

**NOTES FROM THE FUTURE OF ART**  
**Selected Writings by Jerzy Ludwiński**

EDITED BY Magdalena Ziółkowska



**VAN ABBEMUSEUM • VEENMAN PUBLISHERS • VAMPR #01**

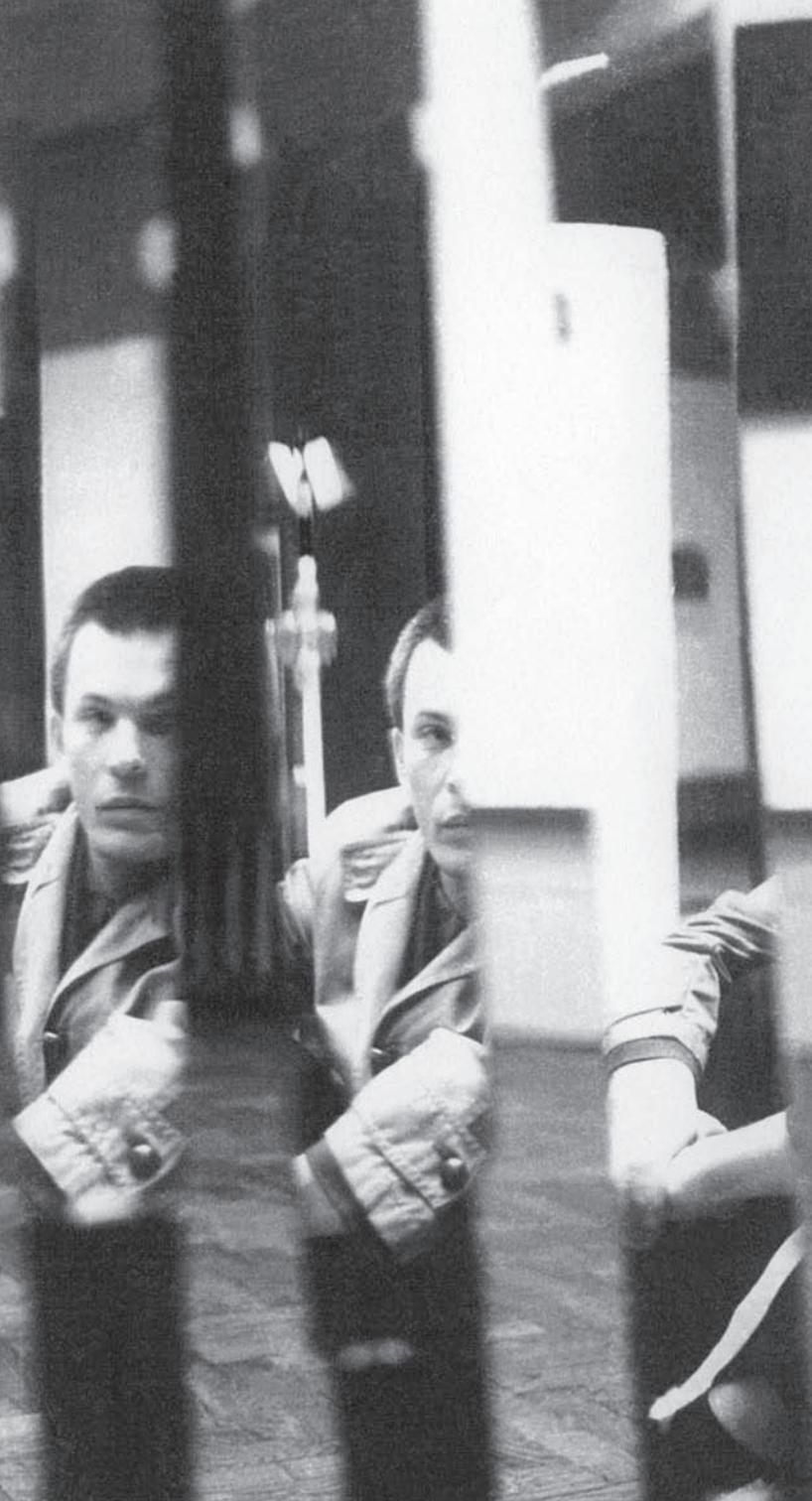






**NOTES FROM THE FUTURE OF ART**





◀ Jerzy Ludwiński with  
a work by Włodzimierz  
Borowski, *MANifest*  
*LUSzrzany [MIRror*  
*MANifesto]*, 1966,  
*The First Syncretic Show*,  
Office for Contemporary  
Art, Lublin.  
courtesy: the archive of  
CCA, Warsaw.

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**VAN ABBEMUSEUM PUBLIC RESEARCH #01**  
EINDHOVEN • 2007

## VAN ABBEMUSEUM PUBLIC RESEARCH

One of the core tasks of a museum is research. This is understood in a variety of different ways by different museums. At the **Van Abbemuseum** we identify two core research tasks; to research the collection and important artistic positions that are permanently represented in this museum; and to research the history and ideology of the museum in general, as a specific class of public institution.

**VAN ABBEMUSEUM PUBLIC RESEARCH** is designed to make public the fruits of our various researches. We will determine our own priorities as a museum and also invite researchers from outside the core team to develop projects of their own. We will also try to record public knowledge and memories of the museum in order to extend the types of voices that can contribute to museum history. Outcomes of the research will include publications, exhibition projects and media productions.

One series under this rubric will be dedicated to the original writings of key curatorial figures or institutional groups who have speculated on the function and possibility of the museum since 1945. The individuals can serve as inspirational sources for future development as well as a record of particular museological speculations. The first of these is the Polish art historian, critic and curator **Jerzy Ludwiński** [1930–2000], to be followed in 2008 by Dutch museum director **Jean Leering** [1934–2005].

## NOTES FROM THE FUTURE OF ART

- 07 | **Charles Esche** Foreword
- 09 | **Magdalena Ziółkowska** Introduction
- ▶ | **Luiza Nader** Jerzy Ludwiński. Counter-Dictionary

### ART

- 17 | Art in the Postartistic Age
- 27 | Appendix to Art in the Postartistic Age
- 34 | Wrocław '70
- 38 | Neutralisation of Criteria
- 45 | Unidentified Art
- 50 | The Stages of the Evolution of Art
- 54 | Mountain
- 55 | The Art of Art-Documents
- 56 | \* \* \* [process ➔ work of art]
- 60 | Breton's Staff and the Third Art
- 65 | Art at the Stage of Explosion
- 66 | The Age of the Outsiders
- 70 | Action POINT
- 71 | \* \* \* [swimming]
- 74 | The Aesthetic of Glue
- 82 | Art 'beyond', art 'AWAY FROM'
- 88 | Art AFTER
- 94 | \* \* \* [Radziejowice]
- 95 | The Chronicle of the Avant-Garde
- 96 | Wrocław – Inauguration – State College of Fine Arts
- 100 | \* \* \* [a radical detachment from what was already there]
- 104 | Novelty in Art is the Measure of the Artist's Imagination.  
Jerzy Ludwiński talks to Paweł Polit



## **INSTITUTION**

- 121** | The Greatest Minds of the Twentieth Century
- 124** | \* \* \* [Man's Natural Surroundings – Newspeak]
- 125** | The Museum of Current Art in Wrocław [General Concept]
- 132** | Centre for Artistic Research. Programme
- 140** | Situation
- 146** | \* \* \* [the sanatorium edifice]
- 147** | Microgallery
- 151** | \* \* \* [15. XII. 92, MA]
- 153** | It Begins in Wrocław... **Wanda Gołkowska and Jan Chwaczyk**  
in Conversation with **Magdalena Ziółkowska**

## **ARTIST**

- 178** | \* \* \* [All artists share – the same potential – unlimited]
- 179** | The Zone Free from Convention
- 190** | A Report from the 'Anti-Happening'
- 196** | The Mimicry of Neutrdrome
- 199** | Conversation. **Jarosław Kozłowski and Jerzy Ludwiński**
  
- 222** | Calendar
  
- 234** | Biography
- 238** | List of Sources

## Foreword

Since taking over as director of **Van Abbemuseum** in 2004, I have been interested in how the idea of the museum as a public institution has evolved in general. In particular, I want to explore proposals for the museum that seek to break with its nineteenth century bourgeois legacy, and to introduce some of the radicalism and experiment associated with modern and contemporary art. Such radicalism has been an important aspect of the history of museums since their beginnings in the French revolution. For over two hundred years, there has been a battle for the meaning of museums, as various attempts to reform them have reflected on and sometimes led social and political change; as their instigators sought to get closer to the ideal museum as a site from which the world could be imagined differently and ultimately changed for the better.

Therefore, in thinking through any future policy directions for the **Van Abbemuseum**, I am indebted to the many people who have been there before, individuals who made proposals for new kinds of relations between museums, artists and publics that can still inspire us today. It is significant that most of these proposals were led by, or made in collaboration with their contemporary artists, whose developing forms of aesthetic production were driving new types of art institution. Living artists are therefore always the key to the possibility that exists for museums. At the same time, ideas for the new museum were often motivated by a political or philosophical desire on the part of curators or museum directors to see art reach beyond its social or economic boundaries. It is in the meeting of such artistic and political ambitions, in their widest sense, that ideas are ignited and new 'possible museums' are born.

The tradition of the **Van Abbemuseum** is illustrative of some of these ambitions, oscillating between an emphasis on the social role of art and its autonomous qualities. To avoid simply another oscillation, while also learning from the past and building a legacy of institutional experimentation for our own locality, with this book we introduce a new series of research publications. Each book will feature an important, if sometimes neglected, curatorial figure who has been active in the past fifty years. Our main aim is to publish these individuals in their own words, so that our many publics can judge the value of the proposals for themselves, though interpretative texts are sometimes included. We have chosen to begin the series with **Jerzy Ludwiński** [1930–2000], a comparatively unknown figure internationally, who nevertheless produced ideas that can be seen to bear a close relationship to some current developments. **Ludwiński** was working in the People's Republic of Poland at a time when artistic expression was subject to a degree of direct political interference. This probably contributed to his inability to realise certain of his ideas, or at least to the short lived manifestation of them. However, the extent to which his writings resonate with our contemporary situation is remarkable. They range widely across the field of art, while there is a consistent interest in institutional structures and how they can be matched to the conditions of art, artists and different publics.

I would like to thank **Magdalena Ziółkowska** for her dedicated editorial work, and **Dejan Kršić** for another great design that will serve as a template for the future books in this series.

**Charles Esche**

DIRECTOR • VAN ABBEMUSEUM

# Introduction

*Notes From the Future of Art* is the first collection of texts by **Jerzy Ludwiński** [1930–2000] published in English.

**Ludwiński** was an art historian, critic, curator, initiator and organiser of artistic symposia and *plein airs*, founder of the Mona Lisa Gallery and an academic professor. He fulfilled those functions on the peripheries of the state system of his time, activating, in turn, the cultural circles in Lublin, Wrocław, Toruń and Poznań. Within the frame of artistic life established by the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland, he marked out his own 'playing field', where such notions as 'critic', 'curator', 'gallery' and 'museum' underwent significant transformation. The models of cultural institutions created by **Ludwiński** at the end of the 1960s – Museum of Current Art, Mona Lisa Gallery and Centre for Artistic Research – became not only the places of a particular reflection on art, but above all, an institutional shelter for the first manifestations of conceptual art in Poland. They happened to occur when the existing model of artistic life had almost ceased to function in Poland, and revealed the loss of an artistic centre, the consequent scattering of activity and the incapability of the media and art criticism to respond. Also the vocabulary of contemporary art, along with the ways of thinking and writing about artistic expression, the status of a work of

art and its new developments, turned out to be invalid.

In August 1966 **Jerzy Ludwiński** became the commissioner of the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium of Artists and Scientists, entitled *Art in a Changing World*, taking place in the newly built Nitrogen Plant in Puławy. One of the aims mentioned by the organisers was to reveal the interdependence of science, technology and art, to point out that the discourses of these disciplines were interwoven. The authorities explicitly appropriated the symbolism of the meeting in order to strengthen their position; its context and localisation served to legitimise the mechanisms of cultural politics. The symposium ended in an atmosphere of scandal, and alarmed the local establishment. Local authorities decided to 'silence' the situation and thus the whole documentation of the event was destroyed.

In the same year **Ludwiński** created the programme of the Museum of Current Art. It refers to the world of its time by presenting a critique of the official cultural politics of the Polish People's Republic, and exposing the inadequacy of the vocabulary previously developed by historians and art theorists. It also introduces the terms of a new, transformed area of artistic practice, into the domain of historical

categories. **Ludwiński** called the Museum of Current Art 'a sensitive seismograph', 'a catalyst', 'a testing ground', 'a melting pot' of new tendencies and attitudes. It was supposed to grasp an artistic process and its consequent proposals in the exact moment of their coming into being. The concept of the Museum directly targeted the organisation of artistic life on both a micro and macro level. It was responsible for the introduction of such terms as 'risk', 'reflex' and 'individual responsibility' into the area of institutional functioning and reflection. The Museum of Current Art proved to be a flexible project appropriate for the artistic reality of the late 1960s; doubly flexible. It widened the limits of definition and artistic categories, and also challenged the symbolic values attached to the institution. The Museum of Current Art was no longer a traditional museum, the main protagonists of which were a collection, its history, values, opinions and particular works. These notions were radically transformed and the weight of symbolic capital transferred to less solid ground. The 'playing field' marked out by **Ludwiński** was nothing less than a platform for ideas and reflections heading into the future, dedicated to art being created in a certain moment and to the quest for the most interesting phenomena. It created a possibility to accurately express and trace the logic of the development of new art, to which the traditional aesthetic and formal categories no longer referred. The

organisational shape and structure of the Museum of Current Art doubly minimised the distance between an institution and the development of artistic phenomena. The modern fine arts were considered to be an 'open system' undergoing changes. The internal organisation of the official institutions closed themselves to the presentation of the new and newest phenomena, of presenting an art that was not only focused on the visual experience, but also art for which the 'idea' was the main medium of the artist's activity. In contrast, new categories – such as attitude, creative process, artistic fact, concept and reality – became the components of the 'open system'. As a result, the concept of the 'institution' and an understanding of its function in artistic life gained new meaning. **Ludwiński's** project was characterised by the absence of a formal and hierarchical organisational structure and a lack of artistic orthodoxy. It offered scholars ongoing participation in artistic reflection, focused on the information and documentation process and ensured an absolute openness to new art forms, provoking and accelerating the process of art's extension, and the necessity to transform the artistic institution according to the changes in the field of art. This is what makes **Ludwiński's** concept one of the most radical museum projects, according to which a 'museum' turns out to be a 'space for discourse', geographically sovereign and temporally independent.

The programme of the Museum of Current Art and the activities of 1966 were the starting point for my research which lasted more than a year. It developed into the project *Notes From the Future of Art* realised in the **Van Abbemuseum** in 2007, of which this publication is a part, along with a **Plug In** presentation. The book contains not only a selection of theoretical and critical essays written for the Wrocław monthly *Odra* on the occasion of symposia and *plein airs*, but also the handwritten notes and drafts of lectures, preserved as raw, unpublished material revealing the porosity of language and the oral character of many texts. The assembled material is organised into three parts, entitled *Art*, *Institution*, *Artist*, each is followed by a particular conversation, in which **Jerzy Ludwiński** takes different roles. The *Counter-Dictionary* written by **Luiza Nader** appears throughout the book, the only non-authorial voice in the whole publication.

\* \* \*

This publication would not have been possible without the participation of many people. Here I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the project, especially to **Małgorzata Iwanowska-Ludwińska** for access to archival material; to **Jarosław Kozłowski**, **Wanda Gołkowska** and **Jan Chwałczyk** for the significant meetings, conversations and invaluable factual help; to **Tadeusz Rolke** and **Zdzisław Holuka** for the photographs;

to **Paweł Polit** for his valuable guidance; to **Luiza Nader** for the significant *Counter-Dictionary*. I would like to thank all the translators; **Jane Warrilow** (copy editor); **Ola Berłożcka** and **Piotr Woźniakiewicz** from CCA, Ujazdowski Castle.

**Magdalena Ziółkowska**

GUEST CURATOR • VAN ABBEMUSEUM

**ART**



PHOTO: Elżbieta Strzemiecka.

COURTESY: the archive of CCA, Warsaw.

# Luiza Nader Jerzy Ludwiński. Counter- Dictionary

**LUIZA NADER** [b. 1976],  
art historian and critic.

# Evolution

In biology, evolution is the change in the heritable traits of a population over successive generations, as determined by shifts in the allele frequencies of genes. The basic mechanisms that produce evolutionary change are natural selection and genetic drift; these two mechanisms act on the genetic variation created by mutation, genetic recombination and gene flow. As in Richard Dawkins' book, evolution is like a 'blind watchmaker', it has no predefined direction,<sup>01</sup> Ludwiński claims that art development is not a teleological design but is happening closer to the way that the universe and matter evolve, or cells function in a physical and mathematically described reality. Such a model works both on the micro (evolution of species) and macro (global scale evolution) level and is far from the Hegelian *Aufhebung* dialectics. Ludwiński points out that the evolution of art is a constant increase of extreme oppositions: materialisation versus ultimate dematerialisation (and vice versa), addition/complexity versus subtraction/simplicity; the gradual expansion of the definition of art and the subsequent elimination of concepts like work of art, artist, author; identification of work of art with creative process. This view of art development has little to do with the notion of cultural evolution based on social progress. Commenting on art paradigms, Ludwiński did not maintain that what follows on the chronological axis is superior to the previous state of the development of human civilisation. Moving freely in historical time, he was interested in the moments of change, crisis, stagnation, acceleration or retardation. Chronology in this case has an application as a coordinate cutting across the axis of arguments in favour of cultural evolution, acknowledging the direction of art evolution with no hint to its aim. ✕

01 | Richard Dawkins,  
*The Blind Watchmaker*,  
W. W. Norton &  
Company Inc.,  
New York 1986.



## Art in the Postartistic Age

Though the evolution of art is a continuous process, it is interrupted by revolutions and breakthroughs. I intend to discuss here the fourth revolution in the development of art, which took place in the 1960s. The structure of that revolution, if it can be presented in a systematic way at all, (the attempt seems rather risky and doomed to failure), was shaped by two basic groups of artistic phenomena. The first group consists of the phenomena that grew out of the tendency known as destructive art. This would include different activities such as: *activité*, happening, event, ephemeral art. The other group has its roots in what used to be called the constructivist tradition, and it would include different visual experiments with light and motion, as well as such phenomena as: environment, different forms of labyrinths, the development of multiples, minimal art and tendency zero. Both groups of artistic phenomena shared certain characteristics. One of them was the tendency to reach the point 'zero', as if artists sought to move backwards and forwards on the borderline of doing nothing. The other shared characteristic was the increasing tendency to destroy the idea of a work of art. It should be clearly stated that the differentiation between the two groups of artistic phenomena is rooted in the tradition and habit of dividing art into two trends. In reality, there is no such division in art. Its picture is much more complex and varied. Both trends are frequently interrelated or even overlapping, and the majority of tendencies listed above could be justifiably described as constructivist art. They all fit well into both categories of artistic phenomena outlined above. The origin of ephemeral art can be found in the group involved in visual experiments and in dadaist practice. The same is true of environment. The development of multiples, initiated by **Marcel Duchamp**, who commissioned three hundred identical bicycle wheels, touched upon geometrical art, one of whose manifestations is minimal art. In both cases it is impossible to retain any artistic divisions, not only into different trends – and art does not tolerate

polarities – but into tendencies, either. The disintegration of artistic tendencies, which took place in the 1960s, is now complete. Each tendency has become a genre in its own right, highly nuanced and multi-faceted. And this has led to the emergence of impossible art.

Impossible art is not a tendency, but rather a new artistic sphere, comprising equally the elements of both tendencies outlined earlier. It is not however a simple synthesis or the allying of former trends, but rather their further dispersion. Impossible art brought about such a reevaluation of artistic phenomena that it has become necessary to redefine art itself. A new definition would have to take into consideration all the new elements of art, which have not been considered before. It should be more capacious than all the previous definitions. Consequently, impossible art in all its variations would become a notion much broader than all the former definitions of art. In the last two years various attempts have been made to define and classify impossible art. These attempts have not yet been entirely successful, though some statements produced by both artists and art theorists from those circles deserve closer consideration. **Douglas Huebler**, an American artist, thus referred to his own practice: “Art is not SOMETHING, art is EVERYTHING”, with the exception of all the things that resemble art.

**Thomas M. Messer**, Director of [the Solomon R. Guggenheim] Museum in New York, in his article published in *Art in America* listed three features which he considered characteristic of this type of work. Firstly, the works were unusually big, often reaching such a gigantic size, that the viewer lost direct visual contact with them. Secondly, this kind of art was transitory, not designed to last but “to inevitably make the way to its own demise”. And thirdly, it was not loyal to reality and to all art as reality. It was the way in which artists opposed the *status quo* and the situation existing in nearly all manifestations of life.

Impossible art has also been divided into several sections, none of which should be identified with directions or tendencies in art. Within one such section the following types of work have been distinguished: land art, art of the water, art of the sky, concept art. The last one, also known as conceptual art, is the most extreme form of art as it can do without material works. “Everything I can do with objects, I can do with non-objects” says **Joseph Kosuth**, one of the most prominent representatives of conceptual art.

Thus, impossible art is not characterised by any shared stylistic features; it is a mosaic of hugely diverse phenomena, which often have nothing in common, neither in terms of broadly defined artistic ideology, nor visually, especially as they often materialise only in the viewer’s imagination. The reception of these works, therefore, can elicit a broad range of responses. So far, impossible art has been the most radical expression of the revolution that took place in the 1960s.

To try to adequately characterise the structure of that revolution would be a highly challenging task, with no chance of success. Nevertheless, an attempt at a more ordered presentation of the process of the development of art in the last few years can be very useful for many reasons. Unquestionably there have appeared a number of new elements, which until recently have been absent from art, and whose presence would almost exclude some objects or other artistic facts from the domain of art.

The first such characteristic, the origins of which can be traced to the inter-war period and found both in the work of the dadaists and **Marcel Duchamp**, and of artists dedicated to geometrical abstraction, was the complete devaluation of the original and of the hand-made quality of a work of art executed by the artist. Since then a work of art can be made by any company or produced in a factory, without the artist’s involvement. It could be reproduced in a series, as was the case following the proliferation of multiples. And finally, it could be transformed or even shaped by the public,

invited by the artist to participate in the process of creation. The second characteristic, which has become especially prominent recently, has been the elimination of the material object itself. This often entailed the degradation of all the visual elements. The paradox of this new situation, which is worth noting, is that it often results in the creation of large and complex devices, which – as in visual, kinetic or light art – are not art objects in their own right, but instruments to create simple illusions, such as, for example, light projections. Conceptual art and idea art dispense with material objects, and artists such as **Arakawa**, **Kossuth** or **Huebler** have conceived structures that can never be constructed.

The third characteristic that can be distinguished, is an entirely new way of recording a work of art. The artists mentioned above document their concepts and ideas by means which have so far been assigned more to literature than to visual art. Instead of making art objects they simply produce their writings, which serve as the basis for the materialisation of the objects. Boundaries have been crossed between different artistic genres, which until that point were viewed as separate art forms and which have now lost their distinct constitutive features. Nowadays, music pieces, which have a visual character, are being written in the circles of such composers as **John Cage**. Sound also happens to be the major component of works which would be traditionally representative of the visual arts. Such genres as concrete poetry use either graphic signs or are recorded on tape. All this is the outcome of the obliteration of the borders between different artistic disciplines, which until recently have been considered separate. Such a development, as, for example, a happening, operates on the borders between the visual arts, music and theatre.

The fourth characteristic, which has been marked very distinctly, is the incorporation of time into the work of art, the structure of which has, until recently, been exclusively spatial. The process originated with visual experiments in which movement was added to art objects. It was carried considerably further by ephemeral art,

in which the existence of material objects was defined by time. In the work of **Jean Tinguely**, the machine constructed by the artist destroyed itself at the end of the exhibition. The most radical step forward, however; to introduce action which takes place in time but lacks material manifestation, was the happening – a *sui generis* improvised performance.

The fifth characteristic of the revolution in question is the new complexity of the relationship between the artist – the work of art – and the viewer, which has lost its traditional tripartite structure. The process, on a larger scale, was initiated by the neo-dadaists and new realists, who invited the public to transform their paintings; in the circles of constructivist art and visual experiments the public was also permitted to change the composition of paintings, thus rendering the works quite relative. However, the major breakthrough occurred in different kinds of activities, especially in happenings, whose participants were at the same time the viewers. In 1965 in London, there was a show of **Ben**, who sat for twenty-four hours in a shop window. As was suggested in his artistic statement, he was both the author of the show, the work of art itself and the public, since he watched street traffic for the duration of the work. All the predictable relationships were thus turned upside down.

The sixth characteristic, which is perhaps the most radical of those listed here, is a complete disintegration of both the spatial and temporal structure of a work of art. In the case of some activities similar to happenings or impossible art, the action could spread throughout the globe, as was the case with a TV happening by **Marta Minujin**. In the different manifestations and activities of impossible art it is difficult to know when the action of art begins because it is difficult to decide at which point of creation art starts to manifest itself. It also happens that there is no clearly defined end to an action since it neither comes to an end at all or, imperceptibly, it becomes fused with everyday reality.

And finally, the seventh characteristic consists of the relocation of the centre of gravity of the work of art, from the structural sphere of a work of art – spatial or temporal – to the conceptual sphere of ideas, offering a new picture of reality. The origins of that situation should be sought at the moment when the material object was devalued and the balance between its conception and realisation was undermined. Impossible art in general, and conceptual art in particular, offer a number of examples of works of art, which comprise material objects, sometimes even of gigantic size, but their visual forms are irrelevant. It is only the concretisation of the object's meaning in the viewer's imagination that matters. There are also works, whose only realisation is their conception, or rather what used to be regarded as conception. Not infrequently, their only realisation is the revelation of the art process itself, which, in turn, can amount to the artist's programme, expressed by means of documentation and arbitrary systems of signs, which need not necessarily be visual.

The last, or eighth characteristic of the revolution in question is the artists' attempt to remove themselves from what is traditionally defined as the artistic order. This order is perhaps sustained only by force of habit and the belief that it is inevitable, whereas in fact it can be an artificial creation at the time when the borderline between art and reality has been obliterated. Art has been absorbed by reality and at the same time reality has been appropriated by art.

Though the number of artists is increasing it is obvious that the age in which we live is not the age of art. There are areas in which progress is much faster and these set the tone of contemporary civilisation. I mean here science and technology. The two major functions of art – cognitive and creative – have been considerably challenged: the former by science, and the latter by technology. It might seem that artists have been pushed away from previously occupied positions or that they are being moved to a marginal position.

This results in a paradoxical situation. The more the territory of art is shrinking, the more art is encroaching upon the territories of the apparently victorious disciplines. And since these are most symptomatic of contemporary reality, art cannot avoid confronting them, and it has to enter into a dialogue with science and technology. This dialogue, like all dialogues between art and reality is complex and it embraces a broad range of attitudes, from acceptance to rejection. As regards visual experiments, art enters so much into the territory of science and technology, that they become indistinguishable; the products of new realism and dada cannot be distinguished from commonplace objects and natural things, and happenings and other artistic actions from everyday activities.

In this new situation the area of art practice is constantly growing rather than diminishing, and at the moment it is practically unlimited. Therefore, the threat of the disappearance of art as a separate enclave within reality is now especially imminent.

Until recently there has been one art divided into separate genres, styles, tendencies, trends and techniques. The same held true about the work of individual artists, each with their own style and approach. The system that lent itself to a slow evolution was governed by the law of the series. All paintings, sculptures, and other kinds of objects were to look similar and to use the same language of visual signs. For that taboo to be broken we had to wait until **Duchamp** and **Schwitters** used *ready-mades*, and **Mondrian** and **Malevich** manifested their impersonality. This was accompanied by the increased activities of a kind that have so far been considered marginal: programmes, manifestoes and theoretical treatises.

Loyalty to stylistic means has been losing its significance. Its position has been taken by truth to ideas, which can be conveyed using approaches borrowed from different tendencies and techniques. Thus, a dividing line could be drawn across the *œuvre* of an artist, as was the case, for example, with **Claes Oldenburg**,

the founder of 'soft art', who was at the same time a pioneer of pop art, land art and happenings. **Robert Morris** is an even more radical example. Morris, in addition to his simple minimalist prisms, started to introduce materials to his work, chaotically accumulated scraps and remnants, creating the so-called 'anti-forms'. Moreover, in his articles on art, **Morris** would enter into a dialogue with himself. Thus, not only objects, techniques and activities, previously outside the province of art have been elevated to the status of works of art, but also theoretical writings, which have been recognised as legitimate artistic articulations. This is especially true with regard to idea and concept art, in which it is difficult to distinguish between artists and art theorists, since both are primarily concerned with writing texts. The exhibition, *Konzeption/Conception*, in Leverkusen last year, which provoked one of the most heated debates, featured a collection of maps, theoretical treatises and diagrams, presented by eleven artists representing the circles of impossible art. There was a twelfth presence behind the show, too. The exhibition was curated by **Seth Siegelau**, the founder of a gallery in New York which exists only as a concept, while **Siegelau** considers himself an art theorist.<sup>01</sup>

Therefore, the stylistic disintegration of the works of individual artists can be justly regarded as superficial when we realise that the visual aspect of works of art has long ceased to be of major importance. Moreover, the disintegration is concerned neither with the artists' attitudes nor with their ideas. Rather it is a symptom of the ongoing process aimed at abolishing all the separate enclaves of art practice. Until the 1920s these enclaves were identical to different movements in art, within which groups of artists set out to pursue similar tasks. The movements were then replaced by broadly understood tendencies whose boundaries were not defined. Over time, as the debates – heated between the representatives of different movements and less so within each movement – died down, the last vestige of the traditional division was challenged: the borderline between art and reality. Impossible art, which is a conglomeration of all known and still unknown possibilities

**01** | Here **Ludwiński** probably meant two different projects that took place around the same time: the exhibition *Konzeption/Conception*, at the Municipal Museum, Leverkusen, Oct–Nov 1969, and the project initiated by **Seth Siegelau**, *July, August, September 1969*, described in its catalogue as a "show that occurred simultaneously in 11 different places in the world", with the following artists participating: **Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Daniel Buren, Jan Dibbets, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, N. E. Thing Co., Robert Smithson, Lawrence Weiner** [editor's note].

of art, contested the very existence of that borderline. The new understanding of art that has been offered takes it for granted that until now art has been a special case within the evolution of culture, included in the order which we still tend to call artistic, in the same way that **Robert Smithson** included the Yukatan peninsula in his own work. As **Allan Kaprow** once remarked, the history of America was the greatest happening of all.

In a situation in which it is not possible to define the limits of art, and therefore to define art, the status of the work of art has itself become vague. Perhaps **Yves Klein**'s 'zone of invisible sensibility', which reveals the absence of the object, can still be identified as one, while **Marcel Duchamp**'s decision to give up any kind of artistic practice, which **Duchamp** considered the greatest achievement of his life, is certainly not. Recently, there has been a tendency to avoid the very term 'work of art' and replace it with the term 'artistic fact', which is a broader notion. The work of art was the crowning point of the creative process, its apex mattered, while the process itself was of no interest to viewers. Artistic facts, on the contrary, bring viewers much closer to the process of creation. They are the sum of all the possible manifestations of this process. Even they, however, despite their logical and coherent character as the artist's work, hide the artistic process in an artificial way. It is difficult to resist a suggestion that what is happening 'in-between' the artist's activity is equally, if not more important, especially as human thought cannot be fully rendered in any existing language.

Still, it is possible to reconstruct the creative process, at least partially, if we deal with a chronologically arranged set of artistic facts. Since there are artistic facts, which have lost their structure in time and space, and it is impossible to state when they begin and when they end, it would be logical to include the whole creative process in the realm of artistic phenomena. Such a collection of artistic facts, together with the reconstructed creative process, could be called an art system. The art system then, would be the

means of the artist's existence in a given system. This is still called the area of art; though perhaps, it is time to question that name.

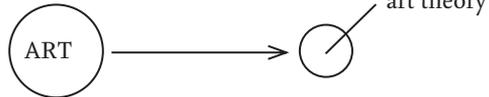
However, there is also a possibility, or even a certainty, that some creative processes cannot be reconstructed. For they are not revealed, nor happen to be revealed outside the system which we use to relate to art. Perhaps, some time in the future, it will become possible to reconstruct them. It is not impossible that a new language will be developed that we cannot currently envisage, but whose emergence cannot be excluded either. I do not mean to imply here that this language might resemble telepathic communication. At this moment we need the notion of a process which cannot be reconstructed, and for which I would suggest the name of 'absent art', to become aware of a certain critical situation, comparable to the notion of *limes* in mathematics. When these processes have been deciphered and absent art becomes part of an art system, then we could certainly equate art and reality.

Perhaps, even today, we do not deal with art. We might have overlooked the moment when it transformed itself into something else, something which we cannot yet name. It is certain, however, that what we deal with offers greater possibilities. ✕

# Appendix to Art in the Postartistic Age

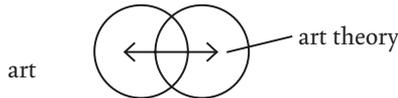
## Art – art theory

Traditional relationship:

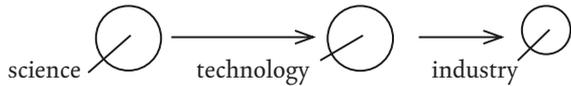


(conventional opinion: art theory is always secondary)

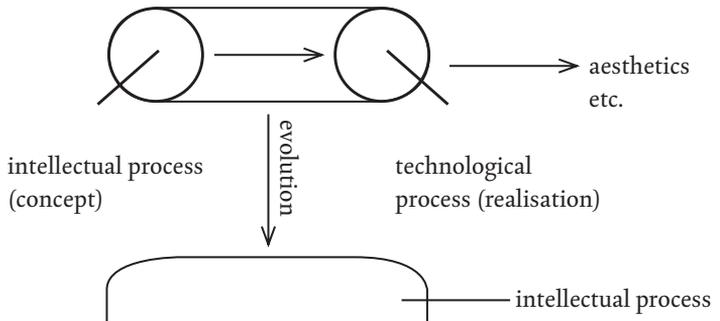
In the future:



Intellectual processes faster than technologies  
ex.



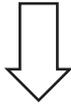
The creative process:



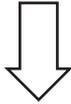
The process of disintegration  
of the notion of a work of art

the years 1960 – 1970

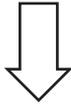
1. devaluation of the original
2. the most important concepts – ideas
3. elimination of the material object
4. different [type of] rendering



The blurring of borderlines between art disciplines



The blurring of borderlines between art and art theory



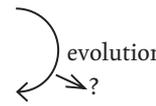
meta-artistic constellation

the blurring of borderlines  
between art and reality

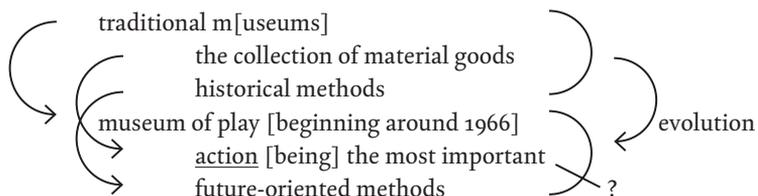
## Intermediary institutions

art —————> viewers

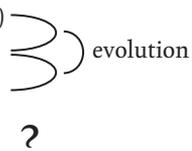
art —————> art

1. exhibition rooms
  - [state of] deepest crisis
  - the most conventional collections of ready-to-sell products for the public
  - research and experimental programmes

A curved arrow labeled 'evolution' points from 'the most conventional collections of ready-to-sell products for the public' to 'research and experimental programmes'. A question mark is at the end of the arrow.

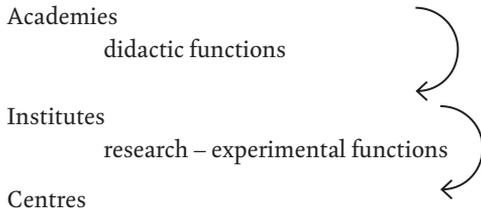
2. museums
  - traditional m[useums]
  - the collection of material goods
  - historical methods
  - museum of play [beginning around 1966]
  - action [being] the most important
  - future-oriented methods

A curved arrow labeled 'evolution' points from 'traditional m[useums]' to 'future-oriented methods'. A question mark is at the end of the arrow. Another curved arrow points from 'museum of play' to 'future-oriented methods'.

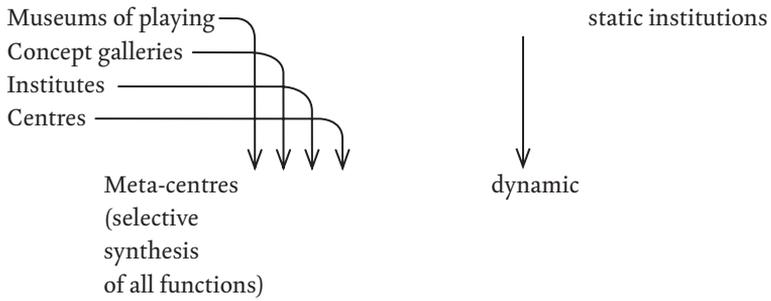
3. galleries
  - ↓ commercial galleries (a kind of store)
  - ↓ galleries of play ([of] action)
  - ↓ concept galleries (without location)
  - ?

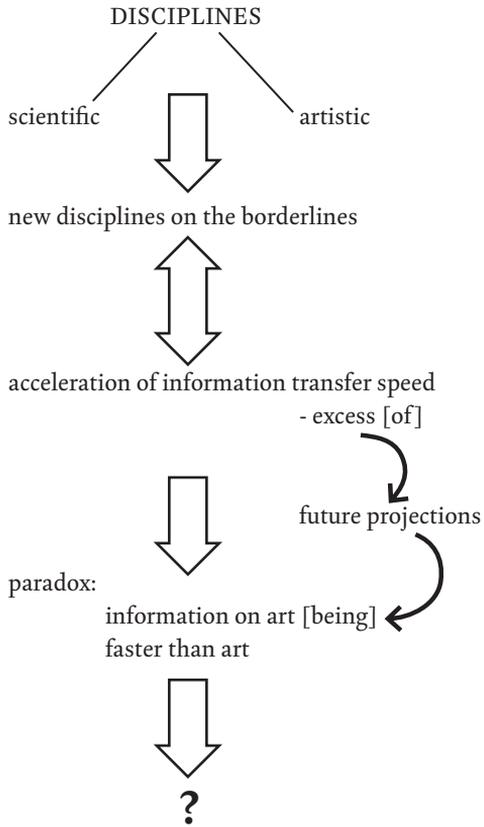
A curved arrow labeled 'evolution' points from 'commercial galleries (a kind of store)' to 'concept galleries (without location)'. A question mark is at the end of the arrow.

4. centres



VARIOUS MODES OF TRANSMITTING INFORMATION





✖



# Dispersion / Vulnerability

The counterweight of the violent avant-garde is neutral art that exists in a most inconspicuous manner. It is an art developing into itself, collapsing inwards, articulated by implosion. Vulnerable art does not destroy the world but protects it, reaching deep into the trench of subjectivity. Helpless art rises from the "delicate twitches of a secret seismograph"<sup>01</sup> put into motion by artists keeping away from the main stage and remaining dispersed. From the further dispersion of the current artistic dictionary 'impossible art' comes into being. It's functioning resembles the expansion of the universe reaching for the thermodynamic equilibrium. As the spaces between individual artists grow, the avant-garde united, forward-directed and 'avant' situated becomes impossible. The postartistic age described by Ludwiński is an age of ongoing disintegration of traditional criteria and modes of creation, exceeding the experience of perception and visibility. It is also an age when art is no longer an independent kingdom of values, and leads to a diffusion of discourses: artistic, ethical, political, social and scientific. ✖

01 | Jerzy Ludwiński, 'Pałka Bretona i sztuka trzecia', in *Epoka błękitu*, Jerzy Hanusek, ed., Cracow 2003, p. 265.

## Wrocław '70<sup>01</sup>

[...] Today, living in a world where the most characteristic disciplines of human creativity are science and technology, one cannot ignore their influence on the dialogue of artists who both challenge and immerse themselves in reality. Now, artists' dialogue with science and technology seems obligatory, because it is, at the same time, a dialogue with reality, which develops alongside it, but completely independently.

I would like to mention that this technological phase in contemporary international art is obvious. It would be rather reckless of us not to notice this fact. We know very well, for example, that **Nicolas Shöffler**, together with his group of kinetic artists, makes use of a splendid technological base – the Philips factory in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Such technological centres are everywhere in the world and the push to make bases of this type in Poland, where technology is no threat, is also noticeable. Events such as the Biennale of Spatial Forms in Elbląg or the Symposium in Puławy, provide sufficient examples of this particular attitude being shared by artists. These different technological means, which are not usually available for artists, can serve to express a range of ideas. This means that they can be used to rebel against technology itself. The formation of a technological base relates to artistic freedom – artists express completely new ideas through something they are not comfortable with.

Now, it was not last year, but a few years ago in Wrocław that I introduced a programme for a newly created Museum of Current Art in which the main department would be an enormous workshop connected through various channels and factories, and where everyone could do whatever they wished to. Someone would be in charge as the main organiser of production. Where that would lead I don't yet know. Nevertheless, it seems to me that it doesn't need to share the fascination with modern technology.

**01** | The discussion held during the Symposium *Wrocław '70* was in two stages: the first concerned the programme guidelines of the Symposium, the second was devoted to discussing the realisation of the presented projects. The first part of the discussion took place from 6–8 February, the second from 17–18 March 1970. This followed the opening of the exhibition displaying the projects, which was organised in the City of Wrocław Museum of Architecture and Reconstruction. Both discussions involved representatives of the Polish Communist Party Voivodship Committee, Wrocław City National Council, The Association of Polish Visual Artists, The Association of the Friends of Wrocław, art critics and the invited artists – the participants

of the Symposium. Among the invited critics and art theorists were, for example: **Janusz Bogucki** [1916–1995], **Wiesław Borowski** [b. 1931], **Mariusz Hermansdorfer** [b. 1940], **Jerzy Ludwiński** [1930–2000], **Ryszard Stanisławski** [1921–2000], **Andrzej Turowski** [b. 1941]. **Jerzy Ludwiński** spoke on the first day of the debate [6 February] in the Świdnica Cellar of Wrocław town hall. The statement published here was made on 7 February and is his reply to the statement made by **Andrzej Wojciechowski** [b. 1941]

on the previous day  
[editor's note].

**02 | Jan Chwałczyk**  
[b. 1924], artist.

On the contrary, at present one can sometimes observe seemingly contradictory aspirations. What I mean is that next to the tendencies towards material and technological gigantism there exist opposite tendencies to dematerialise the work of art. And this dematerialisation can, at times, be very extreme, as **Duchamp** would have it, simply to cease any artistic practice at all. This process takes place on various levels, that is, it cannot be identified with the two trends in art which are ceaselessly given as examples by theorists: on the one hand constructivism or destruction; on the other, intellectualism and rationalism. These various tendencies to either materialise or dematerialise take place on all possible levels and in all possible dualisms known in contemporary art.

At present, human influence on all disciplines of life is tremendous. Recently, enormous energy production in almost all areas has led to the destruction of the natural landscape. Some intriguing opinions are emerging – interestingly these are provoked by technological achievements – that in the era of flights to the moon we should pay particular attention to protecting what remains of the Earth. In relation to the above there is a slogan in the field of art, that *less is better*. It is important to create as little as possible. This finds its expression in such tendencies and movements as zero tendency or minimal art, etc.

Lately I have been observing the work of one of Wrocław's artists, **Jan Chwałczyk**,<sup>02</sup> whose development is quite typical. **Chwałczyk** wants to make images using only light. This means that he wants to remove any unnecessary material that disturbs him and interferes with the reception of his art. He would most probably make his images where only light exists. His general tendency is thus a minimalist one. Now, when light becomes the only and most important element in **Chwałczyk's** images, the physical framework seems indispensable. So, the less of these important elements there are, the more screens are needed, the more complicated the whole apparatus becomes. Finally, in his last works, the apparatus and the whole framework becomes so dominant that it overwhelms what is

in the work itself, what the artist wanted to show. The conclusion is that **Chwałczyk** built a huge factory to show 'nothing' in art. To some extent, a happening can also be seen as a renunciation of the material work of art. What I am talking about is just one of the elements of a happening; at the same time, what an enormous organisational machine, what a great material agency needs to be employed for such an event. However, the human presence is the most important aspect of a happening. This individual needs to be an extraordinary organiser of the various things that take place simultaneously. He or she needs to gather such a mass of objects and in such difficult situations that this overwhelms the efforts required in organising exhibitions. So we have the following phenomenon: in order to get rid of the material presence of the work of art one needs to start this enormous machine, a factory of effects which demands all these organisational efforts. When there is less art in the work of art, the more material and technological elements there are. Now, we have to deal with a strange paradox: the outcome of some artistic realisations is inversely proportional to the organisational and technological efforts involved in them. And now from another perspective, I would like to stress that there are an increasing number of propositions that aim at eliminating this material, this technique and technology. Let me once again use an example from Wrocław, as I prefer to use examples that are familiar to me. To coincide with one of his exhibitions, **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**<sup>93</sup> wrote a manifesto in which he explicitly claimed that it was not important to him that a work of art had been made from material. What was important was the artistic attitude itself. Some time later, the same thing was written by **Julio Leparc** – an artist known for his visual effects. Both in his work and in the manifesto he wrote that year, **Julio Leparc** stated that a material object, a work of art, is not important. What counts instead is the artistic attitude. The first artist – **Jurkiewicz** – spoke of the artist's attitude towards the world in the same way. He would go even further. The work of art is a realisation of the creative process which lasts between works; it is an end point of the creative process; it is the moment that splits the creative process, divides it into smaller stages. The

**03 | Zdzisław Jurkiewicz** [b. 1931], artist.

creative process itself, a part of which is obviously a work of art, is for me something much more important than the finished work, be it a material realisation, a realisation with the use of some technology, or a work that is created without any material such as a happening, for example. A work of art is only the disclosing of the creative process and it seems less interesting. The disclosing of this process however, demands some technological barrier, which is, one should stress, impassable. The reason it is impassable is that, in my opinion, the creative process cannot be expressed with the use of any materialisation, be it in a conventional form or a happening. If artists try to express this creative process, it seems to me they only partially succeed. In the same way one can neither say nor write what he or she thinks, and he or she is trapped in a vicious circle. In this, we confront the discrepancy between the possibility of expressing something materially, as the fine arts still do, and the fact that the idea of the creative process is much broader than the possibility of its expression. Such is the discrepancy, and I do not know the solution. As I have said, the aim to eliminate the effects related to material and situations that take place, demands a huge technological and organisational base. Let us assume for a moment that artists could create great factories of effects, that we could be placed inside and watch the sunset because we would not be disturbed by this gigantic factory; or, at the other extreme, only the attitude would exist, the very creative process without realisation, without a work of art, and at the same time, the creative process which would be a work of art. Surely you realise that what I am talking about cannot be shown in any way. It might be possible some time in the future, but that I do not know. We are not able to answer this. Does it mean we are reaching the point of the end of art? I am not sure. We have witnessed so many conclusions recently that maybe this is just one of them, and not the final one. ✕

## Neutralisation of Criteria

The term 'defencelessness art' has been in use since the time of tendency zero, the late 1950s/early 1960s. It referred to art that was unattractive, almost imperceptible and radically modest.

At the same time the term has become a *sui generis* criterion for evaluation, and defenceless art, quite unexpectedly, has reached the summit of artistic hierarchies. Its defencelessness has become consecrated and is used to question existing hierarchies in the face of the profusion of attractive works.

The criteria by which we judge art, have, as we know, changed through the centuries. Up to a certain point the criterion of perfection was used. It was the first criterion known to us and it has survived in some vestigial form until now. The criterion of perfection was the outcome of the search for universal laws in works of art that could be applied to all artefacts. Works of art were understood as hand-made objects, executed thanks to certain abilities and skills which were mastered to the highest degree. The laws were expected to be identical for all works making it possible to grasp what was unchangeable in art.

The next criterion was that of authenticity. It gained currency at the time of the renaissance and flourished after impressionism, when man confronted nature most directly. The criterion of authenticity was the product of the search for values, not only in the work of art itself, but also outside it, in the person of the artist and his or her psyche. What was taken into consideration was the simplest connection between the work and its creator.

The third criterion was that of a programme. This grew parallel to the criterion of authenticity, but reached its climax in the twentieth century. The criterion of a programme emerged from the artists' analyses of surrounding reality and their attitudes

towards it. Obviously it took into consideration the logic of certain investigations and certain artistic activities within the apparently closed system. The programme surfaced in the sequence of successive works of art or art activities. The analysis of the logic of that succession within the work of an individual artist was a decisive factor here. The criterion of a programme resulted from the search for new meanings outside the material works of art and their creators, existing simply in reality itself. It was also the outcome of the search for a new, separate language to convey new meanings.

As a result of subsequent transformations in art the fourth criterion has developed, the most recent one. It flourished in the 1960s and could be called the criterion of attitude. It was no longer the work of art that mattered, nor its creator's integrity with the work, nor the logic of his or her inner programmes. The manifestation of the attitude itself became most important and it was an attitude of utter disinterestedness. The criterion of attitude developed as a result of the reorganisation of certain activities connected with the making of a work of art.

And finally, there has appeared probably the last criterion in the sequence: that of the change of the rule in art, the criterion of information. It has followed the devaluation of many ideas which were valid until now as a result of questioning the very mechanism of the evolution of art.

The evolution in art progresses when outstanding artists make works of art that discover new things about the world. As a result the outreach of art and the range of artists' concerns are growing, and consequently the whole artistic system and the model of art are expanding in various directions. This is a very uneven process whereby the boundaries of art are constantly pushed further away and that is how the evolution of art can be understood.

At a certain moment art started to appropriate a variety of new areas: these were concerned both with the material sphere and

the notional sphere, and have traditionally not been viewed as belonging to the domain of art. The outreach of art advanced so far in relation to its former limits that it became virtually impossible to define art at all. This was reflected in a variety of definitions conceived by artists, which implied that everything could become art. And thus there emerged a rule of creating certain parity within a system which was called artistic, but which had no well-defined limits.

It was only when the expanding model of the evolution of art ceased to exist and art without limits emerged, that the major criterion, that of artistic discovery, could be contested. It then became difficult to compare phenomena of art, the artistic facts. The measures adopted to judge works of art could now be applied to two layers of a work in accordance with the theory that every work of art – even the most broadly defined, not only as a material object but also as an action, or even a process of creation – consisted of two layers. One layer is constant and is responsible for the legibility of the artistic message. The other layer is entirely new and responsible for the message itself. The first layer is indispensable to understanding the message in the second layer. At the moment when the balance between the two layers is disturbed, and one begins to dominate, a break in communication follows: either the first layer no longer conveys any information or, if a work consists of the second layer only, the information becomes illegible. In the course of the evolution of a work of art and the subsequent processes that followed chronologically, the proportions between the two layers were distorted in favour of the layer of message.

The measures for evaluation, both static and dynamic, ceased to be valid, and we did not even notice when that happened. Most probably the process was triggered off with the introduction of *ready-mades* by the dadaists and it advanced much later, in the 1960s, in the wake of a surge of new artistic phenomena such as: impossible art, land art, landscape art, idea art, conceptual art, situational art, etc. These developments not only caused the

disintegration of the structure of a work of art as understood until then, but they also broke down the structure of all the mechanisms of the evolution of art.

We have reached the point of a complete change in the existing rule of art: while in the past the rule of following a certain stylistic convention was in operation, now that rule has simply been reversed. As a result of the reversal of the rule the expectations addressed to art criticism boil down to praising the originality of every new work of art.

Are we therefore entitled to question any creative attitude, any action, any activity taking place within what we call an art system?

**Marcel Duchamp** once said in an interview for a magazine that his *ready-mades* were silent and he also became silent; he stopped creating. **Duchamp's** silence was most eloquent. Later, **Joseph Kosuth** proposed complete tolerance towards the recipients of art; he made a claim that he had no right to impose anything on the viewers, who should feel free to cull from reality whatever was important to them.

Such was the character of **Kosuth's** presentations with dictionaries, which were actually an invitation issued to the viewers to make their own intellectual efforts. These, in turn, might trigger a chain of associations in their minds. There were presentations with different newspapers that contained news from all over the world spread out simply on a small table, and there were glass panels directed onto real space which could be moved to frame, at random, any view of the world and to easily change it.

01 | Jerzy Rosołowicz  
[1928–1982], artist.

At some stage, **Jerzy Rosołowicz**<sup>01</sup> conceived a theory of a *Neutrdrome* and 'neutral actions'. His works with lenses could be viewed as windows for framing fragments of reality, which, thanks to the lenses could be enlarged and freely moved; practically we are dealing here with the artist's non-interference into anything

that surrounds us, non-interference into nature. **Rosołowicz's** main *Neutrdrome* consisted of quasi-geometrical elements, but neither their forms nor the relationships between them were of any consequence.

**Daniel Buren's** *œuvre* offers yet another example of the tendency towards neutral activities. **Buren** also changed the rule, that is to say he questioned the two layers present in art by reducing *ad absurdum* a series of works: he made works with stripes in different colours which were either glued or painted onto the canvas in white and green, white and blue, white and red, etc., always of the same size. **Buren's** striped works appeared in a number of unexpected sites, they themselves being of an entirely neutral nature; though the stripes are not an imprint of the artist's personality yet they leave their mark upon reality. **Buren** speaks explicitly about striving for the rule of neutrality in art, which, of course is not the same as to the rule of indifference and non-involvement.

Another example has been offered by **Włodzimierz Borowski's**<sup>02</sup> exhibition in the Mona Lisa Gallery in Wrocław, where the artist practically manifested his own absence. **Borowski** did not take part in preparing any element of the show, but he confined himself instead to writing a text. He was not present at the show, either: at a certain moment when strolling outside he intended to communicate with the gallery by means of a short-wave radio, but eventually gave up the attempt at marking his presence altogether.

**02 | Włodzimierz Borowski** [b. 1930], artist.

And finally, **Jack Burnham**, one of the most eminent American art critics of the younger generation, in an article published in *Artforum* suggested that in the future artistic messages might be sent and received via telepathy. He probably meant more or less the same as I did when I wrote some time earlier about absent art, whose creative processes were neither decoded nor revealed, and we could only guess that they were taking place. By extension, we can also presume that in the future those processes will be transmitted in a way that remains unknown to us at the moment.

At present we can witness the phenomenon which may suggest that the range of the process of creation has been shrinking. In the past the process of creation was heralded as the hand-made work of art, then it became concerned with the supervision of its making, for example, in the crafts workshop or by an industrial company, and finally it concluded with the presentation of a concept alone, which marked its completion.

The art process comes to an end early, much earlier, than we thought it would. At the same time our view of all the processes that are taking place is growing more capacious, and the area of our imagination is expanding. The creative process, which plays an increasingly important part, is becoming more elusive and vague as a result of the artists' striving to avoid any definitions. Thus art is approaching a condition of indeterminacy and it is oscillating continuously on the borderline. In simple terms this phenomenon might be explained by the existence of certain barriers imposed by contemporary civilisation. First, there is the barrier of the number of objects, which is the barrier of production. Then there is another barrier, slightly more complex, which is the barrier of increasing speed: as with the barrier of production this is responsible for the growing number of objects because they are in motion. And finally, there is the third barrier, the barrier of information and of the amount of information. It is no longer enough to document the conception of a work of art in a form which would allow for its immediate reconstruction (and microfilms are of no avail here). The aim is to reduce documentation itself. We can leave aside the question of commerce, so often brought into focus nowadays. This is not related to the evolution of art but to the development of the system of art trade. And now we deal with the paradox of minimal art.

Until now the imperative to leave an imprint has operated in art. Artists have been expected to mark their presence with works of art or through some unravelling of the creative process, which testified to the uniqueness of what they did. As a result of that rule even if the work itself could not be situated within any artistic hierarchy,

its creator at least had to occupy some position within one. Such was the path to success. Nowadays, artists set out to make nothing exceptional and the effects are the opposite: doing 'the least' makes it appear unique. There is a tendency to abandon all the hierarchies, demarcation lines and 'pros and cons', and to cancel out these notions for good. In practice this would mean the fusion of art into life.

There is yet another possibility, the opposite of what has been just written. **Dyson** once had an idea of how to cope with the immense growth of population and proliferation of objects. He suggested that the solar system should be dismantled and the matter of the planets revolving around the sun used to make a sphere that would resemble a gigantic soap bubble blown up around the sun somewhere at the level of Jupiter. Of course, one of the many advantages of such a solution would be the preservation of solar energy within the system, the other – the immense space. Perhaps that would be the glorious triumph of human thought? ✕

## Unidentified Art

1. The presentation of unidentified art will be twofold: it will consist of an exhibition of works of art and documents from the Polish and international artistic movement, and it will be accompanied by a substantial publication with the characteristics of the period of 1960–1975, artists' statements, a chronology of events and reproductions of the works of art.
2. The purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate the increasing dialogue that art has with other spheres of civilisation while taking into consideration the specificity of that dialogue with our reality.
3. The presentation sets out to demonstrate the schematic structure of the artistic revolution that took place in the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s.
4. For this reason we avoid a historical presentation of artistic facts in favour of the attempt to first and foremost grasp the process of their evolution.
5. For the same reason the presentation cannot be confined only to outstanding individuals, neither can it be anonymous.
6. The presentation is not intended to offer a broad panoramic view of Polish art nor a survey of its most outstanding achievements; it seeks instead to draw attention to the most dynamic moments, and to the sources of the most significant changes and relocations in art.
7. The presentation of the most innovative and unique phenomena of Polish art should not become an enclave in the body of world art. Therefore we suggest an international context for this action.
8. The presentation itself, and its final stage in particular, is an attempt to show the most open situation in art, which can lead to the emergence of entirely new art.

## THE METHOD OF ARTISTIC ORGANISATION OF THE PRESENTATION

1. An attempt to show the processes of the evolution of art in terms of the increasing polarisation of opposites:
  - A. The process of transition from the extreme materialisation to the complete dematerialisation of art objects and the parallel process running in the opposite direction.
  - B. The process of adding and increasing the complexity of the elements of a work of art and an analogous evolutionary process of deduction and elimination.
  - C. The process of expanding the notion of a work of art and its progressive identification with other areas of creativity and even with the whole reality itself.
  - D. The process of gradually eliminating works of art, the artist's personality and even the very notion of authorship.
  - E. The process of progressive identification of a work of art with the creative process heading towards autonomy.
  
2. An attempt to systematise the evolution of art through its division into stages of development:

### I. The stage of the object

This stage consists of the phenomena bordering on painting and sculpture, as well as *ready-made* objects appropriated by artists, and works of nature fitted freely into 'pictures-objects'. At the time of the supremacy of this kind of art we witness the climax of a concern with matter and technology. Next, there is the obliteration of the divisions between painting, sculpture and other genres of the visual arts, which subsequently lose their specificity.

Tendencies: matter painting, new realism, neo-dada, structural art, minimal art and post-constructivism as well as diverse visual experiments.

## II. The stage of space

The art object loses its significance and becomes a prop in the surrounding space. Emotional space, created through the mutual influences of sets of objects, gathers in importance. What a stretcher was for an easel painting, the interior of a gallery or any other open space allocated to the artist becomes for art at the stage of space. The viewer does not look at the work of art from the outside but is inside it. The limits between different genres of the visual arts are obliterated.

Tendencies: optic-kinetic experiments, environment, arte povera, earthworks, land art.

## III. The stage of time

A new element emerges in art which is of crucial importance: the action in time, which, *nota bene*, takes place in a well-defined and limited space. Chance and improvisation become of utmost significance. A work of art is no longer a material and spatial creation, instead, it becomes a process. Both the environment and the public become inscribed into its limits. This is often accompanied by the reversal of the relationship: the artist – the work of art – the recipient. Phenomena emerge which are on the borderline of the visual arts, music and theatre, and which ultimately leads to the obliteration of the respective boundaries between these disciplines.

Tendencies: ephemeral art, the happening, and possibly different actions in time and space.

## IV. The stage of imagination

A work of art loses its former spatial and temporal structure and no longer conforms to any previously drawn limits. The work of art can appear everywhere and embrace anything and everything. It becomes concrete only in the viewer's imagination. The recording of the creative process is confined either to its prologue – the idea – or its epilogue – the documentation. The ways of recording and documenting artistic facts are irrelevant because these facts themselves take place only in the mind and in the domain of ideas.

The stage of imagination is not peripheral to all artistic disciplines; rather it is their common denominator. What we have here is a kind of meta-art and its attempt to absorb the whole of reality. Traditionally understood tendencies do not apply here. Conceptual art and impossible art are not tendencies.

#### V. The stage of totality

All previous notions relating to art are cancelled out, even that of authorship.

What matters are the tensions created by the collective effort of many individuals which contributes to the making of one system, pulsating with its own life like some gigantic work of nature.

Art = reality.

#### VI. Stage zero

There are processes taking place in the consciousness of numerous people which are not revealed by any means of communication known to us. Perhaps a new civilisation will be capable of receiving them through some means related to telepathy. This would be a kind of art, ideally universal, and at the same time ideally neutral. This stage cannot be presented in an exhibition, it can only be implied. It would provide though the optimum conclusion for the above characteristics of the structure of the evolution of art.

The exhibition, *Unidentified Art*, is explicitly specific and concerned with posing problems. Its programme should clearly be different from the assumptions underlying other exhibitions, especially since at the same time in Poland, and elsewhere in the world, a number of shows complying with the already well-tested schemes will be taking place. ✕

# In-between

"Works of art can be perceived as a means of revealing the creative process. They are windows overlooking this process or they act as gaps. One could say, what is most fascinating is the invisible, something that is 'in-between'. Then, the observer is just as privy as helpless" wrote Jerzy Ludwiński in 1987.<sup>91</sup> Yet the importance of this 'in-betweenness' had been gaining significance in his lectures, writings, diagrams and graphs since the early 1960s. The immaterial creative process happening between the works, revealing objects, actions or absence – is the logic of art articulating its course and dynamic. For Ludwiński the work of art along with *informel* painting ultimately lost its autonomy becoming only a trace, waste, remnant, a visual prosthesis or a relic of inner process. Ludwiński hardly explains how the process comes into being, emphasising only its 'inner' location. We can presume that the process is embedded in the order of the self, or the process is somehow the inner core of the psyche, deriving from an unknowable point 'x'. It is not even certain if the 'in-between' space can be represented – the process manifests itself literally or is revealed, caught for a while, marked, acknowledged. Process is a void, an empty locus in-between objects, a lack. Process is a disposition, an absence in the vibrations of speech integrated into script. Between the illusion of an autonomous ego and an alienation establishing the self, between the world, the wall of representation and the subjectivity, deep in the primary experience of space on the verge of the symbolic system. ✕

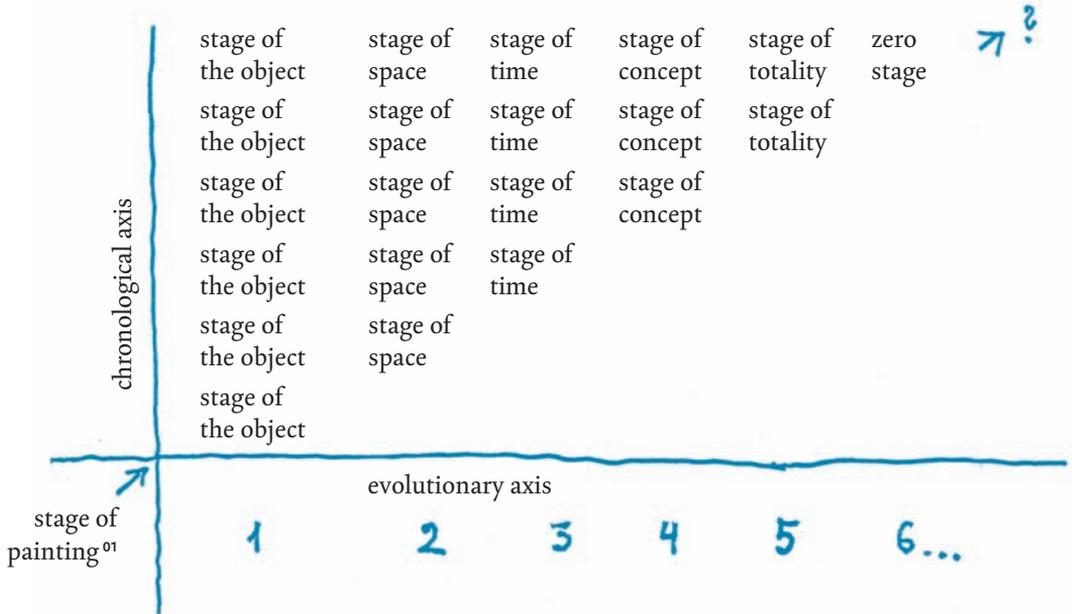
01 | Jerzy Ludwiński,  
'Cały świat to teatr',  
in *Epoka błękitu*,  
op. cit., p. 260.

# ETAPY EWOLUCJI SZTUKI

oś chronologii	etap przedmiotu	etap przestrzeni	etap czasu	etap koncepcji	etap totalny	etap 0 → ?
	etap przedmiotu	etap przestrzeni	etap czasu	etap koncepcji	etap totalny	
	etap przedmiotu	etap przestrzeni	etap czasu	etap koncepcji		
	etap przedmiotu	etap przestrzeni	etap czasu			
	etap przedmiotu	etap przestrzeni				
	etap przedmiotu	etap przestrzeni				
etap obrazu	1	oś ewolucji 2	3	4	5	6...

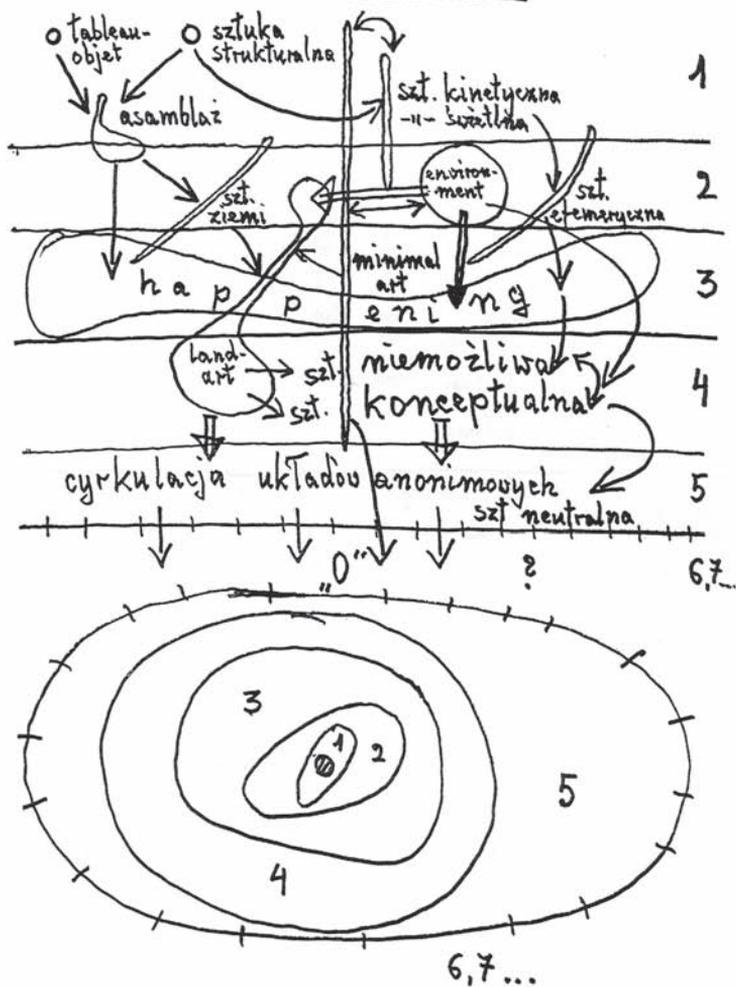
Jan Ludwiński

## Stages of the Evolution of Art



**01** | By 'painting' Ludwiński is presumably referring to the medium of painting, with such specific qualities as flatness, horizontality and opticality, as well as the whole framework supporting the notion of painterly representation in the 1950s: illusion, mimesis, autonomy, gesture, self-expression, abstraction, realism etc. [L.N.]

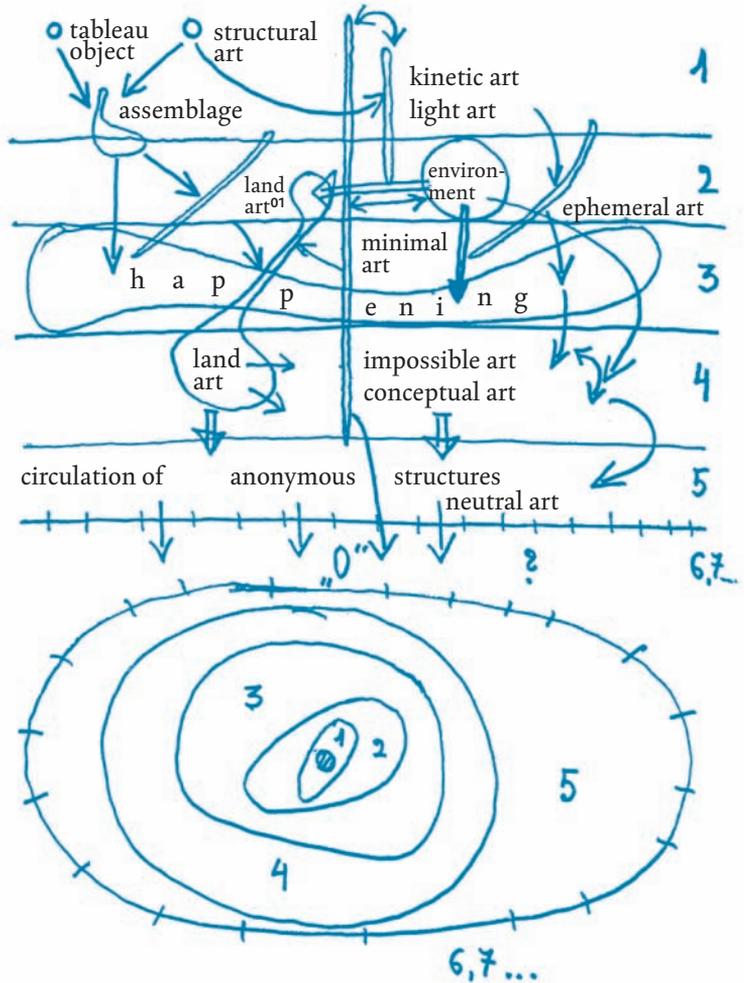
# ETAPY EWOLUCJI SZTUKI



JAN CHWAŁCZYK  
 "KONTRAFUNKT" 1972/74  
 ZFAP, BWA - WROCLAW

# Stages of the Evolution of Art

**01** | In the 1970s, Ludwiński simultaneously used the term 'land art' and its direct Polish translation 'sztuka ziemi', emphasising the close, but distinct relations between the two. The experience of 'sztuka ziemi' is linked to the natural environment, to open space treated as an artistic medium, as canvas or sculpture. 'Land art' is more spectacular and at the same time ephemeral, being an experience of impossibility and invisibility connected to such artistic phenomena as conceptual art. [L.N.]



JAN CHWAŁCZYK  
 "KONTRAPUNKT" 1972/74  
 "ZPAP, BWA - WROŚKAW"

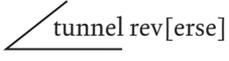
# Mountain

Poznań, 1. VI. 82

Not the immovable, majestic, sublime mountain  
but flat  
the negation of the mountain  
not nature but man

Boroughs and rubbish heaps – rubbish heaps only  
not the shell – but the inside (the invisible)  
buildings, objects  
compressed to squash – all the culture in a nutshell (several thousand years)  
——→ relics, remnants, remains  
only very small objects can survive  
the rest – unified elements  
jabber of things (material)

the mountain radiates  
sends out signals ——→ around the mountain zone of imagination  
the difficulty of reading ←—— tunnel

other mountains – the increasing pressure of official information  
added from unified elements  
——→ reverse process  
layers – signals from within  
reverse situation – outside layer   
most stereotyped  
the oldest in terms of evolution

state of equilibrium between official and underground information  
real mountains and mountains of information  
processes in two different directions ✕

## The Art of Art-Documents

1. Creative process  
The creative process is a continuous phenomenon.  
Works of art [are] tiny fragments of the creative process.  
A work of art [is] one of the ways of revealing the [creative] process.  
Unrevealed moments of the creative process [are] the 'beyond' moments.  
Attempts at reconstruction of the 'beyond' moments.
2. Artistic fact [is] a definition broader than that of a work of art.  
Apart from the work of art [an artistic fact] includes the pre and post phases: the concept and documentation phases.
3. A record of the concept.  
The equality of all possible forms of recording.
4. Documentation of events in time and space.  
Photography and film.
5. Concept and documentation 'in place of' the work of art.
6. The process of blurring the divisions between [the] disciplines of art: fine arts, music, literature, theatre and film.
7. The process of dematerialisation of a work of art.
8. The process of identification of art with:
  - a) other disciplines of creation
  - b) the entire reality
9. Perspectives of art in a future civilisation.
10. The need for a new understanding of progress. ✕

proces  $\rightarrow$  dzieło

||  $\rightarrow$  seria, program

||  $\rightarrow$  różne s., program

"  $\rightarrow$  ...  $\rightarrow$  różne progr.

niemożliwe  
specjalizacja  
grupy

---

interdyscypl. — integracja  
ponaddisc.  $\rightarrow$  synt.

rozwoj

toru specyficzne  
technologie



podobne

styki

pola niemie

\* \* \*

process ———> work of art

[process] ———> a series, programme

[process] ———> various series, programme

[process] ———> ... ———> various programmes

↑ the impossible  
specialisation  
groups

---

interdisciplinary – integration

super-interdisciplinary ———> synthesis

development

tracks specific

[tracks] parallel

points of contact

no man's land

similar problems

Q

problem

✖



# Violence

Ludwiński sees the principles of avant-garde art as articulated almost by a death wish: annihilating the past, shattering tradition, setting museums alight, going to war. Revolution, explosion, guillotine, expansiveness, purity of route, converging time vectors.<sup>01</sup> The avant-garde glorifying amnesia. The avant-garde forgetting, displacing, excluding artists who, ironically and blatantly ambivalent, have troubled its coherent identity. The avant-garde violence turned to auto-mutilation: with the collapse of the modernist edifice of art history the avant-garde disappeared almost voluntarily. A revolution putting itself to the guillotine? And yet, in this act of self-destruction, thanks to its own self-aggression, the avant-garde persists and continues to develop, claims Ludwiński. It may be helpful in understanding Ludwiński's depiction of the avant-garde to refer to Georges Bataille's headless figure Acephalus, freed from the power of reason. The headlessness in this case is autonomous to the rational order, "creating the possibility of escaping the determinations of a reasoning mind".<sup>02</sup> The headless avant-garde exists in a state of utopia foretold by Ludwiński – an age without violence, with no illusions of a bright future, a reality surpassing the structure imposed by ideology, populated by man, whose condition is described not by the 'post' prefix but rather by 'non' or 'without'.<sup>03</sup> ✖

01 | Jerzy Ludwiński, 'Sztuka PO', in *Epoka błękitu*, op. cit., pp. 245–249.

02 | Krzysztof Matuszewski, 'Wstęp', in George Bataille, *Doświadczenie wewnętrzne*, Warsaw 1998, p. 28.

03 | Jerzy Ludwiński, 'Sztuka PO', op. cit., p. 249.

## Breton's Staff and the Third Art

There are certain similarities amongst the artists invited for this exhibition:

1. Everyone has pushed themselves to the limit or so it would seem. Any attempt to exceed this limit has been abandoned. Next to this there was the white canvas or a void.
2. Everyone grasped that the void could be more important than what was surrounding or limiting it.
3. Then everyone tried to restrict this void, either by marking it with blue tape or a trail of light, or by the ebb and flow of waves, or by the regular sound of a golden chord, or celestial music, or “white, clean, thin linen”.<sup>01</sup>
4. And so it happens that the grand reduction of objects, landscape, time, space and reality were affected by chaos in which everything is in excess.
5. A certain field of imagination specific to every artist is created. Their works can be seen at the very horizon of art in a place where art lights itself or falls into darkness.
6. Therefore attitude is superior to form unless “attitude becomes form”.

What I have written so far can be understood as another way of reflecting on the avant-garde. All the artists present here have made their way through the avant-garde, although everyone has done so in a different way.

There are no similarities between the artists invited to take part in this exhibition unless ostensible. Even a perfectly blue line will always remain geometric. A blue tape can only serve to mark reality or rescind it.

**01** | *White, Clean, Thin Linen* [1970]  
– the title of a work by **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**  
[editor's note].

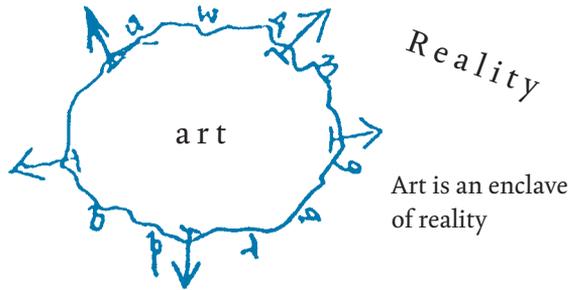
02 | Tadeusz  
Kalinowski  
[1928–1982],  
artist.

Perhaps there is something elusive in the work of the artists whom **Tadeusz Kalinowski**<sup>02</sup> has invited, something that brings them together.

## THE AVANT-GARDE

The avant-garde can only exist in a situation where the model of art, although expanding, has certain limits beyond which lies non-art, i.e., all the remaining reality. The avant-garde is situated precisely on the borderlines waiting to step over them.

It might look like this:



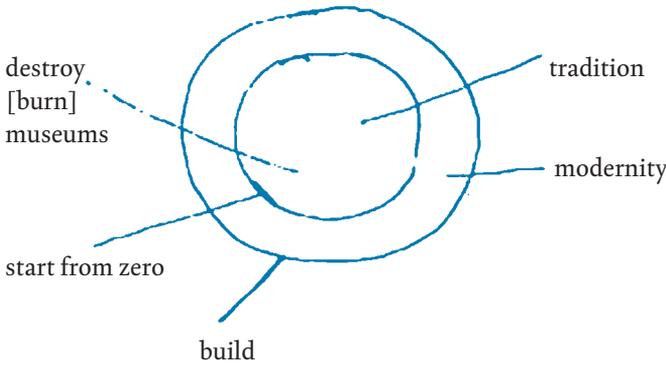
The limits of art are becoming ever more blurred and indistinct.



One can hardly tell what is art and what is no longer art.

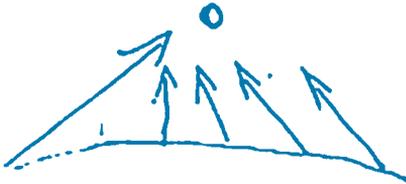
This is why it is difficult to distinguish between:  
an art object and an ordinary object,  
a happening and real life,  
conceptual art and grammar or logic,  
ephemeral art and a tornado.

The first avant-garde was meant to bring order. It was highly rigorous on divisions and limits. A clear line was drawn separating tradition from modernity.



In this clear partitioning there was no room left for **Duchamp's** *ready-mades* and **Schwitters'** *Merzbau*. They were both outside the avant-garde and outside of art. Both belonged to the non-art sphere.

It was the first avant-garde's conviction that all the vectors of art will finally meet at an ever-closer ideal point.



A purity of path was in force.

Anyone who went in the wrong direction was a traitor. For **Matisse**, **Braque** was the traitor. For the supporters of **Mondrian**, **Arp** was a renegade. **Duchamp** was a traitor to everybody. Everyone betrayed everyone else.

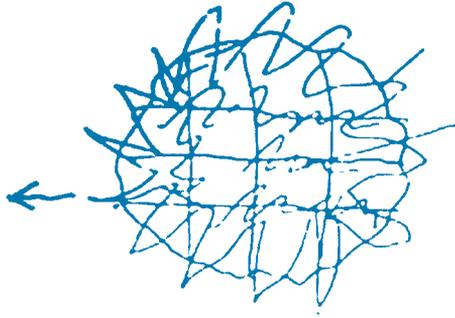
The vectors of art were running in opposite directions. **Breton's** walking staff was needed. **Breton's** staff is a visible sign that art in the 1930s was still in a state of revolution. The stick was in place of the guillotine.

## THE SECOND AVANT-GARDE

03 | Edward Krasieński  
[1925–2004], artist.

We should not begin with a zero but with what is in reach. However, it would be good to head towards a zero point and never to reach it, which means aiming at a gradual immersion into non-art i.e., into reality. But the latter is marked with **Krasieński's** tape.<sup>03</sup> One could assume that the imaginary blue tape marks everything around it. Or one can imagine other signs. And so, gradually non-art ceases to exist.

There are no limits and no divisions.



there are no limits  
and no divisions.  
Artists are far away  
from this model.  
Where? - It remains  
unknown.

Some artists, however, stayed and they create official art. The shell removed from the expanding model is shining bright. An auction of hard hits once associated with the avant-garde is being held. The social presence of the artist is also stressed at exhibition openings. Celebrities dominate the artistic *salon*. Power and mass are to the fore. Also money, which, in the history of the artistic movement has never been so abundant.

Other artists are diffused in the twilight or in the shadow. They have descended into the underground, down into the earth. And so the THIRD ART was born. It comes into existence with the delicate twitches of a secret seismograph.

What is the difference between official art and the old avant-garde? Well, there is no difference in style. Official art tries to imitate avant-garde art and it does resemble it. Sometimes it reminds one of **Oskar Kokoschka**'s expressionism, at other times it may seem like visual explorations or neo-constructivism. But every time it is a massive winged horse.

What is the difference between the 'third art' and official art? Seemingly, there is no difference, as far as style is concerned. But there is one detail: the choice of place. Official artists tend to gather in the most exposed places, whereas the others are dispersed. It is crucial that the latter ('the third') do not need to pass through the narrow gates of art where the CoBrA is lying in wait.

There's also another difference. It is a difference of attitude. This can only be observed when the sequence of events, rather than individual works, is considered, as well as everything that is 'in-between', which means the invisible. The inflated works of admiration-seekers are glamorous and keep pace with the latest fashion. These artists try to exceed fashion with glaring skills.

The first avant-garde were striving to change the world, while their imitators only wanted to decorate it.

The second avant-garde and everything that I call 'the third art' wanted to preserve the world as it is, but also to evolve parallel to it. This explains why there seems to be less of the work of art itself. It is as if the work of art collapsed inwards or even returned to its origin. We may be entering a period of art before art, with the spotlight turned in another direction.

There is no longer any model of art. This is a situation of art with no limits, amazingly diverse even when it is of the most discreet kind. ✕

# Art at the Stage of Explosion

Thinking aloud – autonomous scheme

Model of art

increasing, expanding structure  
beginning: with well-defined shifting boundaries  
→ explosion  
elements penetrated the reality  
→ obliteration of boundaries



≠ questions:

when?

definition – is it possible?

no answer

---

Evolution of art from work of art → artistic fact

1. picture – sculpture  
specificity
2. material object
3. object in space
4. space in time
5. work of art without temporal-spatial structure
6. work of art without message

There is no cybernetics = imperfect synthesis

to understand the concrete statement of the artist  
art not very attractive?

[art] individual, social situation

artist – enemy of the [only] viewer – critic[ism]

The notion of the model

**S[uzanne] Besson**

**O[svaldo] Borda**

**G[ianni] Dova**

**R[oger] Frezin**

**C[oncetto] Pozatti**

**J[ules] Perahim**

✘

## The Age of the Outsiders

Let us look at the gesture of taking off the mask that covers art. This took place in the mid 1960s around the magic year of 1968. This was the time of counter-culture manifestations, important reassessments in the domain of science and philosophy, the development of anti-psychiatry, marginal and alternative actions, and a series of other phenomena including a change of lifestyle and habits. In the arts, this process, already initiated somewhat earlier by presentations from individual artists and Fluxus actions, took on an unparalleled intensity. This was by no means a slight interference that slowly removed the mask from art. On the contrary, it was an attempt at getting rid of it once and for all.

Thus we could observe a radical retreat from the standard notions of contemporary art such as modernity and the avant-garde. A particular feature of modernity, seen as the canon of the period, was the constant striving to work out a compact style that would provide a blueprint and a binding model for artistic practice. It was therefore a purposeful movement based on a strongly held belief of progress leading to perfection. On the other hand, the function of the exploration of the unknown was left to the avant-garde. It was up to the avant-garde to annex new territories and to expand the field of the arts. The direction of this expansion was clearly defined: FORWARD to the victory that would take over everything possible. Its unswerving determination to follow a set course seemed analogous to the survival of the fittest in the world of nature. There were wars waged between tendencies and trends, '-isms' and '-arts', as well as between artists representing '-isms' and '-arts', and also between the artists and the world around them. This last war aggravated the enclave of the arts and extended into the regions of aesthetics, science, politics and the social sciences.

At the same time another battle for supremacy was taking place. The conflict between different cultures, which goes back to the

beginning of history, is the first stage. The second stage began when Western culture started to absorb other cultures. This, as can be witnessed, has led to the increasing obliteration of differences and consequently to an unprecedented total unification.

With the improvement of tools to study events and phenomena distant in time and space it became possible to get through the “layer of appearances” differentiating individual cultures and, in turn, to better comprehend them. In the wake of these studies the most distant cultures proved to be the most interesting and unexpectedly familiar ones. This paradox applied to art as well. Its compact model started to crack apart, become fragmented and differentiated from within. The avant-garde became dispersed and confined to the recently occupied fringes. It turned out that the popular idea of the much hoped for progress, currently in vogue, which spread in all directions, did not meet the expectations it stirred. Within the framework of well-defined disciplines a number of unsolved problems have emerged, questions without answers and arguments in need of proof.

On the other hand, between the different disciplines – and beyond them – there stretched the unimaginable territory that could no longer be studied by means of traditional tools and methods.

In keeping with the vector of progress, the world has developed thus far according to the laws of explosion. In the new situation the issue at stake was not so much to slow down this progress – as to turn it inwards, i.e., according to the laws of implosion. The outcry FORWARD! was contested, and the binding model of offensive consciousness was replaced by the defensive one. While the former still tried to transform the world and improve man's actions within it, the latter sought to preserve and to protect things as they were. This was oriented inwards to explore the depths of humanity and the world, and it was responsible for the creation of a considerable artistic precipice. It is as if the artists hid themselves behind inner screens where all the stylistic considerations and



▲ Jerzy Ludwiński and Jarosław Kozłowski during Ludwiński's first lecture in the Akumulatory 2 Gallery, Poznań, 1972.  
PHOTO: Barbara Kozłowska. COURTESY: the private archive of Jarosław Kozłowski, Poznań.

everything that had been earlier described, analysed and classified, seemed unimportant, and the traditional divisions of art no longer valid. Thus, the only credible way of studying art was to search for its 'deep structures', manifold, incompatible with each other, differentiated through the 'separate' mythologies of individual artists and their individual worlds.

In the late 1960s something appeared which is defined in science as the 'special point' i.e., a state in which time and space shrink to zero and which can perhaps signify the end or the beginning of the world. In this case the 'special point' is a metaphor applied to

a moment in the history of art in which the limits of art extended from zero to infinity, from the individual specificity to the neutral 'being-in-everything'. This individuality, however, differs in quality from the earlier one: it is no longer based on mystifying the artist's biography, leaving his or her traces, or preserving the artist's memory. Thus, the artist is no longer a unique 'Somebody', a chosen one with specific abilities and talent; he or she is now a 'Nobody', like the protagonist in the writings of **Edward Stachura**.<sup>01</sup>

**01 | Edward Stachura**

[1937–1979], prose

writer, poet and  
philosopher.

Let us imagine that almost the whole rectangular model of the progress of art has been filled and that art has appropriated most of the surrounding reality. The model has been turned inside out. The rare white spots are the places that have not yet been appropriated. And what if the whole space were finally taken up by art? This would be the mask of art. The only thing to do would be to rip the mask off and see what it hides behind. ✕

## Action POINT

The point is an idea non-existent in reality. It is however possible to imagine a point at which everything begins or everything ends; or a point at which everything begins and ends at the same time. One can imagine a movement towards this point from all possible directions and a movement from this point in all possible directions. The realisation of such a point in art seems a particularly crucial thing to do. Then, the field is clarified and everything starts as if from the beginning – an immense pulsating process. We propose this instead of an exhibition understood in traditional terms. Action POINT will take place not only in space but also in time. It will also be of an experimental character; a character of a particular test realised among artists and other people interested in art. This is because during the action the point will exist in reality. The task of all the observers will be to find it. ✕

plywanie  
nieprzystające  
tożne / płaszczony  
gatunki genetyczne  
styki  
przenikanie

zastosowanie — mech. dodawanie  
syntera  
eliminacja

\* \* \*

swimming

incongruous

separate planes

genetic species

points of contact

permeability

application — mech[anical] addition

synthesis

elimination



# Strata

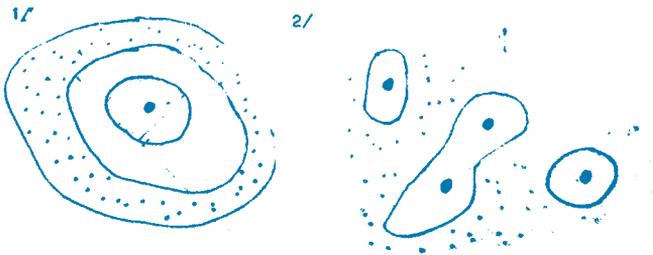
Ludwiński's writings are like layers of petrified speech. A considerable number of his lectures were primarily to be spoken, hardly ever edited if at all transcribed. The spoken style is clearly felt in the coarseness of the text and awkward syntax. The rhetoric of the text is contained in the intonation of speech. Graphs are used to convey ideas resistant to verbalisation, scattering into word rubble. In the diagrams treating on the evolution of art, the concept of strata is crucial: historical narration is constructed not as a linear teleological progression, but as forms resembling geological layers: from the earth's core towards the crust, or in the opposite direction, creating something like Robert Smithson's 'temporal surface'. One can assume that Ludwiński understood the aims of art history in a manner similar to dynamic geology exploring the processes occurring in the earth's crust. Here, art history is viewed as a blind process of stratification or sedimentation, where things or ideas can be overlaid or forgotten but never disappear. The geological metaphor exists in Ludwiński's writing, complementary to the biological model of art's blind evolution, the entropic figure of art as a closed system subjected to the second law of thermodynamics, and a mathematical metaphor of art development as sequence and its unreachable limit. ✖

## The Aesthetic of Glue

There will be no complicated terms or quotations... Nor, practically, any discussion of aesthetics... And a slight mention of glue...

What is this title? – I shall answer that later. I am interested in what happened in the 1970s – or more precisely – on the eve of the 1970s. As a matter of fact I am fascinated by the situation that we have witnessed in art in recent years, and even more by what it can lead to. To begin with I would like to draw attention to ten phenomena which can be defined as retreats or departures. Some of them are representative of the current situation in art. The first departure is from art as it has been understood until now, probably including conceptual art. The second retreat is from modern art. The third one – from experiment. As a result of these retreats all the above terms, with the sole exception of ‘art’, have lost value. Other departures include the breakaway from the avant-garde and the theory of art, from art criticism and art magazines, museums and galleries, and finally from directions and tendencies in art. None of which, of course, have disappeared and they continue their existence in even more spectacular quantities.

The most difficult issue is that of the departure from art as it has been understood until now. Recently, there has been a lot of discussion of ‘open art’ or ‘art without limits’. I have made the following two drawings:



They illustrate two speculative models for the evolution of art. The first drawing shows the model of the evolution up to the present. At the core I have marked the most conventional element in art from which the evolution of art progresses. The expansion of the area of art is increasingly fast due to discoveries and experiments. Within the first model it is still possible to define the boundaries of art and decide what can be classed as a work of art and which facts can be recognised as belonging to the domain of art.

In the second model the situation is completely different. Following the explosion of the first model the limits of art were wiped away. As a result art has no limits. There are only centres of activity that can be spotted within and they are surrounded by empty spaces. This model has no limits; it seems to extend into infinity.

The departure from art follows different directions. Let me mention just a few of them: politics and ethics, different arts, sciences and humanities, such as, for instance, philosophy or general interest in civilisation, the areas that have never been art but which can now be included in its province. Moreover, there is the artists' retreat into the theory of art, which makes it impossible to now dissociate them from art critics, and even the artists' retreat into art criticism itself.

The next point to be raised is the question of modern art. The term was hugely popular in the 1950s, now it has completely lost its value. Perhaps art practice still exists, rooted in the constructivist tradition which is creative and lends character to the style of the age. Modern art became a success because it was recognised as a style. Since it has now become generally accepted that there are no styles, the term itself has lost its meaning. There are other reasons, too, which are perhaps more valid. They include the recognition that the term 'modern art' implied a certain vision of the stylistically unified world in which all things shared

some features. Then there followed the departure from such a unified view, which was probably brought about by the use of the production line in industry. Unification lost its meaning in technology and likewise in art. Paradoxically, so-called 'modern art' lends itself best to museum collections and displays. It looks very good in exhibition spaces and it is remarkably attractive. In art journals and magazines there is an increased interest in art of the past, of the nineteenth century and of other cultures and epochs. The theory that modern art is about the synthesis of the arts of all the ages, and the discovery of elements of other cultures, has become generally accepted.

Then, there is the departure from trends and tendencies. Though they still continue their existence in great profusion and varieties, we can now witness the phenomenon of their instantaneously becoming classics. Even the most recent developments, in a previously unprecedented manner, produce works that immediately make their way to museums and into art collections. Works of contemporary art automatically acquire the status of classics. Moreover, divisions other than those into trends and tendencies gather in importance. And even if artists exhibit together the relationship between their work is rather incidental. A good example of this could be provided by the open-air meeting at Miastko. Artists also find refuge in different syncretisms and they return to past genres of art. I have already mentioned a departure from experiments. The case is simple: the number of observations we can make is so big that they contribute nothing to our understanding. The flow of information is so overwhelming that experiments no longer involve any risks. All experiments are successful and they can only make a different impact. This is probably connected with the retreat from *sui generis* sensualism in art towards theoretical assumptions and the departure from empiricism. Contemporary art is characterised by the hypertrophy of conceptual and documentary layers. The work itself has become the least important thing and we do not now know what it is. Artists have started to avoid works of art.

Then, artists also break away from the avant-garde, which paradoxically has become a mass phenomenon. Until recently, the notion of the avant-garde stood for developments that transcended the boundaries of art and convention. Today, it has lost its former meaning. All outsiders can recognise themselves as the avant-garde because they are in a minority. The situation has become reversed. As a result there are no polemics or controversies. Artists no longer challenge the work of fellow artists, they turn the brunt of their criticism against politicians, the excesses of civilisation and all sorts of abuse and bile. Their contests can no longer be taken seriously.

As a rule, theories of art follow the emergence of serious artistic phenomena which expand the model of art. It becomes necessary then to justify the singularity of new art. Theories of art have become meaningless since no such situation now exists. Art theorists turn their attention towards theories of civilisation and philosophy. Or they even enter the area of art itself. And thus the full circle is drawn. Artists, as I have said, have made their retreat into theories of art, and art theorists into art. There emerges in art a gigantic whirlpool with no way out. The same holds true about art criticism. The most eminent art critics are absent from art journals. And though they continue writing, it is not for the magazines that shape public opinion and it is not about art. Their writing is no longer art criticism.

This situation is due to the lack of criteria of judgement. Until recently the criterion of perfection has been in operation, but it has gradually given way to the criteria of novelty or innovativeness. These criteria have existed parallel to each other. The criterion of innovativeness, however, has no relevance to 'art without limits'. We continue to use it by inertia only, unaware that the whole system based on the succession of artistic movements and founded upon artistic discoveries, is suspended in a void.

Art journals, though they exist, are increasingly focused on museum collections and displays and they do not feature any

new programmes. The dissemination of the printed word is so widespread that we reach the point of zero information. Museums show art of the past. There are no open museums, museums of 'art play'. Galleries have become venues for the flow of information and documentation rather than exhibition rooms.

So much about the retreats. The explanation for them is probably surprisingly simple. Revolutions of the past were moments that separated periods in art and marked the advance of new formations: such was the abbey of St. Denis, the developments in Florence and those around 1910 when cubism and abstraction emerged, followed by **Duchamp's** *ready-mades* and **Schwitters'** total theatre. Then the pace of revolutions rapidly accelerated to reach the point when there was nothing except revolutionary changes. Towards the end of the 1960s an unusual thing happened. While former revolutions produced new, fundamental artistic facts and encouraged divisions into periods, styles and epochs, the revolution of the late 1960s rather than separating art into different epochs, united them instead. It became the meeting point for all the threads of art. At the time, art magazines featured American illusionist painting from the nineteenth century and different 'revelations' about English abstraction from the eighteenth century. Until the time of that anti-revolution, artists would make a radical break with the past, afterwards there followed variations on art of the past. Empty spaces were being filled. The situation is parallel to that in the sciences. The incongruity of different disciplines produces empty spaces, which are being filled by new sciences or 'para-sciences'. 'Para-arts' emerge in the discipline of art. Empty spaces are filled with a trickle of glue which bonds together the kernels of activity, the mass of information. This mass defines contexts for its distinct centres. Perhaps the glue is the vague and the indefinite – the one which is constant because it cannot change the model of 'art without limits'. Some call it pseudo-avant-garde. It cannot be avant-garde because it is not situated outside our model.

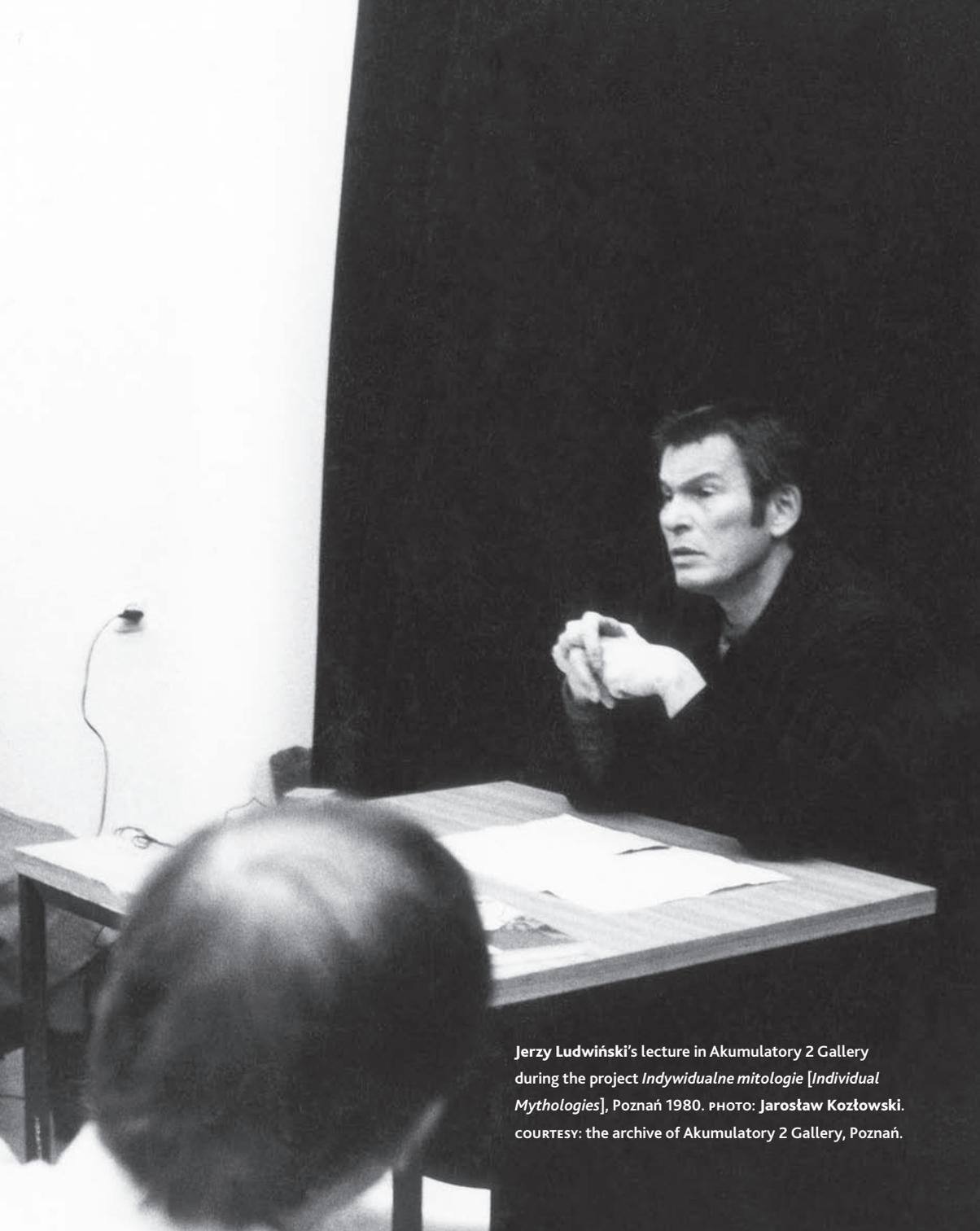
The two models define two great periods in the history of art. The first one lasted from the beginning of art until the late 1960s, interrupted by often extensive revolutions. It seems to me that there is no more room for the phenomenon of revolutions.

It can be said that until the 1960s art was open to analysis, that is to say, it was analytical; departing from individual facts, it was confined to well-defined areas of interest.

**01 | Tadeusz Kantor**  
[1915–1990], artist.

The next age would be that of synthetic art, embracing everything and pouring itself into everything. The return to well-defined positions is, in my view, impossible. **Tadeusz Kantor**,<sup>01</sup> in one of his recent interviews said that for him the closed work of art was important. I do not think it is still feasible. ✕



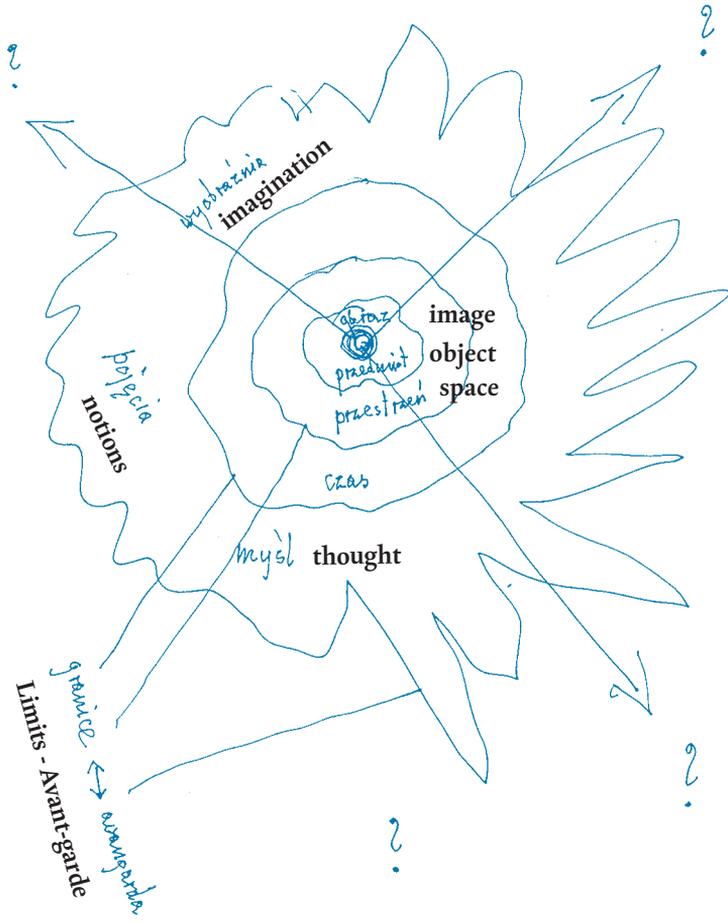


Jerzy Ludwiński's lecture in Akumulatory 2 Gallery during the project *Indywidualne mitologie* [*Individual Mythologies*], Poznań 1980. PHOTO: Jarosław Kozłowski. COURTESY: the archive of Akumulatory 2 Gallery, Poznań.

I.

Sztuka "poza"  
sztuka "OD"

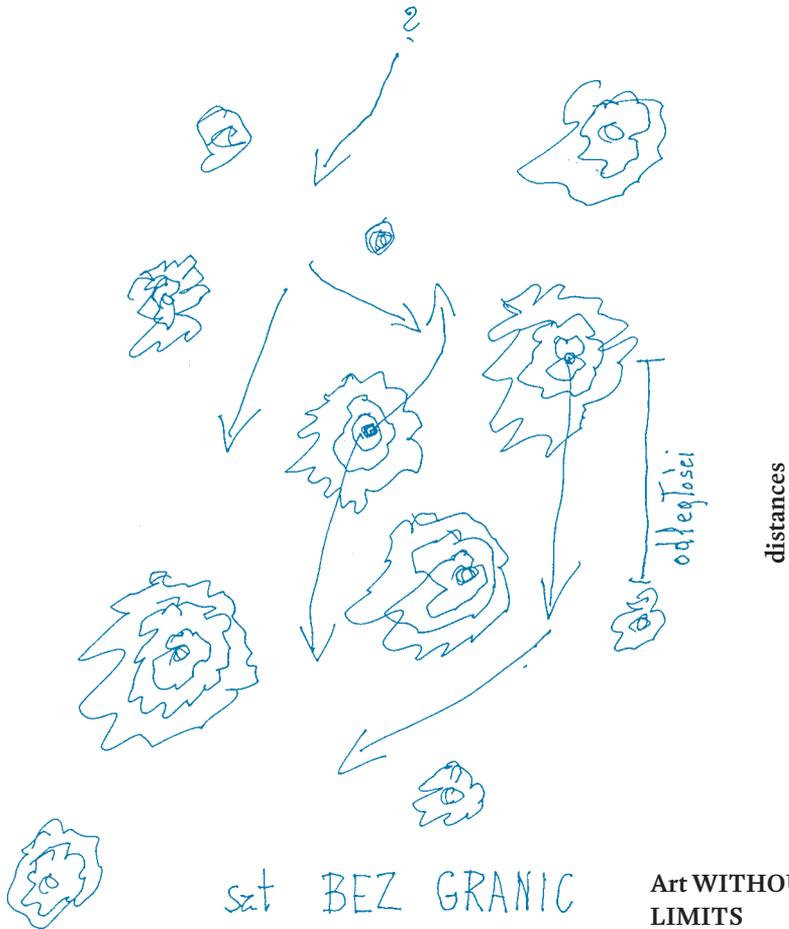
Art 'beyond'  
Art 'AWAY FROM'



II.

Sztuka „MIĘDZY”

Art 'BETWEEN'



Szt BEZ GRANIC

Art WITHOUT LIMITS

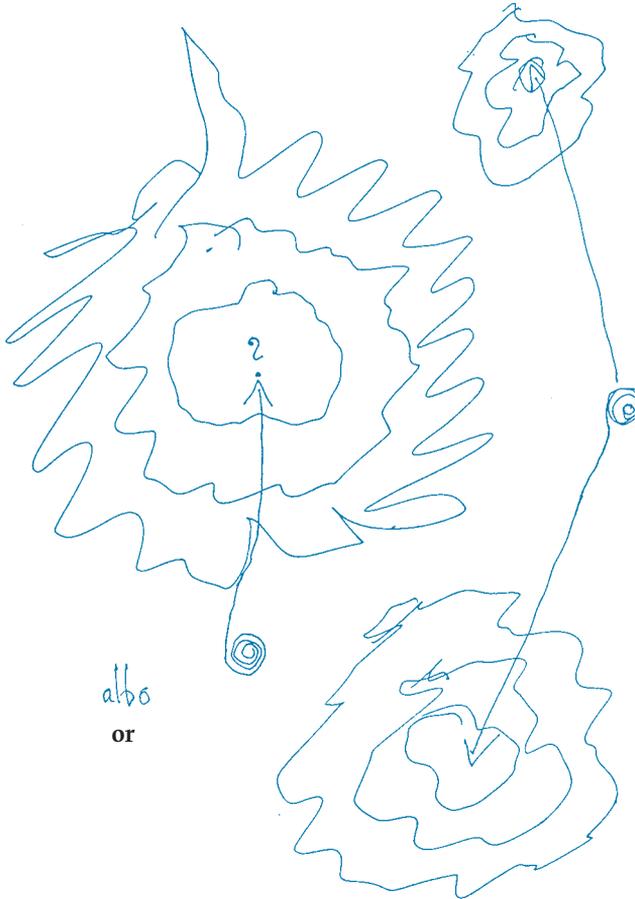
III.

Sztuka "do wewnątrz"  
"do źródeł"  
sztuka "DO"

Art 'towards the inside'  
towards the sources

Art 'TOWARDS'

nie ma granic  
still no limits



IV.

Sztuka

sztuka

sztuka

sztuka

sztuka

sztuka

sztuka

sztuka

Art



# Entropy

Clear references to the second law of thermodynamics – the law of the constant increase of entropy of any isolated system are often present in the critic's writings and graphs. The development of art is drawn in the form of concentric circles of which the outer one breaks and the content pours out in every direction. Once the total stage is reached the paradigm is replaced, art dissolves and penetrates reality becoming a structure of its own. In reality art dilutes, reaching for the zero phase – "art, perfectly neutral and at the same time perfectly universal" revealing itself as pure mind process received by means close to telepathy.<sup>01</sup> Whenever **Ludwiński** depicts the logic of art using the Cartesian coordinates system, the invisible axis of permanent art evolution terminated with the zero stage and a question mark is pointed at the infinite white of the page. Despite criticism of the avant-garde, the ongoing erosion of the art model and the final diffusion of art into reality is precisely the fulfilment of one of the avant-garde mottos of "removing the borders between art and reality". However, as in the case of avant-garde practices the phrase sounds like an aporia [putting an identity sign between art and reality, as **Peter Bürger** argued, treated the former to blunt criticism],<sup>02</sup> **Ludwiński** calls for neutral art, not so much apolitical but 'non-ideological', an art unimposing for the receiver and created with his/her participation and decision. In transposing thermodynamics into the art sphere, one might assume that **Ludwiński** viewed art as reaching towards its own disappearance in the 'harmony of contradiction', dissolving and becoming an element of reality with no more energy to convert. ✖

01 | Jerzy Ludwiński,  
'Sztuka w epoce  
postartystycznej',  
in *Epoka błękitu*,  
op. cit., p. 167.

02 | Peter Bürger,  
*Teoria awangardy*,  
Cracow 2006.

## Art AFTER

What will art be in X years?

Until the 1950s an answer to this question was very difficult, in the 1960s – impossible. Now it has become unexpectedly simple:

ANYTHING

What will be the direction of the development of art?

EVERY

However, in some particular cases:

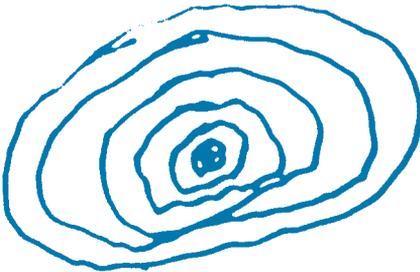
NONE

(Being optimistic, I do not mention an exceptional situation in which art can disappear).

The art in this exhibition is precisely that – anything. Without directions, without trends, without styles (understood as a number of traits which can be traced in a work of art). Instead, present, past and future become one here. As if many mirrors reflected the Inflections of time.

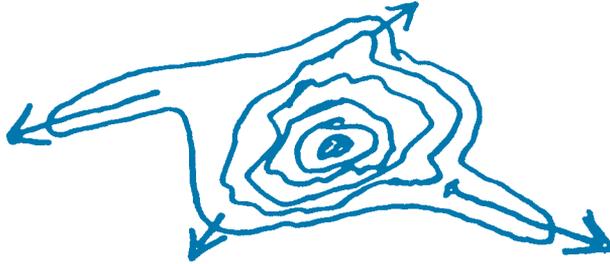
What was before?

Let us think of a multidimensional structure, very irregular but sufficiently flexible, continuously expanding and with changing colours. Such could be a model of art. (oh, how primitive it is).



External layers, resembling grains, are the newest styles, ... gothic, renaissance, baroque, ... modern art. The model is still closed and art has its borders.

It had been like that for 40 000 years and it would have probably remained the same, if not for the emergence of the AVANT-GARDE.



The model stretched in a dangerous way. It began to crack. Some enclaves emerged from beyond its realm.

For example:

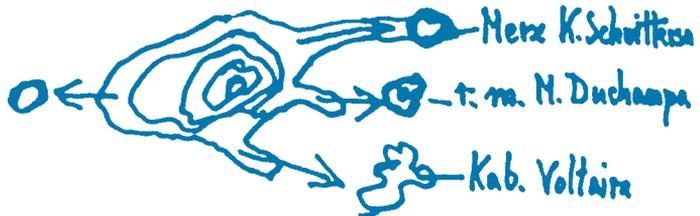
**Kurt Schwitters'**

*Merz*

**Marcel Duchamp's**

*ready-made*

Cabaret Voltaire



This state had lasted for quite a long time, until the mid-1950s, when there emerged such tendencies as structural art, new realism, tableau-objet, pop art. The model filled up again. This time however not for long. It was the beginning of the second REVOLUTION in this century.

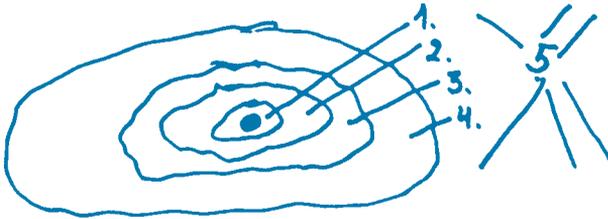
All former styles (grains) were gradually becoming less and less visible, including the last one – modern art, which, from our perspective, seemed non-existent. This condition was not ‘style-creating’. An opposite phenomenon was observed.



Art has now gone through several phases:

1. object phase
2. space phase (environment, land art and ecological art)
3. time phase (happening, performance, activity)
4. imagination phase (impossible art and conceptual art)
- 5.A infinity phase
- 5.B zero phase

The last two phases have not been observed.

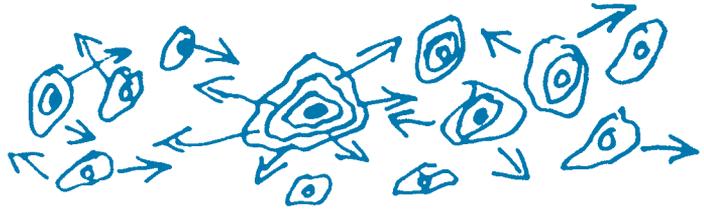


Then, a terrible explosion took place.



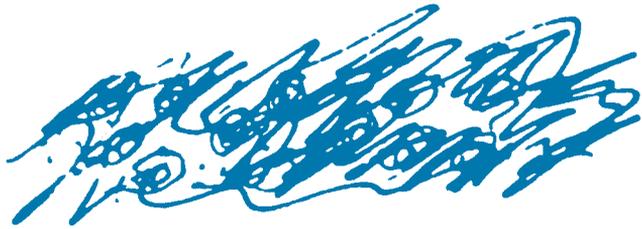
And the model of art ceased to exist.

However, if one should take a closer look it would turn out that there is no SINGLE model of art. There are many of them:



Where is the avant-garde here? Is it on the external layers of particular models? If so, the existence of an infinite number of avant-gardes would be possible.

But, this model of borderless art was not sufficient.



The avant-garde has been blurred. Art was extraordinarily soiled; at first by brushing against other disciplines, such as philosophy, logic, ethics, and even politics. Later, by identifying with reality.

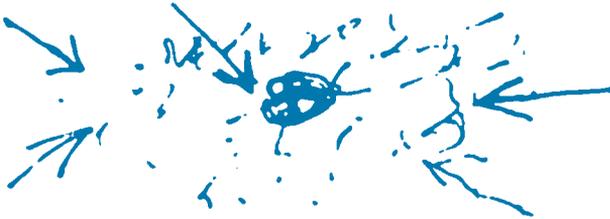
The avant-garde disappeared suddenly and unnoticed by anyone. It disappeared as if voluntarily. In this way the period of conflicts and intolerance, the period of having the right, or even the monopoly, to create new styles ended.

It was the END of the ART of VIOLENCE.

Every revolution takes advantage of gaps between various structures (artistic, technological, social, political) in order to deepen them. In this case the opposite happened. It was a revolution of revolution. Its last phases functioned as a lens attracting as much as possible. The most distant cultures in time became imminent for us. This new cultural situation constructed an instrument for the observation of the most distant beginnings. It was a revolution that had initially made the biggest divisions. Later, it only united instead of dividing. That is why it crossed itself out, it deleted itself. The notion of revolution lost its meaning.

~~-modern art—~~  
~~-avant-garde—~~  
~~-revolution—~~  
~~-progression—~~  
~~-models of art—~~

At present, art has become truly open.  
Especially on the inside.



Explosions have always been mentioned. If so, let it be an implosion as well. A notion of the ETERNITY OF ART could now be invented. What else could be crossed out? It might be possible, but the era of crossing out is disappearing behind the horizon.



A much more interesting question is: what will the man of the future be?

(I do not mention an exceptional situation in which he/she will not exist).

He/she will also be EVERY.

What is more, one could think if man would be a DIRECTIONLESS man.

It might mean the end of the luminous way, the end of striving for universal happiness, the end of an era of ideology and the end of violence. In order to get out of square brackets.

It will be a man WITHOUT (it is not a preposition, it is a noun).



One of the artists in this exhibition proposed 'a man in man'. And let everyone interpret this, as he or she will. ✕

# Radziejowice

1. a device in the telephone  
delay in transmission
2. in art – a delay in relation to the world  
the elimination of precursory acts  
– approval for mass tendencies – the boomerang rule
3. Choices – lack of approval for independence  
unification of a centralised model of art and  
the art[istic] constellation

The chosen artist – a stabilising attitude in the middle of the structure – at the statistically average point no extremes are allowed.

the rule of choice or of the jury

neither kitsch nor a masterpiece will squeeze through

---

Modern[ity] ———>

Avant-[garde] ———> fights – confrontations  
victory – annihilation of everything formerly accepted  
(burn the museums)

violent art

↖ the power of money  
[the power] of ideological manipulation

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the art of collecting ———> from the world towards art  
[the art] of the leaflet ———> from a[rt] ✕

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## The Chronicle of the Avant-Garde

In the Galeria nad Fosą [Gallery on the Moat] in Wrocław, a presentation of performance art was held over several days. The shows finished late at night. One had to walk back to the hotel through a completely empty city.

On the way, a beautiful palace where the Office of Artistic Exhibition's Gallery was situated, attracted everyone's attention. Through a huge window one could see peculiar pictures painted in a careless retro style. The poster was saying that these were pictures painted by amateurs, the retired and the disabled. Next to it, there was an inscription on a stone board: the avant-garde.

On another street a man in blue trousers painted something on a wall with a large brush. A new wave was approaching. ✕

# Wrocław – Inauguration State College of Fine Arts

Nov. 1994

What I would like to say will be about fashion.  
Or rather more about what cannot be fashionable.

One can find less or simply even none of the latter.

Take, for example, dinosaurs who made a dazzling career for themselves, even with children.

It is not only [because of] **Steven Spielberg** himself. He only smelt that something was in the air. Dinosaurs had all the indications to become heroes, or should I say martyrs in the conscience of future generations of living creatures. They disappeared suddenly in a cataclysmic flash that hit our planet.

I like dinosaurs being popular for two reasons:

1. They are drastically different from anything we normally encounter. They activate our imagination towards the other.  
Dinosaurs can also appear in the arts. And that has already happened. Only in art they are inconspicuous.

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And now something totally different: postmodernism.

In 1977 **Jean Fr[ancois] Lyotard** [published] – *La Condition Postmoderne*. Since then, the term appears everywhere:

in fine arts, architecture, music,  
history, philosophy and even sciences.

It is something that followed modernism and was at the same time its contradiction. The average art consumer's idea [of postmodernism] would be as follows:

glass architecture ornamented with columns  
or ripped apart by a giant, massive gate.  
or music with 'tom-tom' drum elements,

or such as that created by **Charles Ives**,  
music overlaying the sounds of workers' manifestoes.

Meanwhile it could be more like this:

postmodernism is a broader notion than modernism, that is  
an effect [that happened] in the 1960s or some years earlier,  
of a complete reversal of proportions within art and in  
culture as a whole.

not everybody together but everyone individually.  
The greater the distance between artists, the more apparent  
the degree of authenticity.

The space between art gained importance.  
[The] time [between art gained importance]  
It became important to be aware of the empty space where  
everything is to be filled.

What is extraordinary [about this space] is that the more we fill it  
the more immense it grows and the more intense it becomes.

More on postmodernism:

one can say postmodernism is a particular example of  
modernism that serves as a centre from which things evolve  
in every possible direction. If we cut out the centre we're left  
with a kind of torus, but one without the outer edge.

~~Around 1970 I wrote~~

One further notion:

the term 'soft-science' appears in the essays of some scholars  
and philosophers. A term parallel to that would be 'soft-art'  
(not to get mixed up with **Cl[aes] Old[enburg]**).

This means that with science it is necessary to go beyond  
the traditional disciplines and even traditional terminology  
into empty spaces.

Simultaneously, the more answers are given the more questions arise. Expansion of the territory of ignorance.

Soft-art

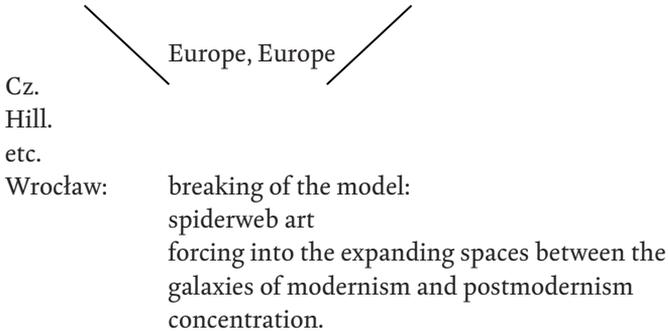
the situation of art unbound  
[the situation of art] without the avant-garde

side by side: art considered traditional  
art considered hyper-modern  
a complete scope of attitudes

simultaneity that was, so far, unfamiliar to art.

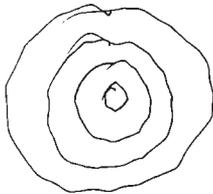
And still artists gather close to narrow passages and create huge jams.

Meanwhile:

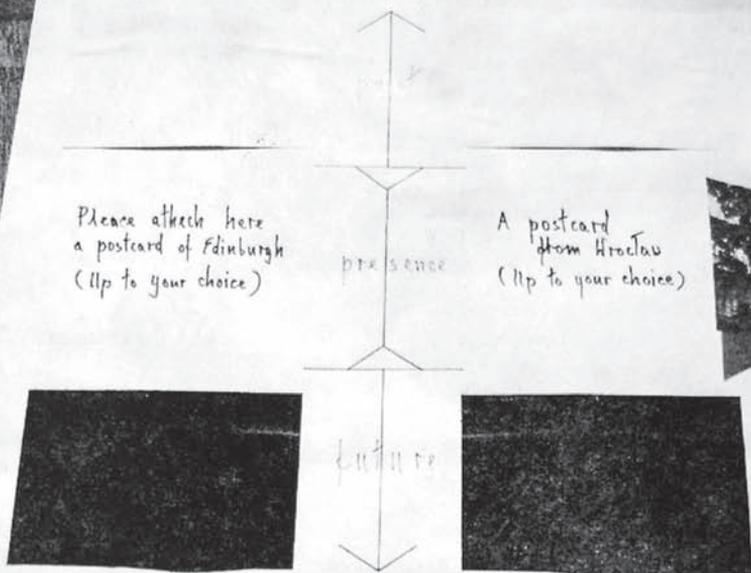


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The black matter of art in  
Wrocław, Poland and the world.



# EDINBURGH — WROCLAW



One can say that only during a short time period called presence one can notice the differences between Wrocław and Edinburgh. Besides one can say that during infinitely much longer periods called past and future one can not point out any differences between these two towns.

Wrocław, July 1972

Jerzy Ludwiński

▲ Jerzy Ludwiński's proposal for a collaborative project between Scottish and Polish Artists, sent to Richard Demarco and his gallery in Edinburgh. This was based on two simultaneous exhibitions: The International Festival, Edinburgh, opening 20 August 1972 and the 10th Meeting of Artists, Scientists and Art Theorists, opening 20 August 1972, Osieki. PHOTO: Magdalena Ziółkowska. COURTESY: the private archive of Wanda Gołkowska and Jan Chwątzyk, Wrocław.

\*\*\*

a radical detachment from what was already there  
filling the empty spaces  
between the available – alternatives

---

as in science  
noncoherence, nonadjacency  
of disciplines → no man's spaces  
para-science  
para-art  
↓  
glue sticking the durable elements together  
information mass describing the context

---

two ages ↷ synthetic art  
analytical art

Dir[ections], ten[dencies]

A number of tend[encies] can be distinguished  
Instant classicising  
→ histor[ical] phenom.  
division made not according to tendencies  
escape into syncretisms

Exper[iment]

empiricism → initial presumption  
observation so abundant that  
the escape from the work of art towards  
other type of process[es]  
nothing is experimental  
– excess of concept, documentation

## Avant-[garde]

mass phenomenon – paradox

a limitless model of art

escape into the fight for taking over civil[isation]

## Art theory

theory of art is becoming the theory of civil[isation]

or a theory of the universe – escape into phil[osophy]

into art

✕

Zdecydowane odcięcie się od tego  
co było  
wypełnić miejsce pustych  
między tym, co jest – warianty  
jak w nauce  
nieodpasowanie, nieprzyleganie  
dyscyplin → miejsca niezycji  
paranauka  
parasztuka  
↓  
Klej Teoretycy elementy teorii  
muszą informacyjna  
opisująca kontekst  
Dwie epoki → szt. syntetyczna  
szt. analityczna

Kier., tend.  
Można wyodrębnić szereg tend.  
Błysk. klasycyzm się  
→ zjaw. histor.  
podmiot nie wy tendencji  
nieowolka w synekretyzmy  
Ekspert.  
empiryzm → założ. pierw.  
iść obserw. jak walka,  
że nieowolka od dr. szt. – nie  
w stronę proc. innego typu nie jest  
– przesł. konc., dokum. ekspert.  
Awang.  
zjawisko masowe – pieradka  
model szt. bez granic  
nieowolka w walce z przej. cywiliz.  
Teoria szt.  
teoria szt. staje się teorią cywil.  
ory teorii świata – nieowolka pfil.  
w sztukach



# Definition

Act against definitions. In his entropic model of art evolution, Ludwiński used terms and labels as if they were chemical elements, but he provided no definitions. In the postartistic era the task of defining seemed futile. However, paradoxically, he himself is a creator of perhaps the most unorthodox and successful definition of conceptual art.

Dispersed in his texts and lectures between 1970 and 1972, and embodied in his curatorial practice, conceptual art (also named 'concept art' or 'impossible art') is an open project, a reflection on the mechanisms running the course of artistic production, an inquiry into the logic of artistic evolution. However, emphasising the conceptual aspect of the work of art, the critic did not view words and objects as mere oppositions; for him, as for Michel Foucault, visibility and announcements "operated in a situation of mutual grappling and capture".<sup>01</sup> Conceptual art, according to Ludwiński, is an attitude of doubt, posing more questions than answers, and a critical stance towards culture where we feel *heimlich*. Conceptual art viewed in this way is not another breakthrough or a step forward. It is rather the degree of self consciousness giving way to splits and failures, a longing for the lost experience (one perhaps had never possessed), a search for the pulse of an inner process between images, beyond objects and below writing. ✖

01 | Ricardo Basbaum, 'Within the Organic Line and After', in *Art after Conceptual Art*, Alexander Alberro, Sabeth Buchmann, eds., Vienna 2006, p. 96.

# Novelty in Art is the Measure of the Artist's Imagination

## Jerzy Ludwiński talks to Paweł Polit

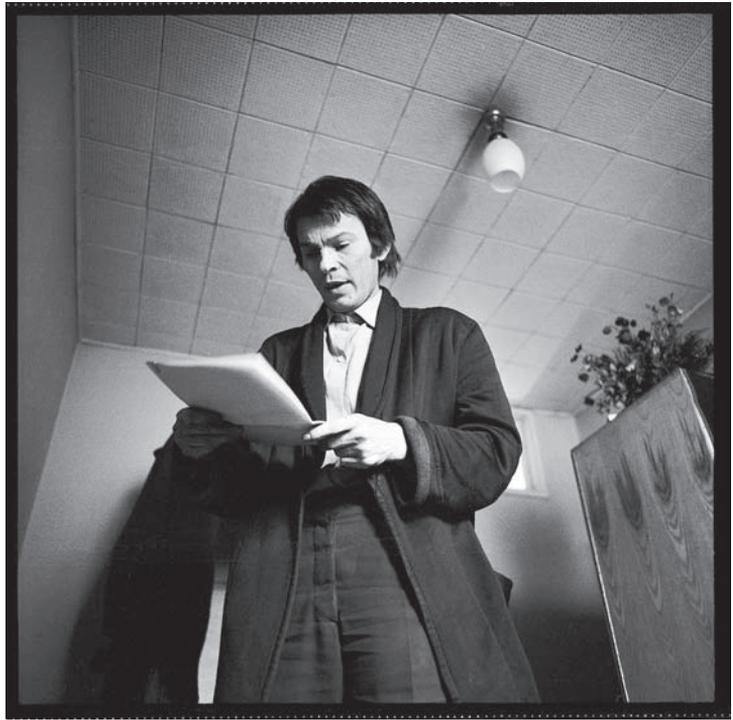
**JERZY LUDWIŃSKI:** When do you think conceptual art made its appearance in the world?

**PAWEŁ POLIT:**<sup>01</sup> Some think that it was with the first Fluxus' manifestations. **Henry Flynt**, for instance, used the term 'concept art' as early as 1960. The beginning of conceptual art may be associated with Fluxus because of **Dick Higgins's** concept of the 'intermedium' or an art object situated somewhere between art and life. When one begins to think in these terms one questions the traditional model of a work of art to ponder on art in general terms. To go further back, we may cite certain practices of **Yves Klein**, for example. At some stage he came to a point when a work of art no longer had material traits.

**J. L.:** To go even further back, we may say that when **Marcel Duchamp** began to put *ready-made* objects on display they no longer existed as forms; their form was fortuitous. Though perhaps there was an element of mystery in their form, perhaps even a symbolic element. Perhaps a numerical meaning was encoded in these objects that only **Duchamp** could have decoded. His *ready-mades* are silent. In fact he said himself that assemblages expressed something while *ready-made* objects were silent, which is one of the finest statements on art I know. Hence everything else was beyond form; one had to think about it rather than merely watch it in time and space.

This is perhaps even more characteristic in the work of **Kurt Schwitters**. Every successive layer of the *Merzbau* blocks the view of the one before, and what is in the middle (which was most probably previously the most important, that first egg-cell of art), is not accessible to us.

**01 | Paweł Polit**  
[b. 1965], art critic and curator at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw.



▶  
PHOTO: Tadeusz Rolke.  
COURTESY: Agency Gazeta.

What preoccupies me in this regard is that at the time when matter applied the highest pressure, during the triumph of the art of objects, especially in the late 1950s/early 1960s, when forms such as *tableau objet*, structural and textural reliefs, assemblages, and all sorts of collections were growing in number, the opposite started, and the palpable element in art was defied. At this point art went through a personality split. Form was gradually given up in art. Moreover, something which the more penetrating observers of art had known even earlier was becoming evident, that a superficial analysis of a work of art, taking into account merely the size or proportion of the forms painted or arranged in space, was no longer possible. It turned out that nothing would come of analyses of this kind, that their potentialities had been exhausted, that there were

no ideal forms to which art could aspire, but the more different, the more non-typical the form, the better.

When **Paul Klee** was beginning to work for the Bauhaus, he said that he was anxious to obey some sort of rigorous discipline in his works, but this was connected with time, not with space, i.e., with the sequence of paintings in time. What happened at this point was that a work of art, or any art object, was not important as such; it was series of works that were important, and the position of a given work in a series. What matters is the process which naturally occurs in time as well as in the artist's imagination, and hence, also in the imagination of the observers who see the process and come to understand it in this way or another, and discover some mystery in it. This is another important element leading to the emergence of conceptual art which is just the process visualised by means of various signals, texts, documents, untypical forms.

At a certain point in the 1960s the work of art as such disappeared, became absent in a way: it could not be located and we were only left with two elements on which to rely for understanding: the concept of the work of art, i.e., something that was there before, or the documentation, all sorts of traces, relics of undertakings, photographs, films. There was something 'before' and something 'after' and nothing in-between.

**P. P:** Can the moment of the disappearance of the work of art be somehow placed in time in Polish art? Should it be associated, for example, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium of Artists and Scientists *Art in a Changing World* in Puławy in 1966?

**J. L:** Let me go back to the situation before the Symposium. Artists were thinking of something beyond the material structure of a work of art. The process started with the emergence of objects that can be described as super-matter (or 'heaps' of matter), assemblages, images-cum-objects. **Włodzimierz Borowski**,<sup>02</sup> for instance, was thinking all the time of stepping beyond material. At this time, he was doing what looked like overly colourful sculptures. He showed one of these at the 1964 exhibition at the

**02 | Włodzimierz Borowski** [b. 1930], artist.

**03 | Marian Bogusz**  
[1920–1980], artist.

Krzywe Koło Gallery in Warsaw which closed soon after. His work was a kind of structural sculpture; what mattered was not its shape but its material quality which absorbed the space within. To this sculpture he fastened, apparently quite incongruously, a butterfly-shaped brooch. **Marian Bogusz**,<sup>03</sup> who was then in charge of the Krzywe Koło Gallery protested and said that the work was kitsch. It might have looked like this if it were not for the fact that the effect was intended. This was one of the moments when **Borowski** was anxious to isolate something from quite a different style and which marked the beginning of the stage of syncretic art in his work. He wanted to bring together different cultural arrangements or perhaps press them together or even annihilate them in what emerged. He combined various elements, cheap colourful plastic articles, a brooch, some refined materials, different modes of stylistic reality squeezed and pressed together like junk. Today we might call it a postmodern situation. Later, at the 1<sup>st</sup> Biennale of Spatial Forms in Elbląg, he made a form on which various slogans were inscribed, a kind of manifesto. Again, **Marian Bogusz** was critical and called **Borowski**'s work a 'bulletin board'. **Borowski** left Elbląg as a result of the disagreement and did not take part in the Biennale. In my opinion what he proposed at this time was a kind of pre-conceptualism. His other project consisted of paintings that could teach us certain types of formal and structural behaviour, a little as happens in cybernetics. That period, the first half of the 1960s, saw the utmost intensity of matter in art, and at the same time a striving for art which no longer had material form.

**04 | Olgierd Sawicki**  
[1928–1966], artist.

At this time, **Olgierd Sawicki**<sup>04</sup> was working in Warsaw on pictures to which he fastened glass tubes filled with liquid in different colours. The pictures could be turned around, causing the liquid in the tubes to mix, which produced varied colour effects. Then he embarked on a project that he did not finish: programmed pictures, shaggy self-propelled forms. **Sawicki** was one of the strangest and most original artists of the period. His art was so highly autonomous that the pictures or series of pictures he produced moved by themselves and lived their own life.

**05 | Jerzy Rosołowicz**  
[1928–1982], artist.

Also, in Wrocław, **Jerzy Rosołowicz**<sup>05</sup> wrote an article entitled

*Teoria funkcji formy* [*Theory of the Function of Form*, 1962] and then a text entitled *O działaniu neutralnym* [*On Neutral Action*, 1967]. The texts should not be read literally, the meaning is camouflaged and has to be read between the lines. His early paintings – ones that made one think of **Władysław Strzemiński**'s<sup>06</sup> unism – which looked a little like a honeycomb because of their cellular structure, and his later paintings made of lenses and prisms, were likewise a kind of camouflage. He was one of the first artists to come close to a neutral situation: for instance, at a certain point the frame was all that was left of an image, implying that the image was merely an instrument for showing reality in a slightly perverse way – through lenses one sees it deformed and upside down. Reality is in motion and has a random quality while the image is merely what shows this. Though only the casing or the frame remains, it is an autonomous object. This leads to a situation in which everything disappears and art itself should blend with the world around and cease to exist. This, for instance, was the message conveyed by his *Utensil for Catching Dew*.<sup>07</sup> The titles of his works are often hideous, for instance, *Neutrdrom*. With reference to the latter, I wrote an article entitled *Mimikra Neutrdromu* [*The Mimicry of the Neutrdrome*], and I was quite pleased with the title. But certainly, everything really started in Puławy. Among those attending the event was **Liliana Lewicka**<sup>08</sup> who created a series of 'places' including a cube much too large to go through the doorway between one room and another. It bore an inscription saying "An object to be carried inside". There was also 'A place to sleep', 'A place to look at', 'A place for contemplation' and a 'place with pigs' heads that one could enter from a special platform. **Mariusz Tchorek**, **Anka Ptaszkowska** and **Wiesław Borowski**'s *Teoria miejsca* [*Theory of a Place*]<sup>09</sup> was presented at the Symposium. **Mieczysław Porębski**<sup>10</sup> expressed his views on 'metacriticism'. Also **Tadeusz Kantor**<sup>11</sup> said something of his own.

**P. P: Włodzimierz Borowski**<sup>12</sup> presented his *MANifest LUStrzany* [*Mirror Manifesto*] and the work *Formuła* [*Formula*], related to the former, which was constructed from splinters of a mirror making

**06 | Władysław Strzemiński** [1893–1952], artist.

**07 |** In Polish, the title is a pun on his name [editor's note].

**08 | Liliana Lewicka** [b. 1932], artist.

**09 | Wiesław Borowski, Anna Ptaszkowska, Mariusz Tchorek**, 'Teoria miejsca', in *Tadeusz Kantor w Archiwum Galerii Foksal, Małgorzata Jurkiewicz, Joanna Mytkowska, Andrzej Przywara*, eds., Foksal Gallery SBWA, Warsaw 1998.

**10 | Mieczysław Porębski** [b. 1921], art historian and critic.

**11 | Tadeusz Kantor** [1915–1990], artist.

**12 | Włodzimirz Borowski**, 'Mirror Manifesto', in *Włodzimirz Borowski. Traces 1956–1992*, Jarosław Kozłowski, ed., exh. cat., Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw 1998.

up the signs + and –. I have an impression that the manifesto and the work relate to what you say of the origin of conceptual art: it came into being when artists began to see art as a process.

**J. L.:** First as a process and second as something more than what was carried into effect in material: as a kind of philosophy of art rather than art alone. What **Borowski** did deserves to be called 'concept art'.

**P. P.:** Another related motif is art's opening up to reality, the treatment of a work of art as an object which absorbs reality, on which reality is directly impressed.

**J. L.:** This particular motif is the subject of a book on which I am working, which presents the process of the evolution of art. The construction of the book is symmetrical. The first part describes the broadening of the model of art. This implies a situation in which art was still an enclave and the area outside was no longer art. This model of art began to expand too rapidly and at a certain point something like an explosion happened bringing forth art unlimited. To distinguish between art and non-art, between art and reality, was only possible through associations and by describing things as art and non-art. I am not concerned with the chronology of events. The logic of the process was evolutionary not chronological. At some point different things began to exist side by side which has continued to this day: on the one hand, we have art unlimited, and on the other, art which is an enclave surrounded by reality which is no longer art. We are dealing with different trends and tendencies which exist and operate side by side and regardless of one another.

The 1960s was an expansive period, in just a few years everything changed, not just in art but in the outlook on the world. Most art historians discussed these phenomena in traditional terms such as styles and trends. Their diction includes terms like cubism, surrealism, dadaism, happening, conceptual art, etc. If the reader is not careful enough, he/she may come to the conclusion that these

are subsequent periods in art. In fact, it is a case of simultaneous occurrence, in which all of these trends function alongside one another, and there are many of them. The situation is not linear, i.e., things do not come in sequence. Here all things happen at the same time, but each has a different measure of time. Everything expands and spreads in many directions.

**P. P:** I have a feeling that for you the history of art comes to an end at a certain point and from then on one should no longer speak about the development of art, but about the accumulation of new phenomena in art of which one cannot say that one is the logical outcome of another. These phenomena blend and interrelate, but it cannot be proved that they result from one another and that they can be arranged in chronological sequence.

**J. L:** Everything results from everything else, which is also because of the exceedingly effective circulation of information at the moment, what with the Internet, the whole reality of television and phantomatics (I use this term borrowed from **Stanislaw Lem's**<sup>13</sup> *Summa Technologiae* rather than the concept of virtual reality). With contacts between artists being so close, things are created at a rapid pace, and practically everything is a reference to something else. It is difficult to do something new something off the beaten track of art. To say 'off' was justified before the late 1960s, not later. At the moment it is impossible to step beyond anything, for we live in the world of art unlimited.

**P. P:** Does this approach to the history of art invalidate the category of novelty in art?

**J. L:** It does not. We live in a period of complete artistic freedom, and everyone can do what one pleases. Novelty in art is the measure of the artist's imagination. A mass of phenomena emerge in art, and the more remote they are from one another, the better. The greater the distance between the attitudes of individual artists, and between their attitudes and their mental structures, the better.

**13 | Stanislaw Lem**  
[1921–2006], writer.

This is perhaps the basic difference between what things used to be like in the past, at the end of the 1960s, and what they are like now. Once I was asked how is it that I can like something in art if I also like something quite different. The question is based on the assumption that not only one's taste in art, but one's views of art have to follow one exclusive direction. This has proved impossible and quite absurd. We can now choose from the whole variety that artists offer us. It seems that the greater the variety and the greater the distance between the artists, the better. This is what postmodernism relies on.

**P. P:** It is somehow related to what you have written in a text entitled *Sztuka PO* [*Art AFTER*] about the model of avant-garde art coming to an end or having been exhausted. According to what you say, progress is now no longer at stake, nor is there just one, exclusive understanding of art. You believe that the concept of progress has been transformed, and a whole variety of artistic proposals, not necessarily compatible with one another, are acceptable, in connection with which the very idea of revolution has changed.

**J. L:** In the past revolution was a very positive concept both in art and, more so, outside art; now we only speak about revolution on the remote geographic and cultural peripheries. On the other hand, I have a feeling that art has almost never seen a revolution, but at most, periods of a great condensation of facts, new facts rising in importance. The first such period in art was in the first decade of the twentieth century; another was in the late 1960s/early 1970s. This does not mean that there was more art then; there is more art now. More art, more publications, more galleries, more museums – they are growing bigger and bigger. There was less of everything then, but many striking phenomena surfaced, quite different from what we had been accustomed to. The situation was fascinating. It is a matter of the past now; everything fits in with a definite standard. There is no way out of the standard. Hence the emergence of iconoclastic procedures which have come to be accepted.

**P. P:** What did you mean by the ‘third art’, of which you wrote in your text *Pałka Bretona i sztuka trzecia* [*Breton’s Staff and the Third Art*]?

**J. L:** I meant non-standard art functioning on the peripheries of the art world. I meant unofficial art which is not commented on, art which is a *faux pas* in a given arrangement. Art of this kind was created by **Włodzimierz Borowski**, for example. I also called it ‘shadow art’ or ‘unidentified art’.

**P. P:** Is ‘unlimited art’ more radical than art understood as an enclave of reality?

**J. L:** Yes and no. Unlimited art includes within its framework attitudes that we used to call academic or even conventional.

**P. P:** Back to the relation between art and reality: I am thinking now of **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**’s<sup>14</sup> text of 1970, *Sztuka w poszukiwaniu istotnego* [*Art in Search of the Essential*],<sup>15</sup> from which it appears that the medium is not important, that form and style are no longer important, that art in fact amounts to the artist’s utmost opening up to reality and to anticipation, to his being on the alert for what may be a signal from art as such. For **Jurkiewicz**, everything may be art if it is recognised as art.

**J. L:** For **Jurkiewicz**, an attitude in itself may be art. His was a very interesting and untypical statement at that time. I think that in **Jurkiewicz**’s case it was always a matter of some kind of emotional opening, unlike **Rosołowicz** whose attitude was increasingly cool. Similarly, **Wanda Gołkowska** represents what is a more sensual attitude in my opinion, unlike **Jan Chwałczyk**<sup>16</sup> who was a rationalist of sorts. Let me add that the artists of whom I have spoken, **Borowski**, **Rosołowicz**, **Jurkiewicz**, **Gołkowska** and **Chwałczyk**, and those of whom I haven’t, such as, for example, **Barbara Kozłowska** and **Zbigniew Makarewicz**,<sup>17</sup> were not in my opinion ones from the conceptual art circles. Conceptual art is **Art**

**14 | Zdzisław Jurkiewicz** [b. 1931], artist.

**15 | Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**, ‘Sztuka w poszukiwaniu istotnego’, *Odra* 3, 1971.

**16 | Wanda Gołkowska** [b. 1925] and **Jan Chwałczyk** [b. 1924], both artists.

**17 | Barbara Kozłowska** [b. 1940] and **Zbigniew Makarewicz** [b. 1940], both artists.

**& Language, Joseph Kosuth**, the group connected with *The Fox* magazine, and **Jarosław Kozłowski** when he was working on his *Exercises*. I understand conceptual art as being situated between art and logic, and art and linguistics. The rest, concerned with the imagination, even that of the sensualist type, is concept art to me. The whole matter is apparently there, though at times in residual form, but also important is what is beyond matter.

**P. P:** Is it possible to distinguish between impossible art and concept art?

**J. L:** I believe not. I think that no borders can be drawn. The character of some concepts is such that when we look at things from one angle what we see is impossible art, when we look from the opposite side what we have may be concept art or conceptual art. It is a matter of perspective not of different art trends. There are those with the reservation that impossible art is not something that is only done for technical reasons, but also for purely logical ones. An important question for me is why there was the emergence of conceptual art. In my opinion, it was connected with a change in the approach to understanding art. In the case of the first avant-garde, we were dealing with a dream of ideal art, moreover, art that was to change the world: vast urban complexes, objects, tools were to be created under the influence of art. Design institutes were set up and the Bauhaus developed along these lines. All this reflected a striving for changing the world for the better, for some sort of utopia. Later on, things began to gradually change, and the concept of ideal art disintegrated. **Man Ray's** flat-iron with spikes was an example of impossible art rather than a functional object. Everything was beginning to go wrong, resulting in complete reorientation: the dominant conviction was that the world as it stood should be protected, among other things, against the excessive number of man-made objects and against the even greater amount of rubbish into which these objects were transformed. Land art was a manifestation of this attitude. What **Robert Smithson** or **Michael Heizer** did was an example of the

defence of the world by artists who no longer wanted to change it, quite the contrary. In Poland, a similar ecological attitude was represented by **Fredo Ojda**.<sup>18</sup> Conceptual art is, to an extent, an art of reduction. Its goal is to reduce the number of objects produced. Non-commercial, ephemeral, frail, this art has no permanent quality, and hence no museum quality. There is less and less art, and a sign or a signal are enough to quicken our imagination. In the end, there may be no art at all, as was the case with **Rosołowicz** whose art merged with reality and vanished. In the late 1960s everything changed in a direction opposite to that marked out by the first avant-garde. It was as if art as a whole was turned inside out.

**18 | Fredo Ojda**  
[b. 1949], artist and  
artistic director of  
the Gallery of Action,  
Warsaw.

**P. P:** What happened in Poland in 1970?

**J. L:** Three important events were held: the Symposium of Artists and Scientists *Wrocław '70*, the summer school at Osieki, called the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, and the *Sztuka Pojęciowa* [*Concept Art*] exhibition at the Mona Lisa Gallery in Wrocław – the first of these was in the spring, the second in the summer and the third in the autumn of 1970. Each was a sequel to the former. *Wrocław '70* marked the beginning of group manifestations of conceptual art. What happened before were individual attempts at reaching a definite concept of art; in 1970 artists began to compare and contrast their attitudes. The participants were very carefully selected by the organisers of all three events, in the former two cases by myself, and I was also among those responsible for the selection of artists invited to Osieki.

**P. P:** In my opinion the Symposium *Wrocław '70* elaborated on the model of art which began to surface in the second half of the 1960s at all the exhibitions organised by the Mona Lisa Gallery that you ran. In fact, the works presented at the Gallery no longer fitted in with the traditional art categories though they could still be displayed in a gallery space. For example, **Wanda Gołkowska's** *Układy otwarte* [*Open Structures*], which broke with the traditional

model of a work of art as a closed entity, or **Włodzimierz Borowski**'s exhibition or 'anti-happening', as you called it, entitled *Fubki tarb* [*Pubes of Taint*], in which the guests at the private view became the material from which his work of art was created. The exhibition was perhaps the most radical example of turning all the binding categories upside down and stepping outside them. On the other hand, what was presented at the Symposium *Wrocław '70* no longer referred to the concept of a gallery as a closed, defined section of space. This suggested a situation of maximum openness, free from any hampering artistic conventions. Don't you think that there was something utopian in it?

**J. L.:** I wouldn't call it utopian. The first avant-garde which developed or 'spluttered' in the 1960s wanted to preserve the world as it was and I see this as utopian. But I had a compelling sense – in Puławy in 1966, and in Wrocław and Osieki in 1970 – of witnessing the birth of new art of the kind that hadn't been seen before. I was also convinced that this kind of art did no harm, that it would join everything that was already there. I thought that there had been painting and that it would pursue its direction and that there would also be other routes running in different directions. I thought that this would be the future development of art, meaning that art would be more open than it had been until then; open to painting, sculpture, graphic art, all branches of art known for centuries, and to what was being created at this time. This was quite a new situation. Earlier, one formula was simply substituted for by another, and at this time different approaches existed one beside another, marvellously simultaneous, with everything being there at the same time.

In my article *Art AFTER* written and drawn in the form of a comic strip, I said that the answer to the question about the art of the future was unexpectedly simple: art of the future was every art imaginable, both traditional and the most current art.

This is why, for example, I do not like evaluation of art. If I am interested in something it is because of the choice I have made. There is an element of expansion in art unlimited and the world

without frontiers, which makes us strive for variety now, not for unity as before. The striving for unity resulted in the emergence of hierarchies, which is no longer possible now, and would be absurd. This is why there are no authorities; there can be no authorities either in art or in the world at large.

**P. P:** In the memorable year 1970, you said that new art was disloyal to reality.<sup>19</sup> What did you mean?

**J. L:** I meant the political realities in Poland at the time. I put it bluntly, saying that artists were against the political realities. The goal of any power, especially in a totalitarian system, is to make the whole of society speak with one voice while artists at this time wanted to speak in many voices, each different to the others. I did not mean crying out anti-state slogans, I did not mean that all should react in the same way. What we did was not popular with the authorities, viz the outcome of the Symposia in Puławy and Wrocław. In both cases attempts were made on the part of those in charge to cover everything up as if nothing had happened – if the documentation evaporated nothing would come to the surface. So that if we wanted to achieve anything, we had to act quickly and without detection.

**P. P:** In *Art AFTER* you also answer the question about the man of the future. In your opinion, he will be one ‘without direction’, he will be a ‘man without...’. This relates to the transformation of the concepts of progress and revolution, of which we have spoken.

**J. L:** I meant that as a man, and even as an artist, he would be immune to ideologies. I thought that he might be a man moving in all directions at the same time. A man who allows himself to like something and its opposite at the same time. The concept of the ‘man without...’ meant the opposite to **Musil’s** *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* [*The Man Without Qualities*]. The title *Art AFTER* is about the transformation which occurred with the emergence of conceptual art. Connected

**19** | Jerzy Ludwiński,  
‘Sztuka w epoce  
postartystycznej’,  
*Odra* 4, 1971.

with this transformation is a way of thinking described today as postmodernism. In my opinion, we should not think of postmodernism in terms of any definite art trend; it is the entire art at a given moment, though viewed from a definite perspective; it is a whole complex of artistic phenomena seen in their variety, for the variety of the things seen is, in fact, the main principle of postmodernism.

**P. P:** Do you mean that viewed from a different perspective avant-garde art becomes postmodernist art?

**J. L:** Postmodernism is both a development and expansion of modernism; thus viewed, modernism as such would be a particular example of what we call postmodernism, and it would function somewhere in the middle, as the core of all phenomena in art. At a certain point the core was removed leaving a doughnut shape around it. What has remained is a complex of all sorts of tendencies, very different from one another, so that if we looked at it from a different perspective, interested in other aspects of the same complex, we could call it something quite different, for example, the New Age. Phenomena liable to rationalisation would add up to postmodernism; what is mysterious in works of art and cannot be rationalised, may be called the New Age. Moreover, it is pure mystery, situated beyond art that we are somehow able to understand. It is a little as it is in science: the area of the unknown expands with the progress of knowledge.

Somewhere at the beginning of all this there was a tendency to cross the barriers so as to be able to speak about the pure artistic process, something never unveiled. I once called it 'absent art'. To unveil the artistic process there are works of art or other artistic statements, or there is bringing any part of the process into focus. I think that what lay at the basis of the transformation discussed, was seeing art and its development as a creative process. ✕

MARCH 1999, TORUŃ



Jarosław Kozłowski (second from left), Jerzy Ludwiński (third from left) during the first NET-project, Jarosław Kozłowski's private flat, Poznań, 1971.  
COURTESY: the private archive of Jarosław Kozłowski, Poznań.

PRZEDMIOTY  
SWIECACE  
DRUGI POKAZ  
ZAMKNIETY  
JUBILEU  
6.3 LA  
TWORO  
BERE  
PO  
RZY  
KUDZI

# INSTITUTION

Najw. umyśle XX:

1. Einstein
  2. Freud
  3. br. Wright
  4. Wittgenstein
- Keynes  
Rachel Carson - środowisko  
Watson, Crick  
Jean Piaget = psychologia  
Tim Berners-Lee - Internet
- 11 itd.:
- Lee Baekeland - chemia  
Philo Farnsworth - tv. satelita  
E. Fermi  
Robert Goddard - techn. rak.  
E. Hubble

Biskupin  
738/37 - VII w.

John Zorn - jazz aw.  
John Pachelbel  
Charles Ives  
Jean Michel Basquiat  
John Zorn - jazz aw.  
John Zorn - jazz aw.  
John Zorn - jazz aw.

# The Greatest Minds of the Twentieth Century

1. [Albert] **Einstein**
2. [Sigmund] **Freud**
3. **Wright** brothers
4. [Ludwig] **Wittgenstein**  
[John Maynard] **Keynes**  
**Rachel Carson** – environment  
[James] **Watson**, [Francis] **Crick**  
**Jean Piaget** – psychology  
**Tim Berners-Lee** – Internet
11. and so forth:  
**Leo** [Hendrik] **Baekeland** – chemistry  
**Philo** [T.] **Farnsworth** – plastics  
**E**[nrico] **Fermi**  
**Robert Goddard** – rocket science  
**E**[dwin] **Hubble**

Biskupin<sup>01</sup>  
738/37 – eighth century BC

**Jaron Lanier** – music and forms  
**John Zorn** – avant-garde jazz  
**Johann Pachelbel**      **Jean Michel Basquiat**  
**Charles Ives**

✕

**01** | Biskupin – a well-known archeological site in Central Europe excavated in the 1930s [editor's note].

# Aesthetical / Critical Redundancy

In the apartment of the critic in Toruń, one bookshelf contained the following titles wrapped in protective paper: Stanisław Lem's *Summa Technologiae*, a worn out volume of Albert Camus *Essays*, with numerous handwritten notes, the second Polish edition of Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, and also *Życie we wszechświecie* [*Life in the Universe*] by Andrzej Trepka, *Przeciw szokowi przyszłości* [*Against the Shock of the Future*] by Józef Bańka and Paul Davies *Ostatnie trzy minuty* [*The Last Three Minutes*]. One can presume what other books might have been there: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas Kuhn, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* by George Kubler and possibly any of the publications of Freeman John Dyson.

"It would be best if everything I have said is proved completely wrong",<sup>01</sup> wrote Ludwiński in a text preceding Jarosław Kozłowski's happening, effectively distracting us from the illusion of the 'subject supposed to know'. Reading Ludwiński's texts is not an easy task: the language he uses is resistant, the concepts seem too transparent or opaque and there are no footnotes. The texts are not scientific in principle, yet the critic refers precisely to theories taken from natural sciences. Ludwiński's readings point to a forgotten discourse present in art history in the 1960s and 1970s: a discourse of futurology, cybernetics, memetics, natural sciences and mathematics. The use of such a discourse was a sign of disenchantment with the application of aesthetics and a withdrawal from a description of art using the categories of beauty, the sublime or form. It was an effect of disillusion with a position of artistic critique in Poland in the 1960s and 1970s, a stance against its quasi-criticality; indifference, against its conformity and wellbeing.

The critic is secondary, wrote Ludwiński in 1969. The limits between theory and artistic practice are disappearing,

01 | Jerzy Ludwiński, 'Pokaz Jarosława Kozłowskiego', in *Epoka błękitu*, op. cit., p. 121.

he added a year later. If the writing of Polish critics' on art, with few exceptions, was articulated by claims for objectivity, Ludwiński's reflections were based on the ethics of failure, close cooperation with artists, and aesthetical, as well as theoretical redundancy. For Ludwiński, a good theory is one that can be falsified and replaced. Just as he did not disregard para-science or pseudo-science, so he distanced himself from any version of a theory that had too much authority. "The blue reflection" is best described by the kind of dialogue and openness of Mikhail Bakhtin's.<sup>02</sup> Ludwiński fulfilled himself in speech, conversation, fierce discussion. He may have regarded script as only the meaningless remains of a continuous process. It may also be that for the critic writing was fascinating as a process in itself, never conclusive, and pointless. It may have been that the whiteness of the page was most appealing to him, slowly destroyed by words written with deep consideration, as a child's passionate scrawling. ✕

02 | Mikhail Bakhtin,  
*Problemy estetyki*  
*Dostojewskiego*, Warsaw  
1970.

# Man's Natural Surroundings – Newspeak

Grodziska – Ur – essence

Rubbish heap – artificial borders – cross section → museum  
radiation of information

Woodbine –

Wilderness → arch[itecture] – return  
remains, relics, remnants of documentation

balance – not geometry  
[order]

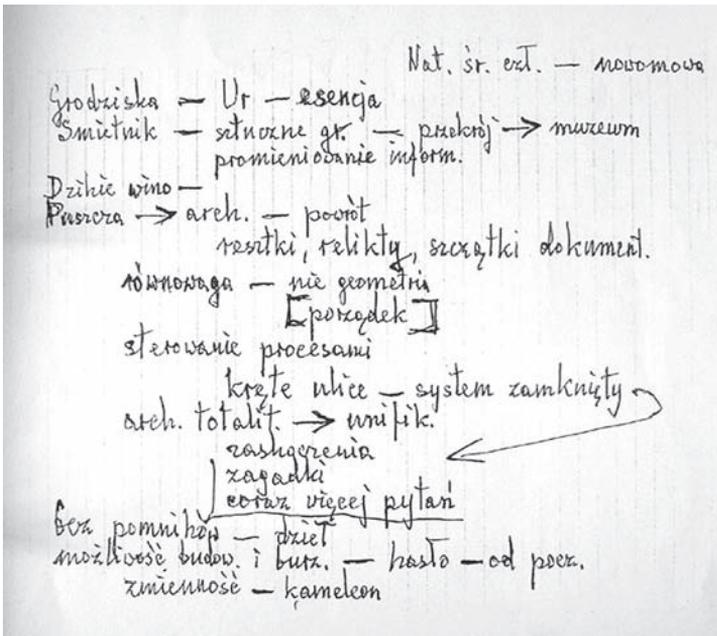
steering of processes

winding paths – a closed system  
totalitarian arch[itecture] → unification  
surprises  
riddles  
more questions arising

lack of monuments – [lack of] works of art

the possibility of construction – the slogan – from the beginning  
and destruction

changeability – chameleon ✕



## The Museum of Current Art in Wrocław [General Concept]

In the whole of Poland there is no Museum of Modern Art. Although many museums, and especially the Art Museum (Muzeum Sztuki) in Łódź, have departments of contemporary art, the theoretical foundations of these departments and their contents are not able to fulfil either the social needs or the interest that Polish art attracts from abroad.

There should be several museums of this kind in Poland. At present, however, Wrocław has a chance to initiate a project that would make it the first, and for some time probably the only city in Poland to have a separate gallery of modern art.

There are several arguments for siting such a gallery in Wrocław:

1. Wrocław's very young and dynamic artistic circle has placed the city higher and higher in the hierarchy of Polish artistic circles. At the moment it can be found in third place, after Warsaw and Cracow. The creation of the Museum of Current Art would promote Wrocław not only on the Polish art scene, but also internationally.
2. Wrocław is a very powerful centre, as far as other disciplines, especially science, are concerned. The existence of the gallery here would create an environment for relations between artists and scientists. Contacts of this nature, rarely undertaken, are still insufficient. The results of such an exchange could prove extraordinary.
3. Wrocław, in a way similar to the district of Dolny Śląsk, and also to the neighbouring lands, is a highly industrialised area. This industry has often been developed from scratch. The creation of a base for new forms of production, and an experimental studio connected to it, could influence in a rather radical way, the logical shaping of future reality; starting with enormous factories and ending with their products.
4. The creation of the only Museum of Current Art in Wrocław would be related to the process of the decentralisation of Polish

culture. It would be an expansion of modern artistic thought into one of the most western districts of the country. The attractiveness of this Museum abroad may also contribute to the popularisation of Polish achievements in the Western Lands.<sup>01</sup>

5. Wrocław, along with the rest of the Western Lands, is a city with an exceptionally large number of young people. The Museum would create conditions for the popularisation of modern art. It would be possible to influence the artistic taste of the majority of society.

### The Specification for the Museum

The Museum of Current Art would differ fundamentally from all other existing galleries which have been departments of big museums. Its uniqueness would lie not in narrowing the field of problems, but, on the contrary, in expanding it with issues which, until now, have not been regarded as important.

The essential differences, which will make the future museum unique, can be presented as follows:

1. In all museums (except perhaps the museum in Łódź) modern art, treated as marginal, is merely a supplement to the often very rich collections of ancient art. Here, modern art would play the leading role.
2. Contemporary visual arts are often treated retrospectively in museums, as the last fragment of art history; as closed as all previous artistic eras. Here, they would exist as a continuously changing open system.
3. The presentation of modern art in museums, and the choice of works for particular exhibition rooms, is determined by their permanent exhibitions of ancient art. This is the reason why curators are not willing to present untypical, original works, and why they wait for the historical resonance of these works. Meanwhile, it is common knowledge, that so-called 'untypical' works often play the leading role in the development of art. Thus, caution needs to be replaced by risk.

The organisers of the new museum should also react very quickly and conscientiously to artistic phenomena currently emerging.

**01** | Western Lands – areas granted to Poland on the basis of the post-Yalta arrangement, made by the countries victorious in World War Two. These lands served to make amends for the loss of the Eastern Lands and included the following cities: Wrocław, Szczecin, Gdańsk, Wałbrzych, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Olsztyn, Opole, Koszalin, Słupsk [translator's note].

4. Hitherto existing art galleries are constituted by collections of works of art which have already been created. That is why their character is static and purely consumerist. The existence of a collection in the new museum should not be a priority. Here, one should react to artistic facts as soon as they emerge. Here, the artistic process itself may become more interesting than a finished work of art. This testifies to the gallery's maximum activity and continuous artistic events.
5. Galleries of modern art, situated in museums, have a delayed reaction to artistic phenomena, the emergence of which they do not want to have any influence over. The example of the Museum of Current Art is different. It has to provoke artistic facts, advance them, and simply, it has to be a place where new art is being created, a gentle seismograph and, at the same time, a catalyst.
6. The name of the Museum of Current Art would therefore be a conventional one, while the institution would have more in common with an artistic atelier than a traditional museum.

### **Departments**

The general concept of the museum includes the following six departments:

#### **1. The Department of Action**

This would be the most important department shaping the character of the institution as a whole. It would hold artistic exhibitions, experiments, demonstrations, events, but also theoretical lectures, readings and discussions. In this department, confrontation with the most interesting artistic proposals would continuously take place. Not only would artists who have already made interesting works be invited to this department, but also those who would seem able to make such works *in situ*. There would certainly be no limits to the means of artistic expression. The organisers would be most interested in these artistic and theoretical propositions which would enrich the concept of art and render its former borders out of date. This type of activity would, at the same time, be directed against rigid conventions and stagnation

in art. All the exhibitions and artistic presentations in the museum should reflect the incredible variety of contemporary art. Therefore, the department of action would be a playing field for diverse, often controversial artistic statements; an experimental range – a source of new tendencies. The recent emergence of some facts in Polish art suggests that there is a chance for realising a project of this kind. The emergence of new galleries (over thirty in Warsaw), diverse *plein airs*, symposia, meetings, conferences and festivals, on a mass scale proves the existence of an intensiveness in the artistic movement, never before experienced in Poland. It is important to give this phenomenon institutional support and to facilitate its further development. The aim of the organisers of the gallery would be to provoke a situation in which the majority of the most interesting artistic phenomena would emerge in the gallery's space.

## **2. The Department of Visual Experiments**

Here, research into the 'behaviour' of various forms in space would be conducted. Based on scientific methods they would be as precise as possible. Experiments in the field of the psychology of forms and colours, and in other scientific fields useful for these purposes, would take place here. This department should initiate close relations with the Wrocław circles of mathematicians, physicians, cyberneticians, and other scientists, whose different ways of thinking could influence artistic visions and ideas of art in a very fruitful manner. Such relations could also have purely practical results, in programming various appliances, producing a range of surprising optical phenomena, and in explaining these.

This department would remind one of an ongoing symposium of artists and scientists from various disciplines. Some time later it could be converted into a studio for visual forms – a professional scientific institute based on the example of institutes of this kind existing in the West, the lack of which is painfully felt in Poland. It would be an institution providing service to industry, commerce, architecture, visual propaganda, and many other areas of work, which would have at its disposal a wide range of new, neatly designed and functional forms.

**3. The Collections Department** would provide a synthetic panorama of the achievements of Polish art in the last decade. It would present all artistic disciplines (painting, sculpture and graphic arts) including artistic phenomena from the borderline of all disciplines, and those that do not qualify for any of them. There would be room for the most vital trends and styles, illustrated by the works of the most distinguished Polish artists. Nevertheless, attention would also be paid, most of all, to the positions, which, in their time, transgressed the actual borders of art and marked its future development. The collection would change its appearance according to current evaluations of the works presented in it. It would thus be a market for the prevailing criteria. This collection would provide a background for the artistic action taking place in the Department of Action. The proportions of tendencies and the artists representing them included in the collection from the current perspective are illustrated by a separate schedule.

**4. The Department for the Popularisation of Art** would have at its disposal sets of reproductions of works of art from various periods, with a particular emphasis on the works of the great masters of the twentieth century. These sets of reproductions, accompanied by an explanatory commentary, would be sent out to schools, cultural centres, common rooms and factories, where the museum would organise popular lectures and screenings of films on art. The aim of this project would be to educate a new spectator, who would enthusiastically react to contemporary artistic phenomena demonstrated both in the museum and in other exhibition spaces.

**5. The Publications Department** – here, the catalogues would be prepared. They would not be arranged traditionally, with an introduction, list of works and reproductions. Publications accompanying the exhibitions would include theoretical essays, various types of inquiries, and even polemical texts. They would also provide a playing field for artistic presentations.

**6. The Technical Department** would play a very important role, given that some of the works would be created in the museum. This department would be obliged to deliver all the materials requested by the artist, to organise technical assistance and to provide proper working conditions.

\* \* \*

A museum of art conceived in this way does not require a large capacity building nor a big budget. It should be a small museum. The attention of the programme curators is not concentrated on the museum's size, but on its separate and specific artistic profile. The realisation of this programme and its continuation seems very difficult. It forces the organisers to have a thorough knowledge of Polish artistic circles and of the most recent work of particular artists, to be acquainted with the international art scene and to be able to act with precision.

### **Preparatory Work**

Preparations for the opening of the museum are planned to take two years. This would be enough time to buy works from past exhibitions or directly from the artists, according to the attached schedule.

### **Exhibitions**

1. December 1966 – **Henryk Stażewski and Tadeusz Kantor**.<sup>02</sup>  
An encounter between the later works of the two greatest living Polish artists, who represent two separate and radically antagonistic movements in art: constructive and intellectual, and destructive and irrational. The catalogue would include essays on the issue of contrasts in art, and statements from both artists.
2. A cycle of four exhibitions presenting the genesis and development of the four most vital tendencies in current Polish art (also internationally): structuralism, new realism and op-art. The fourth tendency cannot be anticipated yet. These exhibitions would provide a kind of chronicle of artistic

**02** | Henryk Stażewski [1894–1988], Tadeusz Kantor [1915–1990], both artists.

thought which accompanies the creation of art. They could show to what extent this thought has developed independently in the context of European art and whether its fruits have been sufficiently original. Such an attempt at matching the Polish avant-garde with analogous international formations has never been attempted. This cycle would be realised in 1967–1968. Accompanying publications would include material similar to that outlined in point one.

3. A plebiscite exhibition prepared by a group of fifteen of the most renowned critics, art theorists and gallery directors. Each of the experts invited prepares his/her own set of works by the artist whose careers he/she follows with great interest and whom he/she promotes. Everyone would have at his/her disposal a space of the same size and unlimited freedom to fill it. An exhibition of this type would be an authentic and distilled survey of the current state of Polish art. The catalogue would include fifteen separate introductions; directly or indirectly outlining the criteria for the selection of artists.

### **The Symposium in Wrocław**

Another event preceding the opening of the museum would be a symposium held in September 1967, organised with the patronage of major industry – the Elwro factory and the refinery of colour metals. Artists interested in new research, and scientists, mainly mathematicians, would be invited to participate in this symposium. The meeting of these two worlds could bring unexpected results. Materials and technical means which would be given to the artists by the industry, and which are not achievable in everyday artistic practice, could influence the shape of modern art in a radical way. The Symposium in Wrocław could be used as an introduction to the work of the department of visual experiments. ✕

# Centre for Artistic Research. Programme

## Art Institutions

Throughout the history of art, art institutions have played a fundamental and ever increasing role. They have mediated in the exchange of experience among artists, and the exchange of values between artists and the general public. The activity of the institutions is, we know, of secondary importance in relation to the art produced in given periods. Recently, however, we have been watching an apparently paradoxical situation: the gap between the activity of institutions and the progress of artistic events has narrowed, despite the acceleration of the progress of art. It may be taken as evidence that the arts, like the sciences, require organised forms of action. The image of a solitary artist struggling with a medium and outside of society belongs to the past.

We can divide art institutions into several categories based on their functions: educational ones (academies, art colleges and high art schools), those focused on research (institutes, experimental studies), those designed for exhibitions (museums, galleries, exhibition venues) and those concerned with the promotion of art (exhibitions, art magazines).

The above classification takes into account only the most evident functions, and it is obvious that the majority of institutions fulfill more than one function at any one time (academies, museums).

All forms of organised artistic activity have evolved both structurally and in terms of function. This evolution of art institutions reflects a similar evolution in the arts.

## Academies

In the last few years the majority of art schools have gone through a crisis. At its core there is the traditional division into departments and the exclusive reliance on traditional teaching methods. Meanwhile, the scope of the notion of 'art' has become much broader and, as a result, the slowly changing methods of education adopted in art schools have become marginal and dated in relation

to current developments in art. Consequently, art students do not take part in the topical artistic debates, nor are they prepared to participate. One can also notice that the theory of art and related subjects tend to be taken rather light-heartedly. Recently, we have watched some attempts at restructuring the inflexible academic system. However, these changes do not usually apply to basic art departments, instead they are introduced into departments considered to be of marginal importance such as, for example, the department of industrial design, where elements of academic research are introduced into the programme.

### **Institutes**

Deficiencies in academic research are compensated with the activity of research institutes and different types of experimental study centres. Studies on the interactions of forms in space are carried out on the basis of artistic experiments, as well as scientific and technological ones.

There has been a marked evolution from the closed system of academies to the open system of research institutes and study centres whose methods ignore the traditional divisions between the arts and sciences and operate on their borderlines.

### **Exhibition Rooms [*Salons*]**

Since the beginning of their existence exhibition rooms have been based on the institution of the jury, which decided whether the works presented matched the artistic standards. The jury still exists although the standards no longer apply. Exhibition rooms have retained their official status which accounts for their hierarchical organisation parallel to the administrative hierarchies of the state. The rooms are used for the display of randomly collected objects of some aesthetic relevance: paintings, sculptures, graphic works, ceramics, glass, textiles, furniture and jewellery.

The objects are judged by the general public, while at the same time they are intended to influence public taste.

In the last few years there has been a growing number of exhibitions focused on specific issues, designed by experts to

answer questions arising from the progress of art. Thus, exhibition rooms have evolved from the typical to the experimental, and from commercial galleries to research centres.

### **Galleries**

A small shop in a street was the prototype of a gallery. Later, an artistic gallery developed, having a well-defined profile and launching certain tendencies in art. Then, there followed the 'art play' galleries in which the collections of material objects lost their former significance. What was important was the action – playing with art.

The latest development in the evolution of the gallery is a conceptual gallery, without premises and exhibitions. This is a manifestation of artistic attitudes.

The evolution of galleries, much more than that of other institutions, has followed developments in art and runs parallel to these.

### **Museums**

Museums, if only because they are considerably larger institutions than art galleries, need much more time to adjust their structures and methods to the current situation in art. Collections are at the core of museum work, and the main responsibility for museum staff is the acquisition of works of art and their documentation. Collections may comprise all the art styles and developments authenticated in the course of history, in an attempt to arrive at the most complete representations of art from all eras. Methods of research used in museums are of a historical nature.

Since the 1920s museums of modern art have been appearing. However, these institutions usually follow the approach of museums of historical art and adopt similar methods. It is only at the end of the 1960s that the 'art play' museum emerges following a model of functioning similar to that of the gallery.

In the 'art play' museums, collections are of secondary importance to the museum's activity; primarily, they provide a different context. The museums themselves do not look backwards but forwards.

As with research institutes, museums emphasise the relationship between art and research. The future direction of art is more important than acknowledged achievements.

### **Art Centres**

Looking at various kinds of art institutions one can notice that some of them (museums and 'art play' galleries, conceptual galleries, institutes and centres of experimental art studies) are in fact concerned with the extended concept of current art. Each of them, however, has a somewhat limited range of interest. These often overlap with each other, yet sometimes there are gaps between them. Thus one can imagine an institution that operates on the margins of the activity of each of the above mentioned institutions, and at the same time tries to fill the gaps that have not yet been explored. Such an institution – which for the sake of convenience could be called the 'Centre for Artistic Research' would be a network of links between institutions and evolving art. At the same time, the work of the Centre would be a selective synthesis of the functions of the existing organisations.

As far as the structure is concerned, the Centre should be as different as possible from formal and hierarchically structured institutions.

Thus it should be a flexible organism, reproducing the continuous change within the art system. The Centre will be an institution which is defined not in terms of buildings and an increasing number of staff, but in terms of processes taking place in various milieus.

### **The Structure and Methods of the Centre for Artistic Research**

a] The Centre would encompass all kinds of artistic facts, i.e., exhibitions, shows, demonstrations, events, as well as theoretical presentations taking place in different venues: museums, galleries, open-air meetings and symposia held all over Poland. The Centre would be mostly interested in artistic and theoretical presentations which should contribute to broadening the notion of art, and redefining and updating its hitherto existing boundaries.

The aim is to create a playground which is not confined to one location or artistic tendency. Such a playground, in which the Centre would take on the role of a major link, might encourage the accelerated progress of art.

Thus, the activity of the Centre would be directed not towards art's past, but towards its future, not towards collecting works of art, but towards their coming into existence, not towards material objects but towards artistic progress.

- b] Documentation – artistic progress, both in Poland and abroad, is being documented in a haphazard way. There is an ongoing need for the systematic documentation of facts from the domain of art. In this case it would be 'live' documentation making use of all the available technological means. It will not be archival documentation but an approach that encourages the constant flow of information. Such an exchange of experience would also contribute to the acceleration of art's progress.
  
- c] Information should be circulated more efficiently among Polish, European and international milieus until exchange has reached the point of saturation. As a result, decisions concerning further contacts would be better informed and more selective. It is also necessary to establish close contacts with scientists and technicians – the history of scientific and artistic discoveries in recent years has shown that the most significant achievements occurred on the border between various areas of creativity. This exchange could evolve into a continuous debate between artists and scientists, perhaps carried out through the exchange of letters. Moreover, it could also have a refreshing influence on art and the whole human environment.
  
- d] Dissemination of art would not follow the traditional educational approach, i.e., in the form of teaching or any other transmission of knowledge or acknowledged taste. It would be an attempt to draw the public into play and the game, into active participation in the creation of art.

In the present situation, which the Centre for Artistic Research will set out to challenge, the achievements of Polish artists in many areas of work are made known only through random displays. As a result it is difficult to enter into dialogue or establish a partnership, i.e., a dialogue conducted on an equal level between Polish artists and art centres throughout the world. And, after all, it is important to show the uniqueness of artistic ideas originating as part of the development of our society. Our knowledge about the artistic activities of other nations is also far from satisfactory. The Centre for Artistic Research in Wrocław could contribute to the increasing importance of Polish art abroad. ✖

Jerzy Ludwiński and Zbigniew Makarewicz during the exhibition *Indywidualne mitologie* [*Individual Mythologies*], Akumulatory 2 Gallery, Poznań, 1980.

PHOTO: Barbara Kozłowska.

COURTESY: the private archive of Jarosław Kozłowski, Poznań.



P R O J E K C



## Situation

### Artists

The Union of Polish Artists and Designers includes approximately 6500 artists. Each and every member of the union has an equal chance to prove him or herself as an authentic artist. That is why artistic institutions, which are obliged to organise exhibitions, have to deal with all the members in the same way. That is the basic rule of the union's democracy. This rule excludes the possibility of a mistake.

### Artists

Amongst those registered in the union there are some real artists. Their number is impossible to know from any statistics. What is known, however, is that there are only a few of them. A plebiscite aimed at separating artists from other people involved in the various disciplines of art, is a well-known historical process. It can only be held unofficially, when critics and artists make their own choices. Choice in art is always connected with risk.

### Exhibitions

About 2000 contemporary art exhibitions take place in Poland each year. The Office of Artistic Exhibitions in Wrocław organises about 160 exhibitions of painting, sculpture and print each year. These exhibitions are presented to the audience without any commentary, and posters advertising exhibitions of internationally renowned artists do not differ from other posters. The whole system of information about exhibitions aims theoretically at equality in all artistic events, so that the audience makes it's own choice. Taking into consideration the huge number of exhibitions one must say that such a choice is impossible.

### Exhibitions

The standard of exhibitions has been levelled to the point where kitsch is put alongside a masterpiece even in a most respectable exhibition space. Usually this does not happen though; not in the official spaces. These present mediocre, academic painting. With little difference between individual works of art, the works of particular artists form a very monotonous model of contemporary art. It is obvious that this model, including both kitsch and masterpieces, does not say anything about contemporary art. Or, what it says is untrue. Meanwhile, the image of contemporary art appears only when one traces extraordinary works and events.

It is not the sum of all pictures which are being produced nowadays, but a sum of new contents and ideas which are transferred through these pictures.

### **Exhibition Rooms [*Salons*]**

There are institutions in Poland created to host exhibitions. These are museums and OAE Galleries [Office of Artistic Exhibitions], but also *salons* of the Associations of Polish Visual Artists. Museums usually organise retrospective presentations of artists who contributed in a special way to a city, region, or to the country. At the same time, whether this contribution was of artistic character or not, does not matter. In the OAE Galleries and the union's *salons* it is the order of the waiting list that counts. In all three cases, an invitation to an artist is decided upon by groups of people employed in these institutions. Therefore, any kind of individual responsibility for the shape of the artistic movement in the country is removed. In this context, the personal engagement of the people making decisions about the exhibition system does not exist at all.

Exhibitions are also held in cultural centres, clubs, libraries, community centres, cafés and other institutions of more or less cultural character. Here, the choice of artists is incidental.

### **The Function of Exhibitions**

Exhibitions are the conclusion and closure of the creative process. Their character is that of a ceremonial ritual whose culmination is the moment of the opening, during which ribbons are cut, speeches and flowers given, toasts raised.

### **Exhibition Rooms [*Salons*]**

Apart from official *salons*, unofficial galleries also exist, which nonetheless, do not play any role in the statistics. There are only a few. So few that they can be easily listed: Krzysztofor in Cracow, Foksal and Współczesna in Warsaw, Od Nowa in Poznań, EL in Elbląg and Śląska in Katowice. Unofficial galleries have come into existence since 1955, but most of the oldest ones no longer exist. Although these galleries have not participated in the national exhibitions' statistics, their role in Polish art has been crucial because they have managed to gather together an authentic artistic movement. In the tiny rooms of these galleries everything that is most unconventional and original in Polish art has been presented. It is here, therefore, that one should look for new artistic phenomena. These galleries are run by self-conscious artists and critics, who judge according to their vision of contemporary art. This is the reason that the quality of exhibitions held in the above galleries is so high. Here, the rule of mediocrity ceases to function.

### **The Function of Exhibitions**

It is possible to think of exhibitions without openings and accompanying celebrations. It is much more difficult though to find an exhibition which would both outshine the aspect of celebration with the ideas of the works of art presented,

Exhibitions present an artist's achievements and his or her past as if the creative process has definitely terminated. The only thing that can be expected at this point is common recognition, or at least, the recognition of the majority. Exhibitions are organised for artists who show their works to an audience, and for the audience that can be delighted by these works. With a large number of works of art presented there is also a chance that people will learn how to look at modern art and how to perceive it. At the same time, there is a threat that public opinion will settle with this mediocre model of modern art.

and to create an atmosphere that provokes artistic discussions instead of small talk. Exhibitions of this sort, however, take place. The only condition is that – if possible – they are an extension of a creative process which will continue beyond the opening ceremony. Such exhibitions are not presentations of an artist's latest works, but propositions of new solutions in art. They do not expect applause but counter-attack. They are prepared neither for artistic circles nor for the audience, but against them. They are not able to teach how to perceive because they do not concentrate on summing up. Art of this type irritates with its untypical character, it disturbs the understanding of artistic phenomena according to a single model.

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### Theoretical Programme

“Pictures speak for themselves”. “A true artist does not speak about his/her works but paints”. These are the most basic rules of the artistic, or should I rather say – formalistic – *savoir-vivre* that functions in the world of mediocre art. But these statements are false. Great artists, from **Leonardo, Poussin, Delacroix** to **Mondrian, Klee** and **Strzemiński**, talk and write eagerly about art. What is more, they write in a clear, simple and straightforward way. Their utterances provide priceless and most authentic sources of information about artistic phenomena. On the occasion of modern art exhibitions, artists' statements are not anticipated. The

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### Theoretical Programme

To trap the artist and make them write about art is not easy. It happens, however, that artists do write: manifestoes, programmes, articles, notes, commentaries. At times this is an indispensable part of their work, at times just a marginal note, or another way of expressing oneself. Still, these utterances are always related to the higher temperature in which the artistic process takes place, and surely, they act as stimulation for various types of research on art. Instead of stereotypical catalogues – publications including definite information on art – a manoeuvre not always possible and not needed

same applies to reliable analysis of the works of art in the catalogue. Forewords in catalogues are usually limited to congratulatory notes. There is even a scheme for such an introduction: equally elegant and almost identical for everyone. Reviews in journals crown the achievement. They are willing to popularise everything that is being exhibited in the same manner. It is, however, possible that some exhibitions are omitted from the newspapers. This happens regardless of the quality of an exhibition. The decision is pure chance.

everywhere. It could provoke a discussion, but this does not have to occur in the case of a large number of exhibitions.

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### **The Gallery's Eccentricities**

The Gallery presents  
artists whose work introduces new and original values.

The Gallery shows  
the artist's work at a stage of transition.

The Gallery rebels  
against the schemes of artistic life.

The Gallery is  
in favour of thorough discussion on art.

The Gallery publishes  
its own and artists' utterances in every issue of *Odra*.

The Gallery invites  
for openings on the first day of every month at 11 a.m.  
for lectures and discussions on the seventh day of every month at 6 p.m.  
for viewing exhibitions, always from the first to the eleventh day of the month,  
from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. in the hall of the International Press and Book Club. ✕



## Page / Place

At the Mona Lisa Gallery, run by Ludwiński between 1967 and 1971 in Wrocław, exhibitions were conceived not as a display of objects but as the unveiling of the artistic process in which the works were immersed. This approach was achieved by artistic actions as much as discussions with the public, and a dialogue of texts by critics and artists in the popular socio-cultural monthly publication *Odra*. The texts, published prior to an exhibition, were not descriptive, critical or simply commentaries – they became the point of action, 'primary information', artistic facts. The succeeding exhibition was their extension. Ludwiński encouraged the artists to 'set traps for themselves' – speaking and writing about their own work and the art of others, but primarily about art understood as an idea to be constantly defined. In 1970, the catalogue of the exhibition *Sztuka pojęciowa* [Concept Art] was the primary place for artistic facts, the exhibition itself being only secondary. The catalogue contained texts and projects annexing the publication space. The exhibition of artistic projects, in an aesthetically indifferent style, only underlined their working character referring to the outlined idea... The catalogue itself – without an introduction, explanations and descriptions, containing only 'raw artistic material' was an attempt to present artistic ideas in a direct way. Both the publication and the display of documentation embodied the idea of a concept gallery unrestricted by a specific space and taking place in the circulating catalogue. It was an embodiment of the 'live in your head' idea – the institutionally unmediated and egalitarian access of artistic ideas to the minds and sensitivity of receivers. ✖

Winn  
gmach sanat. - XIX w.  
olbrzymi → zamek - fabryka  
negat. → pozytyw.  
fabr. wyobraźni  
masa i wzrost

wieża  
Galeria → koniec → najwyżej

\*\*\*

the sanatorium edifice — nineteenth century

[a] huge → castle — factory

negative → positive

factory of the imagination

mass and open-work

tower

gallery → end → highest point

# MICROGALLERY<sup>01</sup>

Wrocław – International Press and Book Club  
23 Kościuszko Square

## General Artistic and Organisational Plan

Thanks to the initiative of the management of the International Press and Book Club, and in concert with the editorial office of the *Odra* monthly and the Office of Artistic Exhibitions, the prospect of opening a new art gallery in the city of Wrocław is being realised. We intend the new gallery's programme to be substantially different from all the other existing exhibition spaces in Wrocław, as well as all other art galleries in Poland. The gallery's goal would be the popularisation of the most interesting achievements of local Wrocław and Polish art amongst the widest possible public, and a presentation of key issues relating to the transformation of artistic activity.

This goal should be achieved through three basic forms of activity:

- A. exhibitions
- B. publications
- C. lectures and discussions

A. **Exhibitions** would be held in the Club's hall (as previously) once a month for two weeks. These would be small presentations of between one and six works. They would serve as a sort of discursive proposal from the artist, expressed through artistic means and presenting the artist's output. Each exhibition would not be an end in itself (as is the practice in exhibition spaces elsewhere), but should generate further actions of a theoretical and promotional character. The main idea is to draw all possible conclusions and consequences from the act of exhibiting works of art. The expenses for both the display and transportation of works would be minimal considering the limited size of exhibitions.

**01** | The proposed name of the gallery is only a working title [Ludwiński's note].

**B. Publications.** The Gallery would not issue current exhibition catalogues. Instead, in every issue of *Odra* two articles would be published. One would be the artist's statement (it could be a theoretical statement on art, but it could also include reflections of various kinds alongside the main subject); the second article would contain an art theorist's response, both to the works shown in the exhibition and the artist's written statement. Both articles would form a kind of dialogue between the artist and art theorist, one that could often transform into pointed polemics. We would suggest putting both statements in one divided column of *Odra*. Since both articles would deal with identical or similar issues, arranging them graphically (divisions) in a specific way would make a double reading possible; either vertically from top to bottom as two separate voices, or vertically as a dialogue. This would be an attempt to introduce new forms of writing about art, which seems more attractive for the reader than traditional reviews, not to mention the common introduction to catalogues.

The length of both articles would be approximately twelve pages of typescript. Moreover, a series of reproductions of the given artist's works is envisaged. The overall volume of the material in *Odra*, including script and photographs would need to be identical in every subsequent issue (this needs particular agreement with the *Odra* editors). In this way, an extra two or three hundred copies of the section could be sent out for internal use to those who are interested, even before the issue appears publicly. Such an insert, with a separately printed hardcover used for every exhibition, would serve as a non-standard type of catalogue. Because the issue is available at news-stands on the first day of every month, this is the day that the Gallery's exhibitions would also be opened.

**C. Lectures and Discussions.** Exhibition openings in the traditional sense should not be expected. Instead, ten days into the exhibition a public meeting involving the artist and the theorist would be organised. Such a meeting would comprise three parts: a short introductory reading by the art theorist, followed by the artist's comments and a general discussion.

The two initial statements should not be a simple repetition of the texts printed in *Odra* but should refer to them critically, or further expound on these theses (the written statements would have appeared approximately six weeks earlier). But all the participants in the debate could refer to the exhibited works, as well as to the four voices from both the artist and art theorist.

The International Press and Book Club lectures are also designed to encompass the whole scope of issues contained in contemporary art.

## **Characteristic Features of the New Gallery**

### **1. Unofficial character**

Most exhibitions are arranged by various competent agencies (institutions) such as the Office of Artistic Exhibitions, and by museums. Both the exhibition schedule and its execution depend on a whole team of people and on various agreements between the institutions. In practice, this excludes any personal responsibility or individual engagement. It seems necessary to create a gallery where one individual would bear the responsibility for the risk that is fundamentally linked with any artistic activity. The rule of risk is to be the gallery's guiding principle.

### **2. Artistic proposals**

In general, it is the most renowned, or at least the most established artists representing accepted values, who participate, or at least hold precedence at official exhibition spaces. Here, by contrast, it is not the volume of artistic output that is important, but adopting a new position, which serves as material for hours of multi-sided discussion. It would therefore be best to show the works of artists in the moment of transition, undergoing fundamental changes in their creative practice.

### **3. Theoretical programme**

Catalogues are not meant to fulfill any theoretical purpose. The introduction in an exhibition catalogue is often an elegant and

descriptive way of pleasing the artist, and is thus useless for theoretical analysis. In the new gallery, the main emphasis is shifted towards issues of theory, hitherto underestimated according to the traditional notion that a true artist does not speak about art. The idea that his/her paintings speak better than the artist has been proved false in the light of past and more recent facts. The new gallery, fighting with this type of 'formalistic' stance, brings the artistic creation to the fore and calls for its complete rehabilitation.

This relates to an attempt to develop greater theoretical activity among fine art circles, which could be crucial for the exchange of ideas, and the ensuing acceleration of developments in the field of art. The artist's statements can also be invaluable material for various investigations into art.

**4. The promotion of exhibitions** unaccompanied by any form of popularisation of art is inadequate. In such instances, the pictures shown at an exhibition are taken out of the wider context of artistic events, and turn for the duration of the exhibition into hollow decoration; the underlying meaning remains incomprehensible for the public. This time, we want to draw the public into the middle of an artistic game through lectures and discussions. We want to "talk the public into" an active pursuit of artistic developments.

#### **5. The highest level**

The new gallery is meant to exclusively present the works of artists who are currently considered the most important. No other factors (nor compromises) should be taken into consideration.

\* \* \*

Full responsibility for the choice of invited artists, the quality of publications, and the standard of lectures, is personally taken by the undersigned. ✕

Jerzy Ludwiński

## 15.XII.92, MA

1. avant-garde ———> peak of the pyramid ——— a mountain  
 un[der]ground ———> ——— under the ground  
 outsider's art ———> drowning in an ocean of facts ——— intentionally  
 the third [art] ———> intermediary sections

2. the paradox

of free market  
 the jurors: neither kitsch nor masterwork  
 stability among mediocrity  
 the press' plebiscite — the fourth power  
 a field for demagogy  
 the public's [plebiscite]  
 stability below the average ———> deposit of funds

the gap

between free artists [and]  
 free market  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 authors' exhibitions ..... > intermediary  
 authors' galleries .....  
 evaluation polls .....  
 gallery collections — recurring names

commercial galleries (critics) ———  
 poets' [galleries] (critics) ——— sensibility  
 experts' [galleries] ——— knowledge (specialisation)  
 [experts' galleries] (universal) ——— no programme  
 [experts' galleries] ——— without location (concept [galleries])

the  
 highest  
 collective  
 sum  
 ✕



Jerzy Rosołowicz, *Neutronikon*, Mona Lisa Gallery, Wrocław, 1968.

PHOTO: Zdzisław Holuka. COURTESY: Zdzisław Holuka.

## It Begins in Wrocław...<sup>01</sup>

### Wanda Gołkowska and Jan Chwałczyk in Conversation with Magdalena Ziółkowska

**01** | The title of the conversation comes from **Zbigniew Gostomski's** project, prepared for the Symposium of Artists and Scientists *Wrocław '70*.

**02** | **Jan Chwałczyk** [b. 1924], artist.

**03** | **Tadeusz Kantor** [1915–1990], artist; **Wiesław Borowski** [b. 1931], **Anka Ptaszkowska** [b. 1935] and **Mariusz Tchorek** [1939–2004] established Foksal Gallery, Warsaw in 1966.

**04** | **Jerzy Ludwiński**, together with **Anka Ptaszkowska** and **Wiesław Borowski**, edited a magazine *Struktury [Structures]* – a supplement of the

**JAN CHWAŁCZYK:**<sup>02</sup> To be honest, it began here – in Wrocław. **Jurek's** [**Jerzy**] arrival was a result of testing previous situations to the limits. In my opinion, this 'testing' would be symptomatic of our future activities and of the tested models of institutions such as the 'gallery' or 'museum'. Talking about these situations however, we should start earlier, with Puławy and Lublin. In 1966, during the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium of Artists and Scientists in Puławy, entitled *Art in a Changing World*, the commissioner of which was **Jerzy Ludwiński**, there was an argument between **Tadeusz Kantor** and the Foksal Gallery from Warsaw [**Wiesław Borowski**, **Anka Ptaszkowska**, **Mariusz Tchorek**].<sup>03</sup> Together with the members of the Foksal Gallery, **Ludwiński** studied art history at the Catholic University in Lublin – in those days a zone of freedom.<sup>04</sup> After they announced *Teoria miejsca [The Theory of Place]*, **Kantor** made his objection saying that this was his concept and not **Tchorek's**. **Ludwiński** realised that **Kantor's** aim was to take over Foksal Gallery and that some people would agree with **Kantor** being the theoretical leader. **Jurek** came to our room and decided that his time in Lublin was over. He was a *persona non grata* within local artistic circles. Apart from **Włodzimierz Borowski** and **Jan Ziemski**,<sup>05</sup> he didn't invite anyone from Lublin to the Symposium. The local circle was unhappy about not taking part in this event and what is more, the documentation from the Symposium was destroyed, as requested by party and national authorities.

**MAGDALENA ZIÓŁKOWSKA:** Was the decision to come to Wrocław related to a particular invitation to run a gallery? In one of his last interviews, **Ludwiński** said that before the Mona Lisa Gallery

came into being, he had been asked to prepare a programme for the Museum of Modern Art in Wrocław which he did very quickly, as there was a real possibility that it would happen.

**J. CH:** During one of our conversations **Jerzy Nowak**, Head of the Department of Culture in Wrocław, wondered how to enliven the local art scene. Then I suggested **Jurek** who agreed to come and was employed as the director's deputy. Just after the symposium in Puławy, taking advantage of the anniversary convention of the Association of Polish Visual Artists [APVA], **Jurek** organised an exhibition in Wrocław's Town Hall. The following three galleries exhibited there individually: Foksal, Krzysztofory from Cracow and the future Mona Lisa Gallery. It should be stated that **Ludwiński** chose the galleries. The exhibition was held in a huge room with recesses, divided in such a way that each gallery had its own space in which to present its selected artists. The exhibition featured amongst others: **Henryk Stażewski**, **Zbigniew Gostomski**, **Edward Krasiński**, **Tadeusz Kantor**, **Wanda Gołkowska**<sup>06</sup> and myself.

**WANDA GOŁKOWSKA:** But also **Jerzy Rosołowicz** and **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**<sup>07</sup> who, later on, was the first artist to have an individual show in the Mona Lisa Gallery. There was no exhibition catalogue.

**M. Z:** How was this exhibition received?

**J. CH:** It had a dramatic resonance. It caused a bloody mess and provoked many unpleasant reactions. The reasons being that we organised it having convinced the local management of the APVA about our show, and we used its institutional framework. The exhibition proved to be absolutely unexpected for other artists and compromising for them. To mark the anniversary, delegates of the Association arrived from the whole of Poland. The exhibition was also unacceptable to academic artists. The head's of the APVA understood neither its theoretical background nor its meaning.

Lublin magazine *Kamena*, devoted to visual arts issues in which **Mariusz Tchorek** also published his texts. In the 1960s, in Warsaw, the critics together edited *Wiadomości Plastyczne* [*Fine Arts News*], a supplement of the student weekly *ITD*.

**05 | Włodzimierz Borowski** [b. 1930] and **Jan Ziemiński** [1920–1988], both artists, members of the Zamek [Castle] Group, which was formally established in 1957. **Ludwiński** was a member and its theorist.

**06 | Henryk Stażewski** [1894–1988], **Zbigniew Gostomski** [b. 1932], **Edward Krasiński** [1925–2004], **Wanda Gołkowska** [b. 1925], all artists.

**07 | Jerzy Rosołowicz** [1928–1982] and **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz** [b. 1931], both artists.

►  
Jan Chwałczyk, *Forma przestrzenna P-IV* [*Spatial Form P-IV*], 1967, in the exhibition *Space – Movement – Light*, Museum of Architecture, Wrocław, 1967-68.  
COURTESY: Museum of Architecture, Wrocław.



**w. g:** **Jurek** liked arguments, games full of nuances. He didn't want to be admired. In art protests are a necessity. For many people from the outside what was happening then remained completely illegible.

**m. z:** Before the Mona Lisa Gallery was established in rooms in the International Press and Book Club [IPBC], the second exhibition entitled *Space – Movement – Light* was organised together with **Mariusz Hermansdorfer**<sup>08</sup> in the Museum of Architecture in Wrocław. Ludwiński called this show an “exhibition of weakness”.

**08 | Mariusz Hermansdorfer** [b. 1940], present director of the National Museum, Wrocław.

**J. ch:** At that time **Mariusz Hermansdorfer** worked in the

Museum of Architecture and **Jurek** assumed that he should be involved in the exhibition. In the catalogue he reiterated that it was an “exhibition of weakness”, by writing that the curator was only able to find one painting showing light as its constitutive element and two works that included mechanical movement. The ‘weakness’, which seemed to him the most important achievement of this exhibition, manifested what had already been developing abroad, but not yet in Poland. Going back to your question about the Museum of Modern Art; at that time we hoped that we would be able to create there a section of the Muzeum Sztuki Aktualnej [Museum of Current Art, MCA]. This can be seen in the catalogue signed “Museum of Current Art, Wrocław”. Yet another possibility emerged, to locate the Museum underground in the so-called Guerrilla Hill. The very moment we managed to get agreement to start refurbishing the place and discussing future exhibitions, we were informed that the space had been given to the army. This was too much to deal with.

**M. Z:** In an interview, **Ludwiński** recalls the plans for an exhibition consisting of the programmes of ten invited galleries (five from Poland and five from abroad), which would have absolute freedom to choose their presentations. This first exhibition in the City Council was a precursor of this. In the end the Museum of Current Art was not set up. There are many crucial moments for institutional reflection and for the model of the museum. One of them is the emergence of ‘risk’ and its role in the organisation of the museum, connected with the notions of ‘play’ and ‘hazard’. It seems to me that **Ludwiński** demanded an uncompromising attitude in the face of reality and in the face of attempts to experience it. The museum, directed at the future, would take the risk of facing reality, contemporary, current art.

**J. CH:** Now add to this **Duchamp** and the American conceptualists and juxtapose it with **Jurek**’s ideas. We have here this risk, this transgression of the boundaries, the fight between old and new art, this shift. The artist is unimportant – let’s put it bluntly. What is



▲ **Jan Ziemiński**, *Przedmiot optyczny ZOD* [*The Optical Object ZOD*], 1966, in the exhibition *Space – Movement – Light*, Museum of Architecture, Wrocław, 1967–68.  
COURTESY: Museum of Architecture, Wrocław.

more, there is no distinction between the artist and the viewer. We put all this together and see that a human being is most important, human personality. It is he/she who decides what is important; who decides what is art and what an artistic impulse is. It is a closure. An artist in the field of art is, in reality, a human being.

**w. g: Jurek** spoke of ‘playing for art’. This phrase describes his attitude very well. The game was also directed against the official policy of the PRL [People’s Republic of Poland].

**m. z:** In the form of an ever-changing ‘open system’ the Museum of Current Art takes up the ‘play for art’ by exhibiting “the most untypical, original works, which in the most clear-cut way introduce solutions and, consequently, in the most clear-cut way, part with the past”. It “reacts to artistic facts immediately as they emerge” and so it “provokes artistic facts and advances them”.<sup>09</sup> Hazard on the other hand, which would also take place there, would be an answer to what had happened directly at the very core of art. It resembles the project of the museum of immediate reaction. ‘Risk’ and ‘reflex’, which are indispensable for an adequate judgment of a situation, are also characteristics of a good sports player.

**09** | Both after: **Jerzy Ludwiński**, *Generalne założenia Muzeum Sztuki Aktualnej we Wrocławiu*, a leaflet, the private archive of **Jarosław Kozłowski**.

**J. CH: Jurek**’s synthetic and, in a way, also analytic mind enabled him to make almost mathematical equations in which ‘play for art’ could be translated into a football game and the other way around. At these moments, logic and emotions merged with each other. **Jurek** took into consideration these sport disciplines, the experience of which was, for the spectator, similar to the experience of art.

**m. z:** As in group sports, for example?

**J. CH:** Yes, and in the crossing of borders here and there. In the programme of the MCA he wrote that the characteristics of the museum would not lead to a narrowing of issues and of field, but, on the contrary, to its enriching with issues that have not been

considered before. The museum was seen as a ‘gentle seismograph’, ‘a catalyst’. For this reason its most important department would be the department of ‘action’, which would take the lead in the whole institution, and would be directed against stagnation in art. **Jurek** called this department ‘an experimental range’, ‘a melting pot’ for diverse artistic attitudes and manifestations, harmonising discourses of art and science. It was a project of the ‘museum in motion’.

**M. Z:** In another interview **Ludwiński** said that the Museum of Current Art was supposed to be the first ‘museum of play’ in the world, a museum where there would be no works that had already been authenticated, but only those still to be authenticated. He alludes here to **Pontus Hulten**, Director of Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and his project for the Pompidou Centre, conceived four years later, in which the names and functions of departments were identical to those of the MCA. However, let’s go back to the point when the idea proved impossible to achieve.

**J. CH:** **Jurek** spoke of setting up an independent gallery. Unfortunately, the structure of the Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych [Office of Artistic Exhibitions, OAE], where, at that time, I was vice-director, meant that this was out of the question, since the party and the Association would interfere. I met with **Maria Berny**,<sup>10</sup> a manager of the IPBC who was interested in organising exhibitions and starting a gallery. From the outset her rules of play were clear: there would be no catalogues printed, at the very most, the costs of lectures and trips would be refunded. This was the formal, external structure of the Mona Lisa Gallery, which opened in December 1967.<sup>11</sup> We mounted exhibitions together with **Jurek** and other artists. Sometimes there were some other people to help. **Klemens Krzyżagórski**, at that time chief editor of *Odra*,<sup>12</sup> gave us some space in the monthly publication which became a symbol of the Gallery. **Jurek**’s statements accompanying particular exhibitions, together with artists’ statements were published there. Published side by side, but independently, they had the status of autonomous

**10 | Maria Berny** [b. 1932], cultural worker.

**11 |** From 1967–69, exhibitions by the following artists were organised in the Mona Lisa Gallery: **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz** [Dec. 1967], **Wanda Gołkowska** [Jan. 1968], **Henryk Stażewski** [Feb. 1968], **Andrzej Wojciechowski** [June 1968], **Jerzy Rosotowicz** [Oct. 1968], **Jarostaw Kozłowski** [Nov. 1968], **Stanisław Drózdź** [Dec. 1968], **Jan Chwałczyk** [Jan. 1969], **Włodzimierz Borowski** [June 1969].

**12 | Klemens Krzyżagórski** [b. 1930], journalist. The Wrocław monthly *Odra* came out for the first time in March 1961, in place of the weekly publication of the same title. Texts by **Jerzy Grotowski**, poems by **Stanisław Barańczak** and **Tadeusz Różewicz** were published there. Among its contributors were **Melchior Wańkowicz** and **Stanisław Lem**.

13 | Władysław  
Strzemiński  
[1893–1952], artist.

artistic proposals and were not commentaries on the exhibitions. The symbol of the Gallery was a drawing by **Władysław Strzemiński**<sup>13</sup> from **Leonardo da Vinci**'s painting.

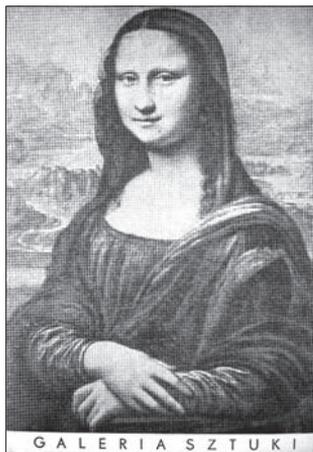
**w. g.:** *Odra* is still the only document of the work of the Gallery.

**J. CH:** The centre of the city intensified the game that took place in the Gallery. I am thinking here of a heated atmosphere, 'an intellectual melting pot', as **Jurek** used to call it. He provoked heated debates on art by 'manipulating' participants in a particular way. During one such debate, artists and adversaries of the Gallery stood up and defended it, because similar to *Mona Lisa*, their galleries could be closed by the Security Service [SB].

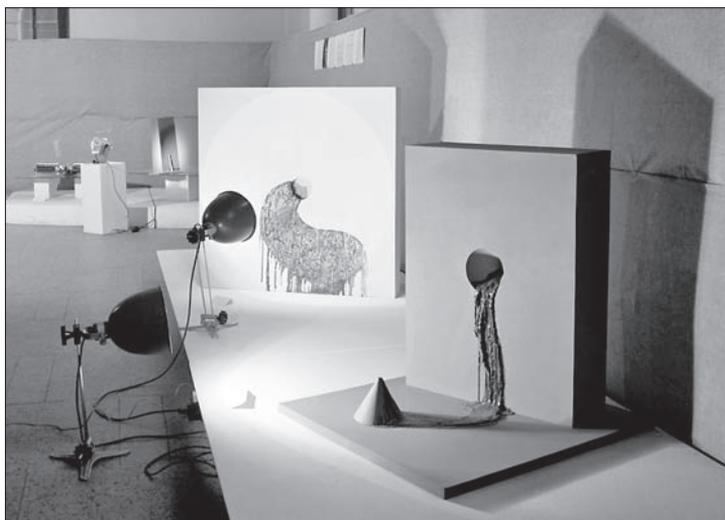
**w. g.:** The Gallery itself was a glazed passage with two entrances, swinging doors to a reading-room and a cafeteria. People coming to the IPBC, that is, the intellectuals, had to pass through the Gallery. It was a small room [5 × 7 metres]. Most of it was unusable, owing to the presence of windows.

**m. z.:** How did the Gallery function, both in the social and political reality and in the artistic field?

**J. CH:** There were several programming assumptions, that is, the 'eccentricities' of the Gallery, as **Ludwiński** called them. The various means of expression were articles, exhibitions, optional forms of presentation and final discussions. These events were not isolated but coincided with one another. They created the dynamic construction of the reality of art. In this way, art was becoming a part of reality and not exclusively a source of information about it. The Gallery's originality lay in the fact that it shifted from the morphological sense to the function of art. The play with time and with creative personality has continued far into the future. From the beginning the Gallery tried to create its own model of a lively centre – a laboratory. In an introductory text to the first exhibition, **Ludwiński** wrote that there would be no official, anniversary



▲ Insert in the Wrocław magazine *Odra*, with the logo of the *Mona Lisa* Gallery. COURTESY: the private archive of **Wanda Gotkowska** and **Jan Chwałczyk**, Wrocław.



◀ **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**, solo exh., Mona Lisa Gallery, Wrocław, 1967. PHOTO: **Zdzisław Holuka**. COURTESY: **Zdzisław Holuka**.

or retrospective exhibitions, presenting the work, achievements and high standard of works. Instead, it would show the work of artists in transition and when challenging artistic conventions. Discovering the boundaries of the creation of artistic facts led to the defining of eight characteristics for future directions of expansion in the field already dominated by creativity [*Art in the Postartistic Age*]. **Ludwiński** ends his text with the following words: “It is quite possible, however, that today we no longer practice art, simply because we have missed the moment when it was transformed into something quite different that we cannot name. That is certain. However, what we practice today presents greater possibilities”.<sup>14</sup> Such was the attempt at reformulating the hitherto existing idea of art in the face of the disintegration of a unified vision of the world. During the Meetings of Artists and Art Theorists in Katowice [1969] **Jurek** gave a brilliant speech. He said that what was interesting, according to him, was not the realisation itself, but the interaction between one realisation and another.<sup>15</sup>

**14** | **Jerzy Ludwiński**, ‘Sztuka w epoce postartystycznej’, in *Sztuka Pojęciowa*, exh. cat., unpaginated.

**15** | “The realisation of a creative process, which lasts beyond a work of art is something much more important than a complete work of art itself”, 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists in Katowice 24–25 Oct. 1969, pp. 22–23.

►  
**Wanda Gołkowska,**  
*Układy otwarte* [*Open Structures*],  
Mona Lisa Gallery, Wrocław, 1968.  
PHOTO: **Zdzisław Holuka.**  
COURTESY: **Zdzisław Holuka.**



**m. z:** In an interview, you said that the reason the Gallery was criticised, not accepted, and attacked in artistic circles, was that the rules of its organisation and running were not understood. The same applies to its failure.

**w.g:** The existence of the Gallery was to some extent an intellectual provocation. In the face of reality, it was a form of protest. Those who criticised the Gallery thought that it was involved with an art they would not make. Their absence – as they were not invited, they did not show up, did not exhibit – resulted in a lack of enthusiasm. Though they did not accept art of this kind, their exclusion from it was the source of their envy and hatred. This art was a double discomfort – for authorities and for academics.

**J. CH:** In my opinion those who attacked the Gallery believed in a kind of ‘academic avant-garde’. Any art objects, removed from traditional academic thought, were alien to them. If we add, that from the first exhibition in December 1967, the Gallery’s activities concentrated on the ‘experiment’ of transgressing hitherto existing academic boundaries, these proposals became doubly alien to them. The academics felt offended by these proposals. It is for this reason that they disliked the Gallery and **Ludwiński** himself. It was no longer a conflict of political origins, but the unified resistance of party, academic and artistic circles.

**W. G:** At some point, it became impossible to keep **Jurek** in Wrocław any longer. We hit a wall. In this context such an artistic attitude was becoming a purely political attitude.

**M. Z:** The first exhibition in the Gallery, the exhibition by **Jurkiewicz**, signalled the direction of future activity – the process of a work of art coming into being. ‘Arriving at’ a work of art became more important than the final result. Another important shift was highlighting ‘an attitude’. In his manifesto of 10 September 1967 **Jurkiewicz** wrote of “a choice of a work of art; of choosing an attitude”.<sup>16</sup>

**W. G:** The attitude was the essence of art.

**J. CH:** The creative process was and is essential.

**M. Z:** In my opinion, an exhibition that went even further was the ‘anti-happening’, ‘negative performance’, as **Ludwiński** called it, by **Włodzimierz Borowski**, entitled *Fubki tarb* [*Pubes of Taint*, June 1969]. It violated the hitherto existing safe place of the spectator.

**J. CH:** Apart from the materials for the exhibition (it featured photographs of former exhibitions in the Gallery depicting the audience, and which were hung like laundry on lines). **Borowski** had sent a letter describing his approach. **Ludwiński** read this

16 | Zdzisław

**Jurkiewicz**, ‘Wysoko intensywnie’, *Odra* 12, 1967, p. 66.

to the audience during the opening. The absence of the author, and a speech given on his behalf, caused some confusion among the audience. In *Pubes of Taint* we dealt with an event existing in indeterminate time. The subject matter – spectators come to the Gallery with a ‘wrapping’, i.e., their mental equipment. Leaving the Gallery they would be ‘expanding’ and ‘developing’ an ‘image’ of this event. The inaccessibility of a mental ‘image’ for the artist-author made spectators responsible for the quality of the show. A script, score, or rather the lack of it, and the absence of the author created a situation in which the spectators themselves were responsible for the emotional and temporal flow of the occasion.

**M. Z:** In *Układy otwarte* [*Open Structures*], the text accompanying her exhibition [Jan. 1968], **Wanda** [Gołkowska] writes similarly about the inclusion of the viewer, about the “existence of a mathematically definite/indefinite number of changes caused by mechanical shifts, the movement of a viewer, introducing physical movement and light”.<sup>17</sup>

17 | **Wanda**  
**Gołkowska**, ‘Układy  
otwarte’, *Odra* 1, 1968,  
p. 68.

**J. CH:** The way that **Wanda**’s exhibition was organised, especially such works as *Sixteen Cubes* or *Composition of Moving Elements*, made the viewer’s imagination and inventiveness responsible for introducing some changes into the structure of the colourful spatial composition, for reconstructing the form, setting exhibited ‘rocking-chairs’ in motion, that is, getting involved in the ‘game’.

**M. Z:** A way of thinking emerges which is characteristic of **Ludwiński** – divisions into stages of development which were an attempt at facing the evolution of art or ever-expanding its range, leading to an explosion which finally abolishes any borders. Having given the characteristics of the ‘total stage’ in his text *Sztuka niezidentyfikowana* [*Unidentified Art*], **Ludwiński** moves from the level of art to the level of more general metaphors: “All previous notions relating to art are cancelled out, even that of authorship. What matters are the tensions created by the collective effort of many individuals which contributes to the making of one system,

pulsating with its own life like some gigantic work of nature. Art = reality”.<sup>18</sup>

**J. CH:** Here we see the reversal of the triad of artist-artwork-receiver, and that spectators become the fundamental ‘element’ of the event. This is true for others as well, for example, in a happening by **Jarosław Kozłowski**<sup>19</sup> entitled *Collages* [Nov. 1968]. Spectators “will be able to observe not only what a work of art is, but also themselves. They will be spatial forms in motion, in a defined space. They will also be participants and even, to some extent, co-authors of the event. They will be the object of some experiments, psychological tests; they will be responsible for the emotional space of the show. I imagine that the traditional relationship of author-artwork-receiver will be the subject of various reversals and major complications during this show. I also imagine that the information, transmitted by the author through his show, will return to him in a different form, as if it was reflected in a mirror, and it would be better, the more the mirror distorts”.<sup>20</sup> On the one hand, paraphrasing **Ludwiński**, art was absorbed by reality, on the other, reality was appropriated by art.

**M. Z:** As with **Liliana Lewicka**’s allotment on the moon which would allow her to realise her artistic ideas.<sup>21</sup>

**J. CH:** **Jurek**’s fascination with the cosmos was even bigger than with football. The moon flight, **Armstrong**’s achievement, of which he talked endlessly, his fascination with **Stanisław Lem**’s<sup>22</sup> novels – these weren’t his only preoccupations. In Wrocław he befriended mathematicians, astronomers, physicists, who, just like him, read **Lem**. This was a platform for exchange among these people. Besides, once he even mentioned that he had wanted to study astronomy or geography. For **Jurek**, science and art had the same aims.

**w. G:** **Jurek** had even made an appointment with **Lem**. He was very much looking forward to it. Unfortunately, in the end, he was

**18 | Jerzy Ludwiński**, ‘Sztuka niezidentyfikowana’, in *Epoka błękitu*, **Jerzy Hanusek**, ed., Cracow 2003, p. 206.

**19 | Jarosław Kozłowski** [b. 1945], artist.

**20 | Jerzy Ludwiński**, ‘Pokaz Jaroslawa Kozłowskiego’, in *Epoka błękitu*, op. cit., pp. 122–123.

**21 | Liliana Lewicka** [b. 1932], artist. She applied to the Mona Lisa Gallery asking for permission to make an artistic allotment on the moon. **Ludwiński** signed the application and gave it to the manager of the Department of Culture, **Jerzy Nowak**, who agreed.

**22 | Stanisław Lem** [1921–2006], writer.

**23** | Stanislaw Lem,  
*Summa Technologiae*,  
Cracow 1964.

**24** | The Symposium  
Wrocław '70 was  
organised on the  
occasion of the twenty-  
fifth anniversary of the  
return of the Western  
and Northern Territories  
to the Motherland  
[Poland]. The main  
ceremony took place  
in May 1970. On 17  
March, in the Museum  
of Architecture, an  
exhibition of fifty-seven  
projects, concepts and  
models was opened. It  
was accompanied by a  
debate [17–18 March].  
The Symposium lasted  
almost the whole year.  
The official ending  
never took place. The  
catalogue was published  
by the Centre of Open  
Theatre Kalambur as late  
as 1983.

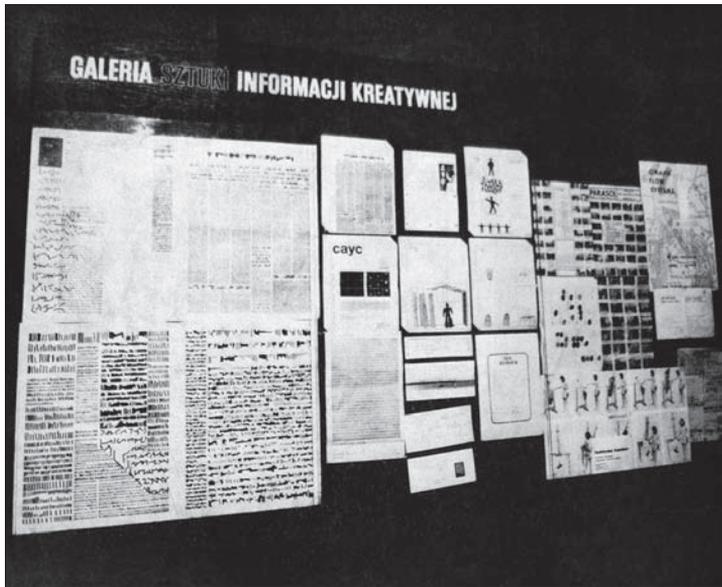
ill and the meeting did not take place. He tried to convince us to read *Summa Technologiae*.<sup>23</sup> One needs to be courageous to see and show the development of art as **Jurek** did. He turned the hitherto existing code of art upside down.

**M. Z:** In 1970 some crucial events took place. In the spring there was the Symposium Wrocław '70,<sup>24</sup> in the summer – the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists in Osieki, in December – the exhibition *S.P. Sztuka Pojęciowa* [Concept Art] at the Mona Lisa Gallery, where the pages of the catalogue became the exhibition space – loose sheets of paper put into an envelope and sent out to artists. When did the concept of the Gallery start to end?

**J. CH:** 1970 was an extraordinary year. **Ludwiński** summed it up once by saying that it was “the last historic year. Events that were of different origins and different specification appeared seamless, as if reeled on one tape”. The idea of the Gallery as a ‘micro-institution’, a mentally flexible gallery directed at the audience, criticising official rituals related to art, was being tested as early as the symposium. The idea of art moved so far that it became intangible. The model ended and the idea of ‘art’ became too big and blurred, it dissolved into reality. If we conclude that ‘man’ exists in the place of the ‘artist’, it is the end. And with the arrival of this definition, the Gallery actually closed with *Concept Art* which presented raw documentation material, photocopied, without any commentaries or descriptions, handed to artists and circulated. In order to come into being this material did not need gallery space. That is why it fulfilled the principle of the ‘concept gallery’.

**w. G:** The political attack on the Mona Lisa Gallery came from **Maria Berny**. One day the Association of Polish Visual Artists proposed new rules: fifty per cent of exhibitions would be made by them and fifty per cent by the Mona Lisa Gallery. **Jurek** was not interested in such a solution.

**J. CH:** In the meantime **Jurek** asked critics to choose artists and



◀ Gallery of Creative Information. The blackboard hung in the Club of the Creative Associations, Wrocław. COURTESY: the private archive of **Wanda Gołkowska** and **Jan Chwałczyk**, Wrocław.

organised discussions. However, he was no longer excited by these exhibitions. After we turned down her proposal, **Maria Berny** made the same offer to **Mariusz Hermansdorfer** who started the gallery named EM. There was no longer any unrest, no heated atmosphere, no hell. When there is no hell, there is no art. Some leftovers from the Gallery were given to the Galeria Informacji Kreatywnej [Gallery of Creative Information, GCI].<sup>25</sup> They created a 'blackboard' reacting to new situations in art. GCI entered into some international relations in a completely different way, a transgression of subsequent borders.

**M. Z:** It seems to me that the Mona Lisa Gallery began a process of physically reducing the gallery's space and that the gallery-board was almost the last stage of this process, of which the end was 'exchange'. It shed new light on the issue of documentation.

**J. CH:** The beginning of the GCI was a questionnaire which

**25** | The blackboard hung in the Club of the Creative Associations in Wrocław's old town.

included questions on the condition of art sent by me to various artists in 1972. One of the questions was: "Is the following abbreviation: Artist-Receiver the final and simplest one?". I got sixty-eight answers by mail. They were included in the catalogue entitled *Kontrapunkt* [*Counterpoint*] published two years later. This automatically brings us to mail art. The GCI was moving issues in a slightly different direction – it disclosed artists, it disclosed documents which were either directly related to projects or they were the projects themselves. The blackboard became the centre of information on artistic events, actions and proposals from the whole world, a place of debate, also between the documents themselves. The necessity of art's public nature was a heritage of the Mona Lisa Gallery. The list of contacts was expanding rapidly due to such people as **Klaus Groh** or **Klaus Kalkmann**.

**w. g:** Mail art was a kind of test of a creative attitude. It formed a network of direct and selfless relations between artists, which made them test each other.

**J. CH:** In Wrocław's circles, the work of the GCI was of no interest to anybody, neither was the blackboard, and it continued to exist unhindered for two or three years. **Ludwiński** was sending texts, collaborating and supporting it.

**m. z:** You said that, in your opinion, the concept of the Gallery came to an end after the Wrocław Symposium. The first project of the Symposium appears as part of the concept of the Museum of Current Art. It was also taken up in other texts. **Ludwiński** was a member of a 'committee of critics and art theorists' appointed by the Organisational Board. Two projects were introduced: Centrum Poszukiwań Artystycznych [The Centre for Artistic Inquiry, CAI] prepared by critics associated with the Foksal Gallery and presented by **Andrzej Turowski**,<sup>26</sup> and the programme of the Centrum Badań Artystycznych [The Centre for Artistic Research, CAR] presented by **Ludwiński**. Although both concepts overtly alluded to the programme of the Museum of Current Art and

26 | **Andrzej Turowski**  
[b. 1941], art historian.

stressed the documentation and information process, they were aimed in different directions. Their points of departure were in their different visions of art. The programme of CAR continued the assumptions of the MCA such as, for example, stressing the future, debunking the myth of a preserved past, taking up the risk of talking about the present, cooperating with scientists who work on the biological structure of the world and not solely with art historians. In this context, the CAR looks more like an anti-institution concentrating on 'process', testing the limits and possibilities of art, and not like a 'space' collecting and storing works of art. It seems to me that in the programme of the CAI some ideas were different, such as the functions of the artistic institution (authors described the Centre as a 'warehouse of ideas' or 'a point of artistic confrontation'), or the relation between critic – artist – receiver (there is reference to a group of fifteen to twenty critics managing the CAI).

**J. CH:** These differences can easily be seen in **Ludwiński's** statements during the debate on the Symposium.<sup>27</sup> He says directly that he participated in the script submitted by the Foksal Gallery, but, at the same time, he distances himself from it. When one reads the shorthand notes of these debates, one can see how they tried to take **Jurek's** concepts and change them according to their needs. **Jurek** says that he also took part in the development of this other concept, but he states that he does not find it up to date and he starts talking about his own proposal. He stresses the need to close the gap between the institution and art, its social dimension. The CAR was not only an institution directed towards the future, but "a system of connections between institutions and changing art".<sup>28</sup> It was supposed to fill space not yet accessed. While the Foksal Gallery was focused on documentation, it was the 'play' that was most important for **Jurek**, that is, a continuously open situation, of which the spectator was part; a situation 'in-between', a stimulation to act out internal conflicts present in art and not 'a central office for collecting materials'. While the CAR seemed not to require space or furniture, the CAI had very straightforwardly formulated demands.

**27** | A comment found in the shorthand notes of the debate. After: the private archive of **Jan Chwałczyk** and **Wanda Gołkowska**.

**28** | **Jerzy Ludwiński**, 'Centrum Badań Artystycznych', in *Symposium Plastyczne Wrocław '70*, **Danuta Dziedzic** and **Zbigniew Makarewicz**, eds., Wrocław 1983, p. 154.

29 | A shorthand note of the evening discussion, 7 February 1970, typescript, p. 5. After: the private archive of Jan Chwaczyk and Wanda Gołkowska.

30 | Antoni Dzieduszycki [1937–1997], Zbigniew Makarewicz [b. 1940], Janusz Bogucki [1916–1995], Kajetan Sosnowski [1913–1987], all artists.

**M. Z:** With reference to the programme of the Museum of Current Art, the two groups presented programmes which at first sight seem quite similar. Why was the project of the CAI conceived? What was its aim if, during the debate, **Andrzej Turowski** said that “the programme of the Centre of Inquiry did not differ from the programme of the MCA [...] the only novelty [is] appointing a concept of this sort for the second time within the Symposium *Wrocław ‘70’*”?<sup>29</sup>

**J. CH:** During the discussion a conflict occurred: on one side **Wiesław Borowski, Andrzej Turowski** and **Tadeusz Kantor**; on the other, **Jerzy Ludwiński, Antoni Dzieduszycki, Zbigniew Makarewicz, Janusz Bogucki, Kajetan Sosnowski**,<sup>30</sup> who all defended **Jurek’s** concept. Finally **Jurek’s** concept was accepted for realisation. The most crucial difference between these programmes was the role of the critics. For the Foksal Gallery they were the most important element – they created the situation. For **Ludwiński**, in turn, critics were not on a level with those who create art. This was a radical repositioning of the situation. **Ludwiński** was saying no to critics as jurors. He could only accept one, totally independent person taking responsibility for him/herself in a particular situation. Here we see the shift from collective to individual responsibility. What is more, he made critic and artist equal. They would publish their texts side by side in *Odra* – a duet working by the same rules. Here lies an essential difference in understanding this ‘artistic game’ [n.b. in Polish CAR is an anagram of A...B...C...]. The Symposium brings to a close, in a definite way, the period of testing a model of the gallery which was reflected in a number of later exhibitions and an open-air Symposium *Ziemia Zgorzelecka* [1971]. The organisers were overwhelmed by administrative pressure, such as, for example, the fact that the catalogue was published as late as 1983.

**M. Z:** Was the outcome of the Symposium a consequence of the fact that the participants’ and authorities’ expectations did not concur? The character of projects selected by the artists was far

from the tone of the official anniversary ceremony demanded by the local establishment. They wrote in *Główne założenia sympozjum* [*The General Assumptions of the Symposium*] that, for example, “some exquisite works of art will be created within the urban organism of the city of Wrocław”.<sup>31</sup> I am asking in particular about the projects of **Jarosław Kozłowski** – *Ekspedycja* [*Expedition*] and *Zwierciadło* [*Mirror*], the pink pillory-phallus by **Anastazy Wiśniewski**<sup>32</sup> or **Jerzy Rosołowicz**’s ‘neutral art’ projects.

**J. CH:** What **Jurek** praised most was discussion; for the local establishment the realisation of projects and works in the city’s space was most important. Apart from two projects, these were not made.<sup>33</sup> Factories, which were supposed to produce them as a ‘social act’, that is, for free, were doing everything to avoid this. Most of the projects proposed by the artists qualified for realisation, for example, *Pomnik zwycięstwa żołnierza polskiego* [*Monument to the Victory of the Polish Soldier*] by **Władysław Hasior**.<sup>34</sup> The organisers were persuaded to take part by the belief that some of the works would be made for free. At that time people were no longer so willing to work without payment. The most important thing that took place during the Symposium was showing that art had moved away from the notions and ideas of art historians. Art moved into another field. That was the most interesting thing for me. However, this evasion of art proved problematic and uncomfortable for the academics. Where boundaries are being crossed, one day failure must occur. In this case it was the lack of understanding on the part of artistic circles.

**M. Z:** During the Symposium art quit its hitherto existing range and was inscribed in the structure of the city. *Wrocław ’70* became, in a sense, ‘an open project’ whose framework was deconstructed; definitions failed and protected spheres were no longer there. **Ludwiński** summed up the *plein air* in the text entitled *Bania z malarstwem* [*Bubble with Painting*]: “These events create an illusion that there exists the great centre of art. In the period of optimum culture such a centre does not exist in Poland. Warsaw is not a

**31** | ‘Założenia ogólne sympozjum’, in *Sympozjum Plastyczne Wrocław ’70*, op. cit., p. 176.

**32** | **Anastazy Wiśniewski** [b. 1941], artist.

**33** | The exceptions were: *Kompozycja pionowa nieograniczona* [*Unrestricted Vertical Composition*] by **Henryk Stażewski** at the Victory Day 9 May 1970 and *Arena* [*Arena*] by **Jerzy Bereś** [b. 1930] – a social act by the students of Wrocław Technical University in 1972.

**34** | **Władysław Hasior** [1928–1999], artist.

35 | Jerzy Ludwiński,  
'Bania z malarstwem',  
Odra 12, 1966, p. 56.

centre of this kind, in spite of the majority of mass media being gathered there. None of the other cities is a centre. That is why a collusive centre needs to exist; a centre that is in constant motion, and which, to some extent, is its own margin. And this initiative, usually taken up by the provinces, is not provincial. [...] It is because those wandering art centres became quite a good tribune, promoting the exchange of opinions, better than conformist articles in the press, radio or on television. They also achieved some other tasks focused on bringing art into society: in Elbląg and Puławy, engineers and workers got directly involved in the game, they were, at least to some extent, co-authors of the works of art".<sup>35</sup> And I think, he is right, because the *plein airs* were held far from the centre, in relatively neutral, natural landscape and no one really knew what was actually taking place there. This fact removed any potential burden on these meetings and imposed on them an artistic structure. Do you think that the *plein airs* could be considered 'a safety valve' which was accepted by the party?

**J. CH:** It was not without reason that they took place outside the centre, that is, away from the Central Board. What is more, they reflected local ambitions. In every town there were activists who wanted to prove themselves, not having however any understanding of the situation. When one proposed a *plein air* on a current, fashionable theme, and additionally, one was supported by the APVA or any other institution, there was a chance to secure funding for its realisation. It was only necessary to stick to existing structures. These restraints made intelligent people enter the game. After a *plein air*, the money had to be accounted for and that was the most difficult thing to do. The authorities lost their tempers and very often the catalogues did not get published, the documentation materials were lost. One could succeed only once.

**w. G:** These differences can also be seen on a linguistic level. The word '*plein air*' alludes to a different tradition than the word 'symposium'. Symposia were more difficult to organise because of their scientific element.

J. CH: A brilliant example of this is a work by **Zbigniew Gostomski** entitled *Zaczyna się we Wrocławiu* [*It Begins in Wrocław*] which is inscribed within the globe.<sup>36</sup> A similar idea was introduced by **Ludmiła Popiel** and **Jerzy Fedorowicz**<sup>37</sup> – a connection between two points on the globe. I remember that during the open-air symposium *Ziemia Zgorzelecka*,<sup>38</sup> we were sitting together at the table, and **Lidka** [**Ludmiła**] said that she had a brilliant idea that she would have liked to propose to the organisers: to borrow a helicopter and use it to stretch a thread over the hole of the Turów mine. Next to us some colleagues were sitting and heard our conversation. After some time, they realised this idea in their own way. They bought a wide tape and holding it walked to the other side of the mine. The action was filmed and screened at the National Museum.<sup>39</sup>

w. G: When we were making unreal conceptual projects we did not care for their potential realisation. What is more, when we saw that project of theirs, we saw that something important was lost in its realisation. It had lost the lightness provided by the thread. This project was realised twice: mentally and physically, by different artists. These are small but crucial differences.

J. CH: A physicist, **Jerzy Lukierski**,<sup>40</sup> participated in the same open-air symposium. I asked him if it was possible to redirect some of the sun's rays from the equator to the North Pole. After some time, he responded that it would be possible if one used very strong magnets in outer space. Then some of the sun's rays could be redirected to the Pole. However, this energy would destroy the globe.



▲ Zbigniew Gostomski: *Zaczyna się we Wrocławiu* [*It Begins in Wrocław*], 1970. COURTESY: the private archive of Wanda Gołkowska and Jan Chwałczyk, Wrocław.

**36** | Gostomski's project included planning an expanding system of elements in the urban space "O" [diameter: X, height: X] and "I" [dimensions: XxXxX] which was made with the use of "industrial methods, always of the same material always

the same height". These elements were supposed to be situated in specified places with the same equal distances, and the process was based on a given scheme. The form of the elements and places were not supposed to express anything.

**37** | **Ludmiła Popiel** [1929–1988] and **Jerzy Fedorowicz** [b. 1928], both artists.

**38** | The open-air Symposium *Ziemia Zgorzelecka* entitled *Arts and Sciences in the Process of the Protection of Man's Natural Environment*, Opolno Zdrój 1971.

**39** | This refers to **Konrad Jarodzki's** project.

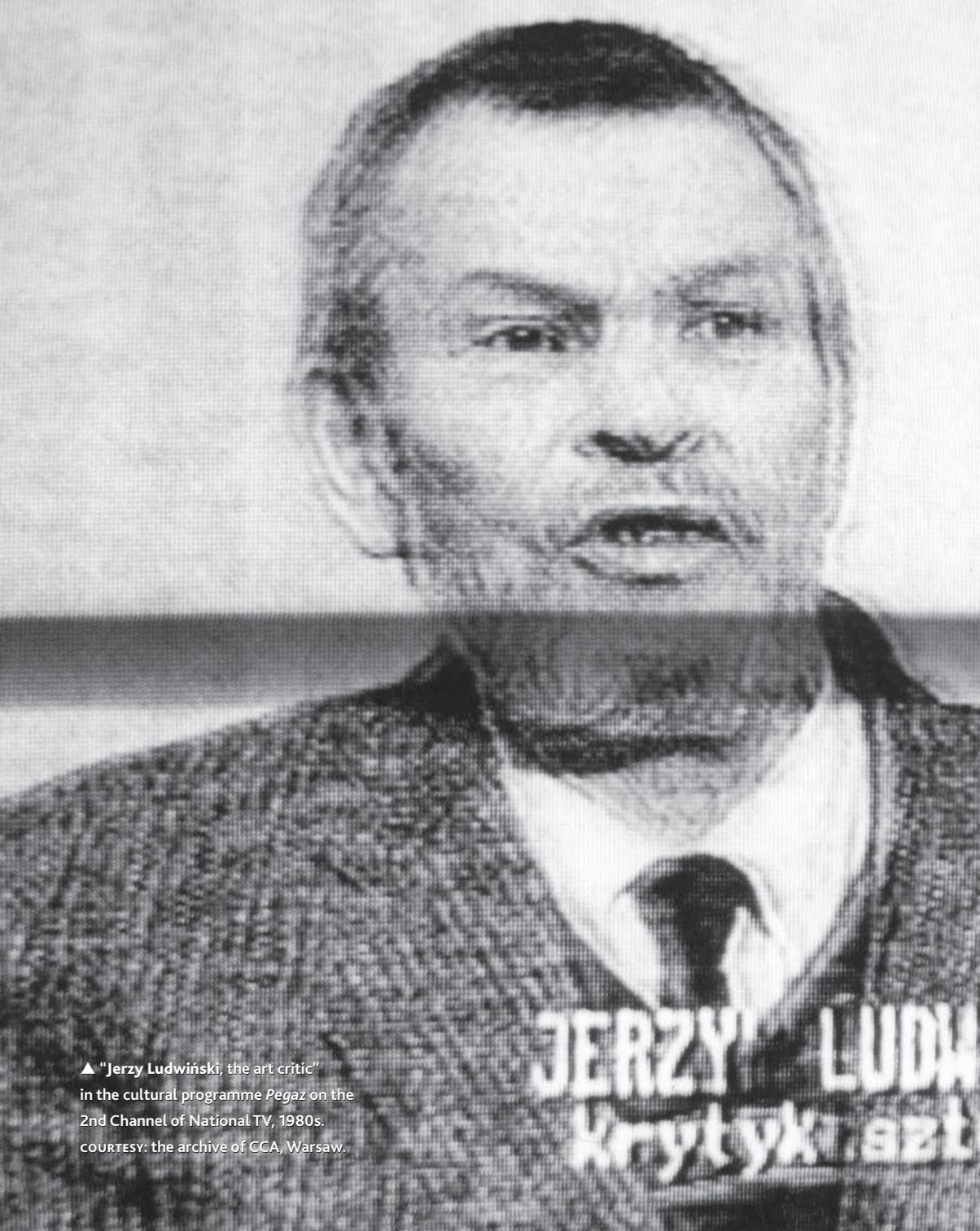
**40** | **Jerzy Lukierski** [b. 1936], physicist.

**41** | **Jerzy Ludwiński**, 'Sztuka PO', in *Epoka błękitu*, op. cit., p. 249.

**W. G:** For us the very idea, the intellectual stimulation, was essential.

**J. CH:** At that time, we realised that art is not so much about material works, but about stimulating the mind, juxtaposing one point of view with another. There needs to be constant conflict between the artist and the spectator. This clash with reality is most important. This clash, or conflict, can be seen in the very concept of a Museum of Contemporary Art. By 'museum' we mean something that is closed, while 'contemporary' stands in opposition to closure. It is therefore a form of art. Thus, the Museum of Contemporary Art would be based on the developments which we have objections against. **Ludwiński** develops this idea even further. In the text entitled *Art AFTER* he asks about the man of the future: "A much more interesting question is: what will the man of the future be? (I do not mention an exceptional situation in which he/she will not exist). He/she will also be EVERY. What is more, one could think if man would be a DIRECTIONLESS man. It might mean the end of the luminous way, the end of striving for a universal happiness, the end of an era of ideology and the end of violence. In order to get out of square brackets. It will be a man WITHOUT (it is not a preposition, it is a noun)".<sup>41</sup> It will be also EVERY art. ✕

MAY 2006, WROCŁAW



JERZY LUDWIŃSKI  
Krytyk sztuki

▲ "Jerzy Ludwiński, the art critic"  
in the cultural programme *Pegaz* on the  
2nd Channel of National TV, 1980s.  
COURTESY: the archive of CCA, Warsaw.

2

**ARTIST**

INSKI  
ukio

# Limit[s]

The notion of 'limit' that is present in Ludwiński's texts has two opposing meanings: bound or borderline, and an unreachable point or number. The first meaning is more conventional: Ludwiński uses it when writing about art transgressing the current paradigm, understanding limit as something that bounds, restrains or confines. The second meaning is taken from mathematics where the limit "is used to describe the behaviour of a function as its argument either gets 'close' to some point, or as it becomes arbitrarily large"<sup>01</sup> and works as a verbal switch redirecting the reading of Ludwiński's texts towards the discourse of science. Limit is "a fixed number that is related to a variable in such a way that the difference between them as the variable approaches the number becomes and remains less than any positive value no matter how close to zero".<sup>02</sup> The notion of art itself becomes close to the concept of mathematical sequence, convergent or divergent. In the first instance, limit is the point to which all elements get as close as possible. In the latter infinity is the reference. Thus for example, 'art's eternity' should then be read as a mathematical concept of infinity, rather than the temporality of a transcendental subject. The 'mathematically oriented' notion of limit also disturbs the clarity of modernist works of art defined by the specific medium; opticality, autonomy and originality. "Art is approaching the limit of indetermination" wrote Ludwiński in 1971.<sup>03</sup> Art is becoming heterogenic; the borderlines between various media and the receiver, viewer and work, record and idea, artistic theory and practice, artist and curator are blurred. Any attempt at classification turns fluid. The limits of art are impossible to trace, looking for a definition of art is a hollow activity. "The development of art in recent years was characterised by incessant expansion, surpassing limits, seizing new genres so far alien to art. In its last phase

01 | [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Granica\\_%28matematyka%29](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Granica_%28matematyka%29).

02 | *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Könnemann, Cologne 1993, p. 581.

03 | Jerzy Ludwiński, 'Neutralizacja kryteriów', in *Epoka błękitu*, op. cit., p. 176.

this phenomenon could look like the Big Bang. This was the beginning of art without limits”.<sup>04</sup> This 'art without limits' described much earlier in *Art in the Postartistic Age* Ludwiński also called 'concept art'; 'a zone free of conventions', 'idea art' or 'impossible art', an art perfectly integrated into reality. All these concepts are united in transgression and refer to the first conventional sense of the word limit: beyond the object, verbal representation, illusion currently accepted by the artistic field. However, concept art was not meant to surpass the limits of art in favour of creating new borders. Concept art functions, oscillating on the border between perception and visibility, between speech and silence, within the infinite space of points or numbers approximating to limit in the mathematical sense. ✖

04 | Jerzy Ludwiński,  
'Włodzimierza  
Borowskiego – tocząca  
się kula', in *Epoka błękitu*,  
op. cit., p. 268.

Milicz, 6.08.75

Możliwości wszystkich artystów — te same — nieograniczone  
Dlaczego nie skorzystali?  
jedno z najb. podstaw. pytań.  
cywilizacje zamknięte  
nie ma zmian  
szt. nowoczesna — gigant. synteza wsz. epok i środow.

typowość — unikalność  
form  
myślenia  
specjaliz. — universal.

\*\*\*

Milicz, 6 Aug. 1975

praca → prawda — fałsz pozyt.  
dobro  
plan genetycz.

All artists share — the same potential — unlimited  
Why didn't they seize the opportunity?  
one of the most fundamental questions.  
closed civilisations  
unchanging  
modern art — a gigantic synthesis of all ages and environments

typical — unique  
forms of thought  
specialisation — universal[ity]  
truth — positive lie  
labour → welfare  
the genetic plan

## The Zone Free from Convention

Recently there has been a lot of discussion about conceptual art. Some theories of conceptual art have been put forward and they are becoming increasingly autonomous. At the same time the subject of these theoretical considerations has been disappearing and we are now at the point when doubts concerning the very existence of conceptual art have reached their zenith. The paradox of that disproportion has been due to the fact that, viewed from the average perspective of art, conceptualism has been identified as a new artistic tendency, which has developed in the course of an exchange of values.

Consequently, traditional painting and sculpture, or even art objects, are to be replaced by the rule of pure conception, which can be written down on paper, recorded on tape, photographed or filmed. Of course, this is not impossible, but such a possibility is virtual rather than real. As a new tendency in art characterised by a set of stylistically distinct features conceptualism does not exist.

**01** | The title of the work 'dew collector' is a pun on the artist's surname 'Rosołowicz', which literally means 'the one who collects dew' [translator's note].

**02** | **Jerzy Rosołowicz** [1928–1982], artist.

### **A Dish for Collecting Dew**<sup>01</sup>

It was the ambition of **Jerzy Rosołowicz**<sup>02</sup> to construct a dish for collecting dew which conceptually anticipated his later work, *Neutrondrome*.

At the same time that he conceived the idea, the artist unexpectedly abandoned his structural reliefs for open structures with fitted lenses or prisms. These were not objects intended to be anchored in reality and to extend it in the multiplicity of material forms, but on the contrary – reality itself was to be contained in those objects. Or, in other words: reality was to remain entirely unaffected by any interference from those transparent objects. If they were enlarged so much as to become imperceptible then we would have a *Neutrondrome*. It is evident that the evolution of **Rosołowicz's** art objects headed towards their dematerialisation, the cancellation of their form and the neutralisation of their singularity in a

given context. The spatial forms of both the *Neutrödrome*, which consisted of a gigantic sphere and a cone, and of the *Kreatorium of the Millenium Stalagmatic Column*, shaped as a ziggurat, were irrelevant.

“Neutral action ... is creativity in its broadest sense, liberated from all convention, style, ‘-isms’ and ‘-art’, unhampered by ideological, philosophical, ethical or aesthetic vogues, separate from all intentional utilitarianism and mercantilism”.<sup>03</sup> This was the course of thinking about art adopted by **Rosołowicz** in the early 1960s, and of all the types of minimalism I know, his has been the most radical. At a time when we witness a process of elevating ordinary objects, everyday activities, and even simple gestures to the status of works of art, **Rosołowicz** is heading in the entirely opposite direction: he wants to deprive the objects made by artists of their uniqueness. And what is more – he attempts to reduce the process of creation itself to the stage of neutral activities. Then, the presence of an artist would no longer be necessary.

#### **Disapprover**<sup>04</sup>

**Wanda Gołkowska** has recently exhibited a series of objects, into which she added her own theoretical writings on rolls of paper. The forms of the objects were irrelevant. One of the artist’s texts read: “Overproduction of works of art and access of information make the choice more difficult and blur differences between the authentic and the secondary. Automatism and habit are often presented as necessary elements of artistic expression – contained in the kilometres and tons of material available on Earth. It is unavoidable – the generated surplus of energy has to be accumulated. I suggest the establishment of a worldwide store of artistic information, which would operate along the lines of a patent office, accepting original notifications and rejecting secondary concepts”.<sup>05</sup>

In one way or another artists have to face the plague of fertility, which was first manifested in the overproduction of objects, and whose next stage – and a much more threatening one – will consist of the overflow of information. One can venture a

**03** | **Jerzy Rosołowicz**, *On Neutral Action*, 1967. Source: *Conceptual Reflection in Polish Art. Experiences of Discourse 1965–1975*, **Paweł Polit** and **Piotr Woźniakiewicz** eds., Warsaw 2000, p. 230 [editor’s note].

**04** | The word was coined in Polish by the artist **Wanda Gołkowska** [b. 1925] to signify one who expresses disapproval [translator’s note].

**05** | **Wanda Gołkowska**, *Disapprover*, 1972. Source: *Conceptual Reflection in Polish Art...*, p. 75 [editor’s note].

hypothesis that the former symptom of the triumphant society – the overproduction – has contributed, among other things, to the emergence of conceptual art.

### The attitude

06 | Zdzisław Jurkiewicz [b. 1931], 'Wysoko intensywnie', *Odra* 12, 1967, p. 66 [editor's note].

“Do not multiply goods. If the choice is between the work which is an object and the work which is not, choose less – the work itself, that is the attitude itself”<sup>06</sup> – these words were offered by **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz** in 1967 as his artistic creed. Since then **Jurkiewicz** has been mounting exhibitions in his flat without the public. He systematically records these shows using photography. There was the action with black paint in the bathroom, the documentation of the progression of the sun disc on the kitchen wall, something with “white, clean, fine linen”, and the environment constructed from different sections of one black form, which, when viewed from one perspective formed an ideally symmetrical figure.

**Jurkiewicz** is involved in a perverse game with visible shapes of reality and he has been recording this play by means of photography, drawing or painting. What matters in these records is not what they look like but what is imperceptible about them and what can aid the reconstruction of the process as a phenomenon that unfolds in time. Photographs, sculptures, drawings and paintings are not intended as the ultimate effects and the crowning point of that play, but they are its vestiges, the witnesses whose evidence is sufficient to testify that something had really existed. Though **Jurkiewicz** himself has been contesting material objects, his situational art is in marked opposition to **Rosołowicz's** neutrality towards the object and **Golkowska's** position of disapproval.

### Reproductions

07 | Jan Chwałczyk [b. 1924], artist.

It is also possible to build instruments that produce illusions by means of the proliferation of objects. That was the idea behind the project put forward by **Jan Chwałczyk**<sup>07</sup> a couple of years ago. The artist wanted to show light, and towards that end he set out to build a number of chests in which he would reproduce it (the

artist himself calls his objects ‘reproductions’). These chests – as I deliberately choose to call them – pretend to be for wrapping light up; while in fact they are the screens upon which light is projected. **Chwałczyk** experimented with light, and subjected it to different transformations, but his drive for knowledge brought about certain technical complications with the apparatus. Moreover, his *Reproducer of the Solar Spectrum*, proposed at the Symposium Wrocław’70, required some professional expertise, i.e., in astronomy. **Chwałczyk**’s idea, still in a typescript, was becoming loaded with elaborate calculations, footnotes and appendices of all kinds. This process still continues, and its recipients can, as yet, only imagine the progression of the rainbow upon intricately conceived screens, or the pattern of the rainbow upon the sky, since the artist does not exclude the possibility of the latter. And thus, the process itself has quite unexpectedly become part of reality, not as the workplace for producing illusions, but as an illusion itself.

### The chest

During the Symposium, *Art in a Changing World*, in Puławy [1966], at the same time that **Jan Chwałczyk** presented his chests conceived as quasi containers for something as immaterial as light itself, **Liliana Lewicka**,<sup>08</sup> at the entrance to her ‘chamber of curiosities’, placed the *Chest Designed Not to Pass Through the Doorway*. The commonplace chest opened up a series of **Lewicka**’s extraordinary projects, of which only the *Theatre for Dogs* was a functional one.

### Formula X

The other work that became increasingly overgrown with intricate proofs, and abounded with complex formulas was **Zbigniew Makarewicz**’s<sup>09</sup> *Theory of the Transformations of the Formula X*. The theory itself was simple: the formula X could stand for anything. The artist gave lectures that illustrated the unlimited possibilities of the transformations of the formula. The theory, which sprang from a perfectly ludicrous idea, in the course of numerous transformations became the most logical of all the theories

**08** | Liliana Lewicka  
[b. 1932], artist.

**09** | Zbigniew  
Makarewicz [b. 1940],  
artist.

that used non-logical methods. For this reason it can provide an excellent justification for a lot of artistic practice otherwise indistinguishable from any other activity. **Makarewicz's** *Formula X*, was accompanied by the artist's happenings from the *Buffo Opera* series, organised in various environments, whereby the happenings empirically corroborated the theory.

### Motion

Towards the end of the 1960s Wrocław became a crucible of views, ideas and attitudes, not infrequently of a contradictory nature. At least a dozen artists, of whom I have mentioned just a few almost at random, contributed to that state of things. Perhaps all of them could be recognised as conceptual artists, even if they have little in common with each other. The crisis occurred a year and a half ago, when three major events took place: the Symposium *Wrocław'70*, the 8<sup>th</sup> open-air Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists in Osieki and the exhibition *Concept Art* in the Mona Lisa Gallery in Wrocław. At the same time a few artists from Wrocław contributed important presentations. In Osieki, **Maria Michałowska**<sup>10</sup> organised the event entitled *One Week*, which consisted of photographic documentation of certain situations, some staged by the artist and some occurring by chance. The effect produced was as if each day the artist had devoted one multiple to facts familiar and one to facts unknown. The other artist, **Barbara Kozłowska**,<sup>11</sup> marked the *Drawing Line* by means of coloured cones. The *Line* was then enlarged to an immense size, thus providing a model of some universal construction for space and imprecisely defined notions. **Natalia Lach-Lachowicz** and **Andrzej Lachowicz**<sup>12</sup> formulated the principle of *Sztuka permanentna* [*Permanent Art*], which was an attempt (different with each artist) to show how reality grows in time and space, and how its subsequent stages can be eradicated from the present. **Andrzej Wojciechowski** and **Mieczysław Zdanowski**<sup>13</sup> built a *Tower of Joy*, a huge structure made from flowers that had been added to the work by the public. **Andrzej Wojciechowski** was also making ultra concrete, almost illusionistic colourful human figures. The *Tower* itself was very concrete, too.

10 | **Maria Michałowska**  
[b. 1925], artist.

11 | **Barbara Kozłowska**  
[b. 1940], artist.

12 | **Natalia Lach-Lachowicz** [b. 1937] and  
**Andrzej Lachowicz**  
[b. 1939], both artists.

13 | **Andrzej Wojciechowski**  
[b. 1941] and **Mieczysław Zdanowski** [b. 1928],  
both artists.

An important role was played by **Stanisław Dróżdź**,<sup>14</sup> one of the few Polish concrete poets. Other artists could be mentioned as part of the changing art scene. A few months later the art movement which I have just discussed became a mass movement in Wrocław. As a result, the situation of its precursors no longer partakes in the spirit of the *Tower of Joy*.

**14** | Stanisław Dróżdź  
[b. 1939], concrete poet.

### **The Model**

Until recently the model of contemporary art could be visualised as an irregular and changeable structure expanding dynamically in different directions. The 'bulges' in its surface signified new tendencies. Since these bulges have appeared on all sides of the structure, the model, despite its changing shape, has been stable until now. In the course of the last few months or years, however, events took place in art which led to the explosion or spilling out from the model. As a result of that explosion certain artistic phenomena found themselves outside the traditional boundaries of art and became dispersed into the realm of reality, where they can neither be easily differentiated nor identified.

That great spillage – as one may easily guess – produced conceptual art, if we accept that the term can still be relevant to us. Thus, conceptualism is neither a trend nor a tendency in art (a tendency being an idea whose scope is broader, since it comprises more diversified phenomena). Therefore, conceptualism can be defined as the zone free from convention. And apparently such a minimalist definition is possible here. The zone comprises everything that can be conceived and transmitted, with the exception of practice that has already been tested and classified. The visual parallels between the artistic facts and the way in which they are recorded are entirely irrelevant. One can well imagine conceptual art practiced with canvas, brush and paint.

It is fascinating to track down the moment of the first breach in our model of art. Certainly it appeared first in the consciousness of artists. And this happened simultaneously and independently in different places which – unlike traditional centres – were not able to produce any schools of conceptual art. Despite the ironic comments

uttered by some critics, there exists neither Polish conceptual art nor New York conceptualism, and for a simple reason that results from universal rigours, the distances between the attitudes of different artists became more pronounced. In such a situation it is impossible to have artistic groups, shared programmes or a unified avant-garde, such as existed in the 1920s. Perhaps the unity of the art system only exists in the doubtful harmony of opposites.

It can easily be argued on theoretical grounds that artistic concerns within the zone free from convention could reach an unprecedented degree of diversity. In practice, however, one can see a marked tendency for the emergence of the centres of artistic propositions, as if some places were characterised by a greater propensity for this than others. Perhaps this is not only caused by mere imitation. Maybe the fascination with the boundaries of art is of critical significance in some places which play a special role in contemporary reality. ✕

▶

The catalogue published on the occasion of the Festival organised by the **Richard Demarco** and **Atelier 72**, with the participation of Polish artists selected and proposed by **Jerzy Ludwiński** (**Stanisław Dróżdż**, **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**, **Barbara Kozłowska**, **Leszek Mickos**, **Zbigniew Makarewicz**, **Maria Michałowska**, **Wiesław Paczkowski**),  
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# Sight

At the beginning of 1990s Jerzy Ludwiński presented the following sentence to Jarosław Kozłowski: "A lamp. Again, I put a finger in my eye".<sup>01</sup> In this instance, closing the eyelids, blinding, does not mean the inability to see. Darkness, visual silence, makes our sight sensitive to a discreet pulse of the world, directing the glare towards the inside, the invisible sphere, the immaterial.<sup>02</sup> For Ludwiński, the eye not only sees, but also constructs the vision, takes part in the process of art creation. Never innocent, the eye, according to Ludwiński, frames the world and in mediation turns it into a representation. An invisible vertical line of sight directed towards the sun was implicit in Władysław Strzemiński's unistic paintings; they were the creations of a blind man looking directly at the sun. Described by Ludwiński, optical instruments made by Jerzy Rosołowicz – the Neutronicons – dispositioned in most cases on a horizontal plane, frame the sheer act of seeing itself. The eye is seeing the sight and the horizontal plane of the image is constituted by reality itself. The world comes into being in the eye. Like Strzemiński, Ludwiński stressed the connection between the eye and the mind but he did not escape the unconscious. For him, being human is not only seeing, but also producing and displacing images. The sight, even with closed or blind eyes, means that the light of the inner process turns man into a constructor of words and objects. ✕

01 | Jarosław Kozłowski, 'Palec w oku', in *Ludwiniana*, Fredo Ojda, Grzegorz Borkowski, eds., Galeria Działań, Warsaw 2005, pp. 7–9.

02 | Jerzy Ludwiński, 'O eliminacjach i rewolucjach', in *Epoka błękitu*, op. cit., p. 284.

## A Report from the 'Anti-Happening'

On 31 January in the Mona Lisa Gallery a strange event took place. Its author was **Włodzimierz Borowski**.<sup>01</sup> The event was called *Pubes of Taint*. Some people believed that on that day nothing happened in the gallery, other people thought it was only part of an event which took place somewhere else, still others believed it was an anti-event, which to some extent might square with the initial perceptions of the situation. Probably most commentators were right.

On the walls of the gallery the following inscriptions were placed: **Włodzimierz Borowski** – *Pubes of Taint*, **Tadeusz Rolke** – photography, **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**<sup>02</sup> – display, **Jerzy Ludwiński** reads the text. While the roles of **Rolke**, **Jurkiewicz** and **Ludwiński** were defined, it was not clear what the author, **Włodzimierz Borowski**, was doing, since he did not take any part in the show, nor was he directly involved in the event.

When, on the evening before the opening of the exhibition, the artists connected with the gallery gathered as usual to help with the installation, they had at their disposal only several dozen photographs by **Tadeusz Rolke**, showing visitors to the gallery and existing in the form of a report. Yet, after all, this was not to be an exhibition of photographs, but an event in which photographs were one of the elements. The author of the whole event, **Włodzimierz Borowski**, was not eager to participate in the staging of the exhibition. He was at first a passive observer of what was happening, later he pitched in to help. The author of the display, **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**, could put whatever he wished into the gallery, or even play some joke on **Borowski**. But he did not take advantage of this privilege, and we all came to the conclusion that the exhibition should be as simple as possible, so that it would not detract from showing what was most important. But showing what? None of us knew what the most important thing

**01** | **Włodzimierz Borowski** [b. 1930], artist.

**02** | **Tadeusz Rolke** [b. 1929], photographer and **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz** [b. 1931], artist.



▲ Jerzy Ludwiński reading Włodzimierz Borowski's instruction during Borowski's 'anti-happening' *Fubki tarb* [*Pubes of Taint*], Mona Lisa Gallery, Wrocław, 1969. COURTESY: the private archive of Wanda Gołkowska and Jan Chwalczyk, Wrocław.

was. With feelings of uncertainty overwhelming us, **Borowski** notwithstanding, we realised that the happening had already begun.

The next day not a single new exhibit was displayed in the gallery. **Borowski** handed me a big sealed envelope which was to be opened in public and the text in it had to be read. **Borowski** did not show up at the gallery, he was absent at the climax of the event.

In the meantime the public started to flow into the exhibition room. At 11 o'clock sharp I opened the envelope and started reading the text which I had never seen before. At the same time **Jurkiewicz** was hanging the pages with the typed text on the wall, and **Rolke** was taking pictures of the guests who came to the opening, especially those who were represented more than once in the exhibited photographs. When I finished reading the public was

confused. Somebody asked whether there would be something else and whether the author of the text would show up. I shrugged my shoulders. The real show was over although **Rolke** was still taking pictures.

The event did not shock the audience. Rather, the feelings experienced by the visitors were those of disappointment. This time nothing attractive was happening in the gallery, although nobody had ever witnessed a similar event here. At the same time the line beyond which it became impossible to speak of art had been crossed. **Borowski's** text was not a work of art, at any rate not of the visual arts. Some of **Rolke's** photographs were works of art but they were not what this was all about. The public was not a work of art either, but – as the author suggested – it was its medium. Meanwhile the true and real work of art was slipping further and further away from us. Perhaps we should have looked for it at the climax of the confrontation with the public, the photographs that were its extension and the text which was an address to the public. Perhaps arranging a creative situation, i.e., a situation which brings about something new, was a work of art. In any case the whole thing was based on very subtle nuances which should have been noticed in order to find the features of a work of art, that is, to receive the information conveyed.

It goes without saying that the event did not take place at 11 o'clock because all of its elements – the public, the photographs and the text already existed prior to this time, and their synthesis was taking place in the mind of the author. The event continued in the minds of the spectators after I had finished reading the text and after everyone had left the gallery. Thus, one can say it had no beginning nor end. Imperceptibly it emerged from reality to merge back into it afterwards.

**Borowski** showed us a sample of reality, but a sample taken in certain laboratory conditions, one might say – in artificial circumstances. He was interested in preserving this reality which

was made up of the viewers under the influence of certain stimuli. He initiated a situation, yet afterwards he did not watch the consequences. He left that to the viewers who thus became not only the main element of the work of art, but at the same time its only recipient and arbiter. This role was not, as usually happens, taken by the author because he was absent at that time. Or to be more accurate, although the author was absent from the gallery, he was invisible and yet his presence was still palpable for other participants in the event. Whether sightseeing or drinking spirits, **Borowski** was still a part of his own picture. Only the signals he was sending were without a response. It was a bit like the one mile drawing by **Walter de Maria** which cannot be captured by the eye but which can be sensed by the imagination. In **Borowski's** work, this phenomenon appeared in an even more extreme form. From the beginning of his artistic activity **Włodzimierz Borowski** has been in intense dialogue with the principles of constructing a work of art. First he stripped bare the mechanisms at work during the composition of a picture, later on he unmasked the organic spatial forms, and finally, for some time now, he has been dismantling the most simple elements and turning exhibitions which he calls syncretic ones, inside out. The more he degraded the concept of a work of art, the more he consecrated the reality adapted by this work. Each and every time the artist was getting close to the critical point beyond which there was only emptiness. In this way he was freeing himself from noise and disturbances. He was able to convey only the information that was most important to him and nothing else.

I am convinced that this time too, reaching the limit beyond which nothing more can be said, the artist has conveyed in the most straightforward and least attractive way a lot of important thoughts. ✕



▲ Jerzy Rosołowicz with his *Travelling Neutronikon*. PHOTO: Tadeusz Rolke. COURTESY: Agency Gazeta.



## The Mimicry of Neutrdrome

**Jerzy Rosołowicz**<sup>01</sup> does not do anything extraordinary in his pictures, or rather his reliefs. He simply repeats identical forms as many times as the size of the background allows. That is why his pictures are silent. Until one day, suddenly, on entering the exhibition room with the artist's work, we were struck by an explosion of light so strong that it nearly blinded us. The work was set against the backdrop of a huge window and instead of neutral, identical rounded forms, **Jerzy Rosołowicz** fitted lenses that were even more inconspicuous because they were transparent. This work was one of the variations of the receptacle for collecting something, this time it was not dew but light. And one should realise that it was mere coincidence that this neutral and ordinary object in which all the forms repeated and complemented each other in a monotonous way, without noticeable tensions or contrasts, became aggressive and threatening, once we found ourselves on the axis of the beam of sunlight passing through it. If, on the other hand, we were to contemplate it, we would probably not notice anything extraordinary at the first glance: at most, our own reflection, slightly deformed through the lens, superimposed upon the landscape seen through the glass, and everything inscribed within the monotonous frame of the relief. It is only when realising that the viewer deals with a work of art, that he or she can start to wonder. **Rosołowicz's** pictures are alienated from their surroundings, but only in the exhibition room; otherwise they coexist perfectly with all the other objects and works of nature. They can be regarded as receptacles to collect light, entrap the viewer, to grasp excerpts of reality. This, however, is not necessary. They are so perfect in their purposeful purposelessness that they are like clothes cut so well that they pass unnoticed.

Much has already been written about **Rosołowicz** for he is one of the artists who occupy prominent positions in Polish artistic hierarchies. Therefore, I will not analyse his work at great

01 | Jerzy Rosołowicz  
[1928–1982], artist.

length, but will confine myself to drawing attention to what has remained unnoticed in his work. At the moment, the artist represents an emphatically visual trend in art – or at least this is generally considered to be the case – which made him a suitable candidate for inclusion in the Wrocław exhibition *Space – Light – Motion*. Critics felt authorised to classify his work thus, because **Rosołowicz** uses simple, geometric forms which are rhythmically repeated and because he sets in motion a pageantry of colours by means of prisms, and a pageantry of illusions with the aid of lenses. Also because in his pictures things appear which are not physically there, but which are added by our eyes guided by the artist. **Rosołowicz**'s pictures are thus partially created – so to speak – in the eye of the beholder, who in this way participates in the process of completing the work of art.

Interestingly, the author of the idea of the *Neutrdrome* does not think that his pictures are representative of current style; he considers his work to be neutral. And he is partly correct, though not entirely so. This work is not representative of contemporary style simply because there is no such thing, but as a result, everything, including **Rosołowicz**'s reliefs, fits into the work of the contemporary artistic community. And even more so: their visual origins make reference – as **T[homas] S. Kuhn** would say – to paradigms, that is, to specific and significant discoveries – in this case artistic ones, which have been generally accepted by well-informed circles. **Rosołowicz**'s attitude on neutrality comes close, for example, to **Władysław Strzemiński**'s<sup>92</sup> theory of unism. **Strzemiński** wished to reduce all the impressions registered by the human eye to a white, non-antagonistic and uniformly synthetic picture on a flat canvas. There is also a close affinity with minimalism.

02 | Władysław  
Strzemiński  
[1893–1952], artist.

Like all artists, **Rosołowicz** is undoubtedly interested in the nature that surrounds him from which he selects some forms. He makes a very literal selection only to successively reject them. **Rosołowicz** hollows out reality, retaining in his imagination only its negative

– things that he neither rejected nor selected; what is retained is the least conspicuous, the least interesting in the world of nature: its structure. **Rosołowicz** would then proceed as no other artist would: he would make his pictures in the likeness of the core of reality and nature's invisible frames instead of its pulp. He makes them thus for the sake of camouflage, to protect their neutrality, not to spoil anything, and not to suggest anything to the viewer. Biologists call such a phenomena 'mimicry'. The mimicry practiced by the author of the *Neutrdrome* is, in its attitude at least, more radical than most minimalisms of which I am aware. Thus, **Rosołowicz's** reliefs probably belong to the world of nature and they can even create a bridge between the natural and human worlds. In the exhibition rooms, however, they give way to alienation and it is there that their mimicry no longer works.

This is the artist who, in his first pictures of the *Olympic Series*, purposefully introduced the third dimension, bringing works to the threshold of relief. Later, he increasingly underlined their convexity or concavity by using rhythmically repeated elements. Suddenly he dematerialised the reliefs by placing lenses and prisms in the openings of pictures. I cannot resist comparing this process to the breakthrough from the massive walls of Romanesque architecture to the traceries of pointed arches and framework construction of Gothic cathedrals. The difference being that Gothic cathedrals were dotted to the same degree with both the functions mentioned by **Rosołowicz**: the absolute and the relative ones; while here we deal only with the former, even if a number of **Rosołowicz's** reliefs were placed together and enlarged to the size of a cathedral. This is how I imagine the *Neutrdrome*: so huge that it is barely perceptible, and so perfect in its function that it becomes thoroughly gratuitous. A receptacle to collect nobody knows what. A picture – a monument that does not suggest anything, but which simply is. ✕

## Conversation. Jarosław Kozłowski & Jerzy Ludwiński

**JERZY LUDWIŃSKI:** There is a section of art – or rather of the art scene – which remains in particular focus in any discussions of art. The names of some artists are repeated in various configurations in art magazines, catalogues, books on art, in museums and galleries. These are usually prestigious places and events. Even the artists themselves share the conviction about the importance of this structure; what is more, one can clearly see they aspire to become part of it, exhibit at these galleries and museums, be mentioned in these magazines and publications. What is the nature of this structure, what does it include, what does it depend on?

**01 | Jarosław Kozłowski** [b. 1945],  
artist.

**JAROSLAW KOZŁOWSKI:**<sup>01</sup> Undoubtedly the prestigious scene of ‘important’ galleries, ‘important’ museums, ‘important’ publications, does indeed exist. It’s good to be seen there, have one’s exhibitions, read one’s name. These are renowned, ‘sanctioned’ places, influencing and defining current standards and hierarchies of values. The whole structure is carefully organised and tested, so it is very efficient. And this is true, regardless of whether its mechanism is powered by the doctrine of trivially conceived cultural policy which had been our experience in this part of Europe until quite recently, or whether it is regulated by the more sophisticated ideology of the market economy, which largely determines the way that art functions in the West. The influence of so-called cultural policy is often easier to recognise: the defining criterion is usually ideological dogma and the manipulation resulting from it. The art market, however, is treacherous, strongly camouflaged. For example, using the slogan of progress in art periodically stimulates demand, promoting new names and announcing new trends, which ensures larger sales. Sometimes these choices amaze us with the banality of the promoted ‘standards’ and their artistic emptiness. And yet, because they involve the engagement of enormous funds for promotion, some of the names remain – at least for a time – in the spotlight

area which you have mentioned, establishing a kind of 'current standard'. Among these most highly regarded names there are also artists important for art and its genuine development. It often happens, however, that finding oneself in the spotlight results in the weakening of one's radical stance and a shift towards a more conventional position. It is difficult to say which is the cause and which is the result in this case. I am certainly simplifying matters, but I believe that the question of who will appear in this spotlight is usually decided by non-artistic factors or simply by chance. Nevertheless, it is a fact that so-called public opinion respects the hierarchies established in this way and many artists do not have the slightest doubt about its status and importance. For some, it provides a goal or motivation for their activity.

**J. L:** Who do you have in mind?

**J. K:** The people whose aspirations have to do with something usually called an artistic career, who define themselves through being praised, popular, financially successful, and for whom art is a comfortable means to realising such ambitions. The artists who – to paraphrase **Włodzimierz Borowski**<sup>02</sup> – are interested in their position more than their attitude. What I'm saying relates mainly to the question of an artist's ethics. There is a view, and not at all an isolated one, that the artistic attitude does not necessarily have a connection with the artistic value of the work; that these two may be separated. I do not believe in the ethical indifference of art. The reason why I am doing something, my method of operation, my goal, the point at which I decide to reveal or hide it, the context to which I refer or which I rebel against – all this is important and relevant for the basic understanding of my activity in the field of art. From this point of view, it is basic hypocrisy to ascribe transcendental values to art, while at the same time using it in a purely instrumental fashion for pragmatic purposes. The art scene that we are talking about generates this kind of hypocrisy. It is the realm of appearances. As a matter of fact, the more light is thrown on it, the less art there is.

**02 | Włodzimierz Borowski** [b. 1930], artist.

**J. L:** Luckily galleries and museums differ. You present your works at some of them and not at others. You make choices and attach great importance to them. What do you choose?

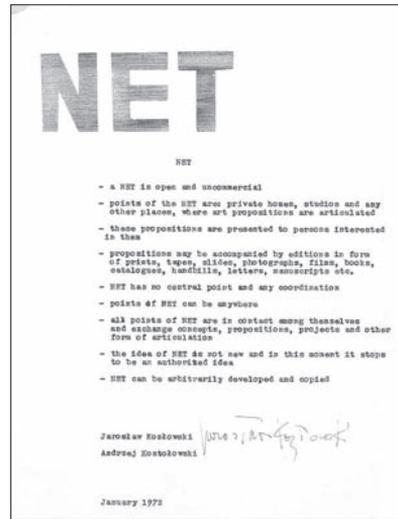
**J.K:** I like places which are dark, or rather in half-shadow. In a sense marginal, toned down, without the atmosphere of inflated ambitions, competition. Art is still for me, the synonym of freedom, in fact, one of the few possible domains where this utopia can come true. That's why I choose the places in which I can feel free and I can trust that what I do will not become an object of speculation or manipulation. In such places they respect art for being art.

**J. L:** An excellent jazz musician, when asked how the greatest jazz personalities were found, said that they "pick one another". That is, there are musicians with whom other musicians want to play and who themselves want just to play with others. Those who are very good, the best, invite those who are less well known to play with them, and these in turn, when they become better known, invite others. In this way, the artists themselves promote other artists. So this would be a bottom upwards movement, natural in a sense. Of course, I realise that jazz music is infinitely more spontaneous than the visual arts. But isn't it true that in the visual arts the artists themselves cannot or perhaps do not want to promote others? They are isolated, often at odds with one another, working for different galleries, out of touch with one another. Some often show their works at the 'right' places, others seldom or never do so; some are written about in thick books, others are ignored, and so, as a matter of fact, people other than artists have a say in the formation of this obvious hierarchy. Perhaps the only example of wholly spontaneous and independent actions would be the activities of the artists belonging to the Fluxus group: the informal festivals they organised, based on their shared predilection for play and provocation, open to the participation of 'outsiders', where everybody did what they pleased. And although these artists differed in their views and individual achievements, they were united by something very important, more important than all the differences.

**J. K:** It seems to me that one might find other such examples.

**J. L:** Cabaret Voltaire in Zürich!

**J. K:** In 1970, **Andrzej Kostołowski**<sup>03</sup> and I formulated a kind of manifesto, which was entitled *NET* – and concerned just such informal and non-conventional ways and means for the dissemination of artistic ideas. Distributed among over 300 artists and art theorists all over the world, it started a lively, intense exchange of ideas and opinions, and gave rise to a lot of presentations wholly outside the established structures. And most importantly, it fostered many contacts and friendships that last to this day. Another good example is the independent galleries movement, which was an attempt to create an alternative art scene. In Poland it was independence from the official, institutional art scene, in other countries mainly independence from commercial considerations. Most of those galleries in Warsaw, Poznań, Łódź, Wrocław and Elbląg were started and run by artists: Krzywe Koło, Od Nowa, EL, Mona Lisa, Akumulatory 2, Zakład nad Fosą, A.T., Wschodnia; and in Western Europe: Vor Ort in Hamburg, Matt's Gallery in London, S:t Petri in Lund, Kanal 2 and 38 in Copenhagen, l'Ollave in Lyons, Giannozzo in Berlin, and many others. It was in those places that very authentic meetings took place and genuine artistic links were built up across ideological and political divides. They created a unique climate of common, disinterested effort, free from the bathos and celebrated formalities which characterise the artistic establishment. In this, those places could be compared to jazz lofts, where the meetings of different temperaments and creative styles produced personalities and innovative ideas. It is a fact that these galleries did not find strong social resonance and that what happened in them was usually shared only by a small circle of enthusiasts. That was partly because they never had at their



▲ Jarosław Kozłowski and Andrzej Kostołowski, *NET* [English version], document dated January 1972.

**03 | Andrzej Kostołowski** [b. 1940], art historian and critic.



▲ Photograph with the following text on the reverse, "NET, the 2<sup>nd</sup> reception, Oct. 1972, Club APVA".



▲ Photograph with the following text on the reverse, "NET – the 1st reception, May 1972, private flat, Matejki Street 68/3a".

**04 | Andrzej Matuszewski**  
[b. 1924], artist.

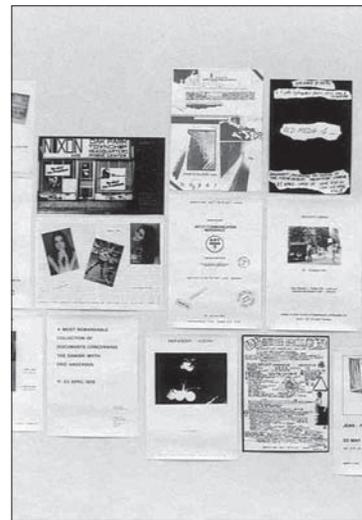
disposal any means to advertise their activities. Anyway, these were often activities which provoked repressive measures from various state institutions on the one hand, and were ignored or attacked by established interest groups and society cliques on the other. Let me give the concrete example of the Akumulatory 2 Gallery in Poznań, which, during its nineteen years of intense activity met with a permanent 'embargo' on information in the media; even such basic information as that concerning the dates and hours of the opening of its exhibitions. But this is not my point. The activities of these galleries were oriented to other goals, coming as they did from the conviction that art is the domain of formulating and expressing views, exploring senses, realising one's dreams. Those places were very important to me. In a sense they have determined my artistic biography because, with the exception of the few times I took part in large group exhibitions, for twenty six years I have never shown my works in any other contexts than those alternative, independent galleries, both in Poland and abroad. And this was a very conscious choice right from the beginning, i.e., from my first exhibition in 1967 at the Od Nowa Gallery in Poznań, run by **Andrzej Matuszewski**.<sup>04</sup>

**J. L.:** The galleries you have mentioned place themselves outside the spotlight area of the art scene. It is there that one may encounter artists such as yourself, who may be called outsiders, since they do not take an active part in official artistic life. And yet, not long ago, only about a dozen years or so, the situation was quite different. At one pole there was official art, traditional and quite academic, and at the other was the so-called avant-garde, rebelling against official art. The opposition was clear. The passage of time

brought mechanisms which, in a sense, forced the official scene to become interested in the avant-garde artists who had previously opposed it. This was a necessity resulting from the vapidness and loss of significance of official art. Later the situation became a bit more complicated. On the fringe there appeared something that came to be called the 'underground'; it grouped artists who did not want to participate in either the official scene or the one that had taken over the avant-garde experience. Still later, it turned out that the division between avant-garde art and official art did not make sense any more and that the 'underground' also belonged to history. And yet a kind of division does still exist. Despite the obvious attractiveness and profits connected with the spotlight scene, there are still artists who clearly keep away, do not want to be part of it. Why is that so?

**J. K:** This is, above all, the question of a basically different idea of art, which is a sufficient reason in itself because it also implies different value judgments, different attitudes and different preferences as regards artistic strategy. In a large part this is also the question of individual choices, resulting from personality traits, such as contrariness, inability to compromise, unwillingness to accept standards dictated by external circumstances, or from a strongly developed sense of freedom and independence. These were probably the reasons in my case too. Very early, during my period of intellectual growth, I became fascinated by existential philosophy. The questions it asked about authenticity, responsibility, freedom, became the basis for my later artistic choices and were important for my decisions concerning my participation in the anti-institutional gallery movement.

**J. L:** In the second half of the 1960s, **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**<sup>05</sup> wrote in one of his texts that a work of art might be reduced to the attitude of the artist. In the context of the process that had led to this statement it appears to have been a valid claim at that time. At about the same time, **Harald Szeemann** organised an important exhibition in Bern and Amsterdam, which he entitled



▲ Photograph from the exhibition at the Akumulatory 2 Gallery, documenting the activity of St.Petri Gallery, Lund, April 1980.

► Klaus Groh and the International Artists' Cooperation, *INFO*, no. 19, 1975.

**05 | Zdzisław Jurkiewicz** [b. 1931], artist.



*When Attitudes Become Form.* So concern with attitudes was then quite common. It was the time when you were embarking on your 'serious' artistic undertakings. How did you conceive your artistic attitude? How is it possible for an attitude to become form. Or to put it in yet another way: is the reverse possible, that is, can we arrive at an attitude starting with the form, which would, in a way, be even more logical?

**J. K:** I would interpret the title of **Szeemann's** exhibition rather as a provocation, because it seems to me that if one treated it very literally and if attitude was indeed to become form, it would lose its sense of an ethical choice, turning into yet another purely formal category. By attitude I understand such realisation of one's internal convictions that is fully compatible with the values and principles forming the essence of these convictions. Or simply acting according to one's views without deviating from them and without compromises dictated by pragmatic or any other factors. In art, though not only there, attitude realises itself in action through conscious acts of choice taken in confrontation with events or situations that demand the defining of one's position. Distancing oneself from them, pretending they are not there would be opportunistic; just basic cowardice. As a matter of fact, all we have said so far concerns behaviour resulting from the adoption of a certain attitude: towards official artistic institutions, towards various forms of the annexation of art, towards other artistic attitudes. But there is also the necessity of constant self-control and guarding against one's own weaknesses, habits, preferences and excessive self-acceptance.

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**J. L:** Speaking of your philosophical interests: you have mentioned existentialism. And indeed it seems that, particularly in your early works one could find evidence of this fascination. I am thinking about the collages of



1966–1967; about the *Arrangement* from the Od Nowa Gallery in Poznań, or *Situation* from the Mona Lisa Gallery in Wrocław. But later, around 1970, you made works which referred to a completely different philosophical formation, to some motifs present in the theories of the Vienna Circle or **Ludwig Wittgenstein**.

**J. K:** I believe existentialism may have influenced the formation of my attitude, but not necessarily (or at least not directly) any particular works. It was a bit different with my adventure with analytical philosophy and **Wittgenstein**. At that time I was very much interested in both logic and philosophy, particularly in British analytical philosophy and the so-called Lvov-Warsaw school, with **Łukasiewicz**, **Tarski**, **Ajdukiewicz**,<sup>06</sup> and on the other hand, **Moore**, **Ayer**, **Ryle** and of course **Wittgenstein**. I even attended a seminar devoted to modal logic conducted by **Barbara Stanosz** and **Zdzisław Zięba** at the Department of Logic at Warsaw University. I was fascinated by paradoxes, language games, traps resulting from the superimposition of logical statements on reality

**06** | **Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz** [1890–1963], philosopher; **Jan Łukasiewicz** [1878–1956] and **Alfred Tarski** [1901–1983], both mathematicians and logicians.

◀◀ Jarosław Kozłowski,  
*Sytuacja [Situation]*,  
Mona Lisa Gallery,  
Wrocław, 1968.  
PHOTO: Jerzy Nowakowski.

◀ Jarosław Kozłowski,  
*Metafizyka [Metaphysics]*,  
Foksal Gallery, Warsaw,  
1972.  
ALL COURTESY: Jarosław  
Kozłowski.

and vice versa. These interests found a marked reflection in a lot of my works from this period including books: *A-B, Language, Reality, Grammar, Sentences, Lesson*; drawings such as *Set, Modal Drawings, Facts*; photographs such as *An Apparatus, Exercises in Semiotics*, and works that would now be called installations, such as *Metaphysics, Physics, Ics, Exercises in Aesthetics* and *Exercises in Ethics*.

This was the time of conceptual reflection in art, there was a climate of extraordinary theoretical tension, and particular attention was given to the comprehensive analysis of the language of art. I was carrying it out too, for my own purposes, both in the works I have mentioned, and in texts written in connection with them in the vein of 'cool' self-criticism. All this together made for an important experience, as it let me explore the character and discipline of language, its possibilities and limitations.

**J. L:** These works, free from any concessions to the viewer, remind me, in a way, of the transfer of the idea of the *ready-made* from the object to the concept itself, i.e., from the material, physical level to the purely linguistic level.

**J. K:** From my current perspective, I would not make such a clear-cut distinction between object and idea. It seems to me that instead there is a constant 'change of places'; transformation of one into the other. Objects may be good carriers of ideas, ideas are often reified. Each such transformation, regardless of its direction, introduces momentary chaos, confusion, which results in a most interesting demystification of either the object or the idea. There opens a kind of crack through which we may gain insight into what is usually hidden, inaccessible, camouflaged. Otherwise, a chair would always be a chair and nothing more, only a chair as itself. Yet it sometimes happens to be the Eiffel Tower.

**J. L:** That's right, but I have something else in mind now. I think it was **Duchamp** who inspired the process which I would call the art of collections. This referred to various collections of objects. You also assembled a considerable linguistic collection consisting of

ideas. Yet at a certain point you abandoned that project.

**J. K:** Such ‘renunciations’ have occurred periodically from the very beginning. As a student, I painted a lot and with great zest. I liked the smell of paints, turpentine; I was praised as a promising oil painter. Finally I felt that painting began to resemble eating cream cakes, that I was losing my objectivity. So I stopped painting. And since my graduation I have not made a single oil painting. Instead, I began to draw, although earlier I had hated drawing; it was then the most petrified form of academic craft. Somewhat similar motivations later made me abandon my linguistic explorations. I noticed that I was feeling more and more comfortable with them. I enjoyed arranging various conceptual configurations, combinations of more and more ingenious games and logical paradoxes. And again I felt the necessity to abandon that, get away from what **Witold Gombrowicz**<sup>07</sup> called ‘stupefaction with form’. ‘Renunciations’ are important. Hence, besides all the other reasons – my great respect for **Duchamp, George Brecht, Włodzimierz Borowski, Andrzej Matuszewski**, who had the courage to make such permanent or temporary breaks. What I am saying here obviously does not refer to the frequent cases of ‘renunciation’ trivially corresponding to the changing trends of the art scene, which could be observed, for example, at the beginning of the 1980s, when the so-called post-conceptualists of yesterday turned painlessly overnight into more or less ‘wild’ painters. It can also be observed today, when the reduced demand for ‘wild’ painting has made the ‘wilds’ suddenly go mellow, turning into cogitative neo-conceptualists.

**J. L:** Despite the renunciations, your works nevertheless arrange themselves into sequences and chains. It seems that only familiarity with these sequences, an awareness of their connections, ensures the proper reading of the meanings of individual links, i.e., the particular works. Would you agree with this opinion?

**J. K:** Well, yes and no. Each work must satisfy the principle of formal ‘transparency’ enabling the viewer to read it by recognising

**07 | Witold Gombrowicz**  
[1904–1968], novelist and dramatist.

►  
Pages from **Jarostaw Kozłowski’s** book, *Lesson*, 1972.  
COURTESY: **Jarostaw Kozłowski.**



LESSON TWO

This is a man. He is John Brown; he is Mr Brown. He is in his sitting-room.

This is a woman. She is Mary Brown; she is Mrs Brown. She is in the sitting-room.

The man is Mr Brown; the woman is Mrs Brown. Mr and Mrs Brown are in the sitting-room; they are in the sitting-room.

Mr Brown has a book. The book is in his hand; he has a book in his hand. Mr Brown has a cigarette. The cigarette is in his mouth; he has a cigarette in his mouth.

Mrs Brown has a pen. The pen is in her hand; she has a pen in her hand. Mrs Brown has a bag. The bag is on the table; it is on the table.

Mr and Mrs Brown have a dog; they have a dog. The dog is in the room; it is in the room. The dog is under the table; it is under the table.

The pictures are on the walls; they are on the walls. The table is under the picture; it is under the picture. The dog is not under the chair; it is under the table. The pictures are not on the table; they are on the wall.

Mrs Brown hasn't a cigarette in her mouth; she has a pen in her hand. Mr Brown hasn't a pen in his hand.



its internal rules and external references. In this sense it should be autonomous and as such function without necessarily relating to other works. On the other hand, art is a process, the expression of various states of consciousness at various times; that is why, despite my earlier reservations, the works remain in constant dialogue with one another. Their interrelationships need not be obvious and visible at first glance, and the dialogue may consist of linear continuation, apposition, as well as in confrontation and discussion. And although I take care to make it possible for the viewer to appreciate the individual works and possibly understand them without being familiar with the previous or subsequent ones, I do not think I could point to a single one which is completely devoid of references to the other realisations. There also exists another kind of inconspicuous link between the different works. Regardless of whether they are analytical or not, more or less formalised, their background usually contains associations not directly connected with their main ideas. For example, in the book entitled *Grammar*, the motif used in the operations with various temporal implications typical of English grammar was the verb *to be*, which was submitted to the test of actual calendar time between 4 January and 2 March 1973. The 'book' time was identical with the actual time of making the book and this in turn was connected with the real-life events which I experienced during that time. And so the book, focusing on the various possible forms of juxtaposing verbal moods in the English language could also be read as a kind of unobtrusive but very private diary.

**J. L:** This aspect of personal reference is present in almost all of your works; I have written about that already.

**J. K:** That's right. I will give you one more example. One of the main motifs in the installation *Dark Blue*, realised

at the Kunsthallen in Odense, is a photograph of a church steeple with a clock which bears a certain relation to other clocks and other categories of time present in this exhibition. This is a photograph of the church steeple at Zaniemyśl, a summer resort near Poznań, where I used to spend my holidays years earlier. And of course this place is associated with many memories. The photograph was taken from the window of the only hotel there, *Zaniemyślanka*, which also has its significance. The church clock, out of order when the photograph was being taken, shows half past three, probably a.m., or the hour that psychologists claim is the time of taking essential, sometimes final, existential decisions; for example, most suicides are committed between 3.30 and 4.00 a.m. This is borne out by statistics. And this in turn refers us to another semantic field, etc., etc. The decoding of all these private references is practically impossible for an outsider and as a matter of fact it is unnecessary, since *Dark Blue* is primarily about time, about the metaphysics of time. The book, *Grammar*, dealt with the same thing, although the two works were separated by almost fifteen years. The presence of 'private codes' is important for me, particularly during the early stages of constructing the work, but in no way should they reduce its readability. I try to observe the criterion according to which a work should be transparent in its construction and as universal as possible on the level of meaning.

**J. L:** One consequence of your analytical period was that you were stuck with the label of a rational artist, a 'conceptualist' in full control of himself and his art.

**J. K:** This is a rather superficial and not very accurate opinion. My works often contain objects or parts of objects, and also concepts, whose presence I am unable to account for. These motifs come back, sometimes quite unexpectedly, surprising even me. Looking for an article some time ago, I came across a copy of a magazine, *Polityka*, from the late 1960s, in which I found a reproduction of my collage entitled *Double Presence* from 1966. I had completely forgotten about this picture, I suppose I had

given it to an acquaintance from Düsseldorf; but its title and the idea it contains are strangely connected with the series of works I made only two or three years ago. They dealt with the problem of duality and were even given similar titles: *Double Agent*, *Double Image*, *Double Exposure*. The same thing happens with various objects. Reconstructing *The Arrangement* at the National Museum in Poznań not long ago – in connection with the exhibition from the Od Nowa Gallery – I noticed that I had used an electric fan in it, those twenty-five years ago. And an electric fan has appeared in my work many times recently, of course without my conscious memory of this earlier use. A similar thing happened with an X-ray photograph of my skull. Various sharp instruments including razors which were pasted onto pictures a long time ago, unexpectedly return in 1992 as a scythe in *Sharp Objects*, from Tapko in Copenhagen. An alarm clock which years ago, probably in 1970, was part of the ‘arrangement’ (not yet called an ‘installation’) entitled *Cabinet*, became a *leitmotif* for a long series of works dealing with the shape and colour of time, from the end of the 1980s, again with no deliberate reference to my previous experience with clocks. So the claim that I am in full control of all the elements of materiality, not to mention of the meanings of the particular representations is rather exaggerated.

**J. L:** I have an impression that some objects recur more often than others. Obviously these include clocks, but also metronomes, keys, electric fans, vacuum cleaners, sharp objects, lamps and other sources of light. Earlier, the various recurring structures included wallpaper designs, paper patterns and wall drawings. Another group is made up of various ‘cultural’ objects: drawings or paintings found or quoted, pastiches, e.g. of **Baselitz**. And the last group includes, perhaps not so much objects, as images and representations: photographs of your eye, mouth, ear, an X-ray of your skull or thermographic images of the brain. Some objects are painted gold, reflect light, glitter, and this glitter camouflages their materiality, although they still remain objects. They are open and closed at the same time. Others, like the alarm clocks, are

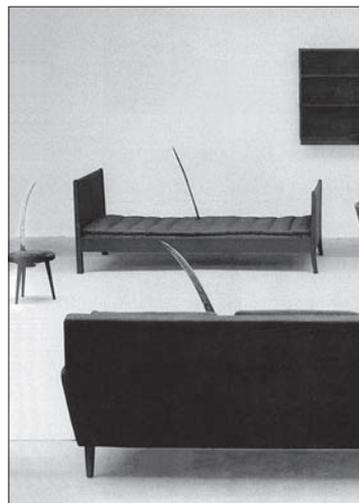
completely covered with black paint, which takes away their basic function. They measure time, but do not show it. Or in an extreme case: you put objects in a box, they are invisible and inaccessible, as if absent. And so, on the one hand some material forms are very much emphasised, even aggressive, on the other hand they are covered, hidden, isolated, they do not emanate anything, they are silent. There are some small exceptions, for example some of them emit sound. You treat sound a bit like an object when it comes from a closed box, and a bit like a drawing when it shapes space. At yet another time you make it represent an object. And we are faced with a paradox because sound, which is temporal in nature, defines space, while spatial objects such as black clocks or metronomes – define sections of time, ‘cut up’ time.

**J. K:** This does not make me too ‘rational’ does it?

**J. L:** This so-called rationalism of yours, combined with unusual consistency, is sometimes reduced to absurdity. I often have an impression that you are simply mocking it. The cover of an important, prestigious catalogue from the DAAD Galerie in Berlin, unexpectedly shows a door with a particularly exposed door handle. It assumes the character of a quasi-symbol. Similarly quasi-symbolic are the keys that you often use in various configurations. The door, the handle, the keys are associated with change, moving from one space to another, entering and going out, opening and closing. But it seems that this motion occurs not only in space, but equally in time and in other media. Your works contain multi-level references, as in *Still Life with Wind and Guitar*, where one can find traces of the various stages in the evolution of art. One of them is a classical and quite realistic drawing of a still life, found in a corridor of the Academy. Another one is the material still life reconstructed on the basis of this drawing, an ‘installation’ of sorts. Then on the wall you draw an artist who is drawing this still life, based on the found drawing. The drawn artist is drawing this already doubly reconstructed and interpreted still life using another – this time Cubist-like – convention. This results in a structure constructed out



▲ Jarosław Kozłowski, *Ostre przedmioty [Sharp Objects]*, 1991, installation view, *Kolekcja 4/Collection 4* exh., Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw.  
PHOTO: Magdalena Ziótkowska.





▼ Jarosław Kozłowski,  
*Ostre przedmioty*  
 [Sharp Objects], Tapko,  
 Copenhagen, 1992.  
 COURTESY: Jarosław  
 Kozłowski.



of various elements taken from different artistic realities. It is as if you were ‘stitching together’ very different states and times to make a patchwork. And this – seemingly impossible – ‘stitching together’ of the various stages in the evolution of art has its own, different but convincing logic, also present in such works as *Opus I* and *Opus II* and the whole Berlin series, *Academy*, from Matt’s Gallery.

**J. K:** Also *The Garden of Art* where I was trying to put together various clichés and stereotypes of contemporary art.

**J. L:** **Robert Rauschenberg** once made a series of prints that incorporated contemporary photographs of **John F. Kennedy**, reproductions of his own earlier works, also *Venus* by **Rubens**. It was a kind of walk around different styles. But the essence of his work was the simple juxtaposition of these different images to form a kind of panoramic collage. In contrast to this, the thing most essential for you is the creation of an unstable configuration, which is in constant motion resulting from the activities of both yourself and someone brought in from a different ‘convention’; another time, like this drawn artist. How is it then that despite this unconstrained import of different elements from different trends and styles, both historical and contemporary, there is a clear link not only between all these elements, but also between the works in which they have appeared and will appear? There must be a method in all this! It seems that the most essential thing is this moment of transformation, and not only the stylistic diversity and the attraction of quoting elements and combining them into new configurations, characteristic of postmodern stylistics. The essence is something else; it is the transformation, the shift, the expansion, usually imperceptible. The *Sharp Objects* expanded; creating a web of unexpected cuts and curved lines in the imaginary space, and in other works time shifted forwards, backwards, or inwards. Again we come to the conclusion that the key issue here is the key itself. Or the door handle. Or the door. Or rather opening it imperceptibly, pushing the handle, turning the key. You show objects, but the important thing is what happens between them and is not intrinsic to them.

**J. K:** There is a kind of constant interaction between all these objects which consists in mutual provocation, ‘multiplying quotation marks’, and which leads to the gradual but unavoidable loss of their former identity, i.e., attribution to a definite style, genre, class. What is even more important, it impairs the sign-quality of the objects which is connected with this attribution, although they are still recognisable as objects, as they do not change their appearance and remain the same as regards their physical constitution. What is disturbed is their mutual relationship. This could be compared to the impact of a powerful virus, which destroys the order and the stable system of hierarchies. It produces kinds of holes; gaps between objects; the common points are lost. Consequently, all the elements begin to shift imperceptibly in different directions, and mix, forming completely new configurations, building a web of different meanings, and eventually – completely changing the former structure of the configuration and its meanings. It is a process that cannot be controlled beyond a certain point. Its course is always a surprise to me. But the less I understand it, the more real it seems. I am thinking, of course, about a special kind of reality analogous to the reality of a game, for example. If one followed this comparison it would be a peculiar kind of game, one with changing, ill-defined rules and so one that cannot be won or lost.

**J. L:** Another instance of this game would be the duality that often occurs in your works. It has various aspects, but what I am now interested in is not so much the duplication of two identical objects, but the duality of two very different ones. I suppose this is another characteristic of your art: the need to be in two different places and two different points in time at once. It probably results from the wish to achieve balance, symmetry, and simultaneity. It is as if you were swinging a pendulum in one direction and at the same moment wanting to balance this by pushing it in the other direction. Extreme, radical realisations immediately find their counterparts in other kinds of extreme realisations with an opposite vector. This was the case when one of your most

categorical and tough works entitled *Single Lighting*, where an image of you in a terrorist's mask at Nikolaj Gallery in Copenhagen was immediately followed by one of your 'lightest' and most gentle ones – *Delicate Movements* at l'Ollave Gallery in Lyon. This is only one of the possible examples. And yet another point: some time ago one could observe the tendency among critics and art theorists, doubtless inspired by the works of some artists (including **Richard Long, Robert Smithson**), to investigate very remote cultures, remote both in time and in space.

A number of books were published, for example, about the drawings on the Nasca plateau, about the art of the Australian Aborigines, the practices of African shamans, etc. Those phenomena were compared to the most current events in art. There appeared a tendency both to construe and to research and analyse the greatest possible differences between cultures. This probably derived from the artists' need to distance themselves from contemporary standards and from the need to define a different perspective, maximally extended in time and space. In contrast to this, you are not much interested in these great differences. You are interested in something else, namely the differences that exist within your own art, the vectors which point in various directions. This regards differences between objects, between objects and drawings, sometimes also the distance between the object and the viewer. Again I will cite *Sharp Objects* and the works in which you have used various kinds of projections, as in *In Yellow* at Matt's Gallery in London, where you almost invited people into your brain. Speaking of this work, it is worth noting something else somehow connected with distance, although touching on a different aspect of it. You set various traps, which consist of drawing the viewer into unexpected and sometimes uncomfortable situations, as in the case of *Sleep Well*, from Kunstverein Giannozzo in Berlin. Another such trap was the inverting of the eyes, now normal, now concave in *Double Image* at Masza Potocka Gallery in Cracow. This gives rise to a strange situation: the inverted eye turned its glance inwards so it could not cross the observer's line of vision, but at the same time, paradoxically, was 'inversely' active in

relation to it: one might say it 'ate' the viewer's glance and met it in defiance of all laws of physics. The eyes in your works might be the subject of a separate talk since they recur periodically from the very beginning; from your student pictures onwards.

**J. K:** I like traps because they undermine accepted wisdom. They may be set at many levels and have various features. A large series of works from the 1980s beginning with *Opus I* and ending with *Die schwarze Rose*, dealt with something that I had called *Mythologies of Art*. Each of the installations – because these were mainly installations, most of them using sound – referred to a different myth, e.g., that of an artist who turns triviality into sacrum, the myth of the freedom of art, the myth of originality and authenticity, of value and disinterestedness, etc. Each of them enticed the viewer with its visual attractiveness, drew him/her into its 'intellectual depth', but at the same time each was a kind of a 'distorting mirror' exposing its own falsity. So these works trapped both the viewers and the art, or certain kinds of notions about what art is. And finally, they were also 'self-traps' because these myths mean something to me, and what is more I was, after all, involved with them as the artist often physically present when I played the violin or the harp. Since I was doing that for the first time in my life, without any preparation, I was also exposed to ridicule in the human dimension as an individual. Other kinds of traps were used in later works which belonged to the series with the working title (perhaps unfortunate), *Realities of Art*. This series included the works you have already mentioned: *In Yellow*, and *Sleep Well*, also all the works with the word 'double' in their titles, as well as *Single Lighting* and *Off-the-Order*. These traps were concerned with various ideas of how we behave towards art. We all become consumers of art at some point. We know what art is, we come to a gallery to make sure we are right about it and we consume it. Sometimes it tastes better, sometimes worse, so that we are satisfied or disappointed. We have high demands, expectations and principles. We have become used to art that is open, inviting, which brings us joy or helps us to understand the world, which

gives us something and makes us richer. In this case the traps were definitely more explicit than in the *Mythologies of Art*. They worked by provocation, the shock of sharp, destructive light, irritating sound, unbearable colour. They were characteristically aggressive, or even explicitly rude, hostile towards the idea of making something accessible. Because, as a matter of fact, does art really have to make itself accessible and nice, or give itself with the feeling of a well accomplished mission? Does it necessarily have to bring satisfaction, ennoble us? These are very important questions. I have an impression that we have created for ourselves a safe enclave called ART, a handy, comfortable excuse for various occasions. The official scene, the art market, hierarchies, *salons*, coteries that we mentioned at the beginning of this talk, are only some of the symptoms of the malady. Deception underlies increasing areas on many levels of the art scene. How else can one describe the littering of public space with so-called public projects, which is currently so popular in the West? These are usually rather naive or conversely – cynical transpositions of the artistic ideas of the Russian avant-garde of the 1920s, a kind of ‘functional decorativism’ or – if you like – ‘decorative functionalism’. Actually, this is one more instrument for manipulating social behaviour under the exalted, though rather worn-out slogan ‘art for all’. I really have had enough of the misuse of some words, the confusion of concepts and the tricky situations ensuing from the fact that someone is ‘making art’ and ‘being an artist’. Perhaps we should be using a completely different vocabulary, because the one that we habitually use leads to colossal misunderstandings. When I say ‘art’, and when **Jeff Koons** says ‘art’ then though we use the same English word, we think and speak of totally different and incongruent spheres of activity. It seems that we should all constantly qualify our statements and explain that what we have in mind is something totally different from the conventional meaning of the words we are using.

**J. L.:** I believe that *Mythologies of Art* and the series of works entitled *Realities of Art* perform a ‘purifying’ function just by their

programmatic de-mythologising and de-mystification of the various conventions and misrepresentations that art has burdened itself with, both as regards its mode of articulation and conception, and its presence in the world.

**J. K:** These were my intentions at least. Let me now follow a line of reasoning similar to yours, which you know I endorse. While I am aware of simplifying matters, I'd like to ask you to imagine three concentric rings. The first one is the domain of reality, both social and material, such as we experience it. The second one would be the domain of art, such as it is usually conceived, the kind we have referred to rather critically here. The third one would also involve art, but conceived quite differently, the art that we are interested in. The relationship between the first and the second ring, or between reality and art in the usual sense of the term is rather well understood. Art is dependent upon reality as its image, projection, commentary, language, utopia or – as **Beuys** would have it – universal 'social therapy'. Reality authenticates art, art in turn introduces order and gives metaphysical dimension to reality. The relationship between the first two rings and the third one would be quite different. It would contain elements of the first ring – that of reality, as well as elements of the second ring – that of art. In both cases, however, these elements would not be 'borrowings'. They would not involve any dependence on the contexts from which they had been taken. It is a bit like the example of a glass of water in the work of **Michael Craig-Martin** which at some point stopped being just a glass filled two thirds with water and became an oak tree. **Craig-Martin** preserved the physical form of a glass of water but changed its substance. The objects within this third ring often look the same but their new status and the different internal relations between them make for the fact that they are no longer in the domain of reality and they have even less in common with their 'representations' or 'transformations' from the domain of art. They assume a different identity and with it they regain their lost dignity.

**J. L:** They regain their dignity because they are stripped of their basic function, connected with their use by man, and their constant subordination to our existence. Moreover, they are not exposed to the manipulations that characterise their various uses in art. Hence, a clock with its face covered with black paint can measure its time much more accurately than any other 'ordinary clock'. And at the same time it shows the absence of time, some kind of eternity where the passage of time is made harmless or at least imperceptible.

**J. K:** I think it was in his *Bemerkungen über die Grundlagen der Mathematik* that **Wittgenstein** used the example of a tape-measure conforming to the one metre standard but made from elastic. It may therefore be expanded at will. Sometimes a centimetre is one centimetre long, sometimes it is five, and at another time it may be ten centimetres long. And in each case the measurement carried out with the use of this measure is equally accurate and true. I like this idea. Such an instrument would be a very appropriate measure both of space and of time within this third ring that I have described.

**J. L:** This reminds me of the concept of the expanding universe, where various bodies move away from one another because of the expansion of space and time.

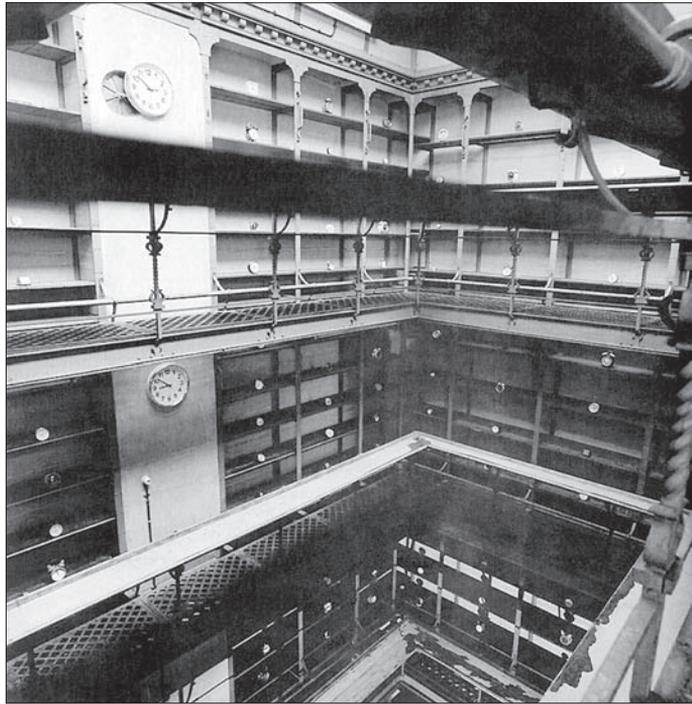
**J. K:** An illustration of such 'elasticity' was provided to me by the work entitled *Personal Files* which I recently realised at Archief in The Hague. I used 352 mechanical alarm clocks sent to me by people from various countries around the world, and four quartz clocks. The alarm clocks ticked in their individual times, the quartz clocks showed the 'objective' time for The Hague, New York, Moscow and Tokyo. The sound of the simultaneously ticking 352 alarm clocks completely erased their function, i.e., measuring time. It was a unique kind of noise resembling pouring rain or a waterfall, without any rhythm or order. The faces of the clocks, uncovered this time, ceased to matter. The hands of the 352 alarm

clocks showed different times simultaneously – hours, minutes and seconds; but they no longer signified anything temporal – and just like the noise, they had more to do with space. The reference point was not only the unique architecture of the nineteenth century archive building, adapted for a gallery, but some other space, unidentified, beyond the known categories.

**J. L:** Perhaps this is that realm of freedom, characteristic of the third ring. When we are talking about art as it is understood conventionally, we have in mind the process of ‘going beyond reality’, but at a certain point one meets an impenetrable wall and has to turn back. And such ‘turning back’ brings us once again closer to reality which results in compromises. The third ring is not restrained by anything and gives one the feeling of unlimited freedom.

**J. K:** This is the greatest value and it should be understood literally, both in the theoretical and the practical sense. Obviously, it does not have anything to do with any form of aggression, vulgarity or intolerance. It is dignified freedom [I am consciously employing the concept of dignity again], respecting both the material world and the world of sentient beings.

**J. L:** In the times of the Great Avant-Garde, artists wanted to change the world. Later, these aspirations were toned down. In the face of various impending dangers it is the desire to save the world that has become more and more important.



▲ Jarosław Kozłowski,  
*Akta personalne* [*Personal Files*], Archief, The Hague,  
1993. COURTESY: Jarosław  
Kozłowski.

**J. K:** Talking about respect for the world, I did not have in mind the now fashionable ecological stance. I am concerned with something much deeper, something that is not a simple projection of casual views and programmes. At one time art is to destroy the world, at another time it is to save it – again the point of reference is reality. And from here it is only a step to subordinating art to this or that ideology, religious system or currently prevailing social norms.

**J. L:** But you must admit, however, that the world needs to be saved. It is an absolute necessity that artists cannot ignore. People must finally take responsibility for the world they live in.

**J. K:** Yes, you are obviously right. People as people and therefore also artists, although the fact that a person is active in the field of art does not matter in the least from this point of view. It is the responsibility of every person regardless of what he or she does. It equally concerns an artist, a postman, a politician, a shopkeeper, a worker and a bank-clerk.

**J. L:** However, there is also something which may be called by analogy ‘the ecology of art’, and which is connected with the idea of not multiplying artistic entities beyond necessity. And the responsibility for this falls exclusively on artists. This kind of awareness has been observable in art since the 1960s. For example, in conceptual art and in collection art. I mean a kind of ‘Ockham’s razor’...

**J. K:** Talking of ‘Ockham’s razor’, there won’t be any conclusion to this conversation?

**J. L:** Of course not, there can’t be any conclusion. Anyway, in your case, a conclusion is just not possible. ✕

MAY – JUNE 1993, POZNAŃ.

- WORLD
  - ▶ POLAND
    - ▶ JERZY LUDWIŃSKI

1930

- *The Man Without Qualities* by Robert Musil.
- First Football World Cup held, Montevideo, Uruguay.
  - ▶ Arrest and imprisonment of Centrolew leaders [left and centre parties alliance], Brześć on Bug River.
    - ▶ Jerzy Ludwiński born in Zakrzówek, the province of Lublin, Poland.

1931

- The Whitney Museum of American Art opens, NYC.
  - ▶ *International Collection of Contemporary Art of the 'a.r. group'* opens at the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art, Łódź.

1932

- Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein exchange correspondence on culture and war.
  - ▶ The Soviet-Polish Non-Aggression Pact signed, Moscow.

1933

- Reichstag is set on fire, Berlin.
- *Merzbau* by Kurt Schwitters.
  - ▶ Pre-Slavic, eighth century A.D. settlement discovered at Biskupin.

1934

- Night of the Long Knives, Germany.
  - ▶ Frederic Chopin Okęcie Airport opened, Warsaw.
  - ▶ *The Cinnamon Shops* by Bruno Schulz.

1935

- Benny Goodman "King of Swing" performs in California.
- Germany's air force the Luftwaffe created.
  - ▶ Death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, Warsaw.

1936

- Summer Olympic Games, Berlin.
- *Fur-lined Teacup* by Meret Oppenheim.
  - ▶ Cable railway onto Kasprowy Wierch starts operation, Tatra Mountains, Poland.
    - ▶ Ludwiński's family move to Lublin.

1937

- Aerial bombing of Guernica.
- First exhibition of Solomon Guggenheim Collection, NYC.
  - ▶ *Ferdurdurke* by Witold Gombrowicz.

- 1938**
- Mass hysteria after **Orson Welles'** broadcast on American radio of *War of the Worlds*, based on the novel by **H. G. Wells**.
  - **Alexander Fleming** isolates penicillin.
    - ▶ Polish troops entered Zaolzie region, Czechoslovakia.
- 1939**
- Siege of Madrid by allied troops under **Franco**.
    - ▶ The defence of Westerplatte.
    - ▶ The suicide of **Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz**, Jeziory.
- 1940**
- **Teddy Hill's** jazz band performed at Minton's Playhouse, Harlem, NYC.
    - ▶ **Xawery Dunikowski** deported to Auschwitz Concentration Camp [until 1945].
- 1941**
- Attack on Pearl Harbour.
  - *Citizen Kane* by **Orson Welles**.
    - ▶ General Government created.
- 1942**
- **Isaac Asimov** formulated the three Laws of Robotics in *Runaround* story from *Astounding Science Fiction*.
  - First nuclear reactor built at the University of Chicago.
    - ▶ Zyklon B used for mass extermination in the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- 1943**
- First solo exhibition by **Jackson Pollock**, Art of This Century Gallery, NYC.
  - Operation Gomorrah air raids over Hamburg.
    - ▶ Mass graves of Polish officers executed by the NKVD discovered in Katyń.
- 1944**
- First nuclear bomb exploded, Alamogordo desert, New Mexico.
  - First solo exhibition by **Jean Dubuffet**, Paris.
    - ▶ Proclamation of the *July Manifesto* by The Polish Committee of National Liberation.
- 1945**
- First recording by **Miles Davis** with **Charlie Parker**.
  - *Animal Farm* by **George Orwell**.
    - ▶ Creation of The Polish United Workers' Party [Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR].
- 1946**
- 'Cold war' begins.
  - First sentences handed out at the Nuremberg trials.
    - ▶ First post-war census.

- 1947**
- First United Nations General Assembly, NYC.
  - *The Plague* by **Albert Camus**.
    - ▶ Operation *Wisła*.
- 1948**
- Berlin Airlift.
    - ▶ The first *Peace Race* held, Warsaw – Prague.
    - ▶ *First Exhibition of Contemporary Art*, Cracow.
- 1949**
- Proclamation of the People's Republic of China.
    - ▶ *Rozstrzelanie [Execution]*, painting cycle by **Andrzej Wróblewski**.
    - ▶ Implementation of the socialist art doctrine in fine arts.
- 1950**
- **Konrad Zuse** builds the first commercial computer Z4, Zürich.
  - Republic of China army invades Tibet.
    - ▶ 1 May announced as state holiday.
      - ▶ **Ludwiński** graduated from the Stanisław Staszic Lyceum in Lublin and begins studies at the Catholic University of Lublin. Majors in art history.
- 1951**
- Radio *Free Europe* begins broadcasting in Eastern Europe.
    - ▶ Death of **Katarzyna Kobro**, Łódź.
- 1952**
- First hydrogen bomb exploded, atoll Eniwetok, Marshall Islands, Pacific Ocean.
    - ▶ Poland takes the name of People's Republic of Poland.
    - ▶ Death of **Władysław Strzemiński**, Łódź.
- 1953**
- **Francis Crick** and **James D. Watson** publish their description of the double helix structure of DNA.
  - Death of **Joseph Stalin**, Moscow.
    - ▶ Transmission of first Polish public television programme.
- 1954**
- Test flight of Boeing passenger aircraft.
  - *Notre Dame Du Haut* by **Le Corbusier**, Ronchamp.
    - ▶ Nowa Huta steelworks opens.
- 1955**
- Death of **Albert Einstein**, Princeton, USA.
  - DOCUMENTA I, modern and contemporary art exhibition, Kassel, Germany.
    - ▶ Palace of Culture and Science erected in Warsaw. Named after **Joseph Stalin**.
    - ▶ *Golden Grape Symposium*, Zielona Góra.
    - ▶ Theatre on Tarczyńska Street, **Miron Białoszewski** and **Lech Emfazy Stefański**, Warsaw.

- ▶ Young Artists' Exhibition *Przeciw wojnie, przeciw faszyzmowi* [*Against War, Against Fascism*], Arsenal, Warsaw.
  - ▶ Beginning of **Ludwiński's** collaboration with the Paris Phases group and the Musée du Poche publishing house.
  - ▶ **Ludwiński** gains diploma from the Catholic University, Lublin.

## 1956

- Soviet military intervention in Hungary.
  - ▶ *Cricot 2* theatre founded by **Tadeusz Kantor**, Cracow.

## 1957

- Equality Rights Amendment, Bundestag, Germany.
- Sputnik I launched by the Soviet Union.
  - ▶ *The Star Diaries* by **Stanisław Lem**.
  - ▶ Death of **Andrzej Wróblewski**, Tatra Mountains.
    - ▶ First official use of name the Zamek [Castle] Group [**Włodzimierz Borowski**, **Tytus Dzieduszycki**, **Jan Ziemiński**, **Jerzy Ludwiński**, initially also with **Przemysław Zwoliński**, **Ryszard Kiwierski**, **Krzysztof Kurzątkowski**, **Stanisław Michalczuk** and **Józef Tarłowski**], Lublin.

## 1958

- *Integrated Circuit* by **Jack Kilby**.
- U.S. Congress formally creates the National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA].
  - ▶ **Maria Jarema** awarded Francesco Nullo prize at XXIX Venice Biennale.
  - ▶ *Studium przestrzeni* [*A Study of Space*], environment by **Wojciech Fangor** and **Stanisław Zamecznik**, New Culture Salon, Warsaw.
    - ▶ Zamek [Castle] Gallery opens, Lublin.

## 1959

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum opens to the public, NYC.
- *Paranthropus boisei* [orig. *Zinjanthropus boisei*] discovered at Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania.
- **Oskar Hansen's** 'open form' theory, CIAM congress, Otterlo, Netherlands.
  - ▶ *Artony* by **Włodzimierz Borowski**.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** edits *Struktury* [*Structures*], art supplement of *Kamena* periodical [–1961].

## 1960

- Soviet missile shoots down American U-2 spy plane. Pilot **Francis Gary Powers** is captured.
- *À bout de souffle* [*Breathless*] by **Jean-Luc Godard**.

- ▶ The ship-museum *Burza* opens to the public, Gdynia.
    - ▶ Zamek [Castle] Group exhibition at Du Ranegagh Gallery, Paris.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** begins collaboration with *Plastyka*, supplement of *Życie Literackie* [*Literary Life*] weekly, Cracow.
- 1961**
- **John F. Kennedy** becomes the 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.
  - Soviet cosmonaut **Yuri Gagarin**, first man in space.
    - ▶ First issue of *Odra* cultural monthly, Wrocław.
- 1962**
- Cuban Missile Crisis begins.
  - First issue of *Artforum*, San Francisco.
  - *Fluxus International Festspiele*, Wiesbaden, Germany.
    - ▶ *Knife in the Water* by **Roman Polański**.
      - ▶ **Ludwiński** collaborates with **George Maciunas** and **Fluxus**.
- 1963**
- Vostok 6 carries Soviet cosmonaut **Valentina Tereshkova**, the first woman into space.
  - First direct telephone connection between Washington and Moscow.
    - ▶ First Polish laser developed, Institute of Physics, Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw.
      - ▶ **Ludwiński** co-edits, together with **Anka Ptaszkowska** and **Wiesław Borowski**, *Wiadomości Plastyczne* [*Fine Art News*], supplement of *ITD* [–1964].
- 1964**
- **Jean-Paul Sartre** refuses the Nobel Prize for Literature.
    - ▶ 34 intellectuals sign a letter concerning the limitation of censorship.
      - ▶ **Jerzy Ludwiński** leads the *Rozważania na temat współczesnej wypowiedzi plastycznej* [*Consideration of Contemporary Artistic Statements*], 2<sup>nd</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.
      - ▶ Birth of **Ludwiński's** son, **Paweł**.
- 1965**
- US troops in Vietnam.
    - ▶ Death penalty for appropriation of public property [so called 'meat scandal'].
    - ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> Biennale of Spatial Forms, EL Gallery, Elbląg.
      - ▶ *Kilka paradoksów sztuki współczesnej* [*On the Paradoxes of Contemporary Art*], 3<sup>rd</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.

## 1966

- Death of **André Breton**, Paris, author of the *Surrealist Manifesto*.
  - ▶ **Henryk Stażewski** shows at XXXIII Venice Biennale.
  - ▶ Foksal Gallery opens, Warsaw.
    - ▶ Symposium of Artists and Scientists, *Art in a Changing World*, together with **Mieczysław Porębski** and **Ryszard Stanisławski**, Puławy.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** moves to Wrocław with the support of **Jan Chwałczyk** and **Wanda Gołkowska**.
    - ▶ Muzeum Sztuki Aktualnej [Museum of Current Art] created.

## 1967

- First human heart transplant by **Christiaan Barnard**.
  - ▶ *Panoramiczny Happening Morski* [*Panoramic Sea Happening*] by **Tadeusz Kantor**, 5<sup>th</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** works as instructor in the Department of Culture, People's Town Council, Wrocław.
    - ▶ *Space – Movement – Light*, exhibition, Museum of Architecture, Wrocław.
    - ▶ *Morfologia sztuki II połowy XX wieku* [*Morphology of Art in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of the Twentieth Century*], lecture, 5<sup>th</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.
    - ▶ First show at the Mona Lisa Gallery. Work by **Zdzisław Jurkiewicz**.

## 1968

- 2001: *A Space Odyssey* by **Stanley Kubrick**.
- Death of **Marcel Duchamp**, NYC.
  - ▶ Student demonstrations, March 1968.
  - ▶ 8<sup>th</sup> *Syncretic Show* by **Włodzimierz Borowski**, Gallery Od Nowa, Poznań.
  - ▶ A Ball at the private house of **Edward Krasieński** and **Anka Ptaszkowska**, Zalesie near Warsaw.
    - ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Katowice.
    - ▶ Mona Lisa Gallery programme: solo exhibitions by **Wanda Gołkowska**, **Henryk Stażewski**, **Anna Szpakowska-Kujawska**, **Adam Styka**, **Andrzej Wojciechowski**, **Jerzy Rosołowicz**, **Jarosław Kozłowski**. Joint exhibition by **Stanisław Dróżdź** and **Zbigniew Makarewicz**.

## 1969

- First man on the Moon, Apollo 11, **Neil Armstrong** and **Edwin Aldrin**.
- *Art after Philosophy* by **Joseph Kosuth** in *Studio International*.
  - ▶ *Sezon* [Season], poetic debut of **Rafał Wojaczek**.

- ▶ Mona Lisa Gallery programme: solo exhibitions by **Jan Chwalczyk**, **Michał Diament**, **Włodzimierz Borowski**, **Andrzej Bereziański**.
- ▶ All Polish session of Art Galleries, Wrocław.
- ▶ Presentation at 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Katowice.
- ▶ *My nie śpimy* [We don't sleep], action, with the participation of **Wiesław Dymny**, **Lesław Janicki**, **Krzysztof Niemczyk**, **Anka Ptaszkowska**, **Stanisław Szczepański**, **Jacek Stokłosa**, **Tomasz Wawak**, *IV Golden Grape Symposium*, Zielona Góra.

## 1970

- *Spiral Jetty* by **Robert Smithson**, Great Salt Lake, Utah.
  - ▶ Workers' protests in Gdańsk, Gdynia and Szczecin.
  - ▶ *Blue* by **Edward Krasiński**, 10<sup>th</sup> Biennale, Tokyo.
  - ▶ Wrocław '70 Symposium.
  - ▶ First Polish translation of *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* by **George Kubler**.
    - ▶ *Art in the Postartistic Age*, lecture, 8<sup>th</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.
    - ▶ *SP. Sztuka Pojęciowa* [Concept Art], group exhibition, Mona Lisa Gallery.
    - ▶ Mona Lisa Gallery programme: solo exhibitions by: **Tomasz Kawiak**, **Kajetan Sosnowski**, **Feliks Szyszko**, **Mściwój Olewicz**.

## 1971

- *Imagine* by **John Lennon**.
  - ▶ *Siekierzada* by **Edward Stachura**.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** works at the Ośrodek Dokumentacji Sztuki [Centre for Art Documentation], Wrocław.
    - ▶ Participates in the theoretical session of the *Zjazd Marzycieli* [Dreamer's Convention], 4<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Spatial Forms, Galeria EL, Elbląg.
    - ▶ Mona Lisa Gallery programme: solo exhibitions by **Anastazy Wiśniewski**, **Tadeusz Brzozowski** and group exhibition by **Zbigniew Dłubak**, **Natalia Lach-Lachowicz**, **Andrzej Lachowicz**.
    - ▶ Closure of Mona Lisa Gallery.
    - ▶ Open-air Symposium *Ziemia Zgorzelecka, Nauka i sztuka w procesie ochrony naturalnego środowiska człowieka* [Arts and Sciences in the Process of Protection of Man's Natural Environment], Opolno Zdrój.

## 1972

- *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*, David Bowie.
- Watergate scandal, Washington.
  - ▶ **Jarosław Kozłowski** opens the Akumulatory 2 Gallery, Poznań.
  - ▶ **Jan Chwałczyk** sends a questionnaire to artists that will later be used in the catalogue *Kontrapunkt [Counterpoint]*. Galeria Informacji Kreatywnej [Gallery of Creative Information] opens in Wrocław.
    - ▶ *W obronie sfery psychicznej [Protection of Psychic Environment]*, a collaboration between Polish and Scottish Artists [including **Jan Chwałczyk**, **Richard Demarco**, **Jerzy Fedorowicz**, **Ian Hamilton Finlay**, **Wanda Gołkowska**, **Jerzy Ludwiński**, **Ludmiła Popiel**], Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh, and at Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.
    - ▶ *Pamiętnik z przyszłości sztuki [Notes from the Future of Art]*, 10<sup>th</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.

## 1973

- Yom Kippur War.
  - ▶ Poland defeats England 2-0 in football, Chorzów.
    - ▶ *O nieporozumieniach i pomyłkach w polskiej sztuce współczesnej [On the Misunderstandings and Mistakes in Polish Contemporary Art]*, 10<sup>th</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.

## 1974

- Turkish occupation of Cyprus.
- *Chinatown* by **Roman Polański**.
  - ▶ Third place in 10<sup>th</sup> Football World Championship, Germany. Coach is **Kazimierz Górski**.
    - ▶ *Sztuka niezidentyfikowana [Unidentified Art]*, text published in catalogue *Kontrapunkt [Counterpoint]*, edited by **Jan Chwałczyk**.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** begins work and classes at the psychiatric hospital, environs of Lubiąż [–1975].

## 1975

- American Apollo and Soviet Soyuz spacecraft dock with each other in orbit.
  - ▶ Central Station opens, Warsaw.
    - ▶ 4<sup>th</sup> Polish Symposium of Creative Circles, Milicz.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** moves to Toruń and marries **Małgorzata Iwanowska**.

## 1976

- Viking 1 lands on Mars.
  - ▶ Warsaw–Katowice motorway opens.
  - ▶ *Manifest sztuki bezczelnej [A Manifesto of Insolent Art]* by **Andrzej Partum**.
    - ▶ *PUNKT [POINT]* Gallery, Toruń [–1979].

- 1977**
- Centre **Georges Pompidou** opens, Paris.
  - *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* by **George Lucas**.
    - ▶ *Między [Between]* by **Stanisław Dróżdż**.
      - ▶ *Uwagi o współczesnej cywilizacji i kulturze [Remarks About Contemporary Civilisation and Culture]*, lecture, plein air, Miastko.
- 1978**
- **Louise Brown**, first human born through *in vitro* fertilisation, United Kingdom.
  - *The One Love Peace Concert*, National Heroes Stadium, Kingston, Jamaica.
    - ▶ Cardinal **Karol Wojtyła** becomes **Pope John Paul II**.
    - ▶ **Mirosław Hermaszewski** first Polish astronaut in space.
- 1979**
- Vietnamese military intervention in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, collapse of the **Pol Pot** regime.
  - First artificial blood transfusion, USA.
    - ▶ Strike at Gdańsk shipyard.
    - ▶ Suicide of **Edward Stachura**, Warsaw.
      - ▶ *Sztuka w punkcie osobliwym [Art in a Special Point]*, lecture, 17<sup>th</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.
- 1980**
- *The Third Wave* by **Alvin Toffler**.
    - ▶ The famous 'gesture' by **Władysław Kozakiewicz**, Moscow Olympic Games.
    - ▶ *Monument to Fallen Shipyard Workers 1970*, Gdańsk.
- 1981**
- First public announcements of AIDS infections, USA.
  - First PC manufactured by IBM, USA.
    - ▶ Introduction of martial law.
      - ▶ *Prezentacja prac toruńskiego środowiska artystycznego [Presentation of Works by Toruń Artists]*, exhibition, curated by **Jerzy Ludwiński**, Office for Artistic Exhibitions, Rzeszów.
      - ▶ *Awangarda – rewolucja [Avant-garde – Revolution]*, lecture, 19<sup>th</sup> Koszalin Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists, Osieki.
- 1982**
- First human artificial heart transplant, Utah, USA.
    - ▶ Numerous demonstrations against martial law.
    - ▶ Creation of GRUPPA [**Ryszard Grzyb, Paweł Kowalewski, Jarosław Modzelewski, Włodzimierz Pawlak, Marek Sobczyk, Ryszard Woźniak**].
      - ▶ **Ludwiński** receives Professorship at the State Academy of Fine Arts, Poznań, teaching nineteenth and twentieth century art, [–1999].

- 1983**
- Etna volcano active, Sicily.
    - ▶ **Lech Wałęsa** awarded Nobel Peace Prize.
    - ▶ *Tango* by **Zbigniew Rybczyński** wins an Oscar.
      - ▶ **Ludwiński** travels to Narkoping and Stockholm to receive an award from Swedish artists.
      - ▶ Publication of materials from *Wrocław '70 Symposium*, edited by **Danuta Dziedzic** and **Zbigniew Makarewicz**, Wrocław.
- 1984**
- USA withdraws UNESCO membership.
  - First Apple Macintosh computer goes on sale.
    - ▶ Priest **Jerzy Popiełuszko** murdered.
- 1985**
- *Perestroika* reforms initiated, Soviet Union.
  - Wreck of *Titanic* located.
    - ▶ Opening of the Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw.
- 1986**
- Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster, Ukraine.
  - Comet Halley reaches its perihelion.
    - ▶ World congress of intellectuals devoted to the defence of a peaceful future of the world, Warsaw.
- 1987**
- **Ronald Reagan** and **Mikhail Gorbachev** sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Washington.
    - ▶ First happening by *Pomarańczowa Alternatywa [Orange Alternative]*, Wrocław.
    - ▶ LOT Polish Airlines aircraft *Tadeusz Kościuszko* crashed in Kabaty forest.
      - ▶ Birth of **Ludwiński's** son, **Daniel**.
- 1988**
- Visit to Poland by **Margaret Thatcher**.
  - KIASMA opens, Helsinki.
    - ▶ *Dekalog* by **Krzysztof Kieślowski**.
      - ▶ Group exhibition *Struna [String]*, initiated by **Fredo Ojda**, Gallery of Action, Warsaw.
- 1989**
- Tiananmen Square massacre, Beijing, China.
  - **Václav Havel** elected president of Czechoslovakia.
    - ▶ Round Table talks, Warsaw.
- 1990**
- Lithuania declares independence from the Soviet Union.
  - East and West Germany reunify.
    - ▶ First presidential elections.

1991

- Collapse of the Soviet Union.
- **Tim Berners-Lee** releases files describing his idea for the World Wide Web.
  - ▶ Poland is first country to recognise Ukrainian independence.
  - ▶ Stock Exchange opens, Warsaw.
    - ▶ *Próba zepsutej wagi* [*Weighing on Broken Scales*], lecture from the cycle *Obrzeża myśli o sztuce* [*The Margins of the Theory of Art*], CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw.

1992

- Article on the discovery of the first extra-solar planetary system, **Aleksander Wolszczan** and **D.A. Frail**, *Nature*.
- Bosnian War begins.
- Maastricht treaty is signed, founding the European Union.
  - ▶ First private TV station Polsat launched.
  - ▶ *Gallery Mona Lisa Wrocław 1967–1971*, exhibition, Gallery of Document, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. Curated by **Grzegorz Borkowski**.

1993

- **George H. W. Bush** and **Boris Yeltsin** sign the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty [START], Moscow.
- European Union formally established.
  - ▶ The Polish ferry *Jan Heweliusz* sinks off the coast of Rügen in the Baltic Sea.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** receives honorary membership of the Association of Polish Visual Artists [APVA].

1994

- Channel Tunnel opens between England and France.
- Rwandan Genocide begins in Kigali, Rwanda.
  - ▶ Tragic fire during rock concert by the group **Golden Life**, Gdańsk.

1995

- US embargo on Iran.
- *M-theory* [*Second Superstring Revolution*] by physicist **Edward Witten**.
  - ▶ *Gdzie jest twój brat, Abel?* [*Where is Your Brother Abel?*], Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw. Curated by **Anda Rottenberg**.

1996

- Chess computer *Deep Blue* defeats world chess champion **Garry Kasparov** for the first time.
- Dolly the sheep, the first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell, is born at the Roslin Institute in Midlothian, Scotland.
- *Formless*, exhibition, Pompidou Centre, Paris. Curated by **Rosalind Krauss** and **Ive-Alain Bois**.

- ▶ Nobel Prize for Literature awarded to **Wisława Szymborska**.
  - ▶ **Ludwiński** is awarded the *Bene Scholae Merito* medal and Rector's Award for didactic achievements, Academy of Fine Art, Poznań.

## 1997

- NASA's Pathfinder space probe lands on the surface of Mars.
- Guggenheim Museums' open in Bilbao and Berlin.
  - ▶ Millenian floods.
    - ▶ **Ludwiński** travelled to DOCUMENTA X, Kassel, together with **Elżbieta Kalinowska, Piotr C. Kowalski** and **Joanna Janiak**.

## 1998

- France defeats Brazil 3-0 to win the FIFA World Cup.
  - ▶ Beginning of negotiation for EU accession.
    - ▶ *W środku oka sztuki [In the Centre of the Eye of Art]*, lecture and exhibition, Gallery of Action, Warsaw.

## 1999

- Introduction of Euro currency.
- *Sports Illustrated* names **Muhammad Ali** as 'Sportsman of the Century'.
  - ▶ Polish edition of *National Geographic*.
    - ▶ *Refleksja konceptualna w sztuce polskiej. Doświadczenia dyskursu: 1965–1975, [Conceptual Reflections in Polish art. Experience of Discourse: 1965–1975]*, exhibition, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. Curated by **Paweł Polit**.

## 2000

- The Russian submarine *Kursk* sinks in the Barents Sea.
- Serbian president **Slobodan Milošević** leaves office after widespread demonstrations.
  - ▶ *Beware of Exiting Your Dreams You May Find Yourself in Somebody Else's*, jubilee exhibition, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw. Curated by **Harald Szeemann**.
    - ▶ Death of **Jerzy Ludwiński**, Toruń.



PHOTO: Tadeusz Rolke.  
COURTESY: Agency Gazeta.

## Biography

I was born on 2 January 1930 in Zakrzówko, Lubelskie province, into an intellectual environment. My father's name was **Bolesław**, my mother was **Irena**, her maiden name was **Polakowska**. Since 1936 I have been living in Lublin. In 1950 I graduated from the Stanisław Staszic Lyceum, and in 1955 graduated in art history from the Faculty of Arts at the Catholic University of Lublin. Between 1955 and 1966 I lived in the cities of Warsaw, Lublin and Cracow. I have written articles for many cultural periodicals such as *Kamena*, *Przegląd Kulturalny* [*Cultural Review*], *Polska* [*Poland*], *Życie Literackie* [*Literary Life*, the supplement to *Plastyka* edited by **Janusz Bogucki**]. I have organised exhibitions in Lublin and Warsaw and written introductions to many catalogues. Since my graduation I have been in close connection with the Warsaw, Cracow and Lublin avant-garde (circles), and also with the Paris Phases group and the Musée de Poche publishers.

In 1956 I co-founded the Zamek [Castle] Group, and in 1958 the Zamek Gallery in Lublin. The gallery organised the first Polish exhibitions of structural art and paintings-objects. From 1959–61 I was editor of *Struktury* [*Structures*] art magazine. This was a supplement of the avant-garde magazine *Kamena*, where one of the first cross-genre art theories was being developed. Since 1962 I have been co-operating with the Fluxus movement [**George Maciunas**]. From 1963–64, together with **Wiesław Borowski** and **Hanna Ptaszkowska** I was editor of *Wiadomości Plastyczne* [*Fine Art News*] – an *ITD* art extra devoted to avant-garde art [environment, happening, ephemeral art]. During this period I collaborated with **Janusz Bogucki** on the *Wstęp do wiedzy o sztuce* [*Introduction to the Knowledge of Art*] project designed to popularise modern art with young industry workers.

Since 1964 I have participated (repeatedly) in the Osieki *plein air* [Meeting of Artists and Art Theorists] and since 1955 I have

regularly joined the *Złote Grono* [Golden Grape] symposia in Zielona Góra, the **G[erard] Kwiatkowski** biennale in Elbląg and others in Łagów, Ustka, Augustów, **Zbigniew Makarewicz** in Bolesławiec [*Pole Gry, The Field of Play*], and other *plein air* events. In 1966 I was the organiser and curator (together with **M[ieczysław] Porębski** and **R[yszard] Stanisławski**) of the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium of Artists and Scientists, entitled *Sztuka w zmieniającym się świecie* [Art in a Changing World] in Puławy. This was a major event with most of the finest Polish avant-garde artists participating, where new concepts of art and art theory were introduced.

From 1966–75 I lived in Wrocław, where I worked first in the Wrocławski Ośrodek Kultury [Wrocław Cultural Centre] and subsequently at the State College of Fine Arts and at the Ośrodek Dokumentacji Sztuki [Centre for Art Documentation]. In 1966 I developed the programme for the Muzeum Sztuki Aktualnej [Museum of Current Art]. This was one of the first so-called ‘museums of play’. As part of its activity a number of exhibitions were organised, among them, a major exhibition proposed by three galleries: Foksal, Krzysztofory, and Mona Lisa Gallery [1967].

From 1967–71 I ran (with the help of artist friends) the Mona Lisa Gallery. The gallery had a very specific programme; the exhibition catalogues included theoretical texts by the authors and my own texts on the same subject. The participating artists were undergoing fundamental changes at that time; they included among others: **Z[dzisław] Jurkiewicz**, **W[anda] Gołkowska**, **H[enryk] Stażewski**, **J[an] Chwałczyk**, **J[erzy] Rosołowicz**, **J[arosław] Kozłowski**, **Z[bigniew] Makarewicz**, **T[omasz] Kawiak**, **S[tanisław] Drózdź**, **F[eliks] Szyszko**, **T[adeusz] Brzozowski**. One of the last exhibitions held at the gallery was the *SP. Sztuka Pojęciowa* [Concept Art] show in 1970.

In the spring of 1970 the *Wrocław '70* Symposium was held (materials published by the Kalambur Press) of which I was the

programme organiser. This was the first collective manifestation of new art genres: scenery art, land art, impossible art, concept art. Following the Symposium I organised a programme for the Centrum Badań Artystycznych [Centre for Artistic Research] which was realised in part in 1972 as Ośrodek Dokumentacji Sztuki [Centre for Artistic Documentation].

Since 1975 I have been living in Toruń, where I ran the Punkt [Point] Gallery from 1976–79.

Since 1982 I have been conducting seminars on nineteenth and twentieth century art at the State College of Fine Arts in Poznań.

In 1973 I took part in the International Art Festival in Edinburgh; in 1983 I was in Norkoping, Sweden, where I received a prize.

Since 1955 I have been giving lectures and readings at various symposia, sessions, *plein airs*, museums, galleries, artistic and scientific institutions. These were organised into cycles: *Sztuka strukturalna* [Structural Art], *Paradoksy nowej sztuki* [The Paradoxes of New Art], *Fazy rewolucji artystycznej* [The Phases of Artistic Revolution], *Sztuka w epoce postartystycznej* [Art in the Postartistic Age], *Punkt* [Point], *Sztuka outsiderów* [The Art of Outsiders], *Sztuka PO* [Art AFTER]. ✖

# List of Sources

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- 10 | *Microgallery* (orig. *Mikrogaleria*), typescript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]
- 11 | *Mountain* (orig. *Góra*), Poznań, 1 June 1982, manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. E.S.]
- 12 | *Neutralisation of Criteria* (orig. *Neutralizacja kryteriów*), Open-air Symposium, Ziemia Zgorzelecka – 1971, *Arts and Sciences in the Process of the Protection of Man's Natural Environment*, Opolno-Zdrój 1971 [TRANS. E.S.-P.]
- 13 | *Situation* (orig. *Sytuacja*), photocopy typescript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. K.B.]
- 14 | *The Aesthetic of Glue* (orig. *Estetyka kleju*), photocopy typescript, the private archive of **Jarosław Kozłowski**, Poznań [TRANS. E.S.-P.]
- 15 | *The Age of the Outsiders* (orig. *Epoka outsiderów*), 1979, typescript, Gallery Akumulatory 2, Poznań, the private archive of Gallery Akumulatory 2, Poznań [TRANS. E.S.]
- 16 | *The Art of Art-Documents* (orig. *Sztuka dokumentów sztuki*), manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]
- 17 | *The Chronicle of the Avant-Garde* (orig. *Kronika awangardy*), photocopy manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. K.B.]
- 18 | *The Mimicry of Neutrdrome* (orig. *Mimikra Neutrdromu*), Odra 10, 1968 [TRANS. E.S.]
- 19 | *The Museum of Current Art in Wrocław [General Concept]* (orig. *Muzeum Sztuki Aktualnej. Założenia ogólne*), 1966, leaflet, the private archive of **Jarosław Kozłowski**, Poznań [TRANS. K.B.]
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- 21 | *Unidentified Art* (orig. *Sztuka niezidentyfikowana*), 1974, in \* \* \* (so-called 'black catalogue'), Galeria Sztuki Informacji Kreatywnej, Wrocław 1975-6 [TRANS. E.S.-P.]

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## DRAFTS and NOTICES

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- 25 | \*\*\* [a radical detachment from what was already there] (orig. *zdecydowane odcięcie się od tego co było*), photocopy manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]
- 26 | \*\*\* [Art 'beyond', art 'AWAY FROM'] (orig. *Sztuka poza, sztuka OD*), photocopy manuscript, the private archive of **Wanda Gołkowska** and **Jan Chwałczyk**, Wrocław [TRANS. M.P.]
- 27 | \*\*\* [*Man's Natural Surrounding – Newspeak*] (orig. *Nat. śr. czł. – nowomowa*), photocopy manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]
- 28 | \*\*\* [*process → work of art*] (orig. *proces → dzieło*), manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]
- 29 | \*\*\* [*Radziejowice*], photocopy manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]
- 30 | \*\*\* [*swimming*] (orig. *pływanie*), manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]
- 31 | *The Greatest Minds of the Twentieth Century* (orig. *Najw. umysły XX*), photocopy manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]

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- 33 | *The Stages of the Evolution of Art* (orig. *Etapy ewolucji sztuki*), in *Kontrapunkt*, Galeria Informacji Kreatywnej, Wrocław 1972–74 [TRANS. M.P.]
- 34 | \*\*\* [15.XII.92, MA] (orig. 15.XII.92, MGR), manuscript, the archive of CCA, Warsaw [TRANS. M.P.]

## INTERVIEWS

- 35 | *Conversation. Jarosław Kozłowski and Jerzy Ludwiński*, (orig. *Rozmowa. Jarosław Kozłowski i Jerzy Ludwiński*), in *Jarosław Kozłowski. Rzeczy i przestrzenie*, exh. cat., Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź 1994 [TRANS. A.K.]
- 36 | *It Begins in Wrocław... Wanda Gołkowska and Jan Chwałczyk in Conversation with Magdalena Ziółkowska* (orig. *Zaczyna się we Wrocławiu... Wanda Gołkowska i Jan Chwałczyk w rozmowie z Magdaleną Ziółkowską*), non published [TRANS. K.B.]
- 37 | *Novelty in Art is the Measure of the Artist's Imagination. Jerzy Ludwiński talks to Paweł Polić* (orig. *Nowość w sztuce jest miarą wyobraźni artysty. Jerzy Ludwiński w rozmowie z Pawłem Politem*), in *Conceptual Reflection in Polish Art. Experiences of Discourse 1965–75*, **Paweł Polić**, **Piotr Woźniakiewicz**, eds., CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw 2000 [TRANS. M.W.]
- 38 | **Luiza Nader** *Jerzy Ludwiński. Counter-Dictionary* [TRANS. M.P.]
- 39 | **Magdalena Ziółkowska** *Introduction* [TRANS. W.S.]

## NOTES FROM THE FUTURE OF ART

### Selected Writings of Jerzy Ludwiński

VAMPR #01

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**BOOK EDITOR:** Magdalena Ziółkowska

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**AUTHORS:** Jerzy Ludwiński | Jan Chwałczyk | Charles Esche |  
Wanda Gołkowska | Jarosław Kozłowski | Luiza Nader |  
Paweł Polit | Magdalena Ziółkowska

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**CALENDAR RESEARCH:** Ola Berłożecka

**TRANSLATION:** Katarzyna Bojarska | Alina Kwiatkowska |  
Mikołaj Pałosz | Edyta Supińska-Polit | Ewa Stanek |  
Weronika Szczawińska | Maria Wanat

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:** Ola Berłożecka | Jan Chwałczyk and  
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**NOTES FROM THE FUTURE OF ART** is the first English language collection of texts by **Jerzy Ludwiński [1930–2000]**. Ludwiński was a Polish art historian, critic, curator, founder of the **Mona Lisa Gallery**. He worked on the periphery of the state system of the time, activating, in turn, the cultural life of Lublin, Wrocław, Toruń and Poznań. Within the limits of artistic life in the People's Republic of Poland, he marked out his own 'playing field', where such notions as 'critic', 'curator', 'gallery' and 'museum' were tested and transformed. The short-lived cultural institutions created by him at the end of the 1960s included **Museum of Current Art**, **Mona Lisa Gallery** and the **Centre for Artistic Research** and prefigured international developments elsewhere. They still capture the imagination as challenging renowned conceptual art movement in Poland. The book will be of interest to curators, art students and general readers interested in the development of art since 1960s and the crucial contribution of artists and thinkers from the Eastern and Central Europe. ✕

*"[...] the gap between the activity of institutions and the progress of artistic events has narrowed despite the acceleration of the progress of art. It may be taken as evidence that the arts, like the sciences, require organised forms of action. The image of a solitary artist struggling with a medium and outside of society belongs to the past".*

**Jerzy Ludwiński,**  
*Centre for Artistic  
Research, 1971*

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