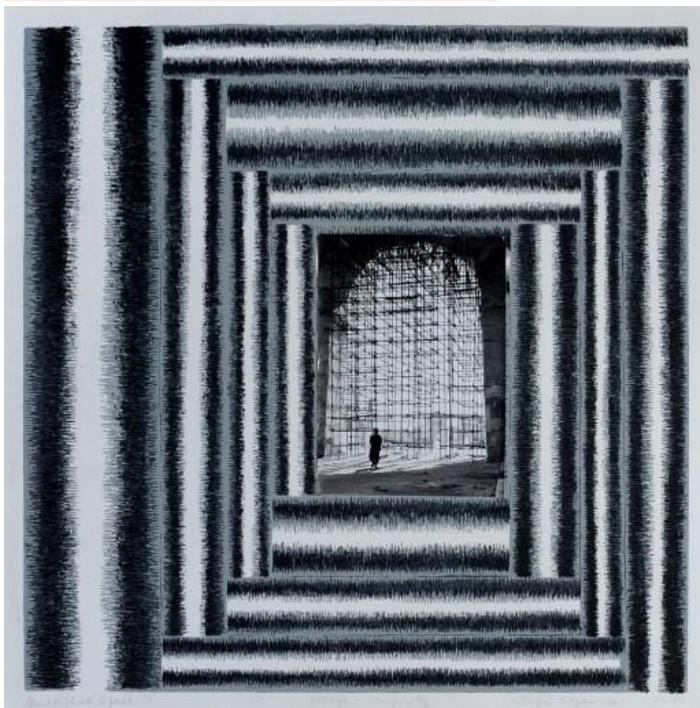


The Bochum Art Museum – the Collection of Polish Art

Selection and texts: Axel Feuß

Multiplied Space IX, 1981



Artymowska, Zofia (1923 Kraków - 2000 Warsaw): Multiplied Space IX, 1981. Serigraphy, Collage, 60.8 x 49.7 cm (41.6 x 41.1 cm); Inv. no. 2149

The Bochum Art Museum

Zofia Artymowska, born 1923 in Kraków, died 2000 in Warsaw. She was married to the painter and graphic artist Roman Artymowski (1919-1993). Studies: 1945-50 Academy of Visual Arts, Kraków (under Eugeniusz Eibisch, diploma in painting). 1950/51 Assistant. Lived in Warsaw from 1951; in Łowicz from 1980. 1953-56 works on murals during the reconstruction of Warsaw. 1954 Golden Cross of Merit. 1960-68 Professor at the University of Baghdad. 1971-83 Lecturer at the University of Visual Arts, Breslau/Wrocław. Solo exhibitions since 1959 in Warsaw, Beirut, Baghdad, Łódź, Breslau, Stettin/Szczecin, New York. Works in museums in Baghdad, Bochum, Bogota, Breslau, Bydgoszcz, Dresden, Łódź, New York, Warsaw.

Right from the start Artymowska worked on abstract paintings, and created monotypes and ceramics. During her time in Baghdad she turned to oil painting. At the university there she taught mural painting at Tahreer College as well as painting, drawing and composition at the College of Engineering in the faculty of architecture. From the 1970s onwards she explored the potential forms of expression inherent in a single geometric form, the cylinder (derived from machine parts) that she used as a constantly duplicated module for creating images. She called the structures she discovered polyforms. With mathematical precision she calculated the composition of her paintings, drawings and graphic works from the three-dimensional cylindrical structures duplicated with light and shade. The final impression is one of vibrating surfaces and illusory depths. In photo collages she combined polyforms with photographs of landscapes (primarily of the near East). In this way she succeeded in creating image drafts, so speak. The polyforms that are now a synonym for all the works created by Artymowska are not only an individual contribution to Polish Constructivism; they also offer an artistic interpretation of the mechanised industrial world.

Further reading: Paintings by Zofia Artymowska, Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, Warsaw 1971; Zofia Artymowska. Poliformy 1970-1983, Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, Łódź 1984; Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 5, 1992. *Online:* Tatra Museum Zakopane.

After over 10 years working with acrylic paintings on the theme of polyforms, at the start of the 1980s Artymowska recognised that the infinite repetition of such geometric shapes could be meaningfully and more easily realised by means of a graphic technique: serigraphy. At the same time she discovered that the depths of polyforms reveal a special effect when they are confronted with collaged photographs placed within. The particular expression inherent in these works is created by the opposition between the different image surfaces; the image-within-an-image effect and the different perspectives. In a serigraphed tunnel made up of horizontal and vertical cylinders (polyforms), there is a photograph of a figure in oriental clothes proceeding from the interior of a building towards the facade of a scaffolding. The modern world of mechanics and industry is confronted with an archaic motif, which is in turn broken by the mathematical structure of the scaffolding. The human seems less to be the prisoner of countless horizontal and vertical structures in both segments of the picture and in its artistic techniques, and much more to be a shape moving towards the light of a not so distant future.

Zwid Kamienny II, 1962



Bereś, Jerzy (1930 Nowy Sącz - 2012 Kraków): *Zwid Kamienny II*, 1962. Wood, stone, H = 200 cm; Inv. no. 1215

The Bochum Art Museum

Jerzy Bereś, born 1930 in Nowy Sącz, died 2012 in Kraków. He was married to the sculptor Maria Pinińska-Bereś (1931-1999). Studies: 1950-56 Academy of Visual Arts, Kraków (sculpture under Xawery Dunikowski, Diploma of Honour). 1963 1st prize in the sculpture competition, Kraków. 1966 member of the Kraków group (Grupa Krakowska II), newly formed after the Second World War. 1967 Sao Paulo Biennale. 1992 World Exhibition in Seville, pavilion of contemporary art. Solo exhibitions since 1958 in Kraków, Bochum, Humlebæk, Sopot, Łódź, Lublin, Sandomierz, Warsaw. Works in innumerable Polish museums, also in Amsterdam, Bochum, Duisburg, Humlebæk, Oxford and Washington.

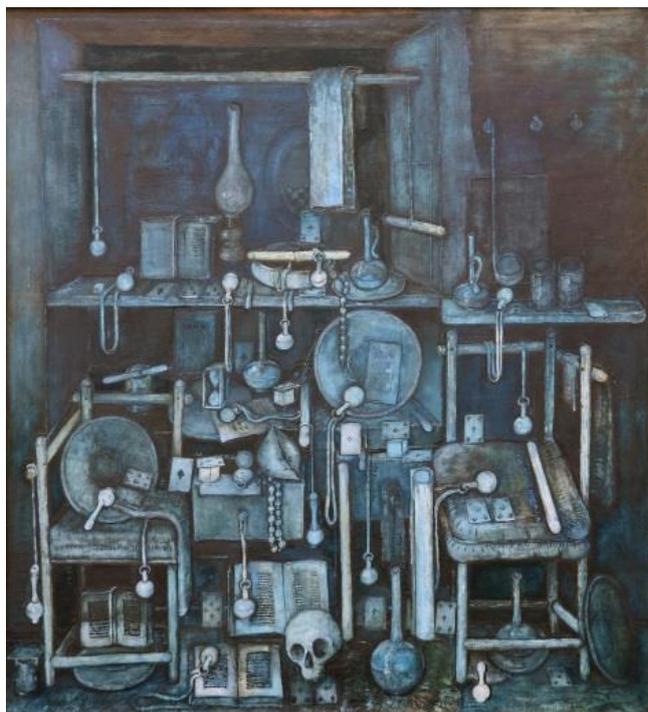
After his early sculptures made from gypsum and reinforced concrete, at the beginning of the 1960s Bereś began to concentrate on sculptural assemblages of roughly hewn wood, jute ropes, stones, leather and cloth rags reminiscent of primitive farming equipment: (the *Zwidy* series - Engl. dream images). He was also interested in traditional handwork in processing materials. His objects which he often photographed in open fields and between ploughed furrows, call to mind folklore traditions like archaic myths and rituals as the sources of human thought and action. In addition, from 1965 onwards he began to create dadaist-like vehicles (*Rollers*), objects with absurd and ironic titles (*Whirlinginstrument*, *Newspaper validator*) and works with political messages taking their inspiration from Polish identity, (*Polish Wheelbarrow*). In 1968 Bereś began to work as an action artist. In ritual actions and performances he placed his sculptural objects on his own naked painted body. Whilst creating his actions he was in a constant dialogue with his audience. In the 1970s he directed *Mysteries of Creation*, *Reflective*, *Romantic* and *Political Masses*. In the 80s he

became the outstanding representative of an artistic “Confrontation with the Sacred”, that might be understood as a reflection on anti-Communist Catholicism in Poland. Along with Tadeusz Kantor, Bereś is widely regarded as the earliest and most important representative of Polish action art. Up till 2012 there were documentations of over 70 actions in Poland, London, Essen, Bochum, Amsterdam, Oxford, Glasgow and Quebec.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Jerzy Bereś, Museum Bochum 1971; J. Hübner-Wojciechowska, in: Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 9, 1994; Jerzy Bereś. Zwidy, wyrocznie, ołtarze, wyzwania, Muzeum Narodowe, Poznań / Muzeum Narodowe, Kraków, Poznań 1995; Jerzy Bereś. Sztuka zgina życie, Bunkier Sztuki, Kraków 2007. *Online:* Museumsplattform NRW.

The Polish art historian Ryszard Stanisławski (born 1921), one of the two adjudicators of the “Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute” exhibition in 1964/65 at the Bochum Municipal Art Gallery, wrote the following about Jerzy Bereś in the catalogue preface: “His seemingly primitive compositions arouse images of primaeval Slavic idols, prehistoric tools and equipment in our imagination.” Stanisławski had selected a sculptural assemblage entitled *Zwid Kamienny II* as one of the artist’s four works in the exhibition, following which they were purchased by the museum. The image from the catalogue shows this work on a photo by the artist between ploughed furrows on an open field. *Zwid Kamienny II* belongs to a group of work that he created at the start of the 1960s entitled *Zwidy*, which Bereś translated as “dream images”. In a statement written in 1965 and published in the catalogue of the Bochum solo exhibition in 1971, he wrote: “I process my work from natural materials like wood, stone, and bast, but I do not treat these materials in a rigorous fashion. I use simple tools [...] to call them sculptural works did not seem to be sufficiently precise; so I called them dream images. To differentiate between the dream images I added a word to describe their particular attribute. Hence the correct translation of the Polish title is “Dream Image Stone II”. Bereś went on to write that his works were the result of a “subliminal activity”, hence “dream images”. Their realisation is “creative”, not orientated on the current “situation in the art world” or on “historic conventions”. Like the other works created in the *Zwidy* series until 1966, “Dream Image Stone II” represents the idea of a people’s archaic creative powers, expressed in the simplest forms of material processing, construction (here wood, stone and an iron chain) and land use. The sculpture is not really useable but is rather a symbol of human primeval roots beyond the boundaries of superimposed cultural and – perhaps – political conventions.

Still Life with Rattles, 1964



Bereźnicki, Kiejstut (*1935 Poznań, lives in Sopot): Still Life with Rattles, 1964. Oil on canvas, 130 x 134 cm; Inv. no. 1216

The Bochum Art Museum

Kiejstut Bereźnicki, born 1935 in Poznań, lives in Sopot. Studies: The College of Visual Arts in Danzig/Gdańsk (painting under Stanisław Teisseyre, 1958 Diploma). Since 1960 Assistant and lecturer, 1981-84 deputy rector, 1984 associate professor, 1994 full professor, 1965 Sao Paulo Biennale. 1969 Gold Cross of Merit. 1971, '77, '91 awards from the Ministry of Culture and Art. 1985 Order of Polonia Restituta. 1964 onwards, countless solo exhibitions in Poland, 1976 in Brussels, 1988/89 in Sofia, 1994/95 in Leipzig, Berlin, Darmstadt, Vienna. Works in Polish museums, in Bochum, Bordeaux, Moscow, Paris, Skopje and Sofia.

Since completing his studies Bereźnicki has made a reputation for himself as the representative of overloaded figurative painting featuring metaphors and symbolic articles. In the 1960s he primarily painted still life works inspired by Dutch baroque painting. Following this his works were dominated by solo and groups portraits, scenes with puppet-like creatures acting within mysterious interiors and exposed to grotesque moods. His theme was the drama of human existence told without pathos and hysteria, with precise stoic calm. He has dealt with a variety of Biblical themes in comprehensive cycles of paintings. In the 1960s and 70s he was regarded as the representative of a new figuration and a neo-traditionalist. His solid craft skills put him close to the Sopot school.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Kiejstut Bereźnicki. Malarstwo, Centralne Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, Warsaw 1971; H. Kubaszewska, in: Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 9, 1994; Kiejstut Bereźnicki. Malerei und Zeichnungen von 1980 bis 1994, Polnisches Institut, Leipzig 1994; Kiejstut Bereźnicki. Malarstwo, rysunek, Muzeum Narodowe, Danzig 2008. *Online:* Państwowa Galeria Sztuki, Sopot; culture.pl.

In the 1960s Kiejstut Bereźnicki concentrated mainly on still life painting in which he entered a dialogue with Dutch baroque still life painting. One of these works in 1961 was a Still Life with Skull and Playing Cards. In this early phase he preferred to use cold colours such as the blue used in his 1964 painting Still Life with Rattles. Bereźnicki's lavish use of properties refer to symbolic images as they were once used in baroque Vanitas paintings to make the viewer highly aware of the intransience (lat. vanitas) of life and of all human activities. The skull is the most obvious symbol of the intransience of human existence. Playing cards symbolise the addiction to gambling; the hourglass and the pocket watch are symbols of passing time; the petroleum lamp of the dying light; open books of the ephemeral striving for knowledge; chains of pearls for vanity; the knife for human vulnerability; the empty shell for death; the half empty glasses and decanters for alcoholism (also for the opposites of full and empty and for the fragility of glass); plates and bowls for the end of human happiness. However the main motif in the painting is the huge amount of children's rattles with their round heads, handles and strap bands lying around all over the picture. Now useless and laid aside, they symbolise ephemeral childhood and, like the musical instruments in baroque still life paintings they also symbolise music that has faded away and sound that is now lost forever. The title Still Life mit Klappern can be found today in the catalogue of the exhibition entitled "Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute" and shown in the Bochum Municipal Art Gallery in 1964/65. After the exhibition closed the work was purchased by the museum. The German title is probably a translation mistake, for the painting should more correctly be entitled "Still Life mit Rasseln". By contrast with baroque images Bereźnicki does not place his vanitas symbols on a table but in a storage room with two chairs, a wall niche and shelves, thereby translating them into the modern age. Another of his paintings shown in the same exhibition is entitled Still Life with Child (also from 1964): it can be reasonably interpreted as a symbol of lost childhood and the futility of future life. The painting shows a girl sunk in thought surrounded by rattles, a drum and the vanitas symbols described above. Bereźnicki's later more colourful paintings of people are mostly played out in restricted, hermetic interiors.

Mechano-Faktur Construction, 1924/1961



Berlewi, Henryk (1894 Warsaw - 1967 Paris): *Mechano-Faktur Construction*, 1924/1961. Screen print, 61 x 50 cm; Inv. no. 1504

The Bochum Art Museum

Henryk Berlewi, born 1894 in Warsaw, died 1967 in Paris. Studies: 1904-09 School of Fine Arts, Warsaw (painting under Edward Trojanowski et al.); 1909-10 the Academy of Arts in Antwerp (under Juliaan de Vriendt); 1911-12 École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (under Paul Maurou). 1921 gets to know El Lissitzky in Warsaw, and follows him to Berlin. 1922-23 in Berlin in the circle of the European avant-garde (Mies van der Rohe, László Maholy-Nagy, Raoul Hausmann, Theo van Doesburg). Member of the November group. 1924, in Warsaw, co-founder of the constructivist group "Blok" (along with Władysław Strzemiński, Henryk Stażewski et al.); Co-founder of the Reklame office "Reklama-Mechano". 1927, meets Kasimir Malevich in Warsaw. 1928 moves to France. 1942, flees from Paris to Nice; 1943/44, member of the French resistance. 1945, return to Paris. 1962, several month's stay in Berlin at the invitation of the Academy of Arts. Solo exhibitions from 1921 in Warsaw, Berlin, Nice, Paris, Bremen, Brussels, Łódź. Works in Berlin, Bochum, Hamburg, Jerusalem, Krefeld, Lwiw, Łódź, New York, Paris, Stuttgart, Tel Aviv and Warsaw.

Berlewi, who was taught by traditional painters, later came into touch with cubism in Paris. From 1914 onwards he began to concern himself with Futurism and Dadaism; from 1918 with Jewish folklore themes (Marc Chagall); from 1921 under the influence of El Lissitzky with constructivism and suprematism. In 1923 he began making compositions from rhythmically distributed rectangles, bars and dots mostly in black, white and red, whose shapes and typographies are very close to the Bauhaus style. He called the theoretical concept behind these geometrical portraits created with the help of templates, *Mechano-Faktur*; the concept appears in 1924 as a manifesto in the Berlin periodical "Der Sturm", and

was taught by Josef Albers at the Bauhaus. Starting in 1928 in Paris, he turned once more to figurative art, portrait painting and – between 1947 and 1956 – cubist works. In 1957 he took up work on *Mechano-Faktur* once more and attempted to give himself a new profile, above all in the USA, as an early representative of Op Art.

Further reading: Retrospektive Ausstellung H. Berlewi, Berlin 1964; Andrzej K. Olszewski: Henryk Berlewi, Warsaw 1968; Visuell konstruktiv. Henryk Berlewi, Kunstbibliothek, Berlin 1968; Georg Brühl: Herwarth Walden und “Der Sturm”, Cologne 1983; U. Leszczyńska, in: Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 9, 1994. *Online:* Henryk Berlewi Archive; monoskop.org; YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe.

The 1961 screen print repeats a sketch from the *Mechano-Faktur* series begun by Henryk Berlewi in 1923. The original - in black ink and red topcoat on paper – was made in 1924 and can be seen in a historic photograph showing the artist in the same year during his exhibition *Mechano-Faktur* in the Austro Daimler Salon in Warsaw. It measures 98 x 81 centimetres (ill. in: Brühl 1983). In the same year a manifesto of the same name appeared in the periodical “Der Sturm” (vol. 15, no. 3, 1924) published in Berlin by Herwarth Walden. Here the artist propagates a collectivist orientated art aimed at social developments and based on industrial guidelines. Illusionist spatial portraits are to be replaced by flat shapes. During this time Berlewi is particularly interested in advertising, design, printing techniques and typography. Following his acquaintance with El Lissitzky in Warsaw in 1921 he made close links with Russian Constructivism; and thanks to his meeting with Theo van Doesburg in 1922 in Berlin, with Neo-Plasticism practised by the Dutch group “De Stijl”. He became acquainted with the Bauhaus through László Maholy-Nagy, who had been teaching a basic course there since 1923 along with Josef Albers. Berlewi’s sketches for *Mechano-Faktur* were first seen in the section devoted to the November group at the Major Berlin Art Exhibition in 1923. In July 1924 Berlewi displayed them in Herwarth Walden’s Berlin gallery “Der Sturm”. There is probably a mutual influence derived from similar typographical sketches from the Bauhaus during this time, like those of Herbert Beyer and Joost Schmidt. The unity of art and technology was also taught at the Bauhaus. *Mechano-Faktur* means the creation of a structure with mechanical means. Berlewi created the variations in this series with the aid of perforated templates. He returned to *Mechano-Faktur* at the end of the 1950s, impressed by the work of Victor Vasarely’s geometric illusionist art and the start of op art. Critics and indeed Berlewi himself, regard him as the real “father” of this current art trend, and Vasarely as the epigone. In order to spread his original ideas anew Berlewi transformed his 1920s sketches by means of screen print techniques. When the Museum of Modern Art was preparing an exhibition on op art featuring Vasarely as the most important artist, Berlewi travelled to New York in order to introduce himself as the real inventor of this form of art. Finally in 1965 he (along with Josef Albers, who had been a teacher since 1933 at the Black Mountain College in North Carolina), participated in the first major op art exhibition, “The Responsive Eye” in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, with a work from his *Mechano-Faktur* series. The 1961 screen print was purchased by the Museum Bochum from a Bremen exhibition in 1968. The gouache (1924) was kept in the collection of the Łódź Museum of Art: in 2013 it was at the centre of an exhibition entitled “Inventing Abstraction 1910-1925” at the MoMA in New York.

Memory/Watchwords, 1997



Marta Deskur (*1962 Kraków, lives there): *Memory/Watchwords*, 1997. Four-part photo work, each 123 x 200 cm, video 3 min. 12 secs.; Inv. no. 3982 a-d

The Bochum Art Museum

Marta Deskur, born 1962 in Kraków, still lives there. Studies: 1980-82, Academy of Visual Arts, Kraków; 1983-88, École supérieure d'art, Aix-en-Provence (Diploma); 1986, School of Visual Arts, Bristol. 1983-88, works at the Theater Scena STU, Kraków. 1989-90, teaches drawing at Aix-en-Provence. 1992, Artist in Residence at the School of Design in Altos de Chavón. 2002/03, Philip Morris Scholar at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin. Solo exhibitions since 1991 in Marseilles, Warsaw, Stettin/Szczecin, Breslau/Wrocław, Kraków, Lublin, Białystok, New York, Graz, Słupsk, Leipzig, Budapest, Danzig/Gdańsk and Düsseldorf. Works in Białystok, Bochum, Breslau, Budapest, Graz, Kraków, Kwangju, Łódź, Stettin and Warsaw.

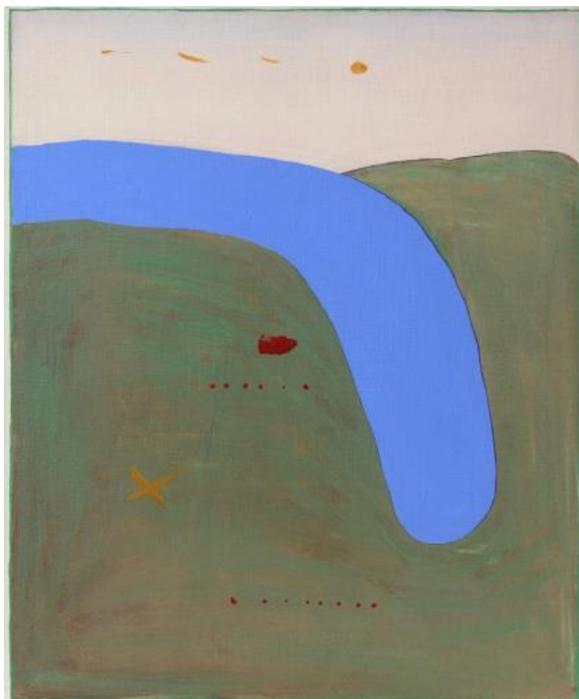
At the start of the 1990s Marta Deskur made her debut with abstract paintings, whereby her main theme was a variation of textures and colour nuances within fields of colour. In installations and theatre-like productions she tested the effects of wrap-around and spatially-linked grids of lines, neon tubes, light and darkness. She also interested herself in photo projects showing the interactions of children and family relations (*Human Clear*, 1996; *To jest Klara, a to jestem ja, Pico / This is Klara and this is me, Pico*, 1998). Following this she created photo, audio and video installations in which she observed and interpreted developments in modern society. Above all Deskur worked on the problem of illusions in everyday life, the material world and its mystification in a reality dictated by commerce. She questioned the origin of social phenomena. Her photographic work is dominated by paradoxical opposites: her first step is to try to attain the highest level of credibility and objectivity in her pictorial motifs. She then distances herself from them and alienates them

into unreal grotesque forms. Hence her works become a dialogue with reality (*Family* 1999; *Dziewice* [Virgins], 2002; *The New Jerusalem*, 2007). Her most recent works deal with religious, sexual and ethical prejudices, and turn our attention to fears, xenophobia and hypocrisy (*Sweet Aberration*, 2011).

Further reading: Transfer Polska - Nordrhein-Westfalen, Muzeum Rzeźby im. Xawerego Dunikowskiego, Warsaw / Museum Bochum et.al. 1998; Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 26, 2000; Marta Deskur. Fanshon, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin 2003; Marta Deskur. not to be touched, Minoriten-Galerien, Graz 2005. *Online:* culture.pl; Galeria Le Guern, Warsaw; Galeria Arsenał, Białystok.

Contemporary art since Marcel Duchamp has been working more strongly with viewers' associations and experience than works of past epochs of art that often draw on traditional canons of religious, mythological, symbolic, historical and political meanings. Marta Deskur combines her four-part photographic work with the Polish title "memory/hasła" with a video in which slogans can be read within the verses: IF YOU WANT / MAKE / AN / ASSOCIATION GAME / MEMORY MIX / MIX FOR EAT / CHOOSE FROM / ASSOCIATE / NOTE FOR YOURSELF [...]. They can be read in the catalogue of the exhibition "Transfer Polska - Nordrhein-Westfalen" published in 1998 by the Museum Bochum. Following this the installation was purchased by the museum. The German titles used the word "Losungen", (lit. watchwords) that is not much in use today. The Polish word "Hasła" can however also be translated as "slogan, motto, buzzword". According to Duden "slogans" are generalities, empty phrases, idioms, platitudes and phrases. In the opening block of texts Deskur's "slogans" refer back to tales with popular, religious and historical origins: TODAY I SAW A MURDER ... / EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON GOD IS NOT HOWEVER GOD / EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD IS FUNNY / FORGET ME NOT / GRIMALD AND BADUCHENA WITH THE CONFESSOR [...]. In the second block the quoted "slogans" are generalised empty phrases, idioms and phrases: LOVE TO EAT / EAT SOMETHING TASTY / LOVE TO LOVE / WE'RE DOING FINE / GO IF YOU WANT TO / SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD TO WEEP / IT CLEANS LIKE RAIN [...]. Both text blocks are invitations to the viewer to make playful associations related to the photos on show. Here a mother is sitting at the table with her children. All the members of the family are however eating individually and remain alone. On the mother's plate is a muzzle. She closes her own mouth with the end of a fork. In the second picture she is pulling the muzzle over her mouth. A girl who is not eating but busying herself with toys and household articles at the table, is simultaneously being made up with a brush (in a double exposure). The boy who is eating is thinking of a dog he has seen at play (I ALWAYS SAW DOGS THERE) and which is now lying before him in an enlarged form on the table. Domestic and family communication is the theme of the succession of images and the association game. This communication mostly takes place at the table at mealtimes and consists of traditional stories and generalities. It mostly falls on deaf ears: the mother violates herself by symbolically sealing her mouth. The children are busy with other things. They are also subject to violence through the make-up and the presence of the dog. The viewer is challenged to contribute to decorating the family conflict from his/her memory (MEMORY MIX). The artist's installation is part of a series of photo and video works which she has been working on since the mid-1990s with the interactions of children and relatives.

17 | 74, 1974



Fijałkowski, Stanisław (*1922 Zdobunów/
Wolhynien, lives in Łódź): 17 | 74, 1974.
Oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm; Inv. no. 2090

The Bochum Art Museum

Stanisław Fijałkowski, born 1922 in Zdobunów/Wolhynien, lives in Łódź. 1944/45 deported to Königsberg as a forced labourer. Studies: 1946-51 College of Visual Arts, Łódź (painting under Władysław Strzemiński, Stefan Wegner; Diploma in drawing under Ludwik Tyrowicz). 1947-93 Teaching activities, also as head of a painting and drawing studio, Pro Rector; 1971-78 co-founder and Dean of the Faculty of Drawing; 1983 Professor; 2002 Honorary doctorate. 1969, Sao Paulo Biennale. 1972, Venice Biennale. 1989-90, Guest professor at the Universities of Gießen and Marburg. 1990, Jan Cybis prize. 2002, '13 Order of Polonia Restituta. Countless international awards. Member of the Belgian Academy of Sciences. Solo exhibitions since 1957 in Poland, Paris, Hamburg, Hannover, Berlin, Gießen, Marburg, Düsseldorf. Works in countless Polish and German museums, and also in London, New York, Prague and Vienna.

As one of the successors of Strzemiński, Fijałkowski was painting cubist and constructivist studies against a natural background up until the mid-1950s, in order to get a strong formal foothold. Under the influence of Kandinsky's writings (including "Concerning the Spiritual in Art"), which he translated into Polish, and given his special interest in surrealism he succeeded in organising surface images from sharply delineated geometrical and amorphous forms that could be equally perceived as abstracted objects and abstract forms. This ambivalent formal invention appeals to the subconscious mind of the viewer and links a trained registration of the reality inherent within a shape with transcendent, mythical and poetic sensibilities. In his *Motorway* paintings that he created between the 1970s and the turn

of the century from a sophisticated system of symbolic numbers and colours, Fijałkowski links everyday, earthly experiences with emotions and fantasy: “Ambivalent earth - the path and the tiny triangle of scorched grass. The sky is undivided, but is painted in such a way that it could also be water and air.” (Fijałkowski, 1976)

Further reading: Stanisław Fijałkowski. *Bilder und Grafik 1965-1977*, Museum für Kunst and Kulturgeschichte Lübeck, Museum Bochum et.al., 1977; J. Ładnowska, in: *Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, vol. 39, 2003; *Wystawa prac Stanisława Fijałkowskiego*, Miejska Galeria Sztuki, Łódź 2012. *Online:* culture.pl

The title refers to the day the painting was made, 17th January 1974. None of the coloured figures and surfaces is clearly defined. The blue stream bending towards the left is either climbing out of the brown-green surface or flowing into it. It might be a spring, a river or an estuary depending on whether you perceive the surrounding surface as a cutting between some mountains, as a landscape stretching into the distance or as a flattened out map of the countryside. A yellow cross, dotted red lines and a spontaneous red brushstroke could be markings on a road map. But the white surface on the upper edge of the picture seems to be the sky stretching over a hilly landscape, above which strange yellow flying objects are moving. Each individual form, each colour and each perspective has been nurtured in natural reality: however they take on a new significance when perceived emotionally or imaginatively, thereby opening up poetic narratives for the viewer trying to decipher the picture. A huge amount of axes and diagonals determine the picture and cause us to oscillate between the different perspectives. If we try to hold fast to a distinct interpretation of the individual colour signs the sophisticated system instantly collapses.

Rozważania o symbolice cyfr, 1993



Grabowski, Jerzy (1933 Gutki - 2004 Warsaw): Rozważania o symbolice cyfr, 1993. Linoleum blind print with rolled on colour application on paper, 62 x 91 cm; Inv. no. 3705

The Bochum Art Museum

Jerzy Grabowski, born 1933 in Gutki, died 2004 in Warsaw. Studies: 1953-62 Technical College in Breslau/Wrocław (architecture); 1956-62 Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw (drawing, diploma under Józef Mroczczak). 1962-74, activities for a variety of publishers. From 1975, professional contacts with Richard Paul Lohse. From 1976, head of the lithography workshop at the drawing faculty of the College of Visual Arts, Łódź; 2001, full time Professor. From 1993, head of the graphic seminar at the European Academy of Arts, Warsaw. Countless Polish and international awards, medals and prizes in the area of drawing. Solo exhibitions since 1963 in Warsaw, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gdynia, Lund, Düsseldorf, Kraków, Zurich, Hagen, Hamburg, Sopot, Łódź, Chicago, Tokyo and Vichy. Works in Bochum, Bratislava, Bremen, Brussels, Helsinki, Lille, Ludwigshafen, Moscow, Vienna and in countless Polish museums.

Jerzy Grabowski was an outstanding representative of geometric abstraction in Poland, who continued the tradition of the Polish Constructivists in the 1920s "Blok" group. His broad interests in the areas of mathematics, physics and cybernetics all the way to philosophy formed the basis for his artistic approaches. For him the intellectual process leading to the conception of a future work of art was the most important part of his creative work. His first drawings and water colours in 1967 were based on randomly selected numbers and

structured successions in the ten-area. He converted numerical values into geometrical figures like triangles and squares whilst assigning the size of the numbers to colour values in modern, internationally binding colour circles and systems. His compositions touch on a “mathematical code” relating back to a Judeo-Christian numerical symbolism. Starting in 1968 he began to extend this system to graphic work by means of embossed printing. In doing so he perceived the equilateral triangle placed within a circle and a square as a perfect figure and continuous design motif into whose embossed pattern he inserted changing basic colours. His work is very close to that of Richard Paul Lohse in the mathematical reckoning of its composition and choice of colours. Using mathematical systems he uses philosophical observations to explore the existence of the cosmos and the character of religions. That said, his graphic works are mainly recognised for their outstanding technical qualities.

Further reading: Vier zeitgenössische Polische Künstler, Galerie Elisabeth Henning, Hamburg / Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, 1977; Geometrie als Sprache. Zeitgenössische Polnische Konstruktivisten, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart 1991; M.T. Krawczyk, in: Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 59, 2008; Sebastian Dudzik: Jerzy Grabowski. Artist and the Universe / Artysta i Uniwersum, Lublin 2012. *Online:* Komart Gallery, Bratislava.

The handwritten title on the print reads (in English) “Some thoughts on numerical symbolism”. At the time it was made this print was like a résumé of almost thirty years’ artistic work in translating his mathematical codes into art in the form of equilateral triangles – something he regards as being the ideal geometrical shape. At the centre of the picture is an equilateral triangle with alternating basic colours, red, blue and yellow and the achromatic colours black and white arranged in a similar manner to those in a colour circle. The rest of the centre of the picture continues with triangles from top to bottom, alternately on their tip or their base. The white area on the left is shaped by embossed triangles solely standing on their tip: the right side is shaped by triangles that only stand on their base. Above the coloured triangle a mixture of the two white areas comes together to form a further triangle standing on its tip. Three other figures resemble signets inserted into the embossment: on the left a triangle standing on its tip; below a star made up of triangles in a circle surrounded by a square, and on the right a square with triangles placed inside it. Two sloping colour bars, running parallel to the left edge of the coloured triangle – alternately red and blue – give the composition a sideward moving dynamic.

The work was created at a time when the artist was interested in visualising timeless, universal values encoded in signs, symbols and numbers. His universal use of equilateral triangles refers back to Judeo-Christian traditions which equate them with the godlike element, perfection and the universe. The triangle is a symbol of the Holy Trinity and the absolute. As an ideal module it symbolises the structure of the world in a micro-area, and watches over its organisation as a superordinate symbol. The universal divine principle is not only embodied in the geometric forms, concealing a Judeo-Christian symbolism scarcely comprehensible to the average viewer, but also in its basic colours (information in a letter Dr. Sebastian Dudzik, Toruń) – The present work was a gift from the artist to the Bochum Museum. A similar signed variation with the same title, but in which the two sloping bars remain white, was exhibited in 2007 at a posthumous retrospective in the Test Gallery in Warsaw.

The Invasion of Troy, 1971



Hasiór, Władysław (1928 Nowy Sącz - 1999 Zakopane):
The Invasion of Troy, 1971. Wood, textile, figures, found
pieces, electrical installation on chipboard with a gold
frame, 90 x 129 x 25 cm; Inv. no. 1672

The Bochum Art Museum

Władysław Hasiór, born 1928 in Nowy Sącz, died 1999 in Zakopane. Studies: 1947-52, State School of Arts and Crafts in Zakopane (under Antoni Kenar); 1952-58, Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw (sculpture, diploma under Marian Wnuk). 1957-66, teacher at the Zakopane School of Arts and Crafts. 1970-71, teacher at the College of Visual Arts, Breslau/Wrocław. 1970, Polish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (together with Józef Szajna). 1971, prize from the Polish Ministry of Culture for his life work. Solo exhibitions since 1961 in Poland, Stockholm, Humlebæk, Göteborg, London, Helsinki, Moscow, Brussels and Budapest. Works in countless Polish museums, in Ålborg, Bochum, Edinburgh, Helsinki and Oslo.

During his studies Hasiór in Zakopane learnt woodcarving techniques under Antoni Kenar, that linked contemporary sculpture with the local folk art practiced by the Tatra Gorals. In 1959 he travelled to Germany, Belgium, Holland and Italy with the help of a scholarship from the French Ministry of Culture, and worked in Ossip Zadkine's atelier in Paris. Here he met late surrealists and members of the "Nouveau Réalisme" group. On his return he made a name for himself as a representative of object art and opponent of Polish Constructivism. He made objects and assemblages from finds and toys – often using application techniques on

textiles – with surrealist characteristics or containing fetishes and totem elements of folk art. From the mid-1960s onwards he created banners, flags and standards, inspired by Polish war emblems and images used in church processions. He used them to stage happenings, processions and room installations, and worked with fire and burial rituals. Almost all his works deal with historic events and themes, above all connected to the Second World War, but also to mythology, religion and literature. His designs for monuments to the victims of Polish history were inspired by real monuments in Czorsztyn, Koszalin, Stettin/Szczecin and Zakopane.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Władysław Hasiór, Museum Bochum 1971; Władysław Hasiór - Camiel van Breedam, Kunsthalle Darmstadt, Museum Bochum u.a. 1990/91, Brussels 1989; Anna Żakiewicz: Władysław Hasiór, Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw 2005; A. Żakiewicz, in: De Gruyter Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 70, 2011. *Online:* Museumsplattform NRW; Tatra Museum Zakopane; culture.pl

Władysław Hasiór's *Invasion of Troy* belongs to a series of framed assemblages made between 1968 and the 1990s, which the artist himself describes as "objects that act as if they were images (a colouristic exercise)". (Cat. Darmstadt/Bochum amongst others 1990/91). In the year in which it was made the work was shown in a solo exhibition by Hasiór in Bochum, and subsequently purchased by the museum. Applications consisting of different coloured – at times relief-like – stitched-on textiles make up the landscape. Toy animals, oval objects with tiny black furs and a fanned-out doll's plait functioning as a tree, enliven the scene. A vanguard of sheep leads the Greeks' expedition with the Trojan horse. This is given an additional dynamic by red plastic wings illuminated by a small lamp at the back that transforms it into a Pegasus. This is followed by black furry abstract "warriors". The doll's head possibly embodies Helena whose self-staged abduction triggered off the ten-year Trojan War. A round application functions as a black sun symbolising the menacing disaster. The assemblage is part of a series of Hasiór's reworking of mythological and literary material. Some critics have interpreted this work as referring to the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops into Prague in August 1968; but this is highly improbable given the fact that the work was created three years later. The scene is rich in images, but above all in the use of materials that trigger off dreamlike associations and emotions. The work has a close relationship to surrealist image and object art (cf. Meret Oppenheim: *Breakfast in Fur*, 1936). The link between two seemingly incompatible literary sources – the saga of the Trojan horse and the mythological figure of Pegasus the winged horse and child of the sea god Poseidon and the Gorgon Medusa – that are transformed into a freshly constructed story is also surrealist. Hasiór succeeds in making this link by means of an inconspicuous motif, the red plastic wings that are given an outstanding function within the picture by means of an electrical installation. Furthermore it is impossible to simply dismiss the humorous aspects.

Relic no. 2, 1968



Kantor, Tadeusz (1915 Wielopole Skrzyńskie - 1990 Kraków): Relic no. 2, 1968. Oil on canvas, Umbrella, 200 x 130 cm; Inv. no. 2046

The Bochum Art Museum

Tadeusz Kantor, born 1915 in Wielopole Skrzyńskie, died 1990 in Kraków. Studies: 1934-39, Academy of Visual Arts, Kraków (painting, set design under Karol Frycz, Zbigniew Pronaszko). 1942-44, works with an experimental theatre group. From 1945, activities as a set designer in different theatres in Kraków. 1945, co-founder of the Young Artists Group (Grupa Młodych Plastyków). 1947, first trip to Paris. 1948, founder of the Kraków Group (Grupa Krakowska II). 1948-49, 1967-69, lecturer at the College of Visual Arts, Kraków. 1955, co-founder of the Cricot 2 Theatre, ebed.; Henceforth countless theatre productions, and from the 1980s worldwide theatre tours. 1959, Documenta II, Kassel. 1967, Sao Paulo Biennale. 1977, Documenta 6, Kassel. 1978, Rembrandt prize, Basel. 1979, '82, '86 Obie Award, New York. 1981, prize awarded by the Minister of Culture. 1982, Grand Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta. 1990, Grand Cross of Merit from the Federal Republic of Germany. Solo exhibitions since 1956 in Warsaw, Stockholm, Paris, Düsseldorf, New York, Lausanne, Baden-Baden, Edinburgh, London, Berlin, Kraków, Tokyo, Nuremberg, Copenhagen, Florence, Prague and Zurich. Works in countless Polish museums, Bochum, Ghent, Künzelsau, Nuremberg, Paris and Stockholm.

Throughout his life Kantor worked simultaneously as a painter (from 1964/65 as an object and performance artist, and a dramaturg/director of plays by other authors (incl. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz), and (from 1975 onwards exclusively) his own plays. Changes in style in the visual arts and the theatre took place simultaneously and influenced each other simultaneously (e.g. informal painting / informal theatre). He laid down his principles for the separate theatre periods and his basic ideas on art in manifestoes. He became famous as a dramaturg at the Kraków theatre “Cricot 2”, amongst others as one of the most important representatives of the theatre of the absurd and through his international productions in the 1980s. Kantor’s first paintings in 1946 were late Cubist portraits inspired by the paintings of Pablo Picasso. Between 1947 and 1952 he concerned himself with “metaphorical” paintings related to surrealism; between 1955 and 1960 with informal oil paintings in which he adapted techniques like Jackson Pollock’s “Drippings”. Whereas in 1961 he defined the “reality of the lowest rank” in the theatre and propagated “poor, meagre props” as carriers of objective reality, he also began to integrate *objets trouvés* and waste materials into his pictures. His manifesto *Emballages* (French for packages) written in 1963, was named after his action packaging of people on stage and his packaging of objects and image concepts in pictorial art (*Infant in based on Velázquez*, 1966). Starting in 1965 he began to organise happenings in which actors, themes and objects from extremely different backgrounds interact in a largely incoherent manner. Kantor’s play *The Dead Class* (1975) was the starting point for a “Theatre of Death” during the following years. Here – and also in his object and installation art – he tackled childhood memories from small-town Galicia, and more generally mechanisms of memory and obsessively repeating scenes. His pictures during the 1980s were the start of a dialogue with European paintings (Velázquez, Goya, Chagall). He also reflected autobiographical themes in self-portraits.

Further reading: Tadeusz Kantor. *Emballages*, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź 1975; Tadeusz Kantor. *Emballages 1960-1976*, Galerie R Johanna Ricard / Institut für Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 1976; Tadeusz Kantor, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich 2009; Tadeusz Kantor. *Er war sein Theater*, Institut für Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 2011; K. Czerni, in: *De Gruyter Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, vol. 79, 2013. *Online:* culture.pl.

In the catalogue to the *Emballages* exhibition that took place in the Łódź Art Museum in 1975 Kantor wrote the following words under the Polish heading “Parasol”: “In 1964 I attached my first umbrella to a canvas”. The thing he was looking for in 1964 was not just any old object with which he could shape a collage but a special form of *Emballage*. In the previous year he had published a manifesto by the same name that paid tribute to the artistic phenomenon of packaging (French: emballage). Following this he began to use packaging in his stage work with living actors because it had a deeply psychological meaning for him. The ritual of packaging is very similar to an initiation. Tying things up recalls sacred traditions and packaging itself embodies “the human striving and passion for storing and collecting things, isolating and hiding them”. Packaging embraces a “fascination for the unknown and the mysterious”; it also offers potentials for psychological retreat. “If you want to hide something very deeply ... Emballage! To isolate it from the world, protect it from stupidity, ignorance and meanness! Emballage!” (*Emballage* manifesto, 1963; Cat. Nuremberg 1976). In 1975 he continued as follows: an umbrella “is a rare metaphorical “emballage”; it is the ‘envelopment’

used in many human affairs, rooted deeply in its poetry, something pointless, helpless, indifferent and yet also full of hope and ridicule. I furnished all the possible meanings inherent in an umbrella with a painting commentary, initially in an informal style, then figuratively. It was only later, between 1946 and 48, that I realised that an umbrella was something like a fetish for me. I used to collect umbrellas [...] and after collecting a lot of them they helped me to construct surrealist landscapes [...] On top of that an umbrella means circus and theatre. Actors in the play "The Circus" by Mikulski (1957 in the Cricot Theatre) used umbrellas to protect their uprooted, poverty stricken lives and their relics of poetry and hope." (Cat. Łódź 1975). Between 1964 and 1970 Kantor made a lot of paintings with applied umbrellas. He also used them in his stopping places around the world, including 1965 in New York, 1966 in Baden-Baden and Stockholm, 1967 for the Biennale in Sao Paulo and 1968 for an exhibition in Nuremberg. The umbrellas are always black and often, as in the existing painting, linked with portraits and scenes featuring figures. Sometimes the artist covered them completely with white paint to make them melt into the ground of the picture – once again packed in a layer of paint. But umbrellas are not the only objects that Kantor used as particular forms for *emballage*, but also suitcases, bags and wooden boxes, all of them hiding places for memories. They also play an important role as stage props, and equally as applications on paintings. In 1963 Kantor constructed a roughly screwed-together assemblage, featuring an applied paper bag and painted boy's legs, that was locked away in several ways with a lock and crossbeams under the heading "EMBA ..." (*Relic I*, 1963, Bochum Art Museum). In the picture shown here, *Relic no. 2* (1968) the umbrella corresponds with the figure of a boy with the features of the artist hanging upside down from the roof, and two isolated male legs mounted and leaning against the wall. The latter might be props used in a magician's trick or an absurd theatre play. If we follow Kantor's own interpretation of umbrella images, the boy might be a symbol for all the topsy-turvy memories of past childhood, whereas the male legs might be a symbol of the human rudiments existing in the present. Both past and present are inadequately protected by the umbrella. They are "relics" of the poetry and hope inherent in life, extended by the different levels of meaning in umbrellas to signify uselessness, helplessness and ridicule. Following the *Emballages* exhibition in Nuremberg in 1976 the Museum Bochum purchased both works along with the installation *Portrait of Mother* (1976).

Portrait of Mother, 1976



Kantor, Tadeusz (1915 Wielopole Skrzyńskie - 1990 Kraków): Portrait of Mother, 1976. Installation (Photograph on canvas, wooden box, cloth bags with photo portraits), 95 x 105 cm, 26 x 159 x 90 cm; Inv. no. 2047

The Bochum Art Museum

Tadeusz Kantor, born 1915 in Wielopole Skrzyńskie, died 1990 in Kraków. Studies: 1934-39, Academy of Visual Arts, Kraków (painting, set design under Karol Frycz, Zbigniew Pronaszko). 1942-44, works with an experimental theatre group. From 1945, activities as a set designer in different theatres in Kraków. 1945, co-founder of the Young Artists Group (Grupa Młodych Plastyków). 1947, first trip to Paris. 1948, founder of the Kraków Group (Grupa Krakowska II). 1948-49, 1967-69, lecturer at the College of Visual Arts, Kraków. 1955, co-founder of the Cricot 2 Theatre, ebed.; Henceforth countless theatre productions, and from the 1980s worldwide theatre tours. 1959, Documenta II, Kassel. 1967, Sao Paulo Biennale. 1977, Documenta 6, Kassel. 1978, Rembrandt prize, Basel. 1979, '82, '86 Obie Award, New York. 1981, prize awarded by the Minister of Culture. 1982, Grand Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta. 1990, Grand Cross of Merit from the Federal Republic of Germany. Solo exhibitions since 1956 in Warsaw, Stockholm, Paris, Düsseldorf, New York, Lausanne, Baden-Baden, Edinburgh, London, Berlin, Kraków, Tokyo, Nuremberg, Copenhagen, Florence, Prague and Zurich. Works in countless Polish museums, Bochum, Ghent, Künzelsau, Nuremberg, Paris and Stockholm.

Throughout his life Kantor worked simultaneously as a painter (from 1964/65 as an object and performance artist, and a dramaturg/director of plays by other authors (incl. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz), and (from 1975 onwards exclusively) his own plays. Changes in style in the visual arts and the theatre took place simultaneously and influenced each other simultaneously (e.g. informal painting / informal theatre). He laid down his principles for the

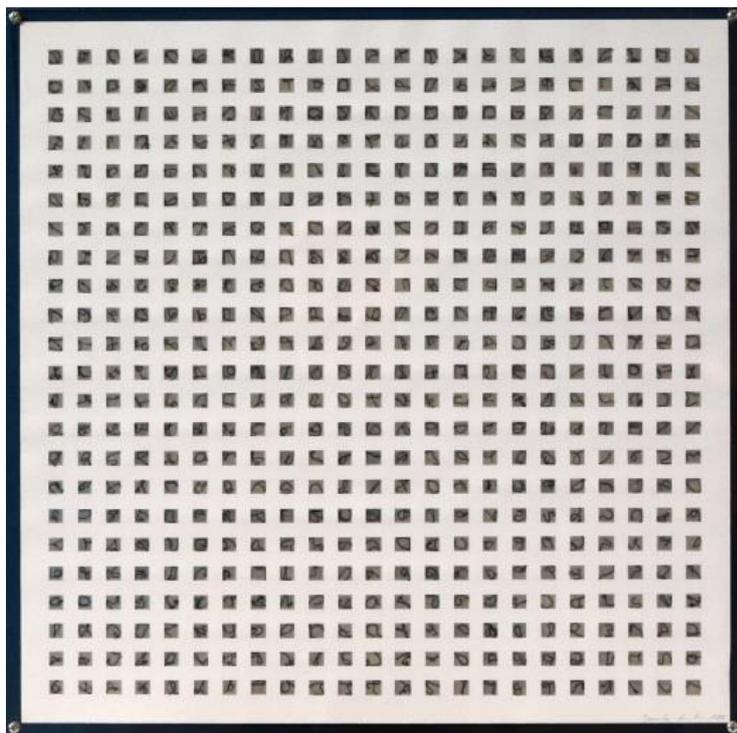
separate theatre periods and his basic ideas on art in manifestoes. He became famous as a dramaturg at the Kraków theatre “Cricot 2”, amongst others as one of the most important representatives of the theatre of the absurd and through his international productions in the 1980s. Kantor’s first paintings in 1946 were late Cubist portraits inspired by the paintings of Pablo Picasso. Between 1947 and 1952 he concerned himself with “metaphorical” paintings related to surrealism; between 1955 and 1960 with informal oil paintings in which he adapted techniques like Jackson Pollock’s “Drippings”. Whereas in 1961 he defined the “reality of the lowest rank” in the theatre and propagated “poor, meagre props” as carriers of objective reality, he also began to integrate *objets trouvés* and waste materials into his pictures. His manifesto *Emballages* (French for packages) written in 1963, was named after his action packaging of people on stage and his packaging of objects and image concepts in pictorial art (*Infant in based on Velázquez*, 1966). Starting in 1965 he began to organise happenings in which actors, themes and objects from extremely different backgrounds interact in a largely incoherent manner. Kantor’s play *The Dead Class* (1975) was the starting point for a “Theatre of Death” during the following years. Here – and also in his object and installation art – he tackled childhood memories from small-town Galicia, and more generally mechanisms of memory and obsessively repeating scenes. His pictures during the 1980s were the start of a dialogue with European paintings (Velázquez, Goya, Chagall). He also reflected autobiographical themes in self portraits.

Further reading: Tadeusz Kantor. *Emballages*, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź 1975; Tadeusz Kantor. *Emballages 1960-1976*, Galerie R Johanna Ricard / Institut für Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 1976; Tadeusz Kantor, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich 2009; Tadeusz Kantor. *Er war sein Theater*, Institut für Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 2011; K. Czerni, in: De Gruyter Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 79, 2013. *Online:* culture.pl.

Chronologically, the installation *Portrait of Mother* (1976) is the last of the group of works entitled *Emballages* that Tadeusz Kantor exhibited at the “Galerie R Johanna Ricard” and the Institute of Modern Art in Nuremberg in 1976. It was subsequently purchased by the Museum Bochum along with the assemblages *Relic I* (1963) and *Relic no. 2* (1968) that were also featured in the exhibition. Starting from Kantor’s eponymous manifesto published in 1963 (cat. Nuremberg 1976) *Emballages* is a concept used in theatrical actions, and also paintings, assemblages, objects and installations, in which packaging (French: emballages) plays a central role. For Kantor, wrapping, tying, storing, secreting and hiding things are not merely human rituals and needs; they also conceal a potentially obsessive way of dealing with memories: in the form of enveloping actors on the stage, but also in the shape of pockets, suitcases, chests, boxes and, last not least, umbrellas, which the artists use as props on stage, and as found objects in making his assemblages and installations. They are ready-made hiding places for memories and obsessions. Alternatively he declares them to be hiding places in order to isolate his memories from the world, and from stupidity, ignorance and meanness. (Manifesto *Emballages* 1963). Boxes as storage places for memories that can be nailed up hermetically, and which nonetheless reveal relics of the objects stored within, occur in Kantor’s happenings on several occasions: “A narrow, dark room full of boxes, large boxes are lying and standing around, one piled on another. All nailed up. “Someone is nailing up the last box – unremittingly to the end. White cloths and

shirts are protruding from the boxes, bits and pieces are hanging from it. On the chair lies a motionless, wrapped form like a human body.” (cat. Nuremberg 1976). We can see such a box in the installation here. The lid lies to one side as if the memory held within had liberated itself. Tied-up cloth sacks with printed portraits of Kantor’s mother in various situations and periods of her life represent an unknown package of memories for the viewer. However Kantor’s memories of his mother have been broken open, twisted and revealed to the public despite the fact that they remain tied up in sacks: “If you want to hide something very deeply ... Emballage! To isolate it from the world, protect it from stupidity, ignorance and meanness! Emballage!” (Manifesto *Emballage*, 1963) At this time Kantor decided to take a new path with his theatre work in the form of his play *The Dead Class* (1975): namely “to abandon the avant-garde highway in favour of the path to the cemetery” (Teatr śmierci. Teksty z lat 1975-1984, Breslau/Wrocław 2004, 16). In his “Theatre of Death” (Teatr śmierci) he aimed to illuminate mechanisms of memory by means of sequences of images, photos from the family album, fragments of memory, obsessively recurring scenes and absurd situations, in order to reveal the chaos of shattering events, memories, relics and yearnings that determine human existence. In our installation, one visual relic from his “Theatre of Death” is the enlarged sepia photograph (around the size of a painting) taken from a snapshot in his family album, showing the place where the Kantor family is buried. In his play *Wielopole Wielopole*, which he completed around the same time, he dealt with all his dead relatives who were closely linked with the village in the Carpathian foothills where he spent his childhood. When Kantor’s father failed to return home from the First World War his mother Helena moved home with her two children to live with her brother, the village priest of Wielopole. Kantor grew up in his uncle’s vicarage, but after his death Helena Kantor (born Berger) had to leave the village with her children (Donata Kaman: Theater der Maler in Deutschland und Polen, Münster 2001, pp. 247 f.) In the existing installation Kantor links the memory of his mother – simultaneously revealed and concealed – with the place of his childhood. The photo of the family grave is part of the fragments of memory that make manifest the tangle of human upheavals.

No title, 1999



Karsten, Danuta (*1963 Mała Słońca, lives in Recklinghausen): No title, 1999. Paper, wood glue, textile threads, Plexiglass, 50 x 50 cm; Inv. no. 4013

The Bochum Art Museum

Danuta Karsten, born 1963 in Mała Słońca (south of Danzig/Gdańsk), lives in Recklinghausen. Studies: 1983-85 State College of Visual Arts, Danzig (sculpture); 1986-93 Düsseldorf Art Academy under Klaus Rinke (master student) and Günther Uecker. 1998 Special prize from the Lovis-Corinth-Preis of the Esslingen Artists' Guild. 2009 Guest Professor in Danzig. 2012 Special prize from the Flottmann-Hallen, Herne. Solo exhibitions since 1994, amongst others, in Essen, Recklinghausen, Regensburg, Herne, Münster, Remscheid, Bochum, Danzig, Otterndorf, Reutlingen.

Danuta Karsten works primarily with interiors in galleries, museums and historic buildings. Her installations mostly consist of white or transparent materials like water glass, paper, PVC foil, nylon cord, air cushions, plastic strapping, curd soap and latex, all of which are used in large series. After analysing the space and a long production phase during which she processes thousands of straps, pieces of paper and foil, she transforms the interiors into temporary works of art. Her installations are mostly arranged geometrically to cover large parts of the air space – hanging, hovering or braced – or cover the floor spaces. She uses her materials to “draw” in the room. Her calculations, craft and construction result in a sensual experience of new artistic realities.

Further reading: Danuta Karsten - Rauminstallationen, Museum Bochum 2001; Danuta Karsten, Bönen 2012. *Online:* danutakarsten.com

Danuta Karsten's work was purchased by the Museum Bochum in 1999 and consists of a paper grid mounted between two panes of Plexiglass and featuring 529 windows made of wood glue. With painstaking attention to detail she has placed textile threads in the shape of fictional written letters that have no relation to any real language. As in her spatial installations she combines geometric conceptions and serial production with the powerful individual expression inherent in the finally cut material. After the wood glue has hardened the windows become small transparent spaces in which to perceive the individual letters. The small format links calculation, craft skills, conception and materials science to materialise and abstract thought: the invention of a new writing. This gives us a space for the imagination, the intellect and for artistic experience. In 2007 Danuta Karsten created an installation by the name of *Calligraphy* for an exhibition entitled "Language codes – Spatial codes" in the Galerie Kränzli in Göppingen. Here a long series of hanging calligraphic signs made of white painted wood and hanging from strings of nylon make up a fictional linguistic and code space.

Wide Gap between the Sky and Nature, 1969



Kobzdej, Aleksander (1920 Olesko/Ukraine - 1972 Warsaw): *Wide Gap between the Sky and Nature*, 1969. Synthetic material, oil on canvas, 138 x 130 cm; Inv. no. 1623

The Bochum Art Museum

Aleksander Kobzdej, born 1920 in Olesko/Ukraine, died 1972 in Warsaw. Studies: 1939-41 faculty of architecture at the Technical College in Lwów/Lemberg (now Lwiw); 1945, Academy of Visual Arts, Kraków (painting under Eugeniusz Eibisch); 1945-55, Assistant to Władysław Lam at the department of drawing and painting in the Technical College in Danzig/Gdańsk (1946, diploma in construction engineering). 1943, deported to Germany; flight to Yugoslavia. 1945, return to Poland. 1946-51, lecturer at the Sopot Art College (initially as an Assistant to Józef Wnuk), 1951-72 lecturer at the Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw (faculty of interior architecture, from 1954 for painting, there 1955 diploma; dean on several occasions). 1958 part-time (1971 full time) Professor. 1965-66, chair of painting at the College of Visual Arts in Hamburg. 1952, Golden Cross of Merit. 1954, Venice Biennale. 1957, Study trips to Italy, Austria, France and Switzerland, 1960 through the USA, to England and in the Netherlands. 1959, Sao Paulo Biennale. 1964, Documenta III, Kassel. 1966, Herder prize from the Alfred Toepfer Foundation F.V.S., Hamburg, for a scholarship at the University of Vienna. Solo exhibitions since 1953 in Peking, Warsaw, Budapest, Paris, New York, Kraków, Freiburg, Copenhagen, Essen, Berlin and Stettin/Sczcecin. Works in countless Polish museums, in Bochum, New York, Stockholm, and Belgrade.

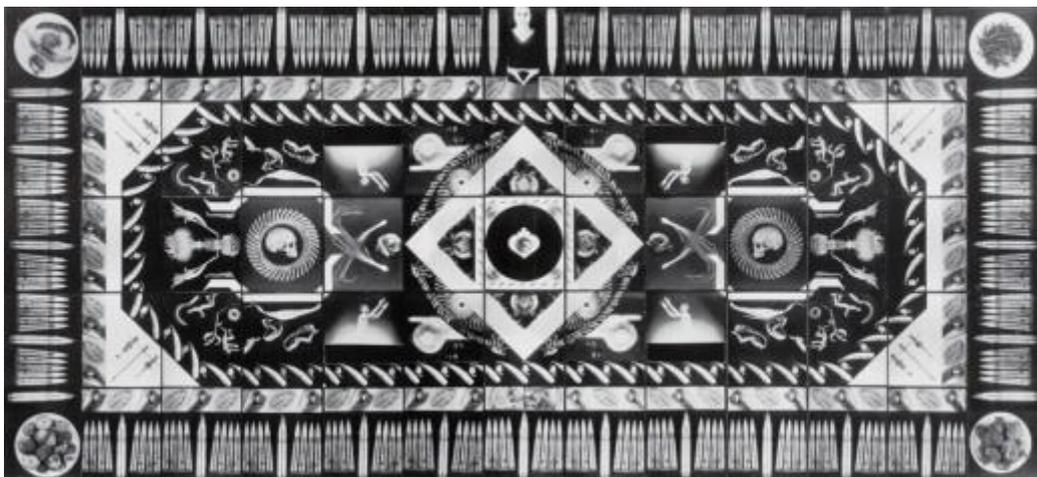
Starting in 1945 Kobzdej's initial works were post-impressionist in style and mirrored his interest in late 19th-century realism. In 1949 he moved on to making pictures of workers (*Give me that Brick*, 1949) and, as an exponent of the Sopot school he became an officially recognised representative of socialist realism. Following journeys to China and Vietnam (1953/54) his imagery became more expressive. From 1957 onwards, during trips to Western Europe, he became influenced by international art movements and turned towards informal, gestural painting and material art. The material reliefs in his so-called "gap" pictures at the end of the 1960s burst the bounds of the pictorial area. From 1970 onwards they are replaced by rich masses of artificial material bursting out of the pictorial ground and consisting of freestanding sculptural arrangements modelled on wire mesh.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Aleksander Kobzdej. Ölbilder - Zeichnungen 1969-1971, Kunstamt Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1971; Alexander Kobzdej. Zmagania z materią / Struggle with matter, Galeria Polskiego Domu Aukcyjnego Sztuka, Kraków 2002; A. Straszewska, in: De Gruyter Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 81, 2013. *Online:* culture.pl.

Aleksander Kobzdej was influenced by international art movements during his travels through Western Europe (1957) and the USA (1960). The Bochum Art Museum possesses a painting entitled *Blue Watchman* (1963) from a series of powerfully coloured impasto pictures closely related to Tachism and the art of Wols. *Broad Gap between the Sky and Nature* (1969) belongs to the subsequent series of *Gap* paintings. Coloured scraps of material protrude from an underlying image base between a strip of blue paint representing the sky in the upper part of the work and a green strip embodying nature in the lower part of the work. They seem like remains of renovation work, carpets and construction materials, but they are all made of synthetic material. Kobzdej's use of synthetic material follows the relief pictures made by Jean Fautrier. In his quotations of raw materials that are basically alien to art he orientated himself to the material images of Alberto Burri and Antoni Tapies that feature

sackcloth, wooden slats, plastic and sand. By introducing two image levels and dispensing with a picture frame he distances himself from the (still recognisable) panel painting. His style is situated somewhere between concrete and abstract art: "Sky" and "Nature" are recognisable as such through their clear colours and location; but even without the title they could also be interpreted as abstract surfaces of paint. In a similar fashion the sculptural material in the centre of the picture can be seen as concrete pieces of rubbish or sweepings and equally as abstract pieces of shaped material. It is conceivable that during the period in which Kobzdej created the work he was thinking in the sense of an early critical realism of relics of industrialisation and environmental pollution – rubbish spewing out of the interior of the Earth and pushing itself into the innocent areas of the sky and the natural world. Along with this picture, in 1971 the Museum Bochum purchased an object showing a mass of abstract plastic bursting forth from between two vertical optical sheets.

Who conquers the World, 1994



Kulik, Zofia (*1947 Breslau/Wrocław, lives in Łomianki-Dąbrowa):
Who conquers the World, 1994. Multipart black and white
photograph, 302.5 x 656.5 cm; Inv. no. 3276

The Bochum Art Museum

Zofia Kulik, born 1947 in Breslau/Wrocław, lives in Łomianki-Dąbrowa. Married to the painter, sculptor, installation and performance artist Przemysław Kwiek (*1945). Studies: 1965-71 Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw (Sculpture under Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Oskar Hansen). 1970-87, Kulik sets up the artist duo KwieKulik with P. Kwiek. 1997, Venice Biennale. 2007, Documenta 12, Kassel. Since 1971, exhibitions by KwieKulik in Elbląg, Malmö, New York. Solo exhibitions since 1990 in New York, Warsaw, Prague, Kraków, Bochum, Rostock, Berlin. Works in Amsterdam, Bochum and in countless Polish museums.

The work of the artist duo KwieKulik is orientated on the theory of "open form" (*Forma Otwarta*, 1959) developed by Oskar Hansen, which propagates event orientated action art, process art, documentation and the interaction of the audience with artists. In 1973 KwieKulik set up a private archive to document the contemporary Polish avant-garde: the archive also contains their own works. They themselves work with concept art, performances, artistic

actions and photography. In 1970/71 they organised an action with the title *Excursion* in which they joined other artists to visit cultural institutions and prefabricated high-rise estates in Warsaw, in order to draw people's attention to their repressive character and document them in films and photographs. Between 1972 and 1974, in their *Actions with Dobromierz*, they documented everyday and artistically shaped situations with their son in the form of 900 photographs. In their *Head Actions* (1978) they attempted to make a link between art and politics and reforming the Polish cultural administration. After they presented their sculpture *Penis Man* (1975) at an exhibition of Polish art in Malmo they were banned from travelling abroad and could only take part in further international exhibitions with Mail Art. They subsumed their artistic interventions under the title *Parasitic Art*, in which they confronted the works of other artists with their own works and commented critically on everyday life in the communist system. In 1987 Zofia Kulik gave up her joint work and her commitment to reform the political system in Poland. Since then she has been concentrating on photography. She mostly works in black and white, with masking and double exposures, whereby she assembles dozens of individual shots to make up tableaux filling complete walls. Her main theme is the dominance of political systems over people, which she visualises with ornamentally and symmetrically arranged symbols taken from military, religious and dictatorial sources placed against naked individuals.

Further reading: Zofia Kulik. *Symbolic Weapon IV, XLVII*. Internationale Biennale, Venice, Polnischer Pavilion, Warsaw 1997; Zofia Kulik. *Od Syberii do Cyberii / From Siberia to Cyberia*, Muzeum Narodowe, Poznań 1999; Zofia Kulik. *From Siberia to Cyberia. Und andere Arbeiten*, Museum Bochum / Kunsthalle Rostock 2005; A. Wiszniewska, in: *De Gruyter Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, vol. 82, 2014. *Online:* Museumsplattform NRW; culture.pl; kulikzofia.pl.

Who conquers the World (1994) by Zofia Kulik was created in 1994. In the same year it was shown in a group exhibition in the Museum Bochum entitled "Nature in Still Life - natura morta? Five Positions on Photographic Still Life". When the exhibition closed the work was purchased by the Museum. The question posed in the title is rhetorical for it is eminently clear that the answer lies in the stacked up piles of machine gun ammunition running around the edge of the picture and the huge amount of male figures in the background. Above them all, standing on the upper edge of the picture is the artist in the pose of a motionless guard with her hands held in the shape of a vagina – the typical symbol of a feminine gesture. The tableau was assembled from around one hundred individual photos and resembles an oriental carpet. It is part of a series of black and white photo images entitled "carpets" which she began in 1989. A precursor had a similar clear title: *All the Missiles Are One Missile*, 1994. Mandalas occurred in previous tableaux, also in the form of Gothic church windows. In addition segments from such works, say in 50 x 60 centimetre sizes, can be found as individual works in international collections. They already contain motifs in a similar form and many different variations. On the mandala *Myself, Poppies and the Joke* (1992) the artist is a guard surrounded by spears, ammunition and bits of machines holding a spear-like sceptre in the midst of a war situation. In the works completed during this period Zofia Kulik takes up a position against wars, ethnic cleansing and repression of all types that she verifies by means of carefully interspersed newspaper photos. In the current work the photo of a hand

on a machine gun and one of a starving child have been inserted into three fields beneath the centre of the picture. “The artist herself takes on the role of a witness, sympathising with the suffering and simultaneously taking over female control over the countless male figures in every possible pose.” (Ewa Hornowska, 1999). In reality these are photos of the same man, a naked model in constantly different poses photographed by Kulik over many years. She uses these in her works as “set pieces which I rearrange every time and can multiply as often as I want” (Zofia Kulik, 1994). In doing so she robs them of their individuality: a homunculus, a creature turned into a subject in order to create her work. In the work under discussion she confronts the male figures with sticks of leak, peppers and other vegetables served up on four plates in the corners of the “carpet”. Just like the apples being offered in the surrounding inner border, these are possibly banal symbols of life and/or survival in contrast to the huge number of symbols of death, like the skulls in the side areas of the picture. It is not only the ornamental carpet-like composition, but also the countless historical quotations like the vase ornamentations reminiscent of Renaissance grotesques in the side areas of the picture that raise the committed theme – the artist’s personal opposition to war and repression – to the level of an eternally valid, sacrosanct art work worthy to be preserved in a museum (Jan Stanisław Wojciechowski, 1997).

Figure no. 156, 1962



Lebenstein, Jan (1930 Brest-Litowski/Brześć Litewski - 1999 Kraków): Figure no. 156, 1962. Oil on canvas, 180 x 96 cm; Inv. no. 1228

The Bochum Art Museum

Jan Lebenstein, born 1930 in Brest-Litowski/Brześć Litewski, died 1999 in Kraków. Studies: 1948-54, Academy of Visual Arts in Warsaw (painting under Kazimierz Tomorowicz, Eugeniusz Eibisch and Artur Nacht-Samborski). 1949-55, Assistant at the Warsaw Academy. 1959 onwards, resides in Paris; 1971, French citizenship. 1959, Grand Prix de la Ville de Paris; Documenta II, Kassel. 1987, Jan Cybis prize. 1998, Grand Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta. Solo exhibitions since 1959 in Poland, Paris, New York, Brussels, Cologne, Berlin, and Chicago. Works in countless Polish and international museums.

Lebenstein grew up in times of war. His brother was in the Polish Home Army; for that reason his father was murdered by the Germans. After 1945 the family fled from Russian occupied Brest to Poland. After successfully completing his studies at the Warsaw Academy the artist began to make expressively deformed *Hieratic Figures* as a contrast to socialist realism and Polish Constructivism. Study trips to Amsterdam and Paris brought him into contact with Western art. His first solo exhibition in 1956 was in the anti-conformist Teatr na Tarczyńskiej in Warsaw. Because of his powerful interest in morphologic structures between 1958 and 1963 he painted his *Axial Figures*, that developed like fanned out insects along a vertical "spine" along a sculpturally textured surface. This series was responsible for the success of Lebenstein's international exhibitions. He used a Paris scholarship from the Polish Ministry of Culture to move to France. In the following decades he made further paintings featuring fantastical and seemingly prehistoric creatures. Hybrids of people and animals symbolise the dark side of the human psyche. In the 1970s and 80s there followed

erotically loaded scenes and illustrations to George Orwell, the Book of Job and the Apocalypse.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Jan Lebenstein. Monströse Kreaturen und "Carnet intime", Gal. Gmurszynska, Cologne 1965; Jan Lebenstein. Demony, Muzeum Literaturny im. Adama Mickiewicza, Warsaw 2005; Jan Lebenstein. Warszawa-Paryż. Prace z lat 1956-1972, Galeria Zachęta, Warsaw 2010; M.T. Krawczyk, in: De Gruyter Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, vol. 83, 2014.

The painting belongs to a comprehensive series of over two hundred *Axial Figures*, that Jan Lebenstein began in Warsaw in 1958 and continued in Paris between 1959 and 1963. In autumn 1959 he exhibited pictures from the series at the first Paris Biennale initiated by André Malraux, where he won the Grand Prix. In 1961 he presented them at his first solo exhibition in the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris and at every important exhibition in Europe. They were purchased by Paris collections and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The painting in the Bochum Art Museum was purchased in 1965 at the end of the "Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute" exhibition adjudicated by Ryszard Stanisławski and Mieczysław Porębski. A primitive creature is growing along both sides of a vertical axis or spine; it is not constructed but dissected into its internal components. "Impaled on an upright central bone with all its entrails symmetrically quartered, these figures undoubtedly present some of the most nightmarish beings produced by current painting." (Gérald Gassiot-Talabot, 1965). Lebenstein himself as described these pictures as "emotional metaphors" of a soul that has been possibly uprooted and dissected on many occasions. His creatures are developed through a relief-like texture in the painting on the surface of the canvas, thereby taking on a life of their own. At the same time they do not arise independent of contemporary art. They consolidate the idea of the early informal creature-like structures made by Jean Fautrier and – not least because of their yellowish brown leathery colours – come close to the simultaneous relief topographies of Antoni Tàpies who created telluric and pre-existent forms in order to withdraw into a psychically determined alternative world.

1 ½ Mandala, 1964



Makowski, Zbigniew (*1930 Warsaw, lives there): 1 ½ Mandala, 1964.
Incl. Water colour on paper, 48 x 61 cm; Inv. no. 1220

The Bochum Art Museum

Zbigniew Makowski, born 1930 in Warsaw, lives there. Studies: 1950-56, Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw (painting under Kazimierz Tomorowicz, diploma). 1962/63, stay in Paris; gets to know André Breton. Takes part in the “Mouvement surréaliste et Mouvement Phases” exhibition in Paris. 1963, Sao Paulo Biennale. 1972, Venice Biennale. 1992, Jan Cybis prize. Study trips to Dresden, Leningrad, Venice, Budapest, Yugoslavia, Vienna and Provence. Solo exhibitions since 1957 in Warsaw, Poznań, New York, Miami, Lausanne, Düsseldorf, Bochum, St. Gallen, Zurich, Paris, Bologna, Mantua, Kraków and Danzig/Gdańsk. Works in Amsterdam, Bochum, Mannheim, New York, Paris, Prague, Rio de Janeiro and in Polish museums.

After his studies under Tomorowicz, a representative of late Cubism, Makowski initially developed a cool constructivist “Unism” based on the style of Władysław Strzemiński. At the same time he was creating drawings and watercolours with stereometric figures in a chessboard manner in a collage-like arrangement featuring human figures, birds and plants, or placed in gloomy landscapes. Makowski has described these works as “surrealist”. He is interested in antique classic literature, philosophy, psychoanalysis and esoteric literature, and writes poems. After meeting André Breton and coming into contact with a group of artists that called itself “Phases” he finally turned to surrealism in Paris. Starting in the 1970s he created colourful pictures in which he combined stylised objects, persons, animals, plants, street views, architectural elements and stereometric figures to create loosely connected two-dimensional or landscape-like compositions with very little depth. Here every element

has its own symbolic meaning (mostly only known to the painter). He inserts numbers, letters and lyrical texts into his works on paper. Recently he has been painting large format works in which female portraits and geometrical nudes, concrete symbols and colourful circles are placed in opposition. He has written art books (*Tabula itineraria*, Kraków 2001) and is also known as a poet.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Zbigniew Makowski, Kunstverein für die Rheinland und Westfalen, Düsseldorf 1964; Zbigniew Makowski. Gemälde und Gouachen, Zeichnungen und Bücher, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1973; Zbigniew Makowski, Muzeum Narodowe, Breslau/Wrocław / Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, Łódź, 1978; Zbigniew Makowski, Muzeum Narodowe, Breslau/Wrocław 2008. *Online:* culture.pl; Galeria Grafiki i Plakatu, Warsaw.

In 1964 and 1965 the Metropolitan Art Gallery purchased four water-coloured ink drawings by Zbigniew Makowski, two of which were bought at the end of the “Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute” exhibition adjudicated by Ryszard Stanisławski and Mieczysław Porębski. One of these was the work discussed here. It belongs to a huge group of “surrealist” – this is how the artist himself described them – drawings completed in the early 1960s. On a gameboard-like surface subdivided into squares, rectangles and braids the artist has arranged symbols from very different origins. These include a chalice and candlestick with seven arms, a hand, geometric and stereometric figures and diagrams featuring dots rods and figures, diagrams of dots, bars and diamond shapes, ornaments and patterns, Arabic numbers and Latin letters, word diagrams like ANNA and AMOR, numerical lines of writing and endless lines of letters and strips of texts. If we search for connections with the Surrealists, we can find stereometric figures in the paintings of Giorgio de Chirico (*Le Muse inquietanti*, ca.1917) and an even closer connection to the DADA drawings and gouaches of Max Ernst made in 1920, which show fictional apparatus and geometric constructions. That said, the drawings made by Makowski have an utterly individual character. They appear to be like picture puzzles, mediaeval maps or building plans, occult and alchemistic instructions whose deliberately freehand irregular construction makes them look very old. The title of the work under discussion can be found in a rectangle inscribed into a round mandala in the right half of the picture with the corner letters A-M-O-R (Latin for love). Originally a mandala was a Hindu and Buddhist (drawn or painted) geometrical or figuratively sacred philosophical image embodying the whole universe with heaven, earth and the underworld. Opposite this on the left is the half mandala described in the title. Another of the artist’s drawings in the Bochum Art Museum shows a “garden enclosed from within” surrounded by way over one hundred symbolic fields, in the form of a geometrical renaissance garden. The drawings document Makowski’s interest in “the history of cultures and civilisations” in his preferred “List of Erudition” (“Notizen”, catalogue Düsseldorf 1964). These documents for decoding (or opening up) the world can only be unravelled by himself. And even if we were to translate the strips of writings this would scarcely contribute anything more to understanding their meaning, “when we know that the literary elements in Makowski’s work are coded in a similar fashion to all the other components in his highly original imagery” (Karl-Heinz Hering, catalogue Düsseldorf 1964).

Head, ca. 1986



Myjak, Adam (*1947 Stary Sącz, lives in Warsaw):
Head, ca. 1986. Bronze, 40 x 44 x 38 cm;
Inv. no. 2471

The Bochum Art Museum

Adam Myjak, born 1947 in Stary Sącz, lives in Warsaw. Studies: 1965-71, Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw (sculpture under Stanisław Kulon et al., diploma). 1979-81, Wilhelm Lehmbrock Scholarship, Duisburg; Guest lecturer at the University of Duisburg. 1982 onwards, lecturer at the Department of Sculpture at the Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw; 1990, Professor; 1990, '96, '99, 2012 Dean. 2005, Gloria Artis Gold Medal from the Ministry of Culture. Solo exhibitions since 1970 in Warsaw, Bydgoszcz, Stettin/Szczecin, Poznań, Amsterdam, Duisburg, Łódź, Kraków, Bochum, Prague, Orońsko, Białystok, Sopot and Lublin. Works in Bochum, Duisburg, St. Urban, Chicago and in countless Polish museums.

Adam Myjak's work deals with a single theme, the appearance and presentation of people in heads, busts, torsos and complete bodies. At the start of the 1970s his work consisted of almost abstract bulky heads made of coloured terracotta and polychrome stucco with very few facial features and furrowed surfaces: very early on they could be interpreted as symbols of wounded souls. Soon Myjak began to assemble larger forms in a Cubist manner to create monumental busts standing in the landscape without a plinth (the cycle: *The past*, 1973). These resonated with the works of Henry Moore. Details disappear in smooth or indented surfaces in contrast with highly expressive mouths and empty eye sockets. Now the heads are fictional portraits, into which flow his own features and those of his father, which he understands as "portrait signals, so to speak, the traces of a concrete, real life" (Interview, Bochum catalogue 1989). Since the end of the 1970s he has primarily worked in bronze

where he gives the surface a variety of different expressions by leaving some parts rough, polishing other parts or giving it an artificial patina. During his scholarship in Duisburg he developed combinations of bronze and artificial stone (the *Masks* cycle, 1981). From the mid-1980s he began to create standing torsos – some of which with hints of heads – whose elongated shape and seeming instability were reminiscent of Alberto Giacometti, whom he much admired. Starting in the 1990s he has been concentrating on complete figures. Myjak's sculptures are an expression of human torment, suffering, transience, fears and emotions, all of which he summarises as 'the human topography'. "I have melted my heads, torsos, figures ...into this human topography" (Interview, in Bochum catalogue 1989)

Further reading: Adam Myjak, Museum Bochum 1989; Adam Myjak. Rzeźba, Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, Warsaw 2005. *Online:* adammyjak.com.

In 1986, two and a half years before it presented Myjak's works in a solo exhibition, the Bochum Museum purchased two busts from his workshop: a larger portrait bust made of aluminium with shoulders and mouth inserted in bronze, and the somewhat smaller bronze sculpture shown here. By contrast with the larger work, here the head, breast and shoulders have been strongly abstracted. All areas of the head have been left out and, like the neckless body base, have been brought together in smoothly polished curvy areas. Their characteristic protruding ridges are reminiscent of pre-1920 Cubist sculptures (e.g. by Alexander Archipenko or Rudolf Belling) or the restricted cubic sculptures made by Henry Moore around 1960. Alongside the deformation (this should also be understood as content) of the head, the mouth is the sole source of interpretation in the physiognomy. It is asymmetrical: the upper lip is drawn even further higher and the corner of the mouth even deeper, thereby hinting at a dissatisfied, perhaps mockingly resigned, mood. This is topped by an arrogant conceited forehead. No matter how each individual viewer might like to interpret the work, the artist makes clear that it is possible to present a complicated emotional state precisely by concentrating on a few essential features. Myjak describes "human topography" as basically being people's spiritual sensibilities dominated by emotions, which have arisen in the course of life as a result of our experiences, fears, emotions, sufferings and doubtless, moments of happiness. He wishes to present all these features in his art. In 1961 Myjak, who has consistently worked in thematic cycles of related works, created a cycle of work with similar titles called *The Human Landscape*. In this cycle one of the heads with a hint of a bust is so similar to the work shown here, that we can assume that they share a common outline and that there have been very few alterations made in this somewhat later bronze work. We can also see in the indented surface of the body a landscape shaped by wind and storms (human life): and, in viewing the totality of the two seemingly irreconcilable motifs ("landscape" and "head"), we also recognise a surrealist element.

Relief no. 26, 1968



Stażewski, Henryk (1894 Warsaw - 1988 Warsaw):
Relief no. 26/1968, 1968. Oil on hard fibre, 60 x 60
cm; Inv. no. 1681

The Bochum Art Museum

Henryk Stażewski, born 1894 in Warsaw, died there in 1988. Studies: 1913-19 Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw (painting under Stanisław Lentz). 1924, co-founder of the constructivist group “Blok” (along with Władysław Strzemiński, Henryk Berlewi and others), 1926, co-founder of the group “Praesens”, 1929, of the group “a.r”. 1925-27, several stays in Paris; gets to know Michel Seuphor, Piet Mondrian, Georges Vantongerloo, Paul Dermée, Céline Arnaud. 1927, gets to know Kasimir Malevich in Warsaw. 1928, Salon d’Automne, Paris. 1929, foreign member of the Paris group, “Cercle et Carré”, 1931, ditto of the “Abstraction-Création” group. 1939, his Warsaw apartment and workshop are destroyed by bombs; his complete work is lost. 1946, new artistic start with figurative compositions. 1955, Gold Cross of Merit. 1966, Venice Biennale. 1972, Herder prize from the Alfred Toepfer Foundation F.V.S. in Hamburg, for a scholarship at the University of Vienna. Solo exhibitions since 1933 in Warsaw, from 1955 in Warsaw, Rome, London, Chicago, Breslau/Wrocław, Łódź, Prague, Brussels, Cologne, Bydgoszcz and Hamburg. Works in Amsterdam, Berkeley, Bochum, the Hague, London, New York, Otterlo, Prague, St. Gallen, Rotterdam and in countless Polish museums.

During the final two years of his studies Stażewski moved in the circle of Polish Expressionists and their group, the “Polish Formists” (Formiści Polscy), with whom he exhibited his work after 1920. During this time he was painting powerfully abstracted, almost monochrome portraits and Still Life works. Following exhibitions of modern art in Vilna/Vilnius and Łódź in 1923 he co-founded a new group of Cubists, constructivists and supremacists under the name “Blok” (Blok Kubistów, Konstruktywistów i Suprematystów). He was the editor of the first five editions of the eponymous periodical which published the works of international avant-garde artists like Malevich, Marinetti, van Doesburg and Schwitters. His own artistic works featured designs for interiors and stage sets. He joined the constructivists in his paintings and, under the influence of Władysław Strzemiński, attempted to make flat, balanced, self integrated geometrical designs. There followed compositions based on grids of horizontal and vertical lines, the basic colours of red, yellow and blue and the monochrome colours of black, white and grey, closely affiliated to the painting style of the Dutch group “De Stijl” around Mondrian and van Doesburg. During his time in Paris he made a name for himself with his theoretical writings and essays, and represented Poland in Europe and abroad in exhibitions like the Machine Age Exposition in New York (1927). At the start of the 1930s he returned to representational art and painted a huge number of landscapes, portraits and Still Lifes. He ceased all artistic activities during the German occupation of Warsaw between 1939 and 1945. At the end of the war until the mid-1950s he created Still Lifes and landscapes on the borders of abstraction. From 1955 on he began to develop “reliefs” with distant mounted, initially organic, then geometric forms in rectangular frames. From 1960, parallel to the Düsseldorf group ZERO, he began working on purely white designs with light effects. During the 70s and 80s he created colourful geometric acrylic paintings with changing theoretical backgrounds.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Bożena Kowalska: Henryk Stażewski, Warsaw 1985; Henryk Stażewski (1894-1988). W setną rocznicę urodzin, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź 1995; Henryk Stażewski. Ekonomia myślenia i postrzegania / The economy of thought and perception, Galeria Foksal, Warsaw 2005.
Online: culture.pl; Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Constructivist artists, i.e. those working with geometrical art before and after 1920, worked with different theoretical approaches. Malevich and the representatives of Russian supremicist created cosmic-dynamic compositions with social implications, which could also be used for architecture and urban planning. By contrast the Pole Władysław Strzemiński, who studied in Minsk and was active from 1918 in Moscow in the circle around Malevich and Wladimir Tatlin, concentrated on the autonomy of the artwork and balanced composition between figures and surface. The Dutch group “De Stijl” restricted itself to horizontal and vertical arrangements of lines, rectangles, squares and the three basic colours and, following the theory of “Neo-Plasticism”, also used this “space-creating” form in architecture. By contrast the Bauhaus masters propagated geometrical forms as an expression of the machine age. Stażewski had a close relationship to all the above-mentioned artists and currents despite the fact that he had already found his own inimitable system in the 1920s. He was interested in the autonomy of the geometrical figure in relationship to the surface surrounding it. He thereby managed to create extraordinarily stringent compositions. After his

work was destroyed in the Second World War and following phases of representational art, he took up geometrical art once more in 1955. He was no stranger to experimentation. In the 1970s at the same time as the start of Op Art, the minimalist art in America with Ellsworth Kelly, and the white forms, light experiments and first kinetic objects made by the Düsseldorf group ZERO around Mack, Piene and Uecker, Stażewski was developing his “reliefs” with geometrical figures which he mounted on the surface in boxlike frames, some of which were movable. Thus he was also testing the third dimension within defined borders. The *Relief no. 26* made in 1968 is one such work. It is mounted on a black surface within a square frame in a stringent composition of isosceles triangles whose diagonal divisions result in a square. The triangles on the black surface are completely autonomous and float in the pre-given space. They vary the basic colours of blue and green (mixed with yellow) into variations of light and dark. In the sense of Stażewski’s complete works they represent autonomous artistic forms made according to stringent principles. In connection with the contemporaneous art in the 1960s we may however view “painting as a philosophical game” (Karl Ruhrberg) using space and material. In 1961 two works made by the artist were bought up by the Bochum Municipal Art Gallery. In 1964 he participated in the “Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute” exhibition adjudicated by Ryszard Stanisławski and Mieczysław Porębski. From 1972 onwards the Museum stocked up its collection with Stażewski’s paintings, reliefs and drawings, including the relief created in 1968.

Green red architecture, 1928



Strzemiński, Władysław
(1893 Minsk - 1952 Łódź):
Green red architecture,
1928. Oil on cardboard, 48
x 30 cm; Inv. no. 2071

The Bochum Art Museum

Władysław Strzemiński, born 1893 in Minsk, died 1952 in Łódź. 1911-14, Studies at the Military School of Engineering in Saint Petersburg. From 1914, military service as an officer; 1916 severely wounded and a lifelong physical handicap. Meets Katarzyna Kobro in the field hospital. 1918/19, studies at the Free State Art Atelier (SVOMA) in Moscow. 1919, works in the Department of Art in the Commissariat for People's Education in Minsk, 1919/20, lives in Smolensk where he is a member of the UNOVIS group. 1921, marries the sculptress Katarzyna Kobro, who had studied at the Moscow Art School between 1917 and 1920. 1921-26, teacher at drawing and secondary schools in Wilna/Vilnius, Vilejka Powiatowa (now White Russia), Szczekociny and Brzeziny. Works for the Kraków periodical "Zwrotnica" (The Points), 1923, at the exhibition of modern art in Vilna. 1924 in Warsaw co-founder of the constructivist group "Blok" (along with Henryk Berlewi, Henryk Stażewski, Katarzyna Kobro and others). 1931, moves to Łódź. 1932, foreign member of the Paris group "Abstraction-Création". From 1945, founds and teaches at the College of Visual Arts, Łódź; 1950, sacked for his lack of respect for socialist realism. Solo exhibitions since 1927 in Warsaw, Poznań, Lwów/Lwiw, Łódź; posthumous: Düsseldorf, Łódź, Warsaw, Bonn, Appeldoorn, Las Palmas. Works in Bochum, Jerusalem, New York, Otterlo, St. Petersburg, Stuttgart and in countless Polish museums (above all in the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź).

Fascinated by the art collection of the industrialist Sergei I. Schtschukin in Moscow Strzemiński turned to the Visual Arts in 1917. In 1918/19 he took part in the revolutionary art actions in the circle of Vladimir Tatlin, Kasimir Malevich, Antoine Pevsner, and in agitprop events. In 1919 he designed the decorations for the first anniversary of the Red Army in

Minsk and, along with Pevsner, was the head of the All Russian Central Office of Exhibitions: he showed his own paintings in the eighth exhibition in Moscow. Up to his time in Vilejka Powiatowa (1923) he was painting in the style of late Cubism and Suprematism. In 1923 he organised the first exhibition of constructivist art in Poland in Vilna, in which Henryk Stażewski also participated. From 1924 onwards he worked on his theory of “Unism” which opposed the dynamic compositions of Malevich and the outside influence of art. Instead of that Strzemiński propagated the autonomy of the work of art and the harmonic unity of form and surface liberated from all dynamics (Essay *Unizm w malarstwie* [Unism in painting], 1928). Following almost completely single colour surface compositions he began to paint balanced compositions with biomorphic forms in colour combinations of similar intensity. In the 1930s he turned once more to late Cubist urban views and landscapes, but also to experimental abstract surface compositions inspired by visual impressions. During the German occupation of Poland he made expressive drawings of the persecution of the Jews and of the events during the war. In 1948/49 he translated visual impressions of sunlight into abstract compositions (*Powidok słońca* [After-image of the Sun, undated]). In the final years of his life he was looking for new methods of representational painting that were the opposite of the official doctrine of socialist realism.

Further reading: Władysław Strzemiński 1893-1952, Kunstmuseum Bonn, 1994; Władysław Strzemiński. Uniwersalne oddziaływanie idei, Akademia Sztuk Pięknych im. Władysława Strzemińskiego, Łódź 2005. *Online:* culture.pl; ddg.art.pl; monoskop.org; Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź.

In 1928, the year in which the *Green-Red-Architecture* painting was made, Władysław Strzemiński published his essay *Unizm w malarstwie* (Unism in painting) in Warsaw in the second volume of a series of writings published by the artists group “Praesens” which he had co-founded in 1926. In the theory of “Unism” that he started working on in 1924 he put forward the argument that painting had to be “concordant” and “organic”. The flat surface to be painted on allows for no spatial, illusionist painted motifs: “The flat surface of a painting is the basis for a unified expression of line and colour. Colour and line can no longer be seen as independent of one another. The line is the boundary limit of colour... Colour and line make up a unity ...” (pp. 15/16). From 1925 his “unitist” paintings show organic forms bounded by lines; the forms touch each other or attempt to move away from each other, and have the same colour as the surface on which they are moving. At the same time as his *Unistic Compositions* Strzemiński was creating a series of *Architectonic Compositions* between 1926 and 1932, to which the picture under discussion belongs. These works follow his “unitist” theories, for they feature flat compositions whose contours are identical with the areas of colour, and make up a unity of surface and form. Their composition was based on measures, proportions, numerical sequences and modules, taken from Strzemiński’s research into historic buildings (he was able to do so thanks to his engineering studies), and which he now fixed as a space-time rhythm applicable to the present day. The majority of the ca. 20 paintings from this series have a 96 x 60 cm frame: the painting before us is precisely half as large. All the pictures in the series showed two or three coloured surfaces bordering one another, whose proportions have been laid down by the artist according to numerical sequences or in a 1:2 relationship. In the painting in question the relationship between red

and green is roughly 1:1.6. In any case, for the artist, the complete work can only be seen as the result of its structure. The things that interest him are: the sameness or difference in the grouping, the distribution of the areas, the mutual way in which the forms move in and out of one another, the contrast between straight and curved lines, between the left and the right sides of the picture, the difference between the upper and lower part of the painting, and the opposition of complimentary colours (in our case, of red and green) etc. All these elements make the *Architectonic Compositions* a variation of "Unism". "No part of a structure can exist independently; the architecture series was created as a sequence of colours and forms." (Janina Ladnowska, 1993). All these compositions are unique with regard to their colourfulness. For Strzemiński does not mix his colours but rather decides on hues and luminosity by placing glazes on top of one another. This gives the painterly quality of the surface image a delicate and animated effect.

Sea landscape, 1934



Strzemiński, Władysław (1893 Minsk - 1952 Łódź): Sea landscape, 1934. Gouache, 21 x 27 cm; Inv. no. 2072

The Bochum Art Museum

Władysław Strzemiński, born 1893 in Minsk, died 1952 in Łódź. 1911-14, Studies at the Military School of Engineering in Saint Petersburg. From 1914, military service as an officer; 1916 severely wounded and a lifelong physical handicap. Meets Katarzyna Kobro in the field hospital. 1918/19, studies at the Free State Art Atelier (SVOMA) in Moscow. 1919, works in the Department of Art in the Commissariat for People's Education in Minsk, 1919/20, lives in Smolensk where he is a member of the UNOVIS group. 1921, marries the sculptress Katarzyna Kobro, who had studied at the Moscow Art School between 1917 and 1920.

1921-26, teacher at drawing and secondary schools in Wilna/Vilnius, Vilejka Powiatowa (now White Russia), Szczekociny and Brzeziny. Works for the Kraków periodical "Zwrotnica" (The Points), 1923, at the exhibition of modern art in Vilna. 1924 in Warsaw co-founder of the constructivist group "Blok" (along with Henryk Berlewi, Henryk Stażewski, Katarzyna Kobro and others). 1931, moves to Łódź. 1932, foreign member of the Paris group "Abstraction-Création". From 1945, founds and teaches at the College of Visual Arts, Łódź; 1950, sacked for his lack of respect for socialist realism. Solo exhibitions since 1927 in Warsaw, Poznań, Lwów/Lwiw, Łódź; posthumous: Düsseldorf, Łódź, Warsaw, Bonn, Appeldoorn, Las Palmas. Works in Bochum, Jerusalem, New York, Otterlo, St. Petersburg, Stuttgart and in countless Polish museums (above all in the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź).

Fascinated by the art collection of the industrialist Sergei I. Schtschukin in Moscow Strzemiński turned to the Visual Arts in 1917. In 1918/19 he took part in the revolutionary art actions in the circle of Vladimir Tatlin, Kasimir Malevich, Antoine Pevsner, and in agitprop events. In 1919 he designed the decorations for the first anniversary of the Red Army in Minsk and, along with Pevsner, was the head of the All Russian Central Office of Exhibitions: he showed his own paintings in the eighth exhibition in Moscow. Up to his time in Vilejka Powiatowa (1923) he was painting in the style of late Cubism and Suprematism. In 1923 he organised the first exhibition of constructivist art in Poland in Vilna, in which Henryk Stażewski also participated. From 1924 onwards he worked on his theory of "Unism" which opposed the dynamic compositions of Malevich and the outside influence of art. Instead of that Strzemiński propagated the autonomy of the work of art and the harmonic unity of form and surface liberated from all dynamics (*Essay Unizm w malarstwie* [Unism in painting], 1928). Following almost completely single colour surface compositions he began to paint balanced compositions with biomorphic forms in colour combinations of similar intensity. In the 1930s he turned once more to late Cubist urban views and landscapes, but also to experimental abstract surface compositions inspired by visual impressions. During the German occupation of Poland he made expressive drawings of the persecution of the Jews and of the events during the war. In 1948/49 he translated visual impressions of sunlight into abstract compositions (*Powidok słońca* [After-image of the Sun, undated]). In the final years of his life he was looking for new methods of representational painting that were the opposite of the official doctrine of socialist realism.

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Up until 1934 Władysław Strzemiński was painting *Unistic Compositions*, in which he verified his concept of "Unism in painting" (*Unizm w malarstwie*, Warsaw 1928) in flat abstract compositions. During this time these compositions are single colour images, for example in grey or olive, filled with countless tiny, torn sculptural rectangles, circles and ovals. These are larger in the middle of the picture, and smaller and more densely arranged as they move towards the edges. The overall effect is to make the surface of the picture appear to be bulging. Victor Vasarely and the 1960s Op Art painters based their works on Strzemiński's

optical experiments. At the same time as the final “unitist” works, and following the *Architectonic Compositions* the artist was beginning a series of sea landscapes (*Peizaj morski*), to which this work, created in 1934, belongs. The sea landscapes followed a summer holiday spent by Strzemiński with Katarzyna Kobro and some family friends on the Hela/Hel peninsula in the bay of Danzig in 1932. The sea landscapes show multiple variations of colours and forms and are closely related to the “unitist” compositions of the previous seven to ten years. They show biomorphic, colourful and clearly contoured flat forms in a spectrum of similar colours (in our case, blue, white and grey) in a balanced relationship to one another and to the surface of the picture. Here contours take on a life of their own for the first time in that they are shifted in their relationship to the coloured areas and have no independent area of content. All in all, however, surfaces, colours, lines and the pictorial ground make up a balanced unit in the sense of “unism”. Strzemiński gave up working with complimentary colours with his *Architectonic Compositions*. Instead of that contrasts of light and dark play an important role here. In 1935 he wrote: „The rolling waves and the wavy coastlines come up against one another analogous to the movements of the eye from one to the other. They create lines with a rhythm related to the whole”. The re-shaping of reality and the organisation of its forms are more close to life and necessary for the present day (Zsch. FORMA, 1935, no. 3, p. 17, p. 5). In addition to the shapes of the waves and the coastline, clouds can be recognised in the upper right corner of the painting in question: similar to the early “unistic” paintings they are moving against the basis of the picture as corresponding forms, but are now additionally modified and held together by a black contour line.

Large Beach, 1964



Tarasin, Jan (1926 Kalisz - 2009 Warsaw):
Large Beach, 1964. Oil on canvas, 95 x 125
cm; Inv. no. 1218

The Bochum Art Museum

Jan Tarasin, born 1926 in Kalisz, died 2009 in Warsaw. Studies: 1946-51, Academy of Visual Arts, Kraków (painting under Zbigniew Pronaszko, Zygmunt Rudnicki; drawing under Andrzej Jurkiewicz). 1962, travels to China and Vietnam. 1962, member of the post-Second World War Kraków group (Grupa Krakowska II). 1963-67, lecturer at the faculty of interior architecture in Kraków. Travels to the Netherlands, France and Sweden. 1965, Sao Paulo Biennale. 1967, settles in Warsaw. 1974-96, lecturer in painting at the Academy of Visual Arts, Warsaw; 1985 associate Professor; 1987-90, Dean. 1984, Jan Cybis prize. 2005, Gloria Artis Gold medal from the Ministry of Culture. Solo exhibitions since 1957 in Warsaw, Nowa Huta, Paris, Rotterdam, Uppsala, Kraków, Lublin, Tokyo, Poznań, Stettin/Szczecin, Leipzig, Cologne, Bielefeld, Sopot, and Płock. Works in Bochum, New York, Rotterdam, Tokyo, Washington and in countless Polish museums.

The Landscapes and Still Life works painted by Tarasin between 1947 and 1960 represent various stages of abstraction. They range from a late Still Life (1954) reminiscent of Picasso's Cubism, via flat, emblematic and geometric abstract works (*Winter*, 1948) all the way to non-representational compositions like those of Ben Nicholson (*Inward*, 1957), although it is impossible to pin down a chronological sequence. For ten years after 1960, under the impression of international informal painting, he painted views of individual objects,

interior spaces, still lifes and landscapes whose composition, individual structure and representational form was based on real impressions. However, as a whole they have an informal character and an aura of powerful materiality. The series of *Beach* images (1963/64) belong here. Starting in the 1970s Tarasin began to dissolve powerfully abstracted impressions of nature into individual symbols that he inserted next to one another like columns of letters on a mostly white background. In his search for more objectified, abstract signs for impressions from nature he has made the image columns clearly more colourful in his painting since the 1980s. His drawings (serigraphs, Indian ink drawings) show monochrome tableaux consisting of pictograms, calligraphy and writing that the artist also places in a film-like manner in front of landscapes and views of interior spaces. At the end of the 1990s his compositions resembled technical arrangements with circuitry, Morse codes and punched tapes.

Further reading: Profile IV. Polnische Kunst heute, Städt. Kunstgalerie Bochum 1964; Jan Tarasin. Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, Łódź 1988; Jan Tarasin, Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej Zachęta, Warsaw 1995. *Online:* Artists of Kalisz; Galeria ESTA, Gliwice; culture.pl.

The painting in the Bochum Art Museum was purchased in 1965 at the end of the “Profile IV. Polish Art Today” exhibition adjudicated by Ryszard Stanisławski and Mieczysław Porębski. It is one of a series of several *Beach* paintings completed by Jan Tarasin between 1963 and 1964. Around 1960 the artist began to filter out contours, light and colour contrasts from his impressions of nature and landscapes, above all their significant structures. He then abstracted them, strengthened and multiplied them to such an extent that they very nearly became abstract compositions. In the picture under discussion the “Beach” is clearly as richly structured as a landscaped space and has an almost real depth as well as being clearly separated from the sky. It is even possible to recognise the silhouettes of many individual and mutually acting human figures. However the painting seems like an informal, non-representational composition because of the way he distributes constantly repeating different structured areas and concomitant contrasts of light and darkness that can no longer be brought into harmony with natural objects. Tarasin’s artistic work is in the “Réalités Nouvelles” tradition evident in Paris since the end of the 1940s, that aimed at being “truer” than realistic painting because it integrated optical and spiritual experiences into the work of art. That said, this tradition was not as far removed from reality as geometrical and concrete formations. At the start of the 1960s Tarasin’s work shows clear signs of being influenced by the brownish, telluric landscapes of Antoni Tàpies and German Tachists and Informalists like Emil Schumacher, who were in search of the essence and structures “behind” the visible world. A light relief in the painting surface is also proof of Tarasin’s interest in substance and material. Last not least the hard and simultaneous tone contrasts point to his interest in photography. The fact is that Tarasin also worked for many years in this area.

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