

# Abstrakce.PL

## The Abstract in Polish Painting 1945 – 2017

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EXHIBITION CONCEPT: Beata Gawrońska-Oramus

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The Abstrakce.PL exhibition prepared by the Museum of Art in Olomouc as part of its presentations of Central European art offers a panorama of Polish abstract art from 1945 to our time. It opens with works by Władysław Strzemiński, an icon of the Polish avant-garde, and closes with the 2017 works of Piotr Lutyński, painter, sculptor; installations, objects, and graphic artist, and musician inspiring new life into the long tradition of the movement.

It is a capacious exhibition of excellent pedigree: at its core are exhibits loaned from the private collections of Renata and Grzegorz Król from Warsaw and Grażyna and Jacek Łozowski from Wrocław, who own works of the most important Polish artists from the post-war days, for instance Władysław Strzemiński, Henryk Stażewski, Waclaw Szpakowski, Maria Jarema, Tadeusz Kantor, Wojciech Fangor, Tadeusz Brzozowski, Alfred Lenica, Jerzy Nowosielski, Kajetan Sosnowski, Mieczysław Janikowski, Teresa Tyszkiewicz, Aleksander Kobzdej, Jonasz Stern, Teresa Rudowicz, Jerzy Kałucki, Jan Pamuła, Stanisław Dróżdź, Jerzy Kujawski, Józef Hałas, Jan Berdyszak, Stanisław Fijałkowski, Koji Kamoji, Leon Tarasewicz, and others. Many of the paintings are significant from the point of view of the artistic development of their authors, and many have been displayed at historic exhibitions, for instance the 1st Exhibition of Modern Art in Kraków in 1948 and the 15 Polish Painters at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York in 1961. The composition of the collections was significantly influenced by the personal preferences of the collectors, which lets us commune with an exceptional selection of works of Henryk Stażewski, Alfred Lenica, Józef Hałas, Teresa Rudowicz of exceptional order, as well as with a unique collection

of works of both Mieczysław Janikowski and Jerzy Kujawski, consummate painters holding an important place in Polish art even though they worked as émigrés, and can hardly be found even in museum collections. The collections of Renata and Grzegorz Król, and Grażyna and Jacek Łozowski not only invite you to a meeting with the classics but also give you an opportunity to get to know currently active artists who are the hope for the future of Polish abstract art, such as Jan Pamuła, Piotr Lutyński, and many others.

The exhibition is given additional esteem by the inclusion of works from the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw, the Museum of Art in Łódź, and Zachęta National Gallery of Art. These collections have provided the works of Władysław Strzemiński, Roman Opałka, Edward Krasiński, Henryk Stażewski, Stefan Gierowski, Jerzy Rosołowicz, Tadeusz Brzozowski, Wojciech Fangor, Ryszard Winiarski, Jan Lebenstein, and Jonasz Stern that extend the spectrum of the exhibition.

Thanks to such exceptional people and institutions opening their collections, you will have an opportunity to see works by 62 artists representing various movements and trends in Polish abstract painting. It is the first exhibition in the Czech Republic to be so complex, which is why it aims primarily at the portrayal of the variety of trends, the richness of personalities and individual artistic attitudes and transformations, in a word, the entire charm of Polish post-war abstract painting.

The exhibition emphasises two main currents of abstract art: emotional and geometrical. Therefore, you can find here works that belong to Tachism, Art Informel, matter painting, as well as structural paintings, and the ones that continue the geometric-constructivism trend defined by the first avant-garde. The currents that were born from abstract art, such as conceptualism and concrete poetry, are also signalled. The individual trends can be followed in their chronological order.

### **The publication**

The publication accompanying the exhibition contains texts written by authors focusing on selected phenomena. *Abstrahentium non est mendacium*, the essay by Krystyna Czerni, concerns the very essence of the phenomenon known as abstract painting and the watersheds in its post-war Polish history. The text by

Bożena Kowalska on two currents of Polish abstract art is a review of the most important works of artists and the trends the works in the collections of Renata and Grzegorz Król, and Grażyna and Jacek Łozowski belong to. Andrzej Nakov's article *Exorcising the Tragedy* focuses on the historical pedigree, inspirations, and specificity of Polish abstract art.

The publication is complemented with artist bios, a timeline, a detailed catalogue of published works, and the illustrative part that contains all the works presented in the exhibition. For the facility of the reader, each of the chapters in the illustrative section is preceded with a brief introduction that provides a guided tour to the narrative of the exhibition that, although designed especially for the eye, holds the stories of people and time under the guise of colour, texture, and matter. The texts preceding individual chapters let the artists speak: their statements are quoted together with comments contemporary to them. The development and character of Polish abstract painting is intertwined into the revolutions of the wheel of history to prove what I believe to be primarily its great independence, creative force, and artistic talent.

The exhibition is held under the auspices of Ilja Šmíd, Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic, and Piotr Gliński, Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.

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