

# SEKCJA 1 / SECTION 1

# WOMEN AT THE ACADEMIES OF FINE ARTS

**Edited by Anka LEŚNIAK**

# INTRODUCTION

The academic conference and the exhibition *Women at the Academies of Fine Arts* was dedicated to the history of women in art academies and the role they play in them today. The impulse for the conference was the 100th anniversary of the admission of the first women students to the academic community at academies of fine arts, including Kraków (1917/18), Vienna (1920/21), Berlin (1919/1920). These events encourage in-depth reflection on the spectrum of issues related to this topic, in the field of art history and criticism, sociology and the biographies of women professors, women masters, graduates and first women students, who opened the door to a professional artistic career for the next generations. The aim of the conference was to exchange information and present various research perspectives on the

activities of women at academies of fine arts, from the first female students to the present day.

Art education takes place at universities that do not necessarily have the word “academy” in their name. However, this term has been used here, not only because of its historical importance, but also for the purpose of its critical analysis. Women predominate among students, while men dominate the staff of the academy of fine arts (e.g. in Poland). However, some changes have been observed in recent decades. In 2008, Ludmiła Ostrogórska was chosen as the first woman in Poland for the position of the rector of the Academy of Fine Arts and headed the Gdańsk Academy of Fine Arts until 2016. Shortly thereafter, this function was taken up by Jolanta Rudzka-Habisiak in Łódź (terms of office 2012-2020). From 2020, Mirosława

Jarmołowicz has been the rector of the Academy of Art in Szczecin.

After more than a century since women, acting against prejudices and stereotypes, won full access to artistic education at academies of fine arts in Europe, it is worth considering what their presence has brought to these institutions and what has changed in them over the decades. The topic of the presence of women in the academies of fine arts was the first in a series of issues and problems raised during the meetings of the Feminist Seminar.

This conversation was continued during the conference *Women at the Academies of Fine Arts* in a series of presentations of artists and theoreticians from Poland and abroad.

Issues:

- first students, first lecturers;
- outstanding professors and women masters and their influence on subsequent generations of women artists;
- women in the structures of academies and in relation to their authorities;
- the influence of women on the content and system of arts education;
- oral history - not only of students and professors, but also other outstanding women that have been remembered by us.

The conference is accompanied by the exhibition *Women at the Academies of Fine Arts*, March 11-31, 2022, Aula Gallery, Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk; curated by Anka Leśniak

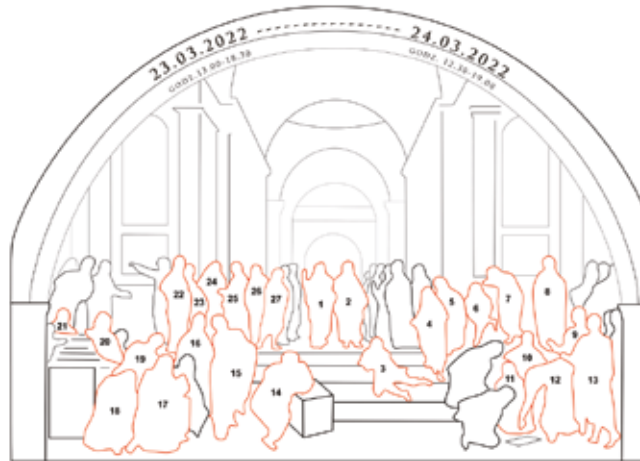
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Concept and coordination : Anka Leśniak, ania włodarska [a.w.]

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Ludmiła Ostrogórska, the first female rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poland, Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk.  
photo by Bartosz Żukowski



# KOBIETY NA AKADEMIACH

## WOMEN AT THE ACADEMIES OF FINE ARTS

23-24.03.2022

KONFERENCJA MIĘDZYNARODOWA  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

AUDYTORIUM

AKADEMIA SZTUK PIĘKNYCH W GDAŃSKU  
ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN GDANSK  
TARG WĘGLOWY 6



AKADEMIA  
SZTUK  
PIĘKNYCH  
W GDAŃSKU



Wydział Rzeźby i Intermediów | Katedra Intermediów  
FACULTY OF SCULPTURE AND INTERMEDIA | INTERMEDIA DEPARTMENT



aica  
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Matronat: MIĘDZYNARODOWE  
STOWARZYSZENIE KRYTYKÓW SZTUKI | SEKCJA POLSKA



DOFINANSOWANE Z PROGRAMU  
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graphic design by Julia Kul



# Darina ALSTER

Academy of Fine Arts in Prague

## TOUCH IS A FORM OF MEMORY. LOOKING BACK AT THE CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS FROM THE FIRST FEMALE ABSOLVENT OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS, PRAGUE

*Touch is a form of memory, a method of remembering and a way of bringing bodies into the present.<sup>1</sup>*

We feel the need of remembrance, when we need to connect different layers of time, because we feel that we cannot grasp the whole situation, or we suspect that some essential information is missing. The memory trace is often broken or omitted, especially when it comes to various disadvantaged and marginalised groups, such as women in art history.

*His story is his story but what about her story?*

In 1998, the Guerrilla Girls published a book called *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*.<sup>2</sup> The book is a critique of traditional art history and an unconventional survey of female artists who have worked from the time of classical Greece to the present. These women artists have traditionally been overlooked by male critics, their works attributed to their fathers, brothers, husbands, or lovers. Here, the GGs offer a more revisionist and inclusive art history where female artists are not excluded on

the basis of gender or ethnicity. Like the Guerrilla Girls, we revise history and find shards of herstory, life stories, and legacies of women artists.

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first female AVU graduate, in the fall of 2022, we have put together a cultural event with Katerina Olivova, a colleague and friend with whom I run the New Media 2 studio at the AVU in Prague, to enjoy the aforementioned jubilee and to make the legacy of the first women officially educated in Art at Prague's academy more visible. The celebrations included an exhibition called *Herstory*, which was located in the library of the school building, and a series of side events.

The celebrations opened with the happening *Embracing the Institution*. We invited all AVU staff and students to take part in the happening. We needed physically to realise together that the institution is our space, which we all can shape. We wanted to feel the touch of every person who is a member of AVU, whether staff, students or pedagogues.

The Art Nouveau building of the AVU was embraced by a living chain of all members of the academic community. The aim of the happening was collectively to realise and experience the fact that the academy as an institution is made

up of its membership and therefore we all have the opportunity to participate in the creation of a dynamic structure called academia. The building could not be embraced completely, but most of it was covered by the human chain.

Physical action deepens and intensifies the experience of theoretical concepts and allows them to be experienced in a new way that carries the potential to provoke change. In the case of an institution, the process of care should be bidirectional. Each and every one of us feels how we become an integral part of the care process that constitutes a living institution and participates in the transformation of its environment through the improvement of internal relationships. The happening took place on 15.11.2022

All that you touch you Change.  
All that you Change Changes you  
The only lasting truth  
is Change.  
Goddess is change <sup>3</sup>

The year 2022 brings another significant moment in the Academy's development. The election of AVU's first ever female rector, Mária Topolčanská, who took office in February 2022. We wanted to celebrate the new rector by embracing the building and supporting her feminist vision.

Hugs and touches are forms of connecting the different layers of time that we carry within us as members of the academic community. There is also a linking of history and the present, an awakening of forgotten memory and the assumption of a certain article of responsibility in these highly transformative times.

Who were the first graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts and what is the significance of their legacy for our times?

In fact, in 1922, four women graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. Each was originally from somewhere else and worked in a different medium. In 1922, Karla Bulovec, Helena Bochořáková, Charlotte Schrotter and Mary Duras graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts. The last-named, though neglected in Bohemia,

achieved worldwide recognition. The sculptures of Mary Duras are represented, among others, in the collections of the National Gallery in Prague.<sup>4</sup> However, each of the artists is a bearer of a quality artistic legacy. When we search for information about these women, we discover their interesting fates and the messages they carried through their turbulent lives.

Vjera Borozan's interpretation focused mainly on two lesser-known authors, Karla Bulovac and Helena Bochořáková. Women were allowed to study in the newly founded Czech Republic from 1918. However, when they wanted to apply for studies, a man had to transport their work to the building.

Helena Bochořáková-Dittrichová (1894-1980), although an overlooked artist in Bohemia, became the world's first recognized author of comic strips, or graphic novels.<sup>5</sup> She accompanied her graphic cycles with social themes with texts. She dealt with the themes of labour, workers, motherhood and also the theme of Indian life. She felt deeply for the workers and for the colonised. Her series entitled *Uprising* was significant. She published several books during her lifetime, including the graphic series *From My Childhood and Between Two Oceans*.

Bochořáková-Dittrichová's larger body of work references starker topics, from oppression to capitalism. "Her subsequent work further expanded [graphic novels'] scope, focusing on history, religion, and impressions of other cultures," Rebecca Gross writes. "As a result, Bochořáková-Dittrichová quietly strengthened the case for topics such as domestic life to be seen as legitimate art subjects rather than as easily dismissed female fodder." (Gross Rebecca, "Bringing artist to light," NEA Arts blog. Accessed April 1, 2023, link not accessible anymore)

"It's great that there's proof that there were women who were working in this very early art form. I'm hoping people will recognise her place, and the place of women at the beginning of things." said Heather Slania, the director of NMWA's library and research center about Helena Bochořáková's works. (see Katherine Brooks, "Meet The World's First Woman Graphic Novelist, Helena Bochořáková-Dittrichová," accessed December 21, 2023,



[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/26/helena-bochoakova-dittrichova\\_n\\_5354241.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/26/helena-bochoakova-dittrichova_n_5354241.html)

Karla Bulovec-Mrak's (1895-1957) work was marked by a lack of funding and therefore materials. She created her sculptures in clay, which disintegrates over time. After her studies, Karla Bulovec returned to her native Ljubljana, Slovenia. She married the first declared gay man, Ivan Mrak. She was therefore a pioneer on the issue of open marital relationships and LGBT+ identities. She was fascinated by indigenous cultures. The only surviving realisation is the Yakumtek Indian statue. It was part of a dreamed-about project for a Pantheon of Indians that was never realised. We only know of the project from drawing studies.<sup>6</sup>

The lecture about the first graduates of the Prague Academy was given by Vjera Borozan. Vjera was the director of the Artyčok project and the director of the National Museum in Montenegro, and currently lives in Prague and teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts.

This was followed by a lecture on Teresa Feodorowna Ries (1866-1956), an unofficial student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. The lecture was given by the Polish theoretician, curator and artist Anka Lesniak from the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk. Lesniak is one of the authors of the exhibition *Un Paradiso Amaro / Bitter Paradise* and a member of the TFR Archive.<sup>7</sup> The exhibition was held in 2021, the centenary of the official admission of the first women artists to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. This exhibition, and the subsequent exhibition *The Lost Element/Reconstruction of the Witch* in the VBKOE (2022), were dedicated to the enigmatic work *Die Hexe* (The Witch, 1895) by the sculptor Teresa Feodorowna Ries, who, although she could not officially study at the Academy, paved the way for future generations of women art students with her enthusiasm.<sup>8</sup>

The figure of *Hexe*, the witch, is a kind of feminist image of a woman who defied patriarchy and lived her authentic life in spite of the status quo. In this sense, every woman artist is a witch. As Kristen J. Solle writes in her book *Witches, Sluts, Feminists*: "a witch is the opposite of a victim."<sup>9</sup>

We saw the exhibition at the Vienna Academy with the New Media 2 studio. The enigmatic sculpture of the witch completely captivated us as well as her contemporary artistic interpretations. Like the works of the first graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts, *Hexe* by Teresa Feodorowna Ries was closely linked to the artist's life and experienced its own troubled destiny. Such a curatorial approach became an inspiration for us of how to grasp the past and connect it with the present through the frame of contemporary art.

The presentations and the debate ended with the performance *Angel of Assassination* by Saydie Vell & Yazz. Dancing with burning fans and wax lovingly poured over each other's bodies, they made a conscious integration of the submissive and dominant components of the soul. BDSM culture can be understood as the objectification of power games, which, when they are conscious and consensual, help transform power games and other usually toxic behaviors into a form of dance. Presentations, debate and performance happened as a part of celebrations which we called Wisdom Day on 22.11.2022.

The main element of the celebration was the exhibition *Herstory*, set in the specific atmosphere of the AVU library. The library of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague is one of the oldest Czech libraries in the field of art history. Its origins date back to the founding of the Academy in 1799. The author of the original unique interior of the library from the early twentieth century is the famous Czech architect Jan Kotěra. The library is housed in the main building of the Academy, which was built in the Art Nouveau style, sometimes called Art Nouveau Baroque. The main building was designed by architect Václav Roštlapil. The project dates from 1897 to 1903.<sup>10</sup>

The exhibition was opened on 15.11. 2022 by the performances *Herstorie* by Kateřina Olivová and *All the female Graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts* by me (Darina Alster).

The performance *Herstorie*: Kača Olivová was lying naked on a pile of feminist books. Her beautiful body was looking very monumental in the darkness of the Art Nouveau library. Kateřina

pulled out various selected books from underneath her and read random passages from her favourite feminist authors. Some of these books were later quoted by Anka Lesniak in her presentation, for example *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Woman in Nineteenth-Century Culture*.<sup>11</sup>

Outside the library, in the corridor directly adjacent to the study department, I was standing on a ladder in a tight red velvet evening dress. On a large sheet of paper about 3 by 10 meters long, I wrote the years from 1922 to 2022. Under each year I wrote the names of the female graduates of the study. Some years were more prolific for female graduates, at other times one or two names appear, and in some years women did not graduate. In the post-war period there is a great rush of names of women graduates. The writing process exceeded the building's working hours, so I was later assisted by the students of the New Media 2 studio in the following weeks.

In this way, we both (Darina and Kateřina) remind us that they are continuing in the roots of our foremothers, women feminists, artists, witches, thinkers and pioneers. Women who have found the courage and self-respect to challenge the unequal social norms set in our Euro-American world by predominantly white cisheteronormative men. These courageous women had the imagination to realise that the norm can be transformed and often contributed to the equality of their followers. These courageous women had troubled lives and were often subjected to hatred and rejection by mainstream society. Like them, it gives us the strength and hope to see the world in the larger scale of herstory and in the broader context of world development for all social classes. Similarly, their legacy gives us the power to actively participate in the transformation of the institution in which we work and to imagine and shape a mutually caring society through our own creation and legacy.

With the aforementioned *Herstory* exhibition, we aimed to present the life and work of four artists - the first female graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts through to the artistic interpretation of the students of the Academy of Fine Arts. For the occasion, we organised a site-specific. We are

fascinated by the quiet and peaceful space of the library, where history and shared knowledge breathe. We worked freely with the legacy of the artists mentioned above, letting it inspire us... The exhibitors were selected on the basis of an open call. The selection criteria for us were the relevance and extension of the subject matter for today's current turbulent times, and also the feminist theme of the position of women in the art world.

Both Kass Vladyka and Karol Filo thematised the relationship with women from their own lineage. Kass's *Golden Girls* is a video of a drag party he threw in his drag form Beatrice to please and share wisdom and humor with his mother and grandmother. In his audiotapes, Karol dialogues about life with his mother, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Hana Chmelíková and the collective created guides for seven exercises in appropriateness. The exercises were designed for mothers who always and everywhere feel out of place. They placed the *Exercise Book* object on a library table, and later it became part of the library's archives.

The diary, which Marie-Luise Pulkrábková used to make the lives of four women artists visible through fictional diary entries, became a bridge to the personal confessions of the academy's contemporary student body and to the revelation of several examples of the pedagogical transgressions of power.

Natalia Różycka's video *A tak Cię zawołałam* (And that's how I called you) captured a fragment of the old Polish series about Janosik, where Janosik, as a symbol of masculinity, seduces his love Maryna through a red carpet rolled out in a meadow. Różycka borrowed this moment for her own erotic play between two girls, contextualizing the fragment as queer and thus appropriating it into the present.

Michaela Prablesková together with Natalia Różycka created a *Celebratory cake*, which was a tribute to the four first graduates and at the same time a certain commentary on the position of women in today's art world and a wish for a better future not only for women.

Sonya The Moon painted on a large strip of plastic a certain allegory of the motivation to

create, Daemon, which drives people on despite all the difficulties of life inspiring them to make art.

Dominik Málek exhibited a painting called *Warmth of Home*, which speaks of gay desire, partnership and the need for a safe space in a non-normative relationship.

Marina Drozd Smutná exhibited a painting painted on a tea towel titled *Kitchen Towel*, the painting themed the invisible feminine care that surrounds our lives and keeps society running.

Nik Timkova exhibited a textile object giga glow for cleaning made of thermal fabric. The object is called *Existential Housekeeping*.

Lenka Štěpánková thematised the low visibility of recent art college graduates with her painting *Hostess Inga*, a portrait of a recent UMPRUM (Academy of Arts, Design and Architecture in Prague) graduate.

Zlata Ziborová placed a series of ceramic breasts directly between books to emphasise the interrelationships between different kinds of bodies and the physicality of each and every one of us.

Together with Kateřina Olivová we exhibited a photograph we made together with Anna Daučíková in 2019 in the space of the library. The photographic work was a means to pass on the imaginary scepter of the function of the head of the studio in an artistic form, and also to divide the monolith of authority power from one personality into two. The joint leadership of the studio, which took 2 years to establish officially, opened the way for leading collectives, frontal distribution of power, art making as a collective phenomenon and the non-hierarchical idea of the studio as a living organism or feminist art laboratory.

The celebrations ended on 29 November 2022, the Day of Joy, with a joint performance by me (Darina Alster) and Kateřina Olivová named *Art Cleaning ladies*. Cleaning ladies have played a specific role in conceptual art. From time to time, they clean up a work of art thinking that it is a mess, thus indelibly inscribing themselves and the work in history. The two pedagogues walked naked through the lower part of the building and swept the thresholds of all the official areas of the building, including the rector's office, the studies

and economics department, the questor's office and several sculpture studios. The two naked female teachers were covered in mirrors like two disco balls, Darina's body was painted dark blue like the body of the goddess Nuit. Both artists thus simultaneously evoked the mythical allegories of Day and Night. Everything happened in total darkness, the scene was illuminated only by one travelling disco light, which changed colours to the rhythm of Sonya The Moon's live music set.

The situation was thus reminiscent of a magical cleansing ritual, with mirrors reflecting tiny lights across the audience to remind us of the fragile places in each and every one of our souls. Awareness of these fragile places should not be an excuse to hurt each other, to entrench ourselves in collective trauma, but rather a moment of healing, knowing that our life stories and pains are symptoms of a society's crumbling trauma,<sup>12</sup> and that these wounds and the whole society can be healed and transformed through mutual respect and compassion. Imagining a new world through rethinking and reevaluating the attitudes of the past through living contemporary art.

Through the celebration, we wanted to encourage a more inclusive treatment of historical facts, to make the legacy of specific alumnae more vivid for our times, and to encourage an overall reflection on the position of women artists in the art world.

*All power to healing and imagination!*

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Quotation from my unpublished dissertation about Liquid identity at the edge of civilisation.
- <sup>2</sup> Guerrilla Girls, *Bedside companion to the history of western art* (London: Penguin Books, 1998).
- <sup>3</sup> Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993).
- <sup>4</sup> A monography of Mary Duras's work was published under the title Mary Duras in 2014. Annotation here: Ivo Habán, *Mary Duras* (Prague: Arbor Vitae, 2014).
- <sup>5</sup> Katherine Brooks, *Meet The World's First Woman Graphic Novelist*, accessed March 21, 2023, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/helena-bochoakova-dittrichova\\_n\\_5354241](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/helena-bochoakova-dittrichova_n_5354241).
- <sup>6</sup> Lev Menaše, Nina Pirnat Spahić (ur.), Reno Svan, Taras Kermauner, Jedert Vodopivec, *Karla Bulovec 1895--1957* (Ljubljana: Cankarjev dom, 2003).
- <sup>7</sup> *Un Paradiso Amaro / Bitter Paradise*, Exhibit Studio, Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, 9.10 - 16.11.2021, curator: Valerie Habsburg.
- <sup>8</sup> *Lost Element. Re-construction of the Witch*, VBKOE, Vienna, 14.01-13.02.2022, curator: Anka Lesniak.
- <sup>9</sup> Kristen J.Solle, *Witches, Sluts, Feminists* (New York: ThreeL Media, 2017).
- <sup>10</sup> Anna Hrabáková, Zuzana Křišková, Pavlína Morganová, Dagmar Svatošová, *220 míst AVU* (Praha: Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze, 2019).
- <sup>11</sup> Per Faxneld, *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Woman in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2017).
- <sup>12</sup> Therapist Resmaa Menakem talks about the society of trauma in the book „My Grandmother's Hands“. Specifically quoting : "Trauma in humans, decontextualized over time, looks like culture." Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother's hands* (New York: Central Recovery Press, 2017).

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# Zofia REZNIK

The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław

## HERSTORICAL FIGURES. WOMEN IN THE 1946–1980 ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS OF THE STATE HIGHER SCHOOL OF PLASTIC ARTS IN WROCŁAW

### Introduction

The year 1946 was the 'year zero' for the Wrocław art academy – on October 1st, the first academic year was inaugurated at the Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław (since 1949 State Higher School of Plastic Arts, SHSPA, now The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, EGAAD).<sup>1</sup> The group of students included 20 women and 36 men. However, there was not a single woman among the teaching staff at that time. The only female employee of the HSPA was one secretary.<sup>2</sup>

In the Polish lands, it was not until the early twentieth century that the access to artistic training in the visual arts became possible for women. Although there were female students at the Warsaw School of Fine Arts (Szkola Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie) as early as 1904, it was still a private institution at the time. Access to a public college was first to be won for herself by Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska in Kraków in 1917, and from the following year – when Poland regained independence – the possibility for women to obtain higher artistic education became formally a reality at both the Academies of Fine Arts, in Kraków<sup>3</sup> and Warsaw.<sup>4</sup> Women started

studying with great enthusiasm and accounted for around a third of all students, although this pathway was still class-based. It was only after the Second World War – as part of the country's communisation process – that the opportunity to access art studies became more realistic and egalitarian.<sup>5</sup> Although gender equality was already enshrined in the 1919 Constitution, the right to education or work was only secured by the socialist state after 1945.<sup>6</sup> Since that time, women accounted for around half of all students nationwide.<sup>7</sup> As Zdzisława Czyżowska noted in her paper for the UN World Conference on the Decade of Women in 1986, the removal of barriers to education in Poland after the Second World War was used to a greater extent by girls than by boys, and this was a growing trend.<sup>8</sup> Historian Małgorzata Fidelis reminds us, however, that all these changes were not the product of an impersonal state apparatus, but instead the outcome of the efforts of particular activists from the 'women's departments' of the public administration, whose work she details.<sup>9</sup>

SHSPA was special in this respect, as it was constituted from the ground up in 1946, which was its 'year zero'. Although the school was founded literally and metaphorically on the ruins of the Breslau Academy of Arts and Crafts (*Akademie*



*für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe zu Breslau*) and, in a city with a new territorial affiliation, did not act as its institutional continuation. Neither did it refer to the pre-war schools of Lviv, although a large proportion of the post-1945 inhabitants of Wrocław came from the so-called Eastern Borderlands, nor was it a branch of the Art Academy in Kraków, although its initiators and many of the first professors came from there.<sup>10</sup> The college created its artistic and institutional identity from scratch. Since women had already made up about half of the students since 1945, one could therefore assume that in such a context, internal relations at the SHSPA had a chance to be re-established in an open and more equal distribution. However, as we know thanks to the *Little Chance to Advance?* (*Marne szanse na awanse*) report published in 2015, the number of women students did not translate into the so-called pedagogical body. As the co-authors of the report state: "If the gender ratio among professors truly mirrored the gender ratio of students (with an appropriate time lag), women would have made up half of the professors back in the 1970s. Meanwhile, today, 45 years later, they make up only one-fifth".<sup>11</sup> The report showed that equality changes in Polish art academies are occurring as the slowest of all higher education institutions – at the level of theological schools [*sic!*] – therefore, the researchers call this situation not a glass ceiling, but an 'armoured ceiling'.

In this article, I would like to present my preliminary findings concerning the number of women at the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław in the light of selected archival material from the years 1946–1980. Initially, I collected quantitative data as contextual research for my oral history based doctoral project at the University of Wrocław and within the scope of a research project entitled 'The Thicket' at the Wersja Foundation. I then developed the database with a grant from the National Science Centre and, based on my activist experience as part of the Caryatid Collective,<sup>12</sup> I transferred it to a dedicated Wikipedia subpage – a dedicated 'Wikiproject'.<sup>13</sup> These are now partly available in open access as the Wikiproject

Thicket.<sup>14</sup> Through this research I wish to look at how this kind of data can be useful for the feminist rewriting of Polish art history or even in evoking the so-called herstory of art in Poland.

## History, herstories and statistics – mixing methodologies

As I began working on the Wrocław art herstories of the 1970s, which is the main part of my PhD project pursued in the field of oral history, I needed to compile a list of potential women interlocutors and obtain contacts with them. Preparing this list of artists inspired me to look at the presence of women in the Wrocław art community a little more broadly, from its post-war beginnings in 1945. While working on the individual narratives, I was simultaneously collecting personal information, which began to form a comprehensive database. I began to ask not only qualitative but also quantitative questions: how many women were there actually? What was their percentage of the total number of students, lecturers, exhibitors? Was the situation of women in the 1970s different from that of earlier decades, and if so, how?

An important moment for me was meeting Anna Kutera and receiving her story about the 1977 work *Is the Word 'Woman' a Noun or an Adjective*,<sup>15</sup> in which the artist used data from a Central Statistical Office publication to ask provocative questions: if the figures prove the equality of women and men among art graduates, why do so few of these women fulfil themselves creatively and where does the problem of discrimination actually come from? Are not the women themselves responsible for their alienation?<sup>16</sup>

Following the artist's lead, I came across Roman Wieruszewski's 1975 publication *Equality of Women and Men in People's Poland*, a comprehensive study of the situation of women in the People's Republic of Poland compiled and published in conjunction with the United Nations'

proclamation of the International Women's Year. The author argued that, despite constitutional gender equality and women gaining full legal rights, it was still necessary to work towards exercising them in practice. To this end, he listed as essential: the need to abolish damaging stereotypes of weakness, lack of ambition or rationality which hold women back in the employment market, the stimulation of their professional development and more substantial participation in the adoption of leadership roles, and the unburdening of household duties, in which he assessed men's participation as still negligible.<sup>17</sup> As Wieruszewski emphasised in his conclusion, care should be taken above all for the practical and psychological support of women, enhancing the process of their 'internal emancipation', resulting in their willingness to take up the opportunities for acting offered them by the socialist state, of course.<sup>18</sup>

I began to ask myself, therefore, obviously engaging with the Linda Nochlin's pivotal question<sup>19</sup>, what was it that caused – despite such a large number of women students of fine arts after the Second World War – that so few of them were recognised by art history? Why did such a small number pursue a successful career and are mentioned in the textbooks as important figures in contemporary art?

Even though I did not have a relevant social science background, I decided to add quantitative research to the qualitative methods I was using to collect and analyse micronarratives. Anna Kutera provided me with inspiration for this not only with her work, but also by showing me Anka Leśniak's 2010 video *Fading Traces*, in which she appeared telling her own story as one of the doyennes of 1970s art in Poland.<sup>20</sup> Thanks to this clue, I also discovered the 2011 project *Registered*, in which Lesniak created, among other pieces, very articulate, almost abstract 'statistical' paintings presenting the proportion of women and men in the exhibitions shown in contemporary art galleries existing since the 1970s, as well as an animation presenting data on the representation of women in art colleges in the twenty-first

century.<sup>21</sup> I also remembered the iconic works of the American group Guerrilla Girls, which often used figures in its banners and posters. Their aim was to emphatically, visually communicate the glaring gender disparity in galleries and museum collections: "less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art Sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female", as we learn from their most recognisable work *Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?*<sup>22</sup>

The possibility of using data visualisation techniques as a means of communicating knowledge, for example in digital humanities, and at the same time as a strategy of feminist activism, seems to me a particularly appealing prospect. I am therefore attempting to use these tactics in a very basic form – simple tables, ratios, arithmetical facts, indicators and figures – by inviting the hitherto rather alien statistical tools into the field of art history. A revised, herstorical and more equitable re-reading of the past of art in Wrocław gains a new dimension with the support of the language of mathematical signs and relationships, which brilliantly illustrates the existing social inequalities. The combination of qualitative, especially biographical, and quantitative methods seems to me to be particularly important when it comes to the critical reflection on women's art. This combination provides a basis for seeing processes, grasping changes and trends or visualising the historical setting also through personal testimonies. Even if it requires stating the obvious to begin with: that while women made up half of all art students in the previous century, among female staff at art academies they were mainly cleaners and secretaries; and that this is also reflected in the under-representation of women in museum collections or in the positions as art professors in the 21st century.

I was largely inspired to develop this article on the numerical presence of women in Wrocław's SHSPA by the *Little Chance to Advance?* report, mentioned above and widely discussed in the art community. However, I was encouraged to pursue it by the work of an 'academic sister', Magdalena

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Proj. Arch.	<p>prof. W. Winogrodzki (P)</p> <p>doc. J. Kewalczyk (P)</p> <p>doc. T. Ferenczyk (P)</p> <p>adj. Zb. Kawecki (P)</p> <p>st. as. N. Wieschalla</p> <p>st. as. R. Heszewski</p> <p>st. as. P. Karpiński</p> <p>asyst. K. Welewski</p> <p>asyst. E. Gańcza</p> <p>asyst. G. Jarecz</p> <p>asyst. P. Lamers</p>	<p>wykl. dr S. Lipiński</p> <p>wykl. dr S. Będkowski</p> <p>wykl. inż. S. Chrenowski</p> <p>wykl. inż. W. Melicki</p>	0/11	0/4	
Proj. Form. Przem.	<p>doc. K. Meissner (P)</p> <p>st. wyk. J. Chierski</p> <p>st. wyk. M. Jędrzejewski (P) od 1.10.74</p> <p>st. wyk. W. Zajączkowski (P) od 1.10.74</p> <p>st. as. W. Semaniszyn od 1.10.74</p> <p>asyst. K. Bukaniś od 1.10.74</p>	<p>prof. dr T. Kolendowicz</p> <p>wykl. inż. S. Zemla</p> <p>wykl. R. Gachewski</p> <p>asyst. M. Schultz</p>	6/6	0/4	
Asyst. Ogólne	<p>doc. J. Halas (P)</p> <p>doc. Z. Artymewska (P) od 1.10.74 - 30.09.75</p> <p>st. wyk. L. Skomrowska (P)</p> <p>wykl. R. Kenieczka (P)</p> <p>st. as. R. Regulski</p> <p>st. as. A. Dymitrowicz od 1.10.74</p> <p>asyst. M. Weleczuk</p>	<p>prof. dr A. Smolalski</p> <p>wykl. Z. Meinhardt</p> <p>lektor mgr B. Ziolkowska</p> <p>" mgr A. Zając</p> <p>" mgr A. Maziarz</p> <p>" dr A. Dworski</p> <p>wykl. dr J. Wrabec</p> <p>wykl. mgr J. Ekwiński</p> <p>wykl. dr E. Niemczyk</p> <p>wykl. dr E. Malachewicz</p> <p>wykl. mgr A. Chrzanowska</p>	3/7	4/11	5/15
Stud. IS-P.	<p>doc. B. Wiczerok (P) od 1.10.74 - 30.09.75</p> <p>wykl. J. Kozłowski</p> <p>st. as. S. Mróz</p>	<p>naucz. A. Sekelowska</p> <p>lekarz B. Żarnowska</p>	0/4	5/14	2/2
W-F	<p>st. wyk. R. Marchacz (P) od 1.10.74</p>				
<p>Rektor - Fokomierz</p> <p>Minister (etat adm.?)</p> <p>mgr T. Piątkowski</p>		<p>21/5</p> <p>21/6</p>		<p>24</p> <p>25/7</p>	
<p>Kierownicy</p> <p>64/15</p>					



In the light of historical data, it would therefore be appropriate to say that there is a pedagogical model firmly rooted in the academy's past, and its figure in the 20th and 21st centuries is no longer master-disciple, but rather 'master and apprentices.'

Mach, previously unknown to me, who, at the conference "Women's Utopias in Action. 100 Years of Women's Voting Rights" in Kraków in 2018, presented a paper entitled *Women at the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków*, a compilation and analysis of quantitative data on female students and staff at the academy she is associated with.<sup>23</sup> I am convinced that collecting such research from other institutions in Poland, although tedious and time-consuming, will allow for more nuanced comparative studies in the future.

### Research materials, objectives and questions

For the purposes of this article, I have set the upper time limit at 1980, that is the end of Tadeusz Forowicz's rectorship (1967-1980). The source materials I have analysed are: matriculation books, entry book and book of studies (student cards) covering the years 1946-1973, the diploma book (1952-1997) and academic year organisation plans from 1954 to 1980. Some documents were not available, such as the consecutive book of studies and staffing plans for some years, especially for the period 1946-1954. The research could be supplemented, deepened, and more detailed by referring to other documents, especially the personal files of individual female students and members of staff. However, as their total number is very high, analysing it was beyond the scope of this study. All the source materials mentioned are kept in the Archive of EGAAD. I have also used the information available in the monographs of the artistic milieu and academy in Wrocław, especially the book containing the memoirs of its first pedagogues, in order partially to fill in the missing information and to include herstorical testimonies.

When I refer to 'women in SHSPA' I mean those persons who have been identified as belonging to the female gender and socialised as

women. Staying with the binary gender division, I distinguish them based on their female name existing in the archival documents. When writing I seek to place them at the centre of both my interest and narrative. With the intention of looking at the equality transformations and the factors conditioning them, I ask the documents a very basic question: how many women were there actually in the Wrocław Academy of Fine Arts? I focus primarily on women students, including graduates, as well as research and teaching staff, also collecting scattered information about those working in the school's administrative division.

The aim of the authors of the *Little Chance to Advance?* report was to provide an answer to the question "why are women dropping out on such a scale in the Polish art education system?" and to identify the cultural, environmental, and psychological factors blocking their advancement and thus the generational and gender transformation in the art schools. This phenomenon, as the researchers point out, is the strongest in art colleges of all art schools and universities in general. They mainly point to the negative role of the master-apprentice model functioning in these colleges, which makes the professor's influence on the student's career path development very strong, sometimes extending throughout the student's entire lifetime.<sup>24</sup>

In the course of researching and collecting the existing data, more questions emerged than I was able to answer, including: on what did the progression of those who persevered depend? Were there any differences in the speed of promotion between men and women? What were the reasons for dropping out for those who did not stay at the academy for long? How was the participation of women in the various fields of university life distributed according to their social background and chosen discipline? Could the choice of a particular discipline have been related to gender at the aspirational level or rather in terms of recognising one's own possibilities and those offered by the university or the labour market? To what extent might psychological factors –

resources, stress, support, encouragement received or lack thereof – that are unmeasurable from today's perspective, have determined their career development? Whether and how did men's and women's salaries differ, who had more access to additional paid assignments? What was the extent of unpaid work – organisational and emotional – provided to the school? I will try to answer some of these questions with the use of available micronarratives of the academy's first female pedagogues, published in 1996 in a collection of memoirs about SHSPA's by its founders, teachers, and students.<sup>25</sup>

### Linguistic and visual representation of gender

Nouns and adjectives in Polish have three types: masculine, feminine and neuter. In the documents analysed, all titles, position and function names were exclusively – with the exception of the positions of secretary and cleaner (*sic!*) – in masculine forms. This is in line with the nomenclature of the time, which favoured masculine forms, and the linguistic *usus*, both of which are still largely in place today and are reflected in the highly androcentric language of legal regulations (according to a grammatical rule, the collective masculine grammatical form covers also non-male persons, e.g. *studenci* that means both 'male students' and just 'students').<sup>26</sup> As English is more gender inclusive due to the lack of grammatical types, I will attempt to portray the language specifics where relevant to the information cited.

In order to counteract the anonymity of women in science, I have also decided to cite their personal details extensively. Due to the fact that, according to the practice in Poland, when women married, they usually changed their surname to their husband's or appended it to their own, I will at the first appearance in this text provide as broad a form of personal data under which the person was

known or may appear in documents and literature as possible. For the purposes of this publication, I also use pink to accentuate the names of the artists referred to and the related absolute figures in order to highlight the content relating to women, and purple to indicate the percentages of women and feminisation rates, both in the text and in the tables.

### ?:? – Informal co-foundress and women co-creators (1946–1953)

Based on the documents examined, it is unfortunately impossible to provide figures on the participation of women in the establishment of the SHSPA in its first eight years of existence. Therefore, from other sources, I would like to present a few of them by their names as persons important for the so-called pioneer period of the Wrocław academy.

In the literature discussing the beginnings of the Wrocław academy after World War II, reference is made primarily to its male founders – undoubtedly men were the main formal actors in the process of establishing and shaping the institution. In the monographs on the post-war artistic milieu in Wrocław, among the over a dozen names of the successively appointed teachers, several women are also mentioned: painters Hanna Krzetuska-Geppert and Maria Dawska (both appointed as assistants in 1948, usually mentioned among the 'pioneers' [masculinatives!], and even called by Andrzej Jarosz to be among 'the founding fathers' of the school [*sic!*]<sup>27</sup>), glass designer Halina Jastrzębowska-Sigmund (although only appointed as a substitute, opening the academic year 1948/1949 with her inaugural lecture<sup>28</sup>) and ceramicists Julia Kotarbińska and her assistant Halina Olech (both working at the SHSPA since 1950). Wanda Gołkowska and Łucja Skomorowska-Wilimowska themselves testify to their presence at the academy since 1950 as assistants (Gołkowska recalls that she was still a student at the time). Maria Starzewska mentions that she was employed

a year later as an art history lecturer.<sup>29</sup> No female teachers of sculpture, printmaking or drawing are recorded during this period, although certainly not all the women working at the college at the time are being listed.<sup>30</sup>

Krzetuska in particular played an important role in shaping the foundations of the academy, as scholars confirm.<sup>31</sup> However, what is significant is that Geppert, in describing the preparations and his fellow co-founders of the time, omits his own wife.<sup>32</sup> She herself mentions that she was delighted with the prospect of moving to Wrocław, even though her husband initially located his ambitions more in Warsaw. "There were four of us at the time (I'm not counting myself), so all of us – Leon Dołżycki, Adam Hannytkiewicz, Eugeniusz Geppert, Emil Krcha – no longer counted on any work in Kraków," the artist writes in her memoirs, using an interesting rhetorical formula: simultaneously including herself ('us') and excluding (the enumeration).<sup>33</sup>

Sylvia Świsłocka-Karwot also mentions other women involved in plastic arts and participating in the pioneering (1945-1949) exhibitions in Wrocław, these were: Zofia Krokowska-Zastawnik, Maria Jurczenko-Kamińska, Felicja Potyńska, Wanda Żygulska-Pogonowska, Krystyna Pękalska, Julia Ponikowska, Maria Zabłocka, Halina Łepkowska-Giećewicz, Irena Borzęcka-Kozłowska and Iza Hochman.<sup>34</sup> In the later socialist realist period (1949-1955), specified by the researcher, further names appear, to some extent of already graduated women: Barbara Gutekunst, Janina Rybicka, Jadwiga Szyszko, Marta Augustynowicz and Róża Kijankowska, Celina Brandstätter, Jadwiga Skomorowska and Łucja Skomorowska, Małgorzata Grabowska-Stradecka, Krzesława Maliszewska-Mazurkiewicz, Maria Janowska-Karpińska and Jadwiga Lebedowicz-Kociankowska<sup>35</sup> and Jadwiga Desage<sup>36</sup>, and several women associated with Lower Silesia. These artists arrived in Wrocław in waves of resettlement from the Eastern Borderlands and migration from other parts of the country, and undoubtedly co-founded the artistic environment reborn in this city after the war. There is no evidence,

however, that they were appointed as lecturers to the emerging academy. Perhaps they were not interested in pedagogical work, or their qualifications were not, in the opinion of the decision-makers, sufficient for the roles of university teachers.

In this first period, it is clearly visible how factors related to a woman's social capital, such as connections, family background or the prestige of the education she received, played a major role in her employment at the academy.<sup>37</sup> Kotarbińska and Jastrzębowska, before the war, had been associated with the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts and the renowned 'Ład' cooperative, and their relocation to Wrocław was linked to the task of strengthening the design division of the Academy in Wrocław, in accordance with the authorities' objectives. Krzetuska and Dawska, on the other hand, were established artists and had personal relationships with the school's key founders, and for both of them this was an ambivalent situation, bringing benefits as well as difficulties. After Geppert was indirectly forced to resign from the rector's chair in 1950, Krzetuska lost her employment entirely. And in 1970, in a somewhat corresponding situation happening in the context of the 1968 political crisis, Dawska had to give up her post and leave Wrocław with her husband (the academy's rector from 1952 to 1965). Krzetuska shares her experience, very consciously pointing out the mechanisms of power and symbolic violence against women: "At the same time, I was not given a further contract as a senior assistant. This was to prove, it seems, that only as long as I had a rector as a husband, I could lead a studio [...] Wherever I tried to get in, I faced an impenetrable wall. The campaign against me also had the excuse that it was simultaneously hitting my husband."<sup>38</sup>

One should also note that the Wrocław academy was formed not only by female teachers, but also by non-teaching staff and students, about whom I write further on in the article. Of the first female students, Świsłocka-Karwot distinguishes (after Geppert): Celina Brandstätter, Izabela Kulczyńska, Ewa Erdt, Krzesława Maliszewska, Wanda Gołkowska and Małgorzata Grabowska.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, the researcher points out that Irena Podbereska-Ptatakis was among those recognised after the first six months of the school's operation, and goes on to mention the names of the 1950 scholarship recipients: Janina Kasperska and Ł. Skomorowska. Among the female graduates noted at the beginning of the 1950s were, besides Gólkowska, Janina Mękarska and Jadwiga Lebiechowicz.<sup>40</sup> However, these are only a few names from among the first female students, because until 1950 a total of around 150 women entered the walls of SHSPA. Altogether, between 1946 and 1972, the group of female students numbered 634, and it is from this largest representation of women at the Wrocław academy that I will begin my further analysis.

1:1 – Significant others. Female students  
49% – truly fully accepted into the academic community?

Data on students, i.e. those admitted into the academy with student record book numbers issued, is drawn from the slightly inconsistent archival documents covering the period 1946-1972: Matriculation Book 1946-1956 (record numbers 1-551), Entry Book for 1952/53, 1953/54 and 1955/56, Book of Studies – Student Cards 1956-1967 (record numbers 552-965) and Matriculation Book 1967-1973 (record numbers 966-1274). Records for the years 1973-1982 were unavailable, the next archived book covers the years 1982-1996. Some of the staffing plans included overall figures for the number of students and enrolments, but these figures were estimates based on the results of the entrance examinations and therefore do not match the figures of actual entrants.

In the light of the above documents, women accounted for almost half of all those who started their studies at the State Higher School of Visual Arts in Wrocław between 1946 and 1972 – there were 634 women to 638 men, making women 49.8% of all students in a given period. The average feminisation rate, however, measured by the average percentage of women in each academic year, was 48.8%. Therefore, it can be stated that there were almost equal numbers of men and women in the group of all new entrants in the

examined period. This could be followed by more detailed questions: did such an equal proportion characterise all faculties and studios? How did this ratio change in the later years of study?

WOMEN AMONG STUDENTS ENTERING THE SHSPA IN WROCŁAW IN 1946-1972				
Starting year of studies	ADMITTED STUDENTS			
	TOTAL	of which women	percentage (%) of women (FR)	AVERAGE feminisation rate (AFR)
1946	36	20	55,6%	54,5%
1947	74	45	60,8%	
1948	58	27	46,6%	
1949	42	24	57,1%	
1950	67	35	52,2%	
1951	45	24	53,3%	38,4%
1952	37	15	40,5%	
1953	39	13	33,3%	
1954	35	8	22,9%	
1955	38	16	42,1%	
1956	37	13	35,1%	46,4%
1957	46	31	67,4%	
1958	35	17	48,6%	
1959	42	19	45,2%	
1960	42	15	35,7%	
1961	47	23	48,9%	46,6%
1962	56	27	48,2%	
1963	50	25	50,0%	
1964	47	19	40,4%	
1965	42	19	45,2%	
1966	48	26	54,2%	53,6%
1967	47	25	53,2%	
1968	47	24	51,1%	
1969	59	34	57,6%	
1970	50	26	52,0%	
1971	52	35	67,3%	60,5%
1972	54	29	53,7%	
TOTAL:	1272	634	49,8%	-
AVERAGE:	47,1	23,5	48,8%	-

Table 1. Women among students entering the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław between 1946 and 1972.

As Table 1 shows, both the total number of admissions and the percentage of female students

slightly fluctuated. In the first five years following the opening of the SHSPA, the enrolment of women was slightly higher than that of men – in the record-breaking academic year of 1947/48, as many as 45 women were admitted, which accounted for almost 61% of all the students. It can therefore be said that women took the opportunity of an education that was new to them in greater numbers, with the average feminisation rate for this period being 54.5%. Undoubtedly, this high feminisation rate is related to the general increased activation of women immediately after the war, referred to by Fidelis after Irena Krzywicka as the 'new matriarchy'.<sup>41</sup> However, the rate fell already in the following five years (1951-1955), by as much as sixteen percentage points to only 38.4%. This period was also characterised by a high volatility of the gender ratio, with fluctuations of up to around thirty percentage points. Similar dynamics characterised the next period (thirty-two percentage points), with a noticeable increase in the average. In the following five-year period, the average stabilised at a similar level as before, repeating the result of around 46.5% with half the fluctuation in the feminisation rate for the individual years.

In the second half of the 1960s, the average gradually increased, approaching the initial level with the lowest fluctuation of only 6.6 percentage points. In the 1971/72 academic year, the feminisation rate rose steeply again to 67.3% – the second highest in the period under review, and almost identical for 1957/58. In contrast, the lowest enrolment of women was in 1954/55, with only 8 female students, representing 23% of the total number.

Thus, after the initial 'little domination' of studies at the SHSPA by women, a kind of backlash and instability of the gender ratio can be observed from the early 1950s until the end of the decade. From the 1960s onwards, women seem to have gradually returned to the position occupied earlier, of fully-fledged students and their presence consistently grew in strength, slightly exceeding the number of male students. Presumably, this trend continued or increased slightly in the 1970s,

but these figures do not, of course, reveal whether equality on a quantitative level translated into equal treatment in the education process itself.

The records analysed also provide other information to varying degrees, such as marital status, social background, grades and examination results, honours, major or faculty chosen, degree obtained and diploma examination grade. Above all, it would be valuable to analyse to what extent the various fields of specialisation were feminised. Given the faculties functioning at the academy at the time and a general review of selected documents, one of the most plausible hypotheses concerns the higher presence of women in ceramics versus glass design and in painting versus sculpture. However, its verification requires a more detailed analysis of the archival materials.

## 50% – determination of female graduates

Graduation means succeeding at the educational level. It may have been affected by a variety of factors – social capital possessed, family role models, social background, available resources (including material), encouragement or discouragement received, degree of determination and others. Data on the number of graduates is drawn from the Diploma Book covering diplomas issued between 1952 and 1997 (numbers 1-1929). For the purposes of this overview, I limit the time span to 1986 to reflect the group studying between 1945 and 1980 and to keep the breakdown to five-year periods.

Although the fluctuation in the average percentage of female graduates is much higher than that of students and the range of difference between years is as high as 47 percentage points, this is most likely due to the individualisation of learning and migration between groups due to breaks, dean's leaves or resumption of the course of study. The distribution of numbers across years may also have been influenced by the changes in the study cycle and curricula (e.g. some of those



starting their studies in 1950 defended in 1955 and some in 1956). On average, during the indicated period, women made up approximately 49.7% of all graduates, which is one percentage point more than in the group of students. It can therefore be concluded that the number of female graduates was equal to the number of male graduates in the period studied (women represented 50.3% of the sum of all graduates from 1952 to 1986).

Women among graduates of the SHSPA in Wrocław in 1952-1986				
Year of graduation	GRADUATES			
	TOTAL	of which women	percentage (%) of women (FR)	AVERAGE feminisation rate (AFR)
1952	37	23	62,2%	52,4%
1953	36	18	50,0%	
1954	28	14	50,0%	
1955	12	6	50,0%	
1956	30	15	50,0%	
1957	28	17	60,7%	39,7%
1958	20	10	50,0%	
1959	24	11	45,8%	
1960	24	5	20,8%	
1961	19	4	21,1%	
1962	33	14	42,4%	50,6%
1963	28	19	67,9%	
1964	19	9	47,4%	
1965	31	12	38,7%	
1966	23	13	56,5%	
1967	37	15	40,5%	47,4%
1968	41	23	56,1%	
1969	42	23	54,8%	
1970	32	14	43,8%	
1971	31	13	41,9%	
1972	32	20	62,5%	59,0%
1973	69	37	53,6%	
1974	50	31	62,0%	
1975	49	25	51,0%	
1976	35	23	65,7%	
1977	59	33	55,9%	52,4%
1978	52	29	55,8%	
1979	55	25	45,5%	
1980	68	38	55,9%	
1981	43	21	48,8%	
1982	38	20	52,6%	46,4%
1983	38	18	47,4%	
1984	48	26	54,2%	
1985	62	23	37,1%	
1986	71	29	40,8%	
TOTAL:	1344	676	50,3%	-
AVERAGE:	38,4	19,3	49,7%	-

Table 2. Women among graduates (master's degree) of the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław between 1952 and 1986.

On the other hand, if we try to calculate the success rate and compare the data on those entering SHSPA with the data on the graduates, we find that, although women do slightly better than men in the overall numbers (a difference of about two percentage points), the average success rate for both genders for the respective years is quite comparable at around 68.5%. However, it must be acknowledged that the success of women is of a somewhat different nature – taking into account additional unfavourable factors such as the high masculinisation of the staff, greater exposure to sexual violence, performing of reproductive work by some women while studying, which involved not only unfavourable interruptions to their studies, but sometimes also the decision to abandon this educational path after maternity leave, it must be concluded that women did much better than the numbers alone indicate.

When comparing the average success rates for women and men for the respective five-year periods, on the other hand, it is noticeable that, although female students initially fared slightly worse than their male counterparts, by the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, the average success rate for their group had increased by almost fifteen percentage points (while for men by only five) and since then they have consistently outperformed men over the period studied. All this may indicate their strong determination and the increasingly more favourable study conditions for them.

The disparity between the success of men and women by year ranges from a mere 0.3 percentage points difference for those entering university in 1966 to 35 percentage points for those entering in 1955. This was the second most disadvantageous year for women, only 37.5% of them became graduates. The worst results, however, came from the highly feminised initial enrolment of women – despite making up 55.6% of first-year students, only 35% of them obtained their diploma. The highest success rates of 94.3% and 91.7% characterised the groups of women entering school in 1971 (with the second highest feminisation rate of 67.3%) and 1951 (feminisation rate of 53.3%) respectively. These results may

indicate a correlation between the number of women in general and their success—the more women there are, the better they do on average.

It would also be interesting to analyse the grades received during the course of study and at graduation and the impact of additional stimulation in the form of various scholarships, prizes and awards, as well as the ‘penalties’ given (failed exams, reprimands or other disciplinary penalties, or the sheer lack of positive stimuli compared to the group).

However, women’s determination and success at university level seems not to translate into later professional success understood as artistic and academic prosperity. Perhaps some of them saw their happiness elsewhere, e.g. in economic security or family life, and so just getting a degree was for them a sufficient achievement? Or was the art world so impenetrable to them? One contemporary study found that female students are twice more likely than male students to find their field of study particularly stressful and twice more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety disorders, while at the same time they achieve better results and prove to be more hard-working. This demonstrates the low self-esteem of women and the much greater effort they put in.<sup>42</sup>

### Less equal further paths

Interestingly, Geppert mentions as many as 6 women among his first students [maskulinatives!]: Brandstätter, Erdt, Gołkowska, Grabowska, Kulczyńska, Maliszewska, and 4 men, which is surprisingly in line with the gender ratio of the time (women made up about 56% of the group beginning their studies in 1946). However, while half of the aforementioned students immediately became employees of the university (50%), only two of the women became teachers (33%) – and that was a rung below, at the secondary art school.<sup>43</sup> What becomes revealed in this recollection is not only the disparity in numbers, but also in the direction of aspirations and career opportunities.



SUCCESS RATE AMONG STUDENTS OF THE SHSPA IN WROCLAW IN 1946-1972											
Starting year of studies	NEW ENTRANTS			GRADUATES			SUCCESS RATE				
	TOTAL	of which men	of which women	TOTAL	of which men	of which women	OVER-ALL	for men (M)	AVER-AGE for M	for women (W)	AVER-AGE for W
1946	36	16	20	13	6	7	36,1%	37,5%	53,4%	35,0%	50,2%
1947	74	29	45	37	13	24	50,0%	44,8%		53,3%	
1948	58	31	27	27	15	12	46,6%	48,4%		44,4%	
1949	42	18	24	31	15	16	73,8%	83,3%		66,7%	
1950	67	32	35	35	17	18	52,2%	53,1%		51,4%	
1951	45	21	24	37	15	22	82,2%	71,4%	66,2%	91,7%	64,3%
1952	37	22	15	23	12	11	62,2%	54,5%		73,3%	
1953	39	26	13	26	17	9	66,7%	65,4%		69,2%	
1954	35	27	8	22	18	4	62,9%	66,7%		50,0%	
1955	38	22	16	22	16	6	57,9%	72,7%		37,5%	
1956	37	24	13	31	20	11	83,8%	83,3%	68,5%	84,6%	63,6%
1957	46	15	31	29	9	20	63,0%	60,0%		64,5%	
1958	35	18	17	24	14	10	68,6%	77,8%		58,8%	
1959	42	23	19	28	16	12	66,7%	69,6%		63,2%	
1960	42	27	15	21	14	7	50,0%	51,9%		46,7%	
1961	47	24	23	37	19	18	78,7%	79,2%	73,7%	78,3%	78,2%
1962	56	29	27	43	20	23	76,8%	69,0%		85,2%	
1963	50	25	25	37	17	20	74,0%	68,0%		80,0%	
1964	47	28	19	35	22	13	74,5%	78,6%		68,4%	
1965	42	23	19	32	17	15	76,2%	73,9%		78,9%	
1966	48	22	26	35	16	19	72,9%	72,7%	71,8%	73,1%	78,9%
1967	47	22	25	37	17	20	78,7%	77,3%		80,0%	
1968	47	23	24	37	17	20	78,7%	73,9%		83,3%	
1969	59	25	34	40	15	25	67,8%	60,0%		73,5%	
1970	50	24	26	40	18	22	80,0%	75,0%		84,6%	
1971	52	17	35	47	14	33	90,4%	82,4%	89,2%	94,3%	92,0%
1972	54	25	29	50	24	26	92,6%	96,0%		89,7%	
TOTAL:	1272	638	634	876	433	443	68,9%	67,9%	-	69,9%	-
AVERAGE:	47,1	23,6	23,5	32,4	16,0	16,4	69,0%	68,4%	-	68,9%	-

Table 3. Success rate among students of the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław between 1946 and 1972 (not including transfers between colleges).

In one of the already mentioned papers for the UN conference, researchers of women's labour activity state that among the factors influencing advancement, the most significant is the one of personality.<sup>44</sup> But was it really women who were alienating themselves, unable to have a better job and salary, or was it also determined by the context? Based on the archival data, it is impossible to say whether overcoming obstacles at the university level was so exhausting that it was for this reason that, after graduation, women were content with less prestigious but more secure jobs, ready to go into production plants scattered all over the country. Nor is it possible to determine what their attitude to further artistic pursuits was, or the reasons why some of them chose to devote themselves to a perhaps slightly less stressful family life, considering their own art as a side occupation.

Geppert's recollection, however, provides an unexpected clue – he apparently overlooked the presence of his own female assistant, Gołkowska, at the academy. Perhaps, then, in the realm of academic careers, women were not well regarded – recognised and wanted – as potential college employees? In what follows, then, I look at the quantitative presence of women in the group of SHSPA teachers.

## **1:5 – (Un)womanly pedagogical body and ladies' corners**

Perhaps Geppert forgot about Gołkowska because she resembled him in nothing. As the authors of the *Little Chance to Advance?* report claim, in the case of the selection of assistants or successors in art schools characterised by a very high degree of intimacy, the presence of the 'little-self' (or 'mini-me') syndrome is identified, which means the selection of a student with similar characteristics to one's own who will be an extension of oneself.<sup>45</sup> Women were, however, invited to become assistant professors and, to some extent, continued as academics, but in the period under review none

of them reached the position of full professor. The position of associate professor was enjoyed by only two: Kotarbińska (1957-1965) and, for a mere two years, Dawska (1968-1970), who had to step down with her husband.

I base my analysis of the personnel of the SHSPA on the annual staffing plans. It has been possible to present reliable figures for female teachers since around the mid-1950s – the first staffing plan preserved in the Archive of the EGAAD dates from 1954.<sup>46</sup> Plans for the years 1961-63, the academic year 1967/68 and 1972/73 remain unavailable and are therefore not included here. The figures quoted from these documents are based on plans that were prepared at the beginning of the academic year and therefore do not take into account mid-year turnover within the so-called teaching body: departures, admissions or promotions.

Within the population of female teachers I would like to distinguish between two groups: full-time employees (open-ended contracts) and employees working on so-called 'contracted hours' (temporary contracts covering teaching hours only). In addition, I would like to look at the presence of women at different rungs of the university position hierarchy. Finally, based on the collected figures, I would like to present those places in the academy that were significantly or insufficiently feminised.

## **Full-time (16%) and contractual (20%) female teachers**

The data collected for the years 1954-1980 show that the percentage of female staff in both groups altogether did not exceed 23%. Women accounted for an average of 17.6% of the university's total teaching staff and a slight rising trend can be seen over the 26 years examined. On average, there were nearly five male teachers to one female teacher (1:4.7), although it must be remembered that the data collected is incomplete and the results differ slightly from the actual situation.

WOMEN AMONG THE RESEARCH AND TEACHING STAFF OF THE SHSPA IN WROCLAW IN 1954-1980												
Academic year	ALL ACADEMICS				of which FULL TIME				of which on CONTRACTED HOURS			
	TOTAL	of which women	% of women	AFR	TOTAL	of which women	% of women	AFR	TOTAL	of which women	% of women	AFR
1954/55	-	-	-	-	51	9	17,6%		n.a.	n.a.	-	
1955/56	52	9	17,3%	15,5%	34	6	17,6%	16,2%	18	3	16,7%	15,0%
1956/57	55	7	12,7%		35	5	14,3%		20	2	10,0%	
1957/58	57	10	17,5%		36	6	16,7%		21	4	19,0%	
1958/59	-	-	-		34	6	17,6%		n.a.	n.a.	-	
1959/60	69	10	14,5%		41	6	14,6%		28	4	14,3%	
1960/61 *	52	7	13,5%	14,6%	37	5	13,5%	15,3%	15	2	13,3%	13,5%
1961/62	n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-	
1962/63	n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-	
1963/64	88	14	15,9%		47	8	17,0%		41	6	14,6%	
1964/65 *	62	9	14,5%		46	7	15,2%		16	2	12,5%	
1965/66	91	14	15,4%	18,3%	46	5	10,9%	13,3%	45	9	20,0%	24,0%
1966/67	87	16	18,4%		44	6	13,6%		43	10	23,3%	
1967/68	n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-	
1968/69	101	21	20,8%		56	8	14,3%		45	13	28,9%	
1969/70	101	19	18,8%		55	8	14,5%		46	11	23,9%	
1970/71	107	17	15,9%	15,6%	55	8	14,5%	15,2%	52	9	17,3%	16,2%
1971/72	105	17	16,2%		54	9	16,7%		51	8	15,7%	
1972/73	n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-		n.a.	n.a.	-	
1973/74	122	17	13,9%		86	12	14,0%		36	5	13,9%	
1974/75	129	21	16,3%		84	13	15,5%		45	8	17,8%	
1975/76	133	27	20,3%	20,8%	87	15	17,2%	19,0%	46	12	26,1%	24,5%
1976/77	127	24	18,9%		83	17	20,5%		44	7	15,9%	
1977/78	133	30	22,6%		90	18	20,0%		43	12	27,9%	
1978/79	141	28	19,9%		87	16	18,4%		54	12	22,2%	
1979/80	143	32	22,4%		100	19	19,0%		43	13	30,2%	
AVERAGE:			17,6%	AVERAGE:			16,1%	AVERAGE:			19,9%	-

Table 4. Women among the academics (research and teaching staff) of the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław between 1954 and 1980. Data for the academic year 1958/59 is incomplete and for the years 1961/62, 1962/63, 1967/68 and 1972/73 not available. Data on persons employed on contracted hours in the years marked with an asterisk (\*) is underreported.

As Table 4 presents, the feminisation rate in the group of those working on contracted hours was slightly higher than for those in full-time positions, with an average of 19.9% for contracted hours and

16.1% for FTEs (only these positions counted in the official statistics of academic teachers compiled by the Central Statistical Office).

Interestingly, however, by 1965 the proportion was different: between 1954 and 1965, the proportion of female full-time employees was on average 1.2 percentage points higher than the other studied group.

Apparently, in 1965, with Stanisław Pękalski taking over as rector (1965-1967), there was a clear and significant (sustained) change in the employment policy. Already in his first year in office, the teaching body was enlarged by almost half, from 62 persons to 91. This did not, however, involve an increase in the number of full-time female staff, who initially even declined slightly (from 7 to 5, while there were 46 men in both years). A significant increase in the number of employees can only be observed in the group of people on contracted hours – the number of women increased from 2 to 9, which meant a jump of 7.5 percentage points in feminisation rate for this group. And while there was a significant increase in gender equality in this group, it was still at a very low level of 20%, and there were far more men employed – their group increased by as many as 22 contractors. However, the following years saw an increase in the number of women in contracted hours up to a level of almost 30% in the academic year 1968/69. Overall, in the second half of the 1960s, there were on average 10.7 percentage points more of them than women in permanent positions. This shows that the increase in the employment of women in research and teaching positions overall was not necessarily associated with the stabilisation of their status and the improvement of their working conditions.

While in the five-year period of 1970-1975 the percentage of women employed on a contract basis fell by almost 8 percentage points, in the following five-year period 1975-1980 it increased by the same number of 8 percentage points (24,0%–16,2%–24,5%). In the same period, a small but steady increase in the group of full-time female employees can be observed, first by about 2 percentage points and later by nearly 4 (13,3%–15,2%–19,0%). Such distinct numerical fluctuations testify to the much higher turnover and instability of employment on commissioned

hours, where personnel changes were made on an ad hoc basis. This form of employment was mostly occupied by people who were either at the lowest, assistant level of the research and teaching career path or, for various reasons, outside of it: lecturers, language teachers, PE teachers or those teaching the so-called theoretical and humanistic subjects.

Over the 26 years studied, the expansion of the permanent personnel increased the number of full-time employees by 39 men (an increase from 42 to 81, i.e. about 193%) and by 10 women (from 9 to 19, i.e. about 211%). Thus, it can be said that the gender gap in employment decreased, but it was a rather slight change. At the beginning and at the end of the period under study, there were still more than four full-time teachers to one female teacher (1:4.7 in 1954 and 1:4.3 in 1980, respectively). However, the average ratio for the entire period was higher at 1:5.2 and even reached an overwhelming ratio of eight men to one woman in the aforementioned year 1965 (a feminisation rate of just under 11%).

Thus, in the light of the data collected, it must be noted that from the mid-1950s the inequality in the key group of full-time employees was in fact increasing and did not fall to its initial level until the mid-1970s. The disproportion did not begin to decline noticeably until the end of the period under study, but by the end of the decade it was only slightly lower than in 1954 (1.4 percentage points of difference). Thus, this insignificant change within the academy did not at all reflect the equality-related social and awareness shift, which, at the level of full-time female employment at SHSPA, only began to become visible in the second half of the 1970s. However, even then it remained far (by exactly 11 percentage points) from the 30% threshold.

Leaking pipe, or ladder with broken rungs (and springboards)

As I have already mentioned, the percentage of the presence of women among full-time teaching staff at the SHSPA in Wrocław between 1954 and 1980 was around 16%. This group included persons in hierarchically ranked positions in several sub-groups, the systematisation and nomenclature

of which changed at the time under state regulations. In order to look at the distribution of the feminisation rate according to classification at the different ranks, for the purposes of this summary and based on the nomenclature present in the documents analysed, I have adopted the systematisation closest to the Higher Education Act of 1958.<sup>47</sup> It distinguishes the following teaching positions [in masculinatives only!], to whom I have tried to allocate English-language equivalents:

ACADEMIC POSITIONS ACCORDING TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1958		Comments
IN POLISH	IN ENGLISH	
<b>I. Pracownicy nauki:</b>	<b>I. Academics (Research-and-teaching staff):</b>	
<b>1. samodzielni:</b>	<b>1. independent researchers:</b>	
a) profesor zwyczajny	a) full professor	A
b) profesor nadzwyczajny	b) associate professor	B
c) docent etatowy	c) full-time docent	C
<b>2. pomocniczy:</b>	<b>2. auxiliary researchers:</b>	
a) adiunkt	a) assistant professor / adjunct (professor)	a
b) starszy asystent	b) senior assistant	b
c) asystent	c) (research-and-teaching) assistant	c
<b>II. Inni pracownicy:</b>	<b>II. Other employees:</b>	
<b>1. dydaktyczni:</b>	<b>1. teaching staff:</b>	
a) starszy wykładowca	a) senior lecturer	I
b) wykładowca	b) lecturer	II
c) bibliotekarze dyplomowani:	c) certified / qualified librarians:	4
i. starszy kustosz biblioteczny	i. senior library custodian	
ii. kustosz dyplomowany	ii. qualified custodian	
iii. adiunkt biblioteczny	iii. adjunct librarian	
iv. asystent biblioteczny	iv. library assistant	
d) lektor (nauczyciel języków obcych)	d) lector / reader (foreign language teacher)	5
e) nauczyciel wychowania fizycznego	e) physical education teacher	3
f) nauczyciele przedmiotów, zawodów i umiejętności praktycznych	f) subject, vocational and practical skills teachers	1, 2
2. [pracownicy techniczno-badawczy, naukowo-techniczni, robotnicy].	2. [technical and research staff, scientific and technical staff, workers].	non-teachers
III. [Pracownicy administracyjno-biurowi, gospodarczy i obsługi oraz robotnicy remontowi i transportowi].	III. [Administrative, clerical, housekeeping and service workers, repair and transport workers].	non-teachers

Table 4. Academic (research and teaching) positions according to the Act of 5 November 1958 on Higher Education Institutions, in Polish with suggested equivalents in English.

According to the legislation, the group of the academic teachers included persons occupying full-time positions in the research and teaching track – independent researchers and the so-called auxiliary research forces – as well as persons in the teaching track. In addition, people involved in teaching supporting subjects, foreign languages, practical and vocational skills, physical education,

qualified people working in the library or dealing with scientific documentation were included.

As regulations regarding the structure and nomenclature of academic personnel (as well as the respective salaries) have changed over the years, the classification of individuals within the academic hierarchy has sometimes fluctuated.<sup>48</sup> In the following summary, I have attempted to

WOMEN IN PARTICULAR ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN SHSPA IN 1954-1980													
Academic year	1954/55	1955/56	1956/57	1957/58	1958/59	1959/60	1960/61	1961/62	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66	
TOTAL FULL-TIME POSTS	50	34	35	36	34	41	37	n.a.	n.a.	47	46	46	
of which women	9	6	5	6	6	6	5	n.a.	n.a.	8	7	5	
% of women (FR)	18%	18%	14%	17%	18%	15%	14%	-	-	17%	15%	11%	
		16%					15%					13%	
A full professors													
TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	-	
of which women	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	0	-	-	
% of women (FR)	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	
		0,0%					0%					-	
B associate professors (incl. professors in 1954 and contract professors)													
TOTAL	9	1	3	5	4	4	4	n.a.	n.a.	3	3	2	
of which women	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	0	
% of women (FR)	11%	0%	0%	20%	25%	25%	25%	-	-	33%	33%	0%	
		14%					31%					10%	
C full-time docents (incl. contract docents)													
TOTAL	0	0	1	4	4	5	5	n.a.	n.a.	6	6	6	
of which women	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	
% of women (FR)	-	-	0%	25%	25%	20%	20%	-	-	17%	17%	17%	
		17,5%					18%					16%	
a adjunct professors													
TOTAL	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	n.a.	n.a.	9	12	11	
of which women	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	1	2	1	
% of women (FR)	20%	20%	20%	17%	17%	17%	14%	-	-	11%	17%	9%	
		18%					14%					15%	
b senior assistants													
TOTAL	1	3	3	6	5	9	6	n.a.	n.a.	6	5	5	
of which women	0	1	1	2	2	3	2	n.a.	n.a.	2	1	1	
% of women (FR)	0%	33%	33%	33%	40%	33%	33%	-	-	33%	20%	20%	
		35%					29%					31%	
c assistants (incl. trainees)													
TOTAL	10	5	6	2	4	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	2	1	-	
of which women	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	0	0	-	
% of women (FR)	20%	20%	17%	50%	25%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	0%	-	
		22%					0%					0,0%	
I senior lecturers (incl. deputy professors)													
TOTAL	3	11	8	2	2	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	3	3	2	
of which women	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	1	0	0	
% of women (FR)	33%	18%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-	33%	0%	0%	
		9%					11%					4%	
II lecturers													
TOTAL	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	1	
of which women	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	0	
% of women (FR)	11%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	
		-					-					15%	
1 auxiliary subjects teachers													
TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	n.a.	n.a.	6	6	5	
of which women	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	
% of women (FR)	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%	-	-	17%	17%	20%	
		0,0%					11%					9%	
2 vocational teachers													
TOTAL	6	7	7	9	7	7	7	n.a.	n.a.	8	8	8	
of which women	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	0	0	0	
% of women (FR)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	0%	0%	
		0%					0%					0%	
3 physical education teachers													
TOTAL	0	1	1	1	-	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	
of which women	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	0	0	0	
% of women (FR)	-	0%	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	-	-	0%	0%	0%	
		0%					0%					0%	
4 librarians													
TOTAL	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	
of which women	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	
% of women (FR)	100%	100%	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	-	-	100%	100%	100%	
		25%					67%					67%	
5 others (instructors, readers, other)													
TOTAL	6	0	0	-	2	-	-	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	4	
of which women	2	0	0	-	0	-	-	n.a.	n.a.	0	-	0	
% of women (FR)	33%	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	-	0%	-	0%	
		0,0%					0,0%					0%	

## WOMEN IN PARTICULAR ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN SHSPA IN 1954-1980

1966/67	1967/68	1968/69	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	
44	n.a.	56	55	55	54	n.a.	86	84	87	83	90	87	100	58,5
6	n.a.	8	8	8	9	n.a.	12	13	15	17	18	16	19	9,6
14%	-	14%	15%	15%	17%	-	14%	16%	17%	21%	20%	18%	19%	
				15%					19%					
-	n.a.	-	-	-	-	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,0
-	n.a.	-	-	-	-	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,0
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
				-					-					
2	n.a.	5	5	1	1	n.a.	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	2,9
0	n.a.	1	1	0	0	n.a.	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	0,5
0%	-	20%	20%	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	0%	-	-	-	0%	
				0%					0%					
8	n.a.	7	10	13	15	n.a.	15	15	18	19	21	21	21	10,0
2	n.a.	1	1	1	2	n.a.	2	2	4	4	4	3	3	1,6
25%	-	14%	10%	8%	13%	-	13%	13%	22%	21%	19%	14%	14%	
				12%					18%					
6	n.a.	8	5	7	7	n.a.	10	10	14	15	14	19	17	9,3
1	n.a.	1	1	2	2	n.a.	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	1,6
17%	-	13%	20%	29%	29%	-	20%	20%	14%	20%	21%	16%	12%	
				24%					17%					
4	n.a.	5	5	6	7	n.a.	12	16	15	12	20	15	16	8,3
1	n.a.	2	2	1	1	n.a.	2	2	4	3	5	3	3	2,0
25%	-	40%	40%	17%	14%	-	17%	13%	27%	25%	25%	20%	19%	
				15%					23%					
1	n.a.	4	3	2	-	n.a.	23	14	15	14	12	8	13	7,1
0	n.a.	0	0	0	-	n.a.	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	1,2
0%	-	0%	0%	0%	-	-	13%	14%	13%	21%	17%	25%	23%	
				9%					20%					
7	n.a.	4	6	4	4	n.a.	9	14	14	13	14	14	16	7,0
0	n.a.	0	1	1	1	n.a.	2	3	2	2	3	3	4	1,3
0%	-	0%	17%	25%	25%	-	22%	21%	14%	15%	21%	21%	25%	
				23%					20%					
4	n.a.	9	8	10	9	n.a.	8	4	1	-	-	1	7	5,9
1	n.a.	2	1	1	1	n.a.	1	1	0	-	-	1	3	1,1
25%	-	22%	13%	10%	11%	-	13%	25%	0%	-	-	100%	43%	
				15%					48%					
7	n.a.	5	5	3	3	n.a.	2	3	4	4	3	4	1	4,1
1	n.a.	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0,3
14%	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
				0%					5%					
5	n.a.	5	5	5	6	n.a.	6	5	5	4	4	4	6	6,1
0	n.a.	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,0
0%	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
				0%					0%					
0	n.a.	1	1	0	0	n.a.	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0,7
0	n.a.	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0,2
-	-	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%	100%	100%	100%	
				-					1					
-	n.a.	2	2	2	2	n.a.	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1,3
-	n.a.	1	1	2	2	n.a.	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	0,9
-	-	50%	50%	100%	100%	-	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	
				100%					-					
-	n.a.	1	-	2	-	n.a.	-	2	-	1	1	-	1	1,8
-	n.a.	0	-	0	-	n.a.	-	0	-	1	0	-	0	0,3
-	-	0%	-	0%	-	-	-	0%	-	100%	0%	-	0%	
				0%					33,3%					

Table 5. Employment of women in particular full-time research, teaching and other academic positions in the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław between 1954 and 1980.<sup>49</sup>



present as accurately as possible the numerical ratios of women and men at various rungs of the academic ladder, which I have standardised. I have included contract professors in the associate professors' group, contract docents in the docents' group and deputy professors in the senior lecturers' group. The 'other' group includes positions that have occasionally appeared as permanent positions over the years: instructors, lecturers or assistant trainees. Also, all job titles appeared exclusively in masculine forms in the staffing plans analysed.

In the different position groups, the average percentage of women ranged from 0–64.3%. In the group of independent research and teaching positions (A–C), it was 0% for the position of full professors (A), 11.2% for associate professors (including contract professors and those at the rank of professor in 1954 – B) and 16.4% for the full-time docents (including contract docents – C). At the level of auxiliary research and teaching staff (a–c), women represented on average: 17.8% of the assistant professors or adjuncts (a), 25.5% of the senior assistants (b) and 12.9% of the assistants (including trainees – c). In the group of didactic positions (I–II), there were on average 14.4% female senior lecturers (I) and 22.7% female lecturers (II), as well as 5.4% female teachers of supporting subjects (1), 28.6% female teachers of physical education (3), 64.3% female librarians (4) and 13.3% women in other full-time teaching positions (instructors, readers, others – 5). There were no female vocational teachers (2) for the entire period studied. However, it must be borne in mind that assistants and lecturers were employed largely on contracted hours, so that they are not included in this summary and the absolute values may appear unrepresentative.

The decline in the feminisation rate at successive rungs of the academic hierarchy, known as 'the leaking pipe' syndrome,<sup>50</sup> is clearly visible here. This systematic decrease in the number of women in higher positions is linked to problems that are currently being intensively researched, such as the so-called glass ceiling, structural violence or the lack of role models in the workplace, society or one's own family. In describing the

origins of this phenomenon, researchers point to the following socially related and interacting factors: differences between women and men in terms of aspirations, self-esteem, family plans, extent and strength of social networks, experience of discrimination, availability of role models.<sup>51</sup> The position of a person socialised into a woman's role operating in a masculinised social and professional environment is therefore particularly fragile and vulnerable to compromise.

Another important factor affecting women is the non-linear multiplication of social capital known as the St Matthew effect – the progressive increase in success generated by even small incentives. In the case of women, however, it is more referred to as the Matilda effect, that is the overlooking and discrediting of women's achievements. Unfortunately, even a slight clipping of wings can project a lack of motivation, self-confidence and, as a result, unsatisfactory results. Thus, even the slightest favouritism in a team (in the case of employees) or a studio (in a group of students) in the form of greater familiarity or attention can have very serious consequences. Similarly, the slightest manifestation of sexual harassment, i.e. gender-based violence used by those with greater power or symbolic status, can have an impact. Within the masculinised structures of the higher education institutions, it was and is most often experienced by women.<sup>52</sup>

Research indicates that one of the important reasons causing 'falling down the academic ladder', also known as 'broken rung syndrome', is marriage and starting a family – the strain of these roles is experienced by women much more than by men in a similar situation.<sup>53</sup> Another issue is the masculinisation of male decision-making bodies, thereby making them less favourable to the advancement of women.<sup>54</sup> Sometimes these decisions were arbitrary, based on personal or political considerations more than on merit.

As Krzetuska reminisces: "It was also characteristic of me to be removed from my position, as I, admittedly, did not have a diploma from the Academy of Fine Arts, but only 20 years of solo work, however those who were contracted



did not have any artistic apprenticeship."<sup>55</sup> She also points to the belittling of her work: "I recall such a situation: after the first review of my studio (I was then an assistant under Prof. Emil Krcha), when everyone ruled that I had a very high-profile studio, the very next day I heard the remark that, after all, I had very talented students, while in the other studio the students were much weaker!"<sup>56</sup> – this was meant as a harmful suggestion that the excellent level was not of her own making.

Coming back to the indicators in this group of female employees, it is worth noting that the 100% feminisation rate occurred in the period in question only in the group of library staff (Irena Pijaczewska, Barbara Prytyka, Zofia Tyślewicz) and PE teachers (Zuzanna Sokołowska), and in one year in the group of female lecturers (Irena Ładomirska). On the other hand, the rate of 0% – the total absence of women – was found in almost all position groups, most frequently in the group of professors, assistants, senior lecturers, supporting subjects and PE teachers and 'others'.

The following women were employed in their respective positions (in alphabetical order):

- associate professor, including contract professor, and professor in 1954 (2): Dawska, Kotarbińska,
- docent, including contractual (5): Zofia Artymowska, Krystyna Cybińska, Dawska, Olech, Skomorowska-Wilimowska,
- adjunct professor (5): Cybińska, Regina Konieczka-Popowska, Irena Lipska-Zworska, Olech, Wiesława Pawelska,
- senior assistant (11): Mirosława Bernat, Cybińska, Gołkowska, Krystyna Januszkiewicz, Marta Lachur, Lipska-Zworska, Ładomirska, Ewa Mehl, Pawelska, Alfreda Poznańska, Skomorowska-Wilimowska,
- assistant (11): Mirosława Bernat, Elżbieta Chodźaj, Cybińska, Gołkowska, Teresa Jarzembowska, Monika Kamińska, Lidia Kupczyńska-Jankowiak, Lachur, Pawelska, Grażyna Płocica, Eulalia Złotnicka,
- senior lecturer or deputy professor (7):

- Dawska, Gołkowska, Kotarbińska, Lipska-Zworska, Halina Pawlikowska, Skomorowska-Wilimowska, Janina Żemojtel,
- lecturer (6): Konieczka-Popowska, Ładomirska, L. Orzechowska<sup>57</sup>, Pawlikowska, Skomorowska-Wilimowska, Fania Sokołowska,
- supporting subjects teacher (1): Pawlikowska,
- reader (1): Ludmiła Nodzyńska,
- PE teacher (1): Z. Sokołowska,
- librarian (2): Pijaczewska, Prytyka, Tyślewicz,
- others (2): Elżbieta Biskup, Bogumiła Cyrek.

On contracted hours the following women worked (54): Krystyna Adamczak, Lucyna Adamus, Bożena Bartecka, Maria Berny, Barbara Brodzińska, Joanna Chalfen, Anna Chrzanowska, Ewa Chrzanowska, Ewa Cieszyńska, Ewa Dawidejt, Zofia Wąsowa-Gunaris, Jadwiga Hawrylak, Halina Idkowiak-Sambor, Jarzembowska, Ewa Jęczalik, Kamińska, Halina Kłosowicz, Konieczka-Popowska, Irena Kośnica, Kotarbińska, Alicja Krępa, Marta Krzemińska, Lucyna Krzemińska, Krzetuska-Gepert, Kupczyńska-Jankowiak, Jadwiga Leśkiewicz-Zgieb, Lipska-Zworska, Halina (Alina?) Maziarz, Ewa Mehl, Nodzyńska, Bożena Noji (?), Teresa Orszulok, Pawelska, Pawlikowska, Pijaczewska, Krystyna Pilch, Grażyna Płocica, A. Poznańska, Jadwiga Poznańska, Adrianna Sarnowicz, Jadwiga Sławińska, Z. Sokołowska, F. Sokołowska, Danieła (Danuta?) Stankiewicz, Starzewska, Anna Węgrzyn, Zofia Woźniak, Emilia Wrońska, Barbara Wysłouch, Agnieszka Zająć, Barbara Zenkteler, Anna Ziomecka, Elżbieta Ziółkowska and Barbara Żarnowska.<sup>58</sup>

Promotion within the research and teaching track involved meeting statutorily defined criteria related, among other things, to the length of service and the completion of a qualification procedure, but the legislature also allowed promotion on the basis of a commission-assessed body of work. Thus, the will of the academic decision-makers and their appreciation of the individual's work may have been entirely sufficient and provided a springboard for the rapid occupation of a more prestigious and better-paid position. On the other hand, failure to achieve promotion within

the statutory timeframe could have meant an irreversible downgrading – a reassignment to a teaching-only position. Such a shift took place in the case of, for example, Gołkowska, who, after a hiatus of more than a decade, returned to the position of senior assistant and was subsequently classified as a senior lecturer, or Lipska-Zworska, who moved to the position of senior lecturer from the position of assistant professor.<sup>59</sup> Skomorowska-Wilimowska recalls with regret the negative impact on the academy from central decisions, including the withholding of staff promotion until the late 1960s after "the removal of some professors in the early 1950s" – she certainly has Geppert in mind here, as well as the politicisation of procedures affecting professional advancement in higher education.<sup>60</sup>

Among those consistently pursuing an academic path or staying on it in the period under review, the following women should be mentioned: Cybińska, Dawska (she was not promoted above associate professor), Gołkowska, Konieczka, Lipska-Zworska, Olech, Pawelska, Pawlikowska, Skomorowska-Wilimowska and Pijaczewska. It would certainly be interesting to track what the average length of time in each position was for women and men, the directions of change – meaning how their academic careers progressed or collapsed – and whether there was any significant difference between these groups in this respect. It would be particularly interesting to track such promotion rates in the transition from contract hours to full-time positions – did women wait longer for tenure? Another interesting question would also be the quantification of work on contract hours or part-time positions. For the sake of a full picture, it would also be useful to take into account departures, especially from lower positions, and any breaks in employment as well as returns.

## Ladies' corners or enclaves of sisterhood?

Among the full-time research and teaching staff at the SHSPA in the period 1954-1980, a regular high, usually 100%, female staffing level occurred only in the library, a place with a decidedly auxiliary function at the academy.<sup>61</sup> In other areas where the female staffing was quite numerous and strong, it unfortunately did not maintain continuity. This was the case in the so-called theoretical subjects, namely social sciences, humanities and art history in particular, as well as in language classes, where female teachers were mostly employed on a contract basis and worked for a rather short period of time. The high turnover of female employees observed in the documents was certainly not conducive to the possibility of establishing lasting and changing interpersonal bonds within the university structure.

In the structure of the PWSSP in the period under study, one can notice the presence of a few particular places where the presence of women was numerous and sustained. If these places were, from the point of view of maintaining the status quo, convenient for placing women there – such as the subservient study of humanistic subjects or the library – then they should be termed so-called 'women's corners',<sup>62</sup> in other words academic ghettos for women. Within them, they may have had a presence in the community, but they did not influence the relationships within it and therefore did not threaten the structure of the institution. In contrast, the more established places, where woman-to-woman relationships were important and nurtured, with older artists supporting younger ones in their professional development, I would call 'the enclaves of sisterhood' within such a structure. Based on the employment records analysed, I observed two such places: the Department of Ceramics and the Faculty of General Plastic Arts Education.

Highly feminised personnel can be observed particularly in the Department of Ceramics, e.g. in the academic year 1968/69 the first ceramics studio

was run by Olech and Leśkiewicz, the second by Kotarbińska and Lipska-Zworska, and the third by Cybińska alone. In contrast, the Department of Glass employed virtually no women at all, manifesting a patriarchal and binary division between the supposedly high and demanding crafts of men and the simpler, much less technologically advanced crafts of women. Lipska-Zworska recalls the tenderness and positive reinforcement that Kotarbińska's students could count on:

Successful student projects, which the Professor called achievements, were regarded as artistic events of the School and it happened that the Professor showed the painted jug of a student, Hanka Aleksandrowicz, now Papierniakowa, to the rector Stanisław Dawski, the dean Stanisław Pękalski and other professors, pointing out the beauty of the glaze and the freshness of the colour scheme, enthusiastically enjoying the achievements of her students.<sup>63</sup>

Olech, meanwhile, wrote of her that she was 'cordial and maternal, but also tough and relentless'.<sup>64</sup> This recollection of the kindness and active promotion of the student contrasts with Skomorowska's account of the rather challenging atmosphere in the sculptor and Auschwitz survivor Dunikowski's studio: "Men would kiss his hand and women would ask about his mood before speaking to him. They feared his alleged malice."<sup>65</sup> In place of male professor's severity and harshness, referred to by Skomorowska across her text and requiring great resilience from her, comes the female professor's encouraging care.

The second place, the Faculty of General Plastic Arts Education in the Department of Interior Design, was something between a women's corner and a sisterly enclave. Its head was the painter Józef Hałas, but the female staff in this department was numerous and maintained continuity over the years – on average, women made up half of the staff. In the 1975/76 academic year they headed three of the four studios there, with the Department employing as many as two of

the three female docents working at the academy. Those working there included: Artymowska, Jarzembowska, Kamińska, Konieczka, Kupczyńska-Jankowiak, Skomorowska-Wilimowska and Żemojtel. From the perspective of the school's structure, the faculty served as a complementary function to the education of design students, and was therefore characterised by far less prestige and, therefore, less competition for positions – perhaps for this reason, women were more often placed there than men, who aspired to and were more often situated in the Department of Painting, Graphics and Sculpture? However, even if the faculty was a place of 'exile,' it was, judging by the career paths of the women employed there, a good and friendly place to work and develop.

Women's friendships are extremely important for building resilience against the negative conditions of functioning in a male-dominated environment. While the female 'pioneers' in Wrocław came from very different contexts and thus of necessity acted rather individually, it was the next generation of female employees – the former first female students – who could recognise the power of sisterhood. Recalling a moment just after graduation, Skomorowska gives an example of such a woman's communal experience:

One beautiful summer day I squatted on the edge of the pavement next to Halina Olech and Maryla Janowska [Janowska-Karpińska]. This sitting directly on the street, Traugutta Street, surrounded by ruins [...] stayed in my memory. It became [...] an act of manifestation of great joy and a feeling of freedom, of liberty. Our three young girls sitting in the street at that time had a feeling of six years of danger and confinement leaving us. The stuffiness of cellars and shelters. We felt like birds released from a cage. We wanted to see as much as possible.<sup>66</sup>

She continues by writing about her later relationship with Olech as co-workers:

Already during my studies and later during my many years at the academy, I had the habit of 'sitting down' to Halina. At meetings, interdepartmental assemblies or college sessions, we always looked out for each other. I remember Halina's cry: 'Ućka! Here!' Very often, despite working in different departments and in different specialities, I visited Halina."<sup>67</sup>

Skomorowska, a sculptor, operated within the highly masculinised structures of her discipline and may have sought contact with a female colleague from a much more feminised ceramic environment out of a need for kindness, for community. As she writes of her colleague nostalgically, "when greeting each of us she would rush off with the words of a song: »O my falcon, you my happiness«. We were all falcons to her".<sup>68</sup> It seems that the presence of a close colleague brought her comfort and support in her own efforts – internal alliance may have helped her to survive, among others under Dunikowski's, and to develop within the structures of the institution. In retrospect, in the 1990s, Skomorowska considers the most important event in her career to be her independence from political pressure and the organisation of her own studio, while Lipska-Zworska lists among her own successes the advancement of the teaching staff at the Department of Glass and Ceramics, whom she was willing to support even at the expense of her own artistic practice.<sup>69</sup> Apparently, in a masculinised environment women are strong with the power of their sisterhood relationships and it might have helped them in moving up the ladder.

## 1:4 – Leadership (not quite) without female heads

Interestingly, the overall rate of feminisation of leadership positions in the SHSPA between 1954 and 1980 was a little higher than the corresponding rate for the pedagogical body as a whole – there were not five, but four male managers to one female manager. This is curious, as it is the presence of

women in authority that should have a positive effect on the employment of women in general. One would have to ask why, then, with around 19% of female leaders, there were only 16% of women in full-time positions? This may indicate that they are replicating the male model of management and are unwilling to support younger women being motivated by competition and protecting their own position in unfavourable circumstances. Or it may also indicate a lack of clout in the aforementioned male-dominated decision-making bodies. "Women tended to reach the top of academic careers at the expense of their personal lives, imitating the working style of older men", as pointed out by the authors of the report referenced several times already.<sup>70</sup>

The composition of the senior staff for the period 1946-1980 is probably reconstructable on the basis of archival data, including the personal files of employees, but remains not fully visible from the perspective of the documents selected for the analysis. In the staffing plans preserved in the archive, the details of the persons performing particular functions were not always present or were incomplete. For this reason, the data for the academic years 1958/59, 1973/74 and years 1975-1980 is approximate and may slightly differ from the actual situation, requiring verification with other sources.

The hierarchy of authority positions included the following roles: rector, pro-rector, dean, vice-dean (pro-dean, being the head of department), head of study, head of faculty, head of studio, head of plant, head of workshop, head of laboratory and head of library. It was very common for roles to be combined in superior bodies and the management of individual units, and it also happened that one person headed several studios at the same time. In the case of combined roles (e.g. head of faculty and a studio or two studios), each role appearing in the documents was counted as a distinct occurrence.

WOMEN IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SHSPA IN WROCLAW IN 1954-1980				
Academic year	LEADERSHIP POSITIONS			
	TOTAL	of which held by women	feminisation rate (FR)	AVERAGE feminisation rate (AFR)
1954/55	9	1	11,1%	-
1955/56	5	1	20,0%	23,4%
1956/57	n.a.	n.a.	-	
1957/58	n.a.	n.a.	-	
1958/59 *	13	3	23,1%	
1959/60	11	3	27,3%	
1960/61	11	3	27,3%	23,6%
1961/62	n.a.	n.a.	-	
1962/63	n.a.	n.a.	-	
1963/64	14	3	21,4%	
1964/65	9	2	22,2%	
1965/66	13	2	15,4%	15,1%
1966/67	38	7	18,4%	
1967/68	n.a.	n.a.	-	
1968/69	60	9	15,0%	
1969/70	51	6	11,8%	
1970/71	53	10	18,9%	17,9%
1971/72	65	11	16,9%	
1972/73	n.a.	n.a.	-	
1973/74 *	62	8	12,9%	
1974/75	65	15	23,1%	
1975/76 *	62	10	16,1%	18,0%
1976/77 *	63	10	15,9%	
1977/78 *	64	12	18,8%	
1978/79 *	63	12	19,0%	
1979/80 *	65	13	20,0%	
AVERAGE:			18,7%	-

Table 6. Women in the leadership of the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław between 1954 and 1980. Data for the academic years 1956/57, 1957/58, 1961/62, 1962/63, 1967/68 and 1972/73 not available. Data for the years marked with an asterisk (\*) is uncertain or estimated. In the case of combined roles, each role was counted as a distinct occurrence.

Based on the data presented in Table 6, it can be seen that the percentage of women in leadership positions over the 26 years studied is unlikely to exceed 30% of the total number of people in management, with an average value

of 18.7%. From 1955 to 1965, the rate was quite high, at around 23.5% in both five-year periods. Again, from 1965 onwards, the feminisation rate dropped significantly – in the next five-year period it was about 8.5 percentage points lower. In the 1970s, the percentage of women increased slightly, averaging around 18%, with a gentle upward trend in the second half of the decade, by the end of the decade reaching a level of around 20% again.

It is symptomatic that despite the clear threefold expansion of the academy's structure around 1966 – with the overall number of managers increasing from 13 to 38 – the increase in the representation of women in leadership is negligible: out of twenty-five new managerial positions, women took up only two, occupying a total of seven positions of authority. It would also have been valuable to examine what was the distribution of the women's presence in leadership by the hierarchy of functions and specialisations – in an overall view of the staffing plans, it is apparent that women were placed more often in lower managerial positions.

The first female heads were Dawska, Kotarbińska, Olech, Cybińska, Skomorowska-Wilimowska, and also temporarily Konieczka, as well as Pijaczewska, who took care of the library, and Pawlikowska, who was initially the curator of the museum, and in 1970 simultaneously the head of a faculty, a studio and a plant. Lipska-Zworska and Artymowska also joined this group. 1974 was the peak year in terms of the absolute number of women in the management (15 out of 65): Skomorowska-Wilimowska was vice-dean, and Olech continued as the head of the Ceramics and Glass Study, the heads of the faculties were Olech and Pawlikowska, and of the studios: Golkowska, Poznańska, Pawlikowska, Cybińska, Olech, Konieczka, Artymowska and Skomorowska (a total of 8 women to 30 men). In addition, Pawlikowska headed a workshop, Olech a plant and Pijaczewska the library. In 1977 Żemojtel joined the ranks of female managers as the head of a workshop, and in 1979 F. Sokołowska was the first head of language courses.



As the already widely quoted *Little Chance to Advance?* report points out, "the low proportion of women on the staff of art colleges may be largely related to the hermetic nature of the art community and the sphere of relationships and the unequal distribution of career-enhancing stimuli".<sup>71</sup> So if one were to look for proto-feminist women frontrunners – female leaders supporting the presence of other women – these, in the light of quantitative data and memories cited, were undoubtedly Kotarbińska and Olech. In the internal school's hierarchy, however, the woman who reached the highest position was Skomorowska, who was the first woman to hold the post of pro-rector since 1978. In the history of the academy, the rector's chair has never been occupied by a woman yet.

## 1:0.8 – Women's division. Female administrative and technical staff

The last – though no less numerous – group of people working at the university are those working in the non-teaching, usually full-time positions: clerical, technical, housekeeping and others. In the documents examined, data on this group appears only for the years 1954/55, 1955/56, 1963/64 and 1970/71, and, although not always complete, gives a certain sense of the degree and process of feminisation of this diverse staff group.

The following subgroups or areas are distinguished in the documents: administration, services, Student House, Experimental Plant, models (most probably working on commissioned hours, however). In terms of job titles, the documents used almost no feminatives, so women worked as the male equivalents of legal secretary (later clerk), secretary, accountant, economist, planner, guard, doorman, craftsman, stoker, cloakroom attendant, duplicator or janitor. The only officially occurring position in the records named as a female variant was that of a cleaner (*sprzątaczką*), in the course of the years, moreover, a position entirely filled by women.

Table 7. Women in the non-teaching positions, namely administrative, service and technical division of the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław in the selected academic years between 1954 and 1971.

WOMEN IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE, SERVICE AND TECHNICAL DIVISION OF THE SHSPA IN WROCLAW IN 1954-1971									
Academic year		NON-TEACHING STAFF							AFR per academic year
		administrative	service	Student House	Experimental Plants	models	OVERALL	of which women	
1954/55	TOTAL	10	-	-	-	-	10	3	30,0%
	of which women	3	-	-	-	-			
	% of women (FR)	30,0%	-	-	-	-			
1955/56	TOTAL	12	13	-	-	7	32	n.a.	-
	of which women	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	n.a.			
	% of women (FR)	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	n.a.			
1963/64	TOTAL	16	19	-	-	-	35	23	65,7%
	of which women	9	14	-	-	-			
	% of women (FR)	56,3%	73,7%	-	-	-			
1970/71	TOTAL	15	30	10	14	-	69	44	62,3%
	of which women	11	21	9	2	-			
	% of women (FR)	73,3%	70,0%	90,0%	14,3%	-			
OVERALL	TOTAL	53	62	10	14	7	146	70	47,3%
	of which women	23	35	9	2	n.a.	-	-	-
	AFR per sub-group	53,2%	71,8%	90,0%	14,3%	-	-	-	-
	AFR for ALL sub-groups	57,3%					AFR for ALL academic years		52,7%

The average feminisation rate for all subgroups is 57.3%, meaning that there was less than one man to every one woman (a ratio of 1:0.8), and it is the highest of all the groups studied in this article. The greatest feminisation rate of as much as 90% was recorded in the group working in the Student House, but the data available only covers one academic year. It is significant that the only male employee in this team was its manager, as in the case of the aforementioned Faculty of General Plastic Arts Education, this model of management by a man over a team of all-women resembles, therefore, a figure of icing on the cake. Of course, the documents in question do not demonstrate the opposite situation, that of a woman managing an entirely or predominantly male team, in any of the academy segments analysed.

The most complete data concerns the administrative unit, where, with an average of 53.2%, a significantly progressive feminisation can be observed while at the same time this subgroup grew slightly. In the service unit, separated from the administration in the 1960s, a very high and constant percentage of women of 70% to 73.5% can be observed. However, it should be emphasised that the positions classified in this group are among the least prestigious in the school: cleaner, janitor (*pedel*), guard, cloakroom attendant, stoker or craftsman. The fewest numbers of women, only two in twelve men, or 14.3%, were employed in the Experimental Plants, involved in wood and metalworking. However, these were not qualified craftsmen, but occupied non-managerial office positions. Unfortunately, there is no detailed data available on persons employed as models.

If, on the other hand, the entire division in question is viewed through the lens of each academic year, the feminisation rate doubled in the 1960s – up by almost 36 percentage points from 30.0% to 65.7%, with a slight decline of around three percentage points in the following decade.

The most numerous and fully feminised (100% occupancy) types of service positions were cleaner, caretaker (*pedel*), doorman and craftsmen with 75% occupancy. Among the office positions, the posts of clerk/senior clerk, accountant/senior

accountant and senior economist were always staffed by women (100% occupancy). There was also a 100% female proportion in the less numerous positions of cloakroom attendant, duplicator or guard.

In contrast, women were not employed (0%) as janitors (*woźny*), drivers, transport workers, maintenance workers or specialised craftsmen: blacksmiths, carpenters or locksmiths. To a certain extent, women were employed as stokers (about 29%). Remarkably, there were no women (0%) in the most important managerial positions for the university at that time: the administrative director and the bursar. Nor were they employed in other managerial positions (0%) of the administrative and economic department, of the Student House, of the storage team or of the Experimental Plants. Women in management positions were almost exclusively in the secretarial positions.

As they were not anonymous and also contributed significantly to the academy, and as that group is the most overlooked in historical analyses, I would like to present them by their names as well. The following women worked in their respective positions:

in 1954/55 as a clerk (3): Julia Brenenstuchl, Zofia Misiówna, Irena Robak,

in 1963/64 as the head of the independent section of the course and organisation of studies – secretary of the college (1): Stanisława Menzłowa; senior economist (2): Dorota Mikulska, Robak; senior accountant (2): Wacława Armatys, Wiktoria Gołębiowska, senior clerk (2): Daniela Iwanek, Helena Niewójt; clerk (2): Brenenstuchl, Misiówna; craftsman (3:1): Janina Horodecka, Janina Piskorska, Helena Zubko; stoker (1:3): Anna Dzimira; cleaner (5): Bronisława Dieszko (?), Celina Półtorak, Krystyna Rak, Zofia Rucko, Maria Zawada; senior janitor (*pedel*) (3): Maria Barciszewska, Henryka Sapała, Alfonsa Sokalska; guard (2): Kazimiera Adamska, Zofia Stefańczuk; in 1970/71 as the head of the independent personnel section (1): Robak; head of the accounting section (1): Wanda Pawlak; head of the secretariat (1): Czesława Pączek; head of the course of study (1): Chima Aleksandra Łagowska; secretariat of the

deans (1): Armatys; senior economist (3): Urszula Bielska, Janina Felińska, Dziewanna Zatorska; senior accountant (1): Maria Kramarzewska; accountant (1): Mirosława Szymańska; senior planner (2): Niewójt, Anita Wierzbicka; clerk (1): Józefa Horeglad; stoker (1:3): Józefa Kwiecińska; duplicator (1): Lidia Jastrząb; craftsman (3:1): Barciszewska, Sokalska, Zubko; cleaner (13): Jadwiga Chodyra, Janina Duda, Urszula Grońska, Anna Kościelna, Edeltrauda Nowak, Aniela Niełacka, Maria Oldziejewska, Półtorak, Rak, Teodozja Strzelec, Irena Szadkowska, Anna Szulc, Zawada; senior janitor (*pedel*) (5): Anna Dzimira, Bronisława Piorunowicz, Barbara Sawczuk, Irena Surmacz, Krystyna Widera; senior doorman (4): Helena Judek, Maria Kubara, Zofia Metyk, Zofia Wołowiec; senior guard (1): Stefańczuk; cloakroom attendant (2): Maria Dudzińska, Izabela Ignaczak.

In all the years given, there was one woman working consistently, Robak, changing positions to higher and higher positions – from clerk to senior economist to the head of the independent personnel section. The other women either appeared only once or remained in a resembling position.

Assuming that the data collected is representative of each decade – the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s – it must be noted that in the administrative subgroup the process of feminisation occurred very swiftly, reaching 30,0%–56,3%–73,3% successively. Interestingly, this progress took place with a relatively modest staff growth of around 50%. So the school's bureaucracy feminised most dynamically and most efficiently.

### So, where are they ?%

Comparing the different groups of women in SHSPA in the selected years between 1954 and 1971, it can be seen that the presence of all women combined – students from all years (estimated),<sup>72</sup> academics and non-teaching staff – gradually increased. What is particularly important, however, is that as early as 1954 the percentage of all women combined in all divisions of the university exceeded

the thirty-percentage threshold of critical mass, at an estimated 38.7%. The average feminisation rate (AFR) of the whole academy (all persons combined) for the selected years 1954/55, 1963/64 and 1970/71 is 41.4%. Whereas, looking at the feminisation of the various subgroups, namely total and new students, graduates, teachers, including full-time and contracted hours, school leaders and non-teaching staff, the average for the corresponding years was around 33%.



Women in various divisions of the SHSPA in Wrocław in between 1954 and 1980									
group	subgroup	Academic year:	1954/55 (a)	1955/56(b)	1963/64(c)	1970/71(d)	1979/80(e)	AVERAGE FR (b-d)	OVERALL AFR (b-d)
STUDENTS*	NEW STUDENTS	TOTAL	35	38	50	50	n.a.	48,0%	46,9%
		women	8	16	25	26	n.a.		
		FR	22,9%	42,1%	50,0%	52,0%	-		
	ALL STUDENTS*	TOTAL	223	194	237	251	n.a.	46,3%	
		women	95	76	109	135	n.a.		
		FR	42,6%	39,2%	46,0%	53,8%	-		
	GRADUATES	TOTAL	12	30	19	31	68	46,4%	
		women	6	15	9	13	38		
		FR	50,0%	50,0%	47,4%	41,9%	55,9%		
ACADEMICS	ALL ACADEMICS	TOTAL	51	52	88	107	143	16,4%	17,3%
		women	9	9	14	17	32		
		FR	17,6%	17,3%	15,9%	15,9%	22,4%		
	FULL-TIME TEACHERS	TOTAL	51	34	47	55	100	16,4%	
		women	9	6	8	8	19		
		FR	17,6%	17,6%	17,0%	14,5%	19,0%		
	CONTRACT HOURS TEACHERS	TOTAL	-	18	41	52	43	16,2%	
		women	-	3	6	9	13		
		FR	-	16,7%	14,6%	17,3%	30,2%		
	LEADERSHIP	TOTAL	9	5	14	53	65	20,1%	
		women	1	1	3	10	13		
		FR	11,1%	20,0%	21,4%	18,9%	20,0%		
AFR for the above subgroups per year			27,0%	29,0%	30,3%	29,5%	-	30,0%	
AFR for STUDENTS* and ACADEMICS in selected years (b-d)								30,0%	32,1%
NON-TEACHING STAFF		TOTAL	10	32	35	69	n.a.	AFR for selected years	
		women	3	n.a.	23	44	n.a.	(a/b, c, d)	
		FR	30,0%	-	65,7%	63,8%	-	53,2%	
AFR for all subgroups per year			28,2%**		37,6%	37,3%	-	34,4%	
AFR for STUDENTS*, ACADEMICS and NON-TEACHERS in selected years (a/b, c, d)								32,9%	32,1%
ALL PERSONS (all students*, academics and non-teachers)		TOTAL	284	278	360	427	-	AFR for ALL PERSONS for selected years	
		women	107	-	146	196	-	(a, c, d)	
		FR	37,7%	-	40,6%	45,9%	-	41,4%	

Table 8. Women in various divisions – students (including new enrollments and graduates), academics (including full time positions, contract hours teachers and leadership) and administrative, service and technical units – of the State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław in selected years between 1954 and 1980. Data for the groups marked with an asterisk is estimated. The average feminisation rate (AFR) for all subgroups for the years 1954/55 and 1955/56 (\*\*) is combined to cover up for the missing or unrepresentative data.

A different picture emerges, however, when comparing the feminisation rate for these groups in the 1970/71 academic year: for full-time female employees, it was a mere 14.5%, for all female academics only about 16%, in the subgroup of female managers nearly 19%, definitely higher for female graduates and female students, constituting about 52% and 54% of their group respectively, and the highest feminisation rate was in the group of non-teaching staff – as high as 64%. In this context, it is interesting to note the slight decline in the number of female graduates between 1954 and 1970, from 50% to about 42% of their group. Despite their initial enthusiasm to study, did they begin to lack motivation as they saw more women cleaners (13) or janitors (5) around them than women professors (3)?<sup>73</sup>

Fortunately, the situation improved for women at the end of the 1970s: in 1979/80, the number and proportion of women among the research and teaching staff increased considerably, including a doubling in the number of female full-time staff (up from 8 to 19, or 19%) and simultaneously the number of female graduate students grew threefold (from 13 to 38, women representing around 56% of the group). Thus, the more numerous presence of women on a cadre – especially those employed in permanent positions and therefore with security and the prospect of professional development, which undoubtedly contributes to enhancing the quality of teaching – seems to have a very positive impact on the education of female students and their academic success.

\* \* \*

The figures for the academy's staff are well complemented by two extracts from the memoirs of the school's first teachers. Stanisław Dawski, recalling the pioneering period of teaching among his colleagues, wrote:

All of us as pedagogues were rookies. No one had taught before. [...] The beginning of the School was the beginning of all our problems, even the organisational and administrative ones. There was a moment

when Geppert came to ask us what to do about the secretariat. I replied that we needed to engage a secretary [feminative – ZR] who had some experience, who had worked somewhere. And there was one secretary [fem. – ZR], one administrative manager who had never been a manager before, one caretaker.<sup>74</sup>

This person was required because of their skills and experience in the profession, but apparently this position was the only one in which a woman was implicitly sought and, as I have already mentioned, only this post was labelled with a feminative.

An interesting aspect of women's participation in organisational and administrative work also emerges from Krzetuska's memoir, she writes:

Coming back to the preparations, however, these were the hardest times. The cleaning alone was exhausting, and if we add that just then the secretary recommended by friends ran away, taking with her the typewriter that had been bought with difficulty, it was already a disaster. So when enrolment was announced, first for the plein-air and then for the School, I was already performing all the supplementary functions, naturally for free. It was very satisfying to know that I was doing something useful after all.<sup>75</sup>

By revealing, without embarrassment, her supportive role to her fellow professors, Krzetuska also exposes an overlooked dimension of the invisible work that women usually do, even if they are employed alongside their colleagues as academic teachers.

It is only when the opportunity arises that some women, transparent in their roles, claim recognition for their contributions and achievements, doing so out of necessity – a sense of justice or a need for recognition, rather than the possibility of some benefit. Elsewhere, Krzetuska points out herself: "Maybe I'm bragging too much – but the fact that the school edifice on Plac

Polski has been rebuilt is no small feat on my part. Everyone around me said it wasn't worth it, that it couldn't be done, and so on. And I persisted [...]."<sup>76</sup> And another artist, Lipska-Zworska, recalls that she was the first organiser of the academy's museum, founded in the academic year 1959/60,<sup>77</sup> of which it is officially more appreciated which rector was appointed.<sup>78</sup>

More humble individuals can only receive adequate recognition from attentive colleagues who will testify on their behalf. Such was the case with Olech, on whose shoulders all the organisational effort involved in setting up the school's most unique department was to rest, the work invisible from the level of official documents: "In my opinion, the history of the Department of Ceramics and Glass at the SHSPA in Wrocław – is the story of Halina Olech's hardworking life," testifies Skomorowska, admiring her colleague's strength and proactivity.<sup>79</sup> But her statements also shed light on the dedication and taking on additional responsibility that women in academia – and the professional environment more broadly – are still predisposed to:

Seeing at times her great workload at the expense of her own creation, I argued and quarreled with her. For she relieved everyone: from professors, administrative staff, janitors to cleaners. To everyone, regardless of their position, she was Halinka. How much of her own salary, sparing herself, she put into equipping the studio, will remain her secret.<sup>80</sup>

Bearing additional costs, especially emotional and organisational ones, and so-called invisible work may have delayed women not only from moving up the ladder, but also in creative development or the realisation of personal goals. With this realisation in mind, it is less surprising to read a confession from Cybińska, a doyenne of the academy in Wrocław and an artist known for her creative determination, discipline and hard work, who, with the benefit of hindsight, recalls that the most important and formative event in her career

was... a break from the college work between 1964 and 1974.<sup>81</sup>

Taking a simultaneous look at the figures found and the biographical and especially autobiographical narratives within oral history projects can be a beneficial formula for art history to break down the dominant narratives produced by the authority of scholars, museum professionals and decision-makers of the art field, operating with categories of assessment derived from a male-centric spectrum of values. Reclaiming the stories of women who did not receive adequate recognition and acknowledgement of the work they carried out, not only artistically but also organisationally or emotionally, is particularly important here. Championing female artists, so numerous in the second half of the twentieth century, in a feminist, equalitarian and inclusive perspective that critically takes into account the context of their functioning and their support networks is, of course, not only a socio-politically informed research task, but also an activism within the field of knowledge.

\* \* \*

Dreaming up a fantasy of sisterhood, one would like to say that perhaps the academy would be somewhat different in terms of equality today if all the women who study and work there supported each other and acted together – in solidarity, without class prejudice or the lining up with strategies of becoming equal in the world appropriate for more privileged men. However, they were undoubtedly hindered by the power on the male side, not so much the symbolic power, but the very real one, influencing working and studying conditions and relations within the institution. With the predominance of men as decision-makers and at the highest hierarchical levels, both in terms of academic titles, degrees and functions and in key non-teaching positions, it is very difficult to feminise the academy as a whole.

Thus, instead of equality at all levels of academic life, we are currently faced with a situation in which female professors still constitute a negligible proportion while female

students are greatly dominant. Based on the data published by the authors of the report *Little Chance to Advance?* and the data collected in the Archive of EGAAD in Wrocław, it can be seen that there has been a significant increase in the representation of women – from one female teacher for about three students to one female teacher for about two students.<sup>82</sup>

WOMEN IN ART COLLEGES IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DATA		
Percentage of women (FR)	SHSPA in Wrocław 1946-80	Fine arts colleges in Poland in 2013
Teaching staff	18%*	35%
Students	49%**	77%

Table 9. Women among students and teaching staff of the SHSPA in Wrocław between 1946 and 1980 in relation to the averages for fine arts colleges in Poland in 2013. The feminisation rate for female teachers (marked \*) relates to the years 1955-1980 and for female students (marked \*\*) to the new admissions between 1946 and 1972.

However, while the Wrocław academy currently ranks close to the national average in terms of the total number of female staff, in terms of the proportion of female professors it is the second lowest, ahead only of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (also established in 1946).<sup>83</sup> In the light of historical data, it would therefore be appropriate to say that there is a pedagogical model firmly rooted in the academy's past, and its figure in the 20th and 21st centuries is no longer master-disciple, but rather 'master and apprentices.' I therefore believe that in an art college with such a unique formula for sharing skills and knowledge, where there is one teacher for about five students (the average for all types of universities in Poland is 1:16), it is, among other factors, the devotion to this teaching model that makes the armoured ceiling in Wrocław particularly fortified.

But since women have already reached the thirty percent critical mass threshold in almost every group, there is – assuming no procedural, political or violence-related obstacles – a good chance that this ceiling will crumble quite rapidly

in the years to come. However, has the critical shortage of female professors already decreased enough? It would also be interesting to see what the real influence of women on politics and equality in the academy has been, for example by examining their involvement in Faculty Boards or Senate meetings – did they speak out on issues of importance to the academy and were their voices heard?

At the time of the political transformation of the 1990s, fifty years after the establishment of the school, Skomorowska was very conscious of the democratic changes taking place and the necessary adjustments to be made at the school. As she pointed out:

Above all, pedagogues need to realise that studio management should not be treated as an untouchable occupation, because it is not one's own individual creation. It is simply to work together more. For the time of "master and apprentice" and, above all, single-person responsibility for artistic education is over – in favour of team responsibility.<sup>84</sup>

The artist wrote this from the position of an already experienced professor, a former pro-rector and leader at various levels of the academic hierarchy. However, the underbelly of her own activity, as other quoted passages testify, was the nurturing sisterhood, warmth and kind words she received from another woman close to her.

What remains is, on the one hand, supporting in solidarity the efforts of women applying for the highest titles and positions – that is, counting on professors and rectors – and, on the other hand, constantly looking after the wellbeing of the least privileged women: students, low-level academics and service workers or those on temporary and part-time contracts, while constantly expanding the attention paid to people from minority and disadvantaged groups. And in doing so, it is worth seeking, protecting, reading, listening and passing on to each other the stories of those women on whose shoulders we stand, those

with whom we can offer our hands and those who come after us, because the numbers show that they are already on their way, and there is some part in their narratives that is also our own.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Sztuk Plastycznych we Wrocławiu (PWSSP) is also known in English as 'State Higher School of Visual Arts', 'State Higher School of Fine Arts' or 'State College of Fine Arts'. I will be using the exact translation referring to plastic arts, as intended by the school's creators.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately her name was not provided. Eugeniusz Geppert, "Pierwsze lata...", in *Szkice z pamięci: Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Sztuk Plastycznych we Wrocławiu we wspomnieniach jej założycieli, studentów i pedagogów: Lata 1946-1996*. Cz. 1, ed. Andrzej Saj and Urszula Benka (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Akademii Sztuk Pięknych, 1996), 28.

<sup>3</sup> Iwona Demko, *Zofia Bałtarowicz-Dzielińska: Pierwsza studentka Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Akademii Sztuk Pięknych im. Jana Matejki, 2018), 81-105. Iwona Demko, "Zofia Bałtarowicz-Dzielińska – pierwsza studentka na krakowskiej Akademii Sztuk Pięknych / Zofia Bałtarowicz-Dzielińska – the First Female Student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow," *Sztuka i Dokumentacja* 19, (2018): 27–32, accessed September 4, 2022, doi:10.32020/ARTandDOC/19/2018/6. Monika Stelmach and Iwona Demko, "Zwycięstwo Zofii: Rozmowa z Iwoną Demko," *Dwutygodnik.com*, 263, August 2019, accessed September 4, 2022, <https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artikul/8427-zwyciestwo-zofii.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Dobromiła Dobro, Agnieszka Kalita, Hanna Kraś, Adam Mazur, Agata Ostrowska, Agata Plater-Zyberk and Katarzyna Trzeciak, "Opowiedzieć pomijane historie: Rozmowa z kuratorkami wystawy *Kocham w życiu trzy rzeczy: samochód, alkohol i marynarzy*," *BLOK*, August 23, 2021, accessed September 4, 2022, <https://blokmagazine.com/pl-opowiedziec-pomijane-historie-rozmowa-z-kuratorkami-wystawy-kocham-w-zyciu-trzy-rzeczy-samochod-alkohol-i-marynarzy/>. "Kocham w życiu trzy rzeczy: samochód, alkohol i marynarzy. Nieopowiedziane historie studentek ASP w Warszawie 1918-1939 / Three Things I Love in Life – The Car, Liquor and Sailors: Untold Stories of Women Students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw 1918-1939," *Lokal30.pl*, accessed February 6, 2023, <http://lokal30.pl/wystawy/kocham-w-zyciu-trzy-rzeczy-samochod-alkohol-i-marynarzy-nieopowiedziane-historie-studentek-asp-w-warszawie-1918-1939/>.

<sup>5</sup> "Statistical Yearbook 1955" of the Central Statistical Office (GUS/CSO) presented an increase of 20 percentage points in the proportion of students coming from peasant and working-class families in the group of students at vocational and art schools in the 1953/55 academic year compared to 1935/36. Detailed information on higher education institutions was published from 1959 onwards. "Rocznik Statystyczny 1955. Główny Urząd Statystyczny Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej," *Rocznik Statystyczny* 15 (Warszawa: GUS, 1956), "Szkołnictwo/Schooling" insert.

<sup>6</sup> Zofia Morecka, Danuta Graniewska, Adam Kurzynowski and Barbara Tryfan, "Aktywność zawodowa Kobiet," in *Kobieta w Polsce: Referaty na Światową Konferencję Dekady Kobiet ONZ* (Warszawa: Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, 1986), 36-37, 52-53.

<sup>7</sup> Anna Gromada and Jutta Kawalerowicz, "Pancerny sufit: dlaczego jest tak mało kobiet w kadrze uczelni plastycznych w Polsce?" In *Kariery akademickie kobiet i mężczyzn: różne czy podobne?* ed. Renata Siemieńska-Żochowska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2019), 119. Anna Gromada, Dorka Budacz, Jutta Kawalerowicz and Anna Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse? Raport z badania na temat obecności kobiet na uczelniach artystycznych w Polsce*, ([Warszawa]: Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation, 2015), 7, accessed September 4, 2022, <https://www.nck.pl/upload/attachments/317998/Marne%20szanse%20na%20awanse%20RAPORT.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Zdzisława Czyżowska, "Kobieta w Polsce w latach 1975-1985: Przegląd statystyczny / Woman in Poland 1975-1985: Statistical Review," in *Kobieta w Polsce*, 11-35.

<sup>9</sup> Małgorzata Fidelis, *Kobiety, komunizm i industrializacja w powojennej Polsce / Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland*, trans. Maria Jaszczurowska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B. – Grupa Wydawnicza Foksal, 2015), 37-75.

<sup>10</sup> Michał Jędrzejewski, "Słowo wstępne / Preface," in *Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Sztuk Plastycznych we Wrocławiu, [1946-1990]: CBWA 'Zachęta', Warszawa luty 1990: Wystawa prac studentów i pedagogów / State Higher School of Plastic Arts in Wrocław, [1946-1990]: CBAE 'Zachęta', Warsaw February 1990: Exhibition of Works by Students and Teachers*, ed. Wojciech Śmigieński and Irena Zaucha (Warszawa: Centralne Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych 'Zachęta', 1990), 9. Hanna Krzetuska, "Jak to było na początku / How it Was at the Beginning," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 39-40.

<sup>11</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 7. All the translations from Polish by Zofia Reznik.

<sup>12</sup> Caryatid Collective (Kolektyw Kariatyda) – informal group of information activists dedicated to enriching Polish Wikipedia with content on encyclopedic women in the arts. "Wikiprojekt:GLAM/Kolektyw Kariatyda," pl.Wikipedia.org, last modified October 31, 2022, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikiprojekt:GLAM/Kolektyw\\_Kariatyda](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikiprojekt:GLAM/Kolektyw_Kariatyda).

<sup>13</sup> The Wikiprojekt is a group of Wikipedians working together to improve Wikipedia in a subject area of their choice. "Wikipedia:WikiProject," en.Wikipedia.org, last modified August 14, 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject>.

<sup>14</sup> "Wikiprojekt:GLAM/Gaszcz," pl.Wikipedia.org, last modified May 1, 2021, <https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikiprojekt:GLAM/Gaszcz>.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Kutera, *Czy wyraz „kobieta” to rzeczownik, czy przymiotnik? / Is the Word 'Woman' a Noun or an Adjective?* 1977, fragment of a report, collage, drawing and typesetting on paper, in the artist's collection.

<sup>16</sup> Anna Markowska, "Trzeba przetrzeć tę szybę: Powikłane dzieje wrocławskiej Galerii Sztuki Najnowszej (1975-1980) w Akademickim Centrum Kultury Pałacyk / This Glass Must Be Wiped Clean: The Complicated History of the Recent Art Gallery (1975-1980) at the Pałacyk Academic Culture Centre," in *Awangarda nie bila braw: Cz. 1: Galeria Sztuki Najnowszej /*



*The Avant-Garde Did Not Applaud: Pt. 1: The Recent Art Gallery*, ed. Anna Markowska (Wrocław: Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław, 2014), 290. Zofia Reznik, "Piąta Beatles i Matka Sukcesu. Artystki kolektywu GSN w świetle historii mówionej / The Fifth Beatle and the Mother of Success. Female Artists of the RAG Collective in the Light of Oral History," in *Awangarda nie była braw*, 334-335.

<sup>17</sup> Roman Wieruszewski, *Równość kobiet i mężczyzn w Polsce Ludowej* (Poznań: Wydaw. Poznańskie, 1975).

<sup>18</sup> Wieruszewski, *Równość kobiet i mężczyzn*, 226.

<sup>19</sup> Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," in *Women, Art, and Power, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 145-178.

<sup>20</sup> The artists invited to the project were: Izabella Gustowska, Anna Kutera, Natalia LL, Teresa Murak, Ewa Partum, Krystyna Piotrowska oraz Teresa Tyszkiewicz. "Fading Traces: Polskie artystki w sztuce lat 70.," *Ankalesniak.pl*, accessed September 4, 2022, [http://www.ankalesniak.pl/fading2010\\_pl.htm](http://www.ankalesniak.pl/fading2010_pl.htm).

<sup>21</sup> "Zarejestrowane," *Ankalesniak.pl*, accessed September 4, 2022, [http://www.ankalesniak.pl/registered2011\\_pl.htm](http://www.ankalesniak.pl/registered2011_pl.htm). "Zarejestrowane," *Łódź-art.eu*, accessed September 4, 2022, <http://www.lodz-art.eu/zarejestrowane/index.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Guerrilla Girls, *Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?*, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> Magdalena Mach, *Kobiety na Akademii Sztuk Pięknych im. Jana Matejki w Krakowie* (paper, "Kobiecie utopie w działaniu. 100 lat praw wyborczych kobiet" conference in Kraków, 2018), courtesy of the author.

<sup>24</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 10, 22.

<sup>25</sup> Andrzej Saj, and Urszula Benka, eds., *Szkice z pamięci*. The publication contains, among other things, invaluable herstorical material – the narratives of several women involved with the academy in its early years, most of them now deceased, and their answers to questions asked in a questionnaire designed in conjunction with the publication. The following were invited to contribute to the project: artists K. Cybińska, W. Gólkowska, M. Janowska-Karpińska, R. Konieczka-Popowska, I. Lipska-Zworska, H. Olech, Ł. Skomorowska-Wilimowska, art historians B. Baworowska, I. Huml, I. Pijaczewska, M. Starzewska and a literate U. Benka. An excerpt from H. Krzetuska's autobiography was also included.

<sup>26</sup> The discussion on the use of feminatives, especially in official documents, had its turning point in public debate in Poland in 2019. At that time, the Council for the Polish Language issued a statement advocating an increased visibility of women in the Polish language and the symmetrical use of feminine forms alongside masculine ones where possible. In the same year, the Senate of the Adam Mickiewicz University passed a new statute with an unprecedented clause on allowing female forms of the names of positions and functions. In 2020 a similar clause appeared in the statute of the Academy of Art in Szczecin, and in 2021 the Senate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków took a corresponding decision. The Szczecin Academy was honoured with the only feminist art award in Poland, i.e. the Maria Anto and Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven Art Award, in the "special recognition for supporting the presence and visibility of women in education and culture" category as a pioneering institution in the field of art. Also, the feminine language forms functioning in higher education institutions and in the art world became the subject of Iwona Demko's activist project *Feminatives at the Academy*. "Stanowisko Rady Języka Polskiego przy Prezydium PAN w sprawie żeńskich form nazw zawodów i tytułów (25 XI 2019 r.)," *Rjp.pan.pl*, accessed September 4, 2022, [https://rjp.pan.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1861:stanowisko-rjp-w-sprawie-zenskich-form-nazw-zawodow-i-tytulow](https://rjp.pan.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1861:stanowisko-rjp-w-sprawie-zenskich-form-nazw-zawodow-i-tytulow). Paulina Januszewska, "Mów mi »rektorko«: O feminatywach na uczelniach," *Krytykapolityczna.pl*, July 10, 2020, accessed February 6, 2023, <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/kraj/akademia-sztuki-szczecin-feminatywy-nowy-statut-januszewska/>. Kov, "Akademia Sztuki z nagrodą za »rektorkę«, »dziekanę« i »kanclerzową«: Uznane za wsparcie kobiet," *Szczecin.wyborcza.pl*, December 29, 2020, accessed February 6, 2023, <https://szczecin.wyborcza.pl/szczecin/7,34939,26646565,akademia-sztuki-z-nagroda-za-rektorkę-dziekane-i-kanclerzowa.html>. Aleksandra Suława, "Droga Pani Dziekano... Po co nam feminatywy na uczelniach?," *Styl.interia.pl*, June 4, 2021, accessed February 6, 2023, <https://styl.interia.pl/spoleczenstwo/news-szanowna-pani-dziekano-po-co-nam-feminatywy-na-uczelniach,nId,5276339>. Iwona Demko and Łukasz Trzcinski, *Feminatywy w Akademii: Słowniczek* (Kraków: Dom Utopii – Międzynarodowe Centrum Empatii; Teatr Łażnia Nowa, 2022).

<sup>27</sup> Andrzej Jarosz, "Barwne kadry, spiętrzone materie, kontemplacyjne płaszczyzny: Z dziejów współczesnego malarstwa wrocławskiego," in *Wrocław sztuki: Sztuka i środowisko artystyczne we Wrocławiu 1946-2006*, ed. Andrzej Saj (Wysoka: Agencja Reklamowa i Drukarnia Kontra s.c., 2007), 25, 33, 36.

<sup>28</sup> Sylwia Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970: Artyści, dzieła, krytycy* (Wrocław: Via Nova, 2016), 30, 33.

<sup>29</sup> Andrzej Saj, and Urszula Benka, eds., *Szkice z pamięci*, 45, 157, 160.

<sup>30</sup> The dates of commencement given by different authors are sometimes a little inconsistent and need to be verified. Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970*, 27, 63, 66. Andrzej Saj, ed., *Wrocław sztuki*, 10, 24-37, 83-90, 126-145, 153-183, 205-207, 250. Paweł Banaś, "PWSSP – szkic do portretu / SHSPA – Sketch for a Portrait," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 9-11. Michał Jędrzejewski, "Słowo wstępne / Preface, 9-10.

<sup>31</sup> Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970*, 290. Jarosz, "Barwne kadry, spiętrzone materie, kontemplacyjne płaszczyzny," 33. Banaś, "PWSSP – szkic do portretu / SHSPA – Sketch for a Portrait," 9-10.

<sup>32</sup> Geppert, "Pierwsze lata...", 25-26.

<sup>33</sup> Krzetuska, "Jak to było na początku," 39-40.

<sup>34</sup> Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970*, 17-57. Sylwia Świsłocka-Karwot, "Obraz rozciągnięty w czasie: Środowisko wrocławskie i sztuka w latach 1946-2006," in *Wrocław sztuki*, 289-293.

<sup>35</sup> Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970*, 59-107. Jarosz, "Barwne kadry, spiętrzone materie, kontemplacyjne płaszczyzny," 42-43.

<sup>36</sup> Unquestionably significant in the history of women's art was the 1952 Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Prints by Women Plastic Artists. It was the first exhibition of its kind to bring together works by eleven of the above-mentioned active women artists. The commissioner of this exhibition was Dawska, and among the eight jurors there was only one woman – Jastrzębowska. Desage was mentioned in the Świsłocka-Karwot dissertation for the first time as a participant in the 1953 edition. Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970*, 86-87.

<sup>37</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 14-15.

<sup>38</sup> Krzetuska, "Jak to było na początku," 42.

<sup>39</sup> Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970*, 23. Świsłocka-Karwot, "Obraz rozciągnięty w czasie," 290.

<sup>40</sup> Świsłocka-Karwot, *Sztuka we Wrocławiu w latach 1945-1970*, 25, 61, 62, 67.

<sup>41</sup> Fidelis, *Kobiety, komunizm i industrializacja w powojennej Polsce*, 37-41, 50-56.

<sup>42</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Geppert, "Pierwsze lata...", 27.

<sup>44</sup> Morecka, Graniewska, Kurzynowski and Tryfan, "Aktywność zawodowa Kobiet", 52-53.

<sup>45</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 16.

<sup>46</sup> An analysis of the numerical presence of women in the university in its first seven years of operation requires a separate reconstruction study based on information scattered over various documents.

<sup>47</sup> Ustawa z dnia 5 listopada 1958 r. o szkołach wyższych (1958), accessed February 6, 2023, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19580680336/O/D19580336.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> The classification of some employees was sometimes variable, e.g. in the case of a PE teacher in some years it was in the supporting personnel group and in other years in the lecturing group. The available documents also did not always include library staff. There was also a migration in the classification of people between full-time employees or on contract hours, especially in the group of assistants and lecturers, instructors or those teaching socio-political and humanistic subjects.

<sup>49</sup> In the academic year 1954/55, 9 people were employed as 'professors' (in the following year eight became deputy professors and one became an associate professor) and three as 'deputy professors' (in the following year still as deputy professors).

<sup>50</sup> I derive this term from the paper by Mach. Mach, *Kobiety na Akademii Sztuk Pięknych im. Jana Matejki w Krakowie*. Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 15.

<sup>51</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 11-21.

<sup>52</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 16. The issue is currently being discussed in public colleges, sparked in 2018 by the Ombudsman's report *Experiences of harassment among female students. Analysis and recommendations (Doświadczenie molestowania wśród studentek i studentów. Analiza i zalecenia)*, revealing just how widespread a problem of sexual violence is in higher educational institutions. "Doświadczenie molestowania wśród studentek i studentów: Analiza i zalecenia RPO," Bip.brpo.gov.pl, February 11, 2019, accessed February 6, 2023, <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/molestowanie-wsrod-studentek-i-studentow-analiza-i-zalecenia-rpo>.

<sup>53</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 51.

<sup>55</sup> Krzetuska, "Jak to było na początku", 42.

<sup>56</sup> Krzetuska, "Jak to było na początku", 42.

<sup>57</sup> Full name missing.

<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, it is difficult to analyse the allocation to particular posts within commissioned hours, as this information is usually not explicitly recorded in staffing plans.

<sup>59</sup> The maximum time for holding a given position was regulated by law and, on the one hand, it forced the employees to improve their professional qualifications, namely to obtain degrees or to build up a body of work, while, on the other hand, it obliged the institutions of higher education to promote employees to further positions. In the event of a shortage of vacant positions, a shortage of staff or a particular preference or dislike for a particular person, these decisions could be taken in a non-obvious manner, that is, accelerated or deferred or even blocked advancement.

<sup>60</sup> "Uczelnia i jej pedagodzy – wspomnienia, oceny, refleksje (Ujęcie ankietowe)," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 164.

<sup>61</sup> I exclude here the group of PE teachers, because for almost the entire period in question the teacher and the head of the Physical Education Study was a man, Roman Marchacz, classified in the second half of the 1970s as a lecturer or senior lecturer. It was only then that Z. Sokołowska, who had previously worked with him on contract hours, was given a full-time teaching position.

- <sup>62</sup> This more elegant phrase is usually uttered in the context of group exhibitions, in which the works of women artists are separated from those of other artists and gathered in one place, usually demonstrating the curator's helplessness in convincing and substantive inclusion of women in the proposed exhibition.
- <sup>63</sup> Irena Lipska-Zworska, "Pani Profesor Julia Kotarbińska," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 86.
- <sup>64</sup> Halina Olech, "Pierwsze lata ceramiki – pierwsi pedagodzy (o Rudolfe Krzyweu i Julii Kotarbińskiej)," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 92.
- <sup>65</sup> Łucja Skomorowska-Wilimowska, "Moje wspomnienie o Xawerym Dunikowskim (wybrane fragmenty)," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 63-65.
- <sup>66</sup> Łucja Skomorowska-Wilimowska, "Wspomnienie o Halinie Olech," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 125.
- <sup>67</sup> Skomorowska-Wilimowska, "Wspomnienie o Halinie Olech," 125-126. 'Učka' was a diminutive of the name Łucja, indicating great intimacy.
- <sup>68</sup> Skomorowska-Wilimowska, "Wspomnienie o Halinie Olech," 126.
- <sup>69</sup> "Uczelnia i jej pedagodzy – wspomnienia, oceny, refleksje (Ujęcie ankietowe)," 166-167.
- <sup>70</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 20.
- <sup>71</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 53.
- <sup>72</sup> The data for the group of students of all years is estimated based on the summarised admissions for five consecutive years, e.g. the estimated total number of students at the academy in 1954 is the sum of those admitted between 1950 and 1954. The resulting data is overstated as it does not take into account the so-called sifting and transfers between colleges.
- <sup>73</sup> In 1970/71 there were no female full professors, only one full-time docent and two adjuncts (assistant professors).
- <sup>74</sup> Stanisław Dawski, "Tamte czasy (wspomnienia wg stenogramu wywiadu z 1979 r.)," in *Szkice z pamięci*, 29.
- <sup>75</sup> Krzetuska, "Jak to było na początku," 40.
- <sup>76</sup> Krzetuska, "Jak to było na początku," 43.
- <sup>77</sup> "Uczelnia i jej pedagodzy – wspomnienia, oceny, refleksje (Ujęcie ankietowe)," 163. Data from staffing sheets.
- <sup>78</sup> "Ośrodek Dokumentacji Sztuki," [asp.wroc.pl](http://asp.wroc.pl), accessed February 6, 2023, <https://www.asp.wroc.pl/pl/uczelnia/osrodki-i-jednostki/osrodek-dokumentacji-sztuki>.
- <sup>79</sup> Skomorowska-Wilimowska, "Wspomnienie o Halinie Olech," 126.
- <sup>80</sup> Skomorowska-Wilimowska, "Wspomnienie o Halinie Olech," 126.
- <sup>81</sup> "Uczelnia i jej pedagodzy – wspomnienia, oceny, refleksje (Ujęcie ankietowe)," 164.
- <sup>82</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 6-8.
- <sup>83</sup> Gromada, Budacz, Kawalerowicz and Walewska, *Marne szanse na awanse?*, 8.
- <sup>84</sup> "Uczelnia i jej pedagodzy – wspomnienia, oceny, refleksje (Ujęcie ankietowe)," 173.

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## THE JOY OF CREATION. TERESA SIERANT-MIKICICZ'S ROLE IN BUILDING THE GDANSK ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS BRAND

*In my view, there is no true history of this school without Franciszek Otto and Teresa Sierant. The former was the holocaust of our intelligence - Teresa somehow compensated for that, whole decades of beauty and art she told us about.*

From a laudation delivered by Prof. Mieczysław Olszewski on the occasion of a commemorative celebration honouring the sixtieth anniversary of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk.

One can safely say that the history of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk begins with the arrival of seven painters who set themselves the goal of creating an art school in Tri-City. Thanks to them, in the late summer of 1945, the State Institute of Visual Arts<sup>1</sup> was established in Sopot; a few weeks later it was transformed into the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Gdansk with its seat in Sopot.<sup>2</sup> It often happens, however, that stories concerning the beginnings of the Gdansk Academy of Fine Arts feature its "founding fathers," forgetting somehow that three out of seven people who built the School were women - a case quite rare in the patriarchal world of that time. They were: Krystyna Studnicka, Józefa Wnukowa and Hanna Żuławska.<sup>3</sup> Three strong personalities, three great artists. Thus, it can be stated that the feminist theme was significantly present already in the founding act of the Gdansk Academy.

A few years later, this group of women building the identity of the Gdansk Academy was joined by Teresa Sierant. Nevertheless, while

Krystyna Studnicka, Józefa Wnukowa and Hanna Żuławska remain relatively popular, due to their artistic activity, Teresa Sierant is only mentioned in conversations and memoirs of those who have known or met her. Therefore, the aim of this text is to bring to light the figure of Teresa Sierant - associated with the Gdansk Academy almost from the very beginning, and for a long time the only professional art historian employed there. For decades, almost every graduating student at the School had to pass exams and, often, write a theoretical paper. In addition, most of the academic community frequently met Teresa at the academy library which she managed for almost fifty years. Throughout the years, it was her knowledge, attitude and joy of life, that drew paths of personal development for countless students. Thus, one can conclude that along with the end of her employment at the Academy - she retired in 2001, in her seventies - a certain era ended, the era of finest quality joy of life. In a way, everything that led to Teresa Sierant's appearance

at the Gdansk State Higher School of Visual Arts (PWSSP) stemmed from old friendships and wounded ambitions. To explain this properly, one has to go back to the period between 1940s and 1950s. In 1949 Prof. Marian Wnuk, then the Gdansk School Rector, left Tri-City to take over the sculpture studio, and later the position of Rector at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts. Then Prof. Jan Wodyński<sup>4</sup> was appointed Rector in Sopot, only to be replaced in this position by Prof. Stanisław Teisseyre who arrived from Poznań in 1951. At the Krakow Congress of the Association of Polish Artists and Designers in 1945, when the future development of artistic education in Poland was under discussion, the need for a third Academy of Fine Arts, apart from those in Krakow and Warsaw, was noted. This new institution, according to the participants' suggestions, was to be established in Poznań.<sup>5</sup> At the time when, partly for ambitious reasons, Teisseyre moved to Tri-City, the matter of the third academy was still open. Thus, Prof. Teisseyre made efforts to ensure that the planned increase in rank was assigned to the Gdansk institution. The main difference between the Academy of Fine Arts and the State Higher School of Visual Arts study programs was marked in their approach to the theory and history of art; hence the new Rector's endeavours focused on adapting the theoretical program to the higher academic requirements. Rector Teisseyre's goals were set on teaching art history.

Initially, students at the State Higher School of Visual Arts in Gdansk learned about the history of art as part of classes in art or design studios. In 1947, the course was taken over by Janina Ebenberger-Orzechowska who focused mainly on Italian art.<sup>6</sup> But the new authorities were perhaps not in her favor because, probably even before 1950, her education was questioned; as evidenced by written testimonials of her former students at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, which confirm information concerning lectures on Italian art conducted by Ebenberger-Orzechowska at her alma mater in Lviv in the years 1935-1939.<sup>7</sup> No wonder that in these circumstances Rector Teisseyre began looking for an art historian whose person would

not raise any objections. This person turned out to be Teresa Sierant who had been recommended by Jan Chranicki,<sup>8</sup> then the director of the Pomeranian Museum in Gdansk;<sup>9</sup> in 1956 she was employed at the State Higher School of Visual Arts.

Teresa Sierant was born on December 5, 1931 in Majków Duży,<sup>10</sup> but soon the family moved to Starogard Gdański, where Teresa's father, Teofil Sierant, got a job at an amplification (relay) station belonging to the state-owned company Polska Poczta, Telegraf i Telefon. There, she began her primary school education, which was interrupted after a year by the outbreak of World War II. The family then moved to Piotrków Trybunalski, where, changing their place of residence several times, they survived the German occupation. In 1945, the Sierants moved to Gdansk and settled in Wrzeszcz. Then Teresa began her education at the Stefan Żeromski V Liceum in Gdansk-Oliwa. Having graduated, she studied history of art at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, in years 1949-1952. She was studying there with, among others, Marian Arszyski. At that time, history of art was delivered in a two-stage study programme, and the Toruń University did not have the right to conduct the second cycle of studies granting the Master's degree in art history.<sup>11</sup> In the light of that, Teresa Sierant's talent and scientific potential becomes evident as she was the only person from her year selected to continue studying;<sup>12</sup> thanks to that, in the years 1952-1954, she completed her MA studies in art history at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. There Teresa Sierant found herself in good company - studying with some of the greatest Polish figures in this field, such as Teresa Jakimowicz, Zofia Ostrowska-Kęłowska, Janusz Kęłowski and Piotr Skubiszewski - in her year, and Alicja Kępińska a year below.

For the first few months of her studies, she participated in a Master's seminar conducted by Fr. Prof. Szczesny Dettloff; however, after he was forced to retire in March 1953,<sup>13</sup> she found herself under the scientific supervision of Prof. Gwidon Chmarzyński and Prof. Zdzisław Kępiński, with whom she defended her Master's thesis which

concerned tenement houses in Gdansk. On June 26, 1954 she was granted the Master's degree in art history and received her Diploma of Completion of the second stage study programme from the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the University of Poznan.

The realities of the time meant that after graduation, in 1954, Teresa Sierant received a work order directing her to Kwidzyn, but thanks to director Jan Chranicki, she was employed at the Pomeranian Museum in Gdansk,<sup>14</sup> at its Scientific and Educational Department. Thus, she naturally entered the community of Gdansk museologists and art historians. No wonder that a year later, on November 24, 1955, she was among the founding members of the Association of Art Historians, Gdansk subsidiary. Jan Chranicki, then director of the Pomeranian Museum, became its president, and Teresa Sierant became the vice-president of the self-education section.<sup>15</sup>

Before the war, just after graduating from the art history studies at the Jagiellonian University, Jan Chranicki worked at the Museum in Lviv. In these days, he met Juliusz Studnicki and Stanisław Teisseyre. Thanks to these acquaintances he, in later years, sometimes gave lectures on history of art at the Gdansk School. In addition, "he worked for several Festivals of Fine Arts in Sopot as part of Organizing Committee, he was a member of [...] the Diploma Committee of the State Higher School of Visual Arts [in Gdansk]."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, when Teisseyre was looking for an art history lecturer, he sought the advice of director Chranicki who suggested Teresa Sierant. It so happened that Teisseyre knew also Prof. Kępiński from Poznan, who recommended her as well. And so, in October 1956, while still employed at the museum, Teresa Sierant began giving lectures at the Gdansk State Higher School of Fine Arts. Initially, Rector Teisseyre entrusted her with the students of the I and II year only, allowing her to assist at his lectures for the IV year painting students. As she recalls, the classes led by Teisseyre taught her to look at painting, and talk about the essence of art of a given time; it was then when she began to focus on making her lectures not resemble

those from her studies. In turn, the classes Rector had conducted assisted by Teresa Sierant inspired his trust; thus, in the next academic year she was delivering lectures to students of all years.<sup>17</sup>

Working with students became her passion. Thanks to the support of the School Authorities, she took her students on yearly monument-researching tours around Poland, participated in painting and sculpting plein-air. Students adored her, feared her, but most of all respected her. Among proof of the admiration there is, for example, a medal cast for her by a group of students as a thank you, inscribed: AMICAE STUDIORUM - TERESIE SIERANT - SEMPER FIDELI. She values this medal more than the Presidential Bronze Cross of Merit she received in 1996.<sup>18</sup> No wonder that she was always present in stories told by Prof. Andrzej Dyakowski, mentioned many times by Prof. Mieczysław Olszewski, she has remained important for many former students. Krystyna Niżnikiewicz (Suwara), appreciates her not only for the knowledge Teresa Sierant passed on to them, but also for teaching them to look at art. Teresa Miszkin, a former student and later professor at the Gdansk Academy of Fine Arts, recalled that, apart from respecting Teresa Sierant's knowledge, women studying at the Gdansk Academy admired her for her courage and joy of life, for her fearless belief in herself, and accepting no imposed limits. To them, she was the example of an intelligent, well-educated yet liberated and beautiful woman. In addition to the all that, Teresa Sierant conducted field inventory research of the monuments of Gdansk Pomerania<sup>19</sup>, she wrote scientific and popularizing texts (including the one devoted to Memling's triptych which is presented at the Gdansk National Museum<sup>20</sup>), she prepared a guide to the exhibition of Flemish and Dutch paintings of the 17th century for the Pomeranian Museum in Gdansk,<sup>21</sup> she wrote about Gdansk monuments,<sup>22</sup> she conducted series of lectures at the BWA Gallery in Sopot. Using her personal contacts, she invited, among others, Prof. Stefan Morawski, Prof. Andrzej Ryszkiewicz and Prof. Jacek Woźniakowski to give lectures at the Gdansk School; and, at the same time, like the proverbial "Strongwoman" from

Stefan Żeromski's novel, she travelled with her lectures on art to schools and community centres in rural areas. Everything indicated that, like the rest of her friends from Poznań, she would become recognized as one of the famous art history professors. She did even make an attempt to write a doctoral dissertation devoted to the Gdańsk Higher School of Visual Arts artistic environment. For that reason, as she recalls, she participated during the early 1960s in the doctoral seminar led by Prof. Roman Wapiński. However, it must have taken place a little later - in the second half of this decade, since Wapiński obtained his habilitation in 1964.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, she quickly gave up on this idea - she chose life.

It must be admitted that despite the "communist times," the late 1950s as well as 1960s were an intense and lively period, especially at the School. It still seems to be one of the most colourful and crazy times in the history of Gdańsk academic life - the time of student theatres, with the famous Bim-Bom at the forefront, the numerous faces of Zbyszek Cybulski, Bogumił Kobiela, Jacek Fedorowicz...,<sup>24</sup> colourful plain-airs in Dębki, Kadyny, Chmielno; the time of crazy balls at the Gdańsk PWSSP. Teresa Sierant actively participated in everything. Thus, she quickly became an excellent partner for both intellectual conversations and ... dancing. Serenity and joy of life. To many people she was also a "scandalist." Since, in the decisive moment of her life she did not hesitate to bet on love, and in 1972 she married her then student, Romuald Mikicicz. As she herself claims, in spite of everyone, it turned out that it was the best possible decision<sup>25</sup>.

The position she built for herself over the years at the Gdańsk School meant that almost all Rectors, starting with Prof. Stanisław Teisseyre, valued her opinion. As she declares, the School has always been close to her heart. It seems evident, for instance, when examining her efforts towards building the independent trade union movement in 1980,<sup>26</sup> and her later involvement in the first, fully democratic Rector elections held at the Gdańsk PWSSP in spring 1981.

Aware of the passing time, changing artistic

fashions and preferences, at some point she began to "escape" to the privacy of the Academy library which she had created practically from scratch, and then managed for decades. At the same time, as long as she worked at the School, she strove to support new tutors who succeeded her in didactic functions.

It seems that the best summary of Teresa Sierant's role presents itself in the farewell words issued to her - who after having tutored many generations of artists was retiring in autumn 2002 - by the former Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Prof. Tomasz Bogusławski:

On behalf of the Gdańsk Academy of Fine Arts Senate and my own, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you for the many years of continuous effort in educating the students of our Academy in humanities, as well as for your commitment and excellence at managing the academic library.

To many generations of students at the Academy you were the guide to the history of art and the curator of all the small, but greatly valuable museums contained between the covers of books. We were lucky to have benefited from your knowledge, experience and invariably kind help, navigating our reaching for beautiful, colourful albums, obligatory and optional reading positions, footnotes, bibliographies and iconographies. Among the bookshelves with hundreds, later thousands of titles, one could always feel your presence so tender towards art, students and books.

For this special kind of presence, which I will allow myself to call PERSONALITY, I thank you with all my heart's warmth and cordiality.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> According to Józefa Wnukowa, the first inauguration of the academic year took place on October 15, 1945, see: Józefa Wnukowa, "U źródeł szkoły talentów i charakterów," *Gdański Rocznik Kulturalny* 10 (1987): 174.

<sup>2</sup> The ordinance No. L. dz. 1972/V/11022 issued by the Minister of Culture and Art on December 6, 1945, signed by the then Deputy Minister, Leon Kruczkowski, see: Józefa Wnukowa, ed., *Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Sztuk Plastycznych w Gdańsku. 1945–1965* (Gdańsk: PWSSP w Gdańsku, 1965), 9. It should be noted that the School managed to keep this name for the first few post-war years, and it was not until the 1950 act that it was changed to the State Higher School of Visual Arts (PWSSP).

<sup>3</sup> in fact Anna Klementyna Żuławska née Jasińska, see: Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Collection: Personal Files of Employees: "Hanna Żuławska," ref. Ż9: *Certificate of birth and baptism*, issued by the Roman Catholic parish of St. Barbara in Warsaw (act no: 462 from 1909).

<sup>4</sup> After World War II Jan Wodyński was first involved in organizing the School of Visual Arts in Katowice, then he was a painting professor at the University of Torun, Faculty of Fine Arts; since 1947 (until 1953), he was briefly staying in Tri-City where in 1949–1950 he assumed the position of Rector. He came to the Sopot School thanks to an old, pre-war friendship with Jacek Żuławski. Wodyński was a former student of Wojciech Wajs at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow; there he met Jacek Żuławski who was studying under Felicjan Kowarski. When Prof. Kowarski moved to Warsaw, Żuławski followed him to finish his studies at the School of Fine Arts there (it became an Academy in 1932). No wonder the professor saw Jacek as his successor. Wodyński, already living in Warsaw at that time, maintained close contacts with Kowarski's studio. Therefore, after Żuławski had left for Józef Pankiewicz's studio in Paris, it was Wodyński who became Kowarski's assistant.

<sup>5</sup> See: [Kazimierz Tomorowicz], "Ramowy program szkolnictwa artystycznego plastyki w Polsce. Projekt Związku Polskich Artystów Plastyków," *Przegląd Artystyczny. Biuletyn informacyjny Związku Zawodowego Polskich Artystów Plastyków* no. 1 (September 1945): 4, quoted from: <https://kpbc.umk.pl/Content/215903/Publikacja-WiMBP-070727.pdf>, accessed June 03, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Born on June 21, 1894 in Lviv, ibidem, she began studying art history before the First World War, which she later continued in Italy, see: Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Collection: Personal Files of Employees: "Janina Ebenberger-Orzechowska," ref. E1.

<sup>7</sup> Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Collection: Employees' Personal Files: "Janina Ebenberger-Orzechowska," ref. E1: Declaration by Zofia Łepkowska, and Statement by Maria Sobolewska.

<sup>8</sup> Jan Chranicki knew Stanisław Teisseyre from Lviv before the war. Teisseyre was born in Lviv, Chranicki chose to live there, see: Helena Hohensee-Ciszewska, "Jan Chranicki. 1906–1976," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, R. XXXIX, no. 1, (1977): 110. (110–111); Anna Gosieniecka, "Jan Chranicki 3.II.1906–11.V.1976," *Gdańskie Studia Muzealne*, vol. 1 (1976): 224. (223–224).

<sup>9</sup> Currently, since 1972, the National Museum in Gdańsk.

<sup>10</sup> Piotrków County, Łódź Voivodeship. Biographical data of Teresa Sierant, see: Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Collection: Personal Files of Employees: "Teresa Sierant-Mikicicz," ref. S 158: Personal Survey.

<sup>11</sup> At that time, only three universities in Poland had such a right: in Warsaw, Poznań and Krakow (Jagiellonian).

<sup>12</sup> Marian Arszyński was admitted to the MA studies in art history in Poznań only a few years later (he studied in years 1955–1958).

<sup>13</sup> After Dettloff's statement commenting on Stalin's death. As a result, "on March 20, 1953, members of the University of Poznań Senate stated that »the educational influence of Fr. Prof. Dettloff on academic youth is definitely harmful,« and they decided that »further activity of the above-mentioned professor at any Polish University is impossible«, and then issued a request to the »citizen Minister« imploring him to immediately cease the professional relationship with Fr. Prof. Dettloff." Their wish was granted on the same day, quoted from: <https://poznan.ipn.gov.pl/pl7/aktualnosci/179674,Wyklad-Sprawa-księży-profesora-Szczesny-Dettloffa-Poznan-7-marca-2023.html>, accessed June 17, 2023; see: Piotr Grzelczak, "Sprawa ks. Szczęsnego Dettloffa. UAM 1953," *Artium Quaestiones* vol. XXII (2011): 79–99.

<sup>14</sup> She was employed there from November 1, 1954 to March 31, 1963.

<sup>15</sup> Jacek Kriegseisen, *Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki Oddział Gdański 1955–2015. W 60. rocznicę powstania* (Gdańsk: Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki, Oddział Gdański, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Helena Hohensee-Ciszewska, "Jan Chranicki. 1906–1976," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, R. XXXIX, no. 1 (1977): 110 (110–111); Anna Gosieniecka, "Jan Chranicki 3.II.1906–11.V.1976," *Gdańskie Studia Muzealne* vol. 1 (1976): 224 (223–224).

<sup>17</sup> An interview with Teresa Sierant, conducted on March 26, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> See: The decision issued by the Polish President on January 18, 1996, concerning awarding decorations, Polish Monitor, 1996, No. 16, item 212.7; cf.: Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Collection: Personal Files of Employees: "Teresa Sierant," ref. S. 158.

<sup>19</sup> See: Krystyna Mellin, Teresa Sierant, "Kartuzy i powiat kartuski. Stan z września 1958," in *Zabytki Województwa Gdańskiego*. Table no. 6 (Gdańsk: Muzeum Pomorskie w Gdańsku/Konserwator Wojewódzki Gdański/Okręgowa Komisja Opieki nad Zabytkami), 3–11. MNG Library, DZ-15051, reference number L III 832.

<sup>20</sup> Teresa Sierant, "Sąd Ostateczny" *Hansa Memlinga* (Gdańsk: Muzeum Pomorskie, 1959). MNG Library, reference number L II 4354.



<sup>21</sup> Teresa Sierant, *Przewodnik po wystawie malarstwa flamandzkiego i holenderskiego XVII wieku* (Gdańsk: Muzeum Pomorskie w Gdańsku, 1960). Biblioteka MNG, sygn. L II 4069 [Teresa Sierant, *Guide to the exhibition of Flemish and Dutch paintings of the 17th century*]. MNG Library, reference number L II 4069.

<sup>22</sup> Teresa Sierant, *Renesansowe kamieniczki*, from the series: Zabytki Gdańska (Gdańsk: Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki, b.r.w.). MNG Library, reference number L II 5146.

<sup>23</sup> Prof. Roman Wapiński received his habilitation degree in humanities in 1964, see entry: Roman Wapiński, [https://www.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=WAPI%C5%83SKI\\_ROMAN](https://www.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=WAPI%C5%83SKI_ROMAN).

<sup>24</sup> Who, *nota bene*, was also a student of Teresa Sierant.

<sup>25</sup> Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk, Collection: Files of Employees: "Teresa Sierant," ref. S. 158: Extract from the marriage certificate - copy.

<sup>26</sup> In 1980, she was elected vice-president of the Scholl's NSZZ Solidarność Committee.

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# Ulrike HIRHAGER

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

## 'DAMAGING THE SILENCE AND ORDER.' WOMEN AND THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS VIENNA

### 2020/21 ... An Anniversary Year

The academic year 2020/21 was an anniversary year at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna: 100 years before, in the 1920/21 winter semester, women were first admitted to study there.

This article is the follow-up to a project the University Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna initiated at the suggestion of the Academy's PR department: the regular presentation of an 'Archivist's Choice'. In monthly intervals, a video series covering certain topics from '100 Years of Women's Studies' was put online together with an essay.<sup>1</sup>

### Women's Studies in the Arts in Vienna before 1920

Before 1920, women could take private (and rather expensive) lessons, attend private schools or the *Kunstschule für Frauen und Mädchen* (Art School for Women and Girls), as well as the then *Kunstgewerbeschule* (today's *Universität für angewandte Kunst*, University of Applied Arts) or the *Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt* (Higher Federal Institution for Graphic Education and Research).<sup>2</sup>

The admission of women to the Academy in 1920/21 was preceded by discussions that went on for several decades.<sup>3</sup> In 1872, the Ministry of Education submitted this subject for appraisal to the faculty board. The board members refused the idea on the following grounds: the Academy building did not provide enough space; women were less educated than men and were only suited to produce 'lower art,' like flower and portrait painting; finally, one could not expect young ladies to be put together in one room with young men, as they would not be able to pursue their studies without 'damaging the silence and order at the institute'.<sup>4</sup>

In 1904, the whole matter was taken up again by the Ministry with a similar outcome – the faculty board feared dilettantism as a consequence of women being admitted because of their 'lack of creative spirit'.<sup>5</sup>

This assessment was valid until after World War I. In 1919, the State Office for Internal Affairs and Education ordered the Academy to take steps to introduce women's studies, which they finally did in 1920/21.

The women who enrolled in the 1920s were in fact not the first. The Academy of Fine Arts Vienna was founded in 1692, and the Archives' holdings go back to 1706. The Archives' records

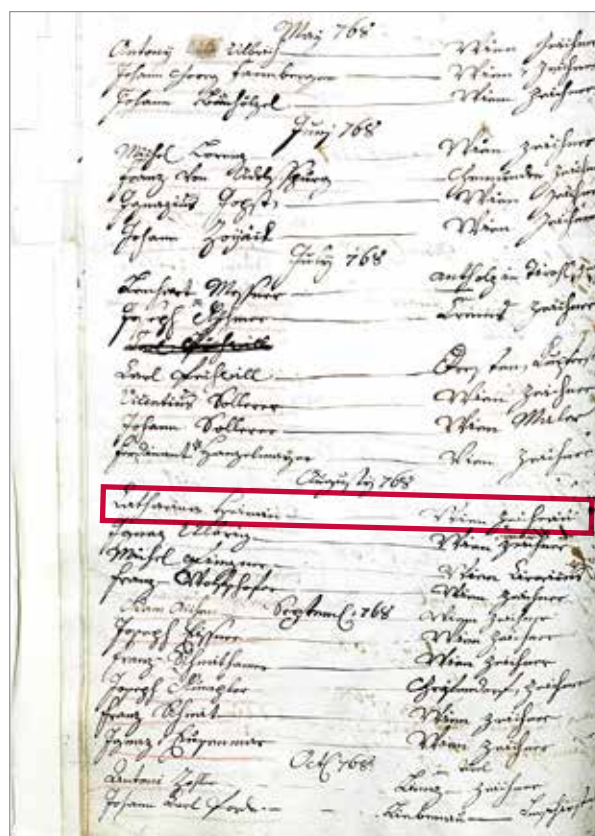
from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century provide evidence of several female students, as well as female regular and honorary members 150 years before the official year of admission.

### Early Female Students at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

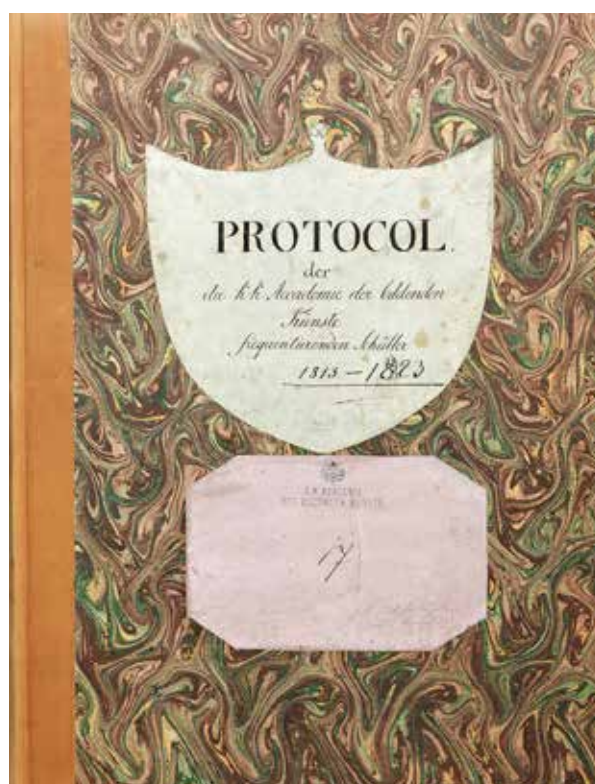
The first woman mentioned in our students' records is Katharina Heim. (ill. 1) She enrolled at the *Kupferstecherakademie* (Engraving Academy) in 1768.<sup>6</sup> The *Kupferstecherakademie*, founded in 1766 by Jacob Matthias Schmuze, was an institution in its own right until 1772, when it was merged with the *Kaiserl. Königl. Hof-Academie der Mahler- Bildhauer- und Baukunst* (Imperial and Royal Court Academy of Painting, Sculpting and Architecture) to form the *K. k. Akademie der vereinigten bildenden Künste* (Imperial and Royal Academy of United Fine Arts) at the instigation of State Chancellor Wenzel Kaunitz.

In the 1810s, three women are mentioned in volume 17<sup>8</sup> of our students' records: (ill. 2) Theresia Kaltner from Munich, daughter of the painter, engraver and lithographer Joseph Kaltner (1757–1824)<sup>9</sup>, enrolled at the Academy on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1819.<sup>10</sup> We do not know how long she stayed. Karoline Pianzykowska née Edle von Roth from Strasbourg entered the Academy on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1815, and attended the painting class until the 1820/21 winter course, specializing in miniature painting.<sup>11</sup> Marianne Fricart attended the painting class in the winter semester of 1819/20,<sup>12</sup> and in 1822 and 1824 she participated at the Academy's art exhibitions.<sup>13</sup> She travelled a lot and became quite a famous portrait painter; in newspaper ads, she offered her services as a 'portrait painter in oil' in Vienna, where she had her own atelier in 1824, and then in Preßburg/Bratislava/Poszony (Slovakia), where she settled in 1825.<sup>14</sup>

The evidence of female students at the Vienna Academy comes to a halt in 1820 – for 100 years, our students' records remain 'women-free'.



1



2



3

### Female Members of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

The chance to become a regular member has existed from the beginning of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.<sup>15</sup> The statutes from 1726 note that only practicing artists were allowed to apply for membership, and they had to present a sample of their work (which is later called *Aufnahmstück*) to the Academic Council.<sup>16</sup> In 1751, members are mentioned by name the first time.

The statutes of the *Kupferstecherakademie* from 1767,<sup>17</sup> written on parchment in a lavishly elaborated Gothic script, show how highly Empress Maria Theresia estimated this institution. (ill. 3) The *Kupferstecherakademie* accepted painters of any kind (if they possessed the necessary skills in the arts),<sup>18</sup> sculptors (including gold-, silver-, steel-, and punch-cutters), master builders und engravers. In paragraph *undecimô* (21) it

is stipulated that aspirants had to attend the Academy for one year.

The statutes of the *K. k. Akademie der vereinigten bildenden Künste* from 1800 and 1812<sup>19</sup> expected excellent and publicly acclaimed achievements as artists from future members; the vote was done by balloting; black marbles were used for refusal, white for acceptance.<sup>20</sup> The Academy accepted members until 1870.<sup>21</sup>

Membership at the Academy not only added to an artist's reputation, but also involved privileges, e.g. in terms of taxation, the exemption from military service, and the permit to wear a uniform (*Civil-Uniform*).<sup>22</sup>

Jacob Matthias Schmuzer, the director and founder of the *Kupferstecherakademie*, seems to have been more progressive than his colleagues from the *Kaiserl. Königl. Hof-Academie der Mahler- Bildhauer- und Baukunst*. He even devised courses in model drawing (with dressed models) that were accessible to anyone.<sup>23</sup>



At his *Kupferstecherakademie*, a few women joined the ranks of the members. Their *Aufnahmstücke* are held by either the *Gemäldegalerie* (Paintings Gallery) or the *Kupferstichkabinett* (Graphic Collection) of the Academy. (ill. 4)

In 1768, two women were appointed as members: first, the painter Anna Dorothea Therbusch (1721–1782),<sup>24</sup> who had been taught by her father, the painter Georg Lisiewski (1674–1750; employed at the Royal Court in Berlin). (ill. 5) The second was *Frau von Cont [Conte]*, *Mitglied der Akademien in Rom Florenz, Parma, und Bolonien [Bologna]* (member of the Academies in Rome, Florence, Parma, and Bologna).<sup>25</sup>

In 1771, three women were appointed as members of the *Kupferstecherakademie*:<sup>26</sup> (ill. 6) the pastelist Gabriele Beyer (1729–1802), née von Bertrand, art teacher of Maria Theresia's daughters and wife of court sculptor Wilhelm Beyer,<sup>27</sup> (ill. 7) the Parisian engraver Anne Philiberte Coulet (1736–after 1787)<sup>28</sup> and the Dutch portrait painter Gertrude de Pélichy (1743–1825).<sup>29</sup> (ill. 8)

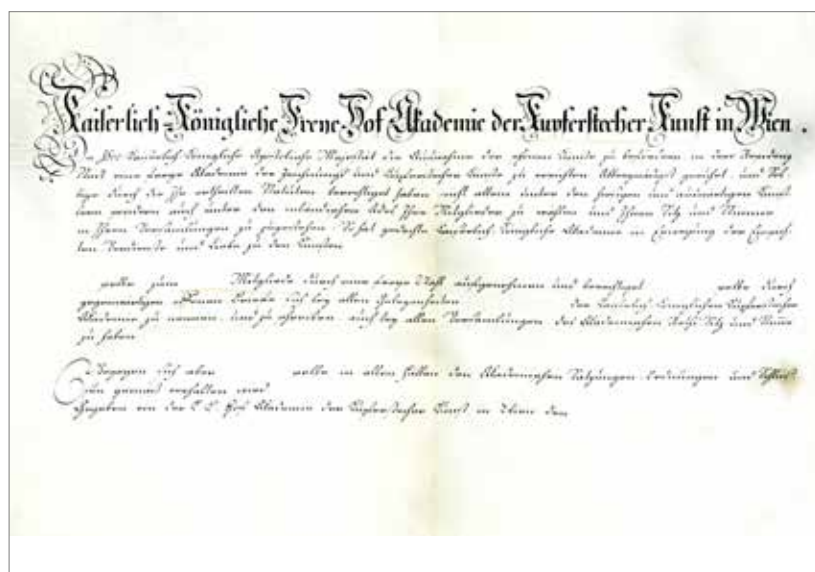
Women also participated in the Academy's exhibitions, e.g. Gabriele Beyer, who is explicitly named as a member, in 1774, 1777 and 1786.<sup>30</sup>

The *Kupferstecherakademie* and the *Kaiserl. Königl. Hof-Academie der Mahler-Bildhauer- und Baukunst* were merged in 1772. For the almost 100 years to come, until 1870, hundreds of members were accepted; none of them was a woman. After 1870, only the option of becoming an honorary member remained.

### Noble 'Dilettantes' as Honorary Members of the Academy

The Academy not only accepted 'regular' members, i.e. active artists, but also honorary members. In the statutes of 1751 these so-called *Ehrenmitglieder* are mentioned for the first time.<sup>31</sup>

It was again Jacob Matthias Schmuizer's *Kupferstecherakademie* that acted in a progressive way: Its statutes from 1767 explicitly state that women, no matter what their social position was



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Antoine Boucher: nach Auftrags mit die-  
 gen Porträtgemälden ist ein wohl gegangenes  
 und coloriertes Madonnen, so einige Blumen  
 in der Hand hält.

Benvenuto von Florenz zu Paris aufgesetzt,  
 welche die Lindische Link, eine Frau, die ihren  
 alten Vater pflegt, in der Gemalt, nach  
 ganz Zeichnungen eingeseilt.

Madame de La Fayette nach einer gezeichneten  
 und bekannten Gemälden des Benvenuto  
 in Paris seit 1700. Bild nach einem  
 gegessenen überarbeitet.

6



7



8

(*Frauen-Personen von hohem und niedrigem Stande*), could become honorary members.<sup>32</sup> The only condition was excellence in their artwork.

In the first draft of the statutes of the *K. k. Akademie der vereinigten bildenden Künste* from 1773<sup>33</sup> it is stipulated that art lovers of both sexes who handed in their *Aufnahmstück* could become honorary members. In the binding statute of 1800, women are not specifically mentioned any more: The ranks of the honorary members could be joined by art lovers and supporters of the fine arts and of artists, as well as male scientists whose field of work showed a close connection to art.<sup>34</sup>

From 1767 to 1836, approximately twenty noblewomen were accepted as honorary or regular members of the Academy resp. the *Kupferstecher-akademie*. These women were 'dilettantes' who practiced their art for pure joy, as in the original meaning of the Italian *diletto* (not like the women mentioned above, who made their living with their art).<sup>35</sup> They either belonged to the Imperial House or were closely associated with it. Their patronage had a certain protective function for the Academy and for the arts taught there.<sup>36</sup>

The first members of the *Kupferstecher-akademie*, accepted in 1767, were women: the Archduchesses Maria Anna (Marianne) and Maria Carolina (Charlotte), two of Maria Theresia's daughters. The latter appears in our sources as a regular (of the *Kupferstecherakademie*), but also as an honorary member (of the *Kaiserl. Königl. Hof-Academie der Mahler- Bildhauer- und Baukunst*, accepted in 1768).<sup>37</sup> The archduchesses' *Aufnahmstücke*, both drawings of an excellent quality, are preserved in the Academy's *Kupferstichkabinett*. Their teacher was Gabriele Bertrand. (ill. 9)

Two other noblewomen became members of either institution in the 1760s: in 1768 Ernestine von Losymthal, wife of the Academy's *Protector* Adam Philipp Losy von Losymthal and daughter of Maria Theresia's intimate friend Maria Carolina Gräfin Fuchs von Bimbach,<sup>38</sup> and in 1769 Princess Marie Anne von Lamberg, née Countess Trautson.<sup>39</sup>

The women who were appointed as honorary members from 1789 on all belonged to

the Imperial House. In this context, I can only point out some exemplary names; a complete list is given in my essay 'Adelige "Dilettantinnen" als (Ehren-)Mitglieder der Akademie' and can be viewed in the newly developed database on the Academy's website.<sup>40</sup> In 1789, Archduchess Elisabeth Wilhelmine, the first wife of Emperor Franz II (I), became an honorary member.<sup>41</sup> In 1812 and 1818, the Emperor's third and fourth wives followed: Maria Ludovica<sup>42</sup> and Carolina Augusta,<sup>43</sup> as well as his daughter, Archduchess Marie-Louise (the wife of Napoleon I), in 1818.<sup>44</sup> The Academy's Archives hold her thank-you letter.<sup>45</sup>

The artworks of these 'noble dilettantes' show a very high quality, for example the *Aufnahmstück* of Maria Antonia, Princess of Naples and Sicily (appointed in 1802).<sup>46</sup> (ill. 10)

In 1836, the last female honorary members of the Imperial House were appointed: Empress Maria Anna Karolina and the Archduchesses Maria Dorothea, Maria Elisabetta, Maria Theresia, and Sophie.<sup>47</sup>

There was then a long period without women. More than 150 years later, the architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (in 1994), the sculptor Louise Bourgeois (in 2000) and, in 2010, the painter Maria Lassnig and the writer Friederike Mayröcker were appointed honorary members of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Recently, in the spring of 2023, the sculptor Teresa Feodorowna Ries posthumously received an honorary membership.





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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Permalink, <https://www.akbild.ac.at/de/resolveuid/40b76ef6ad2d478a94876468423efoc7>.

<sup>2</sup> Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber, *Künstlerinnen in Österreich 1897–1938. Malerei. Plastik. Architektur*. Wien 1994, pp. 45ff.

<sup>3</sup> For the following see Eva Schober, 1872 – Das erste Dokument ..., Permalink <https://www.akbild.ac.at/de/resolveuid/64fdf4af867c41f81190a44aeaac8702>.

<sup>4</sup> Universitätsarchiv der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien (UAAbKW), *Verwaltungsakten* (VA) 1872–104.

<sup>5</sup> UAAbKW, VA 1904–65.

<sup>6</sup> UAAbKW, *Matrikelbuch* (students' records book) vol. 2 1/2, *Protokoll / Jener Schüler, welche in der k.k. / Kupferstecher-Akademie-Zeichner / aufgenommen worden sind / vom Jahre 1766 bis 1784 / dann vom Jahre / 1805 bis 1845*, fol. 4.

<sup>7</sup> 1733–1811. Also Schmutzer; Schmuizer is the spelling he preferred, see Monika Knofler, *Das visuelle Gedächtnis der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien*, manuscript.

<sup>8</sup> UAAbKW, *Matrikelbuch* vol. 17, *PROTOCOL. der die k.k. Accademie der bildenden Künste frequentierenden Schüler 1813–1823*.

<sup>9</sup> ÖBL Online-Edition, [https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb/oebl\\_K/Kaltner\\_Josef\\_1757\\_1824.xml](https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb/oebl_K/Kaltner_Josef_1757_1824.xml).

<sup>10</sup> UAAbKW, *Matrikelbuch* 17/15, *Matrikelbuch* vol. 19, *Protocoll / der frequentierenden Schüler der Mahlerkunst von 1813 bis 1823 / von A bis Z*, fol. 10.

<sup>11</sup> UAAbKW, *Matrikelbuch* vol. 12, *Protocoll / Schülerliste vom Jahre 1810–1812*, fol. 39, *Matrikelbuch* 17/23, *Matrikelbuch* 19/15.

<sup>12</sup> UAAbKW, *Matrikelbuch* 17/7, *Matrikelbuch* 19/6.

<sup>13</sup> UAAbKW, *Kartei Kunstausstellungen* (card index art exhibitions).

<sup>14</sup> *Allgemeines Intelligenzblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, No. 114, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1824, p. 843, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=18240518&query=%22Fricart%22&ref=anno-search&seite=5>; *Intelligenzblatt zur Preßburger Zeitung*, No. 82, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1825, p. 1113, <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=pre&datum=18251018&seite=9&zoom=33>; AKL online s.v. „Fricart, Marianne“, [https://db.degruyter.com/view/AKL/\\_40286559?rskey=poExcl&result=1&dbq\\_o=fricart&dbf\\_o=akl-fulltext&dbt\\_o=fulltext&o\\_o=AND](https://db.degruyter.com/view/AKL/_40286559?rskey=poExcl&result=1&dbq_o=fricart&dbf_o=akl-fulltext&dbt_o=fulltext&o_o=AND).

<sup>15</sup> See for this and the following Walter Cerny, *Die Mitglieder der Wiener Akademie*, Wien 1978, and Angelika Plank, *Akademischer und schulischer Elementarzeichnenunterricht im 18. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt/Main etc. 1999 (= Beiträge zur Neueren Geschichte Österreichs Bd. 10) (Diss. Wien 1997), pp. 94ff.

<sup>16</sup> UAAbKW, *Statuten* (Statutes) 1726, MSZ II/3, fol. 160/168–174 ex VA 1735, fol. 169v.

<sup>17</sup> UAAbKW, *Satzungen der Kupferstecherakademie* (Statutes of the Engraving Academy), 1767.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, para. *decimo* (10): *Mahler von allerley Arten, wen [sic] sie nur die erforderliche Stärcke in der Kunst besitzen [...]*.

<sup>19</sup> UAAbKW, *Statuten* 1800 and 1812, MSZ II/3.

<sup>20</sup> UAAbKW, *Statuten* 1800, MSZ II/3, para. XXVI.

<sup>21</sup> Due to the introduction of a new statute in 1872, see Cerny, *Kunstmitglieder*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, 10ff.

<sup>23</sup> Plank, *Elementarzeichnenunterricht*, 81ff.; Monika Knofler refers in her not yet published manuscript *Das visuelle Gedächtnis der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien* to Schmuizer's *promemoria* (memorandum) as well (UAAbKW, VA 2a/Mappe 2, fol. 19–22, fol. 21). In this document, Schmuizer offers drawing lessons taking place after the Academy, where anyone, no matter what age, if man or woman or child, is allowed to take part; the drawing of heads, hands and dress is taught, as well as inventing, arranging the models and expressing taste. Almost identical is UAAbKW, VA 2a/Mappe 2, fol. 1–3, fol. 1v; in this document Schmuizer also proposes to use male and female convicts (*Zuchthäusler*) and people from the *Armeleuterkotter* (work house) as models for reasons of cost (fol. 3v).

<sup>24</sup> UAAbKW, *Wahlbuch* (Book of Elections), p. 120. Walter Wagner, *Geschichte der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien*, Wien 1967, p. 423, gives 1776 as the year of her acceptance, but we do not have any proof for this. In fact, in 1776, Anna Dorothea Therbusch offered the Emperor a painting as a gift, referring to herself as a member of the Painters' Academy (UAAbKW, VA 1776 fol. 101/102). For Therbusch's biography see Helmut Börsch-Supan, „Lisiewska, Anna Dorothea“, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 14 (1985), 684–685, <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd122269071.html#ndbcontent>. Thanks to MMag. René Schober (Kupferstichkabinett der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien) and Mag. Claudia Koch (Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien) for the permission to use the reproductions of the drawings and paintings in this article.

<sup>25</sup> UAAbKW, VA 2a/Mappe 2, fol. 76/77 ex 1769; *Wahlbuch*, p. 119; cf. Cerny, *Kunstmitglieder*, p. 38; thanks to the Archive of the Accademia Nazionale di Belle Arti di Parma, *Frau von Conte* could be identified as Marguerite Lecomte (1717–1800), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marguerite\\_Lecomte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marguerite_Lecomte).

<sup>26</sup> UAAbKW, VA 2a/Mappe 2, fol. 152/153 ex 1771; UAAbKW, VA 1818 fol. 69–81, fol. 73v (Beyer and Coulet are mentioned here). The *Wahlbuch* (p. 120) lists *Mademoiselle Coulet, Fräulein Bertrand* is added in a later script; *Baron Ballischi* can only mean Baroness Pélichy. See for the following Monika Knofler, „Das fortschrittliche 18. Jahrhundert – Maria Theresias Vorbildfunktion für Künstlerinnen“, in *Carte blanche für Anna Reisenbichler. I work too much, work too little*, ed. by

Wolfgang Cortjaens and Julia M. Nauhaus. Kupferstichkabinett der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien (Wien 2019), 17–34; Anton Weinkopf's *Beschreibung der k.k. Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien. 1783 und 1790*, Wien 1875, p. 11 (Beyer, Coulet; for Pélichy vide fn. 29).

<sup>27</sup> Dankmar Trier, „Bertrand, Gabrielle,“ AKL online, [https://www.degruyter.com/database/AKL/entry/\\_10122062/html](https://www.degruyter.com/database/AKL/entry/_10122062/html).

<sup>28</sup> Renate Treydel, „Coulet, Anne-Philiberte,“ AKL online [https://www.degruyter.com/database/AKL/entry/\\_10173309/html](https://www.degruyter.com/database/AKL/entry/_10173309/html).

<sup>29</sup> AKL online, [https://www.degruyter.com/database/AKL/entry/\\_00119770/html](https://www.degruyter.com/database/AKL/entry/_00119770/html), s.v. „Pélichy, Gertrude Cornélie Marie de“; Weinkopf, *Beschreibung*, 8, 70, wrongly lists Pélichy as an honorary member. Plank, *Elementarzeichnenunterricht*, 97, points to this mistake. Cerny, *Kunstmitglieder*, 40, lists her as *Baron Ballischi* (vide fn. 26).

<sup>30</sup> Catalogue des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, et gravure exécutés par des membres de l'Académie Imp. et Royal. des Beaux-Arts ; exposes dans le salon destiné a cet effet, Wien 1777: *Madame Beyer*: fol. 2 (1x), 3 (7x), 4 (5x); UAAbKW, *Kartei Kunstausstellungen*. See Plank, *Elementarzeichnenunterricht*, 272. *Verzeichnis der von der k.k. Akademie bildender Künste aufgestellten Kunstwerke*. Wien 1786: *Madam Gabriele Beyerinn, geb. [née] von Bertrand, Mitglieder der Akademie* [member of the Academy]. *Porträt der Mademoiselle von Greiner* [portrait of Mlle von Greiner].

<sup>31</sup> UAAbKW, *Statut* 1751, MSZ II/3, fol. 91–99 ex VA 1751, fol. 92r.

<sup>32</sup> UAAbKW, *Satzungen Kupferstecher-Akademie*, para. 21.

<sup>33</sup> UAAbKW, *Entwurf zu den Satzungen der k.k. Akademie der vereinigten bildenden Künste* (Concept of the Statutes of the Imperial and Royal Academy of United Fine Arts) 1773, MSZ II/3, para. 5.

<sup>34</sup> UAAbKW, *Statuten* 1800, MSZ II/3, para. XXVIII.

<sup>35</sup> See for this and the following Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber, *Künstlerinnen in Österreich*, 24ff.

<sup>36</sup> See Angelika Plank, *Elementarzeichnenunterricht*, 84ff.

<sup>37</sup> See UAAbKW, *Matrikelband* 2 1/2, fol. 82; VA 2/Mappe 2, fol. 76 ex 1769; VA 1792 fol. 249; *Wahlbuch*, 88; VA 1818 fol. 73; see Knofler, *Das visuelle Gedächtnis*; Weinkopf, *Beschreibung*, 7; *Carte blanche für Anna Reisenbichler*, 50, exhib. cat., (W. Cortjaens).

<sup>38</sup> UAAbKW, VA 1792 fol. 249; VA 1818 fol. 73. Knofler, *Das visuelle Gedächtnis*; Knofler, *Das fortschrittliche 18. Jahrhundert*, 29; Plank, *Elementarzeichnenunterricht*, 95. Monika Knofler assumes that she was a member of the *Kupferstecherakademie*.

<sup>39</sup> Member of the *Kupferstecherakademie*: UAAbKW, VA 2/Mappe 2, fol. 70; Weinkopf, *Beschreibung*, 8, with a description of her *Aufnahmstück* on pp. 16–17; as member of the *Kaiserl. Königl. Hof-Academie der Mahler- Bildhauer- und Baukunst*: UAAbKW, VA 1818 fol. 73; see also Plank, *Elementarzeichnenunterricht*, 95.

<sup>40</sup> Permalink <https://www.akbild.ac.at/de/resolveuid/ofe5eaaof89d1eb7f432bad355d3e791>; <https://ehrenmitglieder.akbild.ac.at/db>.

<sup>41</sup> Wagner, *Geschichte*, 432, gives 1785 as year of acceptance; the reason for this may be that the draft for the diploma (dated 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1789) is part of a document with drafts for different diplomas from 1785 to 1789 (UAAbKW, VA 1785 fol. 26–29, fol. 29v). The decree of appointment (UAAbKW, VA 1789 fol. 12) served as a model for the decree of Archduchess Maria Anna Ferdinanda (UAAbKW, VA 1793 fol. 138).

<sup>42</sup> UAAbKW, *Wahlbuch*, 92.

<sup>43</sup> UAAbKW, *Sitzungsprotokoll* (minutes of the meetings of the Academic Council, SProt) 1818 fol. 23; *Wahlbuch*, p. 93.

<sup>44</sup> UAAbKW, VA 1818 fol. 443, SProt 1818 fol. 86.

<sup>45</sup> UAAbKW, VA 1820 fol. 553.

<sup>46</sup> UAAbKW, SProt 1802 fol. 30/31; *Wahlbuch*, 90.

<sup>47</sup> UAAbKW, *Wahlbuch*, 94–95.

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## Illustrations

Ill. 1: Entry of Katharina Heim in the students' records, UAbKW, *Matrikelbuch* vol. 2 1/2, *Protokoll / Jener Schüler, welche in der kk. / Kupferstecher-Akademie-Zeichner / aufgenommen worden sind / vom Jahre 1766 bis 1784 / dann vom Jahre / 1805 bis 1845*, fol. 4

Ill. 2: UAbKW, *Matrikelbuch* Bd. 17, *PROTOCOL. der die k.k. Accademie der bildenden Künste frequentierenden Schüler 1813–1823*

Ill. 3: UAbKW, *Satzungen der Kupferstecherakademie* (Statutes of the Engraving Academy), 1767, frontispice

Ill. 4: UAbKW, Diploma of the *Kupferstecherakademie*

Ill. 5: Anna Dorothea Therbusch, Portrait of the Painter Philipp Hackert, 1768, oil on wood, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, inv. GG-113

Ill. 6: UAbKW, VA 1771 fol. 152v, detail

Ill. 7: Gabriele Beyer-Bertrand, Girl with Flowers, around 1771, pastels on paper laid on canvas, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, inv. GG-185

Ill. 8: Gertrude de Pélichy, Head of a Woman, 1770, chalk drawing, Kupferstichkabinett der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, inv. HZ 3843

Ill. 9: Maria Anna, Archduchess of Austria, Head of a Woman, 1767, red chalk on paper, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. HZ 17.120

Ill. 10: Maria Antonia, Princess of Naples and Sicily, Head of an Angel, c. 1802, chalk drawing, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. HZ 8410

# Marina GRŽINIĆ

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

## THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN ON THE CONTENT AND SYSTEM OF ART EDUCATION

In the following, I would like to highlight some fragmentary practices of art and teaching in order to open a possibility to tell a different story of the positions within the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Fred Moten states in "Ecology of Eloquent Things," "We live within the history of a double violation, the denigration of things and the coincident devaluation of people that is carried out by what is supposed to be their reduction to things."<sup>1</sup>

My idea, therefore, is to strive for a gesture that builds some pillars of thinking to unlearn the repetitive history of white educational institutions arbitrarily employing any other position that might be called a Person of Colour in continental Europe today. This is again a racialised term to protect "white innocence."<sup>2</sup>

In "The Unquiet Dead: Race and Violence in the 'Post-Racial' United States," J.E. Jed Murr:

focuses in particular on popular cultural repertoires of narrative, visual, and sonic enunciation to read how histories of racialized and gendered violence circulate, (dis)appear, and congeal in and as "common sense" in a period in which the uneven dispensation of value and violence afforded different bodies is purported to no longer

break down along the same old racial lines. [...] Deeply and contested and contradictory [...] in their articulations to other modalities of difference and oppression is alleged to have undergone significant transformation such that, among other things, processes of racialization are understood as decisively delinked from racial violence.<sup>3</sup>

We are experiencing something similar in the European space, in the institutions of the former West. In the former East, there is an intensified process of ongoing racialisation, subjugation, and discrimination, first against LGBTQI+ communities, and then an overt and poisoning, but EU-supported dispossession of refugees, especially those who are not "white." This text navigates through some important events and positions that have changed the state of affairs and of which we should be made aware. These events and positions are all connected to the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. They bring the future and it is up to us to see how we can unlearn our present to imagine a better world differently.



## Part 1.

### Introduction: Where I stand

In 2003 I was appointed professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, where I teach the Conceptual Art Studio. I direct the Conceptual Art Studio, which I have conceived as “post-conceptual” (Post-Conceptual Art Practices, or PCAP). This is how many of the contemporary conceptual artworks are seriously defined today because we were too tied to a historical movement with conceptual art. Activism, politics, and theory are paramount to the way we engage with visual practices and the politics of representation in PCAP. Theory is not about old academic theories that stifle art practice, but about contemporary theoretical and critical thinking that helps students develop processes for conceptualising the visual arts and the politics of the world, which has many different levels. Every provider of content and context, from pencil to computer, is supported.

PCAP asks us to rethink what the image is, how the relationship between art, culture, society, and politics is established, and the ways in which students can function as responsible political subjects. The idea of bridging the gap between media and conceptuality means that we look deeply at technology, from film, photography, video, internet, and multimedia to computer technologies, to develop a politically and socially engaged art that can intervene in a larger context. Art is not a tool that can simply be used for a particular, innocent process of producing and disseminating images and knowledge. Education is not a transparent machine for the production and dissemination of skills. PCAP is therefore developing a platform for the discussion and conceptualisation of various artistic, cultural and political issues.

The Academy of Fine Arts Vienna is a polystructured institution that combines art with art education and philosophy of art with the training of future art teachers. Accepting the professorship is a political decision. I think it is a challenge to dismantle the power of hierarchy because it exists. It is one of the fundamental functions of the institution. Danila Mayer, an anthropologist, explained in the

midst of the 2020-2022 Corona pandemic, which is a very neoliberal virus: free movement of goods and money, but total restriction of free movement of people ... the transfer of tax money to corporations and businesses ... the isolation of people at home. The whole world has come to a standstill and the reason is the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suddenly, humanity, touching, hugs, conversation, kindness, celebration and all the “good things” associated with being together seem to have met an early death and insecurity, aggression, depression, fear, hostility, oppression, racism - all forms of discrimination are the order of the day. The community organisation Afro Rainbow Austria has described the consequences of the pandemic. They say that for their vulnerable community, Covid-19 brought job loss, depression, homelessness, and delays in asylum procedures, to name a few. Thus, interventions at the level of production, distribution, and institutionalisation of knowledge are capital's latest attempt to transform even universities and academies into managerial institutions that produce only “skilled” students.

Afro Rainbow Austria [ARA], *Wearable Vocabulary, Smashing Wor(l)ds Summercamp*, June 26, 2021. Summercamp was organized via the project *Smashing Wor(l)ds: Cultural Practices for re/Imagining & un/Learning Vocabularies* (2020–2022), funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union. It was a gathering of the Austrian partner organisations with Afro Rainbow Austria [ARA], Queer Base, Silent University Austria and the PCAP Students at the Academy of Fine Arts.

The final point of this intervention, which capital has already exercised at every other level of contemporary society, from public space to government agencies, civil rights, and the arts, is depoliticisation. Everything from business to education is now being transformed into a non-political form and agency. What is feared is the entry of the state neoliberal apparatuses into the public education system, which means that students will be controlled and monitored to expediently get a job and pay taxes.





Opening by Marissa Lôbo, Marina Gržinić, *Smashing Wor(l)ds Summercamp*, June 26, 2021. Photo by Rui Bai.



*Smashing Wor(l)ds Summercamp*, Kleine Stadtfarm am Schillerwasser 26.06.2021 Photo J. Pristovsek

What is going on can be aptly described by Kirsten Forkert's thoughts on the contradictions of post-studio practices in relation to the academy in the current political climate. For Forkert, the changes that are taking place have much to do with the commodity value of art and the role of the artist in comparison to another figure, the employee. They are both symptom and reaction to certain political and economic changes.<sup>4</sup>

We seek to open a radical platform for the discussion and conceptualisation of issues as formulated by Forkert in her reflections on post-studio practice:

Post-studio practices challenge the assumptions that art is about technical virtuosity or mute creative expression, and that what happens in the studio or classroom is separate from the rest of our lives. Certain aspects of post-studio practice also question the definition of the artist as a romantic, heroic individual (also

imagined as white and male) – one who does not consider the political or economic context of his work. On the other hand, how much do post-studio practices, as they are taught within the academy, really challenge conventional definitions of authorship or signature style?<sup>5</sup>

In such a context, no tool (if we think of technology) and no paradigm (if we think of theory, the visual, etc.) can be considered a tool or category that can be applied to a particular, innocent, collaborative process of knowledge production and dissemination. In this way, not only can the institutions of knowledge escape connection to power, capital, and economic "rationalisation," but also the methods and technologies used in the process of knowledge production and dissemination are not simply seen as pre-political categories that can be connected exclusively to ideas and discourses of improvement, facilitation, and valorisation.

## Part 2.

### Wo/men, LGBTQI+ initiatives, community, publishing projects by and with PCAP (2005–2022)

Over the past decades, as specific projects of the art studio I direct, Post-Conceptual Art Practices, or PCAP, including 2022, we have published five books.

The books were part of the activation with and by the students of Post-Conceptual Art Practices, or PCAP, of different decades and generations.

The first book, *Medialization/Labour/Spatialization/(Re)Politicization*, published in 2005, addressed and critically countered antisemitism.<sup>6</sup>

The second, *Are You Talking to Me? Discussions on Knowledge Production, Gender Politics and Feminist Strategies*, published in 2008, dealt with feminism, and the post-feminist condition.<sup>7</sup>

The third, *INTERSECTIONS. At the Crossroads of the Production of Knowledge, Precarity, Subjugation, and the Reconstruction of History, Display and De-linking*, published in 2009, dealt with the analysis of education and activism.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth, published in 2013, which we call *The Vocabulary of Decoloniality*, for short, is entitled *Utopia of Alliances, Conditions of Impossibilities and the Vocabulary of Decoloniality*.<sup>9</sup>

In 2022 we published a picture book, *I'm 10 and my hobby is flying*.<sup>10</sup> The book is a project by Cathérine Lehnerer to “unlearn” by the class 4b (Lupo class) of GTVS 3 (primary school and speech therapy school in Vienna). The book was produced as part of the Art Studio for Post-conceptual Art Practices program, Prof. Gržinić, IBK, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Financially supported by the Publication Fund of the Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, 2022.

## THE VOCABULARY OF DECOLONIALITY

*The Vocabulary of Decoloniality*, as the Editorial Group explains in an introduction, focuses on the social and political antagonism of our artistic and epistemological formation in the present: past colonialism and present forms of coloniality, with an emphasis on anti-racism and the new political figure—the migrant! The Editorial Group emphasized that the volume not only provides a cultural framework for analysing racism, colonialism, and strengthened antisemitism, but also looks at their political, social, and economic implications. This includes thinking not only about historical colonialism, but also about the ways in which capitalism shapes the world we inhabit here and now.<sup>11</sup> The concept of decoloniality offers a radical way to rethink learning processes from positions that are not exclusively Western-oriented but are informed by other political-social contexts and perspectives. The concept of decoloniality offers a rebellious position in the history of colonialism and in all its contemporary forms of colonial subjugation, exploitation, and discrimination.<sup>12</sup>

The Editorial Group stressed the importance of analysing the continuities of colonialism, Nazism, and fascism in today's neoliberal global capitalist democracies. Using these continuities, it is possible to define contemporary racism, Islamophobia, anti-Romaism, and antisemitism without forming competing histories of oppression and persecution.<sup>13</sup> As they write, “Many questions could not be answered here and now, yet it was clear that we wanted to reflect upon memory politics as well as upon how to make alliances between present forms of anti-racist, anti-colonial, political, theoretical, critical and artistic works.”<sup>14</sup>



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1. *Will You Marry Me? Marriages of Convenience in Times of Crises. The Nazi Era and Nowadays*, lecture by Henrie Dennis (speaking) and Prof. Dr. Irene Messinger, FH Campus Wien, social work. Organized by the PCAP Studio and Prof. Marina Gržinić at the Institute of Fine Arts, June 27, 2022. Photo by J. Pristovšek

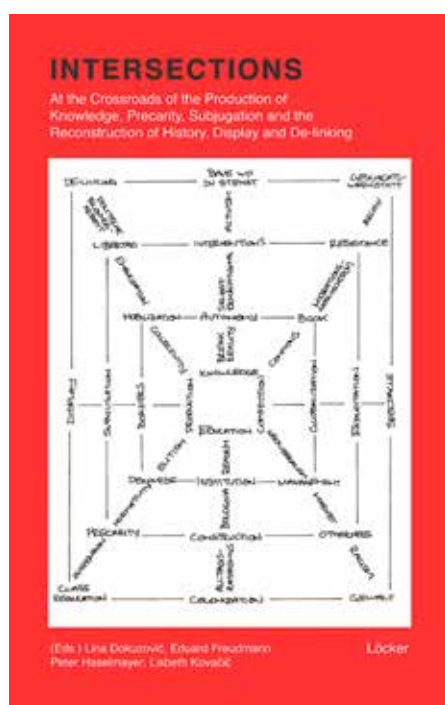
2. Jennifer Ndidi Iroh, *(M)EIN BILD VON MIR – Selbstwahrnehmung in der Fotografie* [A photograph (my) from me – Self-Perception in Photography], first "Memory-Labs" session as part of the project *Citizens' Memories and Imaginaries: Democratic Citizenship* (FWF, TCS 119), Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, May 19, 2022. Photo by J. Pristovšek

3. Asma Aiad, *The Ninth of November 2020*, installation view, *Muslim\* Contemporary*, Prospektthof, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, November 2021. Photo by J. Pristovšek

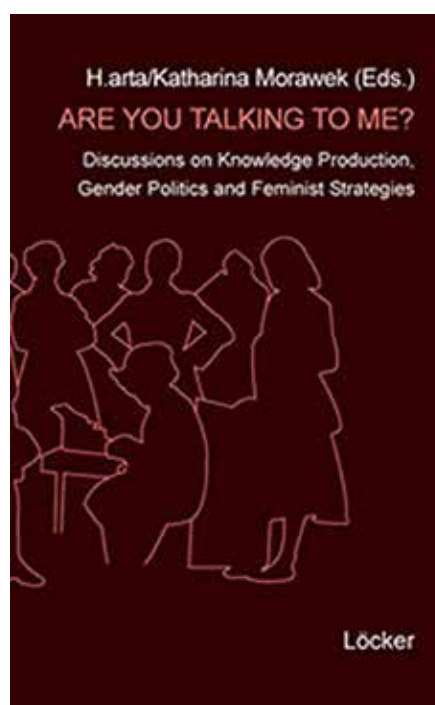
4. *WTF Is a Non-Binary University?* Readings & Contributions: Felix Deiters, Oke Fijal and Finn Mühl, Rundgang 2022 with PCAP class at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, January 20–23, 2022. Photo by J. Pristovšek

5. Book cover *Utopia of Alliances, Conditions of Impossibilities and the Vocabulary of Decoloniality* (2013)





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1. Book cover *Intersections: INTERSECTIONS. At the Crossroads of the Production of Knowledge, Precarity, Subjugation, and the Reconstruction of History, Display and De-linking* (2009)
2. Book cover *Are You Talking to Me? Discussions on Knowledge Production, Gender Politics and Feminist Strategies* (2008)
3. Book cover *Medialisierung/Arbeit/Spatialisierung/(Re)Politisierung: Ein Projekt der StudentInnen der Klasse für Post-Konzeptionelle Kunst und der Klasse für Performative Kunst & Bildhauerei = Medialization/Labour/Spatialization/(Re)Politicization: Project by Students of the Post-Conceptual Art Practices Class and Performative Arts – Sculpture Class* (2005). Photo by M. Gržinić
4. Book cover *I'm 10 and my hobby is flying* (2022)

### Part 3.

#### A New Generation of Artists at the

#### Academy of Fine Arts Vienna:

#### Marissa Lôbo, Asma Aiad, Jennifer

#### Ndidi Iroh

A new generation of artists developing anti-racist, lesbian, and anti-binary gender structures is a powerful undertaking for a new aesthetic of tomorrow. The presentation will aim to reverse a possible narrative about what a decolonial Muslim/lesbian/queer position can do to the ossified academies of fine arts in Europe.

Most influential is the process of establishing the discourse of anti-racism, anti-black racism, and anti-Muslim racism, which undermines the persistent biological gender divide that holds that the boundary between men and women runs only along the heterosexual patriarchal system. Racism is a poisoning, institutional, structural social system of categorisation, of subjugating people based on the colour of their skin.

Marissa Lôbo is a Black feminist activist, member of maiz – Autonomous Center of and for Migrant Women in Linz, she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Post-Conceptual Art Practices. She lives between precarity and utopia and is involved in various initiatives against racism and sexism. As an Afro-Brazilian migrant living in Europe, she reflects on the continuities of colonialism and its everyday impact on black subjects in terms of sexism, homo/trans phobias, and racism. Her work is a constant in the struggles against the perpetual processes of racialisation, segregation and discrimination in the European Union. Lôbo is engaged in the process against the ongoing racialisation of refugees in the EU. They are exposed to the toxic characteristic of their skin colour. Some refugees who are white (in the context of the war in Ukraine and on the borders with Poland and Hungary) are considered the real refugees, others are called “not our” refugees.

In 2016, PCAP, in collaboration with Marissa Lôbo, we organised Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso’s lecture entitled “A Genealogy of the Practices of the Present: A Critique of the Colonial Feminist Reason, Coming from the Historical Experience in Latin America.” Espinosa Miñoso is a thinker, activist, writer, and lecturer involved in radical movements against racism, (hetero)patriarchy, and colonialism. She was born into an Afromestizo family and grew up in the popular neighbourhoods of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Early on, she took up María Lugones’ proposal to develop a decolonial feminism and eventually became one of its most important spokespersons in Latin America.

Espinosa Miñoso’s lecture was about answering the key question:

if we propose a genealogical method to be applied to the field of feminism, it means: how did we become the feminists we are? What are the possible conditions that have enabled feminism to believe what it believes, to say what it says, to do what it does, in a region geopolitically determined by its status as a “Third World” and carrying with it colonial trauma as a condition for being what we are today?

From these questions comes the opportunity to reflect on some key themes of feminism in Latin America and its history of dependency. Not about a Latin American feminism, but about a feminism in Latin America. We see that there is no universal feminism as envisioned by the legacy of Eurocentric modernity. If we find no surprises in the statement that feminism encounters modernity, we must nevertheless ask ourselves how one can be willing to follow it in regions of the world where modernity turns out to be only what it is: racist, Eurocentric, capitalist, imperialist, and colonial.

Perhaps women, gender, and despised sexualities have succumbed to the notion, based on theory and feminist thought, that

the past was always worse for us. Perhaps we could say that feminism claims that our struggle cannot be anything but modern when it proclaims modernity as a historical time that allows us to free ourselves from it. This argument illuminates the divergent interests between feminism and anti-racist, anti-colonial, and decolonial struggles in the region. It allows us to uncover the hidden pattern of feminist struggles and their engagement with coloniality.<sup>15</sup>

Asma Aiad is a Viennese conceptual artist, activist, and youth worker. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and completed her master's in Gender Studies at the University of Vienna on the topic of Islamic feminism. She is a co-founder of Salam Oida, an initiative to promote Muslim culture and arts in Austria, and a spokesperson for the anti-racism referendum Black Voices. Her activism and artistic work deal with anti-racism, feminism, and the deconstruction of stereotypes. Aiad curated *Muslim\* Contemporary* (Atelierhaus Prospekthof, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, November 8–12, 2021), a multidisciplinary, participatory, and dialogical project that aims to reflect on the place of Muslim communities in Austrian society through education, art, dialogue, activism, and culture.<sup>16j</sup>

In the 1930s, the Nazis galloped toward the Reichstag. Today we have fascist populism, the rise of antisemitism, and we know that Austria never underwent a harsh denazification. We are alarmed by the rise of anti-Muslim racism, which is mixed with racism against Black people and Asian communities and calls everyone to action.

Jennifer Ndidi Iroh graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in 2022 with a Master's degree. Her artistic focus is on analog film and photography and other visualizations of Black queer\*ness and feminism, highlighting themes of home, safety, and utopia. Her master's thesis in Critical Studies at the Academy, titled “Re/configurations of Photographic Practices,”

deals with the topics of decolonisation and re/configurations of hegemonic photographic approaches. Beginning with the colonial gaze and its effects, it displays how photography was used as a weapon and tool to carry out colonial practices, which still exists in the present. Furthermore, the focus lies on exploring different ways of perceiving and experiencing images, as well as questioning and re/imagining the archive of visual material to expand the possibilities of making marginalized positions visible. Questions such as, how can images be read beyond their margins?, and what does it take to transfigure the gaze? are explored here. Finally, processes of self-defined photographic works are presented with the example of the two photographers, Zanele Muholi and Mikael Owunna, as well as photographic methodologies displaying the relationship between the photographer, the camera lens and the person being photographed.<sup>17</sup>

A very important reference for Iroh is the work of Tina Campt. In her book *Listening to Images*, Campt says: “Redirecting Ariella Azoulay's evocative proposal to ‘watch’ rather than look at photographs [...], the choice to ‘listen to’ rather than simply ‘look at’ images is a conscious decision to challenge the equation of vision with knowledge by engaging photography through a sensory register that is critical to Black Atlantic cultural formations: sound.”<sup>18</sup>

In *The Civil Contract of Photography*, Ariella Azoulay posited:

Anyone who addresses others through photographs or takes the position of a photograph's addressee, even if she is a stateless person who has lost her “right to have rights,” as in Arendt's formulation, is nevertheless a citizen—a member in the citizenry of photography. The civil space of photography is open to her, as well. That



space is configured by what I call the civil contract of photography.”<sup>19</sup>

In a recent interview, Azoulay argued:

In *The Civil Contract of Photography* I speculated on the existence of a civil contract (in distinction from the tradition of the social contract), that I then labored to find its manifestations at different places and times, as proof that speculation is never simply speculation, but actually an attempt to provide the language with which the participation of others can neither be denied, nor the power we exercise against them when the existing language that makes them irrelevant, invisible, or uncounted is being used. Therefore, the idea started to be: let us acknowledge the ways in which people were always engaged with photography, not only the photographers; and let us account for the ways in which they were engaged in photography.<sup>20</sup>

What we are witnessing these days and in recent years is the takeover of public space by the right-wing mob, fake news and looting by the political elite, hostility, fear, a breakdown in the distribution of what is reasonable, and our inability to think of a future. With these positions and events, a constant process of reflection is set in motion.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Fred Moten, “Ecology of Eloquent Things” (lecture, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, April 8, 2011). Quoted in J.E. Jed Murr, “The Unquiet Dead: Race and Violence in the ‘Post-Racial’ United States” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2014), 3.
- <sup>2</sup> Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).
- <sup>3</sup> J.E. Jed Murr, “The Unquiet Dead,” n.p.
- <sup>4</sup> Kirsten Forkert, “Can Post-Studio Art School Function as a Place of Resistance in an Immaterial Economy?,” in *Mind the Map: History Is Not Given*, eds. Marina Gržinić, Günther Heeg and Veronika Darian (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2006), 224.
- <sup>5</sup> Forkert, “Can Post-Studio Art School Function as a Place of Resistance in an Immaterial Economy?,” 226.
- <sup>6</sup> Marina Gržinić and Monica Bonvicini, eds., *Medialisierung/Arbeit/Spatialisierung/(Re)Politisierung: Ein Projekt der StudentInnen der Klasse für Post-Konzeptionelle Kunst und der Klasse für Performative Kunst & Bildhauerei = Medialization/Labour/Spatialization/(Re)Politicization: Project by Students of the Post-Conceptual Art Practices Class and Performative Arts – Sculpture Class* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2005).
- <sup>7</sup> H.arta [Maria Crista, Anca Gyemant and Rodica Tache] and Katharina Morawek, *Are You Talking To Me? Discussions on Knowledge Production, Gender Politics and Feminist Strategies* (Vienna: Löcker, 2008).
- <sup>8</sup> Lina Dokuzović, Eduard Freudmann, Peter Haselmayer and Lisbeth Kovačič, eds., *Intersections: At the Crossroads of the Production of Knowledge, Precarity, Subjugation, and the Reconstruction of History, Display and De-linking* (Vienna: Löcker, 2009).
- <sup>9</sup> Editorial Group for Writing Insurgent Genealogies [Carolina Agredo, Sheri Avraham, Annalisa Cannito, Miltiadis Gerothanasis, Marina Gržinić, Marissa Lôbo and Ivana Marjanović], ed., *Utopia of Alliances, Conditions of Impossibilities and the Vocabulary of Decoloniality* (Vienna: Löcker, 2013).
- <sup>10</sup> The book is a project by Cathérine Lehnerer who is currently a PhD candidate in philosophy at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.
- <sup>11</sup> Editorial Group for Writing Insurgent Genealogies, *Utopia of Alliances*, 11.
- <sup>12</sup> Editorial Group for Writing Insurgent Genealogies, *Utopia of Alliances*, 11.
- <sup>13</sup> Editorial Group for Writing Insurgent Genealogies, *Utopia of Alliances*, 11–12.
- <sup>14</sup> Editorial Group for Writing Insurgent Genealogies, *Utopia of Alliances*, 12.
- <sup>15</sup> Yuderlys Espinosa Miñoso, “Hacer genealogía de las prácticas del presente: Una crítica a la colonialidad de la Razón feminista desde la experiencia histórica en América Latina” [A Genealogy of the Practices of the Present: A Critique of the Colonial Feminist Reason, Coming from the Historical Experience in Latin America] (guest lecture, PCAP (Post-Conceptual Art Practices) Study Program, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, June 21, 2016). The abstract is available at <https://m1.antville.org/stories/2239994/>. It has been slightly linguistically revised here.
- <sup>16</sup> See Muslim\* Contemporary website at <https://muslimcontemporary.at/>.
- <sup>17</sup> Jennifer Ndidi Iroh, “Re/konfigurationen fotografischer Praxen” [Re/configurations of Photographic Practices] (master’s thesis, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, 2021), 100.
- <sup>18</sup> Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 6.
- <sup>19</sup> Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, trans. Relä Mazali and Ruvik Danieli (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 81.
- <sup>20</sup> Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, “Ariella Aïsha Azoulay – Unlearning,” interview by Filipa Lowndes Vicente, *Análise Social* 55, no. 235 (2020): 425, <https://doi.org/10.31447/as00032573.2020235.08>.

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H.arta [Maria Crista, Anca Gyemant and Rodica Tache] and Katharina Morawek. *Are You Talking to Me? Discussions on Knowledge Production, Gender Politics and Feminist Strategies*. Post-Conceptual Art Practices Studio, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, published by Löcker, Vienna, 2008.

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# Anka LEŚNIAK

Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk

## THE EXHIBITION *WOMEN AT THE ACADEMIES OF FINE ARTS*

### Concept outline and key artistic imperatives

The impetus behind organising the exhibition and academic conference *Women at the Academies of Fine Arts* was the centenary of the first female students' admission to the art academies in Vienna, Kraków and Prague, among other cities. The subject of women and their academic position has been a recurring research enquiry in my artistic projects. As a former art student, I observed that many of my female colleagues outnumbered male students yet most professors were men. Having worked as a freelance artist for a few years, I was appointed to the Sculpture and Intermedia Department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. As an academic I became interested in building connections between female art professors and exploring our professional experiences and work methodologies.

The project's direct idea stems from my artistic research into the life and work of sculptor Teresa Feodorowna Ries (1866–1956). Ries was an artist of Jewish origins who spent her youth in Moscow. In her autobiography *The Language of Stone* (*Die Sprache des Steines*) she reveals that she did attend the Moscow Art Academy but was later expelled for challenging a professor's authority in front of other students.<sup>1</sup> She probably attended the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (MUZHIZV) which was administratively the branch of the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg.<sup>2</sup> Later, Ries moved to Vienna where she lived for over 30 years and created her most outstanding works. Regrettably, she had to abandon her 'Ary-

anized' studio in her 70s, leave all her artworks behind, and flee to Switzerland to escape Nazi persecution.

In her book Ries states that she was an exceptional student in Moscow. She most probably moved to Vienna in 1894 as evident from her registration card kept in the Vienna City and State Archives (Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv). Unfortunately, due to Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts policy, she could not enrol there. Instead, she took private sculpture lessons from one of the professors, Edmund Hellmer.<sup>3</sup> Ten years later, Teresa F. Ries wrote a letter to the Academy's rector Clemens Holzmeister proposing herself for a professor position. Despite her recognition in the Austro-Hungarian art scene, her proposal was ignored.<sup>4</sup> It wasn't until after the World War II in 1947 that the first female professor, Gelda Matejka Felden, was appointed to the Academy in Vienna.<sup>5</sup>

The exhibition provided an opportunity to critically interrogate the distinctions between fine arts academies established in various historical periods and geopolitical frameworks. It also raised the question of whether the contexts surrounding the formation of these academies influenced their later politics toward gender equality and fair access to professional positions. Academies in Vienna and Kraków were founded in the time of a monarchy and women could officially study at neither. The first female students entered the Kraków's Academy in 1918, which was the year when Poland reunited after 123 years of partition by the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Prussian Empires. However, the right to study and vote were not 'gifts' for women from the newly established Polish state. Rather, it resulted from the

ongoing struggle of Polish suffragists and activists of the time. One such go-ahead woman was sculptor Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska, a true forerunner of change who received the right to study at the Academy in Kraków a year earlier in 1917<sup>6</sup>.

Most Polish Academies of Fine Arts were established during the 1940s which marked the beginning of the communist state. At that time, they were officially known as 'State Higher Schools of Visual Arts' (PWSSP) and were only granted the 'Academy' status in the 1990s with the emergence of finance capitalism in the region. The Academy status had been previously only held by the Kraków and Warsaw schools due to their pre-war history. The initiative to create an art academy in Gdańsk was taken by artists – and both men and women played a significant role in this effort. The founders were Janusz Strzałecki, Krystyna and Juliusz Studnicki, Hanna and Jacek Żuławski, and Józefa and Marian Wnuk. They all met after the war at the Baltic coast.<sup>7</sup> From the outset, female students were able to enrol to the Academy. Initially, the school was located in a historical house (Berger's Willa) in Sopot due to the heavily damaged post-war Gdańsk.

In 2019 I travelled to Vienna to do my research on Teresa Feodorowna Ries who is significant in the context of the first emancipated women bravely pursuing their careers despite the patriarchal constraints. As the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first female students' admission to the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts approached, it seemed worth reflecting on the challenges women faced in pursuing art education, particularly in the traditional relationship between master and (his) students. Interestingly, women who worked as painters and graphic artists were more accepted than those interested in sculpture. That medium was seen as a field reserved for men and women sculptors faced even more discouragement than other female artists.

The *Women at the Academies of Fine Arts* exhibition explored the idea of sculpture not only as a material intervention in space but also as 'social sculpture' – a tool for institutional change. As a faculty member of the Sculpture and Intermedia department at the Academy in Gdańsk where the exhibition took place, I am aware that such a viewpoint is subjective and selective. It is important to note that the project

was based on personal experiences and the outcome emerging from them is autonomous and individual. As such, it cannot be treated as a scholarly take on such a wide-ranging issue. Rather, the exhibition became a manifesto for more presence of women in the art academies' structures while offering a platform for exchanging ideas and identifying areas for further research and collaboration.

Furthermore, both the exhibition and the conference aimed to examine the impact of the increasing number of female professors and students on the very structures of the academy. This included topics like the forms of artistic expression, teaching content, and relations within the academic community. The project also encouraged participants to reflect on the history of women's presence within the academic structures. It was vital for me to consider *colleges* (universities) with an academy of fine arts status which in the European tradition emphasises their connection to the prototype of the modern academy, namely the Academia di San Luca established in 1635.<sup>8</sup> For that reason, in this text I am taking into account a variety of academies not because they are 'better' than colleges, but because through adopting the very name 'academy' they inherit a form of prestige and tradition. As Whitney Chadwick notices commenting on German neoclassical painter Johann Zoffany's work *The Academicians of the Royal Academy* (1771-72), "artists are male and white, and art a learned discourse (...) women art objects of representation rather than producers in a history commonly traced through 'Old Masters' and 'masterpieces'".<sup>9</sup>

**First women students, professors  
and rectors, and artistic research  
in archives**

The focal point of the exhibition were artworks related to the theme of women and sculpture (including sculpture and installation). The exhibition featured several women appointed to the Intermedia and Sculpture Faculty of the Academy in Gdańsk including Ludmiła Ostrogórska. She was the first female rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poland holding that position between 2008-16. Interestingly, it took 63



years for a woman to become a rector at this school despite it being co-founded by female artists. This highlights the patriarchal mechanisms of discrimination that have existed regardless of the origins of the individual academies. In Poland, the rector is selected through an election system by fellow professors.

The history of women's presence in academies was presented primarily through artworks and archival materials from the collection of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. The exhibition used that particular art school to foreground histories spanning over several centuries. Simone Bader's video *100 Years\** (2022) featured quotes and archival photos from the Viennese Academy's archives highlighting the evolution of female position there. As it were, the Academy was supported by aristocratic female donors which links it to the phenomenon of female benefactors financing institutions otherwise inaccessible to women. That was reflected by Virginia Woolf in her essay *A Room of One's Own* which was based on the author's own lectures to female literature students. Even in the early 20th century well-off women supported 'prestigious universities' that did not admit women.

*Frau\* auf der Akademie* (Woman\* at the Academy) (2015-18) by Marion Porten continued the history of women's struggle to study at the Academy in Vienna. In her video, the artist uses quotations from the archives focussing on discussions between the (male) professors about whether women should be allowed to study at the Academy. Despite being asked for their opinions by the Ministry of Education, subsequent committees and faculty councils rejected admitting women claiming they lacked talent and the ability to focus on creative work. Eventually, the State Office for Internal Affairs and Education ordered the Academy to allow females thus ending the professors' objections. Porten's video includes excerpts of protocols from the faculty council meetings together with images of the busts of anonymous women from the Viennese Academy's *glyptothek* (a collection of sculptures). The glyptothek is located in the basement which emphasises the work's message – video shots from there are intertwined with scenes in which we see female hands processing some kind of pulp. This may be associated with either preparing plaster for casting, or kneading dough.

Two photographs by Valerie Habsburg were presented alongside the video. One of them showed the façade of the building designed for the sculpture faculty with the inscription "The Master School for Sculptors" (*Meisterschule für Bildhauer*). The other was a photograph of the aforementioned letter sent by Teresa F. Ries to the academy's rector in 1931 (2019). Habsburg juxtaposed the two photographs to highlight the letter being sent when the building for sculptors already existed. She photographed the letter as an archival exhibit.

These two photographs were accompanied by reprints of archival photos from the private archive of Teresa Feodorowna Ries. Valerie Habsburg acquired this archive from an anonymous seller at an auction house. The photos show Ries working on the cast of a sculpture in the interiors of the Academy proving that although women were not registered as official students, they were present in the Academy. They took private lessons and provided additional income for the professors. Edmund Hellmer allowed Ries to use his studio at the school. He appreciated her talent so much that he proposed that she should make sculptures commissioned from him and then showed them under his name. However, he remained against the general admission of female students.<sup>10</sup>

### De-construction, re-construction, and tools for reshaping the space

As a reference to Teresa Feodorowna Ries' story, I filmed *The March for the Witch* (2019-21) in the yard of the sculptors' building previously captured by Valerie Habsburg in her photo diptych. During a stone workshop, I made video footage of female students' hands (they made up the majority of attendees). The video shows the gestures of chiselling and grinding. Today no one is questioning women's abilities to be professional sculptors in the very institution they had no right to study at a hundred years ago. My focus on the hands of female students drew inspiration from Ries' sculpture *The Witch*. It portrays a vigorous woman preparing herself for a Witches' Sabbath. She holds cutting shears in her hand as she trims her toenails. The sculpture has been damaged

a few times and the hand holding the shears is lost. I explore the significance of this lost element in my project *Lost Element. Re-construction of the Witch* (2019-23) and the video *The March for the Witch* is a part of this project. In a metaphorical sense Ries' *Witch* represents liberated femininity but the missing tool symbolises a loss of agency. My video offers a symbolic reconstruction of this lost element embodied and multiplied in the hands of contemporary sculptors. The rhythm of the chisels is echoed in the video's soundtrack: a percussion composition by Justyna Stopnicka June relating to march as a musical genre.

Another context for *The March for the Witch* was a large-size photograph by Agnieszka Babińska depicting a destroyed monument to a man. His head was chopped off and the whole statute removed from its plinth. The picture was taken in Ukraine in 2018. The artist poses the question "Is that Lenin?" in the work's title. It is likely that the monument was one of many dedicated to Lenin across the former Soviet Union. While some of these statutes remain standing, others were removed often with passion and anger as shown in the photograph. In a broader sense, the damaged figure represents the imperial politics of the Russian Empire which have persisted over centuries and continue to this day (it should be mentioned that our exhibition coincided with the Russian aggression on Ukraine in February 2022). Babińska's photograph also raises questions about the visual language of propaganda and how it shapes public spaces through its proliferation. Sculpture memorials play a significant role in appropriating public space with tangible symbols of the regime. As such, the art education system must be compatible with the state ideology to produce artists who can meet its expectations.

Among the works described above was also *House-Shelter* (2020-21), an installation by Sylwia Jakubowska-Szycik, currently the vice-rector of the Academy in Gdańsk. It featured models of wooden houses of varying sizes connected by corridors. For the exhibition, the artist left some parts of the installation unassembled. As a result, it was unclear whether the work was still under construction or had in fact been damaged.

The ambiguity of tools such as chisels and

hammers that can either manufacture or destroy something was reflected in *Persuasion* (2019) by Adrianna Majdzińska. An accumulation of knives was juxtaposed with moulds of soil. The knives were collected from the artist's friends or bought at a flea market and given a new meaning as ready-mades. Their contradictory physical properties such as the hardness of steel and sharpness of blades as opposed to the softness of organic soil could be read as a comment on the Anthropocene era where what is natural, undefined and formless must be shaped, disciplined, and controlled. Another interesting aspect of that work is that while knives are typically utilised in the kitchen (often associated with house chores assigned to women), they are also used in sculpting in clay.

Aurelia Mandziuk's *The Hare. Re-enactment* (2011/12) sheds light on the challenges faced by women artists in making a living from their art. The work is based on the story of Katarzyna Kobro (1898-1951), a Polish female sculptor of German-Russian origins who belongs to the history of avant-garde art.<sup>11</sup> Kobro was married to Władysław Strzemiński (1893-1952), a prominent painter and art theoretician. Their artistic relationship, productive and flourishing in the beginning, soon became rife with conflict and violence on Strzemiński's part, leading to their separation. Although Kobro's contributions to avant-garde art are equally significant as those of her husband's, she was never appointed to the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź which Strzemiński co-founded. Despite authoring outstanding and pioneering sculptures (spatial compositions) and theoretical texts, Kobro was forced to sew fabric toys for children to make ends meet.<sup>12</sup>

One of the toys she made for her daughter Nika was a hare which directly inspired Mandziuk's work. She is a graduate of the Textile Faculty of the Academy in Łódź and is currently serving as the dean of the Design Faculty at the Art Academy in Szczecin. Her works sit in the intersection of art and design. She focuses on an aspect that is not usually considered worth dealing with in Katarzyna Kobro's practice. While some of Kobro's works were damaged or lost and later reconstructed, the hare toy given to Nika has been preserved by Monika Krygier, a daughter of Kobro and Strzemiński's friend. As the hare had lost its legs over time, Mandziuk decided to reconstruct

the toy in its original shape using methods usually applied in art conservation. That way, Mandziuk shifts perspective and challenges patriarchal clichés in narratives on Kobra by inserting a simple child toy into the discourse.

### Institutional critic. Re-forming the Academy

A few years after graduating from the Academy in Łódź, I created a project *Registered* (2011), which included an animation *Academies 2011* that displayed the gender statistics of students and professors in Polish art academies. I collated information from seven art academies' websites and interviewed several professors. The results of this para-sociological research surprised me; all art academies had a majority of female students ranging from 70% to 80%, while around 70% of art professors were men. The differences were slight as the number of female professors never exceeded 35% at any of the academies. These facts were based on hard data. However, many other indirect ways of discrimination were not obvious, and the mechanisms to prevent them were either non-existent or ineffective. These statistics were confirmed a few years later in a report on the study of the presence of women at higher art schools in Poland published by the Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation.<sup>13</sup>

This issue is raised in *Base of Academic Woman's Brain* (2022), a drawing by Julia Kul. It depicts the human brain that looks as if it's taken from a medical textbook. As we read, the drawing was prepared by AKIN\_Autoethnographic Kul Institute of Neuroscience (a fictional scientific body invented by the artist). Kul illustrates and describes over 20 different areas of "an academic woman's brain," each responsible for various functions such as "selective attention (ignoring the way other people ignore you)," "normalising men's language (in case of linguistic exclusion)," "primal instinct to devalue one's own qualification," "fight, flight, freeze or act-like-a-man."

In *Praise of Precariat* (2022) ania włodarska [a.w.] touched upon the question of precarity glaringly prevalent in the so-called culture industries. Like other schools of higher education, the Academies of Fine

Arts benefit from the precarious work of their academic teachers who are employed on mandate contracts, meaning the institutions cover only for teaching hours. Such a tutor is not paid during holidays and doesn't have the right to any other social benefits. However, working at art schools is not limited to teaching hours – for instance, the tutors are obliged to prepare graduate exhibitions and half-year term reviews with students. Włodarska listed a vast number of projects and teaching hours which she realised on mandate contracts between 2015–22. She showed such projects in a golden frame echoing the way prisoners count their time through crossed-out lines arranged in groups, thus capturing the remaining days in confinement.

*Escape from the Oz* (2020/22) presented in the exhibition as an object and photographic documentation refers to an installation of the same title carried out on the façade of the University of Arts in Poznań by Anna Tyczyńska. The artist lowered a rope from the window as if she wanted to leave the institution building. However, the rope was not affixed which thwarted the desired evacuation. This site-specific installation may be understood as a reference to the mechanisms of oppression in state institutions such as fine arts academies. They are often grounded in the passion and commitment of numerous employees who devote their energy to students in the teaching process and implement projects and organisational work to ensure the smooth running of such institutions. However, after some time this leads to a burn-out, routine, and conflicts that may last for years and which affect the overall atmosphere in the institution.

Janina Rudnicka, a professor of drawing at the Faculty of Sculpture and Intermedia of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, created an animation entitled *My Name WAS no 1* (2018). It features the artist's name written in a hand-drawn style using a simple brush from a graphic design software. The name is scribbled repeatedly resulting it being obscured by the lines. This artistic gesture recalls the issue of women's systemic underappreciation in academic structures and their tendency to self-sabotage. Women often feel responsible for the institution's well-being and as a result take on many responsibilities which leaves little time for their creative endeavours.

Janina Rudnicka and Ludmiła Ostrogórska prepared the first ever publication on the Sculpture Faculty of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk in 2003. It presented the history of the faculty and the people associated with it since its establishment just after World War II.<sup>14</sup> Notably, it was the female faculty members who took the initiative to preserve such knowledge of the faculty's origins for future generations. Ostrogórska's work *Atropos Scrolls* (2022) has a special meaning in this context. A spindle-shaped object showcases scraps placed behind a glass surface, much like fragments of memories. Rudnicka was once an assistant professor in the Drawing studio led by Ostrogórska. They were not only colleagues but also became friends. Rudnicka remembers that in 1999 Ostrogórska broke barriers by becoming the first female dean in the history of Polish art academies. This achievement surprised the academic community as sculpture faculties were traditionally considered particularly masculinised. A decade later, Ludmiła Ostrogórska became the first female rector.<sup>15</sup>

### Language as a Manifesto of Presence

Feminist artist and sculpture professor Iwona Demko has thoroughly investigated the role of women in the Academy of Fine Art in Kraków both in the past and present. The Academy was established in 1818 and recently celebrated its bicentenary. Coincidentally, 2018 also marked the 100th anniversary of the admission of its first female students. Despite the significance of this event, it was not included (even mentioned) in the planned celebrations. Consequently, Iwona Demko organised the Women's Year at the Academy in Kraków which included lectures, panel discussions, film screenings, exhibitions, publications, and interventions in the school's space throughout 2018. Copies of antique statues, predominantly male, were adorned with pink sashes inscribed with "200 years of Academy and 100 years of Women's Academy."<sup>16</sup> Demko also created a series of counterfactual photomontages *Real Impossibility* (2018) which imagined what it would have been like if women artists who were historically not allowed to study and teach, had instead been the professors and rectors.

These photomontages were based on photographs from the National Digital Archive and aimed to challenge the male-dominated history of the Academy.<sup>17</sup>

Demko also presented her series *Feminatives* (2021) at the *Women at the Academies of Fine Arts* exhibition. Feminatives are the distinctively feminine forms of nouns derived from grammatically masculine forms, particularly those referring to humans.<sup>18</sup> In English, nouns are generally not marked for gender and there are relatively few feminatives such as waitress or actress. However, in Polish all nouns are marked for their grammatical gender which can be male, female, or neutral. Using feminatives for occupations such as nurses, cleaners, and schoolteachers is popular, but such a linguistic logic is rarely applied to higher education institutions or the realm of politics. There, male forms dominate even when a professor or a prime minister is a woman. This shows the lack of consistency in applying feminatives that is conditioned by patriarchal gender roles. Strangely, the use of feminatives in more 'prestigious' professions such as medical doctors, lawyers or academic teachers has been rejected by many women as they feel that the feminine version of their professions somehow diminishes their status. However, the younger generation of female academics calls for introducing feminatives into everyday use and official documents.

In her series Demko presents exclusively female-gendered names for all academic positions, from a student to a professor through to a rector. The artist challenges gender stereotypes related to women's clothing and the appropriate 'dress code' for sculptors. As a woman, Demko enjoys putting on pink clothes, short skirts and high heels which she also wears at the Academy where she has been appointed to the Sculpture Faculty despite many of her colleagues believing that her very appearance undermines the quality of her work. Once she has realised it, she decided to keep her unique style as a feminist statement and subversive gesture against the adopted habits. She presented her outfit on a mannequin as part of the *Feminatives* series.

Anna Królikiewicz from the Painting Faculty of the Academy in Gdańsk works with senses other than sight. In her art book *Interlanguage* (2019) included in the exhibition one can see images of her



works based on taste and carnal sensuality.<sup>19</sup> Królikiewicz breaks the hegemony of sight and hearing considered for centuries to be the senses superior to smell, taste and touch defined as more corporeal and thus assigned to the sphere of femininity and matter.<sup>20</sup> Music and visual arts were created to please the superior senses and the sphere of spirituality.

### Women's transgenerational legacy and collaboration. Projects with students

In her newly commissioned work Magdalena Grzybowska created a minimalist composition *The Unbearable Lightness of Paper. Submission* (2022) using blocks of white paper for notes that pay homage to her female master, Alfreda Poznańska (1939–2001). Poznańska was Grzybowska's professor at the Academy in Wrocław renowned for representing the impermanence of things through durable materials such as paper sculpted in marble. Grzybowska and her students continue this tradition of combining permanent and ephemeral elements in their intermedia and post-conceptual artworks.

*Love Stories-Radio Pogoda* (2021) by Izabella Gustowska and her students (Martyna Miller, Maja Okamgnienie, Joanna Pietrowicz, Maria Subczyńska, Katarzyna Wojtczak, Weronika Wronecka) is another example worth mentioning here. The film comprises seven distinct stories that showcase diverse artistic sensibilities but together form a coherent whole. The work blends documentary footage and personal memories with surreal and dreamy elements and humour.

Izabella Gustowska is an important figure in the history of women's activities at art academies in Poland. She is a distinguished intermedia artist who often explores feminist themes in her practice. Her work focuses mainly on video and installation art, and she has been teaching at the University of Arts in Poznań (earlier Academy of Fine Arts) for more than four decades. Gustowska is one of few women in the history of Polish art academies who has had the chance to run an accredited studio practice programme. She is also a passionate activist for the

promotion of women's art. Between 1979 and 1994 she ran the ON gallery at the Academy in Poznań presenting the most interesting art tendencies of the time. Gustowska co-curated the gallery with Krystyna Piotrowska who emigrated from Poland in the early 1980s. Together, they organised an exhibition *Women's Art* in 1980 which showed the most significant Polish artists of that time shedding light on femininity and women's position in the society.<sup>21</sup>

When watching *Love Stories* we recognise Gustowska's influence on her students in their awareness of the medium of video, their ability to work with the language of moving image, the aesthetic sensitivity, and the construction of non-obvious visual narratives. As a professor, Gustowska avoided the formatting of her students to her visual language which has been a frequent problem at art academies (though fortunately this seems to be changing lately).

When discussing female professors associated with the University of Arts in Poznań it is important to mention Magdalena Abakanowicz, a significant figure in the institution's history. A world-renowned sculptor, Abakanowicz taught from 1965 to 1992 and she led the Tapestry Studio.<sup>22</sup> According to Krystyna Piotrowska, one of her students, Abakanowicz encouraged them to think beyond the boundaries of artistic disciplines. Through the tasks she assigned to her students Abakanowicz proved that textiles could be transformed into sculptural forms, installations, or performances.<sup>23</sup>

*Sowing* (2021), a performative project in the exhibition initiated by a younger generation academic Martyna Jastrzębska also belonged to the series of initiatives involving students. It was done in collaboration with the NOMUS Museum of Contemporary Art in Gdańsk. The students collected different plant seeds and spread them onto a hemp fabric (jute). The crucial element of their public space action was a walk from the Sculpture and Intermedia Faculty's building of the Academy to the NOMUS Museum. The texture of the jute allowed some seeds to fall down on the way. This action reflects the mechanisms of the education and the art world systems. Are they compatible? Do graduates have an open access to exhibiting in museums? Isn't an artistic career understood in terms of 'an artistic success' defined by the market? Who will survive



and achieve such success? How many seeds will fall somewhere onto the unknown ground, and what new may emerge from the pre-defined structures of the art world? The piece of fabric with seeds that hadn't fallen out on the way to the Museum was buried in front of its building. Perhaps one day they will sprout there.

Artist Agata Zbylut leads the Studio of Photography and Post-Artistic Activities at the Art Academy in Szczecin. As part of the exhibition, she presented a documentation of a project she made with her female graduates. *The Queen of Bees* was presented at Kronika Gallery in Bytom in 2019. In a rather perverse way, the idea of that exhibition referred to the model of showcasing the master and their students. However, Zbylut didn't show 'the best of young artists from her studio but instead focused on the difficulties they faced after the graduation. Some works also revealed direct and indirect gender discrimination in the labour market. A few of the graduates gave up their practices while others experienced some artistic success living out of a suitcase and leading the lives of freelance artists without steady income and health insurance.

Zbylut and her students questioned the traditional master-student hierarchy in their work. Through a collaborative model of *The Queen of Bees*, the vertical structure inherent in institutional education was softened by students being genuine partners and co-creators of the work, and by the professor supporting them in finding their path rather than simply instructing them to do so. This opens up the possibility for collaborative projects where students and professors are equal co-participants. The only question that arises is how the increasing number of women in academic positions can in fact influence the methods of artistic education.

In her cartoon animation *The Exam Session* (2019) Joanna Bajus portrayed her professor Anna Tyczyńska with tenderness and wit, focusing on the latter's appearance, characteristic gestures and 'aura'. Tyczyńska runs the 2nd Interdisciplinary Drawing Studio at the University of Arts in Poznań and showed *Primal Scream* (2015) which documents a student workshop inspired by the therapeutic method invented by American psychotherapist Arthur Janov. Letting out a scream was a difficult task in a world in which we are conditioned to suppress our expression. Each

student screamed one after another and their efforts were recorded as a collective video performance.

## Private is Political.

### Gestures and symbols

Scream was also heard in Dominika Kowynia's painting *The Furious Girl* (2017) (depicting a yelling girl). Kowynia is a painter who teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice. An otherwise empty red wall on which the painting was hung enhanced its expression. The work refers to an event from the artist's childhood when her mother bought her an ornate dress (almost like a wedding dress) for her First Communion ceremony which little Dominika did not care about. However, upon noticing that she stood out from the other girls and commented on it with satisfaction, she was scolded by her mother. Through her work the artist highlights the contradictory expectations that girls face when growing up which demand perfection in many areas while also requiring false modesty. Girls are taught to compete while being expected to deny it.

Eliza Proszczuk from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw explores the notion of female solidarity. Her textile *Sisterhood* (2020) features graphic symbols and pictograms of a woman. They resemble the Palaeolithic 'Venus' figurines or extraterrestrial beings, expressing a sense of power and joy and recalling Niki Saint-Phalle's works. Proszczuk is also the author of *Traces of Sisterhood*, a project that took place at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw two months after the exhibition's opening. It brought together women from various fields for discussions, presentations, and workshops, ultimately resulting in a publication.<sup>24</sup> It is worth noting that Proszczuk also ran a series of workshops with female prisoners where they created outfits that served as a temporary alternative to their prison uniform. During these workshops, the artist recorded conversations with the imprisoned women.

Jolanta Rudzka-Habisiak, the second woman to serve as rector (2012-20) in the history of Polish Academies of Fine Arts is an artist working mainly in textile. She is affiliated with the Textile Institute of the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź (previously, the Faculty of Textiles and Clothing). Interestingly, this

faculty had the highest proportion of female tutors among all departments in the academy with 50% of its lecturers being women. However, this exception only confirms the age-old rule that women in the academies were mainly accepted in fields that were culturally assigned to them. Rudzka-Habisiak presented a large-format object titled *Moon Lake* (2018) in the exhibition. The starting point were the shapes based on letters from the alphabet designed by Władysław Strzemiński. This way Rudzka-Habisiak refers to the work of the founder and patron of the Academy where she studied and currently works. In my view, she effectively hacks the master's work by spontaneously and intuitively arranging the shapes of the Latin alphabet letters he designed into a circular structure covered with gold paper. The work is a pleasure to look at, cozy and tactile, far from the disciplined visual compositions of Strzemiński who created the ideological foundations of the Academy in Łódź.

Rudzka-Habisiak also showed a series of small paintings in which she depicted ideograms from the everyday life and the *iconosphere* (a term introduced by Mieczysław Porębski to designate the universe of images of all kinds surrounding human) of the so-called feminine—lip prints, lipsticks, and clothing accessories. After a closer look, we see a lightning bolt among these pictures – a powerful emblem of women's fight against a legislative proposal for a total ban on abortion in Poland – or an umbrella, both an everyday object and a symbol in the Black Protests against restraining women's right to self-determination.

### Care and Protest

Magdalena Wawrzyniak's graduation artwork *Design of a Conceptual Melee Weapon in the Context of the Contemporary Social Resistance Movement* carried out at the Faculty of Design of the Academy of Art in Szczecin similarly explores public dissent. This performative critical-design object can function as a simple stool. Yet after disassembling its components it turns out to be a piece of armour, a shield and a police baton. The form of the stool, the most basic home equipment, can be

used during protests. This works as a metaphor for society which, however it appears to be passive and subjugated to power, does have the necessary tools for resistance and change which it unmistakably becomes aware of when human rights have been violated and the social contract has been broken.

Marina Gržinić is an artist and philosopher who runs the Studio of Post-conceptual Art Practices at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, an essential part of their socially engaged projects. In the exhibition, she presented *Seizure – Rewriting Counter Histories* (2015), a video film made in collaboration with Aina Šmid. It shows four strong female characters (Adela Jušić, Anja Salomonowitz, Heiny Srour and Nevline Nnaji) working in the field of film and video who take the risk of revealing social mechanisms and power relations. The piece is a hybrid that breaks the conventions of traditional documentary filmmaking. It combines video documentation and interviews to create a visual essay that serves as a rebellious manifesto that challenges the conventions of the genre. The question the artists pose is whether it is possible to subvert, contest, destabilise and rethink some old and new relations in film and political activism.<sup>25</sup>

Artist Bogna Burska is a careful observer of social mechanisms which she explores through performative works situated between video and theatre.<sup>26</sup> She runs classes on sensual perception at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, where students create works based on senses other than sight and deal with the issues of disability. In the exhibition, Burska presented her video *I didn't tell anyone anything* (2017/19) based on the story told by Maciej Chodziński, her PhD student and graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. During his studies, Chodziński was a member of the artistic group Krecha (2006-09) which published an art zine criticising the art world and mass media calling it “media terrorism”. When releasing the zine's topical issue on media terrorism, the artists enclosed an envelope which had the seal of the Krecha group and the inscription “anthrax” on it (a dangerous disease caused by the bacteria *Bacillus anthracis*) and mailed numerous copies of the publication to the cultural institutions in Gdańsk.

Even though the group was well known for its provocative actions in the city's artistic community and the probability that the envelope contained the anthrax bacteria was zero, one of the institutions' directors called the police. Chodziński was taken out of his house in handcuffs and the investigation into the case lasted over a year.

Cuban artist Vivian Crespo Zurita presented her video *The Power of Ancestors* (2019), an excerpt from group performance *Willkommen auf dem Babobara* initiated by Mariama Diallo in 2019 in front of *Africa*, a large-format painting by Maître Leherb (Helmut Leherb) itself deriving from a series of several metre-long faiences (fine tin-glazed pottery) depicting six continents (1980-1992). These large pieces of faience were laid on the Vienna University of Economics and Business walls, the space also used by the Academy in Vienna during a renovation works of its main building. Considering discourses such as post-colonialism and feminism, *Africa* clearly is part of colonial and racist thinking.<sup>27</sup> Crespo Zurita's performance explores patriarchy, migration and indigenous ancestry. The artist emphasises the bond she feels with the sea through her singing. Her performance resembles a ritual with the artist as a shaman who evokes her black ancestors brought to Cuba by the sea. Her country of origin and Europe are also divided by an ocean. Crespo Zurita is critical of the European policy against migrants. As she writes in the commentary on her performance, "I carry the sea and the power of my ancestors within me. I use this power to fight racism, fascism, and patriarchy".

### Final remarks

The myriad of the threads and artistic responses that the exhibition presented are worth further exploration in future projects. Naturally, women in art academies are not just tutors and students. As highlighted in the book *Remembering Academy* edited by Iwona Demko included in the show, there are indeed female employees in administration, cleaning, and security doing work that is often invisible or underestimated.<sup>28</sup> The problem of women in fine arts academies is part of a broader equality discourse related to racial, ethnic or gender identity, and disability. These issues resonate

differently depending on the degree of national and ethnic diversity of the academic community. Polish academies still function in a more homogeneous society than for example the Academy in Vienna. Procedures and communication methods intended to counteract discrimination are still being implemented in Poland.

Certainly, in recent years there has been a greater political, feminist and ecological awareness among students of the Polish academies. Queer and non-binary people are more and more visible, and their creative practices make us acutely aware of the oppressiveness of binary divisions and gender roles to which we are all formatted as a society. Using a sculptural metaphor, it was the women's very entry into the fossilised structure of the academy that constituted the first chip-away breaking down of the monolithic block of exclusion. Women's intellectual, creative and physical presence within the male-dominated structures has helped create a far more inclusive space for diverse attitudes and artistic forms of expression ever since. It has in the process also transformed the definition – and the meaning – of artist.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Julie M. Johnson, *The Memory Factory: The Forgotten Women Artist in Vienna 1900* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012), 205.
- <sup>2</sup> Andrey Shabanov, *Art and Commerce in Late Imperial Russia* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 39-40.
- <sup>3</sup> "100 years of Admitting Women to Study at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna," <https://www.akbild.ac.at/en/news/2021/100-years-of-admitting-women-to-study-at-the-academy-of-fine-arts-vienna-> (10.10.2023)
- <sup>4</sup> Valerie Habsburg, "Teresa Feodorowna Ries and her Private Archive," *Sztuka i Dokumentacja* no. 21 (2019): 134.
- <sup>5</sup> Ulrike Hirhager, "Gerda Matejka-Felden: Umstritten progressive," Biografieblog, *Der Standard*, <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000136742429/gerda-matejka-felden-umstritten-progressiv> (01.10.2023)
- <sup>6</sup> Iwona Demko, *Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska – pierwsza studentka na krakowskiej Akademii Sztuk Pięknych* [Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska – the First Female Student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków], *Sztuka i Dokumentacja* 2018, no. 19, 27-32.
- <sup>7</sup> Roman Nieczyporowski, *Szkoła z Widokiem na Morze. U źródeł Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku* [A School with a View of the Sea. The Genesis of the Fine Arts Academy in Gdańsk], *Sztuka i Dokumentacja* 2021, no. 19, 5-19.
- <sup>8</sup> Academy of Art, *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/art/academy-of-art> (19.10.2023)
- <sup>9</sup> Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 8.
- <sup>10</sup> Valerie Habsburg, Jakob Krameritsch, Anka Leśniak, "The Professor's Council voted against the admission of female students," *Spezialschule*, (Vienna: Schebebrügge.Editor 2019), 115.
- <sup>11</sup> Janina Ładnowska, "Katarzyna Kobro: A Sculptor of Space," *Artibus et Historiae* 22(43) (2001), 161-185, doi:10.2307/1483659
- <sup>12</sup> Phillip Barcio, "Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński – Stars of the Polish Avant-garde," IDEELART, <https://www.ideelart.com/magazine/katarzyna-kobro-wladyslaw-strzeminski> (10.11.2023)
- <sup>13</sup> *Marne szanse na awanse. Raport z badania obecności kobiet na uczelniach artystycznych w Polsce* [Little Chance to Advance? An Inquiry into the Presence of Women at Art Academies in Poland] (Warsaw: Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation 2016), 5. <https://www.nck.pl/upload/attachments/317998/Marne%20szanse%20na%20awanse%20RAPORT.pdf> (18.10.2023)
- <sup>14</sup> *Wydział Rzeźby Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku* [Sculpture Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, ed. Ludmiła Ostrogórska, Janina Rudnicka (Gdańsk: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku, 2002-2003). <https://www.zbrojowniasztuki.pl/pliki/aae680536a21b07814713683c097c274/wydzial-rzezby-akademii-sztuk-pieknych-w-gdansk.pdf> (10.10.2023)
- <sup>15</sup> Janina Rudnicka, "When do we meet...?", *Ludmiła Ostrogórska, Przemiany* [Transformations], ed. Ludmiła Ostrogórska (Gdańsk: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku, 2020), 104.
- <sup>16</sup> Iwona Demko, "Jak to się stało, że się udało?" *Rok kobiet z ASP* [Year of Women from the AFA. The Centenary of women's presence at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts, ed. Iwona Demko, Agnieszka Marecka (Kraków: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, 2021), 13-23.
- <sup>17</sup> "Iwona Demko," *Secondary Archive*, <https://secondaryarchive.org/artists/iwona-demko/> (11.10.2022)
- <sup>18</sup> Jadwiga Linde-Usiekiewicz, "The Case for Feminatives in Polish," *The Magazine of PAS* 4/76/2022, 82, [https://journals.pan.pl/Content/126352/PDF/82-82\\_Linde\\_Usiekiewicz\\_ang.pdf](https://journals.pan.pl/Content/126352/PDF/82-82_Linde_Usiekiewicz_ang.pdf) (12.10.2022)
- <sup>19</sup> Anna Królikiewicz, "Interlanguage," *Międzyjęzyk* [Intrlanguage], ed. Jacek Foromański (Gdańsk: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku 2019), 71-110. <https://www.zbrojowniasztuki.pl/pliki/e72645c98eeb20082be438590a1736a5/anna-krolikiewicz-miedzyjezyk.pdf> (13.10.2023).
- <sup>20</sup> Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Taste and Other Senses: Reconsidering the Foundations of Aesthetics," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, No. 54 (2017), 20-34, 20.
- <sup>21</sup> Agata Jakubowska, "Meetings: Exhibitions of Women's Art Curated by Izabella Gustowska," *Ikonotheke* 26/2016, 291-311.
- <sup>22</sup> Marta Smolińska, "Abakanowicz in Poznań: an enduring presence," *Poznan.pl*, <https://www.poznan.pl/mim/wortals/en/en/news/9560/abakanowicz-in-poznan-an-enduring-presence,170114.html> (14.10.2023)
- <sup>23</sup> Anka Leśniak, *Fading Traces. Polish Women Artists in Art of Seventies*, video-installation based on conversations with artists, 2010.
- <sup>24</sup> *Traces of Sisterhood*, ed. Eliza Proszczuk, Ewa Chomicka (Warsaw: Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, 2022) <https://tractsnetwork.online/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/TRACES-OF-SISTERHOOD.pdf> (16.10.2023)
- <sup>25</sup> "Seizure – Rewriting Counter Histories (2015)," Grzinić-Smid.si, <http://grzinić-smid.si/?p=1303> (17.10.2023)
- <sup>26</sup> "Bogna Burska," *Culture.pl*, <https://culture.pl/en/artist/bogna-burska> (16.10.2022)
- <sup>27</sup> "Kulturen-Clash: Das „nackte“ Afrika an der alten WU," *Die Presse*, <https://www.diepresse.com/5359064/kulturen-clash-das-nackte-afrika-an-der-alten-wu> (17.10.2022),
- <sup>28</sup> *Wspominając Akademię. Wysłuchane, zapisane, okazane. Kobiety* [Remembering the academy. Heard, written down, presented. Women] Vol. 12., ed. Jacek Dembosz, Iwona Demko (Kraków: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, 2021).



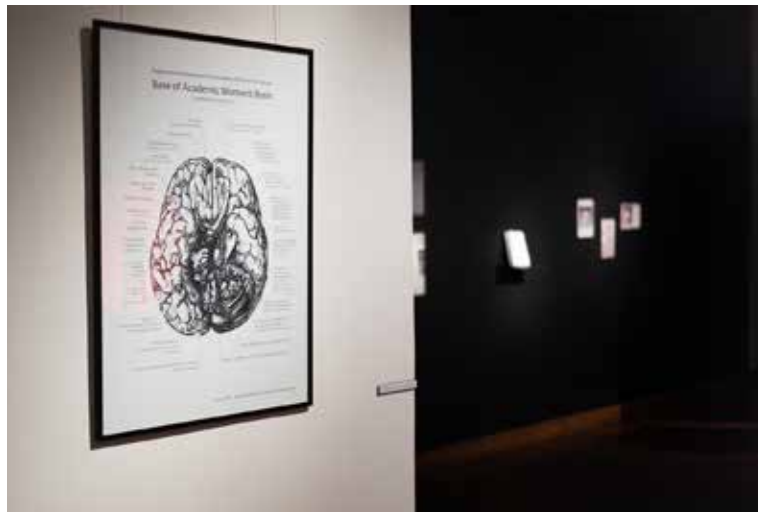
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*WOMEN  
AT THE  
ACADEMIES  
OF FINE  
ARTS*  
project – documentation<sup>©</sup>

Photo by Kacper Krajewski



Julia Kul, *Base of Academic Woman Brain*



Agata Zbylut, *Queen of bees. Documentation of the project*



Ania Włodarska, *In Praise of the Precariat*



Jolanta Rudzka Habisiak, *Moon Lake*, object; Dominika Kowynia, *Furious Girl*, painting



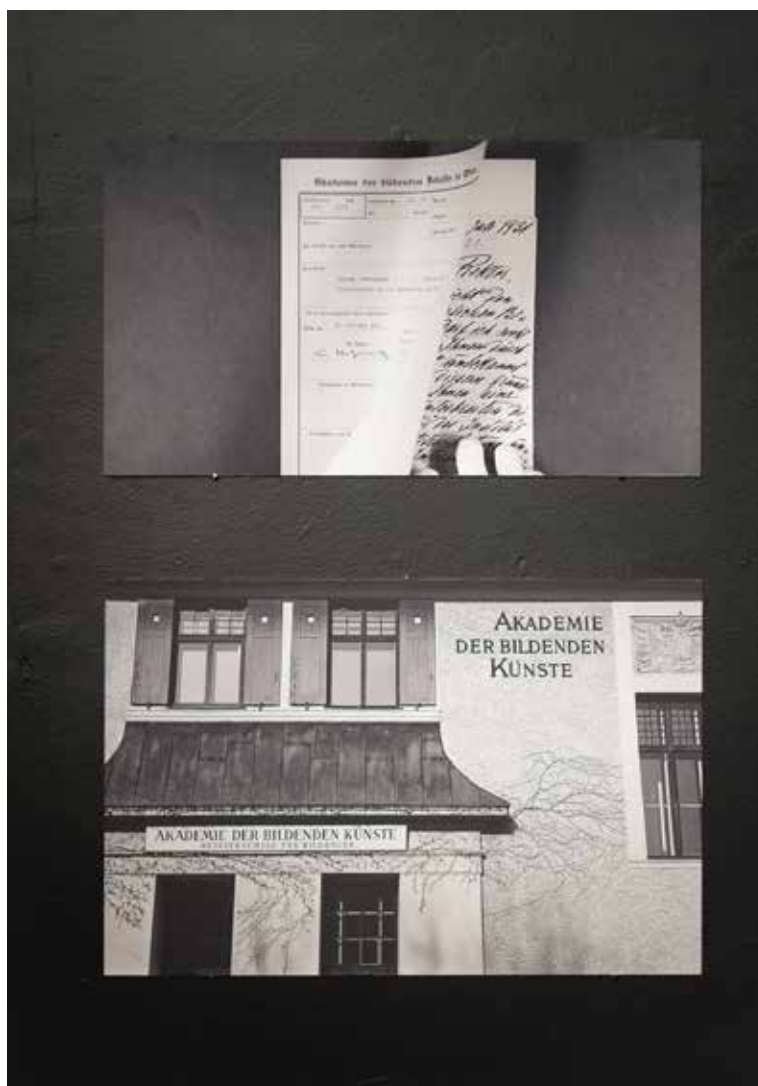
Simone Bader, *101 Years\**, video; Iwona Demko, *Feminatives*, objects



from the left: Anka Leśniak, *March for the Witch*; Agnieszka Babińska, *Is that Lenin?*  
Vivian Crespo Zurita, *The power of the ancestors*



from the left: Magdalena Wawrzyniak, object and photo; Bogna Burska, video; Ludmila Ostrogórska, object



Valerie Habsburg, Letter of application for profesorship from Teresa F. Ries, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Meisterschule für Bildhauer



Exhibition view



Exhibition view



Exhibition view





Exhibition view



*Remembering the Academy*, edited by Iwona Demko



Photographs from the TFR Archive, courtesy Valerie Habsburg



Vivian Crespo Zurita, *The Power of Ancestors*, video



Sylvia Jakubowska-Szycik, *Home Shelter*, objects; Agnieszka Babinska, photographs; Vivian Crespo Zurita, video

*WOMEN  
AT THE  
ACADEMIES  
OF FINE  
ARTS*

artists' documentations<sup>©</sup>

# SIMONE BADER

## The 1st Document\*

Dopiero w roku akademickim 1920/21 przyjęto kobiety jako pełnoprawne studentki Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Wiedniu.

Liczne dokumenty znajdujące się w archiwum uczelni dowodzą, że Akademia, a konkretnie rada profesorska, była zdecydowanie przeciwna przyjęciu kobiet na studia.



Pierwszym dokumentem, w którym pojawia się informacja na ten temat, jest ekspertyza akademii z 1872 r., wydana przez Rektorat na wniosek austriackiego Ministerstwa Oświaty. Wyniki raportu jak można się było spodziewać, potwierdziły obawy profesorów i świadczyły przeciwko przyjmowaniu kobiet.

Negatywna postawa profesorów nie pozostawia wątpliwości: stwierdza się, że kobiety prezentują niższy poziom wykształcenia, a przede wszystkim, niewłaściwe jest moralnie, „aby kobiety i mężczyźni studiowali razem”.

Co więcej, kobiety są w stanie uprawiać tylko „niższe” formy sztuki, takie jak malarstwo pejzażowe, florystyczne i portretowe.

Profesorowie zarekomendowali utworzenie odrębnej szkoły artystycznej dla kobiet – w 1897 r. rzeczywiście powstała w Wiedniu szkoła artystyczna dla kobiet i dziewcząt.

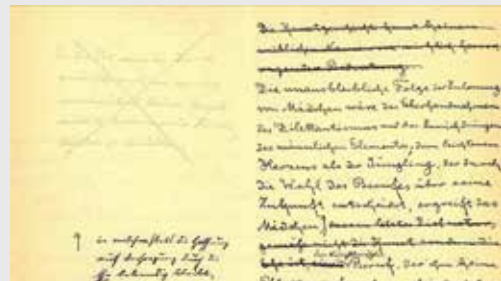
Kolejna ekspertyza z 1904 r., wydana na prośbę austriackiego Ministerstwa Oświaty o zajęcie stanowiska w tej sprawie, porównała Akademię Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, Pradze i Wiedniu.



Podczas gdy akademia w Krakowie skłonna była rozważyć uczestnictwo kobiet w zajęciach, akademia w Wiedniu, podobnie jak w Pradze, była temu przeciwna.



Zapisy wykreślone z dokumentów, są szczególnie znaczące. W tym przypadku, w oświadczeniu z 1904 r. skreślono zdanie: „Historia sztuki nie zna żadnego imienia żeńskiego o naprawdę wybitnym znaczeniu”.(!)



Pojawiały się kolejne zapytania w tej sprawie. Jednak stosunek profesorów do przyjmowania kobiet nie zmienił się w następnych dziesięcioleciach.

W końcu, w 1920 r. wydano zarządzenie Ministerstwa Oświaty: „Kobiety mają być przyjmowane, a Akademia musi zapewnić warunki do tego”. Było to dwa lata po wprowadzeniu w Austrii w powszechnych praw wyborczych dla kobiet, które zdobyły 1918 r.

Excerpts from the text

1872 – The first document...  
by Eva Schober

Head of the University Archives  
of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Translated from English to Polish  
by Anka Leśniak

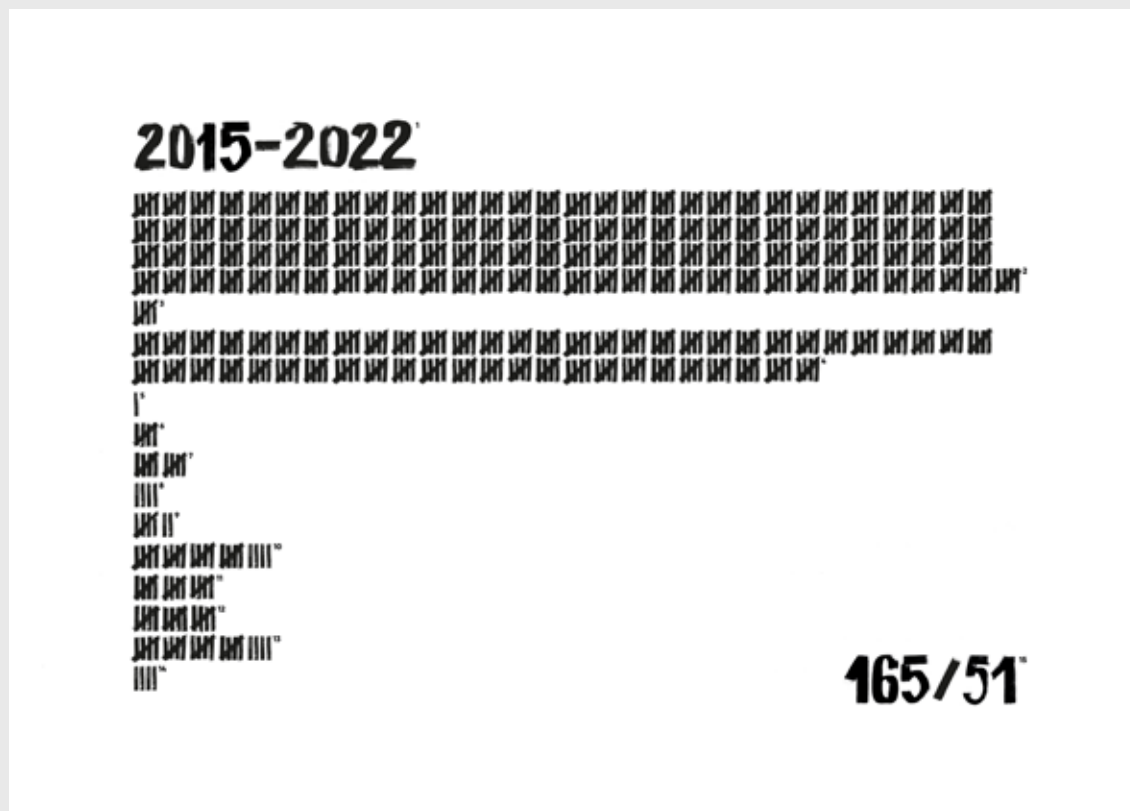
Font: Courier

Video  
Simone Bader  
2022

101  
years\*



# ANIA WŁODARSKA



## *Precariat*

The word 'precariat' (precarity) was formed by combining two English words: 'precarious' and 'proletariat.' What does this word mean? Precarious proletariat? What can I say about such a characteristic group that is unaware of its greatness? Why unaware? Because there is no time to self-organize in constant adaptation to change in the fixation on unstable daily life. The qualities of the precariat (not supported by research but by observation and experience), stress and tension, professional burn-out, striving for appreciation, unsure and uncertain status in the place of work, striving for appreciation, overeagerness, proving that you can do everything and in the best possible way too, overworking, inadequacy, discouragement. The gold frame is a praise, a recognition of the precarians. The gold frame is also for me.

# MAGDA GRZYBOWSKA



*It lasted, paper, granite, 2017*

The exhibition and the conference *Women at Academies of Fine Arts* became an excuse to trace the processes I have witnessed since the beginning of my stay at the Wrocław Academy of Fine Arts.

In the years 1995-2000, I studied sculpture in the studio of professor Alfreda Poznańska (1937-2001), and it is with her that this story begins. Alfreda Poznańska was an artist whose medium was traditional sculptural materials. However, what she instilled in me as a woman was a reflection on ephemeral phenomena, the fleeting 'between' the permanent and the impermanent. Poznańska created her works at a time when sculpture at academies was a male domain - hard stone, hard physical work. This largely shaped Poznańska's attitude, but at the same time, she formulated her own concept of art by reaching for the very idea of durability and impermanence. The sign of this was paper - presented in monolithic sculptural forms, but essentially pointing to the ephemeral and spiritual nature of the work's sources.

My work is focused on capturing fleeting phenomena. I have noticed similar traits in other women in academia, including students and Ph.D. candidates with whom I have had the pleasure of working. I will give them the opportunity to showcase their work, which often features paper as a material and not just an idea. Through their examples and short notes, there will be a feminine perspective on the 'durable-impermanent' dichotomy that is common to all human creativity and seems to define its existence.

The Polish word 'trwało' (meaning 'it lasted') contains an interesting paradox - it refers to something infinite in the past tense. The work is inspired by tombstones and monuments, where inscriptions, names, and epitaphs are usually carved into stone. However, in this case, I used an inherently ephemeral technique of pasting paper notices, which is temporary and doomed to the effects of time, to create the inscription. As a base, I used a granite element of a once-demolished chapel, parts of which can be found in the palace park in Morawa.

# ALEKSANDRA PULIŃSKA

(from Magda Grzybowska)

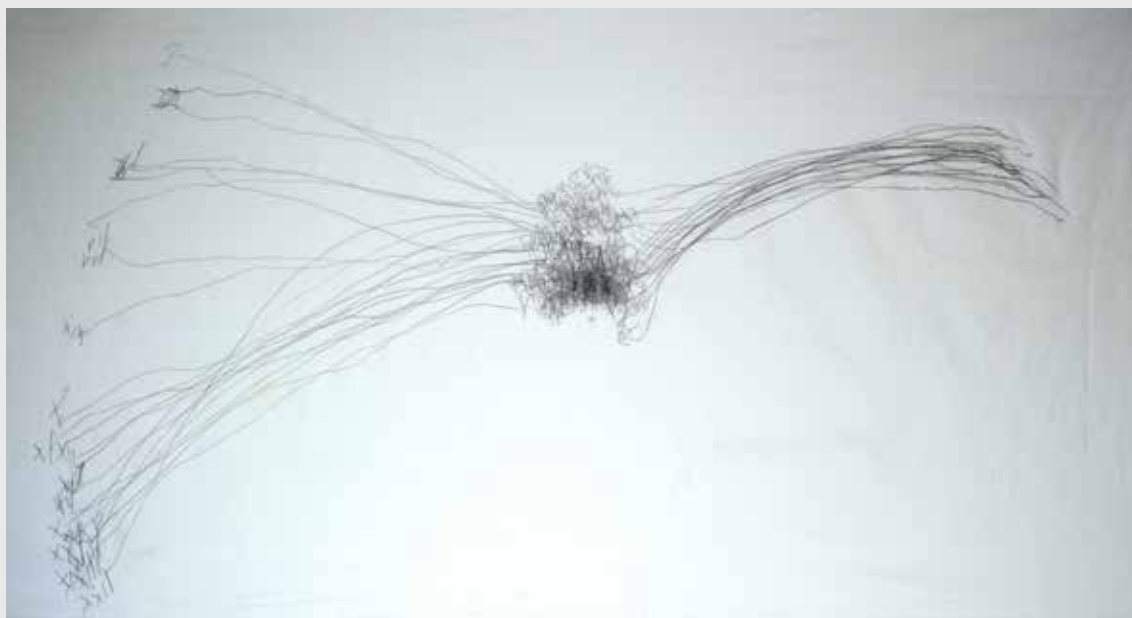


*Your brother's blood is calling from the ground to me*, handmade paper (waste paper), linocut, biota: beetroot seeds, 2021

The plants that grow through my graphic works slowly decompose cellulose with water day by day, writing their ornaments of destruction on the cards. Eventually, they complete their own life and wither. Dealing with these phenomena, however, certainly shows hope that even ephemeral processes can be a source of lasting changes in us.

# AGATA HORWAT

(from Magda Grzybowska)



*Black box, performance for camera, 2021*

The performance piece was an attempt to recall from the deepest recesses of memory the days of December 2020, when, standing in front of the window of the Capitol Theater, I was in contact (or sometimes without it) with a person sitting in a chair - an idle actor protesting against the closure of the theater. After each session, I wrote down the thoughts that emerged in my head during meditation, as well as more cold thoughts summarizing the entire hour-and-a-half experience. The notes were read aloud and recorded by me. They became a frame and a reason for running a line through my head, symbolizing time, and writing words behind it that appeared in my consciousness while listening to those experiences.

# ANGELIKA TAMKUN

(from Magda Grzybowska)



*To Paper*, steel, 2019

In the face of a 1000-year-old oak, our life is just one leaf falling from its crown.  
In human eyes, the life of a fruit fly is like the blink of an eye. And yet, although so fleeting, life - both human and insect - is in their eyes a monument, more durable than bronze.



## JASMIN SCHAITL

(from Magda Grzybowska)



*present/presence (air)*, video, 2018

*present/presence* is an ongoing project visualizing the natural, transformative, and ephemeral properties of matter after the artist's intervention. The title refers to Henri Lefebvre's hypothesis (in *Rhythmanalysis*, 1992) about the common confusion between presence (which cannot be represented, but can only be experienced at the moment itself) and present (sometimes appearing to be, but actually representing being through medium).

In the video work *present/presence (air)*, I exhale on the window, writing 'NOW' on the fogged glass, repeating this action several times.

# ALFREDA POZNAŃSKA

(from Magda Grzybowska)



Alfreda Poznańska, altar of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edyta Stein) in the chapel of the church of St. Michael the Archangel in Wrocław (ul. Kard. St. Wyszyńskiego), marble, completed in 1991

# MARTYNA JASTRZĘBSKA



## ***Sowing***

Referring to the Totart's achievements in times of social anger and lack of trust towards the authorities seems to be an obvious gesture, especially in Gdańsk. However, this is not a simple dialogue. Heritage formation is undoubtedly important but also difficult - especially for young people encountering Totart's art for the first time. Repeating or directly quoting Totart's actions and interventions is impossible from today's perspective; it would create an artificial situation and be doomed to failure in the drastically different context of the reality surrounding us. However, we can undoubtedly point to many separate threads in the formation's achievements, which remain current and gain a new dimension through this specific update when analyzed by people in the 20+ age group.

Work is taking place in a process - we work collectively, also tackling group activity, which is slowly gaining popularity in fine arts. It should be noted that this group met in the same year of study, and they were not a collective established by defining their common priorities. Analyzing the heritage of Totart, we point to the threads closest to our perspective; we look for those sensitive points where the message of action remains above changing times. The project's starting point was the idea of a banner. From the first October classes, students started trying to reread this idea, taking into account the performative factor of the planned action. An object was created in a horizontal arrangement on which kilograms of seeds were poured. The key to plant selection is the space for individual choice - so there were the seeds of plants that are incredibly visually attractive and those that feed us. There are also those that exceptionally support the ecosystem, such as highly honey-producing compositions dedicated to bees. The material used is jute (hemp textile), a biodegradable fabric. This ecological aspect - which is sometimes referred to as an area signaled by Totart - has a unique role in our work. After over six weeks of working together, the group takes the object to a new museum institution on the map of Gdańsk, NOMUS. The march route begins at the Mała Zbrojownia, the seat of the Faculty of Sculpture and Intermedia of the Academy of Fine Arts. Some events on the way are difficult to predict - one of the participants is injured along the way, so we call an ambulance. Fortunately, the injury turns out to be relatively minor. Everyone, including the injured person herself, decides not to abandon the action and move on. During the walk, the textile acts as a sieve - this is made possible by the way of weaving the chosen fabric. Only some of the seeds will be carried to the final destination and buried. Perhaps something will grow out of them. However, some will be sifted out along the way, and some will sown somewhere or serve as food for birds.

In this simple gesture, students notice the conventional nature of their situation - studies are not a guarantee, and the very definition of success in the modern world is subject to dynamic changes. The group carries the object with white gloves. The students treat this characterization as emphasizing the institutional background of their activity. In just half a year, they will officially defend their master's diplomas. They represent the Academy of Fine Art and their march ends in the NOMUS National Museum's Department for Contemporary Art. But it is also a signal towards pompous artistic gestures supporting the cult of the master artist, which have long been devalued. We bury the object together without using tools, white gloves get soaked in mud, and at the end, we shake hands (still wearing gloves) with the recipients of the action.

What is the point of analysis, search, preparation, and construction if, in the end, nothing remains? Against the universal expectation of lasting effects, we point to the validity of the value of the performative dimension of work, the ephemeral, poetic gesture derived from the process - as what is still valuable, perhaps the most valuable.

Authors of the action:

Agata Augustynowicz/ Marta Długołęcka/ Zofia Grunt/ Zuzanna Malinowska/ Anna Przytocka/ Grzegorz Sosiński/ Anita Święciak/ Ewa Tomaszewska/ Mikołaj Walentynowicz/ Karina Zawadzka

The project was carried out under the supervision of Martyna Jastrzębska, Ph.D. as part of the Shaping the Environment classes

2021/22

Graphic design – Patrycja Orzechowska, Photographic documentation – Anna Rezulak

Video documentation – Piotr Tomaszewicz

Full operation documentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjfgDZR2atw&t=671s>



## MARTYNA MILLER

The *Sexinsitu* project seeks a new visibility of sexuality. By focusing on experience rather than fantasy, it restores its social dimension. By recording individual solo recreations of the sexual memories of those participating in the project, an unique archive of sexual experience is created. It takes the form of a macro-organism. Facing the matter of their own bodies and the virtuality of their memories, the beings form an organic machine, whose individual parts cooperate for the common good.

It is a story of intimacy, cosmic possibilities of organisms, circulation, movement and - on the top of it - motion picture and it's responsibility for our imagination.

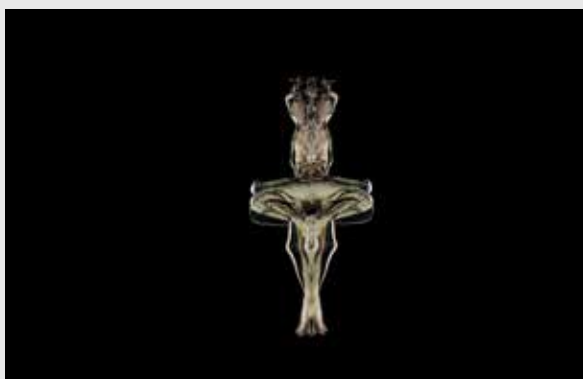


<https://vimeo.com/727534622/dbd58f197e>

The project is developing and macroorganism is growing together with the new participants. It has a modular form, in which each person is unique, transforming within itself realm, that develops with time:

<https://vimeo.com/762152028/3fb7532f1f>

A body situated alone in space, without a partner, recalling the shared moments - it provokes questions about responsibility and pleasure, as well as about the role and function of the body, mind and memory in the process of experiencing pleasure, loving and/or forming relationships. *sexinsitu* problematises human sexuality in the philosophical dimension by treating sex as a personal but not private matter. Its aim is to restore the social dimension of sexuality, in which the term “social” describes all transformative planetary matter.







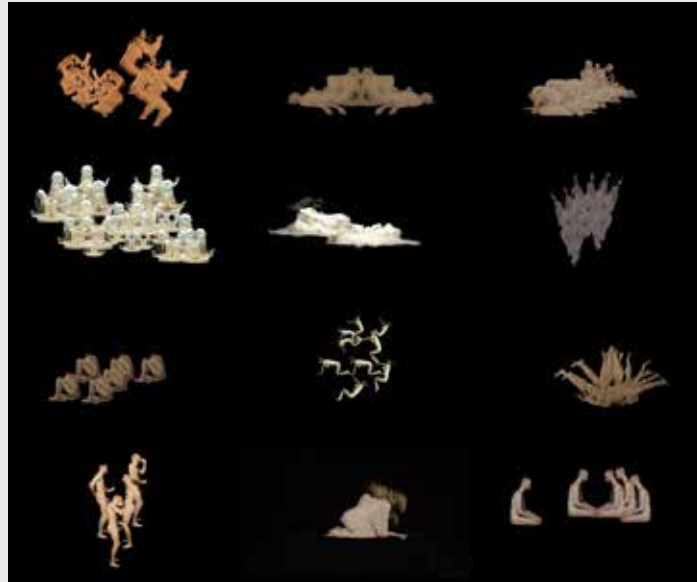
The *Sexinsitu* project takes the form of an archive, specific as it collects data and materials that it produces itself, according to an elaborated method. The basic units are video recordings. They are based on the method of work with the body, in which the participants, through body movements, recall their own sexual memories. They do this alone – without partners. The choreographies created in this way become a prosthesis of this memory, an attempt to materialize intimate and ephemeral sexual events in the image.

This is therefore not an archive in the classical sense of the word, but rather a visual archive project that produces its own technology as a basis for creating a visuality of sexuality based on experience. Its task is to change not only the perspective of looking at sexuality, but to enable insight into this space for ourselves, to tame and express it.



The virtual dimension of memory combines the tradition of performance with the subject matter of new media. The increasing participation of media in the production of our contemporary identities adds another element to this relationship – empathy through embodiment. The dual logic of remediation states that the primary goal of our culture is to become as technologically mediated as possible while removing all traces of our functioning through media. The importance of technology in the construction of our self is realized and fulfilled without our awareness of these processes. This

recognition seems to be crucial in thinking about the body, its experiences and affects, including sexuality. As our primary medium, it has become the encyclopedic product of this double logic – the difference between the medialized image of the body and its experience in non-virtual life is as obvious to us as it is inescapable.



In the image, we see only a piece of what opens up psychologically, socially, and interpersonally. We produce an image, this single, unique reproduction of a sexual memory which, in contrast to the simplicity with which we are used to associating the „sexual“, is illegible, unacceptable as a fetish. Too abstract on the one hand and too raw on the other. Naked and veiled, explicit and understated. Censored virtually and „innocent“ in the situation of direct contact. It is a separate form of recording, something between a note, a sketch and a finished, monumental work. Reconstruction creates and opens up an entire universe, yet its documentation merely records this fact, marking the difference between image and life.

In this dimension, the single act of reconstruction is also a manifesto. A reflection on corporeality, a corporeal trace, noting that I notice the body and sexuality as an element that connects me to the social world. I am on the side of action, search, weakness, experiment, the unknown, the You-oriented world.



By presenting a fragment of my own sexual self, I fight for the possibility of a subjective presentation of sexuality, and thus for the empowerment and emancipation of all of us as sexual, sentient beings.

Martyna Miller, fragment of the DA dissertation, „Sexinsitu. Presentation of sex in everyday life”



*Martyna Miller's art is an area of cultivation of creative relations with the world, the meaning of friendship, community, the presence of female narrative, but also an area of struggle for one's own identity, sexuality, widely understood freedom and independence. The artist is aware of the constantly developing new technologies that change the area of art, but she is also deeply convinced that „the strength, durability, beauty and significance of images come from their function and role in the life of the community”.*

*The theoretical work, and partially the video fragments realizations, have given me a great pleasure to experience wonderful, deeply emotional, intimate, nevertheless universal art, excellently guided by erudite theoretical work, and as free and independent as the author of this project.*

prof. Izabella Gustowska

# AGATA ZBYLUT

## **QUEEN OF BEES**

Exhibition of women students and graduates of the Photography and Post-Art Activities Studio, Faculty of Media Art, Academy of Art in Szczecin.

LOCATION: Centre of Contemporary Art KRONIKA, Bytom, Poland

DATES March 30 - May 2, 2019

ARTISTS: Olga Dziubak, Małgorzata Goliszewska, Hanna Kaszewska, Karolina Melnicka, Patrycja Migiel, Jolanta Nowaczyk, Tatiana Pancewicz, Irmina Rusicka, Emilia Turek, Dorota Wójcik, Agata Zbylut

CURATORS: Agata Zbylut, cooperation Agata Cukierska

VISUAL IDENTIFICATION: Marcin Wysocki



The *QUEEN OF THE BEES* exhibition was intended to extend the dialogue conducted by the Photography and Post-Artistic Activities Studio. Many of these conversations, especially in the last stages of education, concern what will happen after graduation, about strategies that could be effective in the so-called art world. I remember the fear that accompanied me perfectly when I graduated from the Academy. This moment is especially difficult for young women. Even though over 70% of art academies' "graduates" are women. Rankings, sales of works, representation by commercial galleries, and participation in group exhibitions reverse these proportions, and even parity would be unfair.

The exhibition confronted the young women artists with the market, the professional situation, and the social roles they entered after completing

their studies. It included winners of prestigious competitions, foreign scholarships, and women who devoted all their attention to family matters, putting artistic activity into the background. I expected these conversations to be difficult, but the scale of these difficulties was surprising even for me. Especially concerning the artists who are "making a career." They "burn out" very quickly. They are exhausted from constantly maintaining their visibility in the art world. They travel from one exhibition to another, live from project to project, and are still on the road. We know well that participation in exhibitions can be very poorly paid for different reasons - sometimes because of the organizer's small budget and sometimes because the artist is the weakest link who agrees to work without remuneration.



Olga Dziubak

**1500 PLN, 2017**

**video 3'50", one hundred zloty banknote prepared for exchange in the bank for a new one, by gluing a white piece of paper in the place eaten by mice**

The work is a record of repair to money hidden by the artist's grandfather in the attic and found after his death. The banknotes bitten by mice were found when Olga had finished her art studies and was looking for a job. According to the National Bank of Poland guidelines, damaged money can be replaced with a new banknote if less than 75% of its surface is damaged. In the video, banknotes are delivered for exchange following the advice of a bank employee. The artist fills the gaps with white paper, strengthening the visual void.





### **Małgorzata Goliszewska**

***Mom's Room*, 2019, diplomas, statuettes, and other insignia of awards and distinctions that the artist has received since starting her studies at the Academy of Art, which are carefully collected by her mother, who is also the author of the arrangement of this work**

For as long as I can remember, I dreamed of becoming an artist. The art world seemed to me something unique, an unreal fairy-tale land. Throughout primary school, I drew and dreamed of an art school. It was like the gate to paradise. I didn't go to the exam because my mother did everything to discourage me from doing so. She was terrified of what might happen if I fell into the wrong (artistic) environment and that there would be no future for me. I gave up these dreams and went to a psychology high school. It was then 2003. Today, my mother is very proud of me. He collects all the materials about me and decorates his room with them.

The work at the exhibition is an attempt to move fragments of my mother's apartment and recreate her dreams and fantasies, displaying treasures and trophies related to me. It is a kind of altar and tribute that the most loyal fan pays to her favorite star. Most of the artifacts were donated with great anxiety, but for a good cause, to let people see them, maybe someone will appreciate it and notice it. It would be a pity if such a rich exhibition had only one viewer.



Hanna Kaszewska

***Escitalopram Dreams Radio, 2018/2019***

**Internet radio at: [Escitalopram-dreams.eu](http://Escitalopram-dreams.eu)**

**Muzyka Mikołaj Tkacz**

***Sen 23: VIOLATION, 2018/2019***

**Performance art piece during the opening**

Escitalopram is an organic chemical compound and, for the time being, the most selective serotonin inhibitor. The medications, including Escitalopram, are considered highly effective for depressive episodes in bipolar disorder. (...) The only side effect is vivid dreams. Although sometimes annoying, such dreams do not seem to be a high price for the possibility of functioning. However, they remain an integral part of my life that is essentially uncontrollable.

The dreams being a side effect of medical treatment, I turned into podcasts. By narrating them as if they were someone else's dreams, I can distance myself from the story being told while also capturing it.



**Karolina Melnicka**

***I'm Silent*, 2019**

**print on a Japanese unfolding book (empty inside), 23x150 cm**

During Karolina's artistic residency in Tokyo and Kyoto in 2018, the artist came across a self-service love hotel with a several hundred-page catalog in which women exposed their bodies and covered their faces with their hands. This motif was to be used by Karolina to create an animation, with the artist using her hands. Accustomed to a relative artistic activity, she did not expect that the topic would be censored by the institution that invited her and would not be implemented.

*I'm Silent* is an attempt to disenchant this situation. What was not published in Japan was shown in the Kronika gallery. No one will hear this voice in Tokyo or Kyoto, and also the fact that the rejection of the project causes the cancellation of the artist's fee. By trying to speak in the name of those who couldn't speak for themselves, Karolina has been effectively silenced and deprived of the financial resources she expected to receive during her residency.



**Patrycja Migiel**

***Portfolio*, 24'42, 2018/2019**

**print on a Japanese unfolding book (empty inside), 23x150 cm**

Patrycja Migiel established contacts with five people involved in curating and art criticism. She offered to perform tasks they did not have time or inclination to do, such as painting the floor or cleaning the office. She included these tasks in her existing artistic achievements as performative actions. While performing the tasks, the artist tried her best and completed them conscientiously, hoping for future reciprocation from the 'employers.' After each task, a video was created, which the artist posted on her website: [www.patryciamigiel.pl](http://www.patryciamigiel.pl).

The last video, made almost a year later, summarizes the artist's situation after graduation. The question arises - what was the use of the favors performed as part of her diploma? Did she manage to monetize the contacts she established then?



**Jolanta Nowaczyk and Olga Dziubak**

***In Rejection We Trust*, 2018-2019 an installation consisting of a video advertising Open Call: Rejected Proposals and origami made of no longer useable competition entry forms sent by artists from around the world**

For young artists, applying for grants or exhibitions becomes part of everyday life - a placebo pill, an illusion of participation in the world of art. The "grant fever" does not bring many benefits and even leads to depression caused by competing between artists with very different symbolic capital.

In 2018, the fictional foundation 'In Rejection We Trust' launched an open call for artists to submit projects that competition juries had rejected. This project transformed the negative experience of rejection into a creative and critical energy source. Olga Dziubak and Jolanta Nowaczyk, graduates of the Faculty of Painting and New Media at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, invented the foundation. They used institutional criticism strategies in their work and recognized the potential of such collective activities.





**Tatiana Pancewicz**

***Rainbow, 2016***

**3D printed object, LED light, prism**

The rainbow was created as one of the elements of the artist's diploma. It is the result of the artist's cooperation with physicists and opticians. The object itself was 3D printed. The LED light used to obtain a physical rainbow is split on a prism and then diffracted on a semicircular mirror surface. A similar visual effect could be achieved more easily by projecting an image of a rainbow instead of physically breaking and bending light - but then the rainbow would not be a rainbow, but only an image of it. At the same time, this object becomes an emanation of the teaching processes conducted in the Studio in the context of concepts such as truth or the artist's position in society.



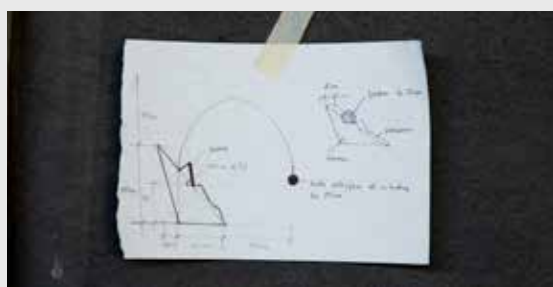
Irmina Rusicka

***What a Fucking Crisis*, 2018**

**Lightbox 100 x 70 cm**

For several decades, researchers have been talking about the think manager - think male phenomenon - the common belief that the one who manages must be a man. Even if a manager is a woman, she should behave 'like a man.' Ultimately, the abovementioned phenomenon transforms into a more radical thinking power – think male. To become effective, female politicians and activists put themselves in other people's shoes and speak in a 'male' voice to be heard by male ears.

In *What a Fucking Crisis*, the central tension is created between the aggressive title and the passivity of the artist in a male disguise. Living in an era of masculinity crisis, the power-male strategy turns out to be ineffective. The attribute of the white man's flexed muscles becomes a clear burden. In a broader perspective, the crisis of masculinity itself is, above all, a crisis of a world based on "masculine" values: domination, exploitation, expansion, and objectification.



**Dorota Wójcik**

***Host Team*, 2018**

**Three sculptural objects, free-standing**

The sculptures were created as part of my master's degree. The starting point was conversations about the influence of third parties on the final shape of an art object, especially where their participation is necessary, e.g., for technological reasons. The flow of financial resources was also an important issue. To be able to study, the artist worked as a hostess, which resulted in frequent absences and little time that she could devote to completing her diploma. One of the last jobs she undertook during her studies was at a nightclub in Zurich. This job involved drinking expensive champagne with men who paid for it. She used the money she earned to pay subcontractors - other men who made the sculptures. The artist also assumed that she would listen to the subcontractors' advice and accept the technical solutions they proposed based on the drawing presented to them. The form of the object to produce was so complex that the subcontractors would not doubt that the artist could not complete it on her own. Additionally, the object was designed with a flaw that made it unstable. Although each subcontractor received the same drawing as a model for the sculpture, each proposed different ways of making it and selected other materials. In this way, three various sculptures were created, the shape of which only serves as a pretext for examining how the subcontractors' knowledge, authority, and personal experience can influence the final shape of the artwork. The sculptures were named after subcontractors, about which the quests were informed during the exhibition's opening by a hostess employed and trained by the artist.



**Agata Zbylut**

***Damp Patch, 2019***

**A fresco painted by Olga Dziubak on one of the walls of the gallery, a video in which Karolina Babińska tells the story of the painter.**

The project was inspired by a story I heard from Karolina Babińska when she was my student, which I have not forgotten for years. It is the story of a painter who, during the most challenging period of her life, painted a fresco on the walls of her studio in the form of stains or fungus. The painting was so realistic and convincing that the artist successfully reported it to the insurance company several times, which paid her compensation. At the time, these were the only paintings she made money from. Today, the painter works as an academic at one of the state art universities. I invited her to participate in the work in Kronika, and although she initially agreed, she withdrew a week later. Instead, I asked Olga Dziubak - another young artist with financial problems - to help me with the project. Olga faked water damage on one of the gallery's walls and received remuneration for her work, which was equal to the estimated compensation for such damage.