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Acknowledgments

With this publication we wish to honor fifty artists who donated their artworks to foreign museums. What this book is calling “the Polish–American exchange” was an initiative of a group of Warsaw-based artists who wanted to establish contact with their colleagues abroad. The art scene in a Soviet satellite country had its limitations, to say the least, but there were still exceptional places and people who made their mark. During the directorship of Ryszard Stanisławski, Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź was one of them. Its origins, dating back to the 1920s, intertwined with biographies of the most interesting postwar artists, and led to significant art donations. Polish artists offered their pieces to the newly established Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (MOCA), and those based in the United States contributed to the Muzeum Sztuki’s collection. Although 1982 marks the first public presentation of these donations, it was a year later that these pieces were processed and included in the inventory. With this publication we celebrate the anniversary of the formal gesture which sealed the exchange.

This publication responds to a necessity: to study two sub-collections of major art museums in Łódź and Los Angeles, a task that required direct contact with artists, archival research, and a platform to discuss the broader contexts of these collections. Conversations with the artist Koji Kamoji and the 1982 engineer of the exchange, Anka Ptaszkowska, were extremely helpful in understanding the conditions of art production and exhibition-making at the project’s core. At the same time, their recollections included many anecdotes and testified to the congenial nature of the activities. We are genuinely grateful for their time and assistance. The following artists answered the questionnaire

we sent to the exchange participants: Peter Downsbrough, Jud Fine, Barbara Kasten, Peter Shire, and Paul Vangelisti. Their recollections proved that artists were approached and asked to donate their work in many ways. The interviews conducted with Wiesław Borowski of Foksal Gallery, Lita Albuquerque, member of the MOCA's Artist Advisory Council, and artist Liga Pang provided a better understanding of the 1982 exchange's institutional context. It was supplemented by consultations with Sam Francis Papers and Count Giuseppe Panza Papers at the Getty Research Institute. This ambitious undertaking would not have been possible without the Getty Library Grant I received and the dedication of Rachel Longaker and Virginia Mokslaveskas who administered my inquiries. The archival research involved examining the historical records of Foksal Gallery and Muzeum Sztuki, as well as Anka Ptaszkowska's papers, provided by Robert Jarosz and Magda Drągowska (MoMA Warsaw), with help of Maria Matuszkiewicz. Thanks to the tireless assistance of Maria Rubersz (Foksal Gallery), this publication illustrates well the artistic value of Polish contribution in 1982. The MOCA Archives, kindly made available by Chief Curator Clara Kim, were combined with records of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris to draft a detailed timeline of the Polish–American exchange.

The concept of this publication has developed through meetings held in 2022 at the Muzeum Sztuki with financial support of the US Embassy in Warsaw. Barbara Kasten joined us then via Zoom, and the following scholars delivered their papers and contributed to discussions during a two-stage symposium: Dr. Christian Berger (Universität Siegen), Dr. Małgorzata Jędrzejczyk (Jagiellonian University in Krakow), Prof. Michael Leja (University of Pennsylvania), Prof. Filip Lipiński (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Dr. Paweł Polit (Muzeum Sztuki), Prof. Agnieszka Rejniak-Majewska (University of Łódź), and Dr. Wojciech Szymański (University of Warsaw). Edited

versions of their papers are found in the section devoted to the practices of the Polish and American artists described through the lenses of their respectful disciplines. Dr. Elizabeth Buhe and Prof. Lucy Bradnock (Courtauld Institute of Art) were present at the symposium, but have not contributed to this publication. We appreciate the involvement of all, contributing to this multifaceted volume with their scholarship. Concluding in the publication, on the other hand, we have new texts expanding on the geopolitical contexts of the 1982 project, starting from my introductory chapter and continuing in Dr. Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus's (Polish Academy of Sciences) meticulous study. Last but not least, we are grateful to David Crowley (National College of Art and Design), and Patryk P. Tomaszewski (City University of New York) for reinterpreting the oeuvres of two of Poland's most renowned postwar artists—Tadeusz Kantor and Henryk Stażewski.

I reserve a special thank-you for Meredith Gray, Director of Registration and Collections, who provided us with information on the Polish artworks in MOCA's collections. Our gratitude also goes out to the Department of Preservation of the Muzeum Sztuki's Collection under the supervision of Tatiana Matwij, as well as digitization and licensing teams – colleagues Monika Cywińska-Pryk, and Marta Pierzchała – along with freelancers Małgorzata Chmiel, and Zuzanna Andruszko. Andżelika Bauer, Head of the Department of Exhibitions and Publications, and Emilia Antosz, Grant Specialist, who also contributed to the success of this project.

We would like to thank the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for the funding to complete the research phase and to organize a book launch in Los Angeles in early 2024. This publication has been long in the making, and at the same time it is just starting its journey. Our sincere appreciation goes to our partners of the final phase in Los Angeles, among them MOCA representatives: Johanna Burton, Director Maurice Marciano, and Clara Kim, Chief Curator & Director of Curatorial

Affairs. My deepest gratitude is reserved for Andrew Perchuk, Deputy Director of the Getty Research Institute, who has supported this project since its inception.

Agnieszka Pindera

Head of the Center for Research and Public Programs at Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź (2016–23)

Agnieszka Pindera

Truckload of Art: The 1982 Cultural Exchange Between Łódź and Los Angeles

In the early 1980s, American¹ artists received an invitation from the California/International Arts Foundation, signed by its Chairwoman, Lyn Kienholz. The letter was an invitation to participate in an international project, one that required the donation of an important work to be exhibited in the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Thereafter, all the American artworks gathered in this way would become part of the collection of the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź. As Kienholz's letter emphasized, the project has been initiated by Henryk Stażewski, and "modeled on an historic exchange in which he participated in the late 1920s and 30s." She was referring to Stażewski's involvement in the a.r. group's most ambitious project—building the International Collection of Modern Art for Muzeum Sztuki, the first modern art museum in Poland. The members of the a.r. group—visual artists Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro, and Stażewski, as well as poets Jan Brzękowski and Julian Przyboś—used their contacts to persuade many European artists to support the initiative by donating their works.²

The internationalism postulated by the avant-garde in founding the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź was interrupted first by World War Two, and then by the Soviet regime. Until the mid 1950s, Polish culture was strictly controlled and dominated by the doctrine of Socialist Realism, imposed by the Polish United Workers' Party; at the same time; international cultural exchange outside the Soviet Bloc barely existed.

Even in the worst of times, Polish cultural ties with France remained intact. The French government intended to use Poland to keep the Soviet Bloc up to date with Western ideas. Two official decrees were signed in 1947 and 1957 to regulate cultural cooperation between the two countries, such as the scholarships for Polish scientists and cultural professionals to travel to France. The University of Warsaw established the Center for French Studies (headed by Michael Foucault) and the University of Paris initiated the Center for Studies on the History and Civilization of Poland. Another example of this cultural exchange was through exhibitions—the official shows focused on crafts and folk art, while more interesting projects were organized on a smaller scale and less formally. One example of the latter was *Précurseurs de l'art abstrait en Pologne: Malewicz, Kobra, Strzemiński, Berlewi, Stażewski*, presented at Galerie Denise René in 1957.

The United States of America was another country that reinstated cultural collaboration with the Soviet Union and its satellite countries at that time. Post-Thaw, the Lacy–Zaroubin agreement of 1958 regulated a four-year series of exchanges. Poland was an interesting case study from an American perspective, as it seemed to oppose the official standards, and persisted in creating and exhibiting abstract art.³ Soon the Guggenheim Museum presented Tadeusz Dominik and Jan Lebenstein, *Time* magazine published a piece on Tadeusz Kantor, and in 1961, MoMA organized the *15 Polish Painters* exhibition, featuring seven paintings by Tadeusz Kantor and three reliefs by Henryk Stażewski.

Remembering the generosity of the artistic community of the 1920s and 30s, an eighty-six-year-old Stażewski wrote to his American colleagues: “contemporary Polish artists are isolated and have too little direct contact with foreign artists and their work. We would like to see how our work functions in a new context and do not see this opportunity in commercial exhibits, galleries, or the traditional art