

Bigos

ARTISTS OF POLISH ORIGIN



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16 August to 6 September 1986

at

Brixton Gallery, 21 Atlantic Road, London SW9

22 September to 4 October 1986

at

The Crypt, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury Way

Dobry bigos jest mieszania różności. Zawsze inny, gotowany na dziesiątki sposobów jest indywidualnym świadectwem domu - miejsca i czasu. Obok kiszanej kapusty, dobrze już kiedyś poszatkwanej i ściśniętej w beczce przez długie miesiące znajdzie się w bigosie i świeża kapusta, nowa w tej kulinarnej przygodzie. Mieso okrasza potrawę, a im więcej jego rodzajów tym lepszy ostateczny rezultat. Suszone grzyby trzeba przedtem namoczyć, by zmiekły, a dadzą później aromat nieznanego angielskiej kuchni. Dodajmy też suszone śliwki, niech obok lasu przypomnianego przez grzyby, będzie i miejsce dla sadu. Pikanterii przydamy czarnym pieprzem orientu i bobkowym listkiem z laurowego krzewu poezji. Jeszcze odrobina słodkiego cukru, odrobina soli i czerwone wino, którego dolewamy po trochu, w czasie wielogodzinnego gotowania. Nie tracąc swego indywidualnego oblicza wszystkie te różnorodne składniki winny teraz nieśpiesznie udzielić innym czarów swych smaków i zapachów stapiając się stopniowo w kotle alchemiczno-kulinarnej transmutacji w tę szczególną polską potrawę. Nie spodziewajmy się, że pierwsze gotowanie przyniesie od razu doskonały rezultat. Wystawmy tymczasem gar na noc za okno, na mroźny, obcy świat i tak przemrożony gotujemy dnia następnego raz jeszcze.

Nasz artystyczny bigos tej wystawy prezentuje jeszcze te wstępne fazy przygotowywania potrawy kiedy gromadzimy składniki. Kucharzenie dopiero się rozpoczyna. Sami jeszcze sobie nie do końca znajomi, podejrzliwi i być może sceptyczni zgodziliśmy się przecież próbować szukać jakiejś wspólnej, mglistej tradycji. Niepewni co do jej istnienia sama nasza wola poszukiwania i niepokojem poświadczamy jej żywotność.

Andrzej Borkowski

B I G O S

ARTISTS OF POLISH ORIGIN

It was when Kasia Januszko moved into my street in 1984 that the Anglo-Polish artists project took off from the stage of vague plans into action.

In September 1984 a long exploratory letter was written to Michael Harrison in the Arts Council of Great Britain with the idea of getting official backing for a prestigious show of the more well known Polish artists that I had become aware of on the British art scene. This early group included people who have since dropped out of the group (Andrzej Jackowski and Hannah Collins) or who have taken a passive role whilst maintaining an interest (Maria Chevska and Adrian Wiszniewski). Other Poles were known but not invited because at the time we were looking for work that had recognisably Polish content (e.g. David Mach). This was because we were trying to persuade the Arts Council of the coherence of the group on the basis of a perceptible 'Polish' influence. Later these criteria were dropped when we decided to open up the group to all professional Polish or part-Polish artists.

We advertised in Artists Newsletter and Jewish Chronicle hoping to attract artists outside of our immediate London circle. We got a good response and the group grew from 12 to over 30 with more women than men. From then on the group itself became more important than the initial concept of a prestigious exhibition.

However, I still considered the organisation of an exhibition the central shared interest that would hold this diverse group of artists together.

Just as this larger, more open, group had formed, the Arts Council, finally, sent us a letter of refusal, in which they said:

"(the committee) is not sufficiently convinced of the value of grouping artists in this way, although they have of course recognised that there are a number of very good artists amongst those you are putting forward."

Michael Harrison, A.C.G.B., 10-9-85

Riverside Studios had also decided not to have our group exhibit and the G.L.C. had given us a 'low priority'. The question we now had to decide was whether our presentation was at fault or whether, as the Arts Council reply suggested, there was an in-built Establishment resistance to giving support to exhibitions representing the culture of emigre or immigrant communities. I include now the two texts which introduced our application.

■ Introduction of each application

Poles have always tended to accord with the British requirement of the speedy integration of foreigners, welcome whilst they adopt the most respectable of English mores. In public the Poles have complied as much as their awkward names and accents have allowed. But Poles have a deep tradition of resistance to cultural attack.

From 1772 to 1795 Poland was partitioned by its neighbours and from 1795 until its liberation and reunion in 1918 was supposed not to have existed. Polish culture survived this long occupation underground. Again in World War II the Poles resisted attempts to erase their culture with strong underground organisation. This is the tradition that Poles bring with them, not only expressed in autonomous schools, clubs, dance groups, etc., but also within people's personality - I think it may explain the tenacity of Polish cultural influence within the individual Anglo-Pole. Catholicism played a major part in Polish cultural survival and as such is more than a 'religion' to many Poles but an integrated part of Polish identity. This has been exploited at times to create divisions between Poles who are Jews and Lutherans, etc., and the majority of Catholics. Within this context of cultural survival connections to European art have been particularly important. The internationalism of the western modern movement has been invaluable in combatting Polish isolation. Polish contributions have been valuable especially in the fields of performance (Kantor and Grotowski) and film (Wajda, Polanski, etc.) but even so it is the connections in the field of fine art that are perhaps most valued. Art is much more a part of popular culture than it is in Britain.

It is then surprising that there has never been a show of the excellent Anglo-Polish artists working in the U.K. These artists are the connective tissue of history and their work is resonant with Polish experience. A show would not only give insight into the emigre experience but also release Polish creativity in the evolution of British and Euro culture.

General text

A policy of Art presentation and distribution which represents the various cultural groupings in Britain as well as encouraging the highest standards of artistic production is becoming an urgent necessity. I am sure that the inclusion of minority cultural groups within the art show circuit will enrich the continual debate and reassessment of what constitutes aesthetic judgement and standards within the international art world.

This thinking would only run contrary to those who believe that the only worthwhile art should comply with immutable/eternal/absolute aesthetic values. Not that I would doubt that some, even many, aspects of aesthetics are rooted in the common nature and condition of human beings. But I think we should now recognise that this ideal within modern art, although symbolically important (the universality of humankind), was unrealised in practice and even the 'purest' abstractions include and are permeated with culturally determined flavours (language, region, class, race, gender, etc.) or are contained within specific cultural viewpoints.

It seems important that we now move on to recognise what is culturally specific, what is fundamentally universal and the relationship between the two. It would seem that a pragmatic and ordered approach is required as a theory cannot be developed without developing also our viewpoints (listening to viewpoints not our own). What I'm suggesting is that a true working universality comes from an understanding and acceptance of differences or 'starting places'. I feel there is some urgency to this vector of thinking given the situation in which questions of difference and universality seem central to our very species' survival in the last quarter of the 20th century.

S.S., 2-1-85

The group was formed as a democratic entity at an inaugural meeting on 17th November 1985 and quickly decided to survive financially through a £10 subscription to cover the cost of regular newsletters. We also decided to rework the documentation into a standardised format before attempting any more applications, the result being this catalogue. A controversy also began about whether we should concentrate on exhibiting together or on inter group communication. The latter argument may be represented by the following proposal.

The proposal of work within a unit

We are individuals with different approaches and attitudes working in various media. There is our background which got us in touch. Now, apart from our individual activities, we can form a team feeling a need for unconventional actions relating to creative processes. The method of our work would explore the essential problems of interpersonal influences. We would work within a group: each of us would direct his/her activity to the other participants. This would enable the realisation of individual often extreme programmes of work with feedback from the rest of the group. It would result in a creative system of feedback replacing the self-acting artist and passive recipient.

This programme would be realised by regular meetings starting in February 1986 for as long as we want.

The above model is an alternative to art as a consumption.

We would see the need to confront the value system established within the group. Therefore we would do documentation of our work and pass on to other people in various ways: shows, exhibitions, discussions, posters, booklets, video documentation, etc.

If you are interested in the above proposal please try to develop this idea, put it on paper and send to Janusz Szczerek, 12 Parmoor Court, Gee Street, London EC1V 3RP, in order to discuss it at our meeting on 4th January 1986.

This way we should produce a statement followed by documentation standardised as we already arranged. I hope to find organisations sympathetic to our work and financing it.

Janusz Szczerek

On the other hand many people were clear about the need to have a group exhibition.

I would have thought shared nationality a very good basis for forming a group or exhibition. Subtitling (theme) may confuse your aims and identity in the eyes of the public and detract from the important subject of Anglo-Polish art per se.

Margaret Ochocki, Nov. 1985

By this time my participation in the large collectively run Brixton Gallery had led to a possible exhibition for the group in the following year. By January 1986 the Crypt of St. Georges Church, Bloomsbury, which had recently hosted the successful 'Our Wonderful Culture' show was also hired for the same period. From the beginning monthly group meetings tried to include a balance of presentations of individual artists' work with organisational discussions. There was also a thread which ran through the meetings in which we made collective work. Krystyna Borkowska most consistently led this trend.

The continuing discussion and controversy about exactly what we were doing together resulted in papers by Jamoula McKean and others as well as several letters.

■ Why Anglo-Polish Art Exhibition?

The first question is what is Polish?

Polish is being part of a country which after hundreds of years has finally got a concrete piece of land internationally recognised as its sole right. Polish is being part of that struggle to get this right, and to keep it.

What is Anglo-Polish?

It is being a second generation Pole, neither English nor Polish, but the two combined. It is alienation from both countries, neither being comfortably 'home'; but both feeding the individual with its culture, prejudice, patriotism, cults, humour, ideals and national phobias/anxieties.

Poland is seen largely from the point of view of parents who 'escaped' or were 'evacuated' some forty years previously, and who carry with them the Poland of what it was like then. Sure, they've been back, visiting. Sure, they send food parcels, and support the striking miners. Sure, the true Poles come to visit, on charity, and then return to their homes. Sure, the children visit these relatives in Poland, and then return to their homes.

The very recent upheavals that have led to our parents' exile were conducted with pain, bereavement, resentment. Even non-Jews were gassed in Auschwitz.

And who recognises the right of those 'in exile'? Those who remained also suffered, but they are home, whatever that is. Those abroad belong to a no-man's-land that is possibly a timewarp, in a host country that has virtually no understanding, having no parallel in its recent past. Sympathy is not 'understanding', it is being charitable.

A new role for the dispossessed has to be worked out. The interaction between the two cultures could very well allow and exchange between the Poland as is and this generation which has not directly taken part in this 'exile', clearing the cobwebs of the previous reality, and starting its own history, making its own choices. There has to be a comfortable marriage between the host country, which is home, and the strong cultural home of our parents.

Why an exhibition?

Not only an exhibition. What leads up to the exhibition(s) is a forum for open discussion. What follows from an exhibition is a public forum.

An exhibition is one way of bringing together this new Anglo-Polish hybrid, which has a unique point of looking at both its cultures, from which both cultures may learn. This hybrid exists, and wants to claim its existence. In that way it can begin to claim independent action, it can begin to take root in both lands.

Jamoula McKean, Dec. 1985

Towards Redefinition

Two members of the group, who do not wish to be named, wrote a critical paper, 'Towards Redefinition', which was circulated around the group in early 1986 but which they do not wish to be published in this context. In this paper they objected to our name, which was then the 'Anglo-Polish Artists Exhibition Group', which they saw as a limitation, and to the idea of an 'Anglo-Polish hybrid'. They stated their identity clearly as foreigners rather than 'half' anything. Polishness was not seen as central to their existence and they wanted to reject the 'emigre' definition with its association of 'victim'.

They also pointed out that we were in danger of promoting myths about a 'Polish spirit' and 'Fate' and, with it, "a romantic vision of Poland as sufferer". This referred in one instance at least to our making connections between our situation here and the recent situation of artists in post Solidarnosc Poland (with the choice of a church crypt as an exhibition venue). They saw this as "questionable and superficial". "What is radical and alternative there derives from the social and political situation which is not comparable to the situation here."

They said, "The struggle for us is not defined by Polishness. It has a wider scope - displacement faced by all artists today. The question is not of mainstream or margin, it is a struggle for integrity of one's own position."

They recognised the importance of "the situation of millions of people in the world to which migration has become a way of life" but wished "to transform it positively beyond our nationality and history". Another disagreement was with the group's focus on the organisation of an exhibition. The potential of an exhibition group was to "express a common concern arising out of a shared philosophy".

Discussion in response to 'Towards Redefinition'

The general feeling between those present was a positive response to opinions being expressed in this way as it opened up debate. It was suggested each individual spoke of their reactions and one of the authors said initially that it was written to shake up the proceedings a little and gather people's opinions on the issues raised.

A major question arose in the realisation of the difference between the Polish members who presently live in England and the English members with Polish ancestry. Stefan recognised that 'Anglo-Pole', as a title, reflected his viewpoint, on which he expanded. He suggested that a revised group structure should take into account much more the differences between people to the possible extent of small groups forming according to special interest, as the Women's Forum, although he emphasised the gains in being a diverse group.

Various views were thrown up regarding the extent to which 'Polishness' mattered - a search to find roots / a parallel between literal rootlessness and artist as rootless, displaced / strength gained in adaptability / positive aspects in being foreign / pathos of loss.

Generally a 'name' was seen as a starting point which could be changed or dispensed with according to the group's expression through the interaction occurring under that 'name'. No shared philosophy was deemed necessary for this cross-section of persons to function as a group.

There was some question as to whether the group was interacting, with Janusz feeling the group had stood still. Krystina would like to see more activity, suggestions and responses and with Janusz wanting the communication process to increase pace. Others saw this process as a slower long-term development although it was generally agreed the exhibitions were important to this end as it was felt that our activities as artists were the highest priority.

Jozefa Rogocki, March 1986

■ **Comments on Jamoula McKean's 'Why Anglo-Polish Art Exhibition?'**

A question I'm still asking. I'm very grateful for this contact with Anglo-Polish artists and would hope that sharing ideas, feelings about our unique situation could lead to some work, independently or together, worthy of exhibiting because of what is communicated about our experiences. But why exhibit now, just because we're Anglo-Poles? Would it not be better to work around that idea, 'A Voyage Around my Father' perhaps, and see what that leads to in terms of an exhibition together, stemming from what we all discover?

I don't feel that my work, at present, says anything about this and should not be included in an exhibition until it does. So until I change my mind I'd like to opt out of any exhibitions but still feel committed to the group. Comments appreciated. I know that there is much in my background which has led to me working as I do but, on this, there is more thinking and discussion needed.

Julia Szoka, excerpt from letter

These discussions led to the reconsideration of our name from Anglo-- Polish Artist Exhibition Group to 'BIGOS'. Later Marysia, Antek and Janusz also decided to exhibit separately at Chisenhale Works, London E3, from September 26th to October 12th, 1986. As I understood it from Janusz, they saw our group as 'retrospective' whilst they rejected this tendency in favour of a forward looking viewpoint. Marysia pointed out that their exhibition would be the expression of their position.

By the beginning of 1986 we had 20 paid up members and made an application for exhibition funding to the Greater London Arts which is the London Regional body of the Arts Council. Finally this was a success and we received £500 and some recognition of our project which such an award confers. Brixton Gallery also contributed £350 towards exhibition costs which, along with a lot of labour donated by Simon Lewandowski, has made this catalogue possible.

The group's newsletters, which were circulated about once a month, were open to contributions from any person in the group*. I had a particular interest in opposing anti-semitism and so circulated a batch of information around the group along which was followed by some discussions and correspondence. It was in fact not long before we experienced anti-semitic and anti-gay remarks made at the Six Polish Women Artists show at POSK, 6-19 April 1986. The G.L.C. funded Polish Womens Forum had invited women from our group to exhibit as part of the forum.

■ 6 Polish Women Artists at POSK Gallery

Our April exhibition provided the first opportunity to see how the work of at least a few members of our group looks together in a gallery context.

* Photocopies of all the preliminary letters and newsletters (approx. 80pp) is available to libraries or researchers at £10 plus p+p.

There were, true enough, 'Polish' elements in the work of all the contributors, but they were perhaps not strong enough to assert themselves in any unified expression in such a small room. There was the specifically Polish humour in Eva Mann's colour drawings, and the Polish love of irony in Krystyna Borkowska's collages. There was the quintessentially Polish imagery of war memorials and roadside saints in Kasia Januszko's photographs from Poland. The traditional Polish craft of paper cut-outs was put to use by Jola Scicinska, but for the very un-Polish end of feminism and as protest against the persecution of Jews and gays in today's society. The fate of Polish Jewry was also the preoccupation of Ruth Jacobson, although her much admired etchings on the subject had none of the characteristics of Polish graphic art today. For me, too, the use of Polish apples in a still life was a sentimental gesture, a concession in a work otherwise devoid of any Polish influences.

It was a bitter, though sadly not unfamiliar, experience - for someone born and bred in Poland - to find that the reaction of the majority of Polish regulars was not exactly that of art lovers: shrugging indifference and misunderstanding at best; vicious, almost fanatical railing against Jews and homosexuals at worst, accompanied by righteous cries of scandal, shame and corruption. The visitors book bore (unsigned) slogans, which were nothing short of Nazi in sentiment. This reaction was well fanned in advance - the exhibition was paid for by G.L.C.'s 'Red Ken' and was therefore 'communist'.

Little did we know that as our hands were reaching out to the older generation in the romantic notion of 're-establishing our roots', the hands of the older generation were busy ripping down posters advertising our exhibition, in the hope of ruining our chances through lack of publicity.

If this what 'our roots' are about, aren't we better out of it?

Lydia Bauman, July 1986

The Brixton Exhibition of BIGOS is our first exhibition open to every member of the group. The form of the Crypt show which follows will be decided in discussions at the end of the Brixton exhibition.

Whether or not a Polish quality may be perceived in the work exhibited may not be the most important question. What is perhaps of more interest is the recognition of this particular foreign element in British contemporary culture and its relation back to Poland. It may be the links that are being forged between people that will be of more importance than any specific questions of commonality of content or historicism within the work.

Stefan Szczelkun, Secretary, 17-7-86

■ Being of Polish origin has always affected my own view of art making. The experience of being brought up in the U.K. of foreign parentage has left me with a great distaste for nationalistic jingoism and all the near-sighted aspirations for humanity that come with it (Poland knows this more than most!).

Ironically this has not affected my sense of Polishness. The sense of a nationalistic link with a country in which I have never lived is a nation (though romantic) of 'a liberated sense of nationalism'. For me the notion of one's self as an individual has to be as strong (if not stronger) as the notion of one's history - roots. The two are inseparable.

We as Poles display to the world our Polishness (whatever it is, it is within us) by displaying ourselves as individuals as Poles. My view is that: the group should base its philosophy on the widest sense of liberty which it can contain; it should concentrate on making each other aware of our work; we should aim to put together an annual show (which could tour) (the first show will be important!); we should get to know each other as friends . . .

Ondre Nowakowski, excerpt from letter 25-5-86

LYDIA BAUMAN

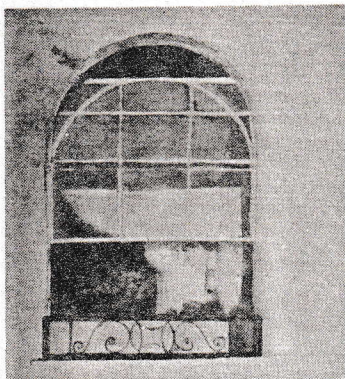
■ Born Warsaw, Poland in 1955; left Poland in 1968, came to England in 1971

■ 1974-78 Graduated in BA Fine Art at Newcastle-upon-Tyne University
1978-80 MA History of Art at Courtauld Institute, London

■ Has exhibited widely in England and has worked as an art critic and lecturer.

■ There is nothing specifically Polish about the character of my work - it is influenced by visual sources from very diverse cultures.

The subject is incidental - an opportunity really for a play of light, surface texture and pattern. To this end I experiment with translucent and textured media such as plaster, gesso, varnishes and wax.



ANDRZEJ BORKOWSKI

■ Born 1949 in Warsaw, Poland

■ 1967-71 University of Warsaw (1975 - MA in Art History)

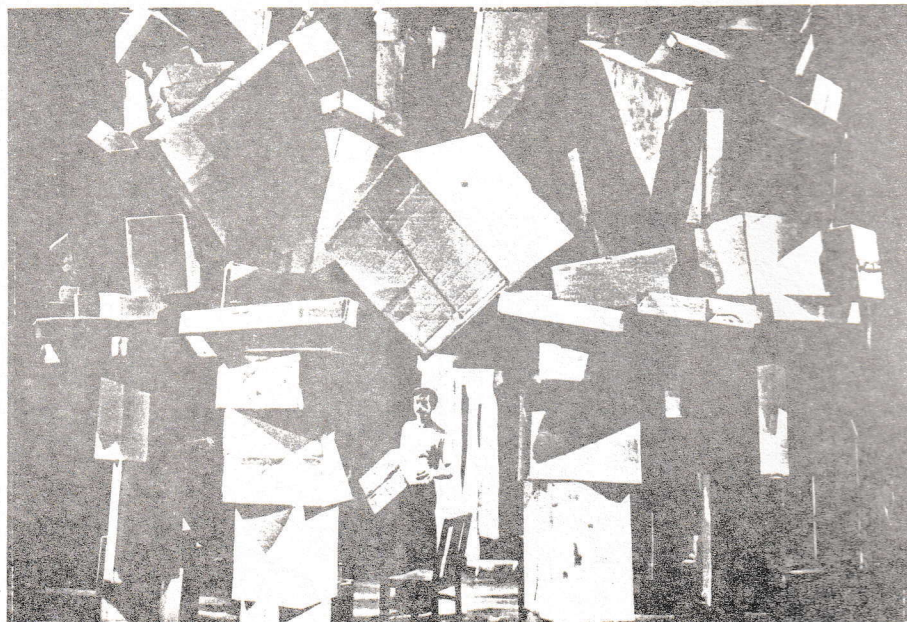
1973-80 Founder member of Akademia Ruchu (Warsaw), theatre co-operative, researching in particular the area between theatre and fine arts.

1977-82 Lecturer in Art History at Academy of Fine Arts, Gdansk, Poland.

1982-84 Work with Hesitate & Demonstrate - visual theatre, London.

1984-86 Work as freelance actor, designer and art critic.

■ I am generally a very interesting person.



MARTIN BLASZK

■ Born Co. Durham, England

■ 1980-84 University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

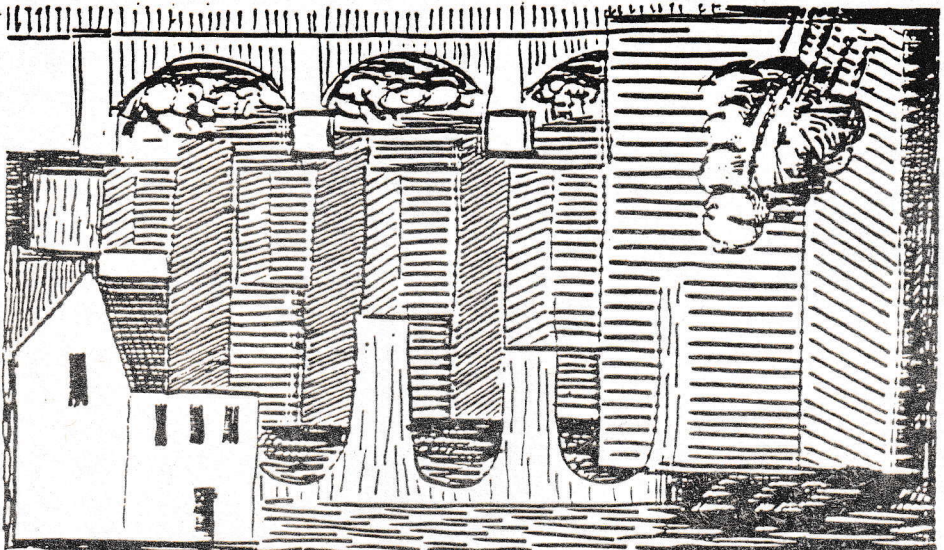
1984 Active in establishment of Whisky Tower Studio

1985 (Jan) Studio in receipt of Northern Arts Award

■ Awards -

1983 Hatton Prize, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

■ In my work I am concerned with the use of line and colour (both are of equal importance) to express my feelings about the environment to which I belong. That is the urban/industrial landscape of the northeast. Central to a greater understanding of this landscape and the means by which I express my feelings about it are my activities within the studio (the microcosm which reflects, through its input of forms and colours, the macrocosm of my surroundings) which encompass still life and the interpretation of non-concrete themes, e.g. music.



TESSA BLATCHLEY

■ Born 1950 in Inverness, Scotland

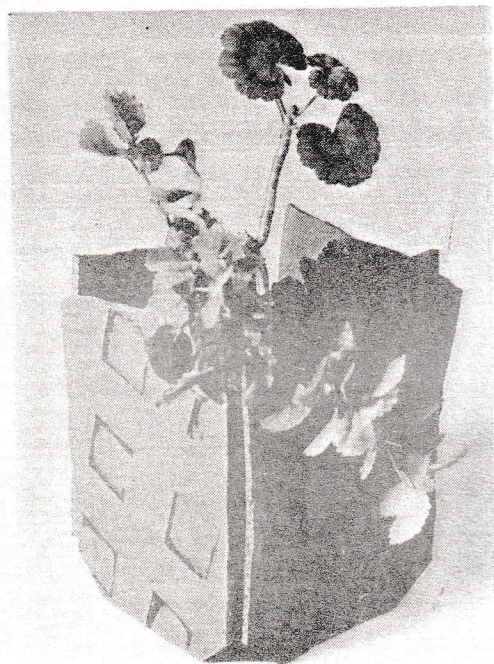
■ 1969-70 Leeds College of Art, Foundation Course

1970-73 Ravensbourne College of Art, BA Fine Art (Sculpture)

1982-84 Goldsmith's College of Art, Postgraduate Diploma in
Ceramics

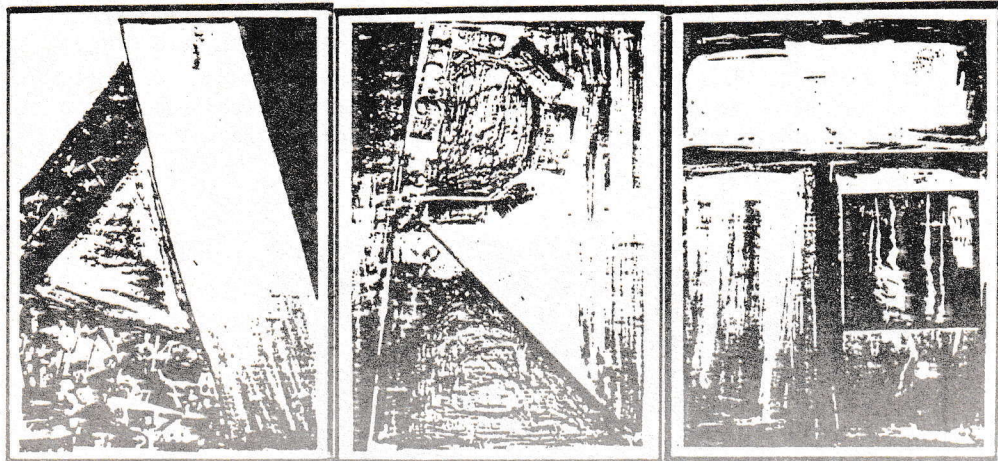
■ My pots are sculptural in form but are all designed to be functional. The clay is high fired in order to hold water. The decoration evolved from a mixture of photographing city landscapes and a fascination with abstract fabric designs.

The work evolved from photographing city landscapes and the erosion of its surfaces. Materials used are red and white earthenware clays and handmade paper.



KRYSTYNA BORKOWSKA

- Born 1954 in Warsaw, Poland
- 1977-83 Studied Painting and Printmaking in Lodz Academy of Art; graduated MA in 1983
1983 on Lives and works in London
- Works in various media including printmaking, photography, painting and collage.



MARGARET BIALOKOZ SMITH

■ Born Warsaw, Poland

■ 1951-57 Studied at the Technical College of Art and the Academy of Art, Gdansk, Poland

1957 Studied at St. Martins School of Art for National Diploma in Design

1973 Further Education Teacher's Certificate at Trent Polytechnic

■ My subject is Man -

Fate of Man

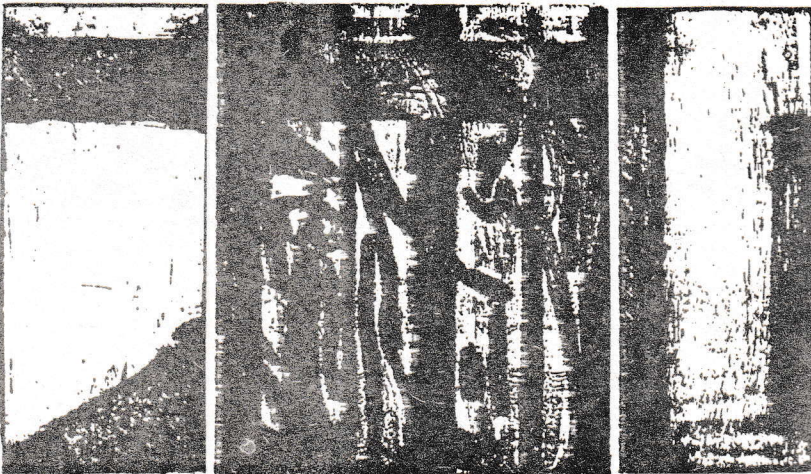
Life of Man

Body of Man

Spirit of Man

Meaning of Man

I express it directly or symbolically. I work at it spiritually, emotionally, intellectually and physically. Every picture is a new birth, a fresh experience, a new challenge. Every medium I use offers different possibilities. I concentrate on one technique for a period of time, until it leads me to a new one. I work towards that which I do not know.



JERZY GEORGE BORT

■ Born Warsaw, Poland

■ Studied at Warsaw University from 1936 until the onset of World War II when he was forced to explore the Soviet Union. He left for the Middle East with the Polish Army, where he transferred to the Polish Air Force, where he served in 306 Squadron and Royal Air Force 41 and 29 Squadrons.

Part-time study at Croydon School of Art in Graphics, Etching, History of Art, Painting with Prof. Marian Bokhusz-Szyszko Group. Retired from Medical Research Council as Electronics Technologist (Medical).



MARIA CHEVSKA

■ Born London, 1948

■ Painter, teaching part time. Exhibiting this year at Chapter Gallery, Cardiff, and Guildhall Gallery, London.



MIETEK DYMNY

■ Born in 1942 in Poland.

■ 1962-64 Teacher Training College, Art Dept.

1964-70 Cracow Academy of Fine Art. 1980 Half Moon Theatre.

1982 Brixton Art Gallery.

■ Like every good artist he is a keen observer of reality and he does not stop at this, but transforms his observations, memories and ~~dreams~~ into very personal and engaging art. Since his studies at the Cracow Academy of Fine art he has been interested in both painting and sculpture, which he combines in an original way.

The impressions of life that are communicated from his works may occasionally seem pessimistic or even brutal and shocking. They are never boring. His art is not meant to please but to stimulate.



RUTH JACOBSON

■ Born in London of Polish-Jewish parentage, 1941

■ 1959-63 Studied Painting and Etching at Slade School of Fine Art, London

1963-64 Studied at Manchester

■ I feel my work is haunted by the spirits of my ancestors; by the poetry and strangeness in the writings of Isaac Bashevis Singer; by the melodies of folk songs; by the guttural, beautiful/ugly Yiddish language, patchwork of the Jews' wanderings through Europe, as by the musical Polish language; by the mystery of light and shadow; by the relentless pageant of history.



KASIA JANUSZKO

■ Born Warsaw, Poland in 1957; left Poland in 1971 to live for two years in Africa, then moved to London

■ BA Honours Degree from Camberwell School of Art

■ Her work consists of drawings, photographs and prints.



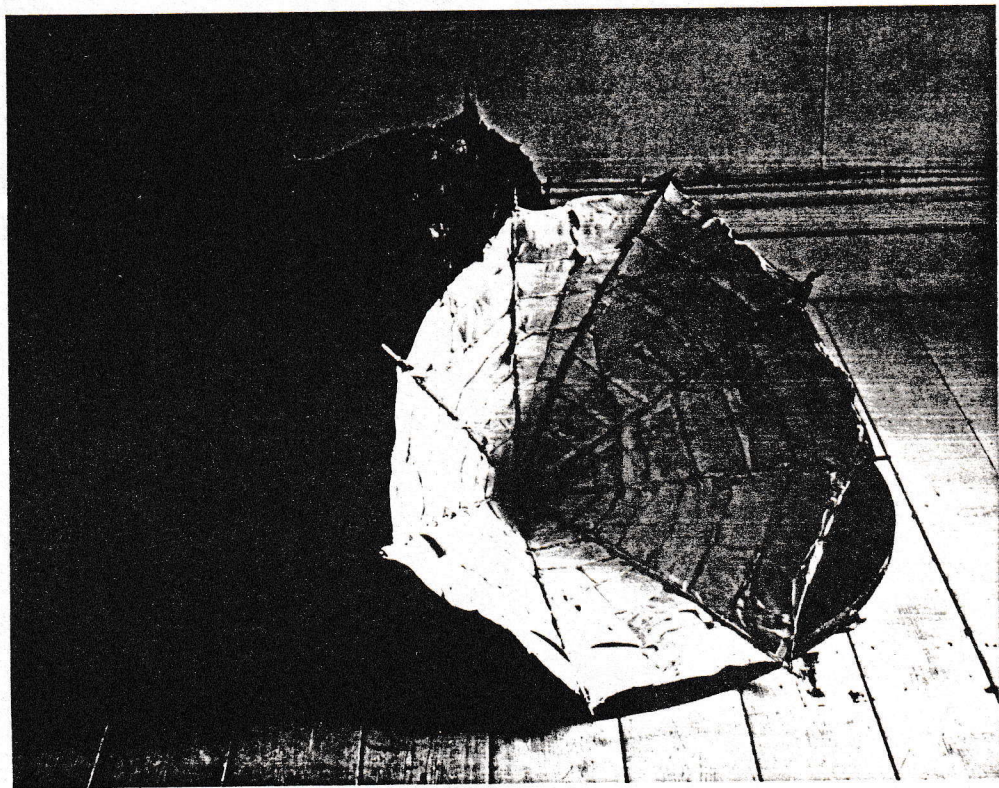
LOUISE SEVERYN KOSINSKA

■ Born 1959

■ 1978-80 Foundation studies at Harrow School of Art

1979 (Summer) Course in making stained glass at the Centre for
Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Oxford

1980-83 BA (Hons) in Fine Art, Portsmouth Polytechnic



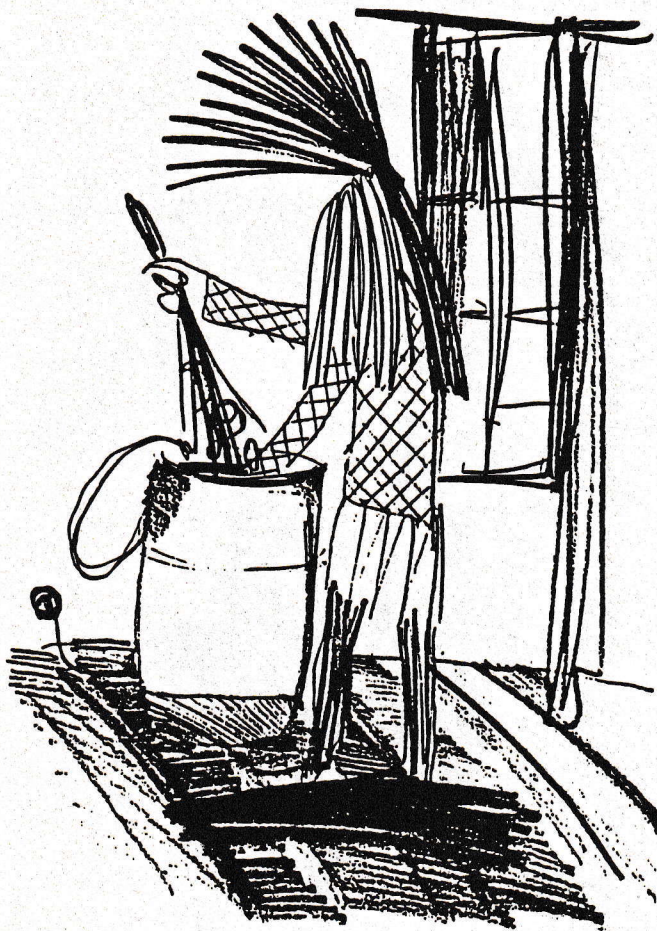
SIMON LEWANDOWSKI

- Born Mansfield, Nottinghamshire in 1952
- 1970-73 Newcastle University, Fine Art
- Member of Impact Theatre Co-op from 1981 to 1984. Has worked as a painter, printmaker and set designer.



EWA MANN

- Born Krakow, Poland in 1948; moved to London in 1980
- 1968-76 Studied Painting at Krakow Academy of Fine Art
- Makes mostly paintings and drawings in different media.



ROSITA MATYNIOWNA

■ Born West Germany, Polish Resettlement Refugee Camp, 1961

■ 1963-80 Ockerton Venture, England
Birmingham School of Art
St. Martin's School of Art, BA

■ Folklore, myth, tales of the unknown, SEDUCTION.
Colour, involvement, blindness, PAINTING.



JAMOULA McKEAN

■ Born 1948

■ 1974 BA Graphic Design, London College of Printing
1975 Printmaking, grant-aided specialist year, London College of Printing
1983 Advanced Typography, part-time special student, London College of Printing

■ I work with drawing, painting and photography, sometimes mixing all three in what I call 'Photodrawings'. The work is thematic. My main sources for reference are Jung, with my own interpretation of Archetypal Imagery, and Barthes, with the notion of recreating a new mythology as we live our lives, in particular, commonplace language/terminology about women.



ONDRE NOWAKOWSKI

■ Born 1954, South Wales

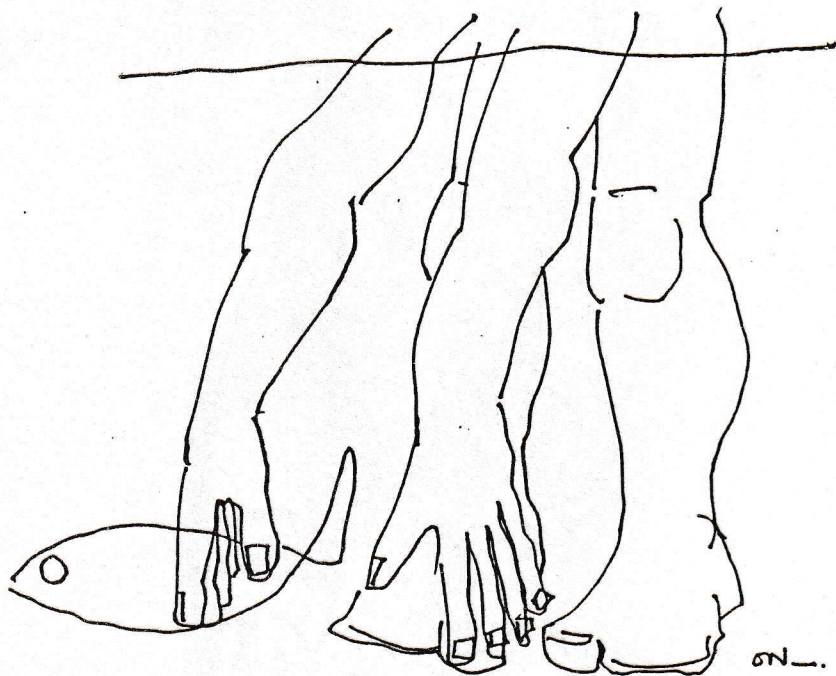
■ 1979-83 Fine Art, North Staffs Polytechnic

1983-84 Fine Art, Manchester Polytechnic

1984 Graduated MA

■ Since 1984, lives and works in South Cheshire. Works in various media - currently wood, mainly carving/drawing.

My current work is a new direction for me into figurative wood carving. It is a combination of a confrontation with a new discipline and a search for new iconography.



MARGARET OCHOCKI

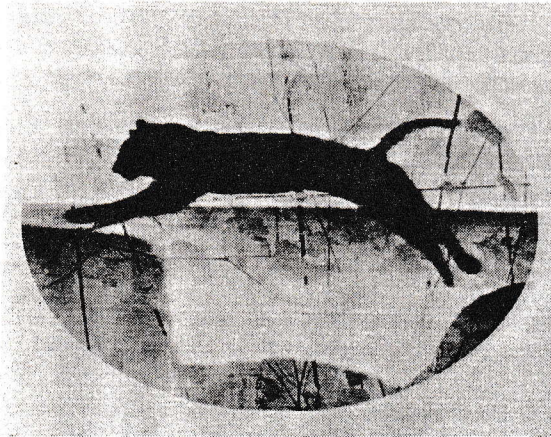
■ Born 1958, Bury, Lancashire

■ 1975-76 Rochdale College of Art, Foundation Course

1976-79 Sunderland Polytechnic, BA (Hons) Fine Art (Photography)

1979-82 Sunderland Polytechnic, MPhil Fine Art/Humanities

■ I am a photographer who hates cameras but loves the darkroom. I hand-colour and partly redraw the photos I take until they become something I can recognise and enjoy; something which lies half-way between observation and introspection.



JOZEFA ROGOCKI

■ Born 1957

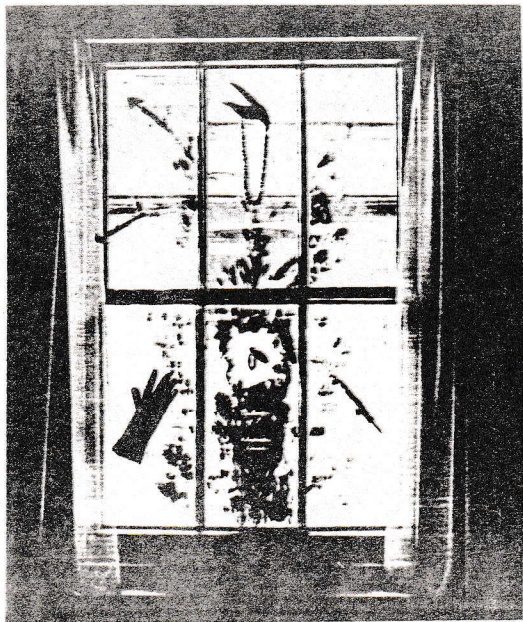
■ 1976-79 Brighton Polytechnic, BA Fine Art

1979-80 Chelsea School of Art, MA Fine Art

■ My work is a continuous collage of found objects, words and materials reappropriated to create a shift in meaning located at the meeting point between the inherent qualities of association and history within the fragments and traces, and the personal will, memory and history of the constructor and interpreter.

The concerns central to my work are - the relationship between private, individual experience and a collective communication - alienation - disembodiment - and an experience of place.

My interest in placing my work and self in the context of 'Anglo-Pole' is to explore the relation between personal history and its influence on the nature of the enquiry one follows in the 'artwork' in a broader context.



JOLA SCICINSKA

- Born, Hammersmith, London; now lives in East Ham, London
- Works with the traditional Polish peasant art of papercutting, and with collage.

The use of papercutting as a medium makes explicit the Polish background from which I see my London reality and that is shaped by the interaction of many cultures. The underlying theme of all my work is a celebration of ourselves and our surroundings - whoever we are - as one of the necessary steps to end all oppression.



STEFAN SZCZELKUN

■ Born Hammersmith, London, 1948

■ 1967-72 Portsmouth Polytechnic

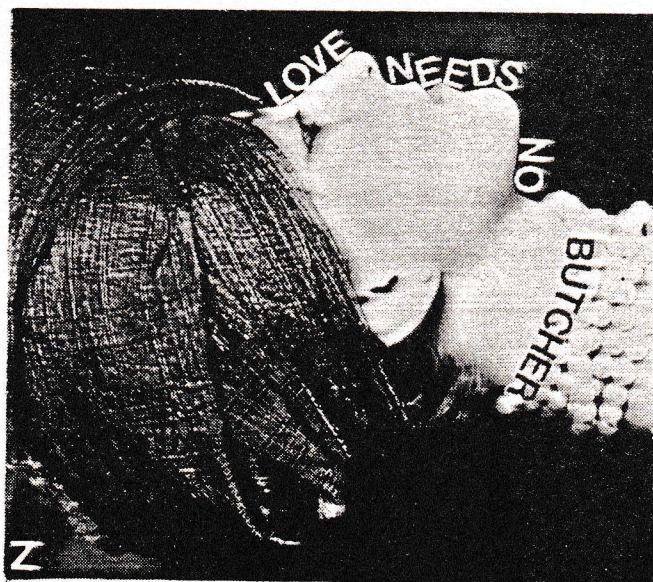
■ Since 1968, has been involved in avant garde activities in various media, apart from the visual, including music (Scratch Orchestra) and dance (X6 and New Dance Magazine). Writing has always accompanied his art activity and has been published in various forms; notably Survival Scrapbook, Shelter, Food and Energy (Unicom, UK, and Schocken Books, USA, 1972-74) and recently Artist Liberation: rough notes 1986 (self published in a database format).

His main work is involved with time based live art using mixed media and often within a collaborative framework. Organised the Anglo-Polish Artists Group in 1984.



SILVIA C. ZIRANEK

■ The hero is a woman. I am not a hammer, though I look good with a man, and say what I want . . . (w)or(d) is not (w)all. I get on with things that count . . . like curries, and wiring; the artist in her studio, the woman with her axe. All right, so I'm a perfectionist; I expect results; but since when has practicality been considered respectable? Emotion can prove to be as efficient as poor lighting (he asked about lerv, and looked at my fuse box). Woman, so suitable for everyday use (Costa del Floorboard; I'm a person, of course).



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Good "BIGOS"* is a mixture of varieties. Always different, cooked in a number of ways, it carries an individual mark of the house, the place and the time. Next to sauerkraut, fine chopped once and pressed in a barrel for the long months of winter, we would have fresh cabbage, new in the culinary adventure. Meat would flavour the dish and the wider the variety, the better. Dried fungi we would have to soak to make them soft. Later they would give an aroma unknown to English cuisine. Let's add some prunes to place memories of the orchard next to that of the woods full of fungi. Then some spice: black pepper from the orient and a few laurel leaves from a prophetic bush of poetry; the sweetness of honey and salt of tears . . . and don't forget to add red wine, little by little during the long hours of stewing.

Now gently, without losing their individual features, all these various ingredients should begin to share the secret charms of their flavours and aromas. Little by little they would blend in a cauldron of alchemico-culinary transmutation to appear again as BIGOS - that special Polish dish.

We must not expect too much from the first cooking. We had better put our pot behind a window or outside in a garden, in the alien cold world of a winter night, but in the morning we should start again.

The artistic BIGOS of our exhibition presents an early stage of culinary proceedings, that of the gathering together of all the contents. Our cooking process has barely started. Not really known to each other, suspicious and sceptical, but still we all agree to search for some common element, source, tradition . . . We are not certain about its existence, but by our will and concern we are proving its liveliness.

Andrzej Borkowski

*BIGOS = traditional Polish cabbage stew.