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ENGLISH SUMMARIES

HISTORY OF WOMEN'S ART EXHIBITIONS IN POLAND

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Joanna M. SOSNOWSKA

An object and a thing

Wystawa Pracy Kobiet (The Women's Work Exhibition) opened in the Museum of Industry and Agriculture in Warsaw at the end of October 1877. When considered in combination with the exhibition *Świat Kobiety (The Woman's World)* that was held in the Civic Resursa in Warsaw at the turn of May/June 1939, the two events function as a particular type of brace for the topic of exhibitions presenting women's achievements in the era of modernism. In the 62-year-long period separating those two events, complex political, social and artistic changes took place that resulted in changes to the process of organizing an exhibition, displaying exhibits and the role of the viewer. The changes related to all exhibitions, not solely to those by women artists, however when it comes to their achievements, they were particularly outstanding as their exhibitions were in a way, a rarity in themselves. The relatively loose structure of 19th century exhibitions in which exhibits used to have a literal meaning by being a metonym of a woman's fate, was replaced in the 20th century by tighter, more restrained structures based on a metaphor. It forced a contemplating subject/exhibition visitor to change their approach towards the exhibits. Whereas earlier they used to be objects existing due to a manifestation of the meaning that a person connected to them, as a result of the changes in the shaping of an exhibition, they have become objects that require from a person the awareness of their own precise material relationship to the object. Contemporary research on materiality as an element of human existence allows for a new perspective on exhibitions. The distinction between an object and a thing shows how an object was constructed in a political, economic and gender-related sense.

Karolina ROSIEJKA

The discourse surrounding women's work related issues in the interwar period. Illustrated with the example of statements accompanying The Pavilion of Women's Work and The Pavilion of Landladies and Countrywomen at The Polish General Exhibition in Poznań

The aim of the article is to reflect upon the nature of the presentation of women's activity and work within the framework of the Pawilon Ziemianek i Włościanek (The Pavilion of Landladies and Countrywomen) and the Pawilon Pracy Kobiet (The Pavilion of Women's Work) at The Polish General Exhibition in Poznań in 1929. With the aid of archive materials – photographs, catalogues and press releases – an overall picture of the aims declared by the women who created the exhibitions, their visions of both pavilions and the way

they were executed is reconstructed. The issue of an open declaration of faith in separation with territorial and peasants guilds and those active on town premises is tackled. It is also analyzed how those issues influenced the decisions made by the creators of the exhibitions. In the light of the process of organization of the two pavilions, the way in which both communities viewed the issues of women's emancipation and the place they set for women in society are reconstructed.

Marcin ROMEYKO–HURKO

The Chalus and Dunin Decorative and Artistic School – the forgotten chapter of Warsaw's artistic life

In the period lasting between 1903 to about 1926, the Decorative and Artistic School for women was open in Warsaw. It was established by the painters – Cécile Chalus from France and Antonina Dunin–Sulgostowska who had been educated in Paris. The school's broad program was a result of the artistic beliefs and education of Chalus – a student of Eugène Grasset, Jules Joseph Lefebvre and Benjamin Constant that in 1900 already had a considerable illustrative output in France. The modern, versatile program of a three-year-long course was mainly dedicated to the applied arts. It covered the subjects of drawing, painting and interior design, lectures on the theory of composition, perspective and art history. One of the main stipulations made by the superiors was to popularize high aesthetic qualities in daily surroundings and to provide appropriate designs for artistic industry. The establishment quickly earned recognition in Warsaw. The school presented its works in a female journal *Nasz Dom. Tygodnik Mód i Powieści* (*Our House. A Fashion and Story Weekly*) and in its own or joint exhibitions – in the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts (1904, 1905, 1907, 1909), at the *Wystawa Przemysłu i Rolnictwa* (*The Exhibition of Industry and Agriculture*) in Częstochowa (1909), in Feliks Richling's Salon Artystyczny (Artistic Lounge) in Warsaw (1911–1914) and in the Pod Husarzem town house on Marszałkowska Street (1915). At the beginning of the 20th century, the school played an important role in the reception of *art nouveau* and in the artistic education and social activities of women, often becoming the first link in the process of educating future renowned artists from different areas of art. Among graduates of The Chalus and Dunin Decorative and Artistic School were Zofia Czasznicka (artistic fabric), Maria Dziewulska (graphics), Katarzyna Zorza Matlakowska (painting), Halina Nusbaumówna (book binding), Wanda Romeyko–Hurko (illustrative arts), Wanda Rudzińska–Wypychowa (ceramics) and Jadwiga Tereszczenko (painting, drawing). The aim of the text is to reconstruct the educational and exhibition activities of this school that has until now been completely forgotten, its artistic and intellectual environment and the reception of its work by the critics of the time.

Ewa BOBROWSKA

Women's art exhibitions as an element of the artistic strategy of Olga Boznańska in her home country

Olga Boznańska, who was educated on courses and in art schools for women, declared more than once her critical approach to women's art. Her talent, noticed early and appreciated by critics, especially European ones, allowed her to present her works at the most renowned and important art events such as at Parisian salons or international exhibitions in Munich, Berlin or London. Simultaneously, the artist did not abandon "female" exhibitions in order to arise and establish her place on the artistic scene that was still dominated by males. The article aims at analyzing the participation of Olga Boznańska in women's exhibitions both in Europe and in her home country. One particularly large part of the article is dedicated to her participation and activities within the Circle of Polish Women Artists, especially with regard to the first exhibition of the association both in its installment in the Cloth Hall in Cracow and in the Salon Krywulta in Warsaw. The article also signifies the making of a first draft of the history of Cracow's association of women artists.

Karolina STASZAK

The exhibition activity of The Polish Women's Artists Union in Lviv

The text aims to reconstruct the exhibition activity of the Związek Artystek Polskich (ZAP – Polish Women's Artists Union) in Lviv. This was the most effectively functioning organization that gathered together women artists in the Interwar period. The consecutive exhibitions that took place in the period between 1917 and 1937 make for the axis of the narration. I introduce (with a few small exceptions) the activity of ZAP chronologically, in a way that the introductory, very brief information on a topic of a given exhibition is an opportunity to approach various issues. For example, issues such as the political aspect of their activities in the period preceding the restoration of Poland's sovereignty, the task placed upon the women artists to initiate the renaissance of religious art, the cooperation of ZAP with the Liga Kobiet (Women's League), the political division present in the Union, the approach to "art" within the Union and among the critics of its exhibitions.

The question that reoccurs is whether it is reasonable to create "female ghettos". I strive to answer the question of what was the reason and why women artists decided to stay faithful to the idea of separation. I reach a conclusion that to understand the character of the Polish Women's Artists Union we have to take into account not only a positive sense of duty towards the national community, but also the feminist (in Górnicka–Boratyńska terminology: "suffrage") pursuit of separation and women's solidarity (but above divisions). Its activities had state-building (community-building) qualities and it released women's potential for self-fulfillment. I believe that friendship was at the basis of all its activities – friendship that played a key role in the history of Polish emancipation, as pointed out by Magdalena Gawin.

Karolina ZYCHOWCZ

The women's art exhibitions organized by The Central Agency for Art Exhibitions (CBWA) during the period of socialist realism

Materials on six exhibitions of women's art organized by the CBWA in the early 1950s are stored in the archives of the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw. They are the foundation of this article that analyses the way in which the Stalinist authorities tried to use women's exhibitions to promote a new image of women. The focus is mainly on the exhibition from 1952 *Kobieta w walce o pokój (A woman in the fight for peace)* organized by the Women's League. The exhibition perfectly reflects the politics of the communist country towards women in the period of Stalinism. The character of the activity undertaken by The Women's League that involved persuading women to pursue a career and take part in work competitions is noticeable in the exhibition. Two exhibitions of women visual artists from the Wrocław region (1952, 1953, Wrocław) as well as the women artists' exhibition from the Poznań branch of the Association of Polish Artists and Designers (ZPAP) are also called upon. They were less ideological in their character. *Kobieta w walce o pokój (A woman in the fight for peace)* was at the time the only nation-wide exhibition that achieved explicit recognition. Other exhibitions were of a local range, the women artists that participated in them avoided ideological issues and the artistic quality of their works had poor reviews in the press. The intent to use women's art exhibitions for propaganda purposes succeeded in a lesser degree.

Agata JAKUBOWSKA

Not sisterhood but friendship. The Izabella Gustowska and Krystyna Piotrowska exhibitions *Reflections*

The text focuses on the series of exhibitions entitled *Odbicia (Reflections)*, in which Izabella Gustowska and Krystyna Piotrowska have displayed their works. Currently six such expositions have been organized, the first one in 1980 and the last one in 2011. I relate these exhibitions to the discussion about the extremely important aspect of the displaying of women's art done greatly under the influence of the women's movement or feminist ideas – thereby within a feeling of community. I point out that in the Polish People's

Republic (PRL) no community that would join women artists in a way close to essential or strategically understood sisterhood was established. I examine the series of joint exhibitions by Gustowska and Piotrowska as an alternative path towards building a women's community within the world of art, a community that is based on friendship. This, analyzed in the light of Giorgio Agamben's concept, provides an explanation for the phenomena of co-existence in the exhibition space, and more broadly in the art world, of separate but closely linked with each other art subjects.

Anna MARKOWSKA

3 women and other exhibitions by the duo Toniak–Szczęśniak

Curatorial work by Ewa Toniak i Małgorzata Szczęśniak in tandem embraces serious and widely disputed displays such as: *3 women: Maria Pinińska Bereś, Natalia Lach–Lachowicz, Ewa Partum* (2011, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw) and individual exhibitions by Alina Ślesińska (2007, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw) and Natalia LL (2014–2015, *Secretum et tremor*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw). Although the role those exhibitions played in the process of the history of feminism cannot be overestimated, those displays distance themselves from simple interpretations of critical approaches and subversive strategies. From one point of view, the Toniak–Szczęśniak tandem created true blockbusters, however from the other, it asked artists difficult questions between the lines, participating in the production of greatness that is definitely adamant and not deprived of imperfections.

The *3 women* exhibition is a pretext to think about the condition of the second wave of Polish feminism and the musealization of ephemeral countercultural activities. Taking into account the contemporary influence of their works, female artists resign from the form invented in other circumstances and create the works from the seventies anew. The refreshment of art works done makes them attractive to the Polish modern middle class and their aesthetic aspirations. Small photographic copies or prints of poor quality which, in times of communism could be placed in a briefcase and taken abroad without the involvement of institutions (works which had strong anti-institutional and critical dimensions) were transformed into works the format of billboards, not only changing the size of the originals but their form too, and – as a result – also their sense.

Izabela KOWALCZYK

Women's art exhibitions 1991–2001: from essentialism to constructivism

The meanings of “women's art” are, among others, defined by the exhibitions of this art. In the text I analyze the period after the change of the system when these kinds of expositions became quite popular. The first exhibition after 1989, the most symbolic one, was the exhibition *Artystki Polskie (Polish Women Artists)* organized in 1991 in the National Museum in Warsaw. It, in some measure, opened the discourse of Polish feminist art history. The last exhibition analyzed is the exhibition *Maskarady (Masquerades)* organized in 2001 as a part of the festival with a meaningful title *Ostatnia kobieta (The last woman)*.

I examine the discourse that accompanied those exhibitions, but, in particular, the declarations of women curators who wondered about the critical meaning of those exhibitions as well as the relationship between exhibitions and feminist history of art.

I am also interested in the differences in the artists' attitudes compared with those of curators and critics towards the issue of women's art and about the whole spectrum of attitudes and opinions evolving from essentialism to constructivism. According to the first approach “femininity” is tackled as a constant value, thoroughly distinct from “masculinity”, influencing a defined sensitivity of women's art, whereas, in the latter approach this sensitivity, as well as “femininity” itself appears to be influenced by cultural structures. I advance the thesis that the first exhibitions organized after 1989 enter, first of all, into a paradigm of essentialism while the ones dated around 2000 reveal more critical thinking and are set on the analysis of the constructions of femininity and masculinity.

Luiza KEMPIŃSKA

Design of the catalogues of contemporary women's art exhibitions in Poland

The article tackles the issue of the visual materials accompanying exhibitions of contemporary women's art in Poland. On the basis of three exhibition catalogues: *Biały Mazur (White Mazurka)* from 2003, *Kolekcja Wstydliwych Gestów (Collection of Shy Gestures)* from 2004 and *Three Women* from 2011, I attempt to examine how the exhibition content, formulated by women curators in curatorial texts, is reflected in the catalogues that accompany those exhibitions. Even though the graphic motives that are present in analyzed publications are not usually a direct, illustrative translation of curatorial texts and exhibition concepts, they do show some relevant entangled meanings. The text concentrates on revealing them through the analysis of the image–text relationships constructed in the catalogues.

Maria HUSSAKOWSKA

Smaller exhibitions

I have entitled the four exhibitions by women artists from Cracow as “smaller exhibitions” in order to bring forward their specific nature, that is foremost a result of the approach of their authors towards the medium of exhibitions. To all women artists, curating is an incidental practice but reaching for the medium of exhibitions occasionally does not influence the value of the created exhibitions. The contemporary grammar of exhibitions known to them is subordinate to the personal statement being constructed, in which the works created by artist–curators are placed in the context of works by other women artists. Annemarie Frascoli and Eli Geisler in a project *Erdhimmel/Ustronie* from 2002 feature a shared female experience of place by striping their works of signatures. The authorship is not important, however the issue of cooperation is highlighted, which strengthens the transfer of the multidimensional nature of the women authors experience. Beata Stankiewicz is the author of the exhibition *Sprawy prywatne (Personal issues)* that had three stages in different cities and spaces. The curator and artist when asked about the concept emphasised several times the spontaneous and “natural” character of work on the exhibition founded by good relations with other artists as well as by the idea/ideology of domesticity worked upon by them. Bożena Knecht who works under the alias of Momoko uses the medium of exhibition more often than Frascoli. The discussed event – *Momoko 2* in the Cellar Gallery in Cracow – is, therefore, an activity singled out from the series of others. The episodic and ephemeral nature of the work – exhibition, describes Knecht's works well as she builds the narration by clashing the intimate, fragmental statements by female artists that have a similar vein to her perception of art as a fully autonomic reality. The fourth exhibition, *Krzqtaaczki (Busy bees)* in Cracow's Dom Norymberski, differs from the others in its scale. Over a dozen women artists from different environments participated in it. The element that links this event to others is the dominant idea to build direct relationships between women artists and the local community of Cracow's district of Kazimierz. The incidental nature of curatorial projects enables them to be located among the minority discourses corroding the discourse of a contemporary exhibition.

Sylwia CHUTNIK

The Art of Mothers and Recorded in the body as examples of feminist–maternity exhibitions

The text tackles the issue of two exhibitions organized by the MaMa Foundation: *Sztuka matek (The Art of Mothers)* that had six stages between 2010 and 2013 and *Zapisane w ciele (Recorded in the body)* in 2015. The concepts of both exhibitions related to the social activity of women curators and the institution that organized the exhibitions and engages in activities that aim at changing the way parenthood is perceived in Poland. In the text the process of the creation of both exhibitions and their consecutive stages is being traced. The displayed works are analyzed as well as the doubts that arose concerning the utility of the maternal perspective in art. The question of the influence of non–governmental organizations on the functioning of galleries and the way of constructing women artists' exhibitions is also raised.

**Ksenia STANICKA–BRZEZICKA, Katarzyna JARMUŁ
i Joanna SZELIGOWSKA–FARQUHAR**

Silesian women artists or women artists in Silesia? Exhibition *Women's art – women in art* in the Silesian Museum in Katowice

The focus of the article is on the exhibition *Sztuka kobiet – kobiety w sztuce (Women's art – women in art)* that was held in the Silesian Museum in Katowice in 2012. However in addition, the previous exhibition *Rollenwechsel. Künstlerinnen in Schlesien um 1880–1945* (2009/10) in Schlesisches Museum in Görlitz is also of high importance. Both exhibitions were based on the same source – the publication of *Artystki śląskie ok. 1880–1945 (Silesian women artists around 1880–1945)* by Ksenia Stanicka–Brzezicka, Toruń 2006. The authentic discovery of works created by women artists and the intent to introduce their works into the history of art, even if at a regional level, was above all the reason for featuring the art created by women in a book and, later on, in the form of exhibitions.

The first part of the exhibition in Katowice, that was curated by Katarzyna Jarmuł, was devoted to the period before 1945. It tackled, after the book, the topic of “women's art”, essentially unexplored in reference to the region of Silesia and its development in the historical and social context of that region in the second part of 19th century. The second part of the exhibition, prepared by Joanna Szeligowska–Farquhar, is applied to the post-war period and discussed the topic of the social and political changes ongoing at the time, referring among others to education and national issues. It involved women artists of Silesian roots and those active in the region of Upper Silesia and the Opole region of Silesia. This part of the exhibition aimed at underlining the different aspects of women's post war art in reference to the works created before 1945.

The exhibition, in which the criteria of choice involved gender on the one side, and “Silesianness” on the other, has become a voice in two discussions that have been conducted for many decades and are still valid: about femininity and being Silesian as elements of subjectivity.