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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 Kōji Kamoji and the 1982 engineer of the exchange, Anka Ptazkowska, 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, a member of the MOCA’s Artist Advisory Council, and artists Liga Pang and Tomasz Osiński 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 Ptazkowska’s papers, provided by Robert Jarosz and Magda Drągowska (MoMA Warsaw), with the 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 respective 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



copies of artworks presented at the festival with the slogans “Buy It Cheaper from Us” and “Down with Plagiarism.” The next day, during the symposium, Ptaszkowska commented on these actions and plainly tied them to current events, as a result of which both Kantor and Gostomski lost their academic positions. She stigmatized the administrative mechanisms based on the quantitative evaluation and conservatism of the art academy. Around that time, Ptaszkowska and Borowski started considering displaying only the documentation of actions that took place elsewhere, but Foksal chose a different course, turning toward conceptualism. It started when Gostomski decided to take part in the Wrocław’70 Visual Arts Symposium¹¹² by contributing *It Begins in Wrocław*, aiming to oppose “the crowd-pleasing nature” of art initiatives at that time.¹¹³ In 1971, a sense of frustration with the obligatory administrative reporting and imposed productivity goals triggered a new idea for Foksal Gallery’s exhibition schedule—nine individual presentations of Second Group, Gostomski, Maria Stangret, Kantor, Kōji Kamoji, and others were carried out in one month.

While Borowski was keeping the lights burning at the Foksal Gallery, Ptaszkowska left Warsaw to settle in Paris in 1970. In less than two years, she was engaged in a new project, Galerie 1–36, in collaboration with Michel Claura and Francois Guinochet, and involving Daniel Buren. This gallery with no permanent address exhibited Peter Downsbrough and Dan Graham, among others. The next venture, located in the vicinity of Centre Georges Pompidou and called Vitrine pour l’Art Actuel, was developed with Claura and Brigitte Niegel. It was mainly a bookstore with artist books, catalogs of exhibitions, and independent art magazines, supplemented with photographs of exhibitions from around the world in the shop window. In the late 1970s, Ptaszkowska traveled to the United States of America, where she tried to persuade the Art Institute in Chicago to acquire an artwork by Henryk Stażewski. While in New York, she delivered a memorandum pitching Stażewski’s idea of a contemporary art exchange with the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź to Thomas M. Messer, who was directing the Guggenheim Museum at the time. After receiving a positive response (**March 6, 1979**), Stażewski wrote Messer a letter with a formal agreement and an explanation: “I am enclosing a draft contract constituting the basis for the gift that we are willing to give to the Guggenheim Museum, which will consist of approximately fifty works by Czech, Hungarian, and Polish artists. [...] I am pleased to inform you that the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź has accepted a similar gift in the form of a collection of works by American and Western European artists participating in the exchange on the terms we proposed.”¹¹⁴

The Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź became a postwar-era agent of cultural exchange after Ryszard Stanisławski became director in 1966—the same year Foksal Gallery opened. During the first years, he successfully juggled Party favorites with exhibitions of internationally recognized artists. He was interested in new directions in art and exhibition making, and considered changing the museum’s functions.

Stanisławski was indeed willing to accept the donation of Western art envisaged by Stażewski, moreover he seemed sure of the Ministry of Culture and Art’s financial support for the project and offered to mediate with the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, where they wished to organize an exhibition of all the donated artworks.¹¹⁵ He had no chance to prove himself on this first count, as a couple months later, Ptaszkowska ended Guggenheim’s involvement in the exchange.¹¹⁶ The problem seemed to be the museum’s financial involvement in the research phase.

The same year on the West Coast, a new museum became part of Mayor Thomas Bradley’s plans for revitalizing Downtown Los Angeles. Proposals for the urban transformation of Bunker Hill were consulted by the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) with the Artists Advisory Council, formed of “Los Angeles’s most prominent,

successful and emerging artists.”¹¹⁷ It consisted of sixteen members, including Peter Alexander, Guy Dill, Fred Eversley, Sam Francis, Robert Irwin, Gary Lloyd, Ed Moses Alexis Smith, and DeWain Valentine. As they proclaimed in **November 1979**: “we are prepared to undertake the responsibility to represent the artists’ community of the Los Angeles area at large in all facets of the planning and negotiating, i.e. (1) design of the museum and grounds, (2) formation of museum policies and the formation of board of directors, (3) the decision process of choosing the director.”¹¹⁸ At the same time, artists Robert Irwin and Sam Francis were also members of the founding Board of Trustees. They headhunted Pontus Hultén and Richard Koshalek as future directors of MOCA, thus completing the third task from the Artists Advisory Council’s list.

Hultén was still involved at the Musée National d’Art Moderne at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris when Ptaszkowska approached him with the idea of the art exchange; he suggested she contact Lyn Kienholz, a cultural producer based in Los Angeles.¹¹⁹ On **April 28, 1980** Ptaszkowska sent a letter asking for assistance in approaching Robert Irwin. She detailed a project juxtaposing fifty eastern and fifty western artists, and wished to discuss the interests of MOCA in receiving “the (eastern) collection obtained through this exchange.”¹²⁰ The reply came in mid-May: “I’m sure Pontus told you that the museum is still a conceptual museum!” Kienholz wrote. “We hope it will be a reality in three years.”¹²¹ Soon, Hultén was recruited by the MOCA founding Board of Trustees, succeeding Messer in the program, as director of the American museum.¹²² On **November 1, 1980** Kienholz informed Ptaszkowska of having discussed the project with Hultén, as well as Sam Francis, who wanted to involve other socialist countries in the exchange. As mentioned above, Stażewski’s initial idea, presented to Messer in 1979, included artists from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. In fact, it was based on the personal network built by Stażewski, who also claimed the role of sponsor of the Polish part, and wanted the same roles to be adopted by Hungarian art historian László Beke and Czech sculptor Stanislav Kolibal. Kienholz’s suggestion that Hultén and Francis involve Poles along with artists from Yugoslavia and dissidents from the USSR was obviously not realistic.¹²³ The following letters do not discuss this idea any further. Throughout this period, Kienholz was informed by Ptaszkowska on each major development, allowing us to examine how the final list of Polish participants was developed.¹²⁴ For instance, in **December 1980**, Ptaszkowska suggested the exhibition might include Tadeusz Kantor’s play *Wielopole*, *Wielopole* performed by the Cricot 2, which was a success in Paris, as well as artworks by artists who acted in this piece (Maria Stangret, Lesław Janicki, and Wacław Janicki, members of the Second Group). Hultén finally seemed to tie everything together—in the early 1981 he visited Poland and Los Angeles.¹²⁵

During a time of extensive correspondence between Ptaszkowska and Kienholz, Suzanne Pagé was commissioned by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to organize an exhibition of Polish contemporary art (**July 18, 1980**). She immediately contacted Wiesław Borowski, whom she had known since 1970, to hear of Pontus Hultén’s recent visit to Poland and the plans of Centre Pompidou for an exhibition of Polish art, showcasing artists from the Foksal circle (as Borowski put it) and organized in cooperation with the Muzeum Sztuki (**February 23, 1981**).¹²⁶ Pagé was sure that the ARC—research and exhibition area in the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris—would be given priority by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹²⁷ In the Polish documents there is no trace of further correspondence with Foksal Gallery, at least until Pagé’s meeting with Ptaszkowska in fall that year.

On **May 18, 1981**, while traveling from Paris to Moscow, Hultén wrote the following note on the back of his business card (stating “Directeur du Musée National d’Art Moderne”): “Dear Richard [Koshalek], Here is the paper from the Polish artist. Stażewski is the grand old man (80 years about) of modern art in Poland. I think the best would be to give copies to the Artists Advisory Council and to Lyn

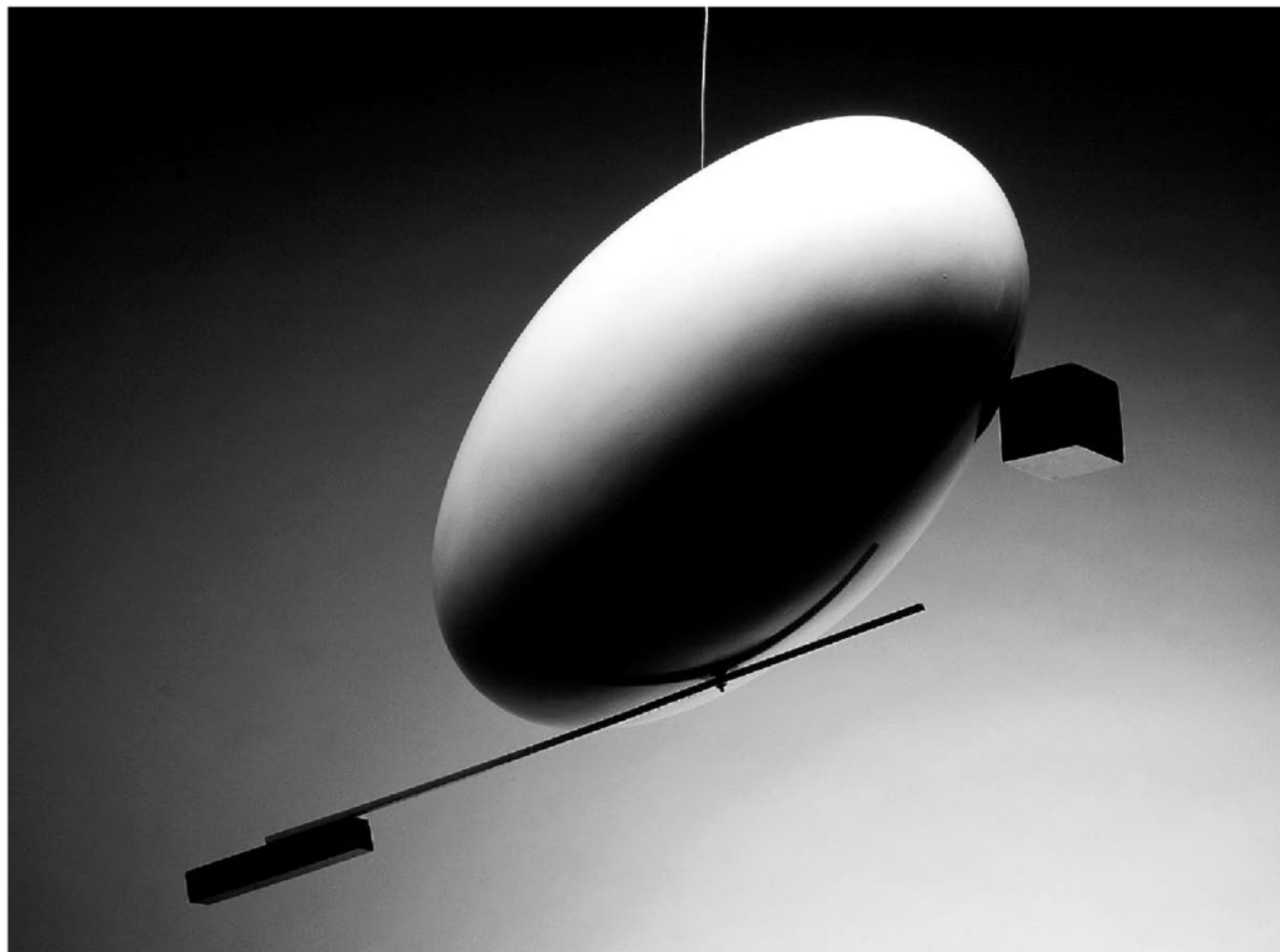


FIG. 1] Katarzyna Kobro, *Suspended Construction (I)*, 1921 (reconstruction by Bolesław Utkin 1972). Metal, fiberglass, epoxy resin, wood, 40 × 40 × 20 cm.
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© Photo by Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź



FIG. 2] Katarzyna Kobro, *Spatial Sculpture (I)*, 1925/1967. Iron sheet, wood, oil paint, 50 × 78 × 56 cm.
T. 9 Inv. No: MS/SN/R/48
© Photo by Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź



Invitation to the opening of *An Artistic Conversation, 1931-1982: Poland/USA* held at the Ulster Museum, Belfast in January 1983.
Courtesy of Foksal Gallery, Warsaw



Invitation to the private view of *An Artistic Conversation, 1931-1982: Poland/USA* held at the Ulster Museum, Belfast in January 1983.
Courtesy of Foksal Gallery, Warsaw

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1	STANISŁAW DRÓŹDŹ	1939–2009
2	ZBIGNIEW GOSTOMSKI	1932–2017
3	LESŁAW JANICKI AND WACŁAW JANICKI	1944
4	ZDZIŚŁAW JURKIEWICZ	1935–2012
5	KŌJI KAMOJI	1935
6	TADEUSZ KANTOR	1915–90
7	EDWARD KRASIŃSKI	1925–2004
8	ANDRZEJ ŁOBODZIŃSKI	1931–2023
9	TOMASZ OSIŃSKI	1951
10	MARIA STANGRET	1929–2020
11	ANTONI STARCZEWSKI	1924–2000
12	HENRYK STAŹEWSKI	1894–1988
13	ZYGMUNT TARGOWSKI	1941–71
14	RYSZARD WINIARSKI	1936–2006
15	LITA ALBUQUERQUE	1946
16	PETER ALEXANDER	1939–2020
17	TERRY ALLEN	1943
18	JOHN BALDESSARI	1931–2020
19	CHRIS BURDEN	1946–2015
20	CHRISTO	1935–2020
	AND JEANNE-CLAUDE	1935–2009
21	LADDIE JOHN DILL	1943
22	PETER DOWNSBROUGH	1940
23	FREDERICK EVERSLEY	1941
24	JUD FINE	1944
25	ROBBERT FLICK	1939
26	SAM FRANCIS	1923–1994
27	JOE GOODE	1937
28	DAN GRAHAM	1942–2022
29	DOUGLAS HUEBLER	1924–97
30	RICHARD JACKSON	1939
31	BARBARA KASTEN	1936
32	LES LEVINE	1935
33	GARY LLOYD	1943
34	JAY MCCAFFERTY	1948–2021
35	ED MOSES	1926–2018
36	ERIC ORR	1939–98
37	LIGA PANG	1939
38	HELEN PASHGIAN	1934
39	DAVID RABINOWITCH	1943
40	SUSAN RANKAITIS	1949
41	JOEL SHAPIRO	1941
42	PAUL SHARITS	1943–93
43	PETER SHELTON	1951
44	PETER SHIRE	1947
45	ALEXIS SMITH	1949–24
46	KEITH SONNIER	1941–2020
47	MICHAEL TODD	1935
48	DEWAIN VALENTINE	1936–2022
49	PAUL VANGELISTI	1945

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THIS SECTION IS INSPIRED BY THE 1982 EXHIBITION CATALOG, AND AS SUCH, THE NOTES DO NOT INCLUDE INFORMATION ON THE CAREERS OF ARTISTS WHO PARTICIPATED AFTERWARD. THE EDITORS OF THIS VOLUME TRIED TO REFLECT CONTEXTS SPECIFIC FOR EACH ART SCENE. THE US REPRESENTATIVES’ EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY THOSE ARTISTS WHO STUDIED AND SETTLED IN LOS ANGELES, ALLOWS US TO TRACE HOW ACADEMIC TRAJECTORIES ARE REFLECTED IN THEIR NETWORKS. FOR THE POLISH ARTISTS, THE COMMUNITIES AROUND (ALTERNATIVE) GAL- LERIES AND ARTIST-LED INITIATIVES AMOUNTED TO SIMILAR FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES.	
Among the founders of Foksal Gallery (1966).	
Actor of Tadeusz Kantor’s Cricot 2 Theater.	
A member of the Artist’s Advisory Council for the Museum of Con- temporary Art (MOCA) founded in 1979 in Los Angeles.	
The artist took part in the <i>Construction in Process</i> exhibition, prior to the exchange project. Held in Łódź in the fall of 1981, it involved fifty-four international artists and was organized with the support of the Solidarność [Solidarity] Workers Union.	
California Institute of the Arts	
University of California in Los Angeles	

EDWARD KRASIŃSKI

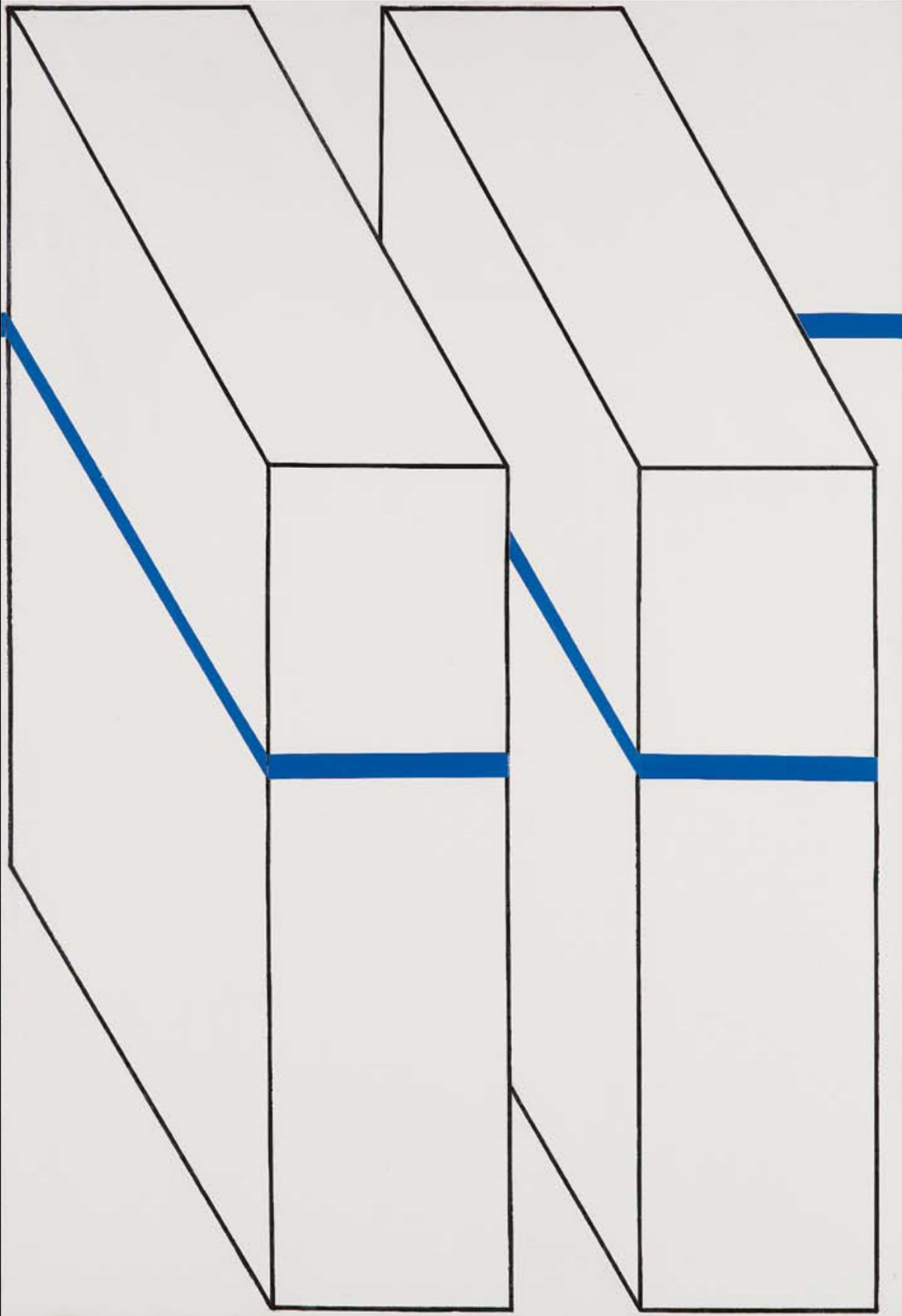
1925-2004

Krasiński graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow (1950). He exhibited at the Krzysztofory Gallery in Krakow (1965) and at Foksal Gallery in the late 1960s and 80s, among other places.

Krasiński is known for the use of a blue strip of Scotch tape in the *Interventions* series. Leading the viewer's gaze along the walls at a height of 130 cm, moving over the surfaces of the pictures hanging there, whether reproductions of paintings or photographs, and entering the interiors in the axonometric structures which the artist started creating in 1973, the blue stripe effaces the differences between real and fictitious space. Krasiński endowed it with the paradoxical character of an indexical sign, adjusting itself to the nature of the space it explores. In penetrating the illusory spaces of axonometric structures, the blue stripe seems to lose its material qualities, aligning itself with an abstract patterns of lines. When creeping across the walls and encountering the uneven surfaces of assemblages, its sensory qualities are intensified, exposing the richness and diversity of the environment in which it operates. As Krasiński commented, the blue stripe "intervenes with the real, reveals the real which was not noticed (or obvious) before." Krasiński's *Intervention* in the exchange project is exceptional in that it has a range of colors rarely seen in his other works from the series.

See the text by Christian Berger in this volume.

F G



Edward Krasiński, *Intervention XV*, 1977. Acrylic paint and blue Scotch tape on fiberboard, 70 x 100 cm.
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