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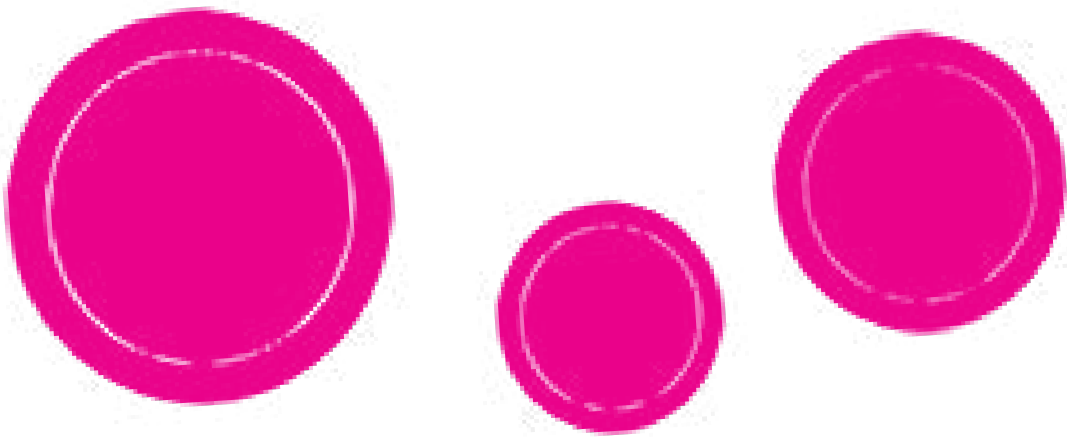
#02

Multivitamin

Poznań / Zielona Góra 2023 / spring



The newspaper contains original texts, graphics, records of concepts and actions



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In this issue

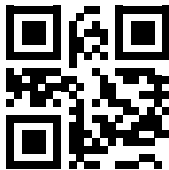
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NON-PERIODICAL PUBLICATION / GRAPHICS ARTS / Group 404 NEWSPAPER

Multivitamin

Maciej Kurak

Avant-garde artists followed political changes, stimulating the search for such forms of creative articulation that would establish a new social order. However, art focused on innovative solutions created a certain paradoxical situation. This involved a constant redefinition of a work of art. This was reflected in the statement that art is art as long as it is also not art, but something other than art.¹ Among the goals pursued by the avant-garde was to criticise the values of petty-bourgeois culture, strongly shaped at that time.² The attempt of the avant-garde to separate itself from bourgeois culture (reduced to an activity reserved for specialists, which was essentially craftsmanship in the era of industrialisation) allowed avant-garde art to come closer to life. At the same time, the avant-garde intensified the process of creative exploration, experimenting with new means of artistic expression, eventually (at the end of the 20th century) leading to the atomisation of creative attitudes.³ The potential of the avant-garde was hidden in liberating art from propaganda ideas anchored in the ways of maintaining the existing order shaped over a longer period (including the power exercised in the Middle Ages mainly by the church, during the Renaissance by the aristocracy, and after the French Revolution by the bourgeoisie). Using this logic, the promise of emancipation could only be retained at the price of rejecting all forms of reconciliation, at the price of maintaining the gap between the dissonant form of the work and the forms of reconciliation, at the price of maintaining the gap between the dissonant form of the work and the forms of everyday experience.⁴ The emancipation of art generated a new way of maintaining distance, which was outlined in the double role of an artistic work, which, on the one hand, sketched visions of a better tomorrow and, on the other, was a form of protest against the existing social order.⁵

The discrepancy between involvement in everyday matters and a critical attitude that forces a distance to life returns in activist, useful and socially engaged activities in art.⁶ The solution to the problem of different attitudes is certainly not the culture industry falsely abolishing autonomous art, but criticism directing attention to the aesthetics of goods and overproduction (factors affecting consumerism, e.g., related to prestige), which is practical in a different sense than the creators of the avant-garde understood it.⁷ Currently, the culture industry is subordinated to the economy, as is the phenomenon of non-conformist conformism. In this case, the forms of opposition end up maintaining the status quo even more strongly than the products of mass culture.⁸

Another way to strengthen the commercial functioning of the system is the useless 'opposition for opposition's sake'. Just like any other attitude that adapts to the media action of culture. Articulations focused on improving the existing technical solutions only deepen practical skills and thus are secondary. They contribute to ignoring new social phenomena, focusing only on improving forms of expression – developed methods of creation.⁹ As a result, the critical nature of creative activities is exposed to superficiality, which can lead to commercialisation and the suppression of initial ideas, or reducing art to a narrow specialisation separated from life.¹⁰ Searching for new ways of articulation and revising them in the context of social relations is justified by the continuous process of changes taking place in creative activities. Innovativeness intensified in the consumer culture, focused only on profit, is inhibited,¹¹ posing the risk of losing social competences. It can also become a developmental value when it enables an individual to escape through self-fulfilment. Thanks to creating an appropriate field for supporting individuality, even if they are genuinely unique, individuals may find an answer that has not yet been used by any of their contemporaries, but even here the answer turns out to be a necessary component of this field. The more complex this field is, the more branched it is and the more developed society itself is: therefore, the greater the share of the responder, the more developed their personality can be.¹² The way out of an uncertain situation seems to be an altruistic activity,¹³ which finds support in art. Focused on creating a 'new order', it contributes to changing customs and thus affects the dynamism of social transformations.¹⁴ An honest creative statement in accordance with facts does not have to assume a messianic vision of repairing the world.¹⁵ In this context, it is important to enable society to learn about the complexity of real phenomena by combining perception with the thinking process and not stopping at the superficial dissemination of information in the media. The interpenetration of various elements of everyday life with art resulting from individual decisions, which are also influenced by emotional factors, make the general rules and trends pursued in a specific socio-historical moment acquire individual characteristics. Psychological concepts, such as intuition, emotionality and mentality, affect how individuals express themselves in art.¹⁶ They are responsible for its multi-faceted nature and move it away from simple meanings, ultimately affecting the wider impact of art on culture. The complexity of art and its multi-element character has an impact on social progress, in contrast to the simplified one-dimensional picture of the world,



which deforms the multithreaded reality. Ultimately, multiculturalism, which is an impulse to transcend individual autonomy,¹⁷ does not shape relativism. Coexisting identities and the ethical idea that binds them together and is focused on overcoming alienation do not enforce metaphysical truth.¹⁸ However, they give the possibility of continuously correcting old and creating new rules and social behaviour. All forms of constituting a political system based on democracy are stimulated by diversity, not a uniform social fabric.¹⁹ Human values established from the perspective of multiculturalism, taking account of individual views, make it possible to ascend to the level of universalism and thus reveal the actual reasons for the persistence of an ideology. An attempt to generalise particular interests is less effective when subordinated to the interest of only one social group. It is known that homogeneity causes stagnation, limits development, and ultimately treats the birth of an individual as the beginning of their personality, disregarding the meaning of com-

Maja Michalska
They Have Given Us Up
digital graphics / 2023

An old, wooden fence was put here in the 1970s to cover the problem that settled in the areas belonging to the curia. Over time, the fence began to fall apart, and openings and holes appeared in it. And someone noticed... not what was behind the fence, but what could be there. He saw a new housing estate, a new life and beautiful apartment buildings overlooking the lake near the city centre, he saw money. Unfortunately, this dream of developers has not yet come true because the problem has to be moved somewhere, tossed to someone else, to regain the area once given to the needy people of Poznań. It would be best if they had already left because they have abused the hospitality of the landowner. But where are they supposed to go if no one wants them anywhere? Could this make the fence stronger? Let's nail down new boards and maybe they will forget about the residents of the Malta estate again.

munity in this process.²⁰ The situation is different with heterogeneity, which is not only associated with dispersion, superficiality and artificially built universality,²¹ but rather counteracts patriarchal behaviour, spaces of repression, social exclusion and discrimination. It can combine different perspectives of viewing reality: complex, ambiguous phenomena with a general meaning and common sense with the reason responsible for understanding a complex situation.²² A cognitive process – considered in isolation and on its own – hides tendencies to self-falsification.²³ The clash of different attitudes²⁴ – affecting progress – is not a superficial or feigned struggle aimed only at accepting economic manipulation,²⁵ but a manifestation of a complex reality close to the truth. It is not limited to epistemological analysis isolated from life, and also takes place outside of particular interests. It does not have to be associated with an idealistic or mechanistic way of acting – building a dangerous distance to reality because reality follows its own path, determined by laws, completely regardless of what is going on in people's consciousness.²⁶

The topic of multiculturalism is often referred to in today's discussions about culture. These are subordinated to the existing rules of constructing a media message. Usually, in this situation, a superficial message is created, which is part of the mechanism of the relationship between cultural diversity and homogenisation shaped by economic polarisation. Superficiality makes it possible to include diversity in consumer culture, which strongly affects the process of alienation and reification subordinated to the mechanisms developed by the system of inequalities, resulting from the organisation of productive forces. Social values focused on financial gain or media publicity may distort the course of ethical activities and ultimately prevent the process of socialisation.²⁷ Multiculturalism in a consumer society eludes interpersonal relations, which are then based solely on material benefits. However, it becomes important when it serves as a starting point for universal values²⁸ and is a vision of shaping a new order (similarly to the avant-garde).²⁹ It contributes to the creation of new social relations affecting the modification of culture and the appropriate organisation of the institutional system. Multiculturalism stimulated by economic development supports growing prosperity and consumerism, which deepens homogeneous practices but can also be the basis for determining general social humanistic values.³⁰ A feigned combination of particular and collective interests causes tendentious changes – directions and tendencies emerge that determine what is general and unrelated to progressive social development.³¹ Common, superficially developed values are not negative or unethical and it is difficult to deny them, and yet, together with the economic system in which they function, they only create the appearance of change. In contrast, transformations in culture, which are closer to everyday life and individual involvement, allow for a faster and more effective impact on social awareness. Affirmative and altruistic ways of operating far from propaganda, focused on the subjective complexity of the world, help to define cross-border views.

Dorota Karolewska

Walk in Zigzags
ink on paper / 2023

The system in which our society operates is theoretically supposed to provide us with security, prosperity and conditions for development. More and more often, however, it transforms into a form of manipulation and exploitation, subjugating various individuals. Although we are often aware of it, our habits, desire for peace and feeling of resignation make us quietly accept it.

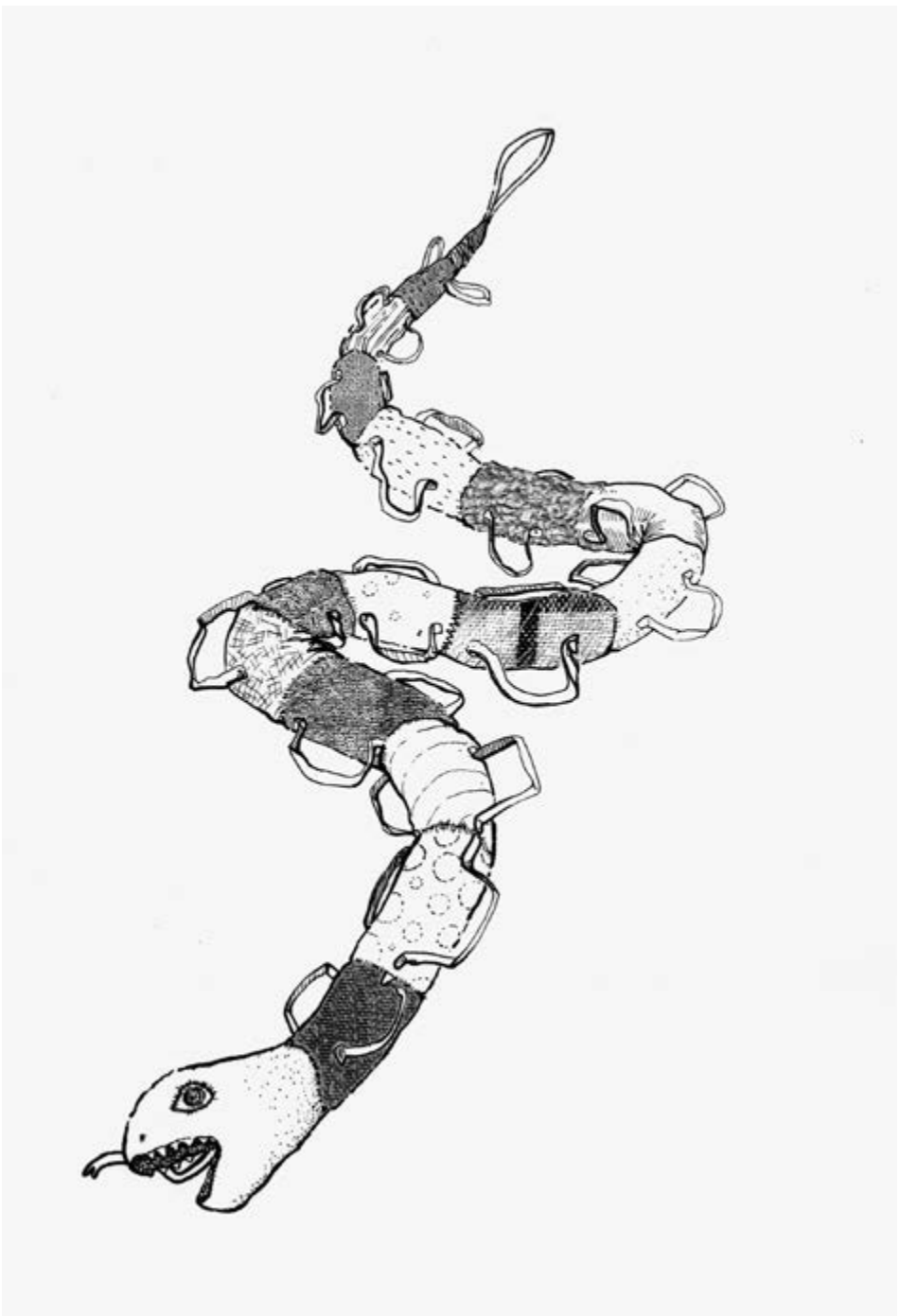
Walk in zigzags
One – two – three
Yours let it be!

Let's go together
all in one row,
head for what's better
than you have now!

Join the queue, go to work,
ordinary life – no pleasures lurk.

In zigzags and in pairs
let's vote for our carers
we are marching, one – two – three
and shall see who will win.

From your childhood,
up to the grave
grab the handle!
Go and work!



Maryna Mazur

Rainbow's Resolve
paper flag / 2023

Fundamental human rights still need to be manifested and fought for. But even a grayscale rainbow is undeniably still a rainbow.



Witold Modrzejewski
Lajkonik (Uber Driver)
collage, digital painting, AI / 2023

Multiculturalism has become a tool of neo-liberal politics that tries to hide real problems (social, economic, political) behind a facade of cultural diversity. It can lead to the segregation and isolation of ethnic groups, as well as increasing the conflicts between them. An example may be the forgotten origin of the folklore character of the Tatar horseman – Lajkonik. Since the 19th century, researchers have tried to explain its origin and connections with other cultures. It may refer to the use of the horse as a totem,

a symbol of strength, energy and prosperity; it may also be connected with the fear of Tatar invasions or be a relic of the figure of a ‘stranger’ from medieval mysteries or local pagan rituals practiced to celebrate the end of winter and the arrival of a new year.

Artistic activity as a creative process in the context of the heterogeneous potential of culture (which is the sphere of reality) creates new social patterns, giving a special value to individuality. At the same time, it violates the real shapes of social existence anchored in culture. The process of creation is not detached from reality, but entangled in the creation of a better tomorrow, as expressed by avant-garde artists. They migrated abroad not only to instil new solutions in their national locality³² but also to learn about other modernist theories and views.³³ An individual, artistic alternative does not relativise reality because it is only a socially conditioned form of manifesting the directness of this process.³⁴ By combining theory with practice, art makes it possible to avoid entering an idealistic concept detached from reality, as well as an ideological constant that ultimately accepts the existing reality. Instead, it coexists with society, leading to cultural changes and thus a new shape of reality.

1. Cf. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, p. 33.

2. This applies, for example, to Germany, where the expressionist trend in art was developing dynamically. The present political system of Germany is nothing more than a compromise between the nobility and the petty bourgeoisie, which amounts to resigning power into the hands of a third class: the bureaucracy... the bourgeoisie emerges from the petty bourgeoisie with the development of world trade and large-scale industry, with the accompanying free competition and centralisation of property... The petty bourgeois is conservative as soon as the ruling class makes a few concessions to him; the bourgeois is revolutionary until he himself rules... Thus the petty bourgeoisie have at least the consolation in their depressed social and political position of being the standard class of Germany; and of having imparted to all other classes their specific depression and their concern over their existence.' Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010, Vol. 6, p. 79.

3. For more on this topic see: Jerzy Ludwiński, *Sztuka w epoce postartystycznej i inne teksty*, ASP Poznań, BWA Wrocław.

4. Cf. Jacques Rancière, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

5. Peter Bürger has developed these ideas, referring to Herbert Marcuse. For more on this topic see: Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-garde*, Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 62.

6. These issues have been discussed by Claire Bishop, among other authors. With regard to the effectiveness of art, she has proposed treating a work of art as a model. For more on this topic see: Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London and New York: Verso, 2023.

7. 'We want – [wrote Osip Brik – the author's note] a worker to cease to be a mechanical performer of some unknown project. He should become a conscious, active participant in the creative process of shaping objects. Then the need for artists-decorators will disappear; "the artist will be immersed in the very development of things".' Andrzej Turowski, *Wielka utopia awangardy. Artystyczne i społeczne utopie w sztuce rosyjskiej 1910–1930*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1930, p. 53 (my translation).

8. György Lukács, *The Ontology of Social Being*, Merlin Press, 1978, Vol. I–II.

9. The phenomenon of academisation was discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin in *Problemy literatury i estetyki*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1982; György Lukács in *Pisma krytyczno-teoretyczne Georga Lukacsa*, Instytut Kultury, Warszawa 1994 and Herbert Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, Taylor & Francis, 2013.

10. Art that ignores social functions is usually a craft. It boils down to formalism, professionalism, techniques, and stands on a par with the art of sowing, healing and counting. For more on this topic see: Mikołaj Czer-nyszewski, *Pisma estetyczne i krytycznoliterackie*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo, 1964.

11. For more on this topic see: Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, London and New York: Verso, 1983.

12. Cf. György Lukács, *op. cit.* p. 644.

13. The difficulty associated with the widespread occurrence of disinterested attitudes results from the circum-

stances in which society functions, which is determined by the system shaped in the process of division of productive forces and their consequences – values established by dominant ideologies.

14. '... development (including development to a higher stage) has nothing to do with how this is judged in an ethical, cultural or aesthetic sense, etc.' György Lukács, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

15. Chantal Mouffe refers to this issue, treating art as a signal, not a command. For more on this topic see: Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*, London and New York: Verso, 2013.

16. For more on this topic see: Lew Wygotski, *Psychologia sztuki*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1980.

17. It is not limited to the concept of plurality in unity, but refers to ideas derived from materialism.

18. The coherence emerging in the developed civilisation of the West between the culturally diverse identity of communities and the homogenisation of the capital economy that binds it together creates a whole that less developed countries are trying to achieve. An individual's fulfillment is then based on a financial gain that generates inequality.

19. In a democracy, man does not exist for the law, but the law exists for man; the human being is the law here, while in other forms of government, the human being is defined by the law. This is the basic distinguishing feature of democracies. For more on this topic see: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

20. For more on this topic see: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

21. For example, universalism associated with liberal clichés creates the illusion of a free, open and democratic space. For more on this topic see: Kinga Dunin, *Łaska przekraczania granic* [in:] Alain Badiou, Święty Paweł. Ustanowienie uniwersalizmu, Korporacja Ha!art, Kraków 2007.

22. Every phenomenon is an appearing entity, each entity appears in some way and cannot exist outside of this dynamic, self-contradictory relationship, each entity is, insofar as they continuously retain and abandon their own existence, insofar as they enter into this contradictory relationship. Cf. György Lukács, *op. cit.* p. 385.

23. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 461.

24. Chantal Mouffe proposed replacing the antagonism of ruthlessly destroying the opponent with the agonism of defeating the opponent democratically. Combining opposing attitudes does not always have to end in a compromise that can damage the initial views of different groups. For example, for the Marxists, the dialectical movement was based on the creation of new solutions under the influence of opposing forces, and not on mechanically combining thesis with antithesis into a synthesis.

25. For example, selfish benefits derived from the possibility of appearing on media forums.

26. Cf. György Lukács, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

27. For example, equality or justice as general values affecting progress become important when there is an appropriate division of labour. It would be a mistake to look for attempts to pursue the same goals in the past. For more on this topic see: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

28. The mere establishment of universal values does not mean that its constant, unchanging substance is shaped. 'Substances can form and pass away without ceasing to be substances for this reason, as long as they dynamically behave during their existence.' György Lukács, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

29. This type of action was undertaken by the international Bunt group, which cooperated with Die Kommunen and Der Sturm activists, among others.

30. It is the value that imposes its implementation on the determinants of practice, and not vice versa. This must not be understood in a way that it is therefore possible to deduce its implementation from the value in thought as if the implementation of value was a simple product of labour. Alternatives are an indelible foundation of the way (implementation) of social-human practice and can only be separated from an individual decision in an abstract way, never in reality. Cf. György Lukács, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

31. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Part. I, p. 258.

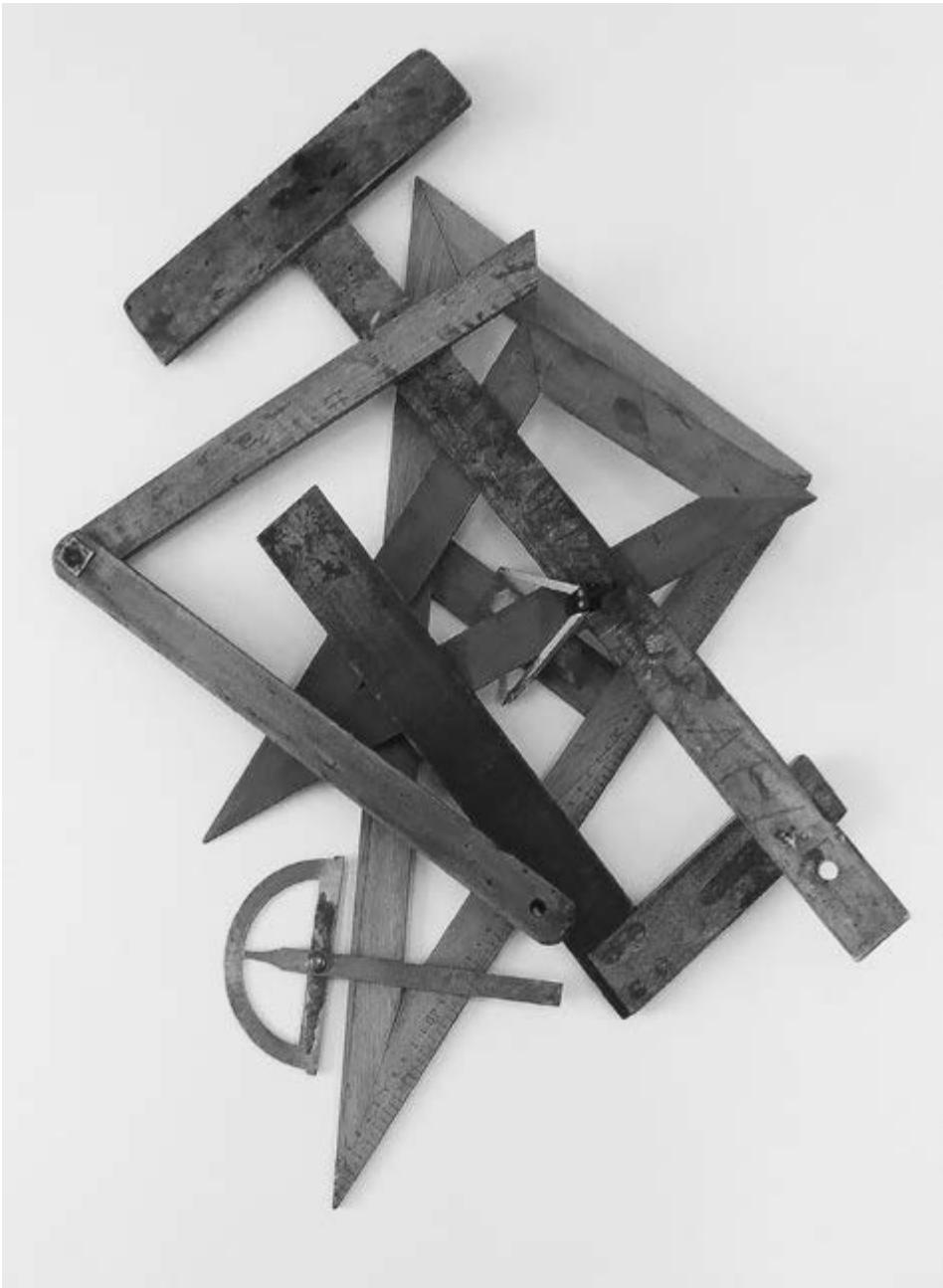
32. In the context of shaping the values of art originating from the culture of a given nation, general human values play an important role. 'If the content of a nation's life is devoid of universal meaning, so that the nation is incapable of rising to the significance of a world-historical nation except through the artificial and forced negation of its own nationality and its own historical development in favour of the civilisation of nations representing humanity, then artistic poetry cannot develop from the natural poetry of this nation...' Wissarion Bieliński, *Pisma literackie*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo, Wrocław 1962, p. 211 (my translation).

33. Stanisław Kubicki (co-founder of the Bunt group), after deserting from the German army, finally settled in Berlin to be closer to the events related to the Spartacist Uprising and indirectly establish universal values.

34. Cf. György Lukács, *op. cit.*, p. 178.



Maciej Kurak
Red Riding Hood
And They Lived Happily Ever After
ink on paper / 2023



Krzysztof Balcerowiak
Continents
object / 100x70 cm / 2023

Bunt: multiculturalism, the myth that founded the ‘new art’ of Poznań and the horizontal history of art

Lidia Głuchowska

Multiculturalism was an everyday reality in pre-state organisations and dynastic states throughout Europe and, in a broader sense, in the non-European world, discovered and colonised until the second half of the 20th century. For example, when a ‘new state’ was shaped, known as the Second Polish Republic, after the end of World War I, the Polish nation began to dominate numerous national minorities in official cultural policy. Of course, in these circumstances, local, multicultural emanations of minority art were explored – often based on references to ethnic roots – primarily through references to visually attractive and ‘easy to digest’ folklorism. In line with idealistic artistic manifestos, they were treated in a similar way as ‘primitive’ art in the entire spectrum of avant-garde achievements to break academic conventions, bourgeois forms of life and the rules of the art market and, above all, to *épater le bourgeois*. However, they were in fact explored mainly within the framework of ethnocentrism and a purely aesthetic, visual novelty.

The discovery of the ‘other’ within one’s own, and predominantly non-European, culture in individual cases certainly had the features of ‘revelation’, genuine fascination and, consequently, the holistic life attitude of individual creators – the movement’s inspirers. On a macro scale – in relation to the achievements of countless multipliers – it was usually only an aesthetic element of a seemingly disinterested act of creative innovation. The latter – as a *porte parole* of manifesto-mania at the turn of the last two centuries – was often instrumentalised only superficially – as a provocative and effective strategy of self-promotion.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, contestation became a fashion. At the same time, the ostentatious manifestation of openness to the ‘other’ – the one from the neighbourhood, almost on a par with those from Asia, Oceania or Africa – was a vehicle for promoting ‘modernity’ in art and socio-political relations. But was it not just a manifesto-mania/artistic utopia? Or – in other words – to what extent were the postulates of people of culture who treated this issue seriously accepted and adapted in practice by state officials at various levels? To what extent in different countries? Within which officially internationally recognised nations? By what key?

The promotion of increasingly instrumentalised multiculturalism in popular

culture was successful during the Art Nouveau and interwar period. In advertising, but also in the architecture on the streets of big cities – on the facades along the streets in, for example, Wrocław and Jelenia Góra – images of ‘Blacks’ appeared as often as before – in the 18th century – in sacral interiors (such as in the University Church in Wrocław or the monastery in Lubiąż). They were preceded by *chinoiseries* and references to Japonism – on luxurious wallpapers, tapestries and furniture door frames, in the designs of, for example, Meissen porcelain from the Baroque, Rococo and Historicist periods, but also in the paintings of artists included today in the canon of so-called high national art (such as Wojciech Weiss).

In the first three decades of the 20th century, when openness to the cultures of ‘others’, and not their dominance, was declared – for example, on posters – their prototypes were ethnographic photographs (for instance, German ones during World War I, but not only these – there were similar Belgian photos of

The fact that military conflicts are destructive and a product of imperialism was understood soon after the outbreak of the Great War. The first clearly recorded protest against the war in the history of art was the performance of the Zurich Dadaists from the Cabaret Voltaire circle (1916–1922). They were often deserters originating from national minorities forced to serve in the armies of imperial states. The movement spread quickly, including in Germany, where, as in other areas of Europe, the influence of the anti-feudal and anti-capitalist revolution was increasingly spreading on the wave of pacifism and related internationalism. The nascent ‘new states’ of Europe, however, perceived these movements as a threat to long-awaited independence. The independence of states that were smaller than the imperial ones, but in the local, often vast landscape of the dominant nations.

The European political order established after World War II brought massive displacements, expulsions, border shifts and ethnic cleansing. In Poland, for

cialist realism. The multicultural mosaic, constituting the wealth of the First and Second Polish Republics, was gradually removed from the general consciousness. Meanwhile, conflicts on an increasingly global scale continued and continue to this day, and they are invariably fuelled by national movements (of course, they are also motivated by religion or – probably to a much greater extent – economic reasons). Respect for the integrity of the co-residents of a region (such as the residents of Lower Silesia and Lubuskie and the Sorbs – the indigenous Slavic population of today’s East Germany, and currently one of the local national minorities) is not obvious.

Contemporary multiculturalism, understood in a broad sense, is inseparably, though not exclusively, related to the phenomenon of cross-border and transcontinental migration and other aspects of globalism. It has its roots in the second half of the 19th century (and in earlier colonisation), and is intensified by mass tourism and the media, including, in particular, the power of the internet. Today, the world has, in fact, become McLuhan’s ‘global village’, but relatively few people know precisely their own (‘local’, trans-regional) multicultural roots and hardly anyone knows where their immediate neighbours come from and what culture they consider their own, in addition to the official Polish one.

The dictate, and in practice often the ‘privilege’, of belonging to a specific community/(local) majority has for centuries determined the status of individuals who have recognised this as ethnic, religious or political subordination. Consequently, only a few decide to reject it, thus exposing themselves to social and, therefore, economic ostracism. The presupposition that what is (contextually) superior is more important than what is individual (such as family ties and the memory of one’s own roots, or respect for the ‘other’ living next door or further away) is, therefore, in most cases, decisive. The privilege of youth, however, is to make ‘mistakes’, that is, to deviate from the above rule. The ‘mistakes’ of youth are sometimes taken with a pinch of salt, but sometimes the achievements of those who allegedly made ‘mistakes’ are condemned to ‘oblivion’. For example, in the official historiography of culture, the achievements of contesting artists, representatives of engaged art, are often downplayed. For this reason, it is worth recalling that 100 years ago there was an artistic group in Poznań that tried to find

MULTIVITAMIN

a compromise between the recognition of *‘raison d’état’* and the feeling that ‘otherness’ does not have to be the cause of discrimination.

When World War I was coming to its end in 1917, in a youthfully ‘irresponsible’ and ‘dashing’ gesture, eight young people met in the manor – the ‘expressionist monastery’ – of an older artist from the Eastern Borderlands, a landowner and anti-statist, Jerzy Hulewicz (who graduated from studies in Paris), in Kościanki near Września. They were assisted by the even older Stanisław Przybyszewski, who was famous in Germany and Scandinavia as a ‘genius Pole’, a ‘satanist’, the doyen of the avant-garde and an apologist for the works of Edvard Munch, Gustav Vigeland, Wojciech Weiss and protector of the legendary editor of the Krakow periodical *Życie* [Life] – Stanisław Wyspiański. At that time, together with Hulewicz and his brothers, he planned to establish a Poznań-based art and literary magazine called *Zdrój*, of which he was originally the nominal editor.

The said eight young people: Adam Bederski, Władysław Skotarek, Stefan Szmaj, Jerzy Hulewicz, August Zamoyski, Margarete and Stanisław Kubicki and Jan Jerzy Wroniecki (later a lecturer at the State Higher School of Fine Arts – now the Magdalena Abakanowicz University of the Arts in Poznań) originally planned an exhibition entitled *Bunt – Wystawa Ekspresjonistów* [Bunt: Expressionist Exhibition] at the headquarters of the Poznań Society of Friends of Fine Arts in April 1918. Having been rejected, the exhibition was finally held (according to what they wrote in *Zdrój*) in public toilets. Officially, it was rejected because they wanted to show ‘indecent’ nudes and promoted anti-academic (non-European) aesthetics. Certainly, however, a much more important reason was that, during the war in a city inhabited almost half by Poles and half by Germans, they printed their posters in both languages as if calling for the reconciliation of nations. What is more, the motif of the Tower of Babel from Kubicki’s linocut used on them must have raised doubts. Was it a call to fight for Poland’s independence (all ‘eight’, as is commonly written – except for Margarete Kubicka, who was German – were members of illegal Polish patriotic organisations), or – in accordance with the intensifying spirit of pacifism and anti-capitalist revolution – for a new world order in a broader sense – without borders, bureaucracy and national divisions? Probably the ambivalent meaning of this graphic was intentional. Whatever the case, did the dignitaries of the Polish artistic institutions in Poznań also know that the members of the aforementioned ‘ephemeral’ association were, at the same time, preparing the publication of a special issue called *Bunt* [Rebellion] in not only the *Zdrój* magazine but also in one of the most famous avant-garde periodicals of that time, the Berlin *Die Aktion*? Did they know that the radical wing of the group sympathised with the followers of the ideas of revolution? Probably not. For all members of the Poznań Society of Friends of Fine Arts educated in the Prussian partition, it must have been obvious that the very name of the group – Bunt – had an international meaning (in German: motley, bright) and so fit the ideology of expressionism (read:



avant-garde, anti-art) in both languages. Aesthetics are not neutral. The expressionist one was associated negatively in Poznań as a product of German art, which is also involved in the left.

Whatever the case, the ideological course of Bunt remained consistently ambivalent. At the end of 1918, the Kubickis left for Berlin, where four exhibitions were held in 1918 and 1919 (one group and two individual: one of Hulewicz’s and Zamoyski’s and the other of Kubickis’ works), including three after Poland gained independence. Margarete Kubicka – a German – was a member of the Spartacus Union, and her husband was said to have distributed leaflets after the outbreak of its uprising in January 1919 and participated in demonstrations fought by the Freikorps. At the same time, the publisher of *Zdrój* called for the unification of the three former partitions in the spirit of the former Jagiellonian Union, against the spirit of separatism, which was common in the former Prussian partition due to its economic dominance over the

other parts of the ‘new state’. Earlier, during the war – in defiance of censorship – he promoted the art of anti-German countries.

During inter-partition separatism, Bunt artists established contacts and organised joint exhibitions with artistic circles from the former Russian and Austrian partitions. Contacts with the Jung Jidysz group from Łódź were strengthened over time as Pola Lindenfeld, Jankiel Adler and their friend Artur Nacht-Samborski lived and worked in the Kubickis’ atelier in Berlin. Early contacts with the circle of Krakow’s formists, documented in a little-known supplement [*Prospect*] to *Zdrój* in 1917, bore fruit two years later. A little earlier, the influences of Czech artists from the *Červen* magazine, including Josef Čapek, were visible in the graphics of Kubicki, Hulewicz and Skotarek. They were probably echoes of contacts established in Berlin among the collaborators of the famous avant-garde magazines (and galleries) *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm*, the existence of which can already be

Maciej Kozłowski
Mongrel
screen printing on fabric / 2023

Mongrel (a word often used as an insult) – a crossbreed, no-breed, a symbol of the rejection of elitism, social class divisions, racial theories and nationalisms. Due to the undefined and usually not fully explained origin (which actually applies to all people), the egalitarian ambassador of multiculturalism is at home everywhere and their attitude is perfectly reflected in the slogan: ‘Everyone is different, we are all equal.’

guessed based on the earlier correspondence of the group members regarding the exhibition planned jointly with the Czechs. Earlier, Przybyszewski had cultivated relations with representatives of the slightly older generation of Prague artists from the circle of the periodical *Moderní Revue*. August Zamoyski’s cor-



respondence with its publisher, Arnošt Procházka, has also been preserved.

Bunt's openness to the art of 'others', understood in a broad sense, was part of the formula of utopian avant-garde internationalism with anti-militarist roots. The culmination of actions undertaken in this spirit by the radical wing of the group was the participation of the Kubickis (and their friends from the Jung Yiddish circle) in the Congress of the International Union of Progressive Artists in the spring of 1922 in Düsseldorf, which was part of the territories administered by France at that time. As some of the separatists protesting at the congress against the creation of national sections – which demonstrated divisions, not an artistic community – and efforts to commercialise artistic life, Kubicki and his friends ostentatiously left the session and refused to participate in the accompanying exhibition. In opposition, Kubicki co-organised the International Exhibition of Revolutionary Artists in the working-class district of Berlin,

of nationality', contrasting it with the 'general sense of humanitarianism', 'global nationhood' and 'supranationalism'. Attempts to clarify the concept of internationalism also took place, for example, during the aforementioned Congress in Düsseldorf. Incidentally, during World War I and the interwar period, when universalism was postulated, internationalism was understood particularly in relation to Europe. Discussions of that time are continued today as part of research on transnationalism or multiculturalism regarding the transgression of the idea of a mono-nation and the equality of minorities. An important impulse that inspired them was the methodological proposals formulated by Piotr Piotrowski, who used the idea of opening to 'distant others' and 'close others' in the description of his concept of horizontal art history (2009). This created a chance for an adequate assessment of the achievements of the Bunt group, operating in a trans-partition, cross-border and transnational – and therefore multicultural – context. Previously, the group's achievements were

their sudden mass appearance in the countries of the former Eastern bloc as an excessive challenge to the status quo. At the same time, the memory of their multicultural tradition, and the reasons for its existence, is relatively weak. Mono-ethnicity or mono-religiousness seem to be natural states, although – for example, in Poland – they are products of political processes of only the past few decades.

Multiculturalism as a determinant of Malaysia's official state policy seems to be a model example. However, what outsider knows exactly its secrets? Meanwhile, within Old Europe, the Catalans, Irish and Basques still strive for autonomy. The Uyghurs in China and the Kurds in the Middle East continue to be victims of discrimination. In Kenya and Ethiopia, the political struggle is still largely conditioned by intertribal clashes, while relatively few know who the Frisians or the Sami are, to cite only a few examples relevant in this context. And all this is happening at a time when multicultur-

they are simply ambiguous. Perhaps the synergy of word and image is also in this sense the greatest potential of contemporary graphics.

More on this topic can be found in, for example:

Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Avant-Garde and Modernism: The Impact of the First World War, Lidia Głuchowska and Vojtěch Lahoda (eds.), Praga 2022.

Bunt. Nowe ekspresje/Bunt. New Expression, Maciej Kurak (ed.), Poznań 2020.

Bunt – Ekspresjonizm – Transgraniczna awangarda. Prace z berlińskiej kolekcji prof. St. Karola Kubickiego/Bunt – Expressionismus – Grenzübergreifende Avantgarde. Werke aus der Berliner Sammlung von Prof. St. Karol Kubicki, Lidia Głuchowska (ed.), Poznań 2015.

Lidia Głuchowska, Stanisław Kubicki – *In transitu. Poeta tłumaczy sam siebie/Ein Poet übersetzt sich selbst*, Wrocław 2015.



Prenzlauerberg, in the autumn of that year. Although its participants had lived in Germany for a long time, they represented their countries of origin. Poland was represented by both Kubickis (sic!), Władysław Skotarek and Stefan Szmaj, as well as Jankiel Adler, formerly associated with the Jung Jidysz group. This exhibition is considered to be the last joint appearance of Bunt members and their last joint manifestation of the artistic idea of the 'international of spirit'. The fact that their attitude was marked by the tension between avant-garde internationalism and romantic patriotism is most clearly illustrated by the fact that after Hitler came to power and the Entartete Kunst [Degenerate Art] campaign began, Kubicki left Berlin, went to the Wielkopolska region and, after the outbreak of World War II, became a courier for the Polish Underground State and was killed by the Gestapo.

At the time when Bunt artists and their contemporaries were active, the concept of multiculturalism was certainly not in common use. Their Berlin collaborators – Franz Pfemfert (editor of *Die Aktion*), Raoul Hausmann and Johannes Baader – popularised the terms 'anti-nationalism' and 'anationalism', while Kurt Schwitters, who was close to Dadaist circles, expressed objections to the 'particular sense

largely 'forgotten' in the national historiography of art, due also to the widespread use of the term 'Poznań expressionism'. This term presupposes that it was a local and monocultural movement, which is obviously misleading.

What is multiculturalism today? Is it the local past resulting from the multi-ethnic nature of, for example, the former Poland, or (or also) the present time resulting from the current mass migration waves? The latter are largely caused by wars on a global scale, including those that continue to break out as a result of centuries of colonisation or seemingly milder forms of domination of some ethnic/religious groups over others. While the historical multiculturalism of multicultural countries was to some extent regulated by the principle of tolerance or cultural autonomy (for example, in the First Polish Republic or the Austro-Hungarian Empire) as a natural state, the one resulting from the influx of 'others' to the centre of Europe in recent years is perceived by many as a threat. While the presence of 'foreigners', including seemingly equal citizens with a 'migration background', is an officially domesticated phenomenon in Western countries, significant parts of societies, many of them long rooted in a specific place, perceive

alism could seem obvious after over 150 years of globalisation processes.

Unification and diversification stimulate each other, as do chaos and order. Or vice versa?

Shaping/discovering individual and collective identities is a process during which self-definition changes. Even if they partly oppose or contribute to the revision of officially constructed historiography, local 'memory cultures' are also stimulated by the pressure of the media. They also change over time.

What function does, or can, art fulfil in the mediation of multiculturalism? In the 'visual identity' – first of high culture and then of the avant-garde and counterculture – its symbols: folklore – in the local context – and exotic – in the global context – are rarely referred to other than in accordance with the convention of Eurocentrism. So far, they have been commonly used in an inflationary and instrumental way, and only rarely in a pro-social way to promote the convention on human rights and the peaceful coexistence of equals in the world. Or perhaps, without a verbal comment,

Dorota Jonkajtis
Identity
digital print / 2023

Seven languages, seven notations, in each of them, one and the same word takes on a slightly different meaning. The combination of letters and signs creates one whole, but the record is illegible, and the content itself, the meaning of the word is lost. Attempts to transcend differences by creating common, artificial languages and artificial alphabets, with arbitrarily selected proportions of ingredients, as unnatural as a multivitamin, have been made many times in history. Unity, language and meanings lost at the Tower of Babel failed to be recovered in this way.



Andrzej Bobrowski
INCIDENT
linocut / 2023

A jagged, slightly tense line divides the relatively clean space of the plane diagonally into two areas of equal size – optically and emotionally similar. There are gaps between the top and bottom edges of the plane. All in all, they are insignificant because they cannot do anything. There was also a line on the left side, it was a bit smaller. Both lines complemented one another. For unknown reasons – I suspect existential ones – under the influence of some – not well defined – impulse, this line has closed itself and taken the form of a ring open at the top to the light. The result is an open-composition system with side edges – free horizons, in which the lines are still close to one another and alive. In a different reality, for example, from a bird's eye view, this incident may tell a completely different story. What? I do not know yet.

Marta Chudy
Old Stuff in the Neighbourhood
photography / 2023

You can buy a piece of meat here. Pretty good (and liver sausage, too). You can also exchange genuine gold for silver earrings that do not darken after a year. An Italian doctor of quantum physics will make dough so thin that no other will taste as good. Flowers, carnations, sunflowers and wreaths are sold here all the time. You can buy leather gloves, little plums and lumber here. It is easy to catch a taxi here. You can see a whisk in a household goods store if you look closely. The fabric shop 'Cornflower' is no longer here; be afraid, you who did not touch at least one piece of fabric there! Swimming trunks, jackets and pumpkins. You'll find everything here. It's a great place. But what are these ciggies for? I don't smoke. My nose hurts when I have to buy tomatoes right behind them. There are many cheeky chaps there – starting with this old dawdler, who harps on about everything he sees at 15:00 on working days, and ending with the rogue, who bleeds at 13:40 on Sunday. It is a real paradise.

P.S. Tram 98 – the motorman takes and gives back a sceptre – I've just said it is a paradise! Well, a royal atmosphere!



The question of internationalism

Dorota Monkiewicz

On 15 October 1922, *The First Exhibition of Russian Art* [Erste russische Kunstausstellung] opened in Berlin's van Diemen gallery. Among the exhibits by the 167 artists were works by Ukrainian Alexander Archipenko, Ukrainian Jew El Lissitzky (Lazar Lissitzky) and two Poles: Kazimierz Malewicz and Władysław Strzemiński. The last surname was incorrectly written in the exhibition catalogue as 'Strzegeminski'. What caught my attention was that the title of the exhibition included the phrase 'Russian art', not Soviet or Bolshevik art. Even if the name 'Russia' with the addition of 'Bolshevik' was used (because this country was renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics two months later, in December 1922), it is significant that the issue of internationalism appeared under the symbolic umbrella of 'Russianness'. And it was to remain this way.

It was not a precedent because the issue of internationalism was raised in the agenda of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL) in the Russian partition of Poland.

*Avant-garde artists
faced the same dilemmas – the choice
between national
identification and
internationalism*

From the beginning, this party was considered a regional branch of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Therefore, both the 'workers' cause' and 'internationalism' were genetically linked to 'Russianness'. The SDKPiL was a party of class interest – the large-scale industrial proletariat – and did not support peasant and national issues. Rosa Luxemburg, a leading activist of the party, believed that the involvement of Polish workers in the struggle for independence would distract them from the main goal, which was supposed to be their economic and political liberation. In addition, as an economist, she was afraid that economic ties with Russian markets would be cut off, affecting the economic development of the Polish lands under the Russian partition. Being cut off from markets would mean an increase in unemployment and further pauperisation of the large-scale industrial proletariat. The point of view of activists from the Russian partition was dominant among the Polish left, as it was also after World War I.



From the 1860s, the workers' movement developed throughout Europe along with successive 'Internationals', which were a forum for cooperation between local parties. It was believed that the situation of the proletariat was analogous in all European countries (with some reservations about Russia), and therefore horizontal ties, the struggle for a common

Stefan Ficner
Holobutiv
(a version of Holobutiv XXII)
zincography + lithography / 2022

The graphic work entitled *Holobutiv* is part of a series based on negatives from the family archive from the interwar period (in this case, 1938). They show

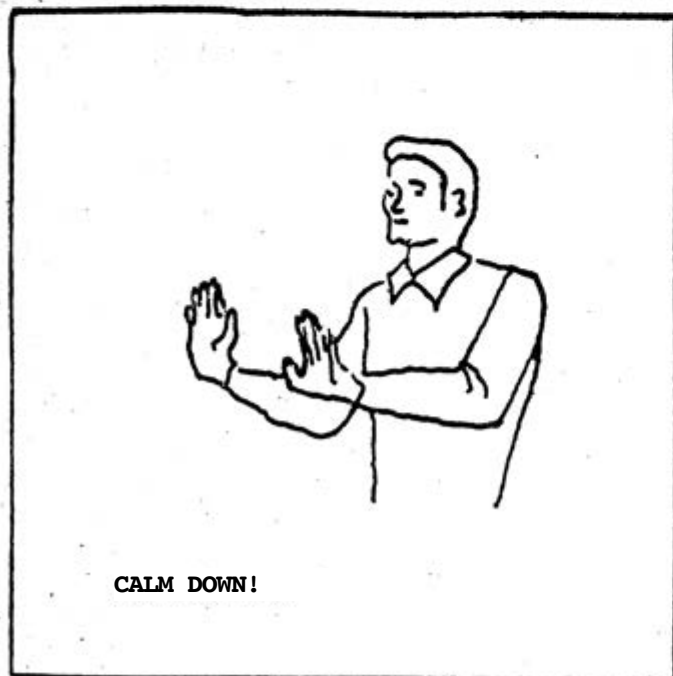
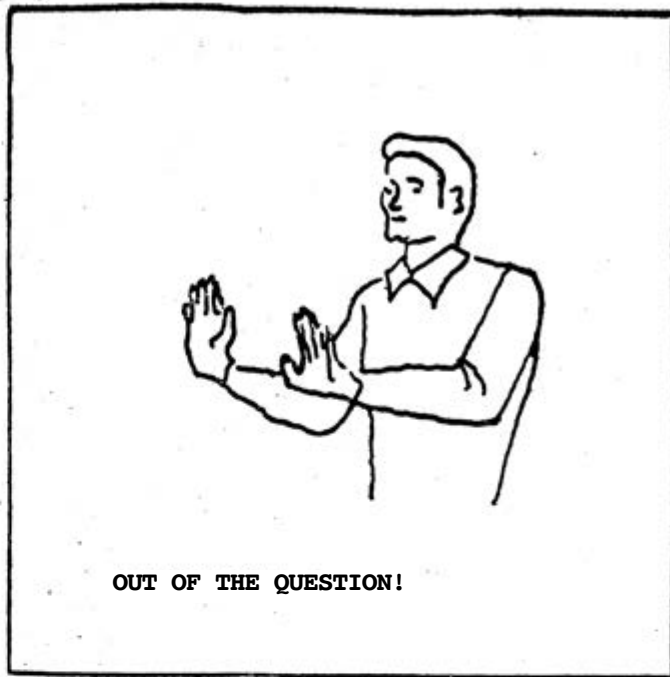
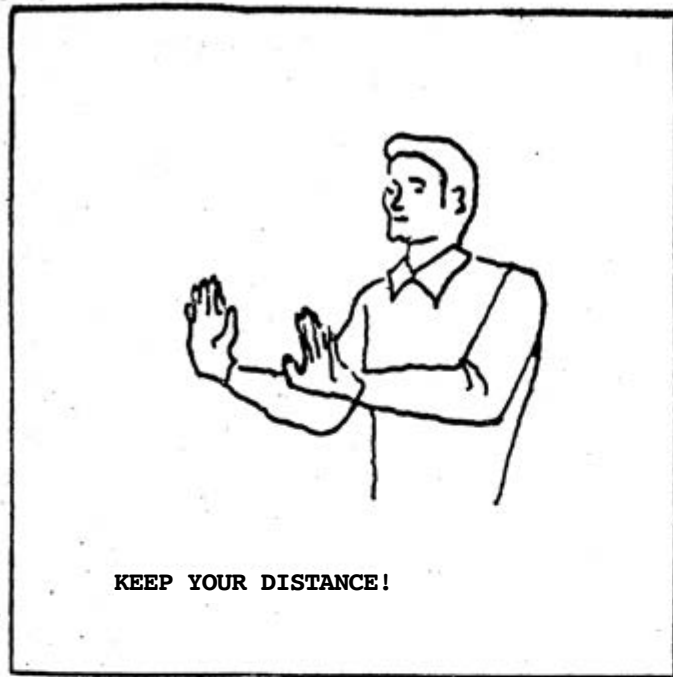
my grandmother and her brother photographed near the village of Holobutiv, near Lviv. In the work, I have also used a remix of Banksy's mural, made, like the original, using a stencil. I have dedicated the artwork to my friends Eline and Joop from the Netherlands.

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cause, should have priority over national egoisms. However, these issues became a matter of dispute. While the socialists supported the emergence of democratic nation-states and acted in accordance with the constitutions of their countries, the communists opted for internationalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The failure of the workers' movement (the so-called Second International) was the inability to formulate a common position against the world war. The socialist parties supported the decisions of their governments to enter the war, while

no longer exists. The anarchists supported self-organisation and self-management of the working masses and opposed the Bolshevik concept of revolution, in which the power of the workers and peasants was to be fulfilled in the guiding role of the party. An additional reason for Stanisław Kubicki to take his position on the issue of internationalism was the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1919–1920 in defence of the newly regained Polish independence. This turned out to be more important to him than the world victories of the proletariat led by the

*Kazimierz Malewicz
remained a Soviet artist,
while Strzemiński
and Kbro crossed the
green border to the
Polish side*



the radical left (communists) opted for the revolution of the proletariat. In Germany and Russia, the communists supported the rebellious army, which formed soldiers' and workers' councils. The argument for pacifism and against the socialists was the consequences of the war including a deep economic crisis, a hecatomb of civilian and military victims and hundreds of thousands of war invalids.

Avant-garde artists faced the same dilemmas – the choice between national identification and internationalism. Parallel to *The First Exhibition of Russian Art*, the ephemeral anarchist group Die Kommune organised a competing exhibition in Berlin called *The International Exhibition of Revolutionary Artists* [Internationalen Ausstellung revolutionären Künstler]. It was an initiative of Stanisław Kubicki, a member of the Poznań expressionist group Bunt, which

Bolshevik state. Due to their different approaches to Soviet Russia, Bunt artists ended their cooperation with the Berlin-based, left-wing magazine *Die Aktion* [The Action], and also did not participate in later events sponsored by that state. This choice had a negative impact on their German artistic careers, as well as on their posthumous place in art history.

The Treaty of Riga, which ended the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1921, stabilised the border situation in Eastern Europe and led to the division of territories between the two warring parties. The residents of these areas could choose their place of settlement and artists could define themselves in terms of their creative environment. Kazimierz Malewicz remained a Soviet artist, while Strzemiński and Kbro crossed the green border to the Polish side at the turn of 1921 and 1922. These choices were not obvious, consid-

Monika Pich
Anyway
Ambiguous Gestures
digital graphics / 2023

ering that during the Polish-Bolshevik war, the couple worked for the propaganda department of the Red Army headquarters. When Strzemiński's relief was shown in Berlin as part of revolutionary Russian art, he was already in Poland and published an essay on new Russian art in Krakow's magazine *Zwrotnica* [Railway Switch]. A year later, together with the Lithuanian Witold Kajruksztis, Strzemiński organised an exhibition of New Art in Vilnius. It was poorly received by both the Polish and Lithuanian press. In both countries, constructivism and cubo-futurism were clearly associated with the Bolsheviks – enemies of the newly regained statehood. Collages containing the letters of the Russian alphabet were particularly disliked. In

Poland, after it regained independence, the de-Russification campaign continued for the following 20 years, covering many different activities of the state administration. For example, signs written in Cyrillic were removed from the public space and Orthodox churches were liquidated.

The 'internationalism' of artists in the regained, multinational state manifested itself in mutual friendships across the current lines of state policy and in recognising the identity of national minorities. The cooperation between Władysław Strzemiński and Vytautas Kairiūkštis, between Henryk Stażewski, Jan Brzękowski and the Lithuanian poetry group Four Winds (Keturi Vėjai), and between Ukrainian, Jewish and Polish artists and Lviv artistic groups (ANUM and Artes) is well known. Left-wing magazines in Poland published issues devoted to the culture and art of national minorities: Lviv's *Signals* about Ukrainian art (no. 4-5/1934) and Belarusian art (no. 75 /1934) and Vilnius' *Žagary* about Lithuanian art (No. 3–4/1934).

Another issue was the practice of communist internationalism in the spirit of the Moscow-based Comintern (Third International), which meant primarily acting in the interest of 'the world's first state of workers and peasants'. Not all of those mentioned above shared this type of leftism. However, many intellectuals, writers and artists belonged to the illegal Communist Party of Poland (KPP). The party was illegal because it did not submit to the legal procedures of the Polish state, that is, it did not apply for registration on the list of political parties. The KPP was an alternative for artists disappointed with the shape of independence in the Second Polish Republic. As predicted by workers' activists at the turn of the centuries, the emphasis on the national cause pushed the social question out of sight and blocked the emancipation of the working class. In the newly established Polish state, the working masses continued to suffer severe poverty. Land reform failed, the economy went from one crisis to another, and illiteracy and unemployment remained high. After the May coup in 1926, problems with democracy were also added. In his poem 'Europe', published in 1929 with a graphic design by Mieczysław Szczuka and Teresa Żarnower, the communist poet Anatol Stern did not demand Poland, but people devouring meat once a month!

*'but who
but who
fights
for the dearer than every
Silesia of the world
dearer than all the inde-
pendences –
liberated
heart of man?!'*

EVENT 6

Maciej Kurak

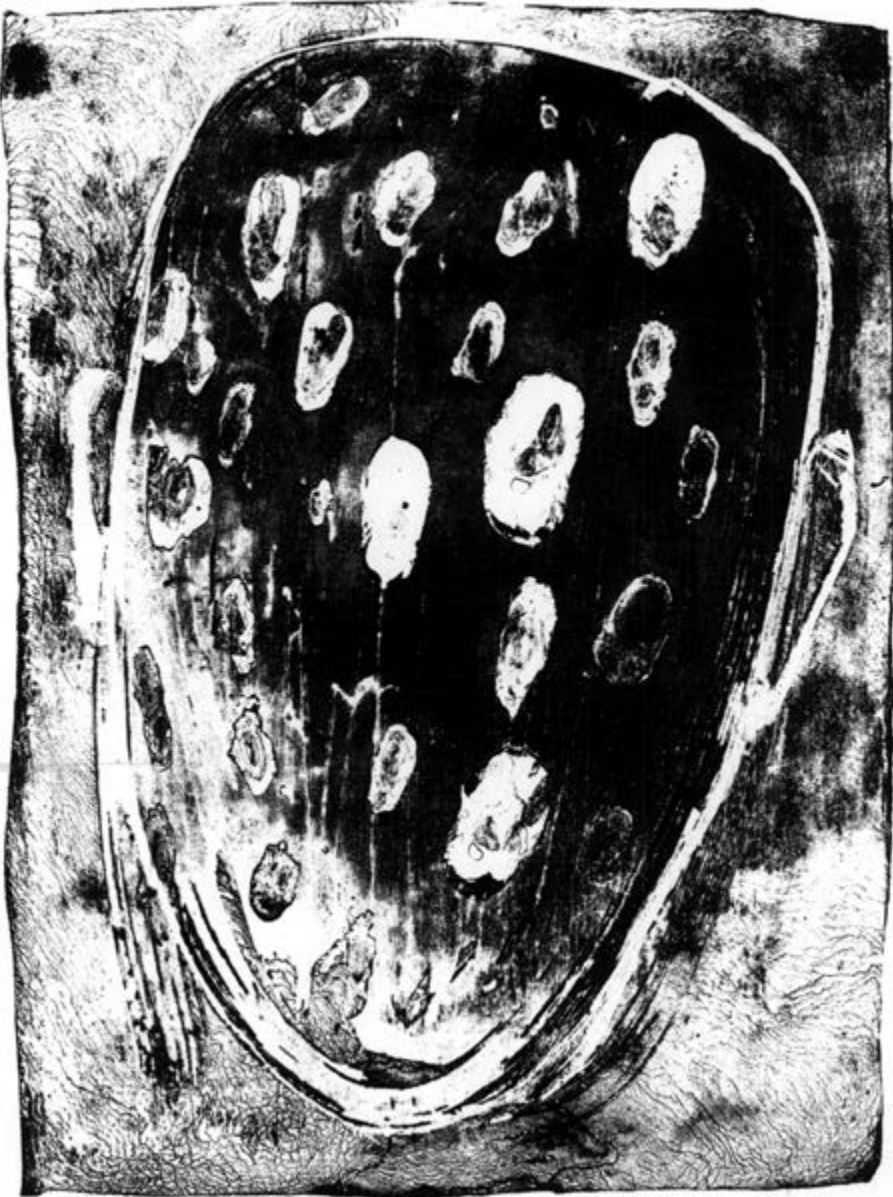
Place: Around Piotrowska Street, Łódź.

Friday, a November evening. Rainy, grey and gloomy. Tired of sitting in a pub, my friend and I go to our friends who run Galeria Wschodnia [Eastern Gallery]. It is located in a private house, in an old tenement building. Poor visibility outside makes it impossible to locate the place. Soaked and irritated, we wander around. We finally get there, or so we think. The gate to the tenement is open. We climb the stairs to the second floor. The door to the apartment is slightly ajar. We carefully go inside. The entire room is hung with curtains. There is darkness. We sense someone's presence and, without first discussing it, we try to wrap the unidentified figure with material. After a long struggle, we finally manage to immobilise the person. In the dark, we move on in silence. We find another door. We open it with difficulty. We enter a very cosy room, wallpapered with geometric patterns. He is sitting in the corner in the twilight. Surprised, we look at each other. Suddenly, the sound of a movie clapperboard' and a loud 'cut' are heard. Cut. We go out into the dark again. We do not meet anyone on the way. Standing in front of the building, we realise that we were not in the right gallery. So, where were we? And where did He – David Lynch himself – come from?



Milena Hościłło
A Guest in the House
ink on paper / 2023

Cultural differences resulting from the development of the global economy make unique customs and traditions disappear. As a consequence, only those that can be adapted to the economic system and co-create the consumer culture are left. The process of the coexistence of different cultures results from socially enforced nomadism, related to the search for regions with better working and living conditions. It is important to skilfully use the potential of multiculturalism in this type of economic reality.



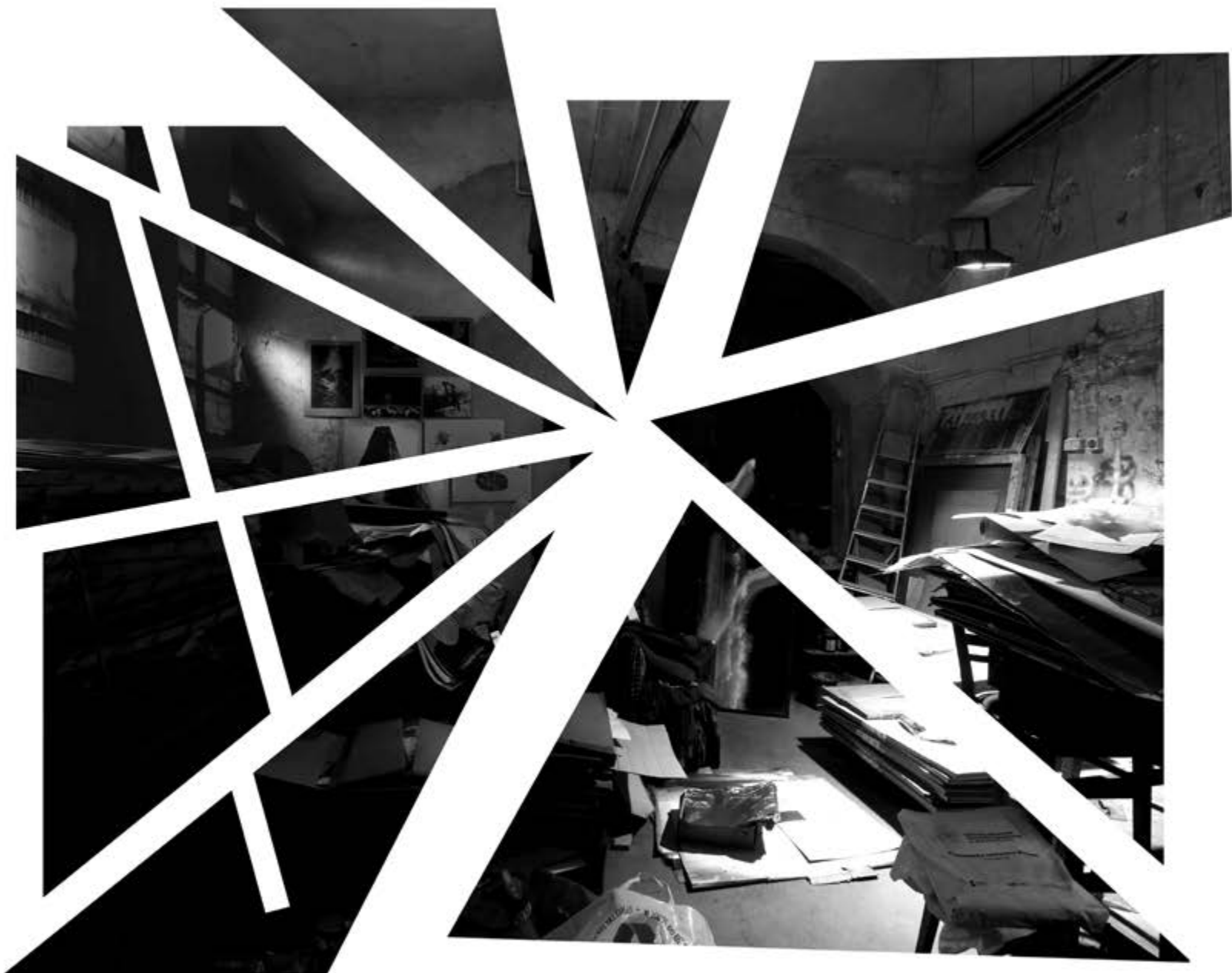
Kornel Offerski
Problems
lithography / 2020

Maybe it is an inherited trauma, on the go, it has clung to me like a telemarketer. It stains me like sealing wax, but it is less fun when it stains another sweater.



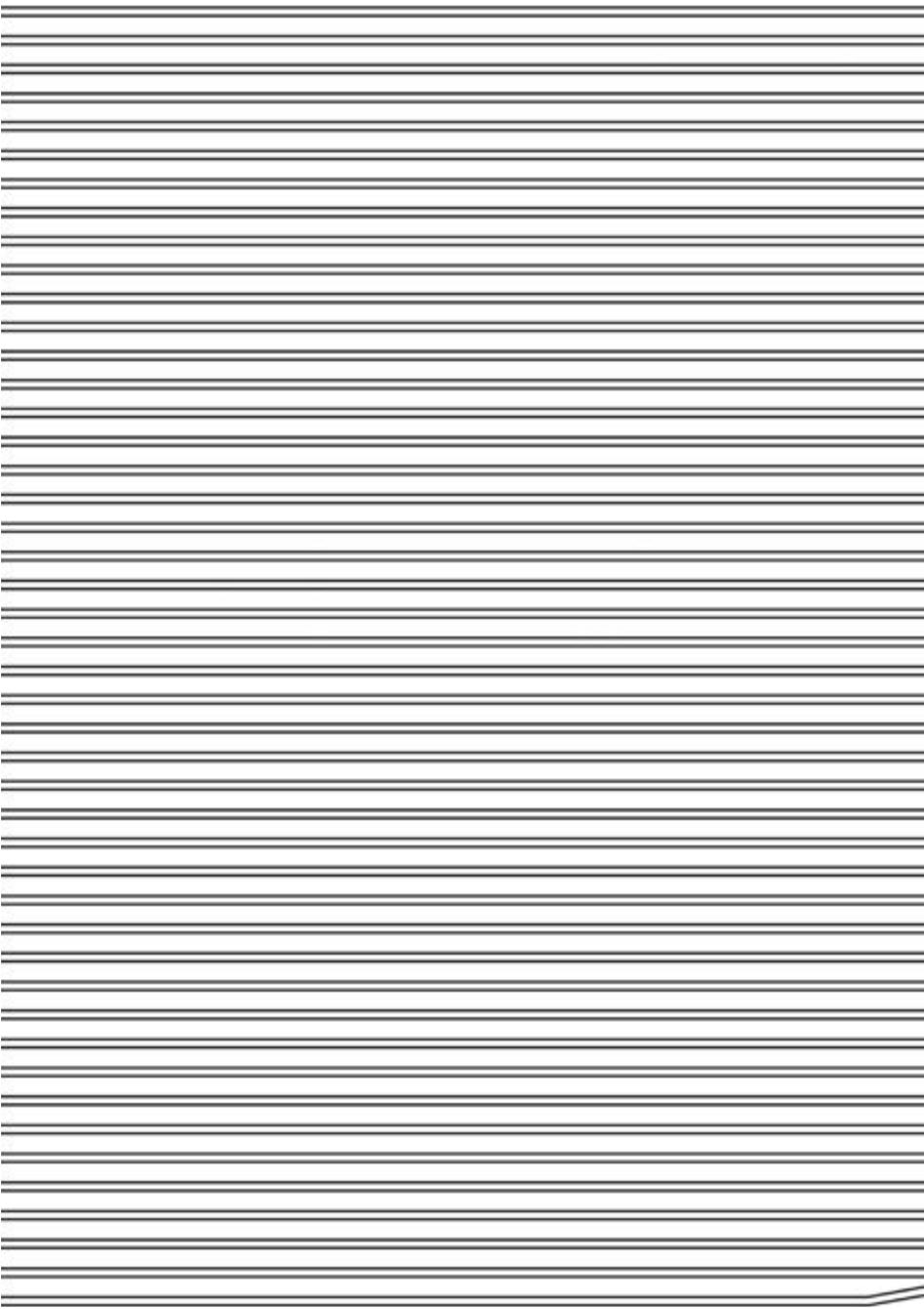
Anna Sobczyk,
Multi Tower
digital graphics / 2023

The biblical Tower of Babel is a symbol of impossible actions, leading to the confusion of cultures and languages. The modern economic system, on the one hand, forces the creation of a global economy and, on the other, affects social polarisation, which basically divides people into poor and rich. An additional element binding monoculturalism is Eurocentrism, which imposes values developed in Western culture.



Grzegorz Nowicki
No Title / 2023

Decades of searching, several studio addresses, many sources of inspiration, plenty of places in the world, a lot of documents, shards of the global village – questions, questions and still no satisfactory answers.



Tomasz Jurek
Filler
digital print / 2023

A graphic element that is used to fill empty spaces in publications. It is used to maintain aesthetic correctness in the image – symmetry, rhythm and compositional balance. The graphic design of a publication affects the perception and interpretation of its content. An image is not only a decorative addition to the text, just like art is not limited to activities that beautify social reality. 'And we will reply to this mercenary pack, this filth, which raises its eyes blasphemously at our holy mistress – art, which tangles at our feet, at the earliest opportuni-

ty – with a kick of the leg.' The quote comes from the editorial published in the literary-artistic-social magazine *Życie* [Life] (no 12, 1899).

Searching for one's expression: The beginnings of modern Jewish graphics

Piotr Rypson

Since the late 20th and early 21st centuries, in an extremely condensed period of time, concepts about the national style of Jewish art have been crystallising.¹ It should be noted that the search for features specific to the modern art of this or that nation was nothing exceptional at that time. The search for modernisation and identity by Russians and Jews in the Russian Empire coincided with similar aspirations to link the renewal of artistic language with something unique in the native culture in almost all nations reshaping their states during World War I and the decade that followed. The common feature of these aspirations was the formal influences of modern art, cubism, futurism and expressionism, as well as the simultaneous discovery of local traditions of folk art. What distinguished Jewish artists from the contemporary artists of other nations were, of course, their lack of a state, their dispersed diasporas and the resulting forced and consolidated separation from the surrounding community. In the case of young Jewish artists, this resulted in a different topography of exploration and a stylistic geography with much wider territories and even chronology.

Narrowing down the above issues to the area of applied graphics and graphic arts and simplifying this division a bit, two main trends in the formation of the vernacular language of new Jewish graphics (and drawings) can be seen in the late 1910s and early 1920s. The first trend was orientalisising and referred to areas inhabited centuries ago by Jewish tribes, to the art of the Middle East, Assyria and Jewish antiquities; it defined the 'Zionist' pedagogy of Bezalel, a pioneering Jewish art school founded in Palestine in 1906. The second reached for the visual language of the avant-garde as well as the symbolism and ornamentation taken from the folk tradition.

The first trend was chosen and co-shaped by Bernard (Ber) Kratka (Kratko), born in Warsaw, better known for his sculptures. His financial situation forced him to create graphic design for books issued by Jewish publishers in Warsaw. Kratka graphically designed a volume of poetry *Di goldene kejt* [The Golden Chain] by Icchok Peretz, published in Warsaw in 1909 by the Farlag Progres publishing house, along with the cover and six colour lithographic frontispieces. The edition was exquisitely edited for Yiddish publications of the time. The artist's works are early examples of the marriage of Yiddish literature with a new type of Jewish graphic art, combining the aforementioned orientalisising aesthetics with Art Nouveau, in both the depiction of figures and the stylisation of Hebrew lettering.

A similar, orientalisising trend was followed a few years later by artists from the Machmadim group, established in Paris in the early 1920s. The magazine *Machmadim* was printed using the inexpensive hectographic duplicator technique, which allowed only one-colour printing of drawings. In addition to the influence of Art Nouveau, these are characterised by orientalisising forms and ornamenta-

integrated into the modern art of many countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas. The tendency to simplify the form, called 'Jewish primitivism' as early as 1919, became one of the characteristics, particularly among the illustrators of Kultur-Lige books. The subject matter of the works, individual forms and symbols, but not necessarily artistic expression, were therefore related to Jewish

of the Russian Empire, far from Moscow and St. Petersburg (for many of them, universalist suprematism and constructivism later became the emancipatory trends, radically cutting them off from the climate of their native shtetl). An intellectual and publishing movement flourished in the peripheral centres of the empire, Kiev, Warsaw, Odesa, Łódź and Vitebsk, and, after the outbreak of the February revolution, also in Moscow and St. Petersburg, resulting in dozens of modernly designed and illustrated titles of books and magazines.

An important point of reference for this movement was the flood of avant-garde publications released in Russia, breaking with the centuries-old tradition of typographic art. They referred to miniatures in old Russian manuscripts, folk *tubok* and pre-Christian Rus. The specific, quasi-religious title page design and handwritten elements combined avant-garde

*In 1918–19, the centre
of the Jewish Renaissance
moved from
revolutionary Moscow
to Kiev*

with the old tradition. The aesthetics of these prints celebrated neo-primitivism in a turn towards what was primitive, folk and tribal, characteristic of the era. In the first period of this turn, before the graphic design of avant-garde publications was dominated by constructivism and a wave of propaganda visual rhetoric supported by the already established Soviet printing industry, these books were based on poor aesthetics. Their creators used freehand techniques of design and reproduction. This specific 'anti-Gutenberg revolution' proceeded in parallel and often in synergy with fascinations with folk art born outside academic buildings. There was a strong turn towards 'primitive' elements, manifested in outstanding works ranging from *The Rite of Spring* (1913) by Igor Stravinsky, cubism and fascination with non-European art to Russian neo-primitivism and other European futuristic-cubist searches for primary and ethnic visual sources (including Polish formism). It is an important point of reference for the restorers of Jewish art; at exhibitions in 1913, the presence of Russian folk woodcuts, luboks, testified to the continuity of artistic discoveries, ranging from folk art to the works of painters gathered in the Donkey's Tail group (to which Chagall belonged). 'The inclusion of self-taught

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artists was essential for Larionov because it was in line with his call for "recognition of all styles", "going East" and towards "national art". Therefore, not only Jewish artists, let us repeat, focused on the search for authenticity with national features.

A new Jewish book

Several studies have been conducted on the role of the book in Jewish culture and the then innovative aesthetics. The subject was topical because of the basic inconsistency between the self-defining term 'People of the Book' and the simultaneous serious stagnation in the development of publishing art, causing an increasingly strong clash with the European revolution in this area from the early 20th century. A handful of early Yiddish publications from the years 1913–18, published in a layout prepared by young artists, such as Budka, Marc Chagall, Eliezer Lissitzky and Joseph Chaikov, created a lasting foundation for the phenomenon of the modern Yiddish book in all its stylistic variations.

In 1918–19, the centre of the Jewish Renaissance moved from revolutionary Moscow to Kiev, where an independent state, the Ukrainian People's Republic, had just been proclaimed. In the new state, the Jews gained space to develop their national culture, despite the ongoing fights, which were accompanied by inseparable pogroms against the Jewish population. Despite the waves of crime and violence, dozens of new cultural and

educational institutions were established, representing the complexity and diversity of the Jewish community in the former empire – religious, moral, class and, of course, political. In January 1919, the Kultur-Lige, the most important Jewish cultural organisation, was founded in Kiev. In addition to well-known writers, the Kultur-Lige section of visual arts included the most important creators of the new Jewish stylistics in Russia and Ukraine: Lissitzky, Chaikov, Ber Rybak, Boris Aronson and Mark Epstein. Thanks to their work, the canon of modern children's illustrations published by

*Lissitzky certainly
played an important
role in shaping modern
Jewish art in Poland*

the Kultur-Lige was created; the promoters of national culture paid particular attention to books.

It was during the Kiev period that the mature formula of Jewish modernism was shaped in the lands of the former empire, combining seemingly contradictory tendencies – folklore and attachment to tradition, orientalism and modern form, biblical symbolism and

the pursuit of abstraction. Seth Wolitz has summed up this new phase of the Jewish book as follows: By treating the page as a canvas, a verbal window, and an independent aesthetic object in itself, the artists raised textual illustration to a modern polysemous art form. The interplay of the figurative image with the Hebrew alphabet or the many abstract designs conflated with Hebrew letters produced at once a verbal symbol and a visual icon.²

At the turn of 1919 and 1920, the main burden of the Kultur-Lige activity was transferred to Poland. The general experiences of the Kiev period also reached there, particularly thanks to the later Warsaw Kultur-Lige publications. Lissitzky certainly played an important role in shaping modern Jewish art in Poland and Jewish-applied graphics, as did Chaikov. Children's publications designed by them spread widely, becoming classics of Jewish publications from that period. Lissitzky's wonderfully illustrated works appeared in print when the artist was already abandoning the national style to fully devote himself to suprematism and abstract art, at the same time serving Bolshevik propaganda with his talent. The symbol of this transition can be his next children's book, *About Two Squares* (1922), with suprematist compositions conveying a communist ideological message.

Years later, Henryk Berlew himself recalled that he expected Lissitzky to be an

instigator of Jewish art, and he met a follower of suprematism who gave him 'the poison of crystal-clear new art'. Having arrived from Russia, Berlew abandoned 'Jewish expressionism' and turned to the constructivist trend in graphic design, also proposing such solutions to Jewish publishers. Another, more diverse stage of changes in Jewish graphic arts began.

1. This text is part of a larger publication.

2. S. L. Wolitz, *The Jewish National Renaissance in Russia*, [in:] *Tradition and Revolution. The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art 1912–1928*, Jerusalem 1987, p. 40.



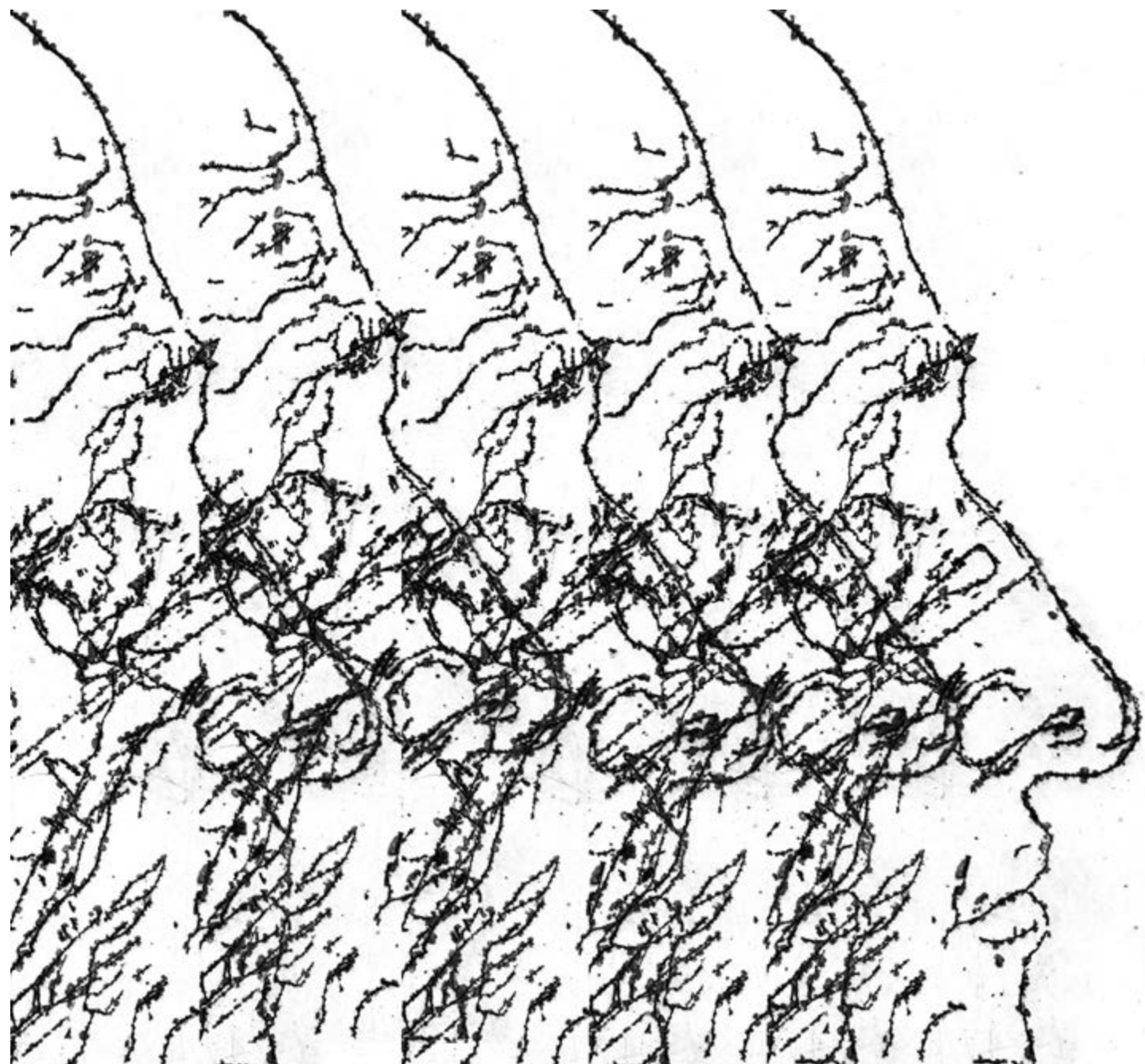
Illustration: Włodarski Radek

tion in the spirit of Kratka and Bezalel, with exceptionally original Hebrew lettering, drawn with Art Nouveau fluidity, reminiscent of the then popular *Arnold Böcklin* typeface, named to commemorate the late Swiss artist.

Most Jewish artists who sought modern forms of expression, however, followed contemporary trends, such as futurism, cubism and expressionism. References to folk culture were of much significance. This apparent contradiction was

Radek Włodarski
TaA
text montage / 2023

everyday life, folklore and tradition. At the same time, even abstraction was considered a specific, national form of expression. This is evident in the works of a number of young Jewish artists in Central Europe, Belarusian, Polish and Ukrainian lands and the Pale of Settlement (Russian: *земля оседлости*), that is, the western and south-western part



Piotr Szurek
Monolith
etching / 2023



Michał Tatarkiewicz

It Is Not a Couch

watercolour, A4 format / 2023

The word 'dywan' [Eng.: carpet] means sofa in Ukrainian. The work refers to the painting *This is Not a Pipe* by René Magritte.

G R O U P
404
grafikaart.pl

The artists of Group 404 (established 2014) focus on social involvement and deal with the construction of a visual message relating directly to the form of presentation. The consistent statements of the artist's co-create graphic works and their contextual elements (arrangement and place presentations, social phenomena, texts). The specificity of the group's operation is aimed at exposing the potential of conceptual process in art, depriving it of its commercial character. The actions of the artistic group are focused on changes that activate the viewer. From the beginning of the group's functioning, the art project *Bunt. New expressions* has been continued. The project relates to avant-garde art in the context of contemporary issues in social relations.

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Anna Sobczyk
Piotr Szurek
Michał Tatarkiewicz
Radosław Włodarski



Max Skorwider
No Title
digital graphics / 2023



The graphic magazine produced by Group 404 belongs to the publishing cycle distributed in the urban public space (in art and culture institutions, and service outlets). It presents different approaches to everyday phenomena shaped in contemporary local culture. It contains original texts, graphics and records of concepts and activities. The second issue of the magazine deals with multiculturalism in the context of an economic system based on the accumulation of capital, as well as values shaped by avant-garde art, particularly those related to the concept of internationalism. The authors refer to the issue of diversity as a cultural factor influencing the process of socialisation.



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