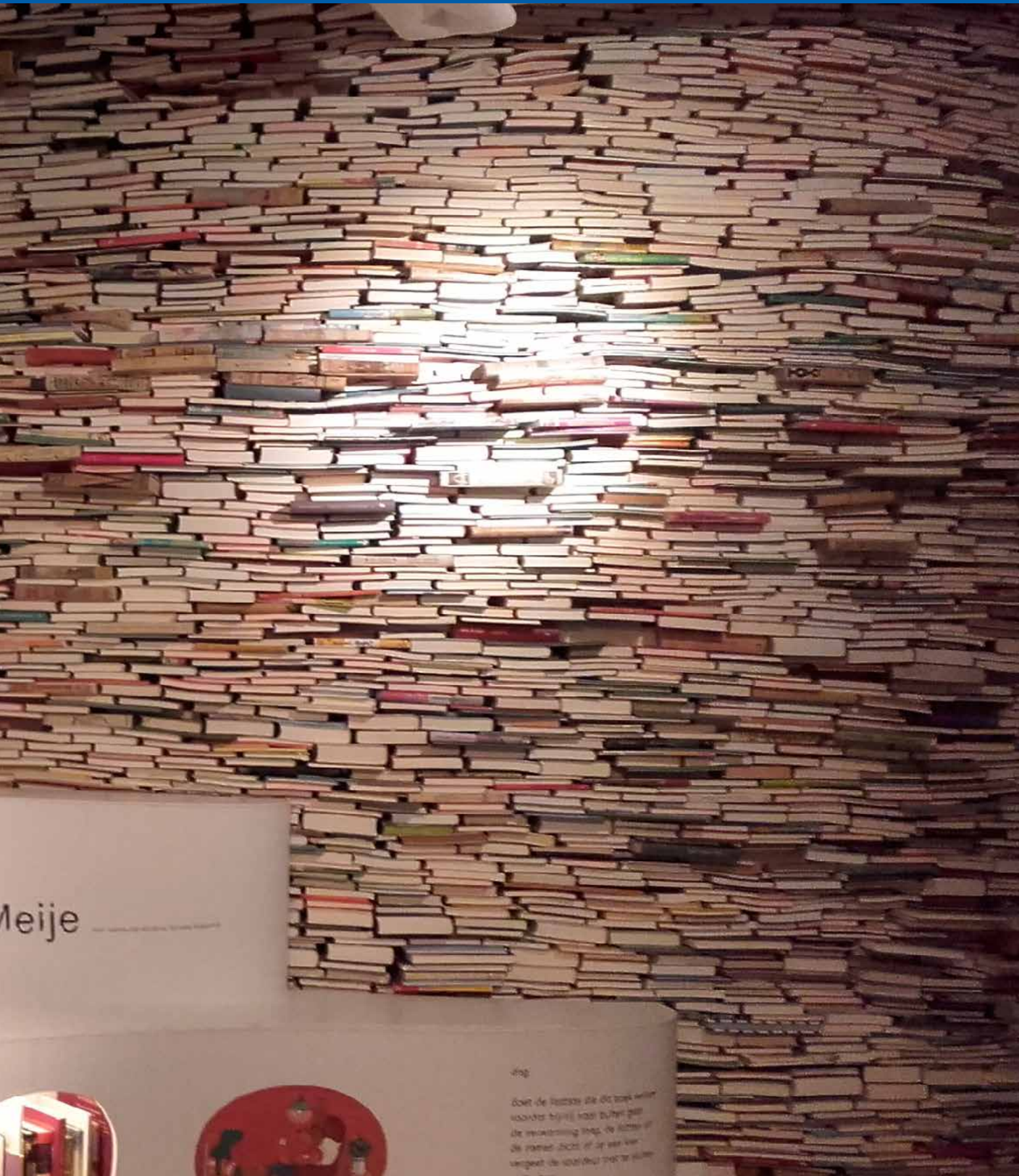


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# FROM ABROAD



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# MUSEUMS IN THE POLISH LIBRARY IN PARIS<sup>1</sup>

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The Polish Library in Paris (Library) is an institution of a long-standing tradition and great merits for Polish culture. Established in 1838, it is one of the oldest institutions preserving the Polish national heritage. Located since 1854 in the building at 6 quai d'Orléans on Saint Louis Island, in the very heart of Paris, the Library boasts a book collection amounting to over 200.000 volumes, these including numerous valuable old prints. Among its most treasured pieces there are e.g. *Commune Poloniae Regni privilegium*, namely so-called Łaski's Statutes (Cracow 1506), and the first edition of Nicolaus Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (Nuremberg 1543). Some of the volumes feature exquisite bindings and unique book plates.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, since the early twentieth century, the Library has also been an institution of a museum status, which seems to be easily overlooked by the public. In 1903, Władysław Mickiewicz, son of the Polish Bard, established the Adam Mickiewicz Museum in the very building. Throughout the twentieth century, the Library was frequently reorganized, aiming to find new operating modes, and to adjust to the changing needs of the Polish, French (and other) public. Today, apart from the Adam Mickiewicz Museum, it offers to the public Salon Chopin, the Salon collecting mementoes of the Composer, and the Bolesław Biegas Museum. Following the restructuring in the early twenty-first century, and the changes in its operations in 2010, the museums have been enjoying a growing interest of not merely Polish visitors. And though objectively the statistics are not impressive, bearing in mind rival Paris offer and technical difficulties, it can be easily observed that the museums have been consistently expanding the circle of their faithful public.

As the present paper deals with the organization of the three museums, a commentary on the complex structure of the Polish Library in Paris is essential. The three museums operate within the framework of a single institution.<sup>3</sup> Basing on its collections, they offer three displays which for historical reasons bear names of separate museums. Collections of printed books, manuscripts, and art works that have separate supervisors, serve not only to hold

permanent and temporary exhibitions, but their items are also systematically provided to the visitors in the reading rooms. In the paper the analysis of musical and academic events (e.g. lectures, conferences) has been purposefully omitted. Since the collections of the Polish Library in Paris as such have been in recent years discussed on several occasions,<sup>4</sup> the present paper shall focus only on the functioning of these, after all untypical even by Paris standards, museums.

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In order to understand the importance of the Library for Polish culture, let us now have a brief overview of its history.<sup>5</sup> It was founded by a group of post-November Uprising emigrants who sought shelter in France, and who, having witnessed the military defeat, decided to struggle for their homeland with other means: by researching into and consolidating history, as well as by promoting Polish culture. This kind of struggle was all the more essential in view of the liquidation of the major Polish libraries and artistic collections within the Russian partition.

In 1832, a part of emigrant circles founded the Literary Society (in 1854, transformed into Historical and Literary Society, TH-L). Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski became its President. And it was the Literary Society that instigated the founding of the Polish Library, officially opened on 24 November 1838. Initially located in the building at 10 Rue Duphot, not far from St Mary Magdalene's Church, following different vicissitudes, it moved to its current address where it has stayed for good. Its operations were connected with the activity of the Historical and Literary Society, which was living through an acute crisis in the late nineteenth century. Due to the decreasing number of members, both institutions suffered growing financial difficulties. In order to save the Library and its collections, in 1893 TH-L decided to transfer the Library's ownership to the Academy of Learning (from 1919, Polish Academy of Learning, PAU) in Cracow. The transfer officially happened in 1893, and in 1899, the Academy assigned Władysław





1. The Polish Library in Paris – the Adam Mickiewicz Museum, temporary exhibition room

Mickiewicz, an activist of great merits for the emigrant community in France, to serve as its representative responsible for the Library. He headed the Library until his death in 1926. It was when he was still in office that a new museum appeared in the same building: in 1903, Mickiewicz's son donated mementoes of his father, as well as a substantial portion of his own collection, setting up the Adam Mickiewicz collection. The fact, however, did not cause that the Polish Library became more popular with Polish society. Following Władysław Mickiewicz's death, Franciszek Pułaski was assigned to serve as the Academy's Delegate at the Library. He succeeded in conducting an essential reform of the Paris institution. The stately room on the first floor was remodelled by the famous French designer Armand-Alberta Rateau (1882–1938), acquiring trendy décor and a modern aspect. The Library turned into a kind of an institute promoting Polish culture in France. Lectures were organized, and so were exhibitions promoting Polish art (e.g. an important exhibition of Polish prints in 1930 curated by Gustaw Gwozdecki), and in 1937, the Centre d'Études Polonaises (Centre for Polish Studies) was founded. As part of the reform, the inventory of the collections was made, following which the section unrelated directly to Poland as for their topics, were sent there (books and prints).<sup>6</sup>

This period of the Library's development was interrupted by the outbreak of WW II. The fragment with its most precious collections was hidden, however the majority were seized by the Nazis, and sent to the Reich. When after the war Franciszek Pułaski returned to the building at 6 quai d'Orleans,

he found it in a deplorable state. He immediately began restoring its functionality and recovering the collections. The major part of the collections was regained, yet what proved to constitute a real challenge was the entanglement of the Paris cultural institutions in politics. The Polish Communist government suspended the Polish Academy of Learning, at the same time establishing the Polish Academy of Sciences, PAN. Basing themselves on feeble legal grounds, thus regarding PAN to be PAU's successor, the Communists made attempts to take over the Polish Library together with its collections. The determination of the Polish emigration, who decided to restore the Historical and Literary Society, and the support of French friends saved the Library as an independent institution.

Having severed Library's formal ties with Poland, the Library ended up facing financial challenges. Despite those problems, it was a decisive period for the development of its museum character. At that point, it received many precious donations. Undoubtedly, the most spectacular was that of Kamil Gronkowski, TH-L President in 1948–49. A long-standing Curator at the Petit Palais des Beaux-Arts in Paris, he bequeathed (d. in 1949) his collection boasting only old French art to the Library. A year later, Bolesław Biegas bequeathed all his property to the Library, this including his sculptures, paintings, art collection, and precious manuscripts. Thanks to this bequest it was possible to set up the Bolesław Biegas Museum in which his paintings and sculptures, as well as the works by the artists that were his contemporaries were displayed. After 1945, a museum room dedicated to Frederic Chopin, an outstanding composer, and also a TH-L member, was





2. The Polish Library in Paris – the Chopin Salon

launched.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, throughout the whole period, works of the artists associated with Poland were flowing into the Library, e.g. of Olga Boznańska, Sara Lipska, Georges van Haardt, Jan Waclaw Zawadowski, Jan Ekiert, and many others. Regrettably, in the aftermath of WW II, the collections also decreased. In the 1970s, in view of a difficult financial situation, some precious works were sold, e.g. Biegas's pieces, or an interesting portrait by J.L. David.<sup>8</sup>

After 1989, the functioning of the Polish Library stabilized. This greatly supported by the establishment of the Association of the Polish Library in Paris, possible as a result of the agreement between the post-WW II TH-L and the restored PAU. The establishment of the new institution allowed to overcome a many-years' legal deadlock resulting from the ownership controversy over the Library building and its collections. Along with the stabilising of the legal and financial standing, the conditions of storing and sharing the library collections, as well as manuscripts and artistic holdings, significantly improved. In 2000–4, a register of the collections and an overall renovation of the building, together with the installation of modern systems of storing library collections, were conducted. Moreover, the space was reorganized by enlarging the display of the Adam Mickiewicz Museum (on the first floor), and by reorganizing the Salon Chopin adjacent to it, as well as the Bolesław Biegas Museum on the second floor.

The today's location and arrangement of the three museums at the Polish Library result from the transformation of the original concept worked out in 2010, on the occasion of Chopin's 200<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. Currently all the

permanent exhibitions are on one storey, while only rooms for temporary (short-term) exhibitions are on the ground floor. The Mickiewicz Museum has been moved to the former librarians' room, and in its place a spacious room for temporary (long-term) exhibitions has been organized, these related to the Poet's figure and oeuvre. Salon Chopin has been modernized,<sup>9</sup> while the Biegas Museum moved from the second to the first floor. The Museums, for which there is one shared fee, are open to visitors Tuesday to Friday from 2.15 p.m. to 6 p.m.

### The Adam Mickiewicz Museum

Adam Mickiewicz settled in Paris following the November Uprising (in which he had not personally participated), together with the Great Emigration, and ranked among the founders of the Polish Library. It was, therefore, quite natural that his son Władysław would bequeath mementoes of his father to this very institution. Today, the Adam Mickiewicz Museum is the first display the visitor gets into by walking up the Library's steps to the first floor. It occupies a medium-size room (about 49 sq m) in which boards in French describe respective periods in the Poet's life. The texts are accompanied by reproductions of country maps, city views, portraits of individuals related to the Poet, and finally the facsimiles of the manuscripts from the Library's extensive collections. Amidst them also genuine objects have been placed: art pieces, personal mementoes, everyday objects. The display presents Mickiewicz's life chronologically, not only as a poet, but also a wanderer, a European, a patriotic



3. The Polish Library in Paris – the Musée Bolesław Biegas

activist. The story begins in Lithuania with his childhood and youth. Later, the early editions of his poetry are shown, and his growing fame, still during the stay in Russia, is spoken of. In 1829, Mickiewicz left the Russian Empire (this testified to by his passport), and first travelled to Dresden. The stay there did not only yield the *Forefathers' Eve*, but also led to a meeting with Goethe in Weimer. Obviously, the largest section is dedicated to Mickiewicz's stay in Paris; his enchantment with Towiański's ideas, lectures at the Collège de France, editing of 'La Tribune des peuples', work at the Arsenal Library. The revolutionary activity of Mickiewicz is also shown: his commitment to the 1848 developments or the expedition to Turkey that ended with the Poet's death. The equally important Poet's 'life after life' has been shown with the funeral ceremonies, the body being transported to the Wawel, and the 1929 unveiling of the monument of Adam Mickiewicz by Emil Antoine Bourdelle in Paris.

The boards and reproductions are accompanied by genuine works that construct a broad context for the Poet's life. Among the most interesting paintings mention has to be made of the *Portrait of Maria Szymanowska*, a pianist and a composer of European renown. Executed in St Petersburg by Walenty Wańskowicz, it does not only recall an outstanding individuality of the period, but also the mother of future Mickiewicz's wife. The memento of the Poet's friendship with Jean-Pierre David d'Angkers, an illustrious sculptor of the time, is to be found in the Poet's portrait. The 1845 silver medal of Maurice N. Borrel, showing the profiles of Mickiewicz, Jules Michelet, and Edgar Quinet, professors at Collège de France, testifies to

the Poet's lectures at that prestigious institution. The model of the statue of the Polish bard by Bourdelle, an eminent sculptor, is not only an outstanding work of art, but also shows how the memory of Mickiewicz was cherished by the Polish community in Paris.

The permanent exhibition is completed with long-term annual displays shown in the spacious former meeting room. The interior that has been included in the UNESCO World Memory Programme serves as a perfect background to displays related to Mickiewicz, or more broadly, presenting the nineteenth-century collections of the Library. In 2015, it was the exhibition titled *Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), maître à penser de la nation, médecin des âmes – ses écrits et sa vie*, whereas in 2016: *Ladislav Mickiewicz (1838–1926), intellectuel parisien*.

When preparing its displays, the Library needs to take into account two major visitor groups: Poles and the French. It is extremely challenging to find a coherent exhibition programme for such different audiences, as it is essential to combine the perspectives which do not match. As much as the Polish public know who Adam Mickiewicz was, he remains an obscure figure to other visitors. The French readily understand the Parisian context which remains unclear to the Poles. The Library meets the challenge unscathed, since it shows Mickiewicz as a European: a personality able to find his identity in various cultural and political contexts of the Old Continent in the nineteenth century. This compromise, however, leaves part of the public unsatisfied, also because the display designed for the Library opening in 2004 is outdated. The concept of



4. The Polish Library in Paris – temporary exhibition room during the ‘Józef Czapski 1896–1993. Peintures’ Exhibition (6 April–13 May 2016)

(All photo: SHLP/BPP)

a board display that worked out in the first years of the new century does not harmonize with today’s viewers’ habits. Institutions in Poland have learnt their lesson of modernity, and have set up new display standards resorting to new technologies. Regardless of how we assess the multimedia, for many visitors they are synonymous with modernity. So as seen against multimedia,<sup>10</sup> the Paris display, as much as relatively attractive a decade ago, today strikes as too static, and does not meet visitors’ expectations.

### Salon Chopin

From the temporary exhibition room you can reach Salon Chopin. Organized in the Library immediately following WW II, for a long time it remained, however, furnished with quite accidental objects from the period. The display was renovated in 2010 to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Frederic Chopin’s birth. The current décor of this smaller Library room (about 22 sq m) echoes the drawing room in Chopin’s Paris flat in Place Vendôme. This address is known to every composer’s lover, since it was there that he died on 17 October 1849. Following the watercolour by Teofil Kwiatkowski, the artist who was friends with Chopin, which shows the interior of his flat, both the carpeting and wallpaper have been recreated, and a fireplace from the period has been purchased. The display includes mementoes of the Composer, his portraits, effigies of his contemporaries, and objects from the period contributing to creating the atmosphere of a Paris interior from around mid-nineteenth century. Chopin’s armchair and a 1845 Pleyel piano, the make the Composer highly appreciated, are two focal exhibits. A big number of the objects are shown in transparent display cabinets, which makes this modest exhibition space look more spacious.

Salon Chopin is a modest, yet very interesting museum. Its concept was based on two assumptions: recreation of a character of a dwelling interior, and presentation of the Composer’s mementoes. Therefore, the display appeals first of all to the viewer’s emotions, proposing a trip in time to the period in which the Composer lived. It seems a justified option, bearing in mind the character of the collections gathered at the Library, including Chopin-related objects;<sup>11</sup> collected during the period of national bondage, influenced by the ideals of the Romanticism, they were first of all meant to ‘elevate people’s spirits’. Due to the restrictions resulting from space scarcity, a visitor may feel unsatisfied having viewed the exhibition, however the contact with the objects that once belonged to Chopin may be a source of exceptional experiencing. The Author of the present paper, while working for the Library, had an opportunity to witness extremely moving reactions of the public.

### The Bolesław Biegas Museum

The third museum operating within the structure of the Polish Library is Musée Biegas. It was launched in 1994 thanks to the fact that Bolesław Biegas (1877–1954) had bequeathed all his legacy (paintings, drawings, and also manuscripts: correspondence, literary works and photographs) to the Historical and Literary Society. The display has been arranged in a room of ca 32 sq m, close to the lift. It features works representative of various periods of the artist’s oeuvre: first of all sculptures, both Symbolist that won Biegas’s fame in Paris, as well as excellent portraits in the realistic convention, showing the circle of the Artist’s acquaintances and friends (e.g. Olga Boznańska’s portrait). The walls feature paintings from the Symbolist period as



well as the 'spherical' ones.<sup>12</sup> It is not, however, a museum of one artist alone. Biegas's works are accompanied by those of the artists who were Biegas's contemporaries: e.g. G. Gwozdecki, O. Boznańska, J. Rubczak, S. Lipski, W. Terlikowski, J.W. Zawadowski. Thanks to that visitors take advantage of becoming acquainted with quite a broad panorama of the Polish artistic colony active in France from the inter-war period, up to about 1960, also including the works of artists who were slightly forgotten in Poland.<sup>13</sup> The completion of the exhibition can be found in the furniture that came from Biegas's atelier, which, similarly as the objects in the Salon Chopin, allow the visitor to 'peep' into the Artist's daily life, and to transfer into the real world in which he lived and created.

Here too, a serious restriction is found in the exhibition's limited space. Therefore, in order to make the Polish Library accessible more fully, the presented works are changed every so often (this applying mainly to paintings). Each new selection of art pieces reveals previously unknown relations between the artists and their works. The unofficial complement to those presentations are the works displayed in the halls, in the staircase (e.g. *Portrait of Artur Rubinstein* sculpted by S. Lipska), in the reading rooms, as well as the sculptures adorning the courtyard (works by E. Wittig, P. Jocz, M. Papa-Rostkowska).

In the context of the Museum's activity, one cannot overlook temporary exhibitions dedicated to art. The programme looks impressive, bearing in mind that the institution is so small: annually, about 7–10 displays lasting for several weeks are mounted. They shed light on and approximate certain aspects of Polish visual culture, reminding of important and well-known artists, but also discovering some. They are mainly of Polish descent or somehow else related to Poland. The exhibitions base most often on the Library's own collections, but also allow to see works from private collections of other public institutions, both Polish and French. The Polish Library boasts two rooms on the ground floor: 34 and 47 sq m respectively; both serve to permanently display the works that are hardly movable (marble bust of Andrzej Mniszch in one and a monumental pastel by Wyczółkowski in the other). The size of both rooms makes an organization of really large exhibitions impossible: in the larger one only about 20–30 medium-sized works can be displayed. The fact that the exhibition space is located on the ground floor allows on the one hand to incorporate the exhibitions into the programme of concerts and conferences (held in the auditorium on the ground floor), on the other, however, detaches it from the direct vicinity with the museums.

Since the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chopin's birth, the annual number of exhibitions has grown. In 2010–11, the Library held 5 displays, in 2012 there were already 8 of them, while in 2013 and 2014, there were 9, and as many as 10 have been planned for 2016. The displays are of a varied character. Apart from the artistic ones (and the annual display), every year the Library proposes several historical displays, presenting manuscripts, documents, books. The range of topics shows that the displays at the Polish Library, despite frequently a substantially modest size, are events of impact. In 2010, they were mainly exhibitions connected with Frederic Chopin (e.g.

presentation of the watercolour by Teofil Kwiatkowski). The following year, among others, the varied and interesting oeuvre of Sara Lipska, an outstanding sculptor, partner of Ksawery Dunikowski was recalled. Several months later, the organized exhibition was dedicated to Maria Szymanowska, a composer and pianist from the early nineteenth century. It seems quite patent that the Polish Library has the goal of rediscovering the artists who have been more or less forgotten. In 2012, when the exhibition showed a private collection, the painting oeuvre of Włodzimierz Terlikowski was displayed. A year later, in cooperation with the Leon Wyczółkowski Museum in Bydgoszcz, graphic art of Karol Mondral was displayed.<sup>14</sup> The 2016 Paris exhibition of Michał Płoński was the first for many years monograph presentation of the works of the artist. This year's exhibitions of Franciszek Black and Georges van Hardt are meant to rescue from oblivion those Polish artists active for a long time in France.

Some of the artistic exhibitions allow the public to see little known, often neither displayed nor earlier published works. Such was the case of the above-mentioned display of Terlikowski's paintings, and the exhibition of Olga Boznańska's works (October 2015), overshadowed, however, by the simultaneously held display dedicated to the artist at the National Museum in Cracow extremely popular with the public. This allows to notice that despite the limited space and financial means, the display programme of the Polish Library is extremely ambitious, both quantity- and quality-wise.

However, temporary displays do have their weaker aspects. The first is connected with their modest scale or with a total lack of catalogues. The second drawback is their short-lasting display: between 2 and 5 weeks (the majority actually are held between 3 and 4 weeks). Therefore researchers or visitors from Poland hardly ever get a chance to see them, since it is not easy for everyone to find time in the middle of the week several times a year (the Library is closed at weekends) to travel to Paris in order to see an exhibition. The two account for the fact that interesting displays, sometimes extremely important for Polish history of art, go almost unnoticed.

The so-far presented image has focused mainly on the positive aspects of the functioning of the Musée Biegas. On daily basis, however, this section of the Polish Library (and the overall of the Artistic Collections) faces numerous challenges. First of all, and this has been reiterated on several occasions in the present paper, the small exhibition space constitutes a serious limitation. The limited space allows to display but a fraction of the rich collections of the Polish Library. The limited space issue also affects the storage of the collections, now amounting to several dozen objects. The storage space has already started reaching its limits, questioning the possibility of the further development of the collections. Although the collections grow thanks to donations, thus quite accidentally, it should not be assumed that they will not grow. The close bonds between the Polish Library and the Historical and Literary Society frequently result in donations by its members, often extremely precious. The example of a big and artistically valuable donation can be seen in the set of several dozen works presented to the Library in 2013 by Andrzej Niewęglowski. That particular donation included works by e.g. J.P. Norblin,

J. Matejko, S. Noakowski.<sup>15</sup> The Library collections also grow on the occasion of temporary exhibitions.<sup>16</sup>

One of the most important problems affecting artistic collections (also of manuscripts) of the Polish Library are conservation issues. Lacking its own permanent conservation workshop, it cannot conduct any consistent conservation activity. This does not mean, however, that this aspect of the museum activity is overlooked. Since the early twenty-first century several larger exhibit sets have undergone conservation works. These were carried out in cooperation with French and Polish institutions (e.g. Institut National du Patrimoine, National Library in Warsaw, National Museum in Gdansk, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw) which financed those operations. Conservation conducted with Library's own limited resources are rather rare. The most precious or needy works undergo the treatment, this, however, is not a long-term planned policy.

Another challenge can be found in the difficult access to a part of the collections. One of the storage spaces is communicated with museum rooms in such a way that transport of larger and heavier objects is really challenging. The lack of space also translates into tough conservation compromises, and thus a significant number of works on paper (particularly prints and posters) are kept without any protective pads or passe-partouts, sometimes rolled up. This does not result from lack of professionalism, but from the fact that there is physically no space for their storage. Similarly modest is the space dedicated to the everyday museum activity. One of the impacts of the deteriorating financial standing of the institution is the limitation of the professional staff to one person only (supported by volunteers and trainees). However, thanks

to the commitment of Curator Anna Czarnocka PhD, this section of the Library operates very effectively. Not only does it have in its scope of responsibilities the organization (or co-organization) of exhibitions, but also manages the lending and sharing the collections, administering it, and completing the scholarly documentation.

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Thanks to the three museums the varied collections of the Polish Library in Paris recording the life of the Polish émigré community in France is made accessible to wide public. Visitors have the opportunity to become acquainted with the political, literary, musical, and artistic activity of the Poles living abroad in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The permanent exhibitions are accompanied by a varied cultural programme, offering temporary displays, concerts, lectures, academic conferences, these including historical and historical-artistic ones, sometimes of international impact.<sup>17</sup> Such a wide offer results from the Library's desire to meet the requirements and expectations of a Paris viewer. It also takes into consideration a Polish audience member, both the one living in France, as well as that coming here on brief visits.

The frequency and quality of the displays allows to rank the Polish Library in Paris among important display institutions, both on the national, and Paris level. The fact that it focuses on the artists creating between different countries, most often Poland and France, builds bridges between the nations. This activity is particularly important today when the future of Europe is at stake. The Polish Library, accessible to the public in the very heart of Paris, continues to remind of the Polish contribution to the history of European culture.

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**Abstract:** The Polish Library in Paris is an institution with a long tradition. Founded in 1834, it has been protecting the treasures of Polish historical and cultural heritage for over 150 years. Since 1903, the building has also been housing the Adam Mickiewicz Museum, which makes it also a museum institution.

Today, it also houses the so-called Salon Chopin commemorating the outstanding composer, and the Musée Bolesław Biegas, promoting the art of Polish artists active in Paris in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The text analyzes the functioning of these three institutions, pointing out their strengths and challenges that they need to face.

**Keywords:** the Polish Library in Paris, Fryderyk Chopin, Bolesław Biegas, Adam Mickiewicz, museum, Polish historical heritage.

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### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The Author of the present paper had the opportunity to work at the artistic collection section of the Polish Library in 2006–7 and 2008–9, and since 2014 he has been contributing to the *Scholarly Elaboration of the Artistic Collections of the Polish Library* Project by the National Programme for the Development of Humanities. The paper has been yielded by the experience and observations gathered while performing these tasks and during other visits to the Polish Library. I would like to express my gratitude to Anna Czarnocka PhD, Curator of the Library's artistic collections, for all her help.
- <sup>2</sup> A. Wagner, *By chronić i zdobić. O oprawach, superekslibrisach i ekslibrisach w Bibliotece Polskiej w Paryżu* [To Protect and Adorn. On Bindings, Super Book Plates, and Book Plates at the Polish Library in Paris], Toruń 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> Formally and legally the buildings and collections are the property of the Society of the Polish Library in Paris founded by the Historical and Literary Society together with the Polish Academy of Learning. See: K.P. Lubicz-Zaleski, *Towarzystwo Historyczno Literackie i Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu* [Historical and Literary Society and the Polish Library in Paris], in: *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie. Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu. Zarys historii i prezentacja zbiorów* [Historical and Literary Society. Polish Library in Paris. History Outline and Collection Presentation], Paryż-Warszawa 2014, pp. 11-13.
- <sup>4</sup> The most important studies are: *Skarby kultury polskiej ze zbiorów Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu* [Treasures of Polish culture from the collections of the Polish Library in Paris], Warsaw 2004; A. Czarnocka, M.M. Grąbczewska, *Malarstwo polskie w zbiorach BPP* [Painting Polish in the collections of BPP], Paris 2011; *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie. Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu. Zarys historii i prezentacja zbiorów* [Historical and Literary Society. Polish Library in Paris. History outline and presentation of the collection], Paris-Warsaw 2014.

- <sup>5</sup> The history of the Polish Library has been briefly described, among others in: K.P. Lubicz-Zaleski, *Historical and Literary Society...*, pp. 9-16. More detailed studies they include: J. Pezda, *The History of the Polish Library in Paris in 1838–1893*, Kraków 2013; F. Pułaski, *Polish Library in Paris in 1893–1948*, Paris 1948.
- <sup>6</sup> The print set donated to Cracow became the basis of the Print Cabinet of the Academic Library at PAU.
- <sup>7</sup> A. Niewęglowski, *Salon Chopina* [Salon Chopin], 'Cenne, Bezcenne / Utracone', No. 2 (67) 2011, p. 14.
- <sup>8</sup> The portrait mentioned as THL property in: A. Ryszkiewicz, *Francusko-polskie związki artystyczne w kręgu J. L. Davida* [French-Polish Artistic Bonds within the Circle of J. L. David], Warszawa 1967, pp. 63-65
- <sup>9</sup> A. Niewęglowski, *Salon...*, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>10</sup> The recently opened Museum of Master Thadeus in Wrocław, thanks to the use of modern technology, stands a greater chance of more easily appealing to the younger public.
- <sup>11</sup> See: M.M. Grąbczewska, *Chopin. Przewodnik po zbiorach Towarzystwa Historyczno-Literackiego / Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu* [Chopin. Guide the the Collections of the Historical and Literary Society/Polish Library in Paris], Paris 2010.
- <sup>12</sup> See X. Deryng, *Boleslas Biegas. Sculptures-Peintures*, Exhibition Catalogue, Paris 1992; X. Deryng, *Boleslaw Biegas*, PTHL-BPP – Artgaleria, Paryż-Warszawa 2011.
- <sup>13</sup> In recent years some of those artists have had their monographic displays, e.g.: W. Terlikowski (Display Salon Marchand, Desa-Unicum, Warsaw 2008), Sara Lipska (*Overshadowed by the Master*, Xavery Dunikowski Sculpture Museum, Warsaw, 19 Aug. – 4 Nov. 2012). In 2014, the Historical Museum in Sanok published J.W. Zawadowski's monograph (Charles Gourdin, *Zawado*, Sanok 2014).
- <sup>14</sup> The Exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue published by the Bydgoszcz Museum fully studying the print oeuvre of the Artist: B. Chojnacka, *Karol Mondral (1880–1957). Twórczość graficzna między Paryżem, Bydgoszczą a Poznaniem* [Karol Mondral (1880–1957). Graphic Art Among Paris, Bydgoszcz, and Poznan], Bydgoszcz 2012.
- <sup>15</sup> 'Cabinet d'un amateur. Dons d'Andrzej Niewęglowski', Paris 2013.
- <sup>16</sup> The exhibition of sculpture of Beata Czapska in 2009 yielded a donation of several works of the Artist; on the occasion of the display of Maria Papi-Rostkowska in 2015, the Artist's family donated one sculpture.
- <sup>17</sup> In 2015 and 2016, conferences related to Polish collecting abroad were held, and in 2016 an important event is to be found in the Seminar *La représentation sculpturale du pouvoir royal en France et son rayonnement en Europe à l'époque moderne* held on 17-18 March. The full Conference programme available on the Polish Library website.

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# OLD COLLECTION – NEW ARCHITECTURE. DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY IN LONDON

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Located in the southern suburbs of London, Dulwich Picture Gallery is a unique museum, both as far as the artistic quality of the collection, mainly paintings by European masters is concerned, and as for the architectural values of the edifice in which the works are displayed. Raised in 1813, the building was designed by the prominent British architect Sir John Soane, and is regarded an archetypical painting gallery. The many additions and extensions to the structure of the building have not spoiled the original edifice; on the contrary, they have boosted its attractiveness and provided it with new functionalities required in modern museums

When visiting the Dulwich Picture Gallery, a Pole cannot help thinking that a large number of the displayed works could be today a pride of Polish museums, had it not been for the vicissitudes of history. For a very simple reason: the works forming the core of the Gallery's collection were actually commissioned over 200 years ago by the last King of Poland Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, with the purpose of setting up a National Gallery in Warsaw. In 1790, King Stanislaus Augustus, resorting to his brother Primate Michał Poniatowski as intermediary, contacted the London-based antique dealer Noel Desenfans (1744–1807) with the request for putting together an appropriate collection, The works never reached Poland.<sup>1</sup> Instead, in 1814, they ended up in Dulwich, a village near London, to be housed in a gallery built specially for them, and designed by Sir John Soane.

It is a long-standing tradition of the European ruling houses to collect art pieces, actually dating back to the Roman Empire. Roman nobles would live surrounded by objects that were rare and beautiful. In Book VI of

*The Ten Books on Architecture*, Vitruvius wrote about the role art played in their residences: *for men of rank who, from holding offices and magistracies, have social obligations to their fellow-citizens, lofty entrance courts in regal style, and most spacious atriums and peristyles, with plantations and walks of some extent in them, appropriate to their dignity. They need also libraries, picture galleries, and basilicas, finished in a style similar to that of great public buildings, since public councils as well as private law suits and hearings before arbitrators are very often held in the houses of such men.*<sup>2</sup> Picture galleries in the above text: *pinacotheka* are rooms in which paintings and frescoes were displayed (*pinakes* – painted boards).

Royal, imperial, and ducal collections were both the attribute of power, as well as its emanation.<sup>3</sup> Sumptuously and richly furnished court seats played symbolical and ceremonial functions, while art collections they housed constituted *an essential element of the court's functioning, at the same time reflecting various diplomatic and cultural connections, as well as the mechanisms that ruled them.*<sup>4</sup> In the modern era the best known court collections were those of the Habsburgs, initiated by Archduke Frederick III, which were opened to the general public in the eighteenth century at the Vienna Belvedere, later transformed into the national Museum of Art History inaugurated by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1891. The collector's passion of the House of Habsburg served as a model for numerous collections established in Central Europe from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, while the Vienna Belvedere was the first painting gallery worldwide whose goal was general



1. James Northcote, Noel J. Desenfans, 1796

education.<sup>5</sup> Royal collections, headed by the Louvre, Hermitage, and the Dresden Gallery, engendered the greatest European national art museums.

Polish monarchs were collectors, too, beginning with Sigismund Augustus who put together an exquisite set of Arras tapestries. Moreover, Sigismund III and his son Vladislaus IV Vasa were art connoisseurs and patrons.<sup>6</sup> Also Augustus III enjoyed fame for his collecting passion; he opened a permanent painting exhibition at the Warsaw Castle, while in Dresden he established a gallery of the Old Masters.<sup>7</sup> Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski took over after the Saxons neither the wealth nor the court in the strict meaning of the term, therefore he had to start building his art collection, an indispensable element of a royal court, from scratch, modelling himself on the grand Renaissance courts in Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. Works of art, specimens of artistic craftsmanship, and scientific instruments for the Warsaw court were bought on the main European markets: Rome and other Italian cities, from Venice to Naples, at auctions in Dutch and German towns, as well as from Paris antique dealers. Despite relatively modest means that the King could allocate to art works, the purchasing process was systematic and programmed in order to collect a gallery of paintings, prints, sculptures, a library, a scientific research room, and an astronomical observatory. King Stanislaus Augustus' intention was to place the jewels of his collection, including the paintings by the Old Masters, in the Łazienki Palace on Water,<sup>8</sup> whose extension in the Neo-Classical style was conducted in 1788–93.

Due to a constantly increasing demand, as of the sixteenth century the European art market was gradually getting organized. The first world centres for art dealing were Amsterdam and Paris, however in the late eighteenth

century, as a result of the French Revolution, London took over. This was when art dealing professionalized, and famous auction houses were established: Sotheby's, Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd; moreover, with such companies as Koetser, Sedelmeyer, Seligman, Wildenstein, a strong antiquarian market developed. It was here that in 1778 Christie's Auction House acted as a go-between in the purchase of Horace Walpole's exquisite painting collection for Tsarina Catherine II.<sup>9</sup> It was to London that more art works were brought than before, partly thanks to the agents who, on behalf of British art dealers, would buy works from Italian orders or impoverishing aristocracy, and partly thanks to the sale out of the collections that reached the city from France engulfed in the Revolution. Desenfans knew how to benefit from both sources. By 1795 he had collected a handsome set of paintings, including examples of the oeuvre of the Old Masters admired at the time. Contemporary art was far more modestly represented, since when buying art works, Desenfans had to bear in mind the King's preferences and his fondness for Anton van Dyck, Rubens, Charles Le Brun, Poussin, and Rembrandt. In 1790–95, apart from paintings, he would also buy pieces of artistic craftsmanship which were used to furnish the Warsaw Primate's Palace and the royal residence in Jabłonna. For all his merits, Desenfans was appointed Poland's Consul-General in London.<sup>10</sup>

Following the last partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia, and Austria (1795), Stanislaus Augustus had to abdicate, while the London antiquarian was left with the collection of 180 paintings. In 1801, he sent a *Memorandum* to Russia's Tsar offering him its sale. According to the information he provided, Desenfans had spent 9,000 pounds on the collection, and had not been paid back.<sup>11</sup> Later he made some other attempts to sell the works, in 1802 organizing an auction of pieces from the 'Polish' collection, publishing an extensive accompanying catalogue, the auction, however, without the expected results,<sup>12</sup> as merely several pieces were sold.

Desenfans, who died in 1803, bequeathed his wealth to his wife and a long-standing friend, the painter Francis Bourgeois (1756–1811). Apart from the pieces meant for the Polish King, his collection also featured many other works. The heir was looking for ways of *making the collection contribute to furthering science, which was Desenfans's goal that he always tirelessly headed towards with his thought and acts*.<sup>13</sup> However, when he tried to purchase a property from the Duke of Portland in order to found a gallery there and open the collection *to the artists and general public for a fee*, he was refused. Consequently, fearing that the collection might be dispersed, he renounced the idea of bequeathing it to the British Museum. In the end, Bourgeois decided to donate the collection to Dulwich College.

In the early nineteenth century, Dulwich College was a wealthy institution, more famed for its hospitality than high teaching standards. Founded by Edward Alleyn (1566–1626), a well-known actor and entrepreneurial organizer of artistic life at the turn of the seventeenth century, Dulwich was described in 1808 after a visitation: *It would be pointless to look for another such vast estate, and equally beautiful with similarly varied sights. Nestled*



2. William Beechey, *François Bourgeois*, c.1805



3. *Edward Alleyn*, English school, 1626

*in the rich fertile valley of much variety, with hills and surfaces enlivened with bustle, work, and commerce, the noise of manufactories and the hubbub of busy people.*<sup>14</sup> The College already owned its painting gallery, made up of the collections of Edward Alleyn (1566–1626) and another actor William Cartwright (1606–86). The first bequeathed his private collection to the school: his own portraits, a series of effigies of English kings and queens, Apostles, and sibyls. They all boast a high antiquarian value as one of the few, relatively high-profile preserved Elizabethan collections. The remaining group of the oldest paintings at Dulwich comes from William Cartwright’s 1686 bequest, bringing together portraits: family ones, those of the royal family, and prominent actors, still lifes, and landscapes. Paradoxically, the low quality of those paintings, some of which were painted by less known or almost unknown artists, turned into the collection’s actual value, serving as a unique testimony to its times. Francis Bourgeois died in 1811. At that time his collection contained around 350 paintings. Bequeathing it to Dulwich College, he also added 10,000 pounds as financing for the construction of a new gallery. His desire was for the new gallery to be designed by the most prominent British architect at the time John Soane (1753–1837), who had, among others, headed the alteration of the Bank of England. The unique feature of his style was the ambition to create new architecture based on classical principles and adjusted to modern needs. Such a combination was mistrusted by many. Friends with the collectors, Soane found the prospect of designing a painting gallery, namely the type of building of particular interest to him, as well as a mausoleum of its founders,



4. Thomas Lawrence, *John Soane*, 1828





5. Dulwich Picture Gallery, mausoleum on the eastern side of the building, the Old College in the background

thrilling. He raised the first mausoleum in the backyard of the London house in Charlotte Street where Desenfans and Bourgeois used to live. After Desenfans's death it was there that his corpse was deposited. Bourgeois's desire was for a similar structure to be raised in Dulwich where his own remains and of those of Desenfans would be placed. He could not have made a better choice of an architect to combine a gallery with a mausoleum. Many a time had Soane submitted to the Royal Academy designs emphasizing his fascination with death and fondness for its symbolic presentation.

In his last will, Bourgeois proposed to gather the paintings in the College's western wing, appropriately altered for the purpose. Upon his first arrival at Dulwich, on the day following Bourgeois's death, Soane realized that due to the poor technical condition of the existing structure, it would be better to raise a new facility at the school's back. He executed some design drafts, these accompanied by water colours and drawings, showing the aerial view of the layout. His initial intention was to make a square composed of the Dulwich College building, the gallery, a library, and almshouses. However, only the fifth most modest design version, limited to a detached edifice housing the painting gallery and the almshouses was approved by the Dulwich College Board on 12 July 1811, and so was relatively modest financing for the project assessed at 11.270 pounds.<sup>15</sup> Soane's plan was to raise the building made of an enfilade of five halls, echoing the layout of traditional galleries in English country residences: stately interiors usually built from the south.<sup>16</sup>

Construction works having been completed in 1813, the paintings were transferred to Dulwich the following year. In 1815, the founders' sarcophagi were placed in the Mausoleum. As of that year, the collection was open to the Royal Academy members and Academy's students. Only in 1817, after the difficulties with heating had been overcome, was the collection opened for good to the general public.<sup>17</sup> The Gallery's architecture strikes with austerity, this partially resulting from the fund cutbacks the architect had to accommodate to. In August 1811, Soane wrote to Dulwich College Director that he was determined to do all he could for the solidity and durability of the structure not to be affected by the limitation of financing.<sup>18</sup> However, the savings did have an impact on the final appearance of the edifice. The arcades planned for the eastern elevation from the side of the garden were never implemented. The Soane Museum features a drawing showing the building just as the architect had imagined it.

However, the austerity of the building stems from Soane's primary search for simplicity in architecture, and from restoring the elementary designing principles applied in the early development of civilization. He had been dealing with this goal earlier, when designing farm structures, such as stables and dairies. The rural setting of the Dulwich Gallery, the institution's authorities remaining indifferent to aesthetics, as well as limited financing, all provided circumstances favouring the rejection of the well-established Neo-Classical trend in architecture in favour of a new style. Soane enthusiastically jumped at



6. Dulwich Picture Gallery, view from the west, from the main entrance



7. Skylights and austere elements of a brick facade





8. Dulwich Picture Gallery, aerial view

the opportunity. At the time it was generally thought that a museum should be in stone, this enhancing its solidity, and should follow a classical order. These prerequisites were not fulfilled in the case of the Gallery: the building housing the Mausoleum, the Gallery, and the almshouse was raised in the brownish-yellowish London stock brick, the cheapest building material at the time that was not actually used for more stately buildings. The architect appreciated the beauty of this material, its variety of shades, and personally supervised the bricklaying. The only expensive material used for the structure was Portland stone in the lantern and the frieze. What the cotemporary found challenging to accept was the renouncing of the classical order. The architect's concession to the canon was the use of vertical brick projections, to an extent imitating arched pilasters, however using the same material as that in the rest of the building. A stone strip along the bottom part supports those protuberances, while the Portland stone belt crowning them mimics a beam structure. Inasmuch as Soane simplified architectural forms, he was able to focus on the features he considered as the most important: the correlation of elements, light and shadow contrast, the building's silhouette against the sky, the play of surfaces. The Gallery's spatial layout: cubes rhythmically alternating with doubled cubes reflect the trust of English

Palladianism in the value of perfect proportions. The rooms are separated by arches. Neither inside nor outside can Classical details be found, except for the lunettes in the untypical ceiling.

Soane considered light to be playing a major role, allowing for theatrical effect and contributing to the 'poetry of architecture'. The fascination with light stems from Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721–89) whose theory of architecture emphasized its close bond with theatre. John Soane developed that motif as the basis of new interior design of unforgettable poetics.<sup>19</sup> In the design of the Stock Office at the Bank of England (1792, unpreserved),<sup>20</sup> with which he was assisted by George Dance (1741–1825), his teacher, Soane created 'architecture liberated from bounds'/'unbridled architecture', in which the attributes of the classical language had been reduced to the system of lines incised in load-bearing elements and dense grooves on the vaults. Lit from above, the spaces gained an exceptionally poetical character (a very personal and romantic combination of Neo-Classicism and Gothic).<sup>21</sup> The elements extremely typical of these spaces are to be found in the light effects and suspended ceiling (Law Courts at the Palace of Westminster; Privy Council Chamber in the new Board of Trade and Privy Council Offices; neither preserved).



The Dulwich Picture Gallery building as such is not large. The display is on the ground floor with enfilades, each crowned with an arc. The aspiration to have the space specifically lit is reflected in the novel scheme of light from above, designed so as to guarantee the best light to view the paintings, avoiding reflections on their surface. Gallery's top light has been adopted and popularized by other institutions of the kind, establishing a model for modern painting galleries,<sup>22</sup> later copied in e.g. Kimbell Art Museum in Texas [Luis Kahn, 1972], Getty Center in Los Angeles [Richard Meier, 1997], and the extension of the National Gallery in London [Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, 1991].

Since the completion of the original building in 1813, it has been altered and extended on several occasions. In 1884, the two-storeyed section that housed the almshouse for orphans was remodelled by Charles Barry Jr, who turned it into a parallel gallery two-storey high; 18 years later Barry added an entrance hall from the south (dismantled in 1953). In 1910–15, following the design of Edwin Stanley Hall, the arcades along the eastern elevation were demolished, to be replaced by another line of four galleries, mimicking Stone's style. In 1936, Harry Stuart Goodhart-Rendel symmetrically completed the eastern elevation, adding a hall from the northern side of the building. In effect, when viewed from the east, the Gallery practically does not show any elements of the genuine edifice.

With the German air raids beginning in 1940, the paintings were transferred to Wales or hidden in the

cellars of the Royal Academy. On 17 July 1944, a bomb fell by the side of the Gallery, destroying its western fragment. Following the end of WW II, and numerous debts on bestowing a more modern aspect upon the Gallery, the decision was made to faithfully recreate it. A meticulous reconstruction, using the original preserved elements of the building was conducted following the design by Russel Vernon of Austin Vernon Associates. At that point, the entrance pavilion on the building axis was raised. Reopened in 1953, the Gallery was repainted in 1980, the building regaining the dirty pink tint called 'burnt ochre'.<sup>23</sup> Originally, the Gallery edifice was widely criticized, and throughout the nineteenth century it was spoken of with reservation, while the attitude of its former administrators is well testified to by a photo from around 1910, showing the Gallery walls entirely covered with ivy.<sup>24</sup> It was not until recently that its architecture had been fully appreciated. Fortunately, the architects who introduced some alterations along the way, were always respectful of the original design, this allowing to have kept the style of the genuine structure.

The Dulwich Picture Gallery, founded in 1811, being the oldest gallery in Great Britain open to the public, soon started attracting other donors. One of the major ones was William Linley (1771–1835) who in 1822 made a long-term deposit with the Gallery of an exquisite double portrait of his sisters by Thomas Gainsborough. Furthermore, in 1835 he transferred to the Gallery nine family portraits by the prominent painter. Throughout the nineteenth century



9. Gallery *enfilade* with an upper skylight



10. Peter Lely, *A Boy as a Shepherd*, c. 1660

many other valuable donations were made. The most important of them being: the portrait by Gainsborough donated by Thomas Moody and showing his wife; the donations of Henry Yates Thompson (1838–1928), Picture Gallery Committee Chairman, who also played a major role in Gallery's history; as well as the donation of the painter and collector Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919): the paintings from his collection representing mainly seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English portrait painting. Today the Gallery features around 650 paintings, though some are rarely on display. Among the most important art works there are several very well known paintings: *Girl at the Window* by Rembrandt, *Venus, Mars and Cupid* by Rubens, *The Triumph of David* by Poussin, or *St John the Baptist* by Guido Reni. One of the best known Gallery pieces is *Portrait of a Youth* by Peter Lely from the former collection of Charles Fairfax Murray.

What visitors can see today at the Gallery is only a part of the collection of paintings put together for the Polish King. Merely 52 of the canvases mentioned in the 1802 catalogue are on display. The collection owes its fame mainly to the paintings by masters of the Dutch, Flemish, and French schools. It contains works by Rembrandt, Anton van Dyck, Rubens, David Teniers, as well as landscapes by Jacob van Ruisdael and Meindert Hobbem. Moreover, it boasts a set of Italianizing landscapes painted by e.g. Aelbert Cuyp, Philips Wouwermans, Nicolaes Berchem, Jan Both, and Karl Dujardin. The French school is represented by the most appreciated French painters at the time: Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain,<sup>25</sup> while the Spanish one by the famous *Flower Girl* by Bartolomé E. Murillo.

On 31 December 1966, six paintings were robbed from the Gallery,<sup>26</sup> fortunately all of them have been recovered.

The robbery, similarly as that at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Philadelphia, made everybody realize how important anti-burglary protection in museums is and so is a particular vigilance of museum guards. All the theft-related issues were taken into consideration during the subsequent modernization of the Gallery, initiated in 1995. The extension and modernization of the Gallery conducted in 1995–2000 coincides with the process of functional and spatial transformation of the museum edifices at the turn of the twenty-first century. That is when contemporary museums turned into competing multi-functional institutions. Visiting museums became a cultural duty, mass museum tourism developed. Commercialization of those institutions that accompanied the phenomenon and a wide range of their activities on offer, had a great impact, both on their operations strategy and spatial models.<sup>27</sup> A contemporary museum, no matter how small, wants to have additional space to support its basic activity: a temporary exhibition room, a museum shop, a café and restaurant, as well as rooms in which club, educational, and teaching activity can be conducted. Such was the motivation that inspired the decision about the Gallery's new extension, whose design was commissioned to Rick Mather.

Born in Portland, Oregon (USA), Rick Mather (1937–2013), began to study architecture in 1961; two years later he moved to London, where he continued the professional training at the prestigious Architectural Association School, and in 1973, he founded his own architectural designing office located in the picturesque Camden Town Quarter. The elegance of his designs, the sensitivity for the use of glass, as well as the command of energy-efficient technologies, soon turned him into a successful architect,



11. Bartolomé E. Murillo, *The Flower Girl*, c.1670





12. Dulwich Picture Gallery after enlargement, view from College Road, chapel's tower and buildings of the old orphanage to the right

contest winner, and designer of highly appreciated implementations, a particularly keen designer of museum building modernizations and renovations. Talented, he had the ability to fill an old and dark museum interior with space and light, aptly and subtly transforming historic edifices into contemporary institutions.<sup>28</sup> His hallmark is to be found either in large-scale glazing of courtyards (Wallace Collection in London, National Maritime Museum in Greenwich) or in glazed cloisters, the latter being the means he applied at Dulwich.

The concept for the Gallery's extension in the form of an arcaded cloister surrounding the internal courtyard echoed Soane's first sketches. Mather left the block of the Gallery as seemingly free-standing, separating the added wing with a glazed connecting passage. The effect of the glazed passage is repeated at the point where the College's mass meets the Chapel. The entrance pavilion houses a café, multifunctional room, cloakroom, and toilets. What is tangible here is the Modernist principle of the continuity of the interior and the outside space: the café flows onto the courtyard, while the silhouette of the Gallery remains visible from the cloister. The interior that was created between the Gallery building and the entrance pavilion raised in dark brick, lined with steel and glass arcades, redefines the composition of the whole urban layout. The emphasis on the axis of the main entrance, turned the

spatial hierarchy of façades; the detached Gallery building designed by Soane actually had two fronts: from the west, enhanced by the Mausoleum mass crowned with a tourette, and from the east, featuring the main entrance to the picture gallery, emphasized with the arcades. What has also changed is the pathway: the original main entrance has become the exit, and now visitors leaving the Gallery need to pass through the shop located in a corner room to directly enter the glazed cloister.

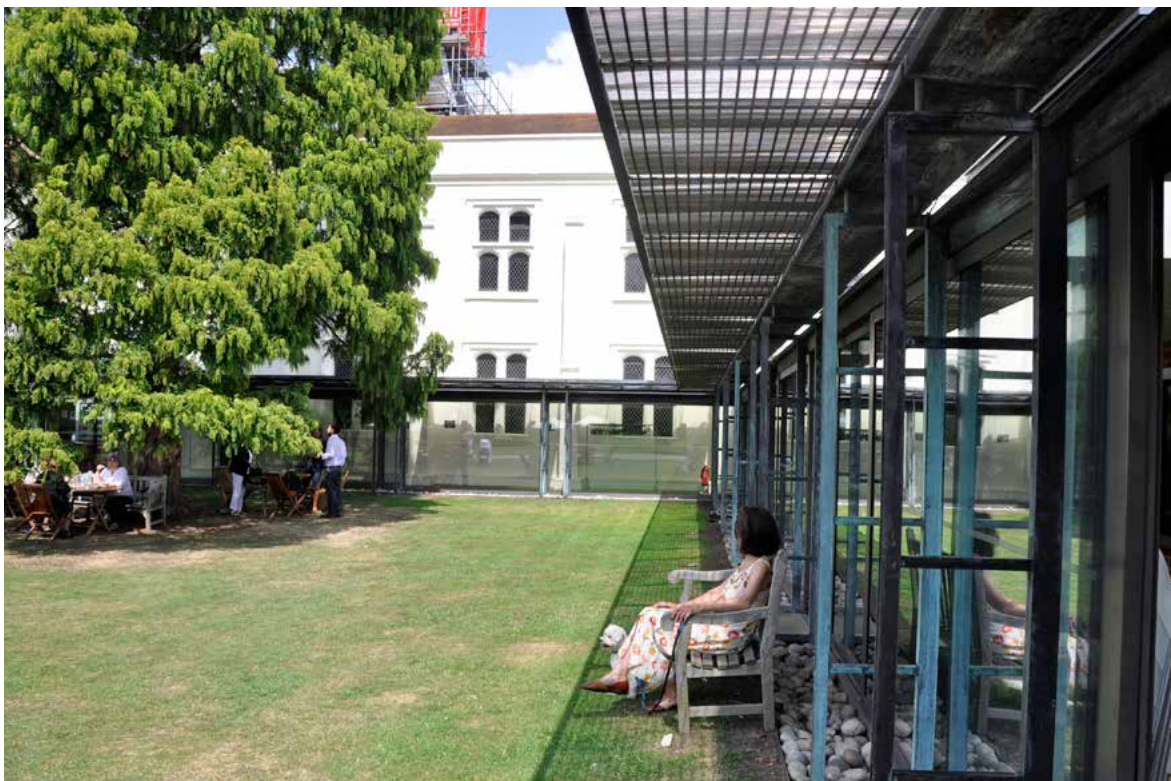
Following the last extension, the building has a strongly defined front, with the part containing the Mausoleum having become an outbuilding, The impression is intensified by the fact that at the back, next to the Mausoleum, the deliveries have been placed. Actually, until this very day Saone's genuine intention that accompanied the designing of the mausoleum is not clear,<sup>29</sup> since it was surrounded with three shut up tight doors, placed as dummies in blank walls, in front of the proper walls – maybe the architect was suggesting in this way that there was an entrance to the building from a different side,<sup>30</sup> or maybe this was just to emphasize the void that accompanies death.

Modernized and extended, the Dulwich Picture Gallery was ceremoniously opened by Queen Elisabeth on 25 May 2000. The extension has been praised and awarded numerous prizes, e.g. Crown Estate Conservation Award in 2001 presented by the Royal Institute of British Architects.





13. Entrance Pavilion housing the café, restaurant, multifunctional room, cloakroom and sanitary facilities



14. Glass cloister linking the Gallery with the Entrance Pavilion, the Old College and the Almhouses of Christ Chapel Tower in the background





15. Glazed passage at the junction of the orphanage – the Almhouses (left) and a new entrance pavilion (right)

Justifying the award, the jury spoke of the architect's genius who ventured to take Soane's masterpiece and turned it into the tourist attraction of the twenty-first century. According to the Jury, a good conservation project does not consist in recreating the matter of the original building, but in recreating its spirit. Today, it is hard to imagine the Dulwich Picture Gallery without its glazed cloister and the café penetrating space with the audacity of Mies van der Rohe. The interiors of the old galleries have been illuminated with computerized lighting systems inbuilt in the renovated ceiling skylights, with all the installations essential to service and secure the priceless collection having been subtly installed within the facility, the oak parquet floor having been recreated. If Soane had the opportunity to see this work, he would certainly praise it, concludes the Jury.<sup>31</sup>

Over two hundred years since its raising, the Dulwich Picture Gallery has undergone numerous alterations, destructions, reconstructions, and extensions. Not having many original bricks in the structure left, its genuine architectural spirit still kindles in its walls, enhanced by the impact of the collection of Western painting masterpieces. A robust cultural institution today, the Gallery conducts widespread educational and teaching activities, forming an important social life centre in the southern suburbs of London. A report for 2013<sup>32</sup> quotes the record-breaking figure of 160.000 visitors to the Gallery, with 37.000 having participated in educational programmes, while the number of Friends of Dulwich Picture Gallery already amounts to over 6.000.



16. Link between the Gallery and new cloisters, with the exit through the museum shop



17. Dulwich Picture Gallery after refurbishment and enlargement – a multifunctional museum and a centre for social life in the southern suburbs of London, as of 2014

**Abstract:** The article presents the history of the Dulwich Picture Collection in London. The gallery building, erected in 1813 and designed by the prominent British architect Sir John Soane, is regarded as an archetype of a picture gallery

building. The many additions and extensions to the structure of the building have not spoilt the original edifice; on the contrary, they have boosted its attractiveness and provided it with new functions required in modern museums.

**Keywords:** Dulwich Picture Gallery, Private Collections of Art, John Soane, The Architecture of Museums.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Some of the paintings ordered for King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski were shown in Warsaw for the first time in 1992. The exhibition at the Royal Castle was accompanied by the catalogue *Kolekcja dla Króla. Obrazy dawnych mistrzów ze zbiorów Dulwich Picture Gallery w Londynie* [Collection for the King. Paintings by the Old Masters from the London Dulwich Picture Gallery], Warszawa 1992. Simultaneously, at the Dulwich Gallery the exhibition *Treasures from Poland. Stanislaus Augustus – King of Poland – Art Patron and Collector* was mounted by the Warsaw Royal Castle.
- <sup>2</sup> Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, transl. Morris Hicky Morgan, Oxford University Press 1914, at <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/20239/pg20239.txt>, [accessed: 22 June 2018].
- <sup>3</sup> K. Pomian, *Zbieracze i osobliwości* [Collectors and Curiosities], Warszawa 1996, p. 321.
- <sup>4</sup> E. Manikowska, *Sztuka, ceremonia!, informacja. Studium wokół królewskich kolekcji Stanisława Augusta* [Art, Ceremonial, Information. Study around Stanislaus Augustus' Royal Collections]. Warszawa 2007, p. 7.
- <sup>5</sup> D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzeum: fenomeny i problemy* [Museum: Wonders and Problems], Kraków 2015, p. 46.
- <sup>6</sup> J. Żukowski, *Sztuka dyplomacji i dyplomacja sztuki* [Art of Diplomacy and Diplomacy of Art.], in: *Sztuka i dyplomacja* [Art and Diplomacy], Warszawa 2013, p. 51.
- <sup>7</sup> C. Taracha, *Dyplomaci i marszandzi. O zakupie obrazów w Madrycie do kolekcji króla Augusta III* [Diplomats and Art Dealers. On the Purchase of Paintings in Madrid for the Collection of King Augustus III], in: *Sztuka i dyplomacja...*, p. 104.
- <sup>8</sup> E. Manikowska, *Sztuka, ceremonia!...*, pp. 179-183.
- <sup>9</sup> C. Taracha, *Dyplomaci i marszandzi...*, p. 103.
- <sup>10</sup> *Kolekcja dla króla...*, p. 22.
- <sup>11</sup> G. Waterfield, *Galeria obrazów w Dulwich* [Dulwich Picture Gallery], in: *Kolekcja dla króla...*, p. 22.



- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- <sup>15</sup> C. Davies, *Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 'Architects' Journal' 24 April 1984, p. 54.
- <sup>16</sup> A. Ken, *Architects and Architecture of London*, Architectural Press, Oxford 2008, p. 115.
- <sup>17</sup> R. Beresford, *Dulwich Picture Gallery. Complete Illustrated Catalogue*, London 1998, p. 19.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 37.
- <sup>19</sup> D. Watkin, *Historia Architektury [A History of Western Architecture]*, London 1986] Warszawa 260, p. 330 pewnie do tej pozycji powinno się znaleźć wydanie angielskie i odpowiednie strony.
- <sup>20</sup> N. Pevsner, *A History of Building Types*, Washington 1976, pp. 201-202.
- <sup>21</sup> D. Watkin, *Historia Architektury A History of Western Architecture...*, p. 330.
- <sup>22</sup> The top light for a picture gallery was first proposed in 1786 by the painter Hubert Robert for the Grande Galerie at the Louvre, yet the idea was implemented only in 1938, after: N. Pevsner, *A History...*, p. 121.
- <sup>23</sup> C. Davies, *Dulwich Picture...*, p. 65.
- <sup>24</sup> R. Beresford, *Dulwich Picture...*, p. 40.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> Three canvases by Rembrand: *Girl at the Window*, version of the *Portrait of Titus*, *Portrait of Jacob de Gheyn III*; three paintings by Rubens: *Goddesses with a Cornucopia*, *Saint Barbara*, *The Three Graces*; one painting by Gerrit Dou *A Woman Playing a Clavichord*, one painting by Adam Elsheimer *Susanna and the Elders*.
- <sup>27</sup> A. Kiciński, *Muzea. Strategie i dylematy rozwoju [Museums. Strategies, and Dilemmas of Development]*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Warszawskiej, Warszawa 2004, pp. 24-76.
- <sup>28</sup> P. Levy, *Rick Mather: Architect hailed for his subtle and light-filled renovations of historic building*, 'The Independent' 25 April 2013.
- <sup>29</sup> In the first versions of Soane's design, the Mausoleum was from the side of the courtyard, i.e. on the eastern side of the building.
- <sup>30</sup> C. Storrie, *The Delirious Museum. A Journey from the Louvre to Las Vegas*, I. B. Tauris & Co. London 2006, p. 124.
- <sup>31</sup> [www.architectsjournal.co.uk/.../stirling-2001-crown\\_estate\\_conservation\\_award](http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/.../stirling-2001-crown_estate_conservation_award) [accessed 29 November 2014].
- <sup>32</sup> [http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/media/294328/DPG\\_AR\\_2013-14\\_online\\_low.pdf](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/media/294328/DPG_AR_2013-14_online_low.pdf)

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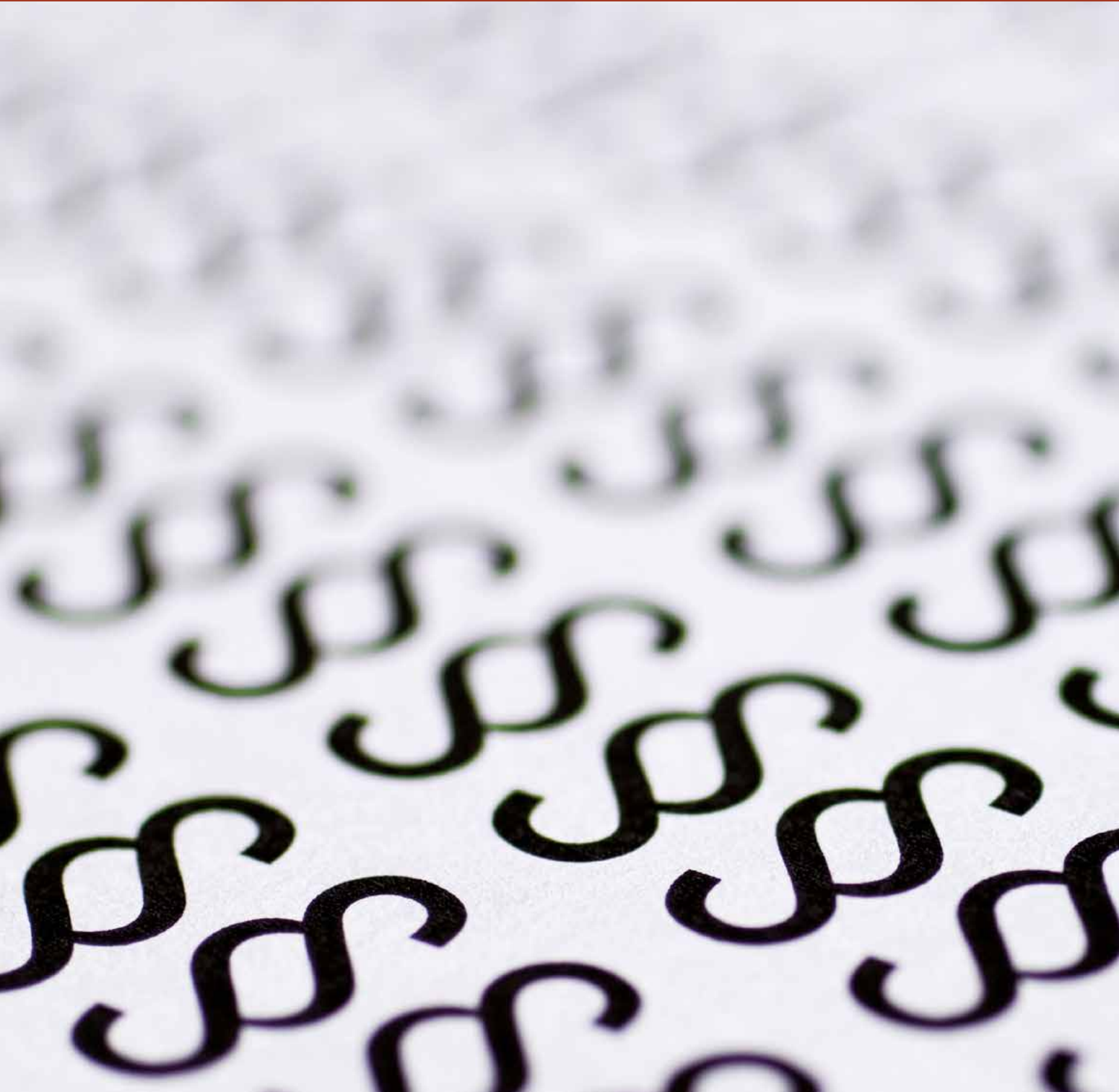
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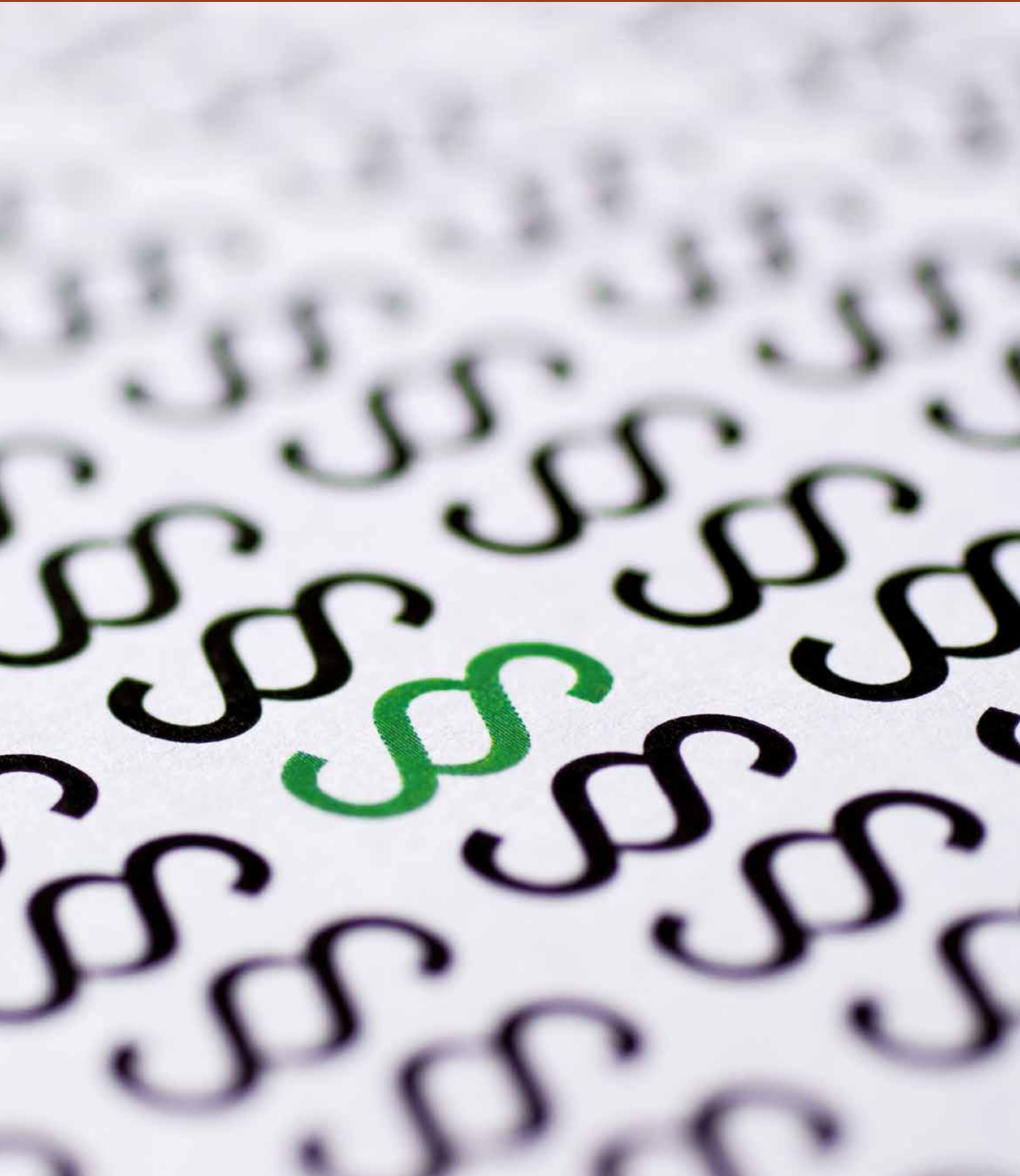
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# CONTENTS SHARED BY MUSEUMS AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THIRD PARTIES

**Rafał Golat**

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

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A museum is an organization unit whose basic tasks of which is to promote its own collections and the knowledge of them, which translates into contacts with various individuals and entities, these including museum visitors to whom specific communications are addressed.

Nowadays, the possibility to present collections by museums and to implement projects related to their promotion essentially increases the Internet resources. However, resorting to the Internet also generates definite threats, related in particular to violating exclusive rights of third parties. When creating and promoting materials and communications as part of the museum's operations, also informative, educational, or advertising, e.g. related to organization of exhibitions or publication of museum's own works, it is essential for the museum to use various types of protected intangible goods. It is essential to avoid violations of third parties' rights, since this may result in museum's liability.

The creation and dissemination of various contents (communications) by museums, is presented below in the context of the protection of basic intangible goods, so-called personality rights, artistic creations, trademarks, and databases protected by copyright.

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In the museums' activity, and therefore in relation to the contents they disseminate, particularly two types of

personality rights are of particular significance (see the remarks below): image and privacy of correspondence, whose protection was specifically regulated under the Act of 4 February 1994 on Copyright and Rights Related to Copyright (Polish Journal of Laws of 2006, No. 90, item 631 as amended), thereafter referred to as 'Act on Copyright'.

Both in the case of the image and privacy of correspondence, of key importance is the requirement to have the consent of the rightsholder (whose image has been made, generally in a photograph) or the letter's addressee, in order to disseminate the image or correspondence (private letter). Given that museums have mainly photographs of different individuals or letters written by them or to them in their collections, which are of a certain historical value, namely created a long time ago, the protection of personality rights in this respect is only of limited importance. This results from the provisions of Article 83 of the Act on Copyright which foresees a twenty-year protection limit. It stipulates that the provisions of Article 78 (1) shall apply respectively to claims brought due to the dissemination of an image presented in it and dissemination of the correspondence with the required permission of the person to whom it was addressed, however such claims may not be brought after the lapse of twenty years from the person's death.

It has to be borne in mind, however, that both a letter, and a photograph are a work in compliance with Art. 1 of the Act on Copyright. The use of them has to be thus analysed in compliance with the provisions of the Act on Copyright (see remarks below), in view of, among other, the seventy-years' protection period (seventy years since the year in which the event happened), and only following the lapse of this time does author's economic right expire (see Art. 36 of the Act on Copyright).

Given that the photographs collected in museums are in their majority from before 1994, namely prior to the coming into force of the Act on Copyright, the use of them has to be analysed in view of the protection regulations, these including limitations resulting from earlier regulations in this respect. The previous Act on Copyright of 1952 (Journal of Laws of 1952, No. 34, Item 234, as amended) stipulated in Art. 2 (1) that a work with the use of photography or like photography is subject to copyright, provided copyright reservation was visibly made on the work.

For our considerations it is worth quoting here the Supreme Court's guideline resulting from the ruling of 6 June 2002 (file reference I KKN 654/00, OSNC, Nos. 7.–8. of 2003 r., item 110.). The Court held that the *renewal and prolongation of the economic copyright protection as provided for in Art. 124 (1.3) of the Act on Copyright and Related Rights of 4 February 1994 relates only to those rights that in compliance with the Act on Copyright of 10 July 1952 were enjoyed by the author, yet have expired with the lapse of time.*

In order to judge whether an 'old' photograph is protected by copyright as for author's economic rights, it is thus important not only whether the seventy years of protection have elapsed, calculated in compliance with Art. 36 of the Act on Copyright, but also whether the photo was subject to copyright in compliance with the earlier regulations (Act on Copyright of 1952).

## Copyright

Apart from photos and letters, museums make us of many other works, e.g. when mounting exhibitions, conferences, publishing works, which in practice implies dissemination of various contents and communications, not merely verbal.

In this aspect the first thing to do is to assess if the work that the museum wants to disseminate continues protected by author's economic rights, or whether such rights have expired. If the latter is the case, further dissemination of the work that is generally accessible, e.g. published earlier by a given publisher, does not require obtaining an appropriate licence from the rights holder in respect of author's economic rights, since these rights do not exist in legal transactions due to their expiry.

Author's economic rights expire after the lapse of seventy years from the end of the year in which the event marking the seventy-year protection period began. The basic principle for calculating this period is from the end of the year in which the work's author died (Art. 36 (1) of the Act on Copyright). In view of these provisions, in 2016 the protection of author's economic rights does not include the works whose authors died in 1945 or earlier. If a museum wishes to use a work to which author's economic rights have expired, what remains is the protection of author's moral rights which are unlimited in time (Art. 16 of the Act on Copyright). Of vital importance is to remember for disseminated works to be marked with the names of their known authors or to avoid introducing any changes to the works unless they have authorised by the rights holders. The suit to the protection of author's moral rights to the work upon the author's death shall be exercised by his/his relatives, first by the spouse, and if such does not exist,

by his/her descendants (offspring, grandchildren, etc.), parents, siblings, and descendants of siblings, in that order (Art 78 (1,2) of the Act on Copyright).

[http://www.en.pollub.pl/files/17/attachment/88\\_Act-on-Copyright-and-Related-Rights,1994.pdf](http://www.en.pollub.pl/files/17/attachment/88_Act-on-Copyright-and-Related-Rights,1994.pdf)

And what if the work that the museum wants to use for its activity, continues protected by author's economic rights? This is a problematic question with relation to the works that have not been commissioned by the museum. Since if the museum commissions writing an article or creating a given graphic work, the contract with the author as executor can include appropriate provisions for either the devolution of the author's economic rights upon the museum, or for granting the museum an appropriate licence.

The situation is much more complicated in its formal and legal aspects when the museum is unable to contact the rights holders entitled to grant permission for the exploitation of the given work. These communication difficulties may occur for a variety of reasons: e.g. impossibility to ascertain the author of the work, or if the rights holder is known, because the museum does not have the rights holder's address for correspondence.

If the museum is unable to contact the rights holder, it should be assessed if the use of the work in this particular case requires the rights holder's permission, namely to verify whether the museum cannot base itself on the statutory licence provided for in the regulation of the fair use of work (Art. 23ff. of the Act on Copyright). The cases of the fair use that are particularly important in view of the museum's activity are in particular as follows: 1) permissible 'reprint' cases as provided for in Art. 25 of the Act on Copyright (important in view of the press published by museums); 2) the informative use of the works made available during current events, e.g. connected with opening an exhibition, reports of these events (Art. 26 of the Act on Copyright); 3) also informative use whose object can be e.g. speeches delivered at public dissertations or fragments of public addresses or lectures (Art. 26<sup>1</sup> of the Act on Copyright); and 4) permissible quote (Art. 29 of the Act on Copyright, in its version in force as of 20 Nov. 2015, following the amendment of 11 September 2015 to the Act on Copyrights, published in the Journal of Law of 2015, Item 1639.): this provision allows the quote in works that are an independent whole, for the justified purpose of the quote, apart from fragments of disseminated works or entire smaller works, also the dissemination of artistic and photographic works.

Furthermore, of importance are also two scopes of statutory licence. Firstly, following the above-quoted amendments of 11 September 2015, as of 20 November 2015, Article 28 of the Act on Copyright was essentially amended. It is important in the respect that apart from libraries, archives, and schools, statutory licences have been also granted to public institutions, museums included. Thus in compliance with Art. 28 (1.3) of the Act on Copyright, museums can make their collections accessible via IT terminals located on their premises. Additionally the amendment essentially altered Art. 33<sup>3</sup> of the Act on Copyright, incorporating the repealed Art.33 (2) of the Act. The amended provisions of Art. 33<sup>3</sup> allow museums to use on a much larger scale than prior to 20 November



2015 works for the advertising of their exhibitions, not only by disseminating them in promotion publications, these including catalogues, but also in other contents disseminated in order to advertise the exhibition, online as well, and also through other means of making works accessible, e.g. by displaying them.

As far as copyrighted museum collections are concerned, it is worth noting that as of 20 November 2015 the ability to make them accessible online has increased, this thanks to coming into force of the new regulations allowing on the one hand the fair use of orphan works, on the other the use of out-of-commerce works (Sections) 5 and 6, Chapter 3 of the Act on Copyright).

Orphan works are e.g. works published in books, diaries, periodicals, or other formats of second publication, to be found in museum collections, provided the rights holders exercising the author's economic right to the works (in two exploitation fields: of multiplying these works and making them publicly accessible so that anyone could access them from any place and at time chosen by them) have not been identified, or found, despite the museum having investigated the author's identity with diligence (Art. 33<sup>5</sup> and Art. 33<sup>6</sup> of the Act on Copyright). The works that are in the museum collections can be regarded as out-of-commerce if they have been published periodicals, or other formats of second publication, and if they are not available in commerce with the permission of the rights holders exercising author's economic rights to the works within the above two exploitation fields, neither in the form of copies that satisfy the rational needs of customers, nor by making them available to the public in the way that everyone can access to them from the place and at the time chosen by them, namely online. Museums can make use of these works with the two above exploitation fields, in compliance with the provisions of Section 6, Chapter 3 of the Act on Copyright, if out-of-commerce works, as defined above, were first published in Poland before 24 May 1994 (Art. 33<sup>10</sup> of the Act on Copyright). This solution may be applicable, for example, to a publication made in a limited edition in the 1950s, which has not been reissued, and in order to reach which the interested individual would be obliged to pay a visit to the institution that has the publication in its collections, e.g. a museum or library.

Apart from the use of works in the communications disseminated by museums, there may also arise the need to disseminate objects of related rights, e.g. artistic performances recorded on the occasion of artists' performance, that accompany the events held by museums, e.g. concerts. The protection of the objects of related rights is provided for in Chapter 11 of the Act on Copyright, detailing specific regulation application (Arts.: 92., 100, and 101 of the Act on Copyright). In this context it is worth signalling that on 1 August 2015 the Amendment of 15 May 2015 to the Act on Copyright entered into force, providing for the adjustment of the Polish regulations to the EU Directive prolonging the protection of related economic rights to disseminated artistic performances fixated on phonograms and related rights to disseminated phonograms from fifty to seventy years (Art. 89<sup>1</sup> and Art. 95 of the Act on Copyright). The prolonged protection in this respect applies only to artistic performances and phonograms that were

subject to protection on 1 November 2013 in compliance with the hitherto regulations, and to artistic performances and phonograms created following that day (Art. 2.1. of the Amendment).

### **Individual designations (trademarks, logos) in museum communications**

In connection with the dissemination of various messages museums also use individualizing markings. Are is primarily a logo, developed for specific needs projects, e.g. annual conferences, or trademarks or company distinctive signs of entrepreneurs or other entities in their current operations.

Due to the dissemination of various contents museums often resort to individualizing designations. They are, first of all, purpose-created logos, for e.g. annual conferences, or trademarks or company logos distinguishing businesses or other entities in the museums' current activity.

The question of the use of individual designations (their dissemination) has to be viewed in two basic contexts. First of all, museums use their own individual designations for e.g. advertising purposes, such as logos constructed with the use of the museum's name (full or acronymic), as well as characteristic graphic elements, In this case museums as the designations' 'owners' can freely use them, thus also disseminate them, e.g. signing their publications with them, or placing them on their websites. Crucial in this context is the aspect of the designation's creation (commissioning), Since a graphic layout or a verbal-graphic layout designation is a work, when commissioning it, the museum should make sure to acquire all the author's economic rights to the logo within an appropriate scope. The issue of acquiring the copyright to the museum's logo is essential also when such a designation is acquired in a competition in order to select the best proposal (design). The provisions related to acquiring author's economic rights should be foreseen in the competition regulations, while the author of the winning design should sign an appropriate declaration stating the devolution of the author's economic rights upon the museum. (Art. 53 of the Act on Copyright requires the devolution to be made in writing or otherwise null and void). Furthermore, museums disseminate designations, including logos of other entities, e.g. sponsors or institutions with whom they cooperate. The use of the designation of another entity by the museum should result from the agreement reached with this entity, e.g. a sponsorship agreement obliging the sponsor to transfer their logo, and the museum to place it on specific materials or in specific places. The use by the museum of others' designations without their rights holders' knowledge or permission is problematic mainly for two reasons: on the one hand, despite this logo being used for advertising purposes, it may be considered as an infringement of another entity's rights, particularly the copyright or industrial property rights, if the used designation has been registered as a trademark; on the other hand, dissemination of a third party's designation may be regarded as advertising services whose provision may prove questionable in view of the lack of a contractual agreement for this service provision by the museum. In the case of advertising services additionally tax liabilities arise.

## Databases

Databases enjoy particular protection. Their use, as well as dissemination, require two ranges of database protection. Firstly, they can be works in compliance with the Act on Copyright, as for the arrangement, composition, and selection of the collected material (Art. 3 of the Act on Copyright). As for the use of a creative database the provisions of the Act on Copyright apply. Regardless of the fact if the given database is creative or it cannot be classified as a work, it may be so that it enjoys particular protection in compliance with the provisions of the Act of 27 July 2001 on Database Protection (Journal of Laws No. 128, item 1402, as amended). This particular protection should apply to larger and professional databases, since in compliance with Art. 2.1 of the Act, a 'database' is a collection of data or any other materials and elements arranged systematically or methodically, individually accessible by any means, including electronic means, where substantial investment, evaluated qualitatively and/or quantitatively, is required for its production, revision or presentation of its contents. It therefore applies to databases which are relatively costly.

As for the use of databases by museums for their activity, and as for the insertion of databases' contents in different contents museums disseminate, the problem is with databases made by other entities. As in the case of databases produced by the museum, it shall enjoy an exclusive and transferable right to extract and re-utilise the data in whole or in a substantial part, evaluated qualitatively and/or quantitatively (Art.6.1. of the Act on Database protection). The re-utilization is understood

as making the database public in any form, particularly through dissemination, direct transfer, or lease. The re-utilisation of a database will thus mean making its contents accessible to the individuals visiting the museum through posting the database on the museum's website.

If the museum is not a database producer, which wants to use, nor is the consent of the subject solely authorized to use the protected database, e.g. through its dissemination, in principle it should be contact this entity to obtain appropriate permission (license) in this respect. No it means that in each case the consent of the base manufacturer data to use it is required.

In the event that the museum is not the maker of the database it wants to use, neither does it have the permission of the exclusive rights holder to the protected database, by e.g. its dissemination, principally contact should be made with the rights holder in order to obtain necessary privileges (licence) in this respect. This does not mean that the need to obtain the consent of the database maker in order to use it is required. For example, it shall be permitted to utilize the substantial part, evaluated qualitatively and/or quantitatively, of the contents of the database that has already been distributed, for didactic or research purposes, pointing to the source, if such utilization was justified by a non-commercial purpose for which the base was used (Art. 8.1.2 of the Act on the Protection of Databases). Furthermore, a special protection of databases made available to the public expires after the lapse of fifteen years since the year in which the database was made available to the public for the first time (Art. 10 of the Act on the Protection of Databases).

**Abstract:** Museums' activity requires creating and sharing various kinds of content, information and communications, including those related to the organisation and promotion of exhibitions. It is essential for museums to share such contents taking into account the protection of the rights of third parties. In particular, one cannot forget about the protection of intangible goods which result from the legislation. Such goods are protected by exclusive rights whose violation may result in entitled persons filing specific claims, including financial ones, against a museum.

In museum practice two ranges of protected goods, i.e. personality rights and works protected by copyright, are of greatest significance. Personality rights, including images of particular people are regulated by the Polish Civil Code while their protection is provided for under the Act of 4 February 1994 on Copyright and Rights Related to Copyright (Polish Journal of Laws of 2006, no 90, item 631 as amended). An example to illustrate the significance of both above-mentioned scopes of protection is the fact of museums utilizing photographs depicting images of various

people, which are protected by copyright. The applicable law stipulates significant restrictions of intangible goods' protection which is manifested in two aspects, one related to time and the other to the subject-matter. On one hand, the protection of author's economic rights is limited in time as such rights expire after the lapse of 70 years; whereas on the other, before such rights' expiry, one may utilize works protected by them only if such utilization is justified by important reasons, including social ones.

Restrictions in the second case, which legalise utilization of works still protected by copyright, result, to a great extent, from a regulation of fair use which has recently (with its binding force since 20 November 2015) been expanded on the scope of fair use of orphan works. Apart from personality rights and works, museums, in their popularizing activity, also have to include other intangible goods which they utilize for this activity. These include rights related to copyright, including artistic creations, regulated together with works by the above-mentioned act of law but also individual designations, including trademarks and databases.

**Keywords:** utilizing the rights of third parties, personality rights – images, copyright protection, designations – trademarks (logo), databases as legal assets.

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# ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO IMPLEMENTING THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT ON THE REUSE OF PUBLIC- -SECTOR INFORMATION AT MUSEUMS

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## Purpose of expert opinion

The purpose of this expert opinion is a presentation of potential problems resulting from the implementation in museums of provisions of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information (PSI; further as: Act on the Re-use) of 25 February 2016. The problems in question are the outcome of the imprecision of statutory provisions, which call for an interpretation, or of the collision with other provisions (in particular the Act on Museums). Numerous challenges may also be the result of discrepancies between the provisions of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information and the heretofore practice of accessing collections by museums.

## Purpose of the re-use of PSI and the mission of the museum

The obligation imposed on museums, consisting of the necessity of accessing public sector information for the purpose of its re-use, can give rise to a conflict against the

backdrop of the mission realised by museums. This involves in particular the absence of opportunities for rendering the decision to share information for the purpose of its re-use (as well as making a negative decision) dependent on the manner of its use, which turns out to be an extremely controversial question from the viewpoint of the activity of a museum. In a situation when a museum shares a digital transfer of a museum exhibit (e.g. a painting), to be re-used in a ridiculing manner, for the purpose of its re-use as public sector information, such activity could be recognised as at odds with the objectives of the museum.

In accordance with art. 1 of the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996: *A museum is a non-profit organizational entity which collects and preserves natural and cultural heritage of mankind, both tangible and intangible, informs about the values and contents of its collections, diffuses the fundamental values of Polish and world history, science and culture, fosters cognitive and aesthetic sensitivity and provides access to the collected holdings.* Moreover,

upon the basis of art. 2 of the Act on Museums, a museum implements the above-defined goals by, i.a. encouraging and conducting artistic and culture-promoting activity (point 7a) and providing access to collections for educational and scientific purposes (point 8). In the light of the Act museum objects constitute national assets (art. 21, par. 1). This fact places special emphasis on the significance of museum objects as an element shaping the identity of a community, its duration, and development. Cultural goods constitute a source of national identity. The Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland declares: *Beholden to our ancestors for their labours, their struggle for independence achieved at great sacrifice, for our culture rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation and in universal human values, we are obliged to bequeath to future generations all that is valuable from our over one thousand years' heritage.* This is why it is necessary for this heritage to be passed on in the best possible condition to successive generations.

The museum is thus an institution implementing goals essential from the viewpoint of society, serving society and its development, striving towards an awareness and intensification of the identity of a given community, and guarding cultural legacy.

In the light of the above there arises a conflict expressed, i.a. in the fact that according to the Act on Museums a museum is to preserve cultural heritage while ensuring access might take place exclusively for educational and scientific purposes; meanwhile, upon the basis of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information it is impossible for a museum to control the manner of using accessed information.

True, in accordance with art. 21, par. 3, point 4 the Act on the Re-use of PSI a request submitted for re-use is to contain *information about the purpose of re-use (commercial or non-commercial), including the area of activity in which public sector information will be re-used, in particular goods, products or services;* an incorrect – from the perspective of the museum objective – goal of re-use or unsuitable goods, products or services within whose range PSI, comprising an element of museum collections, was to be re-used, do not comprise a basis for refusing to provide access to PSI. Obligatory premises for making a decision refusing to express consent for the re-use of PSI (art. 23, par. 4 of the Act on the Re-use) involve limitations of this right foreseen in art. 6 of the Act on the Re-use (owing to the protection of secret information and other secrets protected in a statutory fashion, restrictions due to the privacy of a physical person or the secret of an entrepreneur, limitation of the re-use of information to which access is restricted upon the basis of other acts, restrictions due to the criterion of the public task or due to the fact that third subjects are entitled to copyright). On the other hand, facultative reasons for refusing to express consent to the re-use of PSI (art. 23, par. 5. Act on the Re-use) include a situation indicated in art. 10, par. 2 of the Act on the Re-use, when the cessation of PSI or their processing in a manner and form specified in requests for re-use necessitates disproportionate effort going beyond simple operations.

Doubts are produced by the question whether upon the basis of art. 6, par. 3 of the Act on the Re-use, which constitutes that: *The right to re-use shall be limited with*

*respect to public sector information,* to which access is restricted upon the basis of other acts, it could be recognised that the provision of art. 2, point 8 of the Act on Museums, foreseeing the possibility of *providing access to collections for educational and scientific purposes* constitutes *lex specialis* by creating a foundation for the refusal of providing access to PSI for the purpose of re-use in a situation when re-use would transcend an educational and scientific goal.

## Charges for the re-use of PSI

The possibility of charging for access to PSI for the purposes of re-use and the level of those charges remain for the museum curator a crucial question forejudging the effective implementation of procedures of providing access to PSI for the purposes of re-use. It thus appears indispensable to devise practical guidelines for two situations:

- charges upon the basis of art. 17: *if public sector information is made available or provided for re-use for purposes other than non-commercial research, scientific or educational purposes;*
- charges upon the basis of art. 18 and a regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 5 July 2016 on the maximum rates of charges for re-use imposed by state museums and self-governing museums.

First, in the case of charges determined upon the basis of art. 17 there are no guidelines whatsoever, in particular those concerning maximum rates. Guidelines for museums are, therefore, highly required. There also exists the risk that the applicant might appeal against excessively high charges as at odds with the Act.

Secondly, it is necessary to explain the doubts pointed out by museum curators and concerning the above-mentioned regulation:

- Does the maximum charge for access *via* the ICT system mentioned in par. 2, point 1 pertain to a single file or an optionally larger number of files accessed at the same time?
- Are charges from point 1 and 2 connected, i.e. can a maximum charge be established upon the level of a one-time charge from point 1 and additionally a charge for each file from point 2 in the case of accessing digital reproductions *via* the ICT system?
- Do charges from point 2 also pertain to projections of 3D objects or is point 6 applied in their case?

Thirdly, museum curators indicate that in numerous cases charges from par. 2, point 6 concerning situations other than those involving accessing photographs, copies, prints or digital reproductions may be applied. They also mention that in such cases costs of preparing public sector information for being accessed can exceed the rate of 86 zlotys for every hour of required work performed by a member of the museum staff – for example in those situations when it is necessary to cover the costs of transport and securing the collections or to use equipment unavailable in the institution.

In such situations museum curators should also possess guidelines regarding the application of the provisions of art. 10, par. 2, which frees subjects from the duty of creating or reusing public sector information *if it necessitates disproportionate effort going beyond simple operations.* In the above-mentioned cases museums require directives concerning the sort of situations in which they may refuse

access by referring to this regulation – by way of example, in a situation when the digitisation of the collection is a complex process and calls for disproportionate costs exceeding maximum rates established in the regulation.

### Resolution and formats of files and PSI access

Cultural institutions, including museums, often render access to digitised transfers of collections dependent upon the specificity of accessed files. A particularly essential question is that of transfer resolution – many institutions render accessible only low quality files, while others access such files free-of-charge but levy charges for high quality files.

Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information does not introduce such a differentiation and, in particular, makes it impossible to issue a decision refusing access to public sector information on request for high-resolution files. At the same time, the process of defining the specific resolution of files remains within the limits of *the form of preparation of public sector information*, whose description, in accordance with art. 21, par. 3, should be an element of a request for re-use.

Representatives of museums stress that in certain instances accessing high-resolution transfers could make possible or facilitate the creation of forged collections. They also imply a possible conflict with the regulations of the Act on Museums. Resolving this question appears to be indispensable – although even then the Act in question does not create an opportunity for limiting access. It is, after all, impossible to apply in this instance the restriction introduced by adding art. 31a to the Act on Museums (in the meantime art. 31a was rescinded but identical content was included in art. 30a).

In addition, it is worth taking into consideration the question of the formats of accessing files for re-use. Although this question appears not to produce controversies or difficulties it is worth promoting the application of definite formats (including open ones). The implementation of the Act can additionally assist in promoting the good practice of accessing digitised collections. The Act on Museums contains only a general commitment to apply given formats, defined in the national range of interoperability and issued upon the basis of the Act of 17 February 2005 on the Informatization of Entities Fulfilling Public Duties.

### Restriction of the right to re-use public sector information owing to the state of copyright (the question of the original owner of the author's economic rights)

In accordance with art. 6, par. 4, point 4 of the Act on the Re-use: *The right to re-use shall be limited with respect to public sector information [...] held by state museums, self-governing museums, public libraries, scientific libraries or archives if the original owners of commercial copyrights or related rights were entities other than obliged entities and the duration of these rights has not expired.*

Upon the basis of the Act of 4 February 1994 on Copyright and Related Rights there are two situations in which a subject other than the author becomes the original owner of the author's economic rights.

1) *Unless the contract of employment stipulates otherwise, the author's economic rights in a computer program created*

*by an employee while performing of his/her duties under the employment relationship shall be owned by the employer – art. 74, par. 3).*

2) *The producer or publisher shall have the author's economic rights in a collective work and in particular the rights in encyclopaedias or periodical publications, and the authors shall have economic rights in their specific parts, which may exist independently. It shall be presumed that the producer or publisher has the right to the title – art. 11).*

On the other hand, the museum might become the original owner of related rights in reference to:

1) a phonogram and a videogram – as a producer (*Without detriment to the rights of the authors or artistic performers, the producer of a phonogram or videogram shall have the exclusive right to manage of and to use the phonogram or videogram within the scope of:*

1 reproduction by a specific technique;

2 marketing;

3 rental or letting copies for use;

4 *making a phonogram or a videogram available to the public in a form permitting anyone to have access thereto at the place and time chosen by them;*

2) broadcasting – as a radio or television organisation (*Without detriment to the rights of the authors, artistic performers, producers of phonograms and videograms, radio or television broadcasting organizations shall have the exclusive right to manage and use their broadcast programmes within the scope of:*

1 fixation;

2 reproduction by specific technique;

3 *broadcast by another radio or television broadcasting organization;*

4 rebroadcast;

5 *introduction of their fixations to the market;*

6 *presentation at locations accessible for an entrance fee;*  
7 *providing access to fixations thereof in a form allowing anyone to access them at a place and time chosen thereby – art. 97);*

3) first editions – as a publisher (*The publisher who was the first to publish or otherwise disseminate a piece of work for which the protection period has expired and its copies have not been yet made public, shall only have the right to employ this work and to use it across all the fields of exploitation for a period of twenty five years from the date of the first publication or dissemination – art. 99. Copyright).*

The above-discussed restriction foreseen in art. 6, par. 4, point 4 of the Act on the Re-use comprises, upon the basis of art. 23, par. 4 of the Act on the Re-use, an obligatory premise for refusing access to public sector information for re-use.

A textbook commissioned by the Ministry of Digital Affairs, written in cooperation with the Institute for Legal Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences: *Ponowne wykorzystywanie informacji sektora publicznego* (Warszawa 2016) presents a stand according to which *the re-use of PSI constituting a work in the possession of libraries, archives or museums will not be restricted until the time of copyright protection has passed (...) even if the library, archive or museum purchased the author's economic rights by means of an agreement or inheritance, thus becoming the second owner of those rights* (X. Konarski, *Prawa własności intelektualnej w kontekście ponownego wykorzystywania*



informacji sektora publicznego, in: E. Badura, M. Błachucki, X. Konarski, M. Maciejewski, H. Niestrój, A. Piskorz-Ryń, M. Sakowska-Baryła, G. Sibiga, K. Ślaska, *Ponowne wykorzystywanie informacji sektora publicznego*, Warszawa 2016, p. 197). The textbook in question also indicates the possibility of applying an interpretation different from the above-presented one and permitting the re-use of PSI in the possession of museums in a situation in which the latter are a second hand purchaser of the author's economic rights or related rights or possess an exclusive license. Such an interpretation can be based on a reference to the content and goal of Directive 2013/37/UE, a different comprehension of the concept of the original owner, a different interpretation of art. 6, par. 4, point 4 of the Act on the Re-use as a limitation and not a total exclusion of the possibility of public sector information re-use.

Doubts, therefore, pertain to the question whether a museum is compelled to refuse access to the re-use of PSI if it is not the original owner of author's economic rights or related rights, and the time of the duration of those rights has not expired in a situation when a museum – by means of an agreement or inheritance – purchased all the author's economic rights or related rights, including exploitation encompassing public accessing of works and objects of related rights.

## Collision with the Act on Museums

The Act on Access to Public Information introduced changes into, i.a. the Act on Museums by adding, i.a. par. 4 to art. 25, par 4 to art. 25a and art. 31a. The regulation of art. 31 was overruled by art. 34, point 2 of the Act of 10 June 2016 on Delegating Workers in the Framework of Providing Services, which changed the Act on Museums as of 18 June 2016. Nonetheless, its content was included into art. 30a on the Act on Museums, which provides that access to information guaranteeing safety to museum exhibits due to their protection against fire hazard, theft and other types of danger, which pose the threat of the destruction or loss of the collection, is subject to limitation.

The question whether a collision between art. 30a of the Act on Museums and the regulation of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information occurs in this case, is controversial. Doubts are produced by uncertainty whether the standardisation of art. 30a of the Act on Museums should be treated as a successive premise – apart from the ones mentioned in art. 6 of the Act on the Re-use – restricting the rights to re-use PSI. Mention must be made of the fact that the content of art. 30a of the Act on Museums refers to limiting access to information without rendering precise whether the heart of the matter concerns information in principle, public information, or public sector information. More, it is not clear whether a restriction upon this basis can pertain to access to the digital transfer of the museum exhibit as such. In accordance with the general principle that exceptions should not be interpreted by means of their extension (*exceptiones non sunt extendendae*), restriction of access should be referred exclusively to information, which serves ensuring the safety of the museum exhibits and thus to information about, e. g. storage, security, transport, insurance, etc.

An explanation is due also to the problem whether the regulation of art. 30a on the Act of Museums will be

contained in an obligatory premise of a refusal to express consent to the re-use of public sector information from art. 23, par. 4 of the Act on the Re-use (*An obliged entity shall refuse, by means of a decision, to authorise the re-use of public sector information if the right to re-use is subject to the limitations referred to in Art. 6*) in connection with art. 6, par. 3 of the Act on the Re-use (*The right to re-use shall be limited with respect to information constituting public sector information to which access is limited under other acts*).

## Conditions for accessing public sector information for the purpose of its re-use

Art. 13, par 2 of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information declares: *A museum shall establish conditions for re-use of public sector information which has the properties of a work or is subject to related rights (...) or constitutes a database (...), to which that obliged entity has commercial copyrights or related rights. In particular, an obliged entity shall establish a condition that information must be provided about the surname, the first name or the pseudonym of the author or the performer, if known.* The use of the 'in particular' formula indicates the exemplary but also obligatory character of the specified trend. This means that a museum defines conditions pertaining to the duty of informing about the author although this is not the only condition that can be imposed. In the case of all sorts of information concerning the public sector (regardless of their copyright status) art. 14, par. 1 states: *Conditions for re-use may concern:*

1) *the obligation to provide information about the source and the time of creation, and to obtain information from an obliged entity;*

2) *the obligation to provide information that re-used information has been processed;*

3) *the responsibility of an obliged entity for the information made available or provided.*

Doubts are also produced by the above-mentioned catalogue: is it a *numerus clausus* or an open catalogue? The interpretation that it is a closed catalogue is supported by the fact that in art. 14, par. 2 the legislator decided to define a situation in which cultural institutions can establish additional conditions for access (other than those in par. 1).

Interpretation doubts are also produced by the relations between art. 13, par. 2. and art. 14, par. 1. Dr Marlena Sakowska-Baryła, author of chapter 6: *Warunki ponownego wykorzystywania ISP* in the textbook: *Ponowne wykorzystywanie informacji sektora publicznego*, commissioned by the Ministry of Digital Affairs, claims that all conditions defined by an institution are restricted to a catalogue contained in art. 14, par. 1. *The Act on the Re-use renders facultative conditions in art. 14. It follows from art. 13, par. 2 that the obligated entity shall establish them as long as they correspond to the range and contents of requirements listed in art. 14. The obligated entity thus has no legal opportunity for an arbitrary definition of conditions for re-use. His right comes down to deciding about their introduction. On the other hand, the content of the conditions is basically determined by art. 14 of the Act on the Re-use* (p. 130).

On the other hand, Xawery Kowarski, author of chapter 8: *Prawa własności intelektualnej w kontekście ponownego*

wykorzystywania informacji sektora publicznego in the textbook: *Ponowne wykorzystywanie informacji sektora publicznego*, commissioned by the Ministry of Digital Affairs, maintains that conditions imposed in a situation regulated by art. 13, par. 2 depend on the contents and range of the rights possessed by the obligated subject: *Always, therefore, in relation to PSI comprising a work, an object of related rights or a sui generis database the obligated subject defines the conditions for re-use by defining the principle of re-using such PSI – and in particular the range of the granted authorization as well as the condition pertaining to the duty of informing about the surname, name or pseudonym of the author or artist, if it is known; such conditions will be determined by the contents and scope of the rights possessed by the subject obligated to PSI constituting the work in question* (p. 203).

Naturally, in accordance with art. 15 of the Act the process of defining conditions for re-use cannot limit, in an unjustified manner, the possibilities of re-use – this is the prime interpretation directive regarding the catalogue of conditions from art. 13. On the other hand, art. 15 has been formulated in such a wide and general manner that in practice museums will not impose conditions for access in the case of a work to which they possess the author's economic rights. It is recommended to devise interpretation directives indicating what should be understood as conditions not limiting the possibilities of re-use or a catalogue of good practices for imposing conditions for the re-use of works to which museums possess the author's economic rights.

### Publication of public sector information on museum websites and definition of conditions for re-use

The Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information foresees access to PSI in a non-motion procedure in a tele-information system:

- a) in the Public Information Bulletin (BIP),
- b) in the Central Repository of Public Information (CRIP),
- c) in another way (e.g. *via* a website, which is not a subject party of BIP).

The Act clearly regulates that the absence of information about the conditions for the re-use of public sector information available in BIP or the central repository is regarded as accessing public sector information for the purpose of re-use without any conditions attached (art. 11, par. 4: *If information about conditions for re-use of public sector information made available in the Public Information Bulletin or the central repository is not provided, it shall be deemed that public sector information has been made available for re-use without conditions*). Controversies among museum curators are produced, however, by accessing public sector information websites of institutions (e.g. in digital collections). Art. 11, par. 2 provides: *An obliged entity which makes public sector information available for re-use otherwise than in the Public Information Bulletin or the central repository shall provide information about the lack of conditions for re-use or charges for re-use, when making public sector information available, or shall determine these conditions or the amount of charges*

*for re-use*. It does not, however, define what takes place in the case of the absence of providing such information on the website. The logical interpretation seems to be that if the rational employer were to wish to introduce public sector information published on a website without defining the conditions he would include this supposition within the contents of art. 11, par. 4. Such an interpretation (we cannot assume that information on the website is rendered accessible without any conditions) is also supported by the contents of art. 21, par. 2 of the Act on the Re-use, which provides that: *a request for re-use, (...) shall be submitted if public sector information has not been made available in the Public Information Bulletin or the central repository and conditions for re-use or charges for re-use have not been determined, or information about the lack of such conditions or charges has not been provided*. This question, however, calls for an explanation and a cohesive interpretation owing to the number of resources published by museums on the Internet, outside BIPs or the CRIP system.

It would be advisable to prepare an instruction concerning public sector information on the websites of the cultural institution (in particular museums) within the context of the way of defining the conditions of re-use.

### Act on the Re-use of PSI and Act on Access to Public Information

Doubts connected with the activity of museums are produced by the question concerning the procedure in which requests for access to information should be considered: in the procedure of the Act on Access to Public Information or the Act in the Re-use of Public Sector Information in a situation when the base upon which the request was submitted does not follow from the contents of the request. Can the person who received a negative decision regarding access to PSI for the purpose of re-use apply once again for access to the same information according to the procedure of the Act on Access to Public Information (assuming that the information in question actually is public)? What sort of undertakings should be made in a situation when the person granted access to information according to the procedure of the Act on Access to Public Information begins to utilise it again without requesting that the conditions of re-use be defined?

### Re-use of martyrological works

In accordance with art. 14, par. 2, point 1 of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information: *State museums, self-governing museums, public libraries, scientific libraries and archives may establish conditions for re-use other than those listed in paragraph 1, limiting the use of public sector information:*

- 1) *in commercial activities or in specific fields of use if this information concerns collections addressing martyrdom and contains the national emblem, colours and anthem of the Republic of Poland as well as coats of arms and reproductions of orders, decorations or badges of honour, military badges or other decorations.*

Numerous cultural institutions possess in their resources martyrological collections and those containing national symbols, reproductions of medals, coats of arms, and military

badges. There exists a justified fear that such resources may be used unsuitably in commercial activity. This is why the legislator decided to make it possible, in relation to those resources, to define additional conditions for re-use so as to protect the dignity of the used symbols. The introduced restriction is facultative – a cultural institution may make use of this opportunity.

Certain doubts, however, arise in connection with the range of public sector information protected by the above regulation. The use of the conjunction *as well as* produced a state of legal uncertainty regarding the possibility of imposing additional conditions on public sector information both of a martyrological nature and containing the mentioned symbols, or whether such conditions have to be met jointly (martyrological resources containing symbols). The second interpretation significantly limits the possibility of applying regulations and does not correspond to the needs and fears of cultural institutions (the number of such resources is simply small and often martyrological resources do not contain symbols).

The conjunction *as well as* is absent in legal logic and there exists a discourse asking whether it denotes a connective or an alternative – different interpretations will influence the range of the regulation from the Act. In the case of the former both conditions have to be met jointly, while in the second instance (an alternative) it suffices for a single condition to be met.

The Ministry should issue a binding interpretation concerning resources, in whose case cultural institutions may impose additional conditions (the recommended range – exclusively martyrological public sector information containing only symbols mentioned in the regulation).

## Museum deposits

Fundamental doubts concerning the practice of the functioning of museums appear in connection with museum deposits. At the onset it must be noted that in accordance with a legal definition contained in art. 2, par. 1 of the Act on the Re-use: *Public sector information shall be understood as any content or any part thereof, regardless of the method of recording, in particular written on paper, or stored in electronic form or as a sound, visual or audiovisual recording, held by the entities referred to in Art. 3.* The Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information thus renders the possibility of accessing PSI for the purpose of re-use independent of the ownership status of the museum object, indicating that it is sufficient for the museum object to be in the possession of the museum in order for accessing its digital transfer as PSI for the purpose of re-use to take place. On the other hand, the Act introduces limitations, which refer to museum deposits and are the outcome of the fact that the museum is the possessor but not the proprietor of a given object or that the object is covered by the claims of third parties.

Restrictions referring to museum deposits pertain to two questions.

First, the limitation of the right to re-use PSI. In accordance with art. 6, par. 4, point 2: *The right to re-use shall be limited with respect to public information sector (...) related to deposits held by an obliged entity if their*

*owners excluded under an agreement the possibility of this information being made available or provided in full or to a specific extent.*

The above case allows making an obligatory decision refusing to express consent for the re-use of PSI (art. 23, par. 4 of the Act on the Re-use). The way in which the regulation from art. 6, par. 4 is formulated gives rise to doubts concerning the already made and still binding deposit agreements in which owners of the objects did not exclude outright the possibility of accessing or transferring a given object as a whole or in a defined range. Most often deposit agreements do not contain such formulations. It is thus necessary to render precise whether, and what sort of activities should the museum undertake in such a case – whether in the case of the absence of a stipulated exclusion to recognise accessing PSI for the purpose of re-use as admissible, or whether to regulate this question anew in the course of signing appendices to already signed agreements.

Secondly, restrictions pertain to the question of the conditions of re-use and the possibility of introducing restrictions in this domain upon the basis of art. 24, par. 2, point 2 of the Act on the Re-use: *State museums, self-governing museums, public libraries, scientific libraries and archives may establish conditions for re-use other than those listed in paragraph 1, limiting the use of public sector information (...) to non-commercial activities if this information is related to items which are covered by third-party claims or are not owned by an obliged entity.* Doubts concern the following question: what does the possibility of introducing restrictions into the conditions of re-use depend on and does it depend on the discretionary decision made by the museum or should it be grounded in the provisions of the deposit agreement?

## Re-use of public sector information and image protection

Much controversy among museum curators is produced by the range of art. 6, par. 2 of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information. One of the obligatory premises of issuing a decision refusing consent for the re-use of PSI is the privacy of the physical person: *The right to re-use shall be limited on the grounds of the privacy of individuals or business secrets.*

First, there arises the question whether the protection of personal data is a sufficient premise for refusing access to public sector information or is the museum, owing to the objective of the Act, obligated to anonymize (as much as possible) given public sector information and to transfer it in such an anonymized version for reuse. Dr Marlena Sakowska-Baryła, author of chapter 4: *Ograniczenia prawa do ponownego wykorzystywania ISP* in the textbook: *Ponowne wykorzystywanie informacji sektora publicznego*, commissioned by the Ministry of Digital Affairs, states: *Also in the case of the Act on the Re-use it should be accepted that anonymization is the first measure for the protection of privacy in the realisation of the right to re-use PSI in the case of all ways of applying it defined in art. 5 of the Act on the Re-use. Anonymization, therefore, is taken into account both in the case of proceeding by motion and without motion in the case of the user obtaining PSI for the purpose of its re-use (p. 74).*



This interpretation is supported also by the long-term practice of accessing public information. Universal practice consists of the anonymization of documents, e.g. in the publication of rulings of courts of general jurisdiction, administrative courts, and the Supreme Court, rulings of the Constitutional Tribunal, decisions of public authority organs, resolutions of the organs of self-government units in so-called individual cases (e.g. looking into complaints and motions) and in accessing assorted types of documents containing personal data of persons who do not fulfil public functions. The question of anonymization within the system of the re-use of public sector information still remains to be resolved.

Secondly, doubts concern image protection regulated in copyright. We deal with the exploitation of the image of third parties in public sector information in the case of, for example, related rights to videograms. In practice, the question of obtaining the right to utilise an image was neglected from the viewpoint of legal issues, and this is the reason why cultural institutions often do not possess suitable consent. There thus arises the question whether the absence of such permission is sufficient for the refusal of consent to the re-use of given information. Owing to the wide and insufficiently defined range of the concept of the privacy of the physical person in art. 6, par. 2 as well as expanded judicature concerning privacy guaranteed to everyone by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, we should accept the answer: yes.

Both above-mentioned questions should be interpreted by the Ministry of Digital Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in order to avoid further controversies in the praxis of a cultural institution but also for the sake of extensively restricting the right to the re-use of public sector information.

### Accessing PSI for re-use and granting license agreements

Up to now, in numerous instances museum signed agreements (including those concerning copyright) upon whose basis they rendered their collections available to subjects wishing to use them. It is, therefore, indispensable to forejudge whether such agreements can be still made, or whether only procedures of accessing collections defined by the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information are permissible.

Owing to restrictions resulting from art. 6, par. 4, point 4 the only accessed collections will be those to which copyrights have already expired – it appears, therefore, that accessing them upon the basis of a license agreement is unfounded. It is also necessary to determine whether museums can render available, upon the basis of agreements, collections to which, in accordance with the Act, access is restricted according to art. 6, par. 4, point 4, and to which museums possess author's economic rights enabling re-use.

### Museum as a scientific unit

Apparently, there may exist a conflict regarding the subjective range of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information. The heart of the matter concerns regulations, which assume that: *This Act shall not apply to public sector information held by (...) state cultural institutions (...),*

*except for state museums and self-governing museums within the meaning of the Museum Act of 21 November 1996 (...)* (art. 4, par. 1, point 2 of the Act in the Re-use) and: *This Act shall not apply to public sector information held by higher education institutions, the Polish Academy of Sciences (Polska Akademia Nauk) and scientific units within the meaning of the Act of 30 April 2010 on science financing rules (...)* (art. 4, par. 1, point 3 of the Act on the Re-use).

In certain cases museums are scientific units. A list of scientific units and categories ([http://www.nauka.gov.pl/g2/oryginal/2013\\_09/485ab765cfl189945f7b95572d728cb0.pdf](http://www.nauka.gov.pl/g2/oryginal/2013_09/485ab765cfl189945f7b95572d728cb0.pdf)) mentions the Upper Silesian Museum in Bytom, the Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the National Museum in Cracow, and the Museum of Art in Łódź. In other words, this is a situation in which, on the one hand, the Act is applied in relation to museums with the exception of art. 4, par. 1, point 2 of the Act on the Re-use, while on the other hand, upon the basis of art. 4, par. 1, point 3 of the Act on the Re-use the Act is not applied because a museum is a scientific unit.

As organisational units museums constitute organisational forms of cultural activity as understood by regulations of the Act on Organizing and Conducting Cultural Activities (art. 2 of the Act on Organizing and Conducting Cultural Activities in connection with the Act on Museums, art. 4). Art. 4 of the Act on Museums provides: *In matters not provided for in this Act, provisions of the Act on Organizing and Conducting Cultural Activities shall apply* (Journal of Laws, No. 114, Item 493; 1994, No. 121, Item 591; 1996, No. 90, Item 407), *provisions of the Act of 25 October 1991 on organizing and conducting cultural activities (Journal of Laws 2012, item. 406 and thus comprises lex specialis)* in relation to the Act on Organizing and Conducting Cultural Activities.

At the same time, the Act of 30 April 2010 on the Principles of Financing Science (art. 2, point 9) introduces a legal definition of the concept of the scientific unit, which does not outright indicate museums by name, although they can be included into the category of *other organisational units (...)* and *have registered offices in the Republic of Poland (...) with a status of a research and development centre within the meaning of art. 2 point 83 of the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 recognizing some types of aid that are compatible with the internal market in use*

*Art. 107 and 108 of the Treaty (Official Journal of the EU L 187 of 26 June 2014, p. 1), as long as they conduct lead in a way continuous scientific research or development works granted pursuant to the Act of 30 May 2008 on Certain Forms of Support for Innovative Activities (Journal of Laws [Dz. U.] No. 116/2008, Item 730 and No. 75/2010, Item 473)* (art. 2, point 9, and letter f of the Act on the Principles of Financing Science).

More, the Act of 30 April 2010 on the Polish Academy of Sciences declares that the Academy's auxiliary units include in particular archives, libraries, museums, botanical gardens, and scientific stations abroad (art. 68, par. 1). Auxiliary scientific units of the Polish Academy of Sciences include, e.g. the Earth Museum in Warsaw.

The above reflections lead to a conclusion that in accordance with Polish law museums conducting scientific research as part of their daily activity are scientific units. It should be explained, therefore, which basis should be applied in this situation and

whether regulations of the Act on the Re-use of Public Sector Information can be applied in the case of museums or not.

### Re-use of PSI between cultural institutions

Doubts concerning the re-use of public sector information between cultural institutions pertain to an interpretation of the contents of art. 2, par. 3: *If public sector information is made available or provided by an entity performing public tasks to another entity performing public tasks purely in pursuit of such tasks, this shall not constitute re-use.*

While conducting a pro-European interpretation one should indicate that the purpose of the realisation of

a public task should be understood widely, not merely as a goal for whose purpose information was produced, but also as another target within the range of the public tasks for which PSI was produced.

Controversies concerning the range of the application of the Act are the outcome of the present-day formulation of the regulation. In the first place, one should indicate that *de lege lata* re-use is not tantamount to accessing or transmitting PSI exclusively between subjects carrying out public tasks. Decisive significance is, therefore, ascribed to an appropriate interpretation of the criterion of performing a public task, which, owing to its general character, can result in numerous abuses in relations between institutions.

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**Abstract:** The article discusses both the legal and factual problems related to the necessity of implementing the provisions of the Act on the reuse of public sector information (PSI) of 25 February 2016. The authors highlight the inaccuracies in the way the statutory provisions have been formulated, and which require urgent intervention by legislators due to their doubtful interpretation and the conflict of the Act's provisions on reuse with those of other acts, in particular the Act on

museums. They also identify the discrepancies between how museums currently share their collections and the requirements set by the Act on the reuse of PSI. Individual practical problems are discussed in separate parts of the text. The aim of the article is not to settle the doubts concerning the Act on reuse of PSI, nor to decide what museums should do in that matter, but rather to draw attention to possible ways of interpreting the provisions and the related problems.

**Keywords:** public sector information, heritage resources, reuse, statutory provisions, sharing museum collections.

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# REVIEWS





# HABITUS BEFORE AN ACT. REMARKS ON A BOOK DOCUMENTING THE FIRST CONGRESS OF POLISH MUSEOLOGISTS

**Gerard Radecki**

National Museum in Poznań

In the early spring of 2016, the long-awaited volume<sup>1</sup> that summed up the First Congress of Polish Museologists (the Congress) held in Łódź on 23–25 April 2015 was released. The book that records the events (not just the delivered papers) related to the Congress also testifies to the time and circumstances under which such a general reunion of Polish museum professionals was held for the first time since WW II. It is quite a meaningful testimony, since the Congress had the aspiration to tackle the key problems for Polish museology seen from two opposite perspectives. On the one hand, it was to be a thorough reflection on what contemporary museology (particularly Polish) essentially is, and what role it should play in the continuously changing reality of the first decades of the twenty-first century; this unique academic layer of the Congress was made up of a series of addresses and programme papers that also included the ones tackling the problems of museology provenance and morphology. On the other hand, the Lodz Congress had an entirely utilitarian and short-term dimension: the purpose was to signal the most crucial problems that Polish museums face (in the sphere of legal regulations, organization, staffing, financing, and last but not least, remuneration), and to attempt to solve them. The Congress was thus held in order *to remedy the museum system*.<sup>2</sup>

The publication contains papers and summing up of panel debates, as well as the resolutions adopted at the Congress. These are all inserted at the end of the book. Regrettably, this principle was not followed in the case of addresses opening the volume and descriptions of debate segments, which were not grouped thematically,

but were placed in the order of their presentation. Thus when reading the book, we are unable to read through all the papers one after another, but only those which were delivered on the given Conference day, while the remaining ones have to be sought after through the table of contents. Fortunately, the book, generally of high editorial profile, is equipped with an index of individuals and a substantial number of photos recording the event.

In a brief essay like this it would be impossible to even mention all the major challenges that the Congress discussed, and that have been included in the analyzed book. What can be done, instead, is an attempt to focus on several fundamental issues, subdued to two basics museology perspectives: the external and the internal ones. The first begins with a list of goals for which the museum *estates general*, as the Congress was vividly called by its originator Michał Niezabitowski, President of the Association of Polish Museologists, were summoned to Łódź. Among them the priority was given to the following: the diagnosis of the situation and the legal regime of the museum sector in Poland, as well as pointing out to the factors hindering the social mission of museums.<sup>3</sup> Congress organizers also wished to emphasize the role of museums in *consolidating modern civil society*,<sup>4</sup> and to prepare resolutions that would allow to recommend essential legislative amendments.

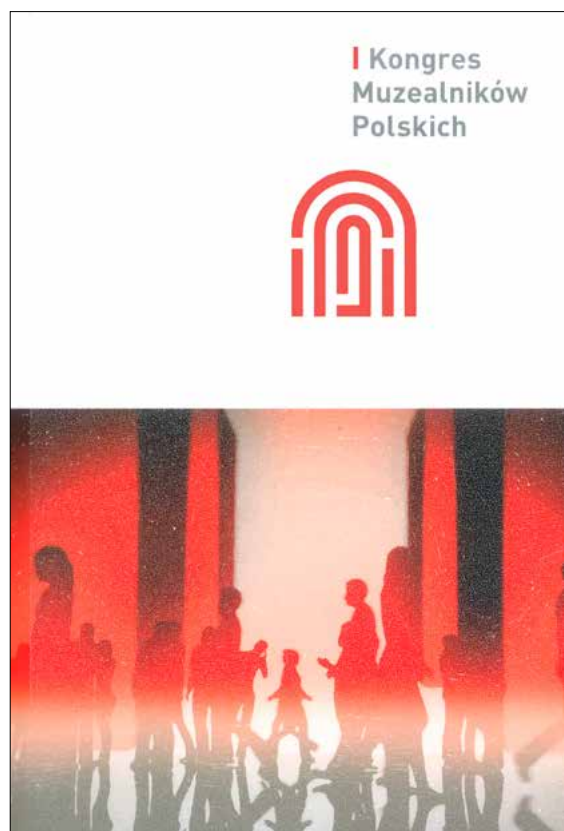
When reading this list of intentions, the inevitable question arises whether our plans (the author of these words also participated in the Congress, and the panel *New Tasks, the Same Personnel. Provisions of the Act on Museum*



*in the Light of the Current Museum Praxis* curated by Paweł Jaskinis) for a museum reform should not be preceded by a comprehensive internal debate on what constitutes the professional identity of museologists and the state of the institutions we work for. Although similar reflections can be found in the book, the overall implication of the views manifested at the Łódź Congress (therefore of the publication itself), was clearly dominated by the museum praxis. On the other hand, however, maybe professionally biased, we too easily tend to make inventories of all the fragments of reality that are describable for us, and also wish to excessively promptly include them in a *catalogue of issues to be regulated most urgently*,<sup>5</sup> thus translate them into new legislative acts, not fully caring about the complexity of things that we are 'regulating'? To avoid too many examples, let us just record the famous case of a museologist's professional status: should we make a provision in the new Act on Museums that merely for the fact of individuals being employed in government- or local government-run museums they should be considered professionals working for museum administration, while neglecting all those actual museologists who all around Poland run at least several hundred smaller and bigger private museums which should actually be called social,<sup>6</sup> and who display great passion when acting in their local environment?<sup>7</sup> We ought to entirely agree with Jarosław Suchan's conclusion that without a *more in-depth self-reflection within the community of museologists themselves such change* (in relation to legal regulations for cultural institutions – GR) *will first of all be impossible, and secondly, insufficient*.<sup>8</sup>

If we were to identify museology with theoretical reflection on the discipline we practice, while museum professionalism with the catalogue of practical activities performed in museums, then even the very title of the Congress reflected the dominance of the latter concept, while museology as such was rarely spoken of in Łódź, and if so, it was in the context of so-called 'new' museology. Which is a shame, since despite real difficulties with grasping the object of museology research, there is no other platform allowing not only to theoretically ponder over museum expertise, but also to ascertain museum expertise-related basic concepts. This sounds like a paradox in view of the imposing, and quite obvious as it might seem, the perspective of museology exploring all the issues connected with museum activity. What we thus should do, it seems, is to return to the sources of the original meanings of the terms that we use, in order to ascertain what the actual museological *habitus* should be composed of. In order to discover it, we could and should once again ask the basic methodological questions, like, for example, what do we consider to be a musealium at present: is it an exhibit, namely a physical object, or, for example, an object recorded in a video? Or maybe just the multimedia used in the museum?

These are the questions tackled in Jarosław Suchan's paper, one of the few theoretical texts included in the publication.<sup>9</sup> The source of the museum phenomenon is the peculiar aura evoked by an exhibited object, defined as a work, exhibit, musealium. The category of being a work distinguished by Walter Benjamin is 'here and now'.<sup>10</sup> The



aura is the way in which an object exists in space and time for the viewer, described by the dialectics of distance and closeness, which also determines the experiencing of the display by the viewer moving through it, this being inherent only in an exhibition, the museum 'language', that we so often tend to forget about.

Although the Congress was, naturally to a degree only, an agora for exchanging views, this does not really change the fact that we lack a debate conducted within the museologist community, and not spontaneously and at congresses which, for obvious reasons and according to organizers' promises, shall be held every several years, but in a regular mode, in trade journals or at thematic conferences. It can be possibly said that there are few places in Poland which would serve as the platform for the analysis of our museums. This, however, does not excuse us for not thinking about them, all the more so as our situation is perceived and assessed, often quite justly, by outside commentators. Museums do not serve the *economization of cultural heritage*,<sup>12</sup> reminds Jerzy Hauser, and continues by saying that the purpose of museums is *a creative recreation and interpretations of cultural resources, and through that activity joining in the processes of the development of individuals and societies*.<sup>13</sup> It may sound surprising that these words are pronounced by an outstanding economist who would sooner be tempted to spot the 'unproductive' sphere of culture through the forecast savings and cuts. Meanwhile, there is no contradiction here; there is instead a broader outlook on the role museums can play as a *learning nursery*<sup>14</sup> in the

whole economic system. Not only in the usually noticed, also in the Congress addresses, sphere of cultural tourism, or the so-called leisure industry. Peter Drucker, author of the modern management methodology many years ago spoke of *Corporate Social Responsibility* saying that the final existence goal of business is not profit, but social development and advancement based on learning.<sup>15</sup> Drucker was also of the opinion that if social institutions' activity cannot be verified by the revenue they generate (companies can), they need management strategy all the more in order to be socially useful and effective.<sup>16</sup>

Many of us are aware of the importance of the social impact of museums (as has already been formulated in the list of the Congress goals as quoted at the beginning), however many of our organizers understand it in a really peculiar way. It is general knowledge that the majority of Polish museums are financed by local governments, which on the other hand binds them in red-tape casuistry. The evaluations of museum's activity by culture department officials follows criteria that are far from the actual service to society, since what becomes the only tangible gauge of museums' 'social utility' is the visit figure, most willingly noted on the occasion of events or festivals held by the museum. This is the issue raised in the summing up of respective panels by their curators: Jarosław Suchan and Antoni Bartosz. In both opinions there emerges the problem of the petrification of the Polish museum management system, and the institutions' almost feudal submission to the local authorities.

The tension between the *gauging*, as phrased by Piotr Oszczanowski,<sup>17</sup> of cultural activity, and the need for autonomy of cultural institutions, is visible in the paradox Suchan observed of limiting the right of the museum directors to independently define their institution's programme, with holding them fully responsible for the programmes' implementations. Interestingly, the director of a Polish museum, as the 'unit manager', to use the administration terms, is fully responsible for all the processes and things happening in the museum, actually remaining the major prisoner of the system. Trapped between the museum staff, rarely willing to introduce any thorough changes to their institution, and the organizer expecting them to enforce 'modern' management forms, museum directors have no right to independently recruit their deputies; their appointment or dismissal has to happen 'in agreement with' (phrase quoted from the Act) the organizer, who may not approve of the submitted proposal. The erosion of the legal status of Polish museums allows to sensibly conclude that the museum director is actually not a museologist. The Congress proceedings repeat the observation that anybody can become a museum director in Poland, and indeed many such cases are known. The former concept of a 'museologist' also signified the job of a curator in the museum, and implied a long-standing process of acquiring knowledge of the collections and managing them, it was therefore unimaginable that the position of the museum director would mean the beginning of a museum career, and not its goal and climax.<sup>18</sup>

*Preservation of a separate essence of museums and increase of the autonomy of the museum management* are the claims presented in the panel summary by Paweł

Jaskanis.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, he points out to an essential *political problem of the lack of co-responsibility of the units of local governments for the museums that are located within their jurisdiction*.<sup>20</sup> It may thus make sense to consider the resuming of the cooperation of 'large' state museums, exerting legal and organizational (not programmatic) control over 'lesser' institutions run by local governments, and also providing them with assistance in these respects? The idea, however, can be easily disparaged, and associated with the centralist, not regional vision of the state, in Poland additionally echoing the worst period of the Stalin era when the system of so-called district museums with those in their charge implied a clear political supervision. Today, however, our community has to notice the challenges of the local government – run museums, often treated instrumentally by the local authorities.

Returning to Jaskanis's paper, let us observe his justified reminder that the empowerment of a museum can consist in establishing a Board of Trustees in the place of the so-far Museum Board,<sup>21</sup> the first of much broader competence than the latter. Forming a Board of Trustees at the museum has been formulated in the Act on Museums, as well as in the praxis of several large Polish museums, registered as Ministry of Culture-controlled ones. Boards of Trustees, supporting museums in the strategic running of the institution, serve both as 'Supervisory Boards', and while holding the prerogative as for the assessment of the Museum's Executive Board (including the assignment of candidates and their appointment as Directors), they substantially contribute to museum's independence. As much as the present paper is not an appropriate opportunity to analyse the complexity of organizational and legal problems of Polish museums, it goes without saying that designing a new formula for museums' activity is a major challenge that the museum community and museums' organizers have to face in the nearest future. It will most undoubtedly be the subject of subsequent Congresses. This might yield a model of a museum being an institution of public utility or a foundation,<sup>22</sup> since both organization types loosen the museum's relation with the organizer (or should we rather say, the body that finances and controls it), bringing it, *volens volens*, closer to the museum's audience, first of all to its nearest environment, thus conditioning its 'social responsibility'. The function of the social service of museums as seen from the perspective of promoting learning, appeared for the first time at the conference under the meaningful title: *Museums as Cultural Institutes for the People*, held in Mannheim in 1903.<sup>23</sup> Today we can argue whether museums are first of all *vehicles for learning*,<sup>24</sup> as suggested by George E. Hein, or should they essentially collect and protect objects of particular worth, yet they undoubtedly rank among very few institutions which shape a conscious and democratic society of free citizens. Until today the museum's paradigm has been constituted by the value of exceptional *power* mentioned by Alfred Lichtwark at the Mannheim Conference,<sup>25</sup> which through *the active and socio-educational as well as the learning function aware of its own goals gives museums an entirely apart and essential position next to Universities and Academies*.<sup>26</sup>

Regardless of whether we date museology beginnings back to the seventeenth-century public sharing of collections that belonged to monarchs and wealthy philanthropists (and following the French Revolution, also state collections), or, as pointed to by Dorota Folga-Januszewska, it *descends from the Athens ancient*

*Aristotle's musaeum*,<sup>27</sup> museum, as if in contradiction to the continuously and constantly changing world, has preserved its permanence. And even boasts glowing prospects for the future, as Jan M. Piskorski foresees after Krzysztof Pomian,<sup>28</sup> though these prospects may not coincide with our expectations.

**Abstract:** The volume constitutes a summary of the First Congress of Polish Museologists (the Congress) which was held in Łódź on 23–25 April 2015. The Congress aimed at raising key issues for Polish museology, on one hand reflecting on its essence and functions, and on the other trying to indicate particular solutions in order to *fix the museum system*.

The publication includes conference papers, minutes of plenary sessions, as well as resolutions adopted during the Congress. The whole was complemented with an index of persons and numerous photographs. While trying to focus on some of the main subjects in the programme of the Congress (and thus, of the book), it is impossible to forget that the change in the law regarding museums should be preceded by a comprehensive discussion on the professional identity of museum professionals, and on the condition of

the institutions where they work. We should therefore devise an actual museum *habitus*, not avoiding key questions such as who should be considered as a museum professional and which unique features make an object become a museum exhibit. The need for discussion and to specify the terms we use was mentioned by many participants in the meeting in Łódź, including outside experts. Museums are specific institutions whose sense of existence, as well as an important feature of their activity, is social service understood as the dissemination of knowledge. The decisions jointly taken during the Congress will facilitate our reform of our institutions' internal organisation. They will also enable us to build ties with organisers of museum institutions aiming at maintaining such museums' autonomy, so they can fully achieve their mission.

**Keywords:** museology, museum professional, musealium, congress of museum professionals, social service, dissemination of knowledge.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *I Kongres Muzealników Polskich* [The First Congress of Polish Museologists], M. Niezabitowski, M. Wysocki (ed.), Narodowe Centrum Kultury, Warszawa 2015, pp. 318, figs.
- <sup>2</sup> P. Jaskanis, *Nowe zadania, te same kadry. Zapisy Ustawy o muzeach w świetle obecnej praktyki muzealnej* [New Tasks, the Same Personnel. Provisions of the Act on Museums in the Light of the Current Museum Praxis], in: *I Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 101.
- <sup>3</sup> *Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 5.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> P. Jaskanis, *Test wielu luster. W kierunku muzeum jutra* [Multiple Mirror Test. Towards the Museum of the Future], in: *Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 159.
- <sup>6</sup> See e.g. M. Maciejewska, L. Graczyk, *Muzea prywatne / kolekcje lokalne. Raport z badań* [Private Museums/ Local Collections. Research Report], [http://www.ariari.org/images/stories/raport\\_muzea\\_prywatne.pdf](http://www.ariari.org/images/stories/raport_muzea_prywatne.pdf) [accessed: 30 May 2016].
- <sup>7</sup> The Museum of Agrarian Technology and Farming at Redecz Krukowy (Kuyavia), actually contrary to its name, presents collections from some dozen areas of human activity. They are displayed in several separate rooms, see the Museum's website: [http://www.redeczkrukowy.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5&Itemid=11](http://www.redeczkrukowy.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5&Itemid=11) [accessed: 30 May 2016].
- <sup>8</sup> J. Suchan, *Zablokowany potencjał rozwoju czy niewykorzystana szansa? Pytanie o czynniki utrudniające i stymulujące rozwój sektora muzealnego* [Blocked Development Potential or Wasted Opportunity? Questions about Factors Hindering and Stimulating the Museum Sector Development], in: *Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 99.
- <sup>9</sup> J. Suchan, *Przedmiot znaleziony przypadkiem* [An Accidentally Found Object], in: *Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 192.
- <sup>10</sup> In Polish museology literature, Benjamin's category of work's aura is mentioned by Irena Wojnar, see *Idem: Zadania muzeum w kształceniu i wychowaniu estetycznym widza* [Museum's Tasks in Shaping Viewer's Aesthetical Education and Upbringing], in: *Działalność oświatowa muzeów, założenia teoretyczne i praktyka* [Museums' Educational Activity: Theoretical Assumptions and Praxis], K. Malinowski (ed.), 'Monografie Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu' 1973, Vol. IX, pp. 104-105.
- <sup>11</sup> *Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 192.
- <sup>12</sup> *Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 98.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> See G. Radecki, *Terra incognita? Uwagi o Strategii Rozwoju Muzealnictwa* [Terra Incognita? Remarks on the Museology Development Strategy], 'Biuletyn Programowy NIMOZ' 2013, No. 9, p. 32.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* There is also a bibliography on Drucker's works.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> J. Suchan, *Zablokowany potencjał rozwoju...*, p. 97.
- <sup>18</sup> On the topic see: D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzealnik. Zawód, profesja czy powołanie* [Museum Professional. A Job, Profession, or a Vocation], in: *Kongres Muzealników...* pp. 57-66, as well as D. Folga-Januszewska's summary of the Panel *Museologist: a Curator, but also a Manager. New Tasks Facing*



*Museologists Versus Changes in Educational and Promotion Systems for Museum Staff*, in: *Kongres Muzealników...* pp. 221- 226.

<sup>19</sup>P. Jaskanis, *Nowe zadania, te same...*, pp. 103-104 (quotation source).

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>21</sup>The problem also raised by Suchan, see: J. Suchan, *Zablokowany potencjał rozwoju...*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>22</sup>E.g Vienna museums have the legal status of research institutions of public utility, while the public support to such institutions is *a conscious support of museums' self-responsibility*, see G. Matt, *Muzeum jako przedsiębiorstwo* [Museum as a Business], Warszawa 2006, p. 225.

<sup>23</sup>Dorota Folga-Januszewska mentions this, *Muzealnik. Zawód, profesja...*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>24</sup>L. Karczewski, *Konstruowanie edukacji. Uwagi po szkoleniu 'Edukacja w muzeum sztuki współczesnej'* [Shaping Learning. Remarks Following the 'Learning at a Museum of Contemporary Art.' Training], in: *ABC Edukacji w muzeum. Muzea sztuki współczesnej, rezydencjonalne, wielooddziałowe i interdyscyplinarne* [ABC of Learning at a Museum. Contemporary Art, Residential, Multi-branch, and Interdisciplinary Museums], J. Grzonkowska (ed.), Warszawa 2015, p. 25.

<sup>25</sup>Quoted after: K. Malinowski, *Michał Walicki – muzeolog* [Michał Walicki, a Museologist], 'Muzealnictwo' 1967, No.14, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzealnik. Zawód, profesja...*, p. 57.

<sup>28</sup>J.M. Piskorski, *Muzea w świecie bez historii*, w: *Kongres Muzealników...*, p. 170.

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# THE COLLECTION OF FELIKS JASIEŃSKI'S DONATION – THE FIRST TWO VOLUMES

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On 11 March 1920 Feliks 'Manggha' Jasieński signed an act of a donation upon whose basis the National Museum in Cracow (MNK) obtained an enormous collection totalling ca. 15 000 objects: Polish paintings and sculptures from the Modernism era, Polish and European graphic works from the turn of the nineteenth century, arts and crafts (assorted utensils, furniture, ceramics, carpets and *kontusz* belts), and examples of folk and Far Eastern art, predominantly woodcuts and other Japanese artworks. This extraordinary collection can be, without any exaggeration, described as a masterpiece comparable with such outstanding undertakings as Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill, John Soane's residence in 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields in London, the Puławy residence of Isabella Czartoryska born Fleming, or de Goncourt brothers' Maison de l'artiste in the Parisian district of Auteuil. A pity that this fact was went unnoticed by the Cracow councilmen during the collector's lifetime and by museum experts in subsequent years. For all practical purposes, the collection was never permitted to make its voice heard, and from the very onset it was divided between particular sets of museum resources of art and crafts according to a domineering vision of a museum and its obligations, and specifically comprehended learned aesthetics. True, during the 1930s the collection was displayed in the Szołajski town house as an integral exhibition but only partially, since it had been deprived of certain works supposedly fundamental for other displays, such as Podkowiński's *Frenzy*, whose absence in a gallery of Polish painting would have been unimaginable (also today it decorates one of the showrooms at the Cloth Hall, although for some time it was accompanied by a tablet explaining its origin). Later, temporary exhibitions were also unable to grant Jasieński a suitable place in collective memory, thus leaving room for deforming clichés, numerous misunderstandings, and stereotypes. This is the reason why we should appreciate the initiative of MNK, which in recent

years published a donation collection to mark its hundredth anniversary (1920–2020). Plans foresaw ten volumes composed of a separate presentation and an interpretation of the collection as a logical work together with a description of its individual parts (painting, drawing, sculpture, graphic art, and the crafts – Polish, European, and Oriental). This colossal venture was undertaken so as to *highlight and perpetuate in universal awareness the dimension and variety of the donated collection* – to cite Zofia Gołubiew, the then director of the Museum. The published two volumes symbolise the scale of the whole project.

Volume one contains a holistic presentation of the complete collection by Agnieszka Kluczevska-Wójcik, editor of the entire *corpus*, and is the outcome of lengthy studies on Jasieński and his collections, conducted in Poland and France (*Feliks 'Manggha' Jasieński i jego kolekcja w Muzeum Narodowym w Krakowie*, 2014). This undertaking called for a thorough analysis of preserved sources since Jasieński was one of the more vivid and most controversial figures in *fin de siècle* Warsaw and Cracow during the Young Poland period as well as an *enfant terrible* of Polish Modernism.

As a lover of Japanese art, which in his opinion was to enliven our culture, Jasieński was the target of attacks and criticism, often unjust. He also became a protagonist of Young Poland legends still recounted today – on the one hand, a *cliché* likeness of an arrogant megalomaniac and a voracious collector, who would stop at nothing for the sake of obtaining a chosen object (the black legend) and, on the other hand, a portrayal of a patron and a friend of artists, as well as a promoter of Polish art and craft (the white legend). The author declared that she merely wished to recall and *supplement his intellectual portrait*, but actually she has to a great extent created it because one has to be a highly specialised scout to discover something in existing historiography.

The collector was born in 1861 in Grzegorzewicze (Mazovia). The first part of his biography is preceded by elements of the genealogy of the father's side of the family but mainly that of the mother, *de domo* Wołowska, a descendant of nobilitated Frankist Jews. This was a family of great patriots, insurgents, and subsequently émigrés, whose property and relations in the world of culture played an essential part in Jasiński's life. He spent his childhood on his mother's landed estate in Osuchów, amidst palace furniture, souvenirs, and paintings (his later collection contained a set of miniature portraits originating from Osuchów). Later, Jasiński left for Warsaw to continue his home education at the IV Boys' Gymnasium, from which he graduated in 1881, but without passing the final exams (due to an eye condition). Consequently, he was unable to embark upon formal academic courses, and as an un-enrolled student attended lectures first in Dorpat (Tartu) and then, after a brief interval, while undergoing medical treatment in Berlin and Paris. Jasiński studied economy, law, philosophy, history, the history of art, and music. While in Paris, he made his first acquaintance with genuine world art at the Louvre, the local galleries, and the annual Salons, and predominantly with Japanese art (at the time of his arrival Paris was the site of an exhibition organised by Louis Gonse at the Georges Petit Gallery). Completing his education Jasiński went on a trip to Italy and upon his return he married Teresa Łabędzka (their son, Henryk, was born in 1888, and several years later, after his parents divorced, left with his mother to live abroad). Residing together with his family in Warsaw he was collaborated with several periodicals as an art critic, considered a musical career, and composed (but according to the later reminiscences of his son, Jasiński simply did nothing), maintained contacts with the art milieu, i.a.

Pankiewicz and Podkowiński, whose works he purchased for his future collections, commissioned portraits, and invited artists to stay with his family in the countryside. He engaged in the revival movement of artistic life in the capital, mainly in the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts (Zachęta) by joining sessions on 'new art' and describing himself as a 'worker' in this field. After the death of Podkowiński, Jasiński, together with Leon Wyczółkowski, whom he later befriended, organised a monographic exhibition of the artist's works. Finally, the wide gamut of his activity must be supplemented by the affair produced by the purchase of *Frenzy*, which up to this day remains a *sui generis* hallmark of Polish art at world exhibitions. The painting was the cause

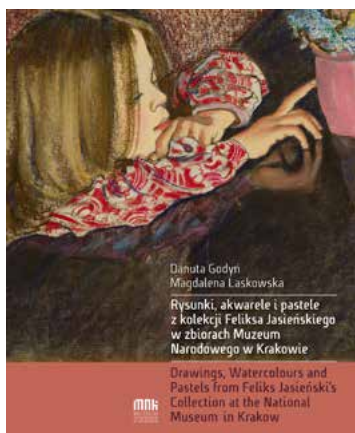
of two notorious scandals – first in 1894, when the canvas, on show at the Zachęta, was slashed by its author, and upon a second occasion in 1901, when Zachęta proposed to purchase the restored painting. Manggha put an end to the ensuing disputes by buying the controversial painting, and then moved for always to Cracow.

Kluczevska-Wójcik dedicated the successive parts of her book to Jasiński's long voyage, which from the spring of 1897 to the winter of 1900 led *from Warsaw to London via Jerusalem*. The tour was associated with the chief literary work by Manggha the collector: *Les promenades à travers le monde, l'art et les idées* (Paris and Warszawa 1901), a *sui generis* account of the great expedition and a description of its successive stages, but also a collection of interesting reflections on art, music, and literature (unfortunately, the whole book was never translated into Polish). The voyage started in Constantinople, and then went on to Jaffa and Jerusalem, followed by Egypt, from which the traveller returned to Europe, where he began touring Italy, France, and Germany; in the meantime he also spent some time in London. Everywhere, his experiences included successive artistic discoveries, concerts, spectacles, reading, visits paid to artists' ateliers, and exhibitions (i.a. the 1900 Exposition Universelle and the much criticised exhibition of Polish art at Galerie Georges Petit in Paris).

Next, the author presented Jasiński's work for the 'Chimera' periodical issued in Warsaw. Upon his return to Warsaw Jasiński, a friend of Zenon Przesmycki (Miriam), published in the periodical in question feuilletons about art and music as well as reviews from exhibitions; he was also an art advisor dealing with the graphic layout and the organisation of exhibitions held at the editor's office. The latter idea, exceptional in Polish conditions, was quite frequent in Paris: such expositions were systematically held in the seat of the avant-garde periodical 'Revue Blanche', published by the Natanson brothers (sons of a Warsaw banker). The programme of

two week long exhibitions prepared by the collector for 'Chimera' for the year 1901 was only partially realized due to his departure. The event was preceded by a loud scandal produced by Gerson's obituary in the press with Manggha undermining the painter's universally acknowledged talent. As a consequence the outraged representatives of the Warsaw milieu brutally attacked his collection of Japanese woodcuts displayed at the Zachęta (with Jasiński responding just as violently). Presumably, Kluczevska-Wójcik wished to avoid delving any deeper into this outright vulgar row.

In the autumn of 1901 Jasiński settled down in Cracow, where his home was turned into a museum, an





exhibition showroom, and a lecture hall. Here, he became a professional columnist, a journalist, and a critic writing for periodicals published in Galicia. From the very onset Jasieński became an active participant of local social and artistic life, loaned objects for assorted exhibitions or organised displays on his own (a total of about 40 held in Warsaw, Cracow, Kiev, and Lwów). Frequently portrayed, he supported artists, and was deeply involved in their problems and disputes (such as the famous duel between Mehoffer and Wyczółkowski). His public appearances, polemics, attacks directed against 'confederate patriotism', and provocations whose battle call was 'new art', were intended to be an 'animating stick' put into the wheel of ossified intellectual and aesthetic habits. From the very beginning Jasieński also thought of opening a museum based on his collections for the purpose of moulding the taste of his countrymen. Initially, he planned to donate artworks to the Warsaw Zachęta, but after he left the capital and only when he truly settled down in Cracow did he declare a donation for the National Museum (1903). From that time on he regarded his collections as a museum department of sorts, which Boy-Żeleński depicted in the poem *One More Branch of the National Museum* (1907), performed at the Green Balloon cabaret. The vision of the addition, accepted by Director Feliks Kopera, produced enormous distrust on the part of the Town Council. In turn, this lack of understanding induced Jasieński to return to his earlier idea and, with the collector Juliusz Herman as an intermediary, he embarked upon successful talks with the Museum of Fine Arts in Warsaw (today: the National Museum). The agreement could not be realised due to the outbreak of World War I, which the collector spent in Ukraine; later, in the already different conditions of an independent Polish state, the collection remained in Cracow. In 1920 it was officially presented to the National Museum, and in 1934 part of it was installed at the Szolajski town house, an event the collector did not live to see (he died in 1929).

In extremely interesting fragments of her book Kluczeńska-Wójcik considered the prime areas of the artistic passion of the titular collector. Probably greatest attention was always drawn by his fascination with Japanese art. In the above-mentioned collection of essays 'Manggha' Jasieński described the growth of his interests, tours of European galleries, museums, print rooms, libraries, auction houses, and artists' studios, contacts with collectors and experts, as well as studies and a constant improvement of knowledge on the subject. The author analysed Jasieński's assessment of Japanese art and competence in this field. The basic part of the collection of woodcuts and other objects was created in the antique shops of Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Leipzig, and Vienna, and together with greatest European merchants, particularly Siegfried Bing. With this aim in mind the collector also attempted to establish direct contacts with Japan through the intermediary of the Lwów painter Stanisław Dębicki. Furthermore, he made efforts aimed at the widest possible popularisation of Japanese art in Poland, convinced that this was the path towards a revival of national art (*Przewodnik po dziale japońskim oddziału Muzeum Narodowego*, 1906). The second favourite domain was graphic art. Jasieński constantly expanded his graphic art collections (by maintaining contact with such marchands

as Amboise Vollard), as well as knowledge on the topic (based on publications, illustrated books, and periodicals); he also attempted to broaden relations with Polish and foreign artists (e.g. Max Klinger). He became deeply engaged in supporting graphic art at home, took part in preparing publications and organising competitions, prizes, scholarships, and the activity of associations (the Society of Graphic Artists). The third realm of his endeavours as a collector was the *oeuvre* of contemporary Polish artists. Jasieński initiated the collection of their works at the end of the 1880s, when, after graduation and his European voyages, he settled down in Warsaw. A great impact on the contents of the collections was exerted by discussions on the preferred character of Polish art, echoes of infamous artistic scandals at the Zachęta (the case of the sculptor Antoni Kurzawa and then of Podkowiński). Initially, the collection was composed of the works of Jasieński's peers: Józef Pankiewicz, Władysław Podkowiński, and Leon Wyczółkowski, and subsequently of Cracow artists, members of the 'Art' association, Academy professors – Jan Stanisławski, Jacek Malczewski, Julian Fałat and Stanisław Wyspiański, Józef Mehoffer, Stanisław Dębicki, Wojciech Weiss, and many others. Jasieński was personally acquainted with all of them and in some cases was even their close friend. The book highly assesses those choices as apt reflections of the main tendencies and transformations in Polish art of the period. The author also drew attention to the exceptional sculpture gallery, which, as a rule, does not often become the object of art collections (Antoni Kurzawa, Konstanty Laszczka, Kazimierz Ostrowski), as well as the symptomatic exclusion of artists whom Jasieński described as 'art poachers' and 'soap producers', such as Henryk Siemiradzki, Aleksander Kostas, Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski, and Kazimierz Pochwalski.

The publication by Agnieszka Kluczeńska-Wójcik is a valuable and extremely interesting presentation of one of the most important accomplishments in the history of Polish culture, which should be classified as an artwork if only due to its meta-artistic character. Feliks Jasieński devoted his entire activity to artists and Polish art. His collections and publications, predominantly *Sztuka Polska* (both a collection of illustrated monographs published in facsimiles and an album from 1903–1905), served this purpose; the same is true of passionate publicists and other undertakings (prizes, foundations, a scholarship fund). Jasieński was firmly convinced about the unity of art – an almost contemporary vision of an absence of distinction between so-called high and low art; hence his interest in the decorative arts and efforts to grant them a status equal to that of painting. Jasieński was also a lover of the art of the Muslim Orient – a predilection expressed in his collection of carpets, fabrics, and ceramics. Alongside the 'professional' crafts, such as the above-presented ones, he also appreciated folk art of the Podhale, Hutsul, and Kaszuby regions (fabrics, wooden artefacts, jewellery, decorations). Jasieński cultivated a special friendship with Wyczółkowski, whom he supposedly exploited by selling his paintings at a profit, but whose *oeuvre* he actually promoted and took care of the rather incompetent artist by organising journeys, paying bills and rent, and settling assorted problems (e.g. he brought over from Paris two graphic presses for Wyczółkowski).

Truly, it would be difficult to imagine Cracow from the Young Poland era without the Wyczół and Manggha team.

The second, even more imposing volume is the first part of a monumental collection encompassing drawings, water colours, and pastels by Polish artists; it is discussed and preceded by a theoretical-historical introduction by Danuta Godyń and Magdalena Laskowska (*Rysunki, akwarele i pastele z kolekcji Feliksa Jasińskiego w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie*, 2016). The presented part of the collection totalled 795 works by 86 more or less known, or totally unknown artists (i.a. students at the Maria Niedzielska School of Fine Arts for Ladies, where Jasiński lectured on the history of art). The collector displayed a special attitude towards drawings, of which he was very fond and which he willingly collected: *Personally, I prefer the sketch to the completed work. I regard the artist's personality to be the most valuable in a work of art. In a sketch this personality erupts violently; inspiration and talent outright gush and the artist works obsessed by the idea of creation and realises his dreams as rapidly as possible* (p. 21). The author also drew attention to the eighteenth-century tradition of this attitude, rather universal at the time of Jasiński, namely, the perception of a sketch not solely as a record of the artist's initial conception and a project of a work, but, first and foremost, as evidence of his talent. This part of the collection (more than in other cases) is the effect of direct contacts with artists, collectors, and critics. Jasiński was clearly fond of accentuating his special bond with the world of art, very often demonstrated by the dedications addressed to him as well as his letters to Feliks Kopera.

In an analysis of this part of the collection the foundation of the author's narration is composed of artists and sets of their works. In each case, upon the basis of preserved sources, the publication describes transactions, loans of artworks for exhibitions, deposits at MNK, sales, and exchanges. A special rank was held by Leon Wyczółkowski and his 325 works. Jasiński esteemed the sketches executed by his friend probably even higher than completed canvases since the former suited perfectly his sensitivity and aesthetics. *Wyczółkowski is the co-creator of my collections* – he was in the habit of saying owing to the fact he either received the majority of the works as

gifts or bought them at low prices (which, in turn, enabled exchange and other purchases). Just as important for the collector was the *oeuvre* of Józef Pankiewicz, whom he met already in Warsaw (*There are no sketches by Pankiewicz, only his canvases*), Władysław Podkowiński, Józef Mehoffer, whose 30 canvases included portraits of Jasiński, historical, Biblical and mythological scenes, landscapes and a cartoon for a polychrome (the Wawel cathedral treasury) and stained glass windows (Freiburg cathedral), Stanisław Wyspiański, Stanisław Dębicki – a Lwów-based lover of Japanese woodcuts, and a number of other painters from Lwów (Juliusz Makarewicz, Aleksander Augustynowicz, Jan Kotowski), together with Olga Boznańska, Jacek Malczewski, Kazimierz Sichulski, Wojciech Weiss, Jan Stanisławski, Józef Chełmoński, Ferdynand Ruszczyc, Karol Tichy, and Tymon Niesiołowski.

A highly valuable element of the publication is a catalogue of works containing superior illustrations, which allow the reader to outright see the collections (although this is not an everyday practice in such cases). The catalogue is supplemented by appendices containing reproductions of inventory cards from the Jasiński collections: *Spis Rzeźb i Obrazów* (made on 11 January 1906), as well as lists of works deposited by the collector at the National Museum in Cracow and those withdrawn from the deposit, together with various other documents, including a *sui generis* morality certificate (*Wybór dokumentów archiwalnych świadczących o finansowej uczciwości Feliksa Jasińskiego oraz jego zaangażowaniu w działalność mecenasowską*); the volume ends with a bibliography and a list of archival material.

It must be added that both books feature a lucid narration and are elegantly written; if something needs to be criticised it is fragments producing a certain dissatisfaction, such as the question of the numerous deposits at the Cracow National Museum prior to the donation. Mentioned upon a number of occasions, they are not discussed in greater detail in the two volumes, although appendices of the catalogue of drawings contain pertinent documents.

The publication project of the National Museum in Cracow is, nonetheless, extremely valuable; hopefully, it will be successfully completed for the round anniversary of Jasiński's donation.

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**Abstract:** These are the first two volumes out of the ten planned by the National Museum in Cracow, which together will constitute the publication of the body of work donated to the museum by Feliks 'Manggha' Jasiński. One volume presents the collector's creative biography and the history of his various collections. There are also attempts to interpret the nature of the content of his collections, mainly woodcuts and other Japanese objects, as well as modern Polish art, paintings, engravings (together with a set of European engravings) and decorative arts. The second volume is the first part of a monumental catalogue of the collection

which covers drawings, watercolours and pastels by Polish artists. The subsequent eight volumes are envisaged to cover particular parts of this extensive collection (of Polish, European and Eastern paintings, drawings, sculpture, engravings and decorative arts). This enormous undertaking marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jasiński's donation (1920–2020), and, as Zofia Gulubiew put it, is intended to *visualise and fix the extent and variety of the collection in the public's awareness*. The publishing project by the National Museum in Cracow is extremely valuable, and it should be hoped that it will succeed as intended.

**Keywords:** collecting, collections, painting, modern art, Polish art, Japanese art, Japanese woodcut, European engraving, Cracow, Zachęta Society of Fine Arts in Warsaw, National Museum in Cracow.

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Permanent gallery of the Art Museum in Łódź under the directorship of Marian Minich, Formism Room 1948–1950, Archive of the Art Museum in Łódź

# POLISH DICTIONARY OF MUSEOLOGISTS



# ON THE NEED TO COMPILE A POLISH DICTIONARY OF MUSEUM CURATORS

Agnieszka Murawska

National Museum in Poznań

The concept of inaugurating efforts aiming at the creation of a dictionary of museum curators, which should become a foundation of further studies, a source of knowledge and, at the same time, a *sui generis* monument, originated during the realisation of a research-exhibition programme dedicated to Nikodem Pajzderski (1882–1940), part of the *Zasłużeni Muzealnicy Polscy* cycle at the National Museum in Poznań in 2013.<sup>1</sup> It was then that numerous bottom-up suggestions were made at the Poznań centre and problems connected with the absence of even a basic compendium of knowledge about the authors of museology in Poland was indicated. At the same time, it became apparent that there exists considerable interest in this topic. The lack of a fundamental source of information such as a dictionary of museum curators points to the fact that our milieu is simply devoid of self-reflection. After all, it is difficult to make progress without referring to the past. This state of affairs is even distressing in view of the fact that professions akin to museum curators possess dictionaries documenting, even if only partially, the accomplishments of outstanding and, upon occasions, even quite ordinary representatives of such professions as conservators,<sup>2</sup> librarians,<sup>3</sup> or archivists.<sup>4</sup> The absence of a dictionary of museum curators exerts a negative impact on the quality of research connected with the history of museology as well as on social awareness and memory about the role played by the representatives of this profession, and affiliated ones, in cultivating national heritage in assorted periods in the history of Poland: the partitions, the process of moulding a modern nation, the reconstruction of the Polish state after 1918, and subsequent public service.

In 2014 A. Szukalska-Kuś, chairperson of the Greater Poland Branch of the Society of Polish Museum Curators (SMP), whose members demonstrated an enduring and serious interest in the question of a dictionary, took, with the support of members of the board, steps towards its creation. Thanks to cooperation with representatives of various museums of the region, the academic environment,

in particular the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (UAM), the National Institute of Museology and Collection Protection (NIMOZ), and the National Museum in Poznań (MNP), the Greater Poland Branch of the Society organised two symposiums and a discussion panel, thus achieving the final stage of preparations. The role of institutional partners – in particular NIMOZ and UAM, whose representatives actively supported, and participated in the undertakings – cannot be overestimated.

The first symposium<sup>5</sup> was regional and the object of its debates evoked the accomplishments of persons associated with museology in Greater Poland. The participants presented almost 30 biogrammes with the widest possible chronological and territorial scope; the same holds true for the range of the museum interests of the portrayed persons. The symposium also pursued theoretical reflections, which by the very nature of things were general and pertained to the methodology of work within the domain of biographical information in assorted varieties of dictionaries as well as to the course and organisation of future undertakings. The reflections considered changeable terminology associated with the profession of the museum curator, with the symposium participants ascertaining a simultaneous outline of professional tasks connected with the realisation of the mission of protecting national heritage – the process of obtaining the latter and its protection and administration, scientific studies, and rendering the legacy available to the public. Much attention was devoted to the precursors of museology, including collectors, whose passions resulted in the emergence of permanent museum collections. Attention was drawn to the fact that research on the biographies of museum curators could have a significant influence on the identity and condition of the profession, which today too should enjoy public trust, while the characteristic features of its representatives must include not only special qualification but also a strong moral backbone and independent interpretations, regardless of changing fashions and pressure. It was established that the profession of the museum curator



is closer to a vocation and a mission than to an occupation, and that a dictionary could undoubtedly become not merely an expression of respect for past generations but, predominantly, delineate certain exemplary standards. The symposium<sup>6</sup> was accompanied by a publication containing a trial version of 28 dictionary entries.

The intention of the second symposium<sup>7</sup> was to propose the project on a national arena. It succeeded in doing so thanks to the active participation of museum curators who arrived from all parts of the country.<sup>8</sup> The speakers presented persons of merit for the museology of particular regions, mentioned theoretical questions and legal aspects pertaining to work on the biographies of the living and the deceased, and discussed the range of the dictionary and its character. It was decided to opt for a national dictionary encompassing the present-day territory of Poland, with historically justified numerous exceptions and with entries dedicated not solely to Polish museum curators but also those of other nationalities who influenced museology in Polish lands and those connected with Poland. The symposium participants acknowledged the so-called Dutch dictionary to be the most suitable, since it makes it possible to apply alphabetical order in each volume. They also debated differentiating the size of the dictionary entries depending on the importance of a given person, and the extent of the bibliography and iconography.

Particularly valuable proved to be presentations of related regional publication initiatives: *Leksykon czeskich i polskich muzealników Górnego Śląska*<sup>9</sup> described by Urszula Zajączkowska, and *Mazowieccy muzealnicy. Słownik Biograficzny*, a *who is who*-type publication by Tadeusz Skoczek.<sup>10</sup> The speakers devoted much attention to warnings connected with the longevity of editorial work, and pointed out problems resulting from the use of obtained source material.

Thanks to the above declarations and other opinions about museum curators and founders of museums, the national dimension of the project gained firm roots and acceptance. The symposium confirmed the necessity of pursuing the titular task in the form of a years-long project involving museum curators, in particular members of museum societies and representatives of assorted disciplines. Already in the course of the first symposium historians from Poznań demonstrated their readiness to embark upon cooperation, which subsequently assumed the form of support for contents and organisation.

The Greater Poland Branch of SMP, encouraged by such a lively and wide reaction, organised another meeting: 'Słownik Muzealników Polskich. Programme premises, structure, financing',<sup>11</sup> this time held as a discussion panel. Invitations were issued to specialists involved in long-term projects with a similar range and tasks, such as *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* or *Słownik Artystów Polskich*, in order to benefit from their experiences connected with comparable scientific ventures. This time the participants were, as in the case of the previous symposiums, interested representatives of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the National Museum in Poznań. Organisational questions entailed the necessity of establishing a dictionary workshop, an editorial board, and a scientific board. Fundamental importance for setting the project into motion was attached not only to its financing but also to determining a permanent seat of

the editorial team, forms of communication with authors, the creation of a database – a file of dictionary entries, and the establishment of an archive conceived as a place for storing the obtained and produced material. At a moment decisive for the existence of the project the Faculty of History at UAM offered both a seat and technical support. The symposium participants also discussed assorted legal and financial aspects. It followed from the heretofore experiences of the panel members that the most suitable would be work conducted by outside authors, for whom the editorial board would prepare a scheme of a dictionary entry, editorial guidelines, and an initial list of entries for the first volume. A letter of intent signed by the interested parties was recognised as indispensable.<sup>12</sup>

An *Agreement about cooperation for the sake of a scientific-research and publishing programme known as Polski Słownik Muzealników* (after as: Agreement) was signed on 19 April 2017 by institutions-partners: the Faculty of History at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań represented by Professor Dr hab. Kazimierz Iłski, dean of the Faculty, and the National Institute of Museology and Collection Protection represented by Professor Piotr Majewski (UKSW), and the social side – the Greater Poland Branch of the Society of Polish Museum Curators represented by Anna Szukalska-Kuś, chairperson of the Branch. The Editorial Committee will be headed by Professor Dr hab. Paweł Stróżyk (UAM). The Agreement preamble contains a justification of the decision to co-create a programme envisaged as a conception intent on presenting the impact of museum curators upon the origin and development of the Polish heritage system and museology, conceived as a separate public service and a branch of specialist knowledge. The programme as such was described as a continuation of heretofore work concerning the history of Polish museology and the accompanying debate about the significance of the professional and social tradition of Polish museology for the condition of contemporary national cultural memory. Hope was expressed that its realisation would contribute in particular to shaping the contemporary professional identity of museum curators and their social integration and indicate the role, which they played in the past and continue to perform in Polish public life.

A motion concerning the financing the project upon the basis of the human and natural resources of the collaborating realizers of the project was filed in the name of the above mentioned parties at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Hopefully, a solution granting a suitable course to the challenge will soon take place.

A durable material and intellectual accomplishment of heretofore endeavours is a publication<sup>13</sup> prepared for the first symposium and issued in the periodical: 'Museum Poloniae Maioris',<sup>14</sup> comprising a historical summary of knowledge about the profession of a museum curator. Publications of material of possible use for the needs of the dictionary were undertaken also by periodicals associated with museology and currently interested not only in commemorating 'those who have passed' but also in presenting in separate sections biographical material of a scientific nature.<sup>15</sup> A list of dictionary entries for the first volume, directives addressed to the authors together

with a list of professional tasks as well as a scheme of a biographical note are ready.

Attracting a large group of potential collaborators-authors and benefitting from their already gained trust and willingness to cooperate are of utmost significance for the realisation of the project.

The coming hundredth anniversary of the regaining of Polish independence is an excellent moment to take

a backward look and to embark upon a years-long project, which has a chance to affect not only the integration of Polish museum curators but also to demonstrate their heretofore achievements in a profession often regarded as a service performed for the nation and the state. This is the best time to do so since thanks to mass-scale access to historical sources in a digital form the research potential has become available as never before.

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**Abstract:** The article documents all the actions which have already been undertaken to compile a Polish Dictionary of Museum Curators. The co-operation of the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections, the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the National Museum in Poznań, and the Association of Polish Museum Professionals, Wielkopolska branch, and the project's public partner and

initiator, which has contributed to two symposiums and a discussion panel. The opportunity to implement a long-term and nationwide project which serves to contribute to knowledge about the development of museology in Poland, consolidate the professional environment, and improve the ethos of a profession which is similar to a public service, will be the substantive result of the events.

**Keywords:** museum curator, history of museology, museology, dictionary, public service.

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### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> J. Bryl, T. Grabski, A. Murawska, E. Siejkowska-Askutja, *Nikodem Pajzderski (1882–1940). Muzealnik, konserwator, historyk sztuki. Projekt badawczo-wystawienniczy*, Poznań 2013-2014. Exhibition on 25 October 2013-26 January 2014, conference on 25 October 2013. The exhibition was accompanied by a guidebook, and papers read at the conference comprised a publication – *Nikodem Pajzderski 15 IX1882-611940. Muzealnik – konserwator zabytków – historyk sztuki*, E. Siejkowska-Askutja (ed.), Poznań 2014. As part of the *Zasłużeni Muzealnicy Polscy* cycle the Archaeological Museum in Poznań prepared in 2014 a project dedicated to Józef Kostrzewski (1885–1969). Currently, the National Museum in Poznań is working on a project on Seweryn Mielżyński (1804–1882).
  - <sup>2</sup> *Polski słownik biograficzny konserwatorów zabytków*, fasc. 1-5, H. Kondziela et al. (ed.), Poznań 2000–2006.
  - <sup>3</sup> *Słownik bibliotekarzy wielkopolskich 1918-2000*, collective work, Wydawnictwo WBPICAK, Poznań 2001.
  - <sup>4</sup> *Słownik biograficzny archiwistów polskich*, vol. 1, 1918-1984, M. Bielińska, I. Janosz-Biskupowa (ed.), Warszawa-Łódź 1988.
  - <sup>5</sup> Symposium 'Between older and more recent years. Museum curators of Greater Poland: precursors, organisers, social activists', Poznań 21 November 2014.
  - <sup>6</sup> 'Między dawnymi i młodszymi laty'. *Muzealnicy wielkopolscy: prekursorzy, organizatorzy, społecznicy*, collective work, A. Murawska (consultant), joint publication of the Greater Poland Department of SMP and the National Museum in Poznań, Poznań [2014, no date].
  - <sup>7</sup> Symposium 'Between older and more recent years. Dictionary of Polish Museum Curators. Perspectives, problems, accomplishments', Poznań 15 December 2015.
  - <sup>8</sup> A. Murawska, *Raport merytoryczny symposium 'Między dawnymi i młodszymi laty'. Słownik muzealników polskich – perspektywy, problemy, dokonania*, Poznań, 15 December 2015, 8 pp., typescript.
  - <sup>9</sup> *Leksykon czeskich i polskich muzealników Górnego Śląska*, J. Kalus, L. Szaraniec, U. Zajączkowska (ed.), Katowice 2007.
  - <sup>10</sup> *Mazowieccy muzealnicy. Słownik Biograficzny*, Z. Judycki, T. Skoczek (ed.), Warszawa 2015.
  - <sup>11</sup> *Panel dyskusyjny Słownik Muzealników Polskich. Założenia programowe, struktura, finansowanie*, Brodnica 13 September 2016.
  - <sup>12</sup> Cf. M. Kępski, A. Murawska, *Sprawozdanie z przebiegu i rekomendacji panelu dyskusyjnego pt. Słownik Muzealników Polskich. Założenia programowe, struktura, finansowanie*, 9 pp., typescript; *Słownik Muzealników - założenia merytoryczne i organizacyjne*, November 2016, M. Kępski (prep.), 4 pp., typescript.
  - <sup>13</sup> See: footnote 6 in: 'Między dawnymi i młodszymi laty'. *Muzealnicy wielkopolscy...*
  - <sup>14</sup> A. Murawska, *Zawód: muzealnik. Spojrzenie okiem historyka*, 'Museum Poloniae Maioris, Rocznik Naukowy Fundacji Muzeów Wielkopolskich' 2015, vol. 2, A.M. Wyrwa (ed.), pp. 67-77.
  - <sup>15</sup> In: 'Museum Poloniae Maioris'... *ibidem*, in: *Słownik biograficzny zbieraczy starożytności i muzealników*, pp. 91-103; also: 'Nowe Zapiski Muzealne', Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu, E. Siejkowska-Askutja (editor-in-chief), fasc. 1, Poznań 2016, p. 2 – *The conception of referring to, and often outright restoring the memory of accomplished museum professionals is particularly close to the aims of the Society, since we wish to entrust custody over monuments of the past to persons worthy of utmost trust, in the conviction that they are capable of taking suitable care and of propagation* [emphasis – A. M]. This issue also contains a biogramme by E. S. Jeżewska: *Barbara Katarzyna Erber, etnograf, muzealnik*, pp. 28-29; the 58th issue of 'Muzealnictwo' initiated a new section: 'Polish Dictionary of Museum Curators', which opens this article and presents two outstanding museum curators: professors Kazimierz Malinowski and Zdzisław Żygulski Jr.
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# KAZIMIERZ MALINOWSKI – MUSEUM PROFESSIONAL

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National Museum in Poznań

The year 2017 marked the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Professor Kazimierz Malinowski and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, while in June 2016 half a century passed from the time when he was once again appointed director of the National Museum in Poznań. All those circumstances require that we recall this person of great merit for Polish museology and the Poznań Museum. The title is a paraphrase of that of an article written by Kazimierz Malinowski: *Michał Walicki – muzeolog*, published in the 'Muzealnictwo' periodical and dedicated to the famous historian of art and expert on Gothic visual arts in Poland.<sup>1</sup> Walicki is less known as a museum professional and even less as Malinowski's mentor, but if one were attempt to briefly define the entire spectrum of the latter's activity in a few words they would comprise the today rather neglected term: 'museum professional', which appears to be the most capacious and adequate. The museological context makes it possible to present Kazimierz Malinowski from the simultaneous perspective of several spheres of his activity, i.e. as a:

- museum professional *sensu stricto*, in other words, on the one hand, a researcher perceiving museology as a separate scientific discipline encompassing all problems associated with museum studies, but on the other hand as a practician working in a museum and taking part in the life of the museum milieu in the widest possible meaning of the term,
- propagator of the role played by museums as institutions open to the public, which, in turn, indicates the topical nature of Malinowski's postulates as regards present-day reflections on functions fulfilled by museums,
- long-term director of the National Museum in Poznań, a true visionary and curator of the institution's new programme, which up to this day clearly contains numerous tangible traces of his activity.

It is impossible to mention in a single sentence all the accomplishments of Kazimierz Malinowski, director and creator of the preserved structure of the Poznań Museum, initiator and editor of 'Studia Muzealne', published to this day, as well as the 'Muzealnictwo' annual, currently the most

important specialist periodical in Poland, author of the first monograph about the most outstanding representatives of Polish museology<sup>2</sup> and a museological textbook,<sup>3</sup> activist and member of several commissions of international museum and conservation organisations, and, finally, conservator and professor at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Although Malinowski was with all certainty a member of a narrow group of the most relevant representatives of Polish post-war museology, today he remains almost totally forgotten. The virtually complete absence of his name in museum daily life determines also the unsatisfactory state of research on his professional biography, even if only within the domain of museology – the second essential domain of his activity was art conservation – and requires to be thoroughly examined. Many opinions or assessments featured below, therefore, should be, upon the current level of research, treated as suggestions and hypotheses, which must be subjected to further verification. This is the reason why in the presented sketch the apparently most prominent traces of the activity of this Poznań museums professional have been marked only cursorily.

Kazimierz Malinowski was born in a merchant's family on 28 January 1907 in Poznań,<sup>4</sup> After graduating in 1925 from the local renowned Mary Magdalene Gymnasium he studied *history of art and, as a side subject, classical archaeology*<sup>5</sup> at Poznań University. Student of Rev. Professor Szczęsny Dettloff, regarded as the father of the history of art and one of the then most outstanding representatives of that discipline in Poland. Biographers of Professor Dettloff accentuate his proclivity for social work but also love of music,<sup>6</sup> and it quite likely that thanks to his vivid personality both passions left their imprint also upon Kazimierz Malinowski. In 1933 Malinowski graduated from Poznań University as a doctor of philosophy and devoted the following two years to further museological studies; as a scholarship student of the National Culture Fund<sup>7</sup> he toured *London, Belgium, The Netherlands and Italy*<sup>8</sup> but stayed the longest in Vienna and Paris, where he studied at École du Louvre, which in 1882 opened the first museology course in the world.<sup>9</sup>



1. Kazimierz Malinowski, PhD (first on the left) with Professors: Roman Pollak, Wojśław Molè and Władysław Tomkiewicz during a conference devoted to Renaissance art in the National Museum in Poznań in 1952

In 1935, while in Paris, Malinowski encountered the newest trends in the development of museology and could have made the acquaintance of Georges Henri Rivière, at the time assistant of Paul Rivet, director of the Parisian Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro – the first museum in the world that could be described as anthropological and whose beginnings in 1878 were connected with the organisation of the World Exposition Universelle in Paris.<sup>10</sup> It was exactly at the time of Malinowski's stay that Paris was preparing itself for a successive Exposition Universelle (1937). The old Trocadéro Museum was to be replaced by the new Palais de Chaillot complex, which housed the equally new Musée de l'Homme, with Rivet as director, as well as Musée national des Arts et Traditions Populaires, with Rivière as the newly appointed director; after the Second World War the latter became the first chairman of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), established by UNESCO, and proved to be a great reformer of world museology.<sup>11</sup>

During the same period, after the completion of the new building of the National Museum in Warsaw (1936), the authorities of the Polish capital appointed Stanisław Lorentz as its director. His co-workers included Michał Walicki, historian of art, who in 1929, after graduating from Warsaw University, perfected his knowledge in the course of scientific trips to, i.a. Belgium, The Netherlands, and Germany. Walicki became deputy director at the Warsaw National Museum, agreed to be head of the Painting Gallery, and in the following years created the first exposition of Polish mediaeval art. It was precisely those interests that in 1935 resulted in the realisation at the Institute for the Propaganda of Art of

the famous 'Polish Gothic Art' exhibition, with Walicki as its prime initiator. In 1936 Dettloff arranged an exposition presenting mediaeval art at the Museum of Greater Poland. Studies on the art of the Middle Ages became a foundation of amiable relations between the two eminent experts on that epoch and it is possible that they met upon the occasion of the Poznań exhibition.<sup>12</sup> Dettloff was interested in the careers of his students after their graduation, and even showed concern for their adequate financial support by often finding them suitable employment.<sup>13</sup> In turn, at the time Walicki was looking for a person to organise the so-called educational service at the National Museum in Warsaw and it is highly likely that it was Dettloff who recommended Malinowski, a young and talented historian of art who had just graduated in museology and had recently returned to Poland.

It is also possible that Walicki and Malinowski met already earlier. At any rate, the concurrence of their views about the need for a social impact of museums remains astonishing. Walicki was probably familiar with Malinowski's postulates from the mid-1930s, expressed in articles accentuating the significance of publishing material dealing with pedagogical methodology concerning museums *as scientific and pedagogical centres*,<sup>14</sup> and with this purpose in mind postulating the realisation of projects of special lecture halls outfitted with audio-visual equipment. In turn, Walicki at the same time praised Service Educatif, organised in 1922 at Musée de Cinquantenaire in Brussels, which apart from organising trips to the Museum and holding courses introduced on a large scale film projections as a *sui generis* didactic aid.<sup>15</sup> Fascinated by the Belgian Museum,

in 1933 Walicki described it in his article: *Spoleczno-wychowawczo i oświatowa rola nauk humanistycznych*, a fact years later recalled by Malinowski.<sup>16</sup> Emphasising the theory and socio-educational praxis of museum institutions Walicki indicated that it is the outcome of *the attitude of contemporary museology towards the needs of the general public*.<sup>17</sup> The Museum in Brussels, designed at the turn of the nineteenth century and situated in a fragment of the Cinquantenaire complex, was initially to be a Museum of the World, presenting *the cultural and civilizational accomplishments of particular states and nations* [including Polish lands], *and even a vision of the progress of mankind uniting in organisations of international cooperation*.<sup>18</sup> This optimistic conception was significantly verified after World War I, and the profile of the Museum was changed decidedly *by the post-war necessity of protecting spiritual values and intellectual culture*.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the original spirit of the Museum of the World – the creation of an exposition *via* objects – exemplifications of the history of culture and the transformations occurring within – was without question present in *Muzeum historii i kultury polskiej*,<sup>20</sup> a project published by Malinowski in 1938 in 'Życie Sztuki'. The same chord resounded once again in ventures realised by the Poznań historian immediately after the war, a topic to which we shall return later on. In 1936 Kazimierz Malinowski became the author of the first educational department in a Polish museum. At that time, as Stanisław Lorentz wrote in a posthumous reminiscence about Malinowski, *such departments were not distinguished, nor were there any educational offices or sufficiently prepared guides. (...) At the National Museum in Warsaw visitors were shown around by the intendant, Feliks Richling. I found it difficult to discover among the then scarce historians of art a candidate for the new, independent post. Only when Dr Kazimierz Malinowski from Poznań was recommended to me (...) I immediately decided to entrust this office, to which I attached great importance, to him. (...) Dr Kazimierz Malinowski created foundations for the establishment at the National Museum of a Socio-Educational Office – the first such institution in Poland*.<sup>21</sup>

Soon afterwards a pulmonary condition forced Malinowski to leave Warsaw. At the time of the outbreak of the Second World War he was in Zakopane, where he stayed for the sake of his health and where he spent the entire German occupation working in an artistic crafts enterprise. Here, Malinowski probably once again met Dettloff, also residing in Zakopane after the Gestapo released him from prison. Already on 1 June 1945 Stanisław Lorentz, still and uninterruptedly head of the National Museum in Warsaw, once more stood up for Malinowski, whom he appointed custodian and vice-director. *While fulfilling the duty of the Chief Director of Museums and the Protection of Historical Monuments – Lorentz recalled – I also retained the function of Director of the National Museum, but was unable to devote much time to it. The Museum was, therefore, supervised by Dr Kazimierz Malinowski. During those early and difficult years Dr Malinowski greatly contributed to the creation of a new museum structure. Since together with his wife he lived in the Museum building he was connected as closely as possible with all the issues taking place at the time*.<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, already in 1947, Malinowski, who must have previously made his access to creating a new political reality in Poland, came to Poznań to accept the function of head of the Department of Culture and Art at the Voivodeship Office. As a newly appointed civil servant but also a music lover, he was one of the founders of the Poznań Philharmonic, together with another outstanding historian of art, conservator, and museum professional Zdzisław Kępiński.<sup>23</sup> From that time Malinowski's professional life was to be incessantly entwined with Kępiński's, also regarding the Poznań Museum. Probably the basic reason for his return to Poznań was the not so distant perspective of becoming director of the Museum of Greater Poland,<sup>24</sup> to which in 1948 Malinowski became firmly attached for almost the rest of his days (with the exception of a 10-year long interval in 1956–1966). The second motive for the decision to return was a proposal of becoming in the 1947/1948 academic year assistant professor in the Department of the History of Art at the University of Poznań, where he did not stay for longer.

Although it is known that in 1953 Malinowski joined the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP)<sup>25</sup> the present-day state of research would make it difficult to answer the question: to what degree did he actually succumb to the Marxist 'sting', and to what extent was his decision an extension of some sort of opportunism or perhaps a desperate attempt at salvaging that, which could still be saved? Already in February 1945 Lorentz embarked upon a subtle game with the communists by personally travelling to Lublin and proposing to the Provisional Government his project of organising a Head Office of Museums and the Protection of Historical Monuments, with himself in charge.<sup>26</sup> The suggestion was accepted, and Lorentz thus remained head of the Warsaw Museum while, at the same time, running the organisation of Polish museums in general and, as a rule, deciding about appointments to the top offices of particular institutions. This state of things remained in force until the mid-1950s. Lorentz joined the Democratic Party (SD) – a PUWP 'lean-to', which was not strictly communist since it originated from an opposition party established in *sanacja*-ruled Poland on the eve of the Second World War. In the 1960s he was also an SD deputy to the Sejm.<sup>27</sup> Malinowski, on the other hand, recalled his affiliations as follows: as a secondary school pupil he was a member of the Tomasz Zan Society and then in his student days he joined the unambiguously leftist and anti-clerical Union of Democratic Youth. After the war he became a member of several organisations, i.a. he was chairman of a Poznań branch of the newly established Society of Historians of Art and Material Culture, vice-chairman of the Voivodeship Council of Culture, member of the Board of the Society of the Workers' Philharmonic in Poznań, member of the Trade Union of Workers of Culture and Art, and even member of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society.<sup>28</sup>

In the case of such self-declared communists as – to remain in the domain of museology and the history of art – Juliusz Starzyński or Zdzisław Kępiński, support for the new authorities and participation in the official structures of People's Poland do not give rise to controversy, but in the case of such persons as Stanisław Lorentz, Jan Zachwatowicz or Kazimierz Malinowski it seems justified to doubt the authenticity of their official



involvement. In other words, there arises the question about the extent to which their participation in assorted bodies constituting new reality or adaptation of Stalinist rhetoric in public declarations simply opened space for conducting a specific game with the powers that be. This was a game in which the stake was not only salvaging the state of possession of Polish museology and, more widely, culture, but also the imposition of their organisational solutions in this particular sphere or, more exactly, within the domain of museums, that would make it possible to avoid Stalinisation as much as possible and to retain contact with the world on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Answers to those questions appear to be especially difficult precisely in the case of Malinowski; at first glance, texts published by him at the beginning of the 1950s or the titles of exhibitions featured at the time at the Poznań Museum, such as: 'Stalin – the ensign of peace, the USSR – the bulwark of peace' or 'The 40th anniversary of Lenin's stay in Poland' seem to unambiguously confirm his political inclinations. In 1953, i.e. at the probably darkest moment of 'the Stalinist night', Malinowski wrote in a programmelike introduction to the first issue of 'Studia Muzealne' that in pre-war Poland a museum was *a bank, in which private collectors placed their collections obtained by means of feudal-agrarian or capitalist-commercial exploitation. The deposited artworks were to honour the name of the donor, reinforce the authority of his class, dynasty or family, and secure the capital contained therein against economic crises. Hence the museum and its staff were restricted to the role of a guardian of private collections, a mausoleum of the accomplishments of the ruling class. (...) Consequently, a museum did not conduct planned scientific research, did not engage itself in systematic collecting, did not organise a suitable organisation campaign and, in a word, was a moribund treasury enclosed in bombastic and haphazardly designed buildings.*<sup>29</sup>

The opinion expressed by Franciszek Mirandola: *Capitalism bought contemporary art and hid it in museums (...)*<sup>30</sup> brings to mind the *moribund treasury* mentioned by Malinowski. Actually, this was a propaganda piece published in 1904 by a Young Poland poet and philosopher, addressed to workers, and calling for free-of-charge access to museums closed *prior to the end of a factory workday*.<sup>31</sup> It would be hard, however, to disagree with the view that, fascinated with the potential of the social impact of museums, Malinowski could have cited it *in extenso* in his comprehensive study. While commenting on this statement it is, after all, difficult not to notice that its author could have at least partly sincerely manifested his views, well-grounded already before the war, and was genuinely concerned with scientific studies, the gathering of collections, or the 'popularisation campaign' carried out by museums, as testified both by his articles and professional practice from the 1930s. More than ten years earlier Malinowski would have probably not described a museum as a *moribund treasury* but rather repeated after Lorentz that it exists *as a treasury of works of art and monuments of the past, a scientific and educational institution*.<sup>32</sup> Did embroilment in a rhetoric that had to be deciphered as a symptom of cooperation with the new authorities, and a *de facto* foundation for a personal career achieved by climbing the rungs of the hierarchy of the new state, not simultaneously signify for Malinowski a negation of at

least part of his personal achievements in the 'bourgeois' Warsaw Museum?

The conception of the new shape of museology in Poland appears to be more important than the personal preferences and post-war political choices made by Polish museum professionals. Was it simply an emulation of Soviet models in Polish conditions? The whole issue seems to be much more complicated. When ICOM – a UNESCO agency – was established in Paris in 1947, with Georges Henri Rivière as its chairman, the whole world accepted his definition of the museum as a permanent and non-profit institution serving society and its development, open to the public and carrying out the task of accumulating, conserving, studying, disseminating, and exhibiting material evidence concerning man and his environment for the purpose of educational undertakings and pleasure.<sup>33</sup> This definition also left a permanent imprint upon Polish museum legislation. In the verification of the role of the museum proposed by the French museum professional a museum served the progress of society. Indubitably, such categories as the social service performed by museums for the sake of society, education, and cultural development of the largest possible number of recipients resounded loudly in the museum activity of Kazimierz Malinowski, but – as has been said above – also long before he embodied those slogans in the People's Republic of Poland. Sources of the idea of the social service of museums went back to nineteenth-century reflections on the tasks of those institutions and appeared for the first time at the onset of the twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> In other words, they were by no means the slogans of Stalinist culture for the masses, although, as is universally known, the latter, in turn, made use of the message contained in the postulates of social egalitarianism.

The new vision of museology proposed by Rivière deprived museums of the odium of a temple of art, inaccessible and reserved only for experts, but perceived them as *par excellence* educational institutions. According to the author of the 'open museum' concept, the museum was to be a seedbed of knowledge about reality by using the original language of the museum exposition, characteristic only for it. More, the new 'museums without walls' were, in accordance with the postulates formulated by museum professionals already at the beginning of the twentieth century, to reach the widest possible social strata. Within the new paradigm of this institution, art museums filled with paintings and sculptures lost their privileged status for the sake of museums embarking upon a new problem angle: world culture heritage, and the creativity of other, non-European cultures, up to then regarded as 'primitive'. Within those 'other' symptoms of culture there appeared, alongside artefacts brought over from other continents, also European folk art: Scandinavian, German or French. The 'open museum' concept developed an educational ethos intent on restoring natural heritage, not limited only to the heretofore Euro-centric perspective of culture; in praxis, it produced, i.a. Skansen museums of folk culture and assorted open-air museums. By studying projects, products of culture rather than works of culture, paintings or sculptures, new French museology rejected the traditional *instrumentarium* of the history of art for the sake of tools borrowed from different domains of science: sociology and cultural anthropology.<sup>35</sup>



2. Stefan Dybowski, Minister of Culture and Art (right) handing the act of establishing the National Museum in Poznań to Kazimierz Malinowski, hall of the NMP, 1950

Apparently in 1949 this 'anthropological' conviction about the supreme rank of folk culture urged Malinowski to organise an exhibition of folk art and crafts in the palace in Rogalin – recently taken over by the Museum of Greater Poland and in the past an exclusive residence of the Raczyńskis, the most powerful aristocratic family of Greater Poland, as well as a true temple of the arts. In this fashion, the Poznań-based museum professional appeared to be implementing the ideas of the museological revolution launched by Rivière and pursued a vision of attractive exhibitions different from the ones held in the past, based on an invigorating contrast between that, which not so long ago was considered 'low', i.e. rural and native art (and crafts), and traditional high culture represented by the *entourage* of a magnate's palace. At the same time, it was obvious that, abstracting from Malinowski's genuine or feigned servilism *vis a vis* the communists, such expositions became an excellent fragment of a political reality, which proclaimed the dictatorship of the masses. Within the new organisation of society, the post-1949 authorities planned universal access to museums, which were to play the role of a propaganda bullhorn. In order to improve attendance they simply increased the number of museums. Malinowski too, at time of his first directorship (i.e. to 1954), enlarged the property of the Poznań Museum by adding four new branches: two palaces (in Rogalin and Gołuchów) and two in Poznań (Museum of Musical Instruments and Museum of the History of the City of Poznań).<sup>36</sup>

The rapidly growing number of museums in Poland during the post-war period was not, however, solely the outcome of the conception of their multiplication and instrumentalisation. Within this context we are forced to return once again to Michał Walicki and his two notions formulated immediately after the war, which Malinowski recalled in an article about this eminent Warsaw historian of art and museum professional.<sup>37</sup> First, in view of the total ruination of the country and the absence of any sort of perspectives for erecting new museum buildings Walicki postulated a renovation of public buildings of value from the point of view of their historical or architectural merits, such as town halls, palaces or burghers' stately town houses, and their adaptation for museums. He made a list more than 90 objects described as 'Houses of the Republic', i.a. such famous buildings as the castles in Sandomierz and Lublin, the Artus Court or the Uphagen House in Gdańsk, the Baryczka town house in Warsaw, as well as a major part of Old Town town halls. Listed Poznań objects included, i.a. the Górká Palace, in which an Archaeological Museum was opened in 1966, as well as the magnificent Renaissance town hall, which, just as town halls in other cities, e.g. Gdańsk, Wrocław or Toruń, was turned into a museum of the history of that particular city.

The second directive formulated by Walicki pertained to the need to establish three national museums in Poland, which in all the more important parts of the country were to create a core of museology and represent the most



3. Kazimierz Malinowski giving a speech at the varnishing day of the exhibition 'French art in Polish collections' in the National Museum in Poznań in 1973 (Stanisław Lorentz is sitting first on the right)

valuable collections. Such institutions, in his opinion, should possess *the rights of a professional supervisor in relation to the given region* and in their capacity as exemplary institutions provide care for smaller units.<sup>38</sup> In other words, the existing National Museums in Warsaw and Cracow were to be supplemented by the Poznań institution, functioning since 1919 as the Museum of Greater Poland and now to be raised to a national rank.<sup>39</sup> As if following this trail, in 1950 Malinowski changed its name, as suggested by Walicki, to: National Museum in Poznań (MNP).

Similarly, and probably keeping in mind Walicki's Buildings of the Republic conception, Malinowski took over a number of ruined historical buildings for the purpose of turning them into new Museum branches. This held true predominantly for the town hall and Royal Castle on Przemysł Hill, a complex of houses in the Old Market, which became the Museum of Musical Instruments, and the equally valuable albeit much more distant from Poznań palace-residence in Rogalin (mentioned previously) and Osuchów Castle. In subsequent years, this new organisational structure designed by Malinowski was supplemented by successive branches: the Poznań Army Museum in a newly built exposition pavilion in the Old Market Square, the Ethnographic Museum in Grobla Street, and the Adam Mickiewicz Museum in Śmiałów.<sup>40</sup> It is worth adding that, for all practical purposes, throughout the entire period of holding the office of director of two Poznań museums Malinowski considered the creation of successive Museum branches and perceived this museum conglomerate designed by him within a long-term

perspective of organic expansion, as evidenced by the fact that already after assuming the function of director (1948) he obtained from private owners lots adjoining the Museum building in the centre of Poznań. This step resulted in the expropriation of the owners of two houses and pulling down buildings that had not been destroyed in 1945 during battles waged for Poznań. In 1965 this *sui generis* total 'musealisation' of urban space, combined with administrative foresight, enabled the Poznań institution to announce<sup>41</sup> a national architectural competition for a design of the New Wing of the MNP, and in 1976, i.e. already under Director Malinowski, to commence construction work.<sup>42</sup>

The same awareness of some sort of 'pan-museum' development understood not only as an evolution of the existing model of the ideological and functional museum, nor merely as an increased number of museum institutions in general, must have accompanied Malinowski while he embarked upon initiatives of organising successive museums (almost all exist to this day) in Greater Poland and the Lubusz region, which were, after all, arranged by museum professionals from Poznań. In numerous instances, such as the Lubuska Land Museum in Zielona Góra or the Jan Dekert Museum in Gorzów – envisaged by Malinowski as an exemplary regional institution – he was the author of the conception (contents and exposition). According to him museology played *the role of scientific documentation for the numerous disciplines it represented, the role of a mass-scale popularizer of knowledge, and a pedagogue*.<sup>43</sup> For those reasons Malinowski could, with full conviction, not





4. Kazimierz Malinowski (right) and Henryk Kondziela (in the middle), one of the PhD students of Malinowski from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and his successor at the post of Director of the National Museum in Poznań, first half of the 1970s

only join in but also, in time, after being delegated to the Ministry of Culture and Art (1950), steer the nationalisation of museums in Poland. Museums, which up to that time possessed the status of self-government, social, and private institutions, now became subjected to central authorities represented by the Ministry. Apparently, in accordance with Walicki's directive, by nationalising and centralising Polish museums Malinowski simultaneously carried out their categorisation and division into 'superior' and 'ward' units. This new organisation of museums was based on the principle of a closer mutual coexistence of national, regional, and county museums.

In 1954 Kazimierz Malinowski left, presumably permanently, for Warsaw, where he became appointed director of the Central Board of Museums and the Protection of Historical Monuments.<sup>44</sup> This was the new name of the already mentioned Head Office of Museums and the Protection of Historical Monuments, created immediately after the war and headed by Stanisław Lorentz; fate willed it that Malinowski accepted a post earlier held by his first superior at the Warsaw Museum. His contemporaries indubitably appreciated Malinowski's organisational and administrative talents – and in numerous aspects he created from the very basis the structure and legal framework of Polish museology and conservation. While representing Poland at the conference held at The Hague in 1954 Malinowski collaborated on the project of the famous Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural

Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.<sup>45</sup> He was also one of the authors of the first Polish Act on Cultural Goods Protection and Museum Protection of 1962, introduced new competences of conservation organs in particular voivodeships, and even proposed a project of a staff and remuneration structure of the museum milieu in Poland, which remained binding for numerous years to come. In 1961 Malinowski created the I Centre of Monument Research and Documentation in Warsaw, and then assumed the function of its director, initiating the inventorisation and classification of architectural monuments in Poland. In the same year, Malinowski – the conservator returned to scientific and didactic work by accepting the Chair of Conservation in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń,<sup>46</sup> and more than ten years later – the local Chair of Museology; in 1971 he was presented the title of associate professor of the humanities, specialising in 'museology and conservation'.<sup>47</sup> By directing the only specialist establishment in Poland (and at the time one of the few in the world) dealing with museology alongside conservation, he embarked upon an attempt at introducing at Toruń University museology as a *par excellence* scientific discipline.

Kazimierz Malinowski was one of the few theoreticians but also practitioners of museology in Poland who proposed reflections concerning its theoretical foundations. As a science, museology, which at least from the end of the nineteenth century sought the object of its studies and,



5. Facade of the National Museum in Poznań, mid-1970s



6. Section of an exhibition of Piotr Potworowski's paintings exhibited at the National Museum in Poznań, June 1976



7. Kazimierz Malinowski at the varnishing-day of an exhibition at the National Museum in Poznań, mid-1970s

even more determinedly, tools that it could have at its disposal, initially perceived its tasks in the methodology of research on collections. A museum professional was a researcher pursuing a science encompassing the process of collecting, the conservation of collections, determining their cultural worth, and, finally, by arranging exhibitions composed of museum objects, devising a method for disseminating knowledge about reality. In the nineteenth century the term: 'museum professional' was a synonym of 'conservator', a guardian of collections, who, however, was by no means a renovator physically intervening in the structure of an object so as to recondition, supplement or protect it against damage. Subsequently, at the beginning of the twentieth century the museum professional and the conservator began to accept also the concept of 'custodian', i.e. a specialist who had at his disposal knowledge about a certain part of the museum collection entrusted to him. Obviously, from the very onset of their existence the role played by museums was connected with rendering collections available, but Malinowski was closer to those commentators dealing with museology who were of the opinion that in the activity of museums the cognitive aspect associated with the collection is just as important as studying and presenting the exhibits. Naturally, determining the provenance of museum objects, establishing their date and attribution, and, finally, indicating their stylistic features and seeking affiliated exhibits makes it possible, on the one hand, to keep inventories and describe possessed resources. Such research is the reason why a museum functions in the manner of a scientific institute, having at its disposal a specific, although simultaneously firmly

dependent on other disciplines, *instrumentarium* (in art museums this is predominantly the history of art). On the other hand, ultimately a museum is to serve the recipients of exhibitions by expanding their vision of the world. The tasks of museology, therefore, often were, and today still are interpreted in a much wider manner: this is supposed to be a science about all processes pertaining to museums, and alongside questions connected with collecting and exhibiting objects it is to notice also the exceptional scale of the social impact of museums. Apparently, it is this holistic perspective of museology that Malinowski found particularly attractive. A museum professional is both a researcher dealing with general processes and a guardian of exhibits undergoing various operations involving the use of instruments, which, albeit borrowed from elsewhere, can be subjected to interdisciplinary universalisation, as it may be described today, and produce new solutions only within the museum. In other words, Malinowski envisaged the museum as a *sui generis* scientific institute or, to put it differently, a specific experimental training ground, a place that as if through a magnifying glass could concentrate the wider spectre of problems broached by the Chair of Museology in Toruń. In 1966 this conviction probably turned into the main premise for Malinowski's return to his post as director of the National Museum in Poznań.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to his first term-of-office, which to a great measure was filled with propaganda 'pieces' about peace, socialism, and Polish-Soviet friendship, he now spent 11 years attempting to ensure the institution he headed a significant place in the triad of the most important museums in Poland. The MNP exhibition programme





8. Exhibition devoted to the memory of Kazimierz Malinowski at the first anniversary of his death, the National Museum in Poznań, November 1978

(All photos from the collection MNP)

was based mainly on monograph presentations of the *oeuvre* of contemporary artists (or those from the not very distant past), who thanks to museum exhibitions entered the pantheon of Polish art. This series of monographic presentations – organised by Malinowski and a group of co-workers but also by artists and curators invited from other centres, mainly Warsaw and Cracow – revealed not only the works of such artists, recognised today, as: Piotr Potworowski, Andrzej Wróblewski, Tytus Czyżewski, Hanna Rudzka-Cybisowa or Artur Nacht-Samborski, but also masters from the past, such as Jacek Malczewski. Up to the 1990s exhibitions of paintings by Malczewski remained the best-recognised hallmark of the Poznań Museum both at home and abroad, alongside equally celebrated displays of Polish Colourism, whose excellent examples were collected for the Museum by Zdzisław Kępiński.

Malinowski, who in museum showrooms propagated cultural education, did not shy from attractive presentations of exhibits. At the first monographic show of the works of Tytus Czyżewski, displayed from January to March 1974, more than 129 original canvases, water colours, and drawings by this artist were accompanied by photographs of his works lost during the war, and featured with a projector; woodcuts by Tadeusz Makowski, illustrating poems by Czyżewski, were also screened.<sup>49</sup> In turn, six tape recorders installed in the showrooms recreated recitations of the poems;<sup>50</sup> it is worth accentuating that a strong wish to use 'audiovisual' carriers at the exposition was

a distinct motif in the correspondence between Director Malinowski and the exhibition curator Joanna Pollakówna.<sup>51</sup> In *Ramowy Plan Działalności Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu w drugim półroczu 1966 roku i w roku 1967*, i.e. prepared immediately after Malinowski's return to the Poznań Museum, the list of educational ventures clearly emphasized *the expansion of popular lectures illustrated with slides and the extension of the campaign of film screenings about art*.<sup>52</sup> Malinowski, therefore, enjoyed an actual chance to implement his postulates originating from the pre-war period. Film projections were rather widely applied both at museum exhibitions and, interestingly, also outside the museum. In April 1971 the Museum held a ceremonial opening of the works of Fernand Léger. The building of the Poznań Museum held *14 film shows, watched by 2200 persons*, against the background of a general attendance of almost 8500 visitors, which in the course of 30 days of the exhibition totalled more than one quarter of the participation of the public;<sup>53</sup> upon the occasion of an exhibition of Gobelin tapestries (in the same museum – GR) *10 Poznań cinemas organised a show of slides concerning this exposition*.<sup>54</sup> A year earlier special film presentations accompanying Museum exhibitions attracted 1150 and 250 spectators (ten screenings were about *Leninist themes* and six featured a film about Poznań and its historical monuments).<sup>55</sup>

An extremely valuable expression of the museological attitude represented by Malinowski was his initiative of

setting into motion a series of publications on museology, issued by the National Museum in Poznań. Already during his first term-of-office as director Malinowski, referring to pre-war 'Roczniki Muzealne' published by the Museum of Greater Poland, inaugurated an edition of the 'Studia Muzealne' annual. In 1952 he initiated the publication of a specialist periodical: 'Muzealnictwo', the first of its sort in Poland (the editorial board was located at the National Museum in Poznań), which to this day is the most important Polish periodical focused on the titular problem.<sup>56</sup> In turn, during the 1960s there appeared the 'Monografie

Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu' series, whose more than ten volumes were dedicated to the most essential

– presumably, from the viewpoint of Malinowski himself – questions of contemporary museology.<sup>57</sup>

In 1975, two years before his death, Malinowski managed to establish the Society of Friends of MNP, active until this day.

Kazimierz Malinowski died in Poznań on 5 November 1977 after a long illness. Persons standing guard over his casket included Stanisław Lorentz, who soon afterwards published posthumous reminiscences about his colleague. Today, the person of the Poznań museum professional is recalled by a bronze tablet hanging in the vestibule of the old National Museum building, in a spot, which after the opening of the new building, for whose sake Malinowski made for many years such strenuous efforts, is inaccessible to the public.

**Abstract:** Year 2017 marks the 110<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Kazimierz Malinowski. June 2016 marked half a century since he re-took the post of Director of the National Museum in Poznań. The circumstances in question require us to remember an individual who was of great merit to Polish museology and to the National Museum in Poznań. The title of this text paraphrases the title of an article by Kazimierz Malinowski Michał Walicki – museum professional, published in the 'Muzealnictwo' magazine and devoted to a renowned art historian and researcher on Gothic art in Poland. Walicki is less known as a museum professional and even less as a mentor to Malinowski himself. However, if one attempted to determine the whole range of the activity of the latter using one word only, the term 'museum professional', rather disregarded today, seems to be the most capacious and adequate. It reminds about Malinowski in some of the most significant aspects of his activity, including the one as: 1/ a museum professional in the strict sense, but also a practician working in a museum and taking part in the life of this environment in the broadest meaning,

2/ a propagator of the social role of museums as institutions open to the general public, 3/ the long-term Director of the National Museum in Poznań, a visionary and a curator of the institution's new programme.

Malinowski was one of a few of the most important figures of the post-war museology in Poland. Today, he is almost entirely forgotten. Almost total absence of this name in today's museum circles also results from an unsatisfactory state of research into his professional biography. Nevertheless, Malinowski's activity, even only in the field of museology, as his second major field of activity was conservation, is still to be meticulously analysed. Therefore, many opinions presented below should be treated as suggestions and hypotheses, still to be further verified, given the current state of research. However, his main fields of activity have been roughly, as it may seem, sketched out in this article. They present him as a propagator of the social role of museums – institutions open to the general public, which, in turn, will prove the topicality of Malinowski's suggestions in comparison with current discussions on museums' functions.

**Keywords:** Kazimierz Malinowski, museology, art history, National Museum in Poznań, exhibitions.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> K. Malinowski, *Michał Walicki. Muzeolog*, in: 'Muzealnictwo' 1967, no. 14, pp. 9-20. A bibliography (incomplete) of the works of K. Malinowski was published by A. Dobrzycka in: 'Studia Muzealne' (National Museum in Poznań) 1977, fasc. XII, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> K. Malinowski, *Prekursorzy muzeologii polskiej*, Poznań 1970.

<sup>3</sup> K. Malinowski, *Kształcenie muzeologów, konserwatorów, restauratorów*, series: *Monografie Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu*, vol. XV, Poznań 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Information about the biography of K. Malinowski originates from posthumous reminiscences published by A. Dobrzycka, *Kazimierz Malinowski (1907–1977)*, in: 'Biuletyn Historii Sztuki' 1979, year: XLI, no. 3, pp. 310-312; S. Lorentz, *O Kazimierzu Malinowskim wspomnienie*, *ibidem*, pp. 313-314; H. Kondziela, *Z żałobnej karty: Prof. dr. Kazimierz Malinowski (1907–1977)*, in: 'Kronika Miasta Poznania', 1978, year XLVI, no. 4, pp. 84-86 or data about K. Malinowski from personal files (cf. following footnote).

<sup>5</sup> Upon the basis of information contained in a biographical note written by K. Malinowski in 1957 and added to the personal files of Professor Kazimierz Malinowski (MNP 493/93/77, p. nlb.).

<sup>6</sup> See: M. Walicki, Z. Świechowski, P. Skubiszewski, *Wspomnienia o Ks. Prof. Szczęsnym Dettloffie*, in: 'Biuletyn Historii Sztuki' 1963, year XXV, no. 4, pp. 304-311. S. Lorentz also drew attention to those merits of S. Dettloff in: *O Kazimierzu Malinowskim...*, p. 313. Cf. also: K. Piwocki, *Profesor Szczęsny Dettloff*, in: *Późny gotyk. Studia nad sztuką przełomu średniowiecza I czasów nowych. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki Wrocław 1965*, Warszawa 1965 and *Szczęsny Dettloff o sztuce I zabytkach Poznania*, K. Szaładziński, J. Jarzewicz (ed. and introduction), Poznań 2011.

<sup>7</sup> S. Lorentz, *O Kazimierzu Malinowskim...*, p. 313.

<sup>8</sup> Personal files of Prof. Kazimierz Malinowski..., see: footnote 5.

<sup>9</sup> Malinowski drew attention that this date is sometimes mistaken for 1928, cf. *idem: Kształcenie muzeologów...*, p. 21 and 40-41.

<sup>10</sup> More on the transformation of the Trocadéro into a new museum in: A. Trąbka, *Muzeum etnograficzne jako sposób opowiadania o innych kulturach*.

- Przypadek muzeów paryskich*, in: *Antropologia zaangażowana (?)*, F. Wróblewski, Ł. Sochacki, J. Steblik (ed.), 'Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego MCCCIX, Prace Etnograficzne' 2010, fasc. 38, pp. 131-139.
- <sup>11</sup> Malinowski mentioned Rivière's museology in his textbook: *Kształcenie muzeologów...*, pp. 42-43, cf. primarily: R. de la Rocha, *Museums without walls: The museology of Georges Henri Rivière*, <http://www.openaccess.city.ac.uk/2154/> [accessed on: 5 September 2013].
- <sup>12</sup> This respectful but friendly attitude of Walicki towards Dettloff can be deciphered in the earlier-mentioned posthumous reminiscence: M. Walicki, Z. Świechowski, P. Skubiszewski, *Wspomnienia o Ks. Prof.*
- <sup>13</sup> K. Piwocki, *Profesor Szczęsny Dettloff...*, p. 13. The concern expressed by the Rev. Professor towards his students was accentuated also by other authors of texts about this outstanding Poznań historian of art, *ibidem*.
- <sup>14</sup> K. Malinowski, *Muzeum zagadnień muzealnych*, in: 'Pion' 1938, no. 6, p. 7, quoted after: M. Krzemińska, *Muzeum sztuki w kulturze polskiej*, Warszawa 1987, pp. 64-65. See also: K. Malinowski, *Rola muzeum w oświacie dorosłych*, Warszawa - Lublin - Wilno 1939.
- <sup>15</sup> K. Malinowski, *Prekursorzy muzeologii ...*, pp. 10-12.
- <sup>16</sup> M. Walicki, *Společno-wychowawcza i oświatowa rola muzeów humanistycznych*, in: 'Kultura i Wychowanie' 1933-1934, year. 1, fasc. 4, pp. 319-335, quoted after: K. Malinowski, *Michał Walicki ...*, p. 11. Cf. also: M. Krzemińska, *Muzeum sztuki...*, pp. 64-65 and 73.
- <sup>17</sup> Quoted after: K. Malinowski, *Prekursorzy muzeologii...*, p. 12.
- <sup>18</sup> Mieczysław Treter drew attention to the Museum of the World In Brussels already prior to the First World War, as noted by Malinowski in: *idem*, *Prekursorzy muzeologii...*, p. 121. I mention this also in my text: *Obszar wydzielony czy nowe otwarcie? Edukacja muzealna jako muzeologia*, in: *ABC Edukacji w muzeum. Muzea sztuki współczesnej, rezydencjonalne, wieloodziałowe i interdyscyplinarne*, J. Grzonkowska (ed.), NIMOZ, Warszawa 2015.
- <sup>19</sup> Quoted after: K. Malinowski, *Michał Walicki...*, p. 12
- <sup>20</sup> M. Krzemińska, *Muzeum sztuki...*, pp. 69-70.
- <sup>21</sup> S. Lorentz, *O Kazimierzu Malinowskim...*, p. 313.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.
- <sup>23</sup> Malinowski became a member of the board of the Society of the Workers' Philharmonic (as the Poznań Philharmonic was known then), with Kępiński as the first chairman.
- <sup>24</sup> This name functioned until 1950, when the National Museum in Poznań was established.
- <sup>25</sup> Personal files of Professor Kazimierz Malinowski..., see: footnote 5, p. nlb.
- <sup>26</sup> Lorentz presented the details of this issue in greater detail in an interview held by Robert Jarocki in: *idem*, *Rozmowy z Lorentzem*, Warszawa 1981, pp. 282-292; we have to keep in mind that although the book was issued in 1981, i.e. at the time of the so-called Solidarity Carnival, when it became possible to express opinions rather freely, prior to its publishing it had been, just as all publications at the time, subjected to censorship of the People's Poland era. In it Lorentz defined his pre-war political views as 'leftist', stressing that he was concerned with the democratisation of life in Poland, although, at the same time, he made the reservation that he was not, and is not, a communist.
- <sup>27</sup> Interview with Stanisław Lorentz: *Bezcenna własność narodu*, in: 'Tygodnik Demokratyczny' 21 September 1969, no. 38 (850), pp. 3-4.
- <sup>28</sup> Personal files of Professor Kazimierz Malinowski..., see: footnote 5, p. nlb.
- <sup>29</sup> A. Dobrzycka, K. Malinowski, *Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu w latach 1945-1952*, in: 'Studia Muzealne' 1953, fasc. I, p. 180.
- <sup>30</sup> F. Mirandola (real name: Franciszek Pik), *Sztuka a lud*, Kraków 1904, quoted after: M. Krzemińska, *Muzeum sztuki...*, p. 25.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.
- <sup>32</sup> S. Lorentz, *Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, zarys historyczny*, in: 'Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie' 1938, no. 1, p. 64.
- <sup>33</sup> See: D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzeum: definicja i pojęcie czym jest muzeum dzisiaj*, in: 'Muzealnictwo' 2008, no. 49, pp. 200-201; A. Rataj, *Muzeum, problem tożsamości – refleksje*, in: 'Muzeum XXI wieku – teoria i praxis'. Materiały z sesji naukowej organizowanej przez Muzeum Początków Państwa Polskiego i Polski Komitet Narodowy ICOM. Księga pamiątkowa poświęcona Profesorowi Krzysztofowi Pomianowi, G. Radecki, A. Tomaszewski (ed.), Gniezno 2010, p. 90.
- <sup>34</sup> These slogans were stated *expressis verbis* at the famous conference held in Mannheim in 1903 under the indicative title: 'Museums as culture institutes for the people'. Attention to this conference was drawn by Walicki, followed by Malinowski, cf. K. Malinowski, *Michał Walicki...*, p. 10.
- <sup>35</sup> I mention this in my text: *Obszar wydzielony czy nowe...*, pp. 6-22, which contains the quotations and where I also present a brief review of the history of museum education in Poland.
- <sup>36</sup> The reception of events from the earliest history of the National Museum in Poznań as well as an assessment of its activity and the expectations formulated by it were presented in a synthesis by Piotr Bąkowski: *Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu w prasie poznańskiej w latach 1950-1966* (M. A. dissertation written in the Faculty of Historical Studies of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Poznań 2011, mps, p. 216.
- <sup>37</sup> M. Walicki, *Dyskusje muzealne*, in: 'Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury' 1946, no. 3/4, pp. 176-186, quoted after: K. Malinowski, *Michał Walicki...*, pp. 16-17.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.
- <sup>39</sup> 1904-1918 and 1939-1945 the building in Marcinkowskiego Avenue in Poznań was used by the German Kaiser Friedrich Museum.
- <sup>40</sup> All those MNP departments function to this day in an unaltered administrative shape.
- <sup>41</sup> At the time the director of MNP was Zdzisław Kępiński.
- <sup>42</sup> After Malinowski the MNP New Building was erected by three directors: Henryk Kondziela, Konstanty Kalinowski, and Wojciech Suchocki; the official opening of the new Museum did not take place until 2000.
- <sup>43</sup> K. Malinowski, *Muzea i ochrona zabytków w roku 1956*, in: 'Muzealnictwo' 1956, no. 5, p. 55.
- <sup>44</sup> For two years Malinowski tried to coordinate his new duties with running the Poznań Museum but in 1956 he resigned from the latter and was replaced by Zdzisław Kępiński, profesor of history of art at the University of Poznań, a great admirer of Polish Modernism, and author of an excellent Museum collection of Colourism. Kępiński was also the author of an original 'Modernistic' arrangement of an exposition featured in a historical object (Goluchów Castle), the only of its kind in Polish museology.
- <sup>45</sup> During the 1950s-1970s Malinowski relatively often took part in international meetings of museum and conservation circles, predominantly ICOM initiatives (at the turn of the 1960s MNP was an ICOM centre of museum education).
- <sup>46</sup> Cf. if only S. Lorentz, *O Kazimierzu Malinowskim...*, pp. 313-314.



- <sup>47</sup>Information in a letter of 11 October 1979 written by Dr Henryk Kondziela, director of MNP, addressed to the Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, in: *Akta personalne...*, p. nlb.
- <sup>48</sup>In 1966 Malinowski replaced the already mentioned Professor Zdzisław Kępiński and wrote about the latter's contribution to the post-war reconstruction of Poznań: (...) *We owe to the initiative of Professor Kępiński, his passion and extraordinary activity, the fact that construction started at such a rate and within such a range. We also know that nothing takes place in Poznań without your active participation (...)* – see: K. Malinowski, *Opinia o pracy doktorskiej Mgr Henryka Kondzieli, Krynica – Poznań, 5 iuty 1972 r.*, in: MNP archival material: *Spuścizna dra Henryka Kondzieli, Sprawy związane z obroną pracy doktorskiej, 1971-73*, MNPA, SHK-16, pp. 64-66.
- <sup>49</sup>I wrote about this in my text: *Muzeum (ruchomych) obrazów. Filmy na ekspozycjach muzealnych w Polsce* (in print). This is the source also of subsequent quotations.
- <sup>50</sup>Letter of 15 January 1974 from Prof. Dr Kazimierz Malinowski, Director of the National Museum in Poznań, to Henryk Ładoch, documents in the collections of the MNP Archive.
- <sup>51</sup>Correspondence of Prof. Dr Kazimierz Malinowski, Director of the National Museum in Poznań, with Joanna Pollakówna, from the 1972-1974 period, documents in the collections of the MNP Archive (MNPA 2868), p. nlb.
- <sup>52</sup>Cf. *Ramowy Plan Działalności Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu w drugim półroczu 1966 roku i w roku 1967*, documents in the collections of the MNP Archive – see: footnote 51.
- <sup>53</sup>D. Cicha, *Opinie zwiedzających o tematyce i ekspozycji wystaw czasowych w Muzeum Narodowym w Poznaniu w 1970 i 1971 roku*, in: 'Studia Muzealne Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu' 1974, vol. X, p. 144.
- <sup>54</sup>L. Talarowska, *Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu w 1971 roku*, in: 'Studia Muzealne Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu' 1974, vol. X, p. 156.
- <sup>55</sup>L. Talarowska, *Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu w 1970 roku*, in: 'Studia Muzealne Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu' 1971, vol. IX, p. 126.
- <sup>56</sup>At present (from 2011) the publisher of 'Muzealnictwo' is the National Institute of Museology and Collection Protection.
- <sup>57</sup>The cycle includes also the above-mentioned museology textbook: K. Malinowski, *Kształcenie muzeologów, konserwatorów...*

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# MARIAN MINICH (1898–1965)

Paulina Kurc-Maj

Museum of Art in Łódź

On the first pages of *Marian Munich – pod wiatr*, a book dedicated to her father, Agnieszka Minich-Scholz wrote: *Many persons, even those from the circle associated with art, are totally unaware of the existence of the first director of the Museum of Art in Łódź. Thirty initial years of the Museum's history are swathed in a mysterious mist of self-existence.*<sup>1</sup>

True, as a rule the Lwów-Łódź museum curator appears in the background of the most frequently evoked event of the period – the International Collection of Modern Art of the 'a.r.' group. The above-cited publication, accompanied by *Wspomnienia wojenne Mariana Minicha* and a re-edition of his *Szalona galeria*,<sup>2</sup> indubitably disperses this mist and is not merely a story told by a daughter about her father but also an effortlessly written brilliant biography bringing the reader closer to colourful family anecdotes and a nuanced portrait of a museum curator and art lover, who managed his museum also in difficult times, with an interval for the Second World War tempest.

The first director of the Łódź institution is little-known even within the museum milieu. Meanwhile, his activity was just as fundamental – although within a different range and for different reasons – as the rather well-popularised work performed by Ryszard Stanisławski, a successive director of the Łódź institution. It was Marian Minich who decided about the initial shape of the Museum of Art in Łódź – the first Polish museum presenting avant-garde modern art – and granted a direction to its development.

Marian Minich was born on 21 December 1898 in a family with Austrian roots in Baligród, at the time located in the Austrian partition area.<sup>3</sup> In 1916 he graduated from a secondary school in Tarnów and when not quite 18 years old enrolled at an officer academy in Troppau. Consequently, conscripted into the Austrian army in which he served at the time of the First World War, and finally joined the Polish Army. In independent Poland Marian Minich lived together with his family in Lwów, where he studied chemistry at the local Polytechnic (certificate of completion in 1923). Already a year later he additionally signed up for a five-year history of art course at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów. While ending his studies he became assistant professor at the Chair

of the History of Modern Art under Prof. Władysław Kozicki, and subsequently at the Chair of Polish and East European Art under Prof. Władysław Podlacha. In 1929 Minich received a University award for his *Koncepcja sztuki klasycznej u Wölfflina*, and three years later, in 1932, he presented a Ph.D. thesis on the oeuvre of Andrzej Grabowski; the summary was published in 'Rocznik Lwowski Towarzystwa Naukowego' and the annual 'Sztuki Piękne'4; a supplemented version was issued more than twenty years later.<sup>5</sup> Minich did not earn a Ph.D. degree until 1955.<sup>6</sup> At the turn of the 1920s he worked sporadically as an art critic ('Gazeta Poranna', 'Lwowski Kurier Poranny', 'Kurier Lwowski', 'Gazeta Lwowska') and a painter (member of the Lwów Society of the Fine Arts and the Lwów Union of Visual Artists).<sup>7</sup>

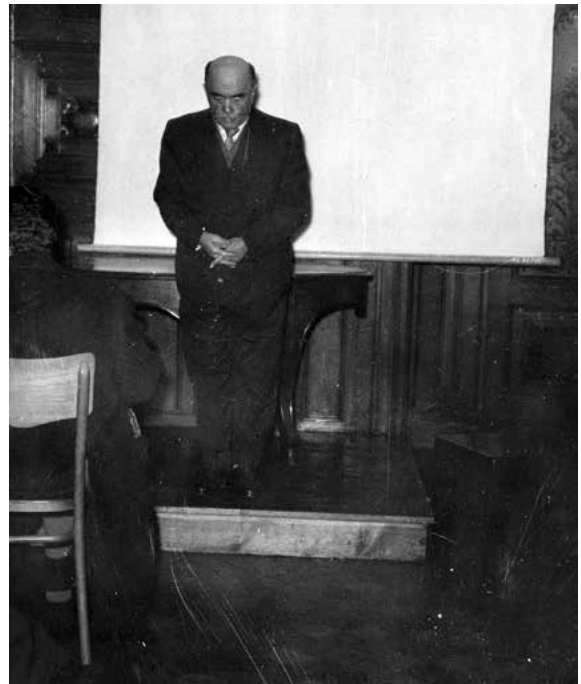
In September 1934 the Consultative Commission at the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art in Łódź met<sup>8</sup> in order to choose a director – a historian of art with no less than one and a half year's experience in museum praxis.<sup>9</sup> In his application Marian Minich stressed interest in twentieth-century Modernist art and to prove his museology abilities mentioned the post of collections administrator at the Department of the History of Modern Art of the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów.<sup>10</sup> The main challenger for the function of future director was Dr Józef Grabowski, head of the Pokucie Museum in Stanisławów. The fact that Grabowski was unable to accept the post prior to the summer of 1935 proved decisive for choosing Marian Minich, Ph.D., available at the time<sup>11</sup> and ready to hold the office as of 1 January 1935. Members of the Museum Commission included, i.a. Dr Zbigniew Bocheński, custodian at the National Museum in Cracow, and Dr Michał Walicki, docent at the University of Warsaw.

Already in January 1935 the Łódź press recorded that the new director of the Bartoszewicz Museum of History and Art was Dr Marian Minich from the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów: *Dr Minich is not only to act as Museum director but also to deal with its expansion and the establishment of new, heretofore non-existent departments.*<sup>12</sup>

At that time, despite possessing the Bartoszewicz collection and the International Collection of Modern Art of the



1. Director Marian Minich (in the middle) during a visit of Soviet artists at the Museum of Art in Łódź, 1954



2. Director Marian Minich welcoming participants gathered in the auditorium of the Museum of Art in Łódź upon the occasion of launching the Amateur-Artists Club, 1961

'a.r.' group, the Łódź Museum of Art was a small institution with a fragmentary collection; it was also new and had been detached from the Municipal Museum as a separate institution only a few years earlier.<sup>13</sup> It was obvious both for the Commission appointing the new Museum director and for the latter that at this stage the most significant tasks involved granting the Museum a developmental line and completing its collections. Additional efforts involved expanding educational activity for the sake of popularising the Museum within the challenging Łódź environment composed mainly of workers. An active milieu associated with the fine arts did not emerge in Łódź until the 1930s. An inauguration exhibition was held in January 1931 at the local Art Propaganda Institute.<sup>14</sup> This was also the year of the establishment of the first Visual Artists Union, subsequently split in 1933 into the Trade Union of Polish Visual Artists promoting modern art and publishing the periodical 'Forma', and the Polish Trade

Union of Łódź Visual Artists concentrated around the more conservative 'Ryngraf' group.<sup>15</sup> The former also contributed to the fact that Łódź was now described as the 'town of the avant-garde'<sup>16</sup> and to the delineation of a specific trend of the development of the Łódź Museum of Art by its director.

Dr Marian Minich was well-aware of the difficulties facing him but also of the exceptional character of the entrusted institution. In a brief summary of his activity he mentioned the tragic state of culture in a predominantly proletarian town, but also the interesting Bartoszewicz 'a.r.' group collections, which created a fascinating and unique phenomenon against the background of Polish museum reality.<sup>17</sup> Almost from the very onset he considered it essential to retain at all cost the international Modernist art collection and the trend of the expansion of his institution.<sup>18</sup> The first significant reform,

implemented in 1935–1936, was the separation of historical collections and old prints (the so-called Bartoszewicz Library) from the Museum and their transference to the Municipal Public Library, while archival material dating basically from the time of the Great War (and partly composed of remnants of the former Museum of the Study of Art) and manuscripts (not until after 1945) were to be entrusted to the Archive of Historical Records of the City of Łódź.<sup>19</sup> Only books on the history of art remained at the Museum – this was the way in which the Museum library was to be expanded in the future. This extremely controversial decision was made contrary to the will of Kazimierz Bartoszewicz (deceased), donor and patron of the Łódź Museum.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that such a solution enabled Minich to concentrate the activity of the Łódź Museum exclusively on art deserves to be appreciated. Without this crucial resolution the institution in question would have been unable to develop into a museum dedicated to modern art.

The reorganisation of the Museum exposition conducted at the time was not only technical (renovation and partial redesigning of the showrooms), but also affected its contents. Minich wrote: *The art department was collated according to epochs and artistic currents as far as was permitted by the scarcity of representative artworks, and gaps were finally filled by exhibits representing a higher standard, arranging all – as far as possible, owing to the rather unsuitable location of the collections – according to binding laws of optics.*<sup>21</sup>

The programme launched by Minich, although at the time still not described in detail, remained a consequence of a formal analysis expounded by Henrich Wölfflin and reflected in the Director's views concerning the history



of art. As pertinent writings indicated recently<sup>22</sup> those opinions were outright borrowed from the studies of Prof. Władysław Podlacha, with whose *Zagadnienie metody historii sztuki* the first director of the Łódź museum institution was probably thoroughly familiar. The Museum collections and exposition were to be created in such a way so as to present stylistic transformations across various epochs as emphatically as possible,<sup>23</sup> the objective being resignation from the traditional layout showing great artists, themes or techniques. This was the way in which the first version of the Bartoszewicz collection was constructed in 1930 in the newly-established Museum, entailing, for instance, separate presentations of collections of works on paper, genre scenes, or Łódź art.<sup>24</sup> Now Minich arranged the new exhibition so that it depicted the development of artistic forms upon the basis of concrete successive trends: Idealism, Classicism, Realism, Impressionism, Expressionism, Formism, Constructivism, Purism, Neo-Plasticism, and Surrealism. Another novelty involved the addition of a Formism Room and an International Surrealism Room to already existing showrooms. Marian Minich later described this method of setting up expositions as *systematic-stylistic*, presented in: 'Rocznik Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi 1930–1962' and the article: *O nową organizację muzeów sztuki*<sup>25</sup> from 1958. The latter text was not published, however, until 1966, after the director's death and, as has been revealed recently, in a significantly abbreviated and partly changed form.<sup>26</sup>

The pre-war exposition prepared by Marian Minich was displayed in 11 showrooms of the Museum building in 1 Wolności Square in Łódź and encompassed modern art to the nineteenth and twentieth century, including a display of the International Collection of Modern Art of the 'a.r.' group. Already then it lacked, i.a. works by European Impressionists and Expressionists, replaced by reproductions.

Despite its contemporary stylistic configuration, the exposition was criticised by a radical part of the Trade Union of Polish Visual Artists. Mention is due to the fact that already in 1934, the Union passed judgment on the composition of the Consultative Commission entrusted with choosing the new Museum director by pointing out that the Commission was not representative for circles involved in modern art.<sup>27</sup> The Union was displeased with the exclusion of its members from decisions concerning artistic issues. The Museum was criticised particularly fervently by Władysław Strzemiński, whose feuds with Marian Minich were cited even by Jan Brzękowski in letters to Julian Przyboś.<sup>28</sup> The 'Forma' periodical issued as many as three anonymous critical articles, of which the most extensive, published in August 1935,<sup>29</sup> became the direct reason for the resignation of Karol Hiller from the post of editor-in-chief.<sup>30</sup> The article in question disapproved of the Minich exhibition's ostentation, aestheticisation, and absence of clarity. According to the unidentified author, the exposition featured too many epigonic works, making it impossible for a member of the public to understand assorted stages in the development of visual arts.

Despite those comments, the conception of a permanent gallery showing the progress of successive artistic forms, devised by Dr Minich before the war, was continued in his museum undertakings also after 1945.

The exposition from the end of the 1930s was additionally enhanced by rather determinedly increased collections, thus

testifying to the skills of the director, who obtained exhibits from artists, their families, and collectors. During Minich's brief pre-war term of office the Museum received successive works predominantly by Polish nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists. The objective of this policy was the widest possible demonstration of a spectrum of artistically interesting phenomena, while the profile of the collection was distinctly focused on contemporary and current art. Fundamental extant archival material, i.e. the former inventory of the Museum of Art in Łódź,<sup>31</sup> shows that this was a period of purchases of, i.a. paintings by Jack Malczewski, Jan Matejko, Piotr Michałowski, and Olga Boznańska, sculptures by Henryk Wiciński and Zbigniew and Andrzej Pronaszko, and canvases by Maksymilian Feuerring, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, and Tytus Czyżewski. Marian Minich valued also representatives of the Lwów milieu, predominately those linked with the Artes group: Jerzy Janisch, Ludwik Lille, Roman Sielski, and Henryk Streng [Marek Włodarski], and the Łódź milieu: first and foremost, Jankiel Adler and Karol Hiller. The director of the Łódź Museum particularly highly regarded the latter artist and in 1938 initiated a monographic exhibition of his works at the Warsaw Institute for Art Propaganda. Mention is also due to the fact that Minich was always an advocate of the *oeuvre* of Władysław Strzemiński and Katarzyna Kobro. Spectacular purchases made at the time included that of *Mother* by Henryk Rodakowski, bought from the artist's son in 1937 for a large sum – a decision criticised by the municipal authorities of the period. On the eve of the outbreak of World War II Director Minich also secured the Karol Rajmund Eisert collection – a donation composed of European late mediaeval, modern, and nineteenth-century art, i.a. a North Italian school canvas probably by Gentile da Fabriano (first half of the fifteenth century): *Bishop and St. Agnes*, works by Jacob Jordaens and Adriaen van de Velde, unfortunately lost during the Second World War, and Fritz von Uhde's *Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garments*, up to this day in the collections of the Museum of Art in Łódź. Finally, the director acquired Polish nineteenth-century paintings donated by the heirs of Henryk Grohman, i.a. works by Henryk Siemiradzki, Teodor Axentowicz, Leon Wyczółkowski, and Włodzimierz Tetmajer.

In 1938–1939 Marian Minich briefly fulfilled the function of head of the Łódź Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum, and from January 1939 was also the Łódź voivodeship expert on the export of artworks.<sup>32</sup> At the time of the Second World War he was relegated by the German occupants from all the above posts, as well as that of director of the Łódź Museum of Art. Minich portrayed the wartime period in his detailed reminiscences:<sup>33</sup> he fought in the September 1939 campaign and at the end of that year was arrested in Łódź together with his family. From 1942 he worked as a teacher of trade correspondence (and clandestinely also of literature, art, history, and the history of social doctrines) at the Gardening Secondary School in Ursynów.<sup>34</sup> Subsequently, in 1945 Minich returned to Łódź where he immediately – in February – again assumed the post of head of the Museum of Art. For the next three months he also supervised all the Łódź museums and then, for a short time, the Ethnographic Museum (1954). Since in 1950–1958 the Museum of Art was simultaneously the Regional Museum Marian Minich was, for all practical purposes, head of museum institutions in this region. In addition he lectured on the history of art, first at the State



3. Formism Room in the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art, 1938



4. Formism Room at the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art, 1939

Institute of Theatrical Arts in Łódź, and then, in 1946/1947–1951/1952, at the University of Łódź. In 1946 he joined the Polish Workers' Party and from 1948 was a member of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). Acted as secretary and vice-chairman of the Łódź branch of the Art Historians Association. In 1953–1957 Minich was a member of the Museum and Conservation Board at the Ministry of Culture and Art, the Culture Commission of the Voivodeship National Council, and the Culture Commission at the Plenary Session of the Łódź Committee of PUWP. In 1964 he received a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree individual State Award for overall activity in the domain of museology.<sup>35</sup>

After World War II the Museum of Art in Łódź was granted a new building – a former factory owner's palace in 36 Więckowskiego Street, totally ill-suited for its new functions. Director Minich rapidly began to seek permission to construct a new seat, but unfortunately to no avail.<sup>36</sup> Almost to the end of the 1940s the activity of the Museum was, therefore, hallmarked by post-war reorganisation. It began to receive recovered artworks and former German property, collections of pre-war Łódź entrepreneurs (from the Biederman and Geyer palaces and the Heinzl collection) and so-called post-manorial property acquired with the intermediary of the Regional Liquidation Office and Provisional State Property Board. The Director also accepted significant donations of Łódź avant-garde art – the Museum collection now included the legacy of Karol Hiller, a set of works by Władysław Strzemiński, and preserved sculptures by Katarzyna Kobro.

In connection with the closure of a permanent exposition of old art at the National Museum in Warsaw the Łódź institution accepted a deposit, i.a. mediaeval artworks, which did not have to be returned until the 1990s, i.e. at the time of Director Jaromir Jedliński.<sup>37</sup>

The further trend of the development of the institution headed by Marian Minich was unambiguously defined in the Statute of the Municipal Museum of Art in Łódź, passed on 6 February 1948 and including an entry declaring that its purpose is *the scientific and didactic accumulation and development of possessed works of art and crafts, with special attention paid to international modern art*.<sup>38</sup> In June 1948 Dr Minich opened the first post-war museum exposition – a continuation of the exhibition conception introduced by him already prior to the war. The display was presented on three Museum storeys and encompassed 30 showrooms featuring the development of art spanning from the Gothic era, followed by foreign paintings from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, a department of Polish painting from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, to International Modern Art. In order to support the structure of the narrative the exposition was supplemented with reproductions. The Director assigned the entire second floor to a presentation of newest art, whose 'point of arrival' and apogee of development was the Neo-Plastic Room. In 1948 this interior – today, already historical – boldly proposed to grant a high rank to abstract art. Designed by Władysław Strzemiński upon the request of Minich, the Neo-Plastic Room contained

numerous works from the International Collection of Modern Art of the 'a.r.' group executed by authors associated with the Geometric Abstract Art of the Neo-Plastic circle and the French Circle et Carré group. The Room's essential supplement consisted of Kbro's spatial compositions as well as those (and furniture) by Strzemiński. The 1948 exposition was welcomed by the authorities,<sup>39</sup> but did not affect the further fate of the Museum. It was closed on 1 October 1950 and reorganised due to the exacerbation of the cultural policy pursued by the communist authorities in Poland. One and a half months later the new permanent exhibition no longer showed avant-garde works recognized as excessively Formalistic, and the Neo-Plastic Room was excluded from the display. Dr Marian Minich was compelled to present exhibits indicating the progress of Realism. The exposition was left mainly with old (spanning from the Gothic period to modern painting) and Polish art, divided thematically and placing particular emphasis on social issues. Its supplement was the exhibition: 'The development of textiles industry Łódź from 1825', presenting the history of the titular industry against the background of that of the proletariat.<sup>40</sup> The Museum also opened a department dedicated to Critical Realism.<sup>41</sup>

Enforced political changes, defined as scientific reorganisation carried out from the viewpoint of Marxist aesthetics, were lauded at a conference held Nieborów in 1951.<sup>42</sup> As a consequence of recommendations made by central authorities the Museum of Art held a series of strongly indoctrinated ideological-professional courses conducted by assorted staff members. It is worth adding that courses proposed by Director Minich concentrated as much as possible on aesthetics and not on workers' movements (*Postulowanie realizmu socjalistycznego w sztuce*, 1951; *O estetyce marksistowskiej*, 1951; *O stosunku historii sztuki do estetyki*, 1953; *O interpretacji dzieła sztuki*, 1954).<sup>43</sup> It is a known fact that at the time Director Minich conducted unofficial courses on modern art, held in the Museum storerooms.<sup>44</sup> His involvement, and that of the Museum, in undertakings of the communist authorities was partly an outcome of the program policy imposed by the Ministry. It could have been also the effect of support for some of this policy's trends, such as workers' education, and certainly assumed different forms in the 1940s or 1950s and even more so in the 1960s. For artists and art theoreticians who originated from the pre-war left wing the new state policy could have been concurrent with their expectations regarding social equality, an approach disclosed in numerous stands (e.g. those of the architects Helena and Szymon Syrkus). Director Marian Munich also backed pre-war leftist circles. This is the way he was described by Klaudiusz Hrabyk, connected with 'Kurier Lwowski': (...) *An excellent reviewer of painting and, at the same time, as we all knew, one who favoured radically leftist views and, we suspected, even communist ones.*<sup>45</sup> Today it has become difficult to assess within this context Museum documents and texts published by Minich after the war. Being connected with one of the more important state museum institutions of the region they must have been subjected to official doctrine and, on the other hand, expressed support for certain decisions made by the authorities regarding culture – such as centralisation or enfranchisement, which the director of the Łódź Museum of Art did not criticise openly. We know from his notes that in time he became aware of

a dissonance between the new state policy and the freedom of art. Although his autobiographical book: *Szalona galeria* contains an optimistic assessment of the post-war situation its author already excluded Socialist Realism of the first half of the 1950s. *The impetus, which thanks to culturally active factors of the people's government enabled us to create original values in museology in the course of several years, was hampered as of 1 January 1950, after the institution was handed over to the Ministry of Culture and Art. Mistakenly comprehended 'socialist realism' and the incompetence of civil servants, who at the time decided about culture, created a cul de sac of sorts in the domain of culture.*<sup>46</sup> The problem of art within the context of the new state policy resounds even more loudly at the end of the book: *Bombarded with anonymous threats, warnings, and poisoned missiles of opinions I asked myself upon numerous occasions whether I am not trapped in some sort of an anti-cognition delusional world – whether the display of my interpretation of modern visual art is not some sort of a fatal mistake? Is all this art truth or a lie? An act of discovery or an expression of impudent arrogance? Is it part of the development of the constructivist requirements of the epoch or does it constitute decayed individualistic fiction?*<sup>47</sup> This dilemma faced by Minich was expressed also in the title of his book describing the Łódź Museum of Art as wild, with the author simultaneously supporting such passion.

Avant-garde art returned to the exposition in 1956, at the time of the 'thaw' following the death of Joseph Stalin. In 1958 a separate department of International Modern Art was introduced in the Museum and a refurbished exposition, comprehensively presenting the premises of the vision launched by Marian Minich, was opened two years later. In 1957–1963 Dr Minich travelled to France, the Netherlands, the German Democratic Republic, and the Soviet Union,<sup>48</sup> enjoying opportunities to gain further knowledge about the state of museology and visual art trends in other countries. His stay in Paris proved to be particularly crucial: through the intermediary of Jerzy Kujawski interesting examples of Abstract Expressionism – canvases by artists from the Phases circle – made their way into the collection, albeit not without mishaps. Just as fundamental was the revival and establishment of contact with the Parisian art milieu: Henryk Berlewi, Galerie Denise René, and Michel Seuphor. Consequently, in 1957 Director Minich became one of the members of the honorary committee of the 'Precursors de l'art abstrait en Pologne' exhibition held at Galerie Denise René in Paris.<sup>49</sup>

In 1960 – upon the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of work and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Museum – Dr Marian Minich opened a permanent exhibition arranged according to a supplemented plan from the 1940s and once again featuring the stylistic-formal development of art across the ages. As Dr Jacek Antoni Ojrzyński, the oft-cited member of the Museum staff, recalled, this was the swan song of the Director,<sup>50</sup> who now could display the progress of art with momentum and by resorting to new purchases. This time too the exposition was supplemented by facsimiles – both of old (e.g. paintings by Raphael and Rubens) and modern art (reproductions of works by the Impressionists), making it possible to guide members of the public across the most significant moments in the development of art notwithstanding the absence of such





## **MIEJSKIE MUZEUM SZTUKI W ŁODZI — WIĘCKOWSKIEGO 36 —**

**ZAWIERA EKSPONATY SZTUKI GOTYCKIEJ, RENESANSOWEJ, BAROKOWEJ, DZIEŁA MALARSTWA POLSKIEGO XVIII, XIX I XX WIEKU, ORAZ DZIAŁ MIĘDZYNARODOWEJ SZTUKI NOWOCZESNEJ. I TKACTWA ART.**

WYDZIAŁ SZTUKI I KRAJNOZNAWSTWA UMIAŃ I SZKIEŁ W ŁODZI, ul. Św. Józefa 10, tel. 7026-300 014 8

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5. Poster of the Municipal Museum of Art in Łódź, 1948



6. Neo-Plastic Room at the Museum of Art in Łódź, 1948–1949

examples in the Museum collections.

The exposition prepared by Marian Minich was a *sui generis* lecture on the history of art, and the above-mentioned *O nową organizację muzeów sztuki* proved to be an extremely important proposal of changing the traditional order of art exhibitions as well as the one imposed by authorities of the Socialist Realism era.<sup>51</sup> The chief premise of Minich's article consisted of reflections about the creation of expositions that would reflect the formal development of art,<sup>52</sup> hence endowing art research with a scientific and rationalised character. Minich was of the opinion that the objective of such activity was educational, exceeding in-depth comprehension of visual art phenomena or the process of moulding exclusively the awareness of recipients. He maintained that art does not come into being autonomously vis à vis the world surrounding it,<sup>53</sup> and thus is of immense importance for shaping social stands.<sup>54</sup>

The cited article devoted considerable attention to the exposition of international modern art featured on the second storey of the Museum building in Więckowskiego Street. In this case the author had at his disposal relatively comprehensive material – at least in comparison with the collection of old art – making it possible to fully present his conception.<sup>55</sup> The exhibition began with a display of Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism, followed by Expressionism, Formism, Cubism, Constructivism, and Post-Constructivism, crowned by the Neo-Plastic Room.<sup>56</sup> The first variant of the Room's arrangement proposed

a presentation of a *striving towards a neutralisation of the energetic tension of form and color* via paintings by Vilmos Huszár, Henryk Berlewi, Georges Vantongerloo, and Henryk Stażewski as well as a facsimile of a canvas by Piet Mondrian.<sup>57</sup> The second variant featured works by Theo van Doesburg and other compositions by Vilmos Huszár and Henryk Stażewski as well as Jean Hélion.<sup>58</sup> Sculptures by Katarzyna Kobro, added to the Room, were to depict the way in which *spatial sculpture based on the potential energy of color organises external space*.<sup>59</sup> The Neo-Plastic Room was followed by a presentation of *Architectonic and Unistic Compositions* by Władysław Strzemiński and an exposition of Surrealism. The last two showrooms showed examples of Abstract Neo-Expressionism. For some of the showrooms, similarly as for the Neo-Plastic Room, Marian Minich also prepared exposition variants, always carefully choosing works that in his opinion were the most representative and avoiding eclectic and epigone compositions, thus granting the gallery a distinctly educational merit.

The embedding of the Minich conception of the exposition in the theory formulated by the Swiss historian of art Heinrich Wölfflin linked this proposal with the methodology of history of art conceived as a theory of perception, formulated in the same period by Władysław Strzemiński, whose book originated in his pre-war articles.<sup>60</sup> The book in question was written from the end of the 1940s, based on, i.a. notes from Strzemiński's lectures held at the State Higher School of Visual Arts in Łódź and published posthumously in 1958.<sup>61</sup> Although the similarity is significant Marian Minich never referred to it directly.<sup>62</sup>

The two conceptions were certainly devised independently, although a certain mutual impact cannot be excluded since the artist and the museum director were in contact. Apart from the fact that the source of both theories was Wölfflin's development of the theory of form they were also part of a wider Modernist concept of the history of art, in which the latter was envisaged as a collection of mutually evolving trends and tendencies, and as such expanded and even progressed. The scientific systematisation of the theories propounded by Minich and Strzemiński was thus also affiliated with, i.a. the famous genealogical tree of the development of modern art proposed by Alfred H. Barr, director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, who in this way attempted to describe phenomena appearing in art in a manner resembling the progress of biological forms. Researchers also drew attention to a similar significance of the Minich conception of the museum exposition and the visions of modern art expositions devised by Alexander Dornier and El Lissitzky in the form of the Abstract Cabinet in Hanover.<sup>63</sup> They shared the didactic merit of a systematised presentation and the rank of the holistic reception of works exemplifying transformations in art, including the possibility of using reproductions. The conception created by Minich indicates also inspiration drawn from, i.a. Max Dvořák and Benedetto Croce,<sup>64</sup> just like avant-garde artists and Modernist historians of art Minich remained an anti-Naturalist.<sup>65</sup>

One of the significant differences between the Minich and Strzemiński programs involved drawing attention to the so-called social factor, which was extremely essential at the time of an interpretation maintained in the spirit of Marxist historiography, imposed upon culture and science.

When, however, we take a closer look at the configuration of the Minich gallery it appears that he attached decidedly less importance to this factor. Director Munich severed ties not only with a layout presenting artistic individualities but also with a thematic-chronological one shocking by means of its social contents, essential at the time of Socialist Realism. Nonetheless, while describing his conception of examining art Minich attempted to grant it *raison d'être* in new conditions by linking it with general tendencies in the development of Polish museology aimed not only at educating but also at reinforcing the ideological message connected with the cultural policy pursued during the 1950s.<sup>66</sup> *Full of inner conflicts, I finally decided to adapt Wölfflinian idealistic premises to the teachings of Marx;*<sup>67</sup> here we may also come across citations from the writings of Lenin referring to the necessity of communist science adapting the whole of human knowledge, by means of which Minich endeavoured to discover support for the necessity of reaching for the legacy of the West.<sup>68</sup>

Marian Munich regarded the principal target of the new organisation of an art museum to be restoration of the importance of the artistic creativity factor, i.e. form, and granting museums a mission focused on the expansion of artistic progress, namely, the introduction of attentiveness for the artistic development of individual recipients and collective culture.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, implementation of the new method of presenting collections was to create conditions for documenting the progress of artistic thought in a manner acknowledged by Minich to be the best, in other words, aiming at objectivism.<sup>70</sup> The director of the Łódź Museum of Art indicated that the most prominent tasks of his conception included: equal treatment of all epochs, periods, and trends of art, affirmation of the purposefulness of the development of the artwork, the progress of culture, and the creation of conditions for an iconographic analysis of contents and thus a better comprehension of the artwork.<sup>71</sup>



7. and 8. Cubism and Constructivism Room at the Museum of Art in Łódź, 1960–1966

(Photos: 1–8 Department of Scientific Documentation of the Museum of Art in Łódź)



The introduction of this method was to have far-reaching positive effects – from the comprehension of culture as a whole, also within the range of one of its domains (music, literature, etc.), all the way to a fully humanistic bringing up of man for the sake of a better understanding, experiencing, and organisation of his life.<sup>72</sup> Those views held by Marian Minich had a lot in common with the stand of the Constructivist Avant-garde, which he acknowledged in his text to be correct.<sup>73</sup> The original typescript of *O nową organizację muzeów sztuk*, preserved in the family archive, followed the example of representatives of the avant-garde by placing strong emphasis on the democratisation of culture and postulating the anti-elitist nature of art.<sup>74</sup> This stand was connected with Minich's belief in the role played by museums conceived as institutions possessing genuine force raising the level of the culture of a given society and, consequently, equally profound faith in the positive significance and causal power of the mission of humanism in shaping society and its environment;<sup>75</sup> his views were thus close to the stand represented by the inter-war avant-garde.

In practice, the new perspective of organising expositions granted the director of the Łódź Museum of Art also other opportunities – it was a scientific justification and restoration of the presentation of modern art during the era of the Socialist Realist cultural policy. Particular importance was attached to the Neo-Plastic Room, which, as researchers confirm, was treated by Minich as a *sui generis* 'leap forward' owing to references to the oeuvre of the pre-war left wing.<sup>76</sup> Importantly, this scientification of stylistic analysis – treated as a foundation of the exposition – made it possible to evade official directives of presenting 'progressive' art, which assessed positively only certain historical realisations of selected epochs, e.g. by emphasising the battle waged by rationalism and realism against mystical religiosity and refined schematics,<sup>77</sup> or by means of a suitable selection of temporary exhibitions focused on the progressive traditions of the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and Positivism, as postulated by Wanda Żaluska in one of the early issues of 'Muzealnictwo'.<sup>78</sup>

The idea launched by Minich was also a proposal of a total reorganisation of art museums. In his opinion the layout of a permanent gallery was to be formal-stylistic, but a historical-chronological model could be characteristic only for temporary expositions. Furthermore, the director of the Łódź Museum of Art was an adherent of a centralisation of exhibitions in Polish art museums.<sup>79</sup> Owing to the absence of other possibilities he did not refrain from a permanent, and not only an occasional, application of facsimiles of works of art in the name of a presentation of *historical and stylistic truth*.<sup>80</sup> By referring, consciously or not, to the intention postulated by avant-garde artists in an issue of the 'Blok' periodical (1924)<sup>81</sup> Minich outright postulated an organisation of museums of reproductions and an introduction of copies of artworks into lesser institutions.<sup>82</sup>

Against the author's wish the text: *O nową organizację muzeów sztuki – credo* (which was, simultaneously, Marian Minich's testament) was not issued as a separate publication. On the other hand, *Szalona galeria*, mentioned at the beginning of this article, was published during his lifetime. This colourful story about years spent at the Łódź Museum of Art remains up to this day an interesting source of knowledge about the then prevailing situation, artistic life, and complex meanders of shaping a modern art museum.<sup>83</sup>

Marian Minich died on 6 July 1965. A day later a Łódź daily wrote: *Łódź culture and science suffered an irreparable loss! The passing of a man who for thirty years devoted every day and moment of his life to beloved art by popularising and collecting its most outstanding works. (...) Extremely vital, connected by various links with the Łódź cultural milieu, Doc. Dr Marian Minich was a true activist (...). Apart from didactics he was engaged in publicists. (...) First and foremost, however, he left behind a magnificent institution – a museum, which thanks to his initiative and work established its high rank. (...) Hail to His memory! (...)*.<sup>84</sup> Director Marian Minich was buried in the communal section of the so-called Avenue of Notables in the Doly Cemetery in Łódź.<sup>85</sup>

**Abstract:** Marian Minich was born on 21 December 1898 in Baligród near Lesko and died on 6 July 1965 in Łódź. For thirty years, with the exception of the World War II period, he was director of the Museum of Art in Łódź. Studied history of art at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów; graduated in 1929. From 1928 employed at Lwów University, first as assistant of Professor Władysław Kozicki and then of Professor Władysław Podlacha. In 1932 presented a doctoral thesis on the *oeuvre* of Andrzej Grabowski (published in 1957). Already as a student granted a University award for his study: *Koncepcja sztuki u Wölfflina*; Wölfflin's methodology influenced Marian Minich's future exhibition concepts. From the late 1920s worked as an art critic writing for Lwów newspapers. In 1935 assumed the office of director of the Museum of Art in Łódź (at the time the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art). Major achievements included not only a considerable

expansion of Museum collections but also the Museum's transformation into an institution dedicated exclusively to art, with a significant representation of contemporary exhibits. In difficult post-war years Marian Minich maintained this trend both before and after the Socialist Realism-era constriction of cultural policy. In 1948, in the wake of a first post-war permanent exhibition the Museum of Art in Łódź opened, thanks to Director Minich, the 'Neo-Plastic Room' designed by Władysław Strzemiński. Marian Minich was also a persistent defender of the avant-garde – he strove towards introducing it as an integral part of the organisation of art museums. From 1946/1947 to 1951/1952 taught history of art at the University of Łódź. Described his experiences as museum director in the book: *Szalona galeria* (published in 1963) and dedicated the article: *O nową organizację muzeów sztuki* (1966) to assorted museum problems.

**Keywords:** Marian Minich (1898–1965), Museum of Art in Łódź, Neo-Plastic Room, contemporary art, organisation of art expositions.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> A. Minich-Scholz, *Marian Minich – pod wiatr*, M. Minich *Wspomnienia wojenne. Szalona Galeria*, Instytut Wydawniczy Książka i Prasa, Warszawa 2015, p. 14; already at the time of Director Minich the history of the Museum of Art was the topic of several publications. Particular attention is due to such general studies as: *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi. Historia i wystawy*, U. Czartoryska (ed.), Oficyna Bibliofilów, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 1998 and a monograph containing numerous articles: *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi*. Monografia, vol. I, A. Jach, K. Słoboda, J. Sokołowska, M. Ziółkowska (ed.), Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 2015 – including an extremely valuable article by M. Selig: *Testament muzealny Mariana Minicha*, pp. 268–301. In addition, I referred to the activity of Marian Minich in the following articles: P. Kurc-Maj, *‘Teoria widzenia’ Władysława Strzemińskiego i ‘O nową organizację muzeów sztuki’ Mariana Minicha, czyli jak patrzeć na sztukę*, in: *Acta Artis. Studia ofiarowane Profesor Wandzie Nowakowskiej*, A. Pawłowska, E. Jedlińska, K. Stefański (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2016, pp. 135–165; P. Kurc-Maj, *Rola inicjatyw i kolekcji prywatnych w muzealnictwie polskim na przykładzie polityki budowania zbiorów w Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi w latach międzywojennych i bezpośrednio powojennych XX wieku*, in: *Kolekcjonerstwo polskie XX i XXI wieku. Szkice*, T. F. de Rosset, A. Kluczevska-Wójcik, A. Tołysz (ed.), NIMOW, Warszawa 2015, pp. 81–93, and: P. Kurc-Maj, J. Sowińska-Heim, *Awangardowa kolekcja w czasach socrealizmu. Polityka programowa Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi w latach 50. XX wieku, Socrealizmy i modernizacje*, A. Sumorok, T. Załuski (ed.), ASP im. Władysława Strzemińskiego w Łodzi, Łódź 2017, pp. 506–532. It is worth mentioning that archival material dealing with the history of the Museum of Art in Łódź is rather limited and pertains mainly to documents and documentary photographs.
- <sup>2</sup> First edition: M. Munich, *Szalona galeria*, Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, Łódź 1963.
- <sup>3</sup> I present a brief recollection of fundamental facts from the life of Marian Minich upon the basis of: A. Minich-Scholz, *Marian Minich...*, the article: J. A. Ojrzyski, *Marian Minich. Dyrektor Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi*, *‘Miscellanea Łódzkie’* 1994, fasc. 3, pp. 8–12 and the biographical note: M. Rubczyńska, *Minich Marian Teodor (1898–1965)*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXI, Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo PAN, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1976, pp. 287–288. Other sources of information include biographies preserved in archival documents: M. Minich, *Marian Minich*, in: *Memoriały, sprawozdania personalne i budżetowe 1945–1947*, State Archive in Łódź, Museum of Art in Łódź, fond 39/2448/0, inv. no. 9, p. 6 and M. Minich, *Do Wydziału Oświaty i Kultury Zarządu Miejskiego w Łodzi... [Podanie na stanowisko kierownika Miejskiego Muzeum Historii i Sztuki]*, Records of the City of Łódź. Department of Education and Culture, State Archive in Łódź, inv. no. 17093, pp. 213.
- <sup>4</sup> *‘Rocznik Lwowskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego’* 1934, no. XIV, fasc. I, item. 727 and *‘Sztuki Piękne’* 1934, X, no. 6, cited after: M. Minich, *Do Wydziału Oświaty...*
- <sup>5</sup> M. Minich, *Andrzej Grabowski 1833–1886. Jego życie i twórczość*, *‘Studia z Historii Sztuki’* 1957, vol. 6.
- <sup>6</sup> M. Rubczyńska, *Minich Marian Teodor...*, p. 288.
- <sup>7</sup> M. Minich, *Do Wydziału Oświaty...*
- <sup>8</sup> The Łódź institution was distinguished from the Municipal Museum of Science and Art in Łódź, which possessed also natural history, archaeological, and ethnographic collections. It was opened in 1930 as the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art. After World War II it was accessible initially as the Municipal Museum of Art in Łódź (since 1948), and from 1 January 1950 under its present-day name (after its management was transferred to the Ministry of Culture and Art – 14 December 1949).
- <sup>9</sup> *Protokół z posiedzenia Komisji Opiniodawczej, Akta Miasta Łodzi. Wydział Oświaty i Kultury*, State Archive in Łódź, inv. no. 17093, pp. 203–205.
- <sup>10</sup> M. Minich, *Do Wydziału Oświaty...*
- <sup>11</sup> *Protokół z posiedzenia Komisji Muzealnej, Akta Miasta Łodzi*, Records of the City of Łódź. Department of Education and Culture, State Archive in Łódź, inv. no. 17093, p. 257.
- <sup>12</sup> *Muzeum miejskie pod kierownictwem dr. Minicha, ‘Ilustrowana Republika’* 6 January 1935, 13, no. 6, p. 5.
- <sup>13</sup> I wrote about the history of the Museum to 1950 in the article: P. Kurc-Maj, *Jakie muzeum? – uwagi na temat historii Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi do 1950 roku*, in: *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi. Monografia...*, pp. 124–175.
- <sup>14</sup> A. Łabęcka, *Łódź – miasto awangardy (lata 1929–1939)*, in: *Sztuka Łódzka. Materiały sesji naukowej Oddziału Łódzkiego Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*, J. Ojrzyski et al. (ed.), PWN, Warszawa-Łódź 1977, p. 127.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 132–133.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 134.
- <sup>17</sup> M. Minich, *Miejskie Muzeum Historii i Sztuki im. J. i K. Bartoszewiczów*, in: *Prace polonistyczne, Koło Polonistów w Łodzi*, Łódź 1937, p. 415.
- <sup>18</sup> M. Minich, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi*, in: *Rocznik Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi 1930–1962*, M. Minich, M. Rubczyńska, J. Ładnowska (ed.), Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, Łódź 1965, p. 11.
- <sup>19</sup> M. Minich, *Miejskie Muzeum Historii...*, pp. 417–418.
- <sup>20</sup> Z. Zielińska-Klimkiewicz, *Księgozbiór Bartoszewiczów – przeszłość i teraźniejszość*, *‘Acta Universitatis Łódzensis. Folia Librorum’* 1998, no. 8, pp. 94–96.
- <sup>21</sup> M. Minich, *Miejskie Muzeum Historii...*, p. 418.
- <sup>22</sup> M. Kunińska, Henrich Wölfflin – Władysław Podlacha – Marian Minich. *W stronę systematyki ‘plastycznych uzupełnień’*
- <sup>23</sup> M. Minich, *Miejskie Muzeum Historii...*, p. 420.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. *Katalog Działu Sztuki nr 1*, the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art, Łódź 1930.
- <sup>25</sup> M. Minich, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi...*, pp. 7–69; M. Minich, *O nową organizację muzeów sztuki*, in: *Sztuka współczesna. Studia i szkice*, vol. 2, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1966, pp. 70–190.
- <sup>26</sup> See: a critical publication of the original typescript and a reprint of the text published in the volume: *Sztuka współczesna. Studia i szkice z 1966 roku*, in: M. Minich, *O nowy typ muzeów...*; the basic difference between the published version and the typescript is the absence in the former of a chapter on widely comprehended museum education. Moreover, certain fragments of the text differ, but this does not alter the message and contents of the theory described in the published article.
- <sup>27</sup> *List Karola Hillera do Komisarza Rządowego Zarządu m. Łodzi z dnia 26 April 1934 and 17 May 1934*, in: Records of the City of Łódź. Department of Education and Culture, State Archive in Łódź, inv. no. 17093.
- <sup>28</sup> Brzękowski mentioned, i.a. that Strzemiński demanded that Minich should accept and display absolutely all paintings offered by the ‘a.r.’ group. The head of the Łódź Museum of Art, on the other hand, accused the artist of forcing him to feature the worthless works of his students. Cf. *List Jana Brzękowskiego*

- do Juliana Przybosia z dnia 24 sierpnia 1936 roku, in: *Źródła do historii awangardy*, T. Klak (prep.), 'Archiwum Literackie' 1981, vol. XXIV, p. 155.
- <sup>29</sup> Muzeum, 'Forma. Czasopismo Związku Zawodowego Polskich Artystów Plastyków w Łodzi' August 1935, no. 5, p. 23.
- <sup>30</sup> According to Dr Jacek Antoni Ojrzyński the author of the article was not, as is universally believed, Strzemiński but Bolesław Hochlinger, cf. J. A. Ojrzyński, Marian Minich. Dyrektor..., p. 11.
- <sup>31</sup> Księga inwentarzowa Miejskiego Muzeum Historii i Sztuki im. J. i K. Bartoszewiczów, 1930–1939, State Archive in Łódź, the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art, fond no. 39/2451/0, inv. no. 2.
- <sup>32</sup> Cf. M. Rubczyńska, Minich Marian Teodor..., pp. 287–288 and M. Minich, Marian Minich...
- <sup>33</sup> Cf. inv. no. 1 and 2.
- <sup>34</sup> M. Minich, Marian Minich...
- <sup>35</sup> General information about the post-war activity of Director Marian Minich is based on: M. Rubczyńska, Minich Marian Teodor..., pp. 287–288.
- <sup>36</sup> J. A. Ojrzyński, Z perspektywy pół wieku... Muzeum Sztuki subiektywnie widziane, in: *Sztuka w Łodzi (6). Złe miasto – dobre miasto*, M. Wróblewska-Markiewicz et al. (ed.), SHS Oddział w Łodzi, Łódź 2014, p. 105.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 110.
- <sup>38</sup> Statut organizacyjny, State Archive in Łódź, Museum of Art in Łódź, fond 39/2448/0, inv. no. 1, p. 1.
- <sup>39</sup> J. A. Ojrzyński, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi a artyści łódzcy 1949–1956, in: *Sztuka w Łodzi (3). Sztuka obok awangardy*, Ł. Grzejszczak, M. Kuźnicki, P. Uznański, J. Weinberg (ed.), Association of Art Historians, Museum of Cinematography, Łódź 2005, p. 95.
- <sup>40</sup> Materiały do formalnego uznania Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi za placówkę naukową z dnia 28.07.1954, Records of the Museum of Art in Łódź, State Archive in Łódź, inv. no. 320. Problems connected with the program of the Museum of Art at the time of the exacerbated Socialist Realism doctrine were described in the article: P. Kurc-Maj, J. Sowińska-Heim, *Awangardowa kolekcja w czasach...*
- <sup>41</sup> J. A. Ojrzyński, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi...*, p. 96.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 95.
- <sup>43</sup> Cf. M. Minich, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi...*, pp. 53–63.
- <sup>44</sup> J. A. Ojrzyński, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi...*, p. 97.
- <sup>45</sup> K. Hrabek, Wspomnienia, 'Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego' 1971, no. 10/1, p. 87.
- <sup>46</sup> M. Minich, *Szalona galeria...*, p. 170.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 171.
- <sup>48</sup> M. Rubczyńska, Minich Marian Teodor..., p. 288.
- <sup>49</sup> M. Minich, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi...*, p. 36.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 104.
- <sup>51</sup> M. Minich, *O nową organizację muzeów...*, p. 70.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 72.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 175.
- <sup>54</sup> Magdalena Kunińska additionally emphasised that the Minich method, which followed the example of his teacher, Prof. Władysław Podlacha, linked anew the conception of the diversity of artistic forms with social life, cf. M. Kunińska, Henrich Wölfflin – Władysław Podlacha..., p. 192.
- <sup>55</sup> M. Minich, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi...*, pp. 45–46.
- <sup>56</sup> Exposition outlay – cf. Schematyczny plan ekspozycji międzynarodowej sztuki nowoczesnej w Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi w roku 1950, in: M. Minich, *O nową organizację muzeów...*, p. 148, fig. 55.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 120–123.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 124.
- <sup>60</sup> W. Strzemiński, *Aspekty rzeczywistości*, 'Forma' 1936, nr 5, pp. 6–13.
- <sup>61</sup> W. Strzemiński, *Teoria widzenia*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1958.
- <sup>62</sup> I wrote more on the conceptions of Marian Minich and Władysław Strzemiński in: P. Kurc-Maj, 'Teoria widzenia' Władysława Strzemińskiego...
- <sup>63</sup> M. Szeląg, Testament muzealny Mariana Minicha..., pp. 278–279.
- <sup>64</sup> M. Minich, *O nową organizację muzeów...*, p. 91.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.
- <sup>66</sup> M. Szeląg, Testament muzealny Mariana Minicha..., pp. 296–299; cf. P. Brożyński, *Maszynopisy nie płoną*. Nota wydawnicza, in: Marian Minich, *O nowy typ muzeów...*, p. XIII and P. Brożyński, *Muzeum w płynnej rzeczywistości*, in: *Ibidem*, pp. 167–168.
- <sup>67</sup> M. Minich, *O nową organizację muzeów...*, p. 91.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 174.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 71.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 89.
- <sup>71</sup> M. Minich, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi...*, pp. 41–42.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 72–74.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 70.
- <sup>74</sup> M. Minich, *O nowy typ muzeów...*, p. 123.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 128–129.
- <sup>76</sup> M. Szeląg, Testament muzealny Mariana Minicha..., p. 286 and 295.
- <sup>77</sup> W. Załuska, *Malarstwo współczesne w galeriach muzealnych*, 'Muzealnictwo' 1953, no. 3, p. 6.
- <sup>78</sup> W. Załuska, *Wytyczne do programu prac muzealnictwa na rok 1953*, 'Muzealnictwo' 1952, no. 1–2, p. 10.
- <sup>79</sup> M. Minich, *O nową organizację muzeów...*, pp. 172–173.



<sup>80</sup>Ibidem, p. 173.

<sup>81</sup>[W Polsce pozbawionej...], 'Blok' 1923, no. 8–9, p. nlb. [2].

<sup>82</sup>M. Minich, O nową organizację muzeów..., p. 173.

<sup>83</sup>M. Minich, Szalona galeria....

<sup>84</sup>Zmarł M. Minich, 'Dziennik Łódzki' 7 July 1965, XX, no. 160 (5778), p. 2.

<sup>85</sup>Spacerownik. Cmentarz na Dołach, J. Podolska (ed.), free-of-charge supplement to 'Gazeta Wyborcza' 30 October 2008, <http://bi.gazeta.pl/im/4/5908/m5908234.pdf>, p. 6 [accessed on: 25 June 2018].

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