

American Artists in the Muzeum Sztuki Collection (Łódź, 17 Oct 22)

Muzeum Sztuki, ms2, 19 Ogródowa, Łódź, Poland, Oct 17, 2022

Kacper Szalecki

International Symposium:

American Artists in the Muzeum Sztuki Collection.

In 1983, American artists donated a collection of their works as part of a project entitled *Échange entre artistes 1931–1982, Pologne-USA*, initiated by artists Henryk Stażewski (founding member of the a.r. group and the Foksal Gallery, both initiatives devoted to the promotion of the avant-garde) and Sam Francis (member of the Artists Committee supporting and advising the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles), as well as Anka Ptaszkowska (critic, co-founder of Foksal Gallery) and Pontus Hultén (director of MOCA). The idea behind the project was to establish a dialogue between Polish and American artists: works by Polish artists were given to the MOCA collection “in exchange” for works by American artists donated to the collection of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź.

The nearly forty works by American artists reflect a range of tendencies in American art of the turn of the 1970s and 80s: post-minimalism, performance, and conceptual art. Many of these works are difficult to classify and fly in the face of prevailing interpretations of American art of the era; they exemplify west-coast approaches to artmaking, contrasting with the languages established by artists centered around New York. The *Échange* project and the resulting collection invite interpretations of the complex political circumstances of the time: the politics of the Iron Curtain and Martial Law in Poland.

Through this symposium, we wish to take a closer look into Polish-American relations and art exchange in the 1980s. The main outcome of the project is to better understand the significance of the *Échange* collection within the larger context of the Muzeum Sztuki collection.

The Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź is one of the world’s oldest museums of modern art. As early as the turn of the 1920s and 30s, a collective of visual artists (Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro, and Henryk Stażewski) and poets (Julian Przyboś and Jan Brzękowski) began gathering pieces by the most important artists of the day, who donated their works to the a.r. collection. Soon, this unique symbol of solidarity and avant-garde cooperation was donated by the a.r. group to the museum in Łódź to popularize the new art.

Symposium Agenda:

9:45 A word to open the symposium by Dominika Świątońska (US Embassy in Warsaw) and an introduction by Agnieszka Pindera and Dr. Paweł Polit (Muzeum Sztuki)

10:00 Agnieszka Pindera (Muzeum Sztuki)

The Exchange in more than three words

10:30 Maria Matuszkiewicz (Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw)

Message in a bottle

11:00 Dr. Paweł Polit (Muzeum Sztuki)

Process, place, intervention. On the affinities between Polish and American artists in the neo-avant-garde era

11:30 Prof. Lucy Bradnock (Courtauld Institute of Art, London)

Los Angeles International: the L.A. Art World circa 1980

12:30–14:00 lunch break

14:00 Prof. Michael Leja (University of Pennsylvania)

Narration and Comedy in 1970s Art in the United States

15:00 Dr. Wojciech Szymański (University of Warsaw)

Chris Burden – Delux Photo Book 1971-1973

15:30 Dr. Elizabeth Buhe

Conceptual Space Between Polish and American Painting

16:30 Prof. Agnieszka Rejniak-Majewska (University of Łódź)

Sculpting Light: The Work of Barbara Kasten and the Modern "Lichtspiel" Tradition

17:00 Barbara Kasten in conversation with Prof. Agnieszka Rejniak-Majewska

The symposium is organized thanks to the support of Embassy of the United States of America.

Reference:

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