

: Magdalena Abakanowicz
Seven Figures, 2008
Giver, 1992

artist's donation and deposits

Magdalena Abakanowicz has for several decades now been one of the internationally best recognised Polish artists. She has gained recognition with her abakans and figurative spatial compositions made chiefly of fabrics, but also of wood, stone, or bronze. She introduced weaving techniques into contemporary art. Highly characteristic for her practice are sculptural series – individual figures or groups. Abakanowicz is represented in the Museum collection by two pieces, corresponding with periods and strands of her oeuvre: a new group of seven figures made of jute sack, and a 1992 sculpture called 'Giver'. The latter is part of the series 'War Games' (started 1987) – sculptural pieces made with trunks of fallen trees bound by metal chains.

Magdalena Abakanowicz (born 1931) is one of the internationally best known Polish artists. Her international career began when she was awarded gold medal at the 1965 São Paulo Biennale. She represented Poland at the Venice Biennale in 1980. She is the author of, among other things, large public-space sculptural compositions at Grant Park, Chicago, and Cytadela, Poznań. She participated in the famous exhibition analysing the premises and legacy of feminist art, 'WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution', at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (2007).

: Paweł Althamer
Rubber, 2008

artist's donation

'Rubber' is the nickname of a person, the title of a work commemorating him, and the material the piece is made of. The work is Althamer's collaboration with the students and teachers of a fine arts workshop conducted by the Warszawa Praga Północ Pedagogy and Social Animation Group. 'Rubber' was a familiar figure for them – a picturesque type from Stalowa street, one of Warsaw's leading 'no-go' areas – a petty criminal and wino for some, a local authority on the code of honour for others. Althamer develops here his conception of community sculpture, of art based on interpersonal relations and social bonds. At the same time, he turns into reality the idea of an interactive monument; the sculpture is mounted on a spring and when pushed by the passers-by, it sways in an imitation of human movement, remembering and 'animating' the figure of the late 'Rubber'. The piece will be exhibited in two locations: at the Museum of Modern Art and on Stalowa street.

Paweł Althamer (born 1967) is one of the most influential Eastern European contemporary artists, who has for years left his mark on the international art scene. Whether creating hyper-realistic sculptural pieces or conducting ephemeral actions, his work is a peculiar kind of urban shamanism, an 'out-of-the-body' kind of experience, pushing further and blurring the distinctions between art and life. His works have been presented at many prestigious galleries and museums, most recently at New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art. He participated in Documenta X in Kassel (1997) and Skulptur Projekte in Munster (2007). Winner of The Vincent van Gogh Biannual Award for 2004.

: Mirosław Bałka
Boy and an Eagle, 1988

Fundacja Egit deposit

'Boy and an Eagle' is one of the key sculptures of the stormy turn of the 1980s and 1990s, when new ways of representation emerged in Polish art in response to the challenges of the political and economic transformation (a moment before the eruption of the phenomenon of 'critical art'). The piece alludes to the myth where Zeus as eagle tempts young Ganymede. In the catalogue of the 1988 exhibition 'Sculpture in the Garden', where the work was shown for the first time, the artist featured two texts altering and broadening the piece's interpretation: an excerpt from William S. Burroughs's prose, and the 1900 patriotic rhyme 'The Polish Child's Confession of Faith' ('Who are you? A little Pole...'). The artist thus introduces to the Polish art discourse the theme of tension between the private and the public, the intimate and the political.

Mirosław Bałka (born 1958) is one of the most well known Polish artists. In 1986, with Mirosław Filonik and Marek Kijewski, he started the artistic collective Świadomość Neue Bieriemiennost (active 1986-1989). Bałka's works have been shown at various international artistic institutions, including a solo show at Tate Britain (1995), at Documenta IX (1992), Carnegie International (1995), or several times at the Venice Biennale of Art. His works are in many prestigious collections, for instance, Tate Modern.

- Who are you?
- A Polish child.
- What's your sign?
- An eagle white.
- Where you're living?

- Among Poles.
- In which country?
- Polish soil.
- What's that soil?
- Fatherland.
- How it's conquered?
- By the hands.
- Do you love it?
- Yes I do.
- D'you believe it?
- Yes it's true.
- Who you're to it?
- Grateful child.
- What you owe it?
- Even die.

Władysław Bełza

Polish child's confession of belief (1900)

“ Little naked boys walk along the banks throwing fruit into the water and masturbating while they emit birdcalls and animal noises, giggling, singing, whining, and growling out spurts of sperm that glitter in the dappled sunlight. As we pass, the boys bend over, waving and grinning between their legs like sheaves of wheat parted by a gentle breeze that wafts us to the jetty. (...)”

On the jetty we are welcomed by a tall statuesque youth with negroid features and kinky yellow hair. It is late afternoon and the boys are troping back from the riverbanks and orchards and fish hatcheries. Many of them are completely naked. I am struck by the mixtures here displayed: Negro, Chinese, Portuguese, Irish, Malay, Japanese, Nordic boys with kinky red and blond and auburn hair and jet-blacks eyes, Chinese with bright red hair and green eyes, mixtures of Chinese and Indian of a delicate pink colors, Indians of a deep copper red with one blue eye and one brown eye, purple-black skin and pubic hairs.”

William Bourroughs

Cities of the Red Night (1981)

: Eustachy Kossakowski archive, 1947-2001

Fundacja EKO donation

The Eustachy Kossakowski archive includes 150,000 negatives and 20,000 transparencies. The priceless collection of the works of a photographer active in Poland and France can be divided into several groups. The first group are pictures from the period when Kossakowski specialised in journalistic photography, working for periodicals such as *Stolica* or *Polska*. The second part is a documentation, priceless for the Museum, of the Polish artistic life of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly documentations of Tadeusz Kantor's and Jerzy Grotowski's theatre shows, or the activities of Galeria Foksal or Galeria Krzywe Koło. Besides that, the archive includes Eustachy Kossakowski's conceptual photographs, such as the famous 6 metres avant Paris (1970), or the later, more metaphysical *Lumieres de Chartres* (1983-1990). In the exhibition we show a documentation of Tadeusz Kantor's spectacle *Where Are the Snows of Yesteryear* (1984) and a selection of journalistic photos.

Eustachy Kossakowski (1925-2001), one of the most well known Polish photographers, practiced both journalistic and artistic photography. He studied architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology. In the late 1950s and the 1960s he worked as photojournalist for the magazines *Stolica*, *Zwierciadło*, *Polska*, *Ty i Ja*. He documented and participated in the artistic life of Warsaw and Paris. He moved to France in 1970, where he immediately won recognition with his series 6 metres avant Paris comprising 159 photographs of 'Paris' signposts on the roads leading to the French capital.

: Kowalnia archive, 1985-2008

acquired with funds from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage's 'Signs of the Time' operational programme

Grzegorz Kowalski's unique teaching curriculum 'Common Space, Private Space' is a perfect example of his 'partnership-based didactics'. Initially, Kowalski pursued it in the early 1980s at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts' Faculty of Industrial Design (with Wiktor Gutt), and from 1985 in the Faculty of Sculpture, where he took over a studio from Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. Over the years, the exercise was carried out a total of eleven times. It is based on a few simple rules. Its purpose is to engage the participants in a process communication without the use of verbal or written language. The exercise is thus oriented not towards creating a collectively produced object, but towards the process itself. Its course is impossible to predict, and the participants are forbidden to act destructively (though the rule has not always been observed). Finally, which is particularly important, students and professors participate in the exercise on equal terms. 'At the beginning everyone has a precisely defined private space within the common space. The private space is the territory of one's privacy. The common space is a kind of agora. In practical application, the two areas integrate rather suddenly, resulting in a transgression and expansion of the originally defined common space', Kowalski wrote. The sources of his didactic conception should be sought in the persons of his masters – Prof Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, and Prof Oskar Hansen, author of the Open Form theory.

Grzegorz Kowalski (born 1942) is an artist, curator, one of the most influential Polish pedagogues. He graduated under Prof Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, and was then assistant lecturer in Prof Oskar Hansen's Solids and Planes Composition Studio. He has participated in numerous exhibitions, such as the 2nd Biennale of Spatial Forms (Elbląg 1967) or the International Meeting of Sculptors (Mexico 1968). He co-curated Galeria Repassage in Warsaw.

: Katarzyna Kozyra
Punishment and Crime, 2002

acquired with funds from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage's 'Signs of the Time' operational programme

The video installation 'Punishment and Crime' documents the activities of a group of hobbyists fascinated with guns and explosives. At a military training ground, in the absence of the military itself, they indulge in a destructive passion – shooting all kinds of guns at car wrecks, blowing up wooden sheds, triggering off unexploded WWII-era artillery shells. Their hobby is a dangerous and illegal one: the explosives and gunpowder are DIY-made, and the explosions are powerful. As the artist recounted, the film's protagonists, who appear in grotesque pin-up girl masks, 'play with death', but their passion is utterly unselfish. The chaotic shooting spree is juxtaposed with images paraphrasing Francisco Goya's etchings from 'the Atrocities of War' series.

Katarzyna Kozyra (born 1963) is one of the most important representatives of the generation that debuted in the 1990s, associated with the critical art current. Works such as *Animal Pyramid*, *Blood Ties*, or *Olympia* provoked heated public debates on the boundaries and objectives of art in the new democratic realities. Kozyra represented Poland at the 1999 Venice Biennale, where she won a honorary mention, and has shown her work on numerous occasions at Zachęta National Gallery of Art. Her multi-part performance project *In Art Dreams Come True* has been presented at, among other venues, the DAAD in Berlin in 2006.

: Jarosław Modzelewski and Marek Sobczyk
Das Gebet des Deutschen Pfarrers oder Bleistiftprobe, 1984

Fundacja Egit deposit

In English translation, the title of this large-format work on paper is 'The Prayer of a German Priest, or, a Pencil Test'. It is one of Modzelewski and Sobczyk's first painting collaborations. The piece was created during the artists' residence in Dusseldorf and refers to the awkward position of a visitor from Eastern Europe, who feels 'disabled', as it were, and excluded. The authors described: 'The able-bodied one is a German; the disabled one in the wheelchair with a lily motif is a Pole – a victim of secret-police interrogations. It's beyond the area on a white background. The priest kneels, adoring, the able-bodied man walks away, looking back, the disabled man understands little, he is in the bottom corner, looking in another direction'. The very well known painting has been often reproduced and presented in exhibitions, including Gruppa's 1992 retrospective at Zachęta National Gallery of Art.

Jarosław Modzelewski (born 1955) and Marek Sobczyk (born 1955) – outstanding Polish painters, founders in 1983 (with other Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts artists: Ryszard Grzyb, Paweł Kowalewski, Włodzimierz Pawlak, and Ryszard Woźniak) of the artistic collective Gruppa. Gruppa was described as being 'gaudy', and its 'wild' practice was a protest not only against the bleak reality of the martial law, but also against the blandness of post-avantgarde art that had just been entering a phase of insipid academism. Currently all Gruppa members work and exhibit on their own.

: Kateřina Šedá

There Is Nothing Here, 2006

acquired with funds from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage's 'Signs of the Time' operational programme

'There Is Nothing Here' is the documentation of an artistic action – a 'community game' inaugurated and 'directed' by Czech artist Kateřina Šedá in the small town of Ponětovice. The residents of this provincial little place in the Moravia region use to complain that 'there is nothing here...': a frozen reality, everything is predictable, nothing unexpected will ever happen here. The artist thoroughly analysed the local community's life (using, among other things, detailed questionnaire forms), acquainting herself with the residents' daily schedules and habits, to one day propose entirely new rules. For twenty four hours the people of Ponětovice synchronised their daily routines, all performing the same activity at precisely the same time. They did nothing new – only the usual things, but with full awareness, as a kind of public 'monument'. The day became a praise of 'nothing', a celebration of the simplest gestures, and of living in a small community. At the same time, there was a disturbing aspect here of susceptibility to manipulation and the controlling function of social norms.

Kateřina Šedá (born 1979) is one of Eastern Europe's most interesting young-generation artists. She has continued the socially-engaged, activist current characteristic for the art of the region. She is a laureate of the Jindřich Chalupecký Award (established by Vaclav Havel) for the most important Czech artist aged under 35. She took part in Documenta XI (2007) and the 5th Berlin Biennale (2008). She had a solo exhibition at the prestigious Renaissance Society in Chicago.

: Wilhelm Sasnal
Broniewski, 2005

artist's donation

'Broniewski' is one of the important paintings by Wilhelm Sasnal that cemented his position as the 'youngest of Polish historical painters'. Sasnal has a penchant for grim and painful subjects, ambiguous issues. And so is the figure of Władysław Broniewski, an author of revolutionary pre-war poems and political-propagandist post-war poetry. The portrait was inspired by the artist's official, heroic-style representations. Sasnal deals here with the issue of the artist's political involvement – here we have a phenomenally talented poet who puts his talent at the service of communist propaganda, in a way undermining his earlier achievements. The piece was shown in the 2005 Galeria Raster exhibition 'Broniewski' that was an attempt to 'disenchant' the poet's image.

Wilhelm Sasnal (born 1972) is one of the most acclaimed and high-profile European artists. He is an author of paintings, drawings, comic books, book illustrations, as well as numerous films. Sasnal explores a characteristic range of themes: history and memory, pop music iconography, private life and friends. He has had many exhibitions in Poland and abroad, including retrospectives at Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven (2006) and at Zachęta National Gallery of Art (2007/2008). He is the winner of The Vincent van Gogh Biannual Award for 2007.

: Monika Sosnowska
Bars, 2008

artist's donation

'Bars' are Sosnowska's latest work, a functional sculpture designed specially for the Museum of Modern Art's temporary space – a former retail pavilion. The piece combines two themes characteristic for the artist's practice: inspiration with People's Poland-era architectural motifs and the related aesthetics of makeshift and amateur alterations and modifications (such as the anti-burglary bars installed by apartment block residents in corridors and staircases), and the disturbing 'peculiarity' that arises when architecture's original function is distorted or modified. In this case, the flat bars enter into the third dimension, their branches 'growing' and twisting, annexing the exhibition space, trapping it.

Monika Sosnowska (born 1972) is one of the most widely recognised young-generation artists. She represented Poland at the 2007 Venice Biennale. Earlier, she participated in, among other events, Manifesta 4 in Frankfurt (2002) and the show *Clandestine* at the 51st Venice Biennale of Art (2003). In 2006, she had a solo show at the New York Museum of Modern Art, and in 2008 an exhibition at the prestigious Schaulager in Basel. Sosnowska participates in the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art's Bródno Sculpture Park project (planned opening May 2009).

: Zygmunt Stępiński
Skarpa cinema neon sign, 1960

donation, Juvenes

The neon sign of Warsaw's now demolished Skarpa cinema, was designed, like the building itself, by architect Zygmunt Stępiński. The neon is a classic example of 1960s commercial design, and at the same time a symbol of the rapid transformation Warsaw's urban tissue has been undergoing. Transferred to the museum, the neon becomes a testimony to the changes as a result of which many valuable examples of historical architecture and design are being destroyed as private investment aggressively pushes into public space. While Warsaw's modernist architecture disappears or dilapidates, the Skarpa cinema neon sign evokes the atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s when the movie theatre symbolised a space of longing and escape into fiction.

Zygmunt Stępiński (1908-1982) was a well known Warsaw architect and urban planner. He was a co-designer of the Trasa W-Z route, the representative MDM residential quarter and Plac Konstytucji, autor of the conception of the reconstruction of Plac Teatralny. Author of 'Gawędy warszawskiego architekta' ['Tales of a Warsaw Architect'] (1984) and 'Siedem placów Warszawy' ['Warsaw's Seven Plazas'] (1988).

: **Alina Szapocznikow**

Sein-Illuminée (Illuminated Breast), 1966

Studies for „Journey”, 11 drawings, 1967

Ventre (Stomach), 1968

Sculpture-Lampe III (Sculpture-Lamp III) (Fetish IX), 1970

acquired with funds from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

The Museum is proud to present three sculptures by Alina Szapocznikow, an artist crucial for the history of post-war Polish art. 'Sein-Illuminée' is a lamp made with polyester casts of lips and breasts, one of the artist's several sculptures simulating the utilitarian function of an everyday article, but the only one of such a complex form and nature. 'Ventre' is a plaster cast of the stomach of Arianne Raoul-Auval, Roland Topor's then-fiancée. The cast became 'source material' for a series of polyester sculptures and the project of stomach-pillow multiple. 'Sculpture-Lampe III (Fetish IX)' is a lamp made of polyester breast casts arranged in a votive manner on a lace drapery. All three pieces represent crucial aspects of Szapocznikow's oeuvre: the use of bodily casts (her own and friends'), their defragmentation and transformation into kind of decorative votive offerings, ties with French New Realism, calling into question the classic definition of sculpture, multiples and quasi-utilitarian objects, and finally, experiments with new materials. Feminist themes, of which Szapocznikow was a precursor in Polish art, run through her entire oeuvre. The sculptural works are accompanied by 11 drawings donated to the Museum by artist's son, Piotr Stanisławski.

Alina Szapocznikow (1927-1973) is one of the most important post-war Polish artists and one of the most original 20th-century sculptors. She studied in the UMRUM arts-and-crafts school in Prague under Josef Wagner, and in the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. She elaborated on and challenged the idea of sculpture, introduced new materials, achieving highly original results. She moved to Paris in 1963. She developed an individual artistic language through which she was able to confront the trauma of the Holocaust as well as the disintegration of her own body. She was one of the brilliant pioneers of European women's art.

: Piotr Uklański
Untitled (John Paul II), 2004

acquired with funds from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

The photograph was made as part of the artist's action during the 2004 Sao Paulo Biennale. Three and a half thousand Brazilian soldiers formed the image, seen from above, of pope John Paul II. The 'tableau vivant' plays with a national icon and the traditional forms of its representation, while at the same time integrating with the continuity of papal representations in Polish art. The piece was also presented as a billboard on the site in Warsaw where the Museum of Modern Art building is to be located. The presentation coincided with John Paul II's death. The piece immediately became a focal point for religious reflection and homage for the great religious leader, with people laying flowers and placing candles beneath it. In 2007 Uklański carried out a similar project on the former site of the Gdańsk Shipyard, with four thousand soldiers forming the Solidarity logo.

Piotr Uklański (born 1968) lives in Warsaw and New York. He has been hugely successful internationally while continuing to explore a repertoire of typically Polish themes and symbols (such as the white-and-red flag and the white eagle). He has had retrospective exhibitions at, among other places, Kunsthalle Basel (2004), Secession, Vienna (2007), and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007). Uklański is also the author of Poland's first ever spaghetti western, 'Summer Love'.

: Artur Żmijewski
Our Songbook, 2002

artist's donation

A film about problems with individual memory and the gradual degeneration of collective memory. During his stay in Tel Aviv in 2003, Żmijewski contacted a number of Polish Jews who had left Poland – the land of their ancestors – shortly before or during WWII. He asked them to recall and sing the songs of their youth. The protagonists recall all kinds of melodies: cavalry songs, pre-war pop hits, the Polish national anthem. Żmijewski shows a world that is irrevocably becoming past. 'Our Songbook' is one of the most moving and meaningful projects of the Polish art of recent years, and one that has found a reflection in the debates on national identity and Polish-Jewish history. Żmijewski broadens the field of art with his films, treating art as a tool for remembering, generating knowledge, and calling it into question.

Artur Żmijewski (born 1966) is one of the most influential figures in Poland's public life – an artist, publisher, commentator, editor 'Krytyka Polityczna'. He believes that art can be used to effect real change in social life, language, and memory. His works have been presented in numerous exhibitions in Poland and abroad. He participated in Documenta XII (2007), and in 2005 represented Poland at the Venice Biennale with 'Repetition'.