

Anna Maria Leśniewska

THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM, TELEVISION AND THEATRE SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ

Exhibitions of Sculpture as a Sign of the Spatial Shift: from *Spring Salon* to *Sculpture in the Garden*

In Polish art history, exhibitions of sculpture presenting a variety of its examples and with space seen as the sculptural material have very rarely been treated as a research subject that would reveal significant formal transformations and exhibition methods.¹ This essay focuses on exhibitions of sculpture that were organised after the 2nd World War and immediately after the period of Social Realism, i.e. in the era of the “thaw” in 1956. This period is particularly important considering the spectacular liberation of the creative spirit from governmental oppression which resulted from liberalisation of the political system. In that period, art defined through its cooperation with space became the domain not only of architecture or town planning, but mainly of sculpture. Only some of the exhibitions of sculpture held in Warsaw – where there was a consolidated artistic milieu and powerful institutional support for the organisation of exhibitions – have been selected here, in chronological order, taking under consideration unconventional attempts in the presentation of sculpture. What emerges is a diversified image of an intense formal experiment in this area based on avant-garde thought as expressed in the treatise *Kompozycja przestrzeni. Obliczenia rytmu czasoprzestrzennego* [Spatial composition. Calculations of the spatio-temporal rhythm] (1931).² This essay is an attempt at presenting relations in the sculptural forms, in which the category

1 The essay focuses on one of the important themes that have been discussed in detail, with reference to the current state of research in both Polish and foreign publications, in Anna Maria Leśniewska's book *Nowe miejsce rzeźby w sztuce polskiej lat 60. XX wieku jako wyraz przemian w sztuce przestrzeni* [The new place of sculpture in Polish art of the 1960s as an expression of transformations in spatial art], published in the 4th volume of *Dysertacje doktorskie Instytutu Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk* [Doctoral dissertations at the Art Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences], Warsaw, 2013.

2 K. Kobro, W. Strzeмиński, *Kompozycja przestrzeni. Obliczenia rytmu czasoprzestrzennego. Biblioteki „a.r.” no. 2* [Spatial composition. Calculations of the spatio-temporal rhythm. Item 2 in the a.r. Library], Łódź, 1931.

of space is a fundamental part of the research perspective. The exhibitions cited herein, which until now have usually been perceived in various studies as indirectly linked with the topic of sculpture – an example being *Studium przestrzeni* [A study of space] (1957) – have been used as research instruments to extend the boundaries of sculptural forms via extension into space.

Earlier research on the topics of sculpture and of exhibiting sculpture in Polish institutions has revealed a considerable difficulty in assessing the issues in question because of the scarcity of documentation and the lack of synthetic analyses. Consequently, this topic, as reviewed from the Polish perspective, is also absent from foreign publication; this state of affairs was aggravated by Poland's political separation from the Western world, which ended only in the year 1989. The presentation of exhibitions of sculpture from *Spring Salon* (*Salon Wiosenny*, 1946) to *Sculpture in the Garden* (*Rzeźba w ogrodzie*, 1957) is organised around an axis based on a presentation of forms which restructure a definite location in space and which do not refer to the surrounding landscape and are not linked to architecture; these forms delineate an autonomous sphere of artistic goals which establishes the essence of the influencing process. The surrounding open space reveals the public aspect of art as a new quality creating a permanent link between the work and its recipient. Places restructured by an artist are carriers of created meanings and sources of energy that enable the ideas contained in them to be propagated further. Sculpture was thus able to exceed the vision of its author as enclosed in its form and acquired the ultimate meaning depending on the external context which determined the conditions in which it functioned.

Spring Salon, organised by the Polish Artists and Designers' Trade Union in Warsaw in 1946, was the first nationwide show of Polish art, including sculpture, to be held after the war. Although it turned out to be a review of the achievements of Polish art of the inter-war period, it nevertheless offered "a possibility of magnificent development", while the intriguing "singularity and distinctiveness"³ found a problematic culmination in the First National Visual Arts Exhibition (I Ogólnopolska Wystawa Plastyki, 1950), which was already Socialist Realist. The rules of artistic composition following the principles of Social Realism were introduced and became a norm that was intended to bring about the "reestablishment of order in a world plunged into the chaos of the war, give art a meaning in the landscape of the post-war catastrophe, and concurrently to find the connection with artistic tradition".⁴ This tradition was expressed mainly through the concept of monumentality, which in the inter-war period concerned primarily the connection between sculpture

3 S. Teisseyre, "Wstęp" [Introduction], in: *Salon Wiosenny* [The Spring Salon], exhibition catalogue, Warsaw, 1946, unpaginated.

4 P. Piotrowski, *Znaczenia modernizmu. W stronę historii sztuki polskiej po 1945 roku* [The meanings of modernism. Towards the history of art in Poland after 1945], Poznań, 1999, p. 33.

and architecture. The promoters of the new authority made use of the condition of artistic awareness that was typical of the 1930s which helped them to fulfil the principles of cultural policy in practice. Of all the art of the 1950s, the results of this policy were the least visible in the area of sculpture. Those artists whose creative work had been formed by classicist traditions in sculpture essentially complied with the postulates of Socialist Realism if they were interpreted broadly.⁵

The Young Artists and Scientists' Club (Klub Młodych Artystów i Naukowców) (1947)⁶ was instituted by Marian Bogusz and Zbigniew Dłubak at Dom Wojska Polskiego in Warsaw. Its counterpart in Cracow was to be the Artists' Club,⁷ conceived as an association with a "socially and artistically progressive ideology".⁸ Its main aim was to "amalgamate the foundations of artistic creativity with contemporary scientific thought" and to "clearly define art's attitude to the ongoing social transformations".⁹ The First Exhibition of Modern Art (I Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej, 1948) opened in Cracow as a result of cooperation between the two clubs. Its intention was to show the state of awareness of avant-garde artists by referring to achievements of science and technology. The exposition was divided into four sections: "photomontages", "images", "models" and "photographs". A very important role was ascribed to "spatial models illustrating the concepts of scale, spatial structure, movement,

5 Specialist literature pertaining to Social Realism is vast indeed. The scale of difficulties in reviewing Social Realism in Polish art and the motivations behind accepting it were analysed in detail by Wojciech Włodarczyk in e.g. *Socrealizm. Sztuka polska w latach 1950–1954* [Social Realism. Polish art in the years 1950–1954], Paris, 1986; idem, "Soc-realistyczny epizod. Warszawa 1933 – Moskwa 1958" [A Soc-realist episode. Warsaw 1933 – Moscow 1958], in: *Warszawa-Moskwa / Moskwa-Warszawa 1900–2000* [Warsaw-Moscow / Moscow-Warsaw 1900–2000], Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 2004. Also recently in: *Za żelazną kurtyną. Sztuka oficjalna i niezależna w Związku Radzieckim i Polsce 1945–1989* [Behind the Iron Curtain. Official and independent art in the Soviet Union and in Poland 1945–1989], Warsaw, 2010, ed. P. Nowicki, the essay by P. Piotrowski, "Polska sztuka między totalitaryzmem a demokracją" [Polish art between totalitarianism and democracy], pp. 64–78, is also worth noting.

6 The Young Artists and Scientists' Club was instituted in May 1947; *Stała wystawa malarstwa nowoczesnego – część I* [Permanent exhibition of modern painting – part 1] and *Wystawa rysunków Marka Włodarskiego z lat 1929–1932* [Exhibition of Marek Włodarski's drawings from the years 1929–1932] opened in November; *Stała wystawa malarstwa nowoczesnego – część II* [Permanent exhibition of modern painting – part 2] opened in December.

7 The Artists' Club in Cracow was established by members of the Young Visual Artists' Group [Grupa Młodych Plastyków] in March 1948.

8 The draft of the statute of the "Artists' Club" association (typescript in M. Porębski's archive), in: *I Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej. Pięćdziesiąt lat później* [The First Exhibition of Modern Art: Fifty years later], exhibition catalogue, Nowosielski Foundation, Starmach Gallery, Cracow, December 1998 – January 1999, Cracow, 1998, p. 79.

9 Ibid.

contrast, object-related inventiveness".¹⁰ They were to make it easy for visitors to perceive modes of visual influence as exercised by contemporary artworks. The theoretical statements of the authors of the exhibits referred mostly to issues of painting, but it was the spatial compositions that were to express the new language of art, i.e. they were to formalise the simplest structure. The visitors also found them the most attractive of all, as they "showed a world that belonged to an artist as much as it belonged to a scientist – a theoretician, or a technician – a practitioner".¹¹ The display included eleven spatial arrangements placed in various parts of the exposition;¹² this underlined the logic of possible solutions and the grammar of signs arranged in model expressions. Some of the exhibits were suspended in space, some stood on plinths. A recurrent element was a placard with information prepared by the organisers that explained the significance of these works; this, in fact, anticipated the installations in today's meaning of the term: "Spatial models collected in this room show how a modern artist perceives and solves the elementary issues of his artistic language: those of space, scale, matter and movement".¹³ In a text that was to be used to guide tour groups around the exhibition, Wróblewski described some of the models, with particular focus on the works of Bogusz. In the first room, the diversity of sizes and colours of free-hanging spherical forms among which the visitor could walk was used by Bogusz to create his own cosmic order – "a model of the universe".¹⁴ Touching any of the spheres put them all in motion and any interference in their order caused others to move rhythmically, thus demonstrating the phenomenon of resonance.¹⁵ The problem investigated in the second work was the contrast of two juxtaposed objects of different shape: one was a form made of precisely joined sections of circles made of metal, and thus open to space, the other was an organic, rough-textured lump: "[The] first rules the space with its curves; the other spreads uneasily, as if the space was crushing it".¹⁶

10 *Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Krakowie* [The Exhibition of Modern Art in Cracow] (typescript in M. Porębski's archive), in: *ibid.*, p. 82.

11 Anonymous, *Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej zorganizowana przez Klub Artystów w Krakowie* [Exhibition of modern art organised by the Artists' Club in Cracow], The Society of Friends of Fine Arts, Cracow, December 1948 – January 1949.

12 The list of exhibits mentions eleven "spatial models": Marian Bogusz (2), Tadeusz Brzozowski (1), Ali Bunsch (1), Tadeusz Kantor (2), Maciej Makarewicz (1), Jerzy Nowosielski (1) and Andrzej Wróblewski (3); the photographs have additionally revealed spatial models by Jadwiga Maziarska (1) and Marian Szulc (1). In the end, Kantor and Makarewicz failed to produce their designs.

13 "Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Krakowie" (typescript in M. Porębski's archive), in: *I Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej...*, op. cit., p. 82.

14 A. Wróblewski, "Omówienie sal wystawowych. 3. Modele" [Analysis of exhibition rooms. 3. Models], in: *I Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej...*, op. cit., p. 113.

15 See A. M. Leśniewska, "Przestrzenne poszukiwania Mariana Bogusza" [Marian Bogusz's spatial explorations], *Rzeźba Polska*, 1987, pp. 151–157.

16 A. Wróblewski, op. cit., p. 113.

Unfortunately, the First Exhibition of Modern Art – envisioned as the opening of a process of education in which the integrated elements of time, history and space would be the markers of a new perception and understanding of art and would offer a way towards acquainting the public with the achievements of contemporary artists – became the end of a yet uncompleted path. The recently ended period was summed up expressively by Maria Jarema: “Socialist Realism should have become a striving for simplicity. And what did it become? Imposed by non-artists, it ceased to have anything to do with art – it became a vulgarity botched by kitsch-makers”,¹⁷ she noted in 1952 and emphasised that “time lost to culture is lost tenfold; when halted for even a short time, culture retrogresses a long way back”.¹⁸ Socialist Realism forced an artist to carry out political slogans in practice and imposed modes of thinking aimed at reflecting reality as it was envisioned by the party. Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz commented: “Foreign models which they gave us to imitate [...] were repellent. [...] All was drowned in a mire of imitation and stylisation”.¹⁹ The only opportunity to implement one’s designs were the occasional commissions or competitions for monuments with clear and politically involved meanings.²⁰

Even the Young Art Exhibition (*Wystawa Młodej Plastyki*, 1955), organised within the framework of the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students,²¹ only slightly diverged from the annual national exhibitions that were staged in the period of Socialist Realism; this went contrary to the hopes that it would trigger a transformation in art, as well as in the manner of presenting sculpture. Its aim was made explicit during the Council of Young Artists; the ensuing appeal stated openly that “the exhibition is to build socialism”.²² The exhibition was thus not a breakthrough, but a continuation of former, Soc-Realist formal solutions, and the contribution of sculpture was practically

17 M. Jarema, “Z notatnika” [From a notebook], in: *Maria Jarema. Projekty i obrazki* [Designs and pictures], Inny Świat Gallery, Cracow, 1985.

18 “Z pracowni plastyków. Maria Jarema” [From the artists’ studios. Maria Jarema], *Życie Literackie*, 1956, no. 28, p. 5.

19 W. Baraniewski, *W kręgu Jarnuszkiewicza. W 35-lecie pracy pedagogicznej prof. Jerzego Jarnuszkiewicza* [In the circle of Jarnuszkiewicz. On Prof. Jarnuszkiewicz’s 35th anniversary of didactic work], Warsaw, 1985, p. 6.

20 See I. Grzesiuk-Olszewska, *Polska rzeźba pomnikowa w latach 1945–1995* [Polish monumental sculpture 1945–1995], Warsaw, 1995.

21 *Ogólnopolska Wystawa Młodej Plastyki, pod hasłem ‘Przeciw wojnie – przeciw faszyzmowi’. Malarstwo – rzeźba – grafika* [The National Young Art Exhibition themed “Against war – against fascism”. Painting – sculpture – graphic art], exhibition catalogue, Ministry of Culture and Art, Association of Polish Artists and Designers, Polish Organisational Committee of the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students, The Arsenal, Warsaw, July–September 1955. Cf. A. Krzywicki, *Postalinowski karnawał radości. V Światowy Festiwal Młodzieży i Studentów o Pokój i Przyjaźń, Warszawa 1955 r. Przygotowania – przebieg – znaczenie* [The post-Stalinist carnival of joy: the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace and Friendship, Warsaw 1955, preparations – course – significance], Warsaw, 2009.

22 M. Zenowicz, *Narada młodych plastyków* [The Council of Young Artists], p. 3.

negligible. The insipidity of forms and the equally unadventurous set of themes of the exhibited works were sadly evident. By giving the exhibition the theme “Against war – against fascism”, the organisers automatically limited the range of works. Andrzej Jakimowicz wrote: “The motto of the exhibition is the fight for peace. Is it surprising, therefore, that when the topic of a work is hate, it is not concealed? [...] [The exhibition] is deeply optimistic; yet it is not a shallow cheerfulness of theme, [...] but its power and trust in the future”.²³ The creators did not share the optimism of the organisers; neither did Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewiczowa, a member of the commission that approved works for exhibition and at the same time a reviewer whose task was to sum up the input of the young sculptors. “I am to write about sculpture, but this time it will be neither simple nor easy, because I think that at the current moment our sculpture has not found itself at the front line of the fight”,²⁴ she wrote. She commented on the exhibited works – *Matka* [Mother] by Magdalena Więcek (1955), *Tajwan* [Taiwan] by Tadeusz Sieklucki (1955) and *Pokój zwycięży wojnę* [Peace will overcome war] by Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz (1955) – stressing the artists’ “revolt against conventions” and their “conscious, controlled reflections”.²⁵ Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewiczowa, a careful observer of the art scene, was perfectly aware of what was being produced in the studios of the young artists because at that time she was already working on a script for the exhibition entitled *Sculpture in the Garden* (1957).

The political situation was not favourable to art, but an exchange of creative ideas between artists continued regardless and works were exhibited at unofficial shows. There emerged informal groups referring to the views that had been aired at the First Exhibition of Modern Art (1948) and to the achievements of the interwar avant-garde. The first exhibitions of Group 55,²⁶ organised outside the official (i.e. institutional) structures, took place in the studio of the sculptress Barbara Zbrożyna²⁷ (Fig. 1), whose *Rzeka* [River] (1955) was at that time a composition that the critics most frequently commented on.²⁸ The soft, organic, intertwined shapes formally referred to Etruscan

23 A. Jakimowicz, “W tytule wystawy...”, in: *Ogólnopolska Wystawa Młodej...*, op. cit.

24 J. Jarnuszkiewiczowa, “Rzeźba na Ogólnopolskiej Wystawie Młodej Plastyki” [Sculpture at the National Young Art Exhibition], *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1955, no. 3–4, p. 44.

25 Ibid.

26 Zbigniew Dłubak documented Group 55 events. His photographs, which document joint events and often show works which are no longer extant, compensate for the absence of a relevant catalogue or publications from the early period of the group’s existence. In addition, the photographs reveal a small section of the social life that was an integral part of the young creators’ artistic life. A. M. Leśniewska’s archive.

27 Group 55’s exhibitions in Zbrożyna’s studio took place in January and May of 1955 and in April of 1956.

28 *Polska Kronika Filmowa* [Polish Film Chronicle], no. 22, 1956, *Grupa 55 – nowy zespół Malarzy i Rzeźbiarzy w Warszawie* [Group 55 – a new team of Painters and Sculptors in Warsaw] is a recording of the artists’ meeting in Zbrożyna’s studio on 10 May 1956.



Fig. 1. Group 55 Exhibition in Barbara Zbrożyna's studio, her *Rzeka* [A river] on the sculptor's stand, 1955, photo by Zbigniew Dłubak, Anna M. Leśniewska's archive

and pre-Columbian cultures; they derived from the same sources as the sculptures of Henry Moore, whose works would be displayed at the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw only in late 1959.²⁹ The Exhibition of Works by Group 55 (1956),³⁰ which was at the same time the opening of exhibition rooms owned by the Art Section of the Krzywe Koło Club in Warsaw,³¹ initiated the career of the

29 *Wystawa rzeźb i rysunków Henry Moore'a* [Exhibition of Henry Moore's sculptures and drawings], exhibition catalogue, Zachęta, Warsaw, 15 October – 5 November 1959; Pałac Sztuki, Cracow, 15 November – 2 December 1959; National Museum, Poznań, 12 December 1959 – 3 January 1960; Museum of History, Wrocław, 13 January – 10 February 1960; Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Museum, Szczecin, 28 February – 31 March 1960. A full list of publications issued in connection with H. Moore's exhibitions in Poland in: "Rocznik 1959–1960–1961" [Annual 1959–1960–1961], Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Warsaw, item 46, pp. 22–24; K. Murawska-Muthesius, "Dreams of Sleeping Beauty: Henry Moore in Polish Art Criticism and Media, post-1945", in: J. Beckett, F. Russell, *Henry Moore. Critical Essays*, Aldershot, 2003, pp. 195–220. Visual material recorded by L. Zajączkowski, *Rzeźby Henry Moore'a* [Sculptures by Henry Moore], Polish Film Chronicle, Warsaw, 1959, WFDiF Archive 44a/1959.

30 The Exhibition of Works by Group 55 took place on 30 June – 27 August 1956 at the Krzywe Koło Old Town Culture Centre.

31 The first Founding Meeting of the Art Section of the Krzywe Koło Club took place on 6 November 1955; in: IS PAN Special Collections, E. Garzdecka's archive, item III, inv. no. 1960. Members of the Art Section were: Marian Bogusz (chairman), Zbigniew Dłubak, Kajetan Sosnowski, Barbara Zbrożyna, Alina Szapocznikow, Barbara Jonscher,

first “authors’ gallery” to be directed by Bogusz in cooperation with the members of Group 55.³²

Texts published mainly in *Przegląd Artystyczny* went hand in hand with a revival of the experiments carried out by the avant-garde artists of the 1920s and 1930s – a revival which was caused by the “thaw”. The process of transforming the conventional perception of sculpture, which was based on the inviolate principle of the solid viewed as a basis for composition, was reactivated parallel to formal investigations in painting. In essence, the transformations were directed against the paralysing, anti-creative didactic system which was then still in force in all departments of sculpture at all the art academies in Poland. In Warsaw, for instance, this system had been in use since the inception, in 1910, of the School of Fine Arts, which was later renamed the Academy of Fine Arts.

The Second Exhibition of Modern Art (II Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej, 1957) at the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw summed up the artistic revival.³³ The exhibition encompassed “painting, sculpture and spatial art, as well as examples of experimental explorations in the field of photography and film projection”.³⁴ On display was *Studium przestrzeni* [A study of space] by Oskar Hansen, Wojciech Fangor and Stanisław Zamecznik. *Studium* was a system of freely positioned colourful planes which integrated the gallery space with its environment into a coherent spatial whole – the external with the internal – in keeping with the theories expounded by Hansen, the then-head of the Studio for the Composition of Solids and Planes at the Department of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts.³⁵ The installation at Zachęta referred to Hansen’s solo exhibition, which had been shown slightly earlier at the “Po prostu” Salon in Warsaw,³⁶ where the artist presented his experience in defining the prospect

Roman Szczurkowski (organizational issues and exhibition exchange) and Ewa Garztecka, who mentions Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz as one of the initiators of the Art Section, in: E. Garztecka, “Krzywe Koło Gallery. Cultural Revival”, *Voice of Warsaw*, 1990, no. 40, p. 7.

32 Cf. J. Zagrodzki, *Zbigniew Dłubak i Grupa 55* [Zbigniew Dłubak and Group 55], exhibition catalogue, Museum of Art in Łódź, June–July 2003; idem, *Stefan Gierowski i Krzywe Koło*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Art in Łódź, October–November 2003; idem, *Stefan Gierowski*, Warsaw, 2005.

33 2. *Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej* [The Second Exhibition of Modern Art], Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Warsaw, October–November 1957.

34 M. Porębski, “Pojęcie nowoczesności...” [The concept of modernity], in: 2. *Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej*, exhibition catalogue, Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Warsaw, October–November 1957.

35 See J. Gola, “Chronology/Kalendarium”, in: O. Hansen, *Ku Formie Otwartej/Towards Open Form*, Warsaw, 2005, p. 179; W. Włodarczyk, *Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w latach 1944–2004. 100 lat Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie* [The Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the years 1944–2004. The 100th anniversary of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw], Warsaw, 2005, p. 251.

36 Oskar Hansen. 1949–57. *Architektura – Malarstwo – Rzeźba* [Oskar Hansen. 1949–57. Architecture – Painting – Sculpture], Association of Polish Artists and Designers, Association

of “studying, or rather ‘creating’, new space”.³⁷ Hansen treated the interior of the gallery as “an airy, three-dimensional background which, on the principle of the contrast of shapes, accentuated the two-dimensional images positioned on plinths and the chiaroscuro form of the ‘active negative’ of architectural space”.³⁸ The principles of Hansen’s theory were initially published in *Przegląd Artystyczny* (1957): “by painting, sculpting or creating architecture we shape space”,³⁹ and then developed in the treatise *Forma Otwarta* [The open form] (1959).⁴⁰ The exhibition could be perceived as a study of the “open form”, in which Hansen demonstrated a harmonious coexistence of well-defined elements and revealed the factors of transformations that changed the density of space. He challenged the concept of a boundary between the air that surrounded a sculpture and the air contained within it; he pointed to its being a matter of convention. Works exhibited at the Zachęta included sculptures from the *Portret powietrza* [Portrait of air] (1956) and *Aktywny negatyw* [Active negative] (1957) cycles, which were intended as a synthesis of emotional states aroused by the display. Later, Hansen continued his investigation of the organic growth of structures in the changing dimensions of time and space by following this principle: “Repeating the same shapes in sculpture and architecture, sometimes repeating shapes that are similar and of identical sizes, and repeating the proportion accepted in architecture in sculpture both create a number of connections that unite sculpture with architecture and broaden the influence of sculpture to embrace the entire architectural environment”.⁴¹

The subsequent *Studium przestrzeni* (1958),⁴² done according to the same principles, was produced by Fangor and Zamecznik in the same gallery which had by then been renamed Salon Nowej Kultury. A system of images/signs positioned at right angles filled the interior, and the viewer became a part of the displayed work⁴³ (Fig. 2). The exhibition was accompanied by Fangor’s text:

of Polish Architects, “Po prostu” Salon, Warsaw, May 1957. The exhibition was announced via a sculptural structure made of rods positioned on the pavement in front of the theatre which housed the gallery; its author called it “Spike strip [Polish: *kolczatka*] – integration of the outside with the inside”, see O. Hansen, *Ku Formie Otwartej...*, op. cit., p. 139.

37 J. Sołtan, “W linii rozwojowej...”, in: *Oskar Hansen. 1949–57*, op. cit.

38 J. Gola, op. cit., p. 139.

39 O. Hansen, “O własnej twórczości” [On one’s own oeuvre], *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1957, no. 4, p. 26.

40 O. Hansen, “Forma Otwarta”, *Przegląd Kulturalny*, 1959, no. 5, p. 5.

41 K. Kobro, W. Strzeziński, op. cit., pp. 9–10.

42 *Studium przestrzeni* [A study of space], W. Fangor, S. Zamecznik, exhibition catalogue, Salon Nowej Kultury, Warsaw, July–August 1958.

43 *Studium przestrzeni*, the environment constructed from W. Fangor’s optical images, emerged as the result of an accidental discovery. Fangor intended to paint double-themed works, i.e. ones in which the figurative signs (faces, hands etc.) were to be seen against the background of a set of disjointed forms with indefinite contours. Having painted



Fig. 2. *Studium przestrzeni* [A study of space], Wojciech Fangor, Stanisław Zamecznik, Salon Nowej Kultury, Warsaw, 1958, the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, photo by E. Kozłowska

The aim of this exhibition is to demonstrate spatial dependencies between images. I am not interested in what occurs in a single image, but in what happens between images. Images become anonymous elements of a set which begins a new life and discharges itself in real space. By selecting a path and a time, the recipient automatically becomes a co-creator of the work.⁴⁴

Space was treated as a natural sculptural material, one that gave the artist the largest creative options and that gradually replaced chiselling stone, working in wood and shaping soft forms in clay. The architecture of Zamecznik's exhibition was thus turned into a four-dimensional sculpture. This fulfilled

the backgrounds, he discovered that they influenced the space underneath the painting by changing it and making it active. The result was an illusion of space reaching from the painting towards the viewer. Fangor resigned from adding figurative elements to these canvases and later termed his discovery a "positive illusory space". The *Studium przestrzeni* exhibition included twenty canvases in varying formats. Only four of them hung on the walls, the others were placed on easels. Apart from *Studium przestrzeni*, in 1959 Fangor and Zamecznik held two more exhibitions focused on the issue of space – in Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and at the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw. Cf. *Wojciech Fangor: Space as Play*, National Museum in Cracow, Cracow, 2012.

⁴⁴ The text accompanying the exhibition. The theoretical summary was also written by Zamecznik, who pointed out that it was not the images but the "tensions generated by them and their reception over time" that had become a creative instrument, "Sztuka przestrzeni" [The art of space], *Projekt*, 1961, no. 2, pp. 28–29.

the principles of Constructivist sculpture, in which the concept of a solid was abandoned and replaced by the “surrounding environment”.⁴⁵

Apart from the vision of new solutions offered by *Studium przestrzeni* (1957), other sculptors who exhibited their work at the Second Exhibition of Modern Art attempted to exceed the boundaries of a solid, and thus also those of the ruling convention; but they did so in the more limited, laboratory scale of gallery spaces. In his commentary to the exhibition, Wiesław Borowski wrote: “A contemporary sculptor does not have to be an abstract one. What he must do is create compositions exerting a visual emotion and characterised by a decisive attitude to space; he must conduct a thorough study of form; he must not avoid making use of new materials and workshop improvements which help to enhance the visual expression of the work”.⁴⁶ Among the exhibited works, Borowski singled out the “huge tripod with a tall, leaning torso”, i.e. *Mówca* [The Orator] by Stanisław Lisowski (1957), which he declared was “a composition that introduces the mood of the era of artificial moons and perfectly rules the large sphere of space which surrounded it”. He also focused on figurative works, i.e. on Ślesieńska’s “graceful and elegant” *Notre Dame* (1957), Tadeusz Sieklucki’s *Przestrzeń* [Space], “filled with the joy of unfettered movement”, the works by Tadeusz Łodziana “operating on pure form with beautiful rhythms and proportions”, and the works of Alina Szapocznikow, characterised by a “vast load of drama emanating from the depths of the solid”. The expressive works: *Kompozycja* [Composition] by Magdalena Więcek (1957) and *Grupa tragiczna, Marcinelle* [A tragic group, Marcinelle] by Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz (1957) merited a separate comment; Borowski perceived their connection with English sculpture, especially with that of Chadwick. Similarly to Katarzyna Kobro, Władysław Strzemiński and Oskar Hansen, Borowski considered the future of sculpture as lying in being “an element that organises functional open spaces (e.g. parks), or in merging with architecture conditioned by close cooperation between the sculptor and the designer”.⁴⁷

The Exhibition of Young Artists’ Painting and Sculpture (*Wystawa Młodego Malarstwa i Rzeźby*, 1957)⁴⁸ in Sopot focused on the methods used by the artists to introduce a form into open space. This time Bogucki’s attention turned to works by women artists: “In the ladies’ competition, Alina Szapocznikow seems to be at the fore. Her *Trudny wiek* [A difficult age] (1956) and *Ekshumowany* [Exhumed] (alternative title: *Rehabilitacja* [Restoring one’s good name], 1956)⁴⁹ are an amazingly harmonious combination of expressive

45 Ibid.

46 W. Borowski, “Nareszcie jest rzeźba” [The long-awaited sculpture has arrived], *Życie Literackie*, 1957, no. 305 (*Plastyka*, no. 15), p. 5.

47 Ibid., p. 5.

48 *Wystawa Młodego Malarstwa i Rzeźby* [Exhibition of Young Artists’ Painting and Sculpture], exhibition catalogue, Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Sopot, June–July 1957.

49 It is difficult to explain why the sculpture was given the same title (also in the double meaning) as had been used by Stefan Boss-Gostawski. In her book *Portret wielokrotny*

power with a sense of proper measure, and of an almost-realistic approach with a contents which is, for realism, extremely risky". At the same time, however, Bogucki worried that the audience may read the sculptures as "cheap eroticism" or "cheap macabre". The critic was equally circumspect in speaking about the other sculptresses: "With Alina Ślesińska, the disquiet of imagination and the impetuosity of feelings run slightly ahead of the conscious approach to shaping the sculpted form. This is probably the reason why she is at times unfinished in her character, not entirely consistent". Barbara Zbrożyna, in turn "surprisingly easily attained her 'jump into modernity'", according to Bogucki, who actually doubted that she had truly attained it, considering the outward similarity of her works to Moore's. Despite the attention he gave to the sculptresses, Bogucki was of the opinion that the only work worthy of note was Lisowski's *Matka* [Mother] (1956) – "a study of the female form consistent in its synthetic shape".⁵⁰ When reviewing Alina Szapocznikow's solo exhibition,⁵¹ Wiesław Borowski described her works as attempts at "exploding the solid form" and revealing the "undersurface strata". Although the forms "begin to crack", he wrote, "this is not at all a spontaneous shattering of a solid; if there is dynamism here, it is constantly tempered by intellect".⁵²

Studies that focus on the Polish sculpture of the 1950s highlight the special role which the exhibition *Sculpture in the Garden* (1957), curated by Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewiczowa, played in the artistic explorations of the time.⁵³ The exposition was arranged in the garden of the palace at Foksal Street in Warsaw, which had formerly been owned by Konstanty Zamoyski and which was, and still remains today, the seat of the Association of Polish Architects (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich, SARP). The exhibition summed up the then-current ideas concerning the individualistic creation of space and the shaping of new landscapes through art. Andrzej Jakimowicz stated that it "revealed the true range

dzieła Aliny Szapocznikow [The repeated portrait: works by A. Szapocznikow] (Poznań, 2008), A. Jakubowska explains why the sculpture was sometimes exhibited under the title *Rehabilitacja* [Restoring one's good name] – the artist was referring to the tragic death of Laszlo Rajk (1949) and the work was "a tribute to a victim of Stalinism whose good name had been restored; with time it stopped being associated with current affairs", p. 99. In the catalogue of her first solo exhibition, i.e. *Alina Szapocznikow*, Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Warsaw, September 1957, the artist herself dated the work *Exhumed* to 1956.

50 J. Bogucki, "Zapiski z podróży nie zagranicznej" [Notes from a journey not abroad], *Życie Literackie*, 1957, no. 289 (*Plastyka*, no. 7), p. 6.

51 *Alina Szapocznikow*, exhibition catalogue, op. cit.

52 W. Borowski, "Rzeźby Aliny Szapocznikow" [Sculptures by Alina Szapocznikow], *Życie Literackie*, 1957, no. 297 (*Plastyka*, no. 11), p. 5.

53 *Rzeźba w ogrodzie* [Sculpture in the Garden], exhibition catalogue, Association of Polish Architects, Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Warsaw, 18 September–October 1957, curator: Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewicz, participating artists: Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Stanisław Lisowski, Tadeusz Łodziana, Tadeusz Sieklucki, Alina Szapocznikow, Alina Ślesińska, Magdalena Więcek, Barbara Zbrożyna.

of issues present in sculptural creation more forcefully than any exhibition locked in the cages of showrooms or museum halls".⁵⁴ Today this exhibition is brought up mainly in the context of the output of Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz,⁵⁵ Szapocznikow,⁵⁶ Ślesińska,⁵⁷ Więcek⁵⁸ and Zbrożyna,⁵⁹ who have already been mentioned here, although Sieklucki, Lisowski and Łodziana took part in it as well. The artists proposed projects which attempted to integrate simplified figural forms and loosely defined organic shapes with the surrounding garden scenery. In his perceptive review, Aleksander Jackowski highlighted the difficulties faced by artists who until then had focused on a "perception of spatiality" that was "studio-oriented" and never confronted with nature; he also stressed that the impact of "identical sculptural compositions" changes when they are placed in "different spatial relations".⁶⁰ According to Jackowski, in *Grupa tragiczna, Marcinelle* [A tragic group. Marcinelle] (1957) and *Suka* [A bitch] (1957), Jarnuszkiewicz revealed "the dramatic nature of human affairs, the emotional experience from which a sculpture has grown". Lisowski, apart from the work *Matka* [Mother] (1956), already known from the Exhibition of Young Artists' Painting and Sculpture, presented the vertical *Kompozycja* [Composition] (1957), which was reminiscent of a long-necked exotic bird or a delicate flower; with its "slender silhouette embedded in the rhythm of trees" it became "an accent to compete with nature". The works of Łodziana, i.e. *Matka z dzieckiem* [Mother and child] (1957), raised on a tall plinth, and the horizontal, organic *Kompozycja* [Composition] (1957), relied in their form on the "balance of spatial relations" and on a "meticulously finished surface".⁶¹ Tadeusz Sieklucki presented the largest number of works; apart from *Kulista*

54 A. Jakimowicz, "Rzeźba w ogrodzie" [Sculpture in the Garden], *Projekt*, 1957, no. 5, p. 28.

55 Cf. *W kręgu pracowni Jarnuszkiewicza. W 35-lecie pracy pedagogicznej profesora Jerzego Jarnuszkiewicza* [In the circle of Jarnuszkiewicz's studio. On Prof. Jarnuszkiewicz's 35th anniversary of didactic work], exhibition catalogue, Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, 1985; Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. *Rzeźby, medale i rysunki* [Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz. Sculptures, medals and drawings], exhibition catalogue, Kordegarda Gallery, Warsaw, 1990.

56 Cf. *Alina Szapocznikow 1926–1973*, exhibition catalogue, Zachęta Gallery of Contemporary Art, Warsaw, 1998; J. Gola, *Katalog...*; A. Jakubowska, *Portret...*

57 Cf. *Alina Ślesińska 1922–1994*, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 2007.

58 Cf. A. M. Leśniewska, *Magdalena Więcek. Przestrzeń jako narzędzie poznania* [Magdalena Więcek. Space as a cognitive tool], Orońsko, 2013; *Magdalena Więcek. Działanie na oko* [Magdalena Więcek. Acting by eye], exhibition catalogue, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 2016.

59 Cf. A. M. Leśniewska, *Barbara Zbrożyna. Rzeźba* [Barbara Zbrożyna. Sculpture], Orońsko, 2006; idem, *Barbara Zbrożyna. Figury nasłonecznione* [Barbara Zbrożyna. Sunlit figures], exhibition catalogue, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 29 March – 18 May 2008.

60 A. Jackowski, "Rzeźba w ogrodzie" [Sculpture in the Garden], *Przegląd Kulturalny*, 1957, no. 41, p. 6.

61 Ibid.

[Spherical] (alternative title: *Okrągła* [Round], 1955),⁶² aptly positioned in a niche of the hedge, *Kolarze* [Cyclists] (1955), which contrasted with the manicured lawn and was reminiscent of exotic plants,⁶³ and *Wioślarze* [Oarsmen] (1955), he exhibited the spherical forms: *Podparta* [Supported] (1956), *Krzywa* [Crooked] (1956), *Sprężyna* [A coil] (1956) and *Lutnia* [A lute] (1956), which demonstrated “the artist’s imagination, the constant need to formulate a spontaneous vision”.⁶⁴ Szapocznikow’s *Tors* [Torso] (1957), which was a “spatially compact, profiled solid”, contrasted with the “tiny, dynamic forms of the surrounding leaves and boughs”. Her *Młodzieniec* [Young man] (1957) – “a composition which ‘in itself’ may arouse various reservations” – revealed its “corporeality, acquiring a new visual sense” owing to its “perfect positioning in relation to the delicate, almost Impressionist part of the garden”. In Więcek’s sculptures, *Próba życia* [A trial of life] (1957) (Fig. 3) and *Kompozycja I* [Composition I] (alternative title: *Macierzyństwo* [Motherhood], 1957) (Fig. 4), the critic discovered “obstinacy and the effort of reaching one’s own authentic vision”.⁶⁵ For reasons that are now difficult to fathom, he did not discuss the works of Ślesińska and Zbrożyna. The expressively deformed figures of the lovers *Abelard i Heloiza* [Abelard and Heloise] (1957) by Ślesińska were spatially joined in a metaphorical embrace. The symbolic, organic forms of *Adam i Ewa* [Adam and Eve] (alternative title: *Erotyk I*, 1955) and *Rzeka* [A river] (1955) by Zbrożyna, already known from the Group 55 Exhibition, were similar in their individualistic expression. A new sequence of meanings was introduced by the expressive sculptures *Erotyk II* and *Erotyk III* (1955–1956), which imposed their emotional shape on the environment. The works of women sculptors referred to sensuality, thus very strongly pointing to the haptic and proxemic matters that were capable of being experienced in individual interaction.

The critics estimated *Sculpture in the Garden* to be the most important exhibition of the period: “For the first time [an exhibition] declared the new condition of sculpture and laid before it new tasks, concerning, above all, issues of sculpture’s spatiality, of which even the participants themselves were not always clearly aware”.⁶⁶ “The place offered various visual positions”, stated

62 Alternative titles given in the brackets indicate that the given sculpture was exhibited under more than one name. J. Jarnuszkiewiczowa, “Tadeusz Sieklucki”, *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1957, no. 6, p. 22, mentions “Round formerly known as *Motherhood*”, which indicates an even earlier change of its title.

63 Ibid., p. 22.

64 A. Jackowski, op. cit.

65 Ibid.

66 W. Baraniewski, “Okolice odwilży” [Around the thaw], in: *Rzeźba polska 1944–1984* [Polish sculpture 1944–1984]. “Arsenal” Gallery of the Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Poznań, 20 September – 21 October 1984, exhibition catalogue, Ministry of Culture and Art, Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Bureau of Art Exhibitions in Poznań, Poznań, 1984, p. 27.



Fig. 3. *Sculpture in the Garden.* In the foreground, the sculpture *Próba życia* [A trial of life] by M. Więcek, the SARP garden, Warsaw, 1957, Magdalena Więcek's photographic archive



Fig. 4. *Sculpture in the Garden, Kompozycja/Czas* [Composition/Time] by M. Więcek, the SARP garden, Warsaw, 1957, Magdalena Więcek's photographic archive

its curator, Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewiczowa, “and regarding spatiality – a sculpture must have a space, a field in which it is active, and light, changes in the lighting”.⁶⁷ This statement from 1984, in a critical text summing up post-thaw phenomena in sculpture, points to the necessity of considering the changing spatial conditions, of being aware of transformations in a form arising from the development of a relationship with the spatial sphere tending towards an installation. Yet in the year 1957 the curator's narrative and argumentation were absent, with the exception of remarks concerning the obvious connection with nature. Also, quite inexplicably, her synthetic study *Polska rzeźba współczesna* [Contemporary sculpture in Poland] (1958)⁶⁸ ignored crucial issues, that is her reflections on the exhibition of which she had been the curator and information on the co-designers of the exposition;⁶⁹ Jarnuszkiewiczowa

⁶⁷ Quoted after: *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁸ J. Jarnuszkiewiczowa, *Modern Sculpture in Poland*, Warsaw, 1958; eadem, *La Sculpture polonaise Contemporaine*, Varsovie, 1958.

⁶⁹ The *Sculpture in the Garden* catalogue mentions the following as involved in preparing the exhibition: Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewicz – organisation; Jerzy Czyż and Wiesław Nowak – exposition design; Roman Cieślewicz – graphic design for the catalogue. Stanisław

limited herself to reports from the ongoing practice of sculpture that had already been published in *Przegląd Artystyczny*.⁷⁰ Comparing the condition of three-dimensional forms in galleries to that of large-scale monuments located in open space, she asserted that “monumental sculpture presented at exhibitions [was] increasingly better, more interesting, more varied, more insightful”. The “entire load of developmental explorations” was transferred, according to Jarnuszkiewiczowa, to studios, where creative experiments had a “less compelling”, workshop character. Artists unfettered by ideological limitations was able to “make various attempts on their own responsibility and in their own name”.⁷¹ Jarnuszkiewiczowa pointed out that the division between private creative discoveries, which were revealed occasionally at exhibitions, and conventional and conservative monuments was increasingly more evident; she noted that “until now there was no opportunity to explore new ideas nor objective conditions to develop them in concrete spatial situations, in direct contact with the audience”.⁷² The process of overcoming the limitations which sculpture had inherited after Socialist Realism was not yet finished at that time, and the works did not go beyond the still obligatory realistic conventions of the form and traditional methods of presentation. From today’s research perspective, *Sculpture in the Garden* is perceived as a source of installation art. It was the first exhibition in the post-war history of presenting sculpture to integrate the form and its setting into a homogeneous space and thus to express, on the one hand, the concept of making an exhibition more accessible to the viewer, and on the other, the concept of creating a heterogeneous anthropological space by developing a relationship with the viewers as persons located in a space which impinges upon their cultural awareness and/or the subconscious and on their individual psychological and physical condition. The experience of the viewers’ presence in space gave the exhibition as a whole the status and eminence of a work of art. An analysis of the relevant photographic documentation reveals the vigorous dynamics and concurrent monumentality of expression of the exhibited works. The power of illusion embedded in this imagery reveals not the forms, but the space inside and around them, which creates within the solid an “interior” open to various points of view. The documented forms have the power of enriching the

Zamecznik is not mentioned. Only the catalogue of his solo exhibition: *Stanisław Zamecznik 1909–1971*, Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Zachęta, Warsaw, November 1973, confirms his participation in this event.

70 J. Jarnuszkiewiczowa, “Z zagadnień rzeźby pomnikowej” [Issues in monumental sculpture], *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1952, no. 4, pp. 24–26; eadem, “Rzeźba na Ogólnopolskiej Wystawie Młodej Plastyki” [Sculpture at the National Exhibition of Young Art], *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1955, no. 3–4, pp. 44–59; eadem, “Pomniki” [Monuments], *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1956, no. 1, pp. 24–28; eadem, “Zderzenie z odbiorcą” [Confronting the recipient], *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1958, no. 3, pp. 2–12.

71 J. Jarnuszkiewiczowa, „Pomniki”, op. cit., p. 28.

72 J. Jarnuszkiewiczowa, *Modern Sculpture in Poland*, op. cit., p. 34.

viewer's awareness and arousing emotional and aesthetic responses. The photographs present the exhibitions as an "image", even though they show a set of objects in space; the photographs have concurrently registered, and thus penetrated, the interior and the exterior on both the micro and macro scale. By arranging the sculptures in the space of the garden, i.e. as being confronted with the natural world, and in correlation with the sensual spatiality of the viewers' bodies, Jarnuszkiewiczowa made their forms an integral part of the exhibition's narrative structure.

The vision on which Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewiczowa based her concept for the *Sculpture in the Garden* is, of course, linked with the treatise *Kompozycja przestrzeni. Obliczenia rytmu czasoprzestrzennego*, but it is also necessary to remember the natural process of diffusion of the non-verbal message existing in parallel, at the same time but in various places, in radically different visions offered by the variety of artists. It is not certain whether Jarnuszkiewiczowa was familiar with the exposition theories proposed in Western Europe at the time; the kinship with the assumptions of painting exhibitions is noticeable and, from the point of view of the current analysis, does not rule out a direct connection. The solutions proposed by Jarnuszkiewiczowa were similar to those offered by Frederick Kiesler (1890–1965), an architect and sculptor who had collaborated with Marcel Duchamp. As an author of installation exhibitions,⁷³ Kiesler broke with the traditional modes of exhibiting objects in a gallery space. He was also the author of the theoretical *Manifeste du Corréalisme* (1947).⁷⁴ The fundamental trait of "correalism" was the achievement of a simultaneous correlation and coordination of the basic elements of the exhibition's structure by applying methods of presentation borrowed from the theatre. Its skeleton consisted of a disciplined set of architectural elements that transformed one into another, thus creating a continuum of components connected with the exhibition, such as sculptures or paintings, as well as components derived from verbal communication, e.g. mythology. He also introduced ideas derived directly from films and advertising. Via this heteromorphic approach he forced the viewer to take an active part in the integrated space, due to which art acquired an anthropological dimension. The idea of the Endless House⁷⁵ was the visual expression of the concepts of correalism, which at the same time fulfilled the Modernist idea of the total work of art as derived from Surrealism. It was a biomorphic, organically shaped solid and, concurrently, its metaphor which actualised a general system of cor-

73 Kiesler's first show, *Internationale Ausstellung Neuer Theatertechnik*, Vienna (1924); the gallery is discussed in *Art of This Century*, New York (1942).

74 *Manifeste du Corréalisme* was produced in 1947 in connection with *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* at Galerie Maeght in Paris and later published in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 1949, no. 2, pp. 79–105; English version: "Second Manifesto of Correalism", *Art International*, 9 March 1965, no. 2, pp. 10–19.

75 See F. Kiesler, *Inside the Endless House*, New York, 1966. A model *Endless House* was made in 1959.

relations and incorporated the space of human experience in the deepest dimension of existence. Kiesler compared the structure of the Endless House to a sculpture, finding it an ideal form which, according to Dieter Bogner, functioned as “a seminal cell containing new possibilities for life”.⁷⁶ Kiesler ascribed a special role to space and to its persuasive function which made it anthropomorphic in order to reveal the crucial factor – the human presence. According to Bogner, the Endless House is “endless like the human body – there is no beginning and no end to it. The ‘Endless’ is rather sensuous, more like the female body in contrast to the sharp-angled male architecture. All ends meet in the ‘Endless’ as they meet in life. Life’s rhythms are cyclical”.⁷⁷ The idea of the Endless House was completely subordinate to the human dimension; the form and shape depended on the psychological and physical condition of the human being. The *Sculpture in the Garden* exhibition became a field for experiencing human perception, following the notion that “it is the viewers that create the paintings”, which was shared by both Duchamp and Kiesler.⁷⁸

The catalogue for the *Sculpture in the Garden* exhibition was an integral part of the show. It was a fully independent work by Roman Cieślewicz, whose later designs for art publications, periodicals and posters would amply illustrate all of the most highly appreciated aspects of design (Fig. 5). Similarly to the exhibitors, Cieślewicz was a young artist with an already impressive portfolio; at that time he was collaborating with Wydawnictwo Artystyczno-Graficzne, the only important art publisher of the era. The catalogue was radically different from the traditional publications that accompanied exhibitions in the 1950s. The quantity of information was restrained; one page was assigned to each exhibitor and contained data regarding his/her art education, a photograph of a sculpture and a list of exhibited works. The exhibitors were required to state when and at which institution they had acquired their art education; this was to certify the young people’s art, to be a guarantee of their abilities. The photographs did not show the entire sculptures, only their details. The reader could get the impression that the camera’s shutter had closed automatically, *ad hoc*, without the participation of the photographer, to select one distinct picture from many. A sheet of white paper took on the role of the landscape background; Cieślewicz mounted details of sculptures on its surface as if he had wanted to show their structure, to enter the sculptures and to encourage the reader to view them; the goal was to rivet the reader’s attention. Cieślewicz also added arrows that pointed the reader’s eye to selected elements; he would adopt the same method later, in the year 1960 while working on the

76 D. Bogner, *Inside the Endless House*, in: *Friedrich Kiesler 1890–1965: Inside the Endless House*, exhibition catalogue, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Vienna, 1997, p. 19.

77 F. Kiesler, *Inside the Endless House* (part 2, note 116), op. cit., p. 136.

78 D. Daniels, *Points d’interférence entre Frederick Kiesler et Marcel Duchamp*, in: *Frederick Kiesler. Artiste-Architecte*, exhibition catalogue, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1996, p. 119.

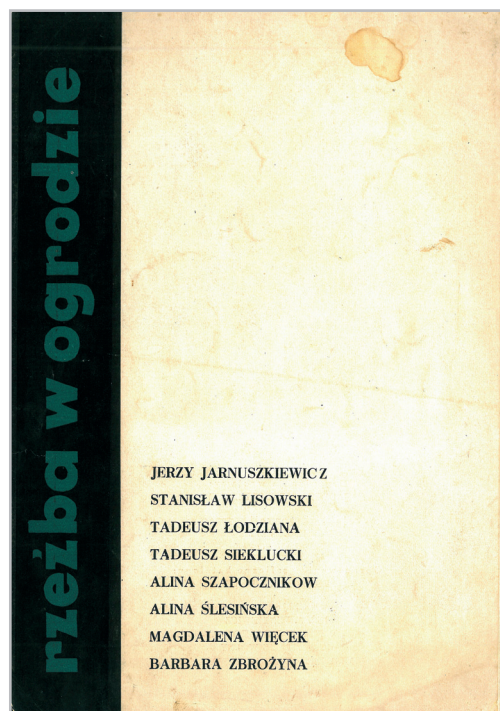


Fig. 5. Catalogue of the *Sculpture in the Garden* exhibition, design by Roman Cieśliewicz

graphic design for the covers of the *Ty i Ja* magazine, in which the illustrations were as important as the information contained in the text.⁷⁹ The green colour of the letters on the cover, underlined by a black background in the title section and seen also between the otherwise monochromatic pages, symbolically referred to nature, to the garden in which the spatial spectacle of forms had been staged. The arrangement of the text was influenced by Władysław Strzemiński's theory of functional typography with its stress on the vertical/

⁷⁹ See K. Czerniewska, *Pragnienie rzeczy. Rozmowa z Teresą Kuczyńską* [Desiring things. An interview with Teresa Kuczyńska], in: <http://www.dwutygodnik.com/arttykul/3649-pragnienie-rzeczy.html> [accessed 14 July 2016]. The *Ty i Ja* magazine (1960–1973) was published under the aegis of the Polish Women's League and the expectations which it was expected to meet were clear; nevertheless, it included not only agony columns and culinary recipes, but also, regularly, reviews of freshly published books and Western films based on Western press materials. It thus created a new quality in the market of illustrated magazines; its target was the young intelligentsia yearning for the free world on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The founder of the magazine, Teresa Kuczyńska, commented: "I think this may have been a form of the anti-system policy of the Western countries: to allow us to transmit contents that would help to destroy communism. And our readers indeed started having various yearnings". The magazine was a window to broadly understood modernity, as it encouraged not simple imitation, but liberating creativeness.



Fig. 6. Catalogue of the *Sculpture in the Garden* exhibition, design by Roman Cieślewicz

horizontal division of the surface that imposed order on the visual plan of the page; but Cieślewicz attempted to loosen this rigid scheme by letting in more light between the lines of the text and the surfaces of the illustrations. In addition, instead of the usual portrait photographs of exhibitors he made use of photographs of sculptors *en plein air* or at their work. The result was a collective portrait of a group of artists who turned out to be the most interesting sculptors of the “thaw” generation (Figs. 6–7).

The merit of the projects involving sculptural forms arranged in space as presented at *Sculpture in the Garden* and then at the Second Exhibition of Modern Art was later confirmed by solo shows in Warsaw. Sieklucki (1957) exhibited at the International Press and Book Club;⁸⁰ Szapocznikow (1957)⁸¹ at Zachęta; Więcek (1958)⁸² and Szapocznikow, Zbrożyna, Jarnuszkiewicz and Sieklucki (1959)⁸³ at the Krzywe Koło Gallery. The critics saw them as

80 *Wystawa rzeźb Tadeusza Siekluckiego* [Exhibition of Tadeusz Sieklucki's sculpture], exhibition catalogue, The Association of Polish Artists and Designers, Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions, Club of the International Press and Books, Warsaw, 1957.

81 *Alina Szapocznikow*, exhibition catalogue, op. cit.

82 *Magdalena Więcek, Marian Bogusz, Stefan Gierowski*, exhibition catalogue, Krzywe Koło Gallery of Modern Art, Warsaw, 1958.

83 *Alina Szapocznikow, Barbara Zbrożyna, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Tadeusz Sieklucki* – sculptural studies, Krzywe Koło Gallery of Modern Art, Warsaw, February–March 1959.

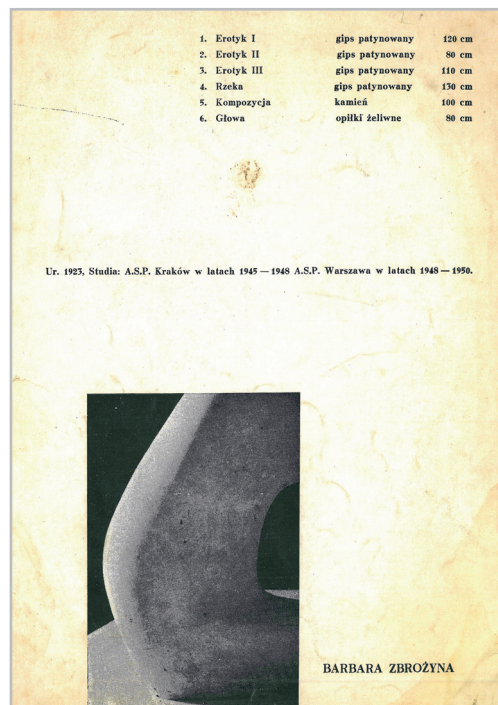


Fig. 7. Catalogue of the *Sculpture in the Garden* exhibition, design by Roman Cieślęwicz

“the strongest and the most vigorous trend in our art”.⁸⁴ They took part in many exhibitions abroad.⁸⁵ The reviews underlined the “boldness and panache of these abstract compositions, which are on a par with the best achievements of Western-European modern art”.⁸⁶ In view of this enthusiastic response, the absence of a theoretical exposition of the concept governing this exhibition is surprising; Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewiczowa presented it only as late as in 1984. She defined five consecutive stages of the process of integrating a sculpture with space:

Stage 1 – “Making the solid spatial. It can be considered the first stage insofar as the sculpted object which is being modelled or constructed is still an independent one; but it is already objectified, either in its arrangement or in its structure. In contradiction to the traditional principles, the shape opens

84 Bg. [J. Bogucki], “Wystawa Nowoczesnych” [An exhibition of the Moderns], *Życie Literackie*, 1957, no. 301 (*Plastyka*, no. 13), p. 7.

85 Ausstellung Polnischer Künstler, Kunstsammlungen In Soest, April – Mai 1959. Later the exhibition moved to Bonn, Karlsruhe, Frankfurt, Essen, Bremen, Hannover and Düsseldorf. *Pologne 50 Ans de Peinture*, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire Genève, octobre – novembre 1959.

86 M. Bogusz, “Wystawa Galerii Sztuki Nowoczesnej ‘Krzywe Koło’ w Niemczech Zachodnich” [Exhibition of the Krzywe Koło Gallery of Modern Art in West Germany], *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1959, no. 4, p. 20.

itself to the space here; it penetrates the space and the space penetrates the solid; the shape and the space infiltrate each other and remain in a constant interaction. The shape undergoes transformation in its spatial development, and thus also in time. The space is an element that shapes and is shaped at the same time”.

Stage 2 – “Deliberately putting a sculpture in contact with the surrounding space, integrating it with the site by finding the proper relations, and causing the scale and features of the site to condition its sculptural form”.

Stage 3 – “Broadening the field of action to include shaping the space itself by integration with it, by setting focus points, by filling it either with purely visual action or with meaning-oriented expression”.

Stage 4 – “The first step towards what tends to be called the ‘environment’. At this stage, organising the surrounding space is tantamount to creating situations that are meaningful in their spatial and temporal development, accompanied by the recipient’s active cooperation. The barrier of the sculpted object is surmounted; it is the shaping and directing of the entire spatial situation that becomes the sculpted object, and the situation takes over the burden of action”.

Stage 5 – “The concluding point, where the sculpture ceases to function as an independent object and a carrier of meaning, and the entire spatial arrangement becomes the sculptural object; this arrangement goes through a sequence of situations whose dramatic progress constitutes what we call the ‘contents’; this is the contents of the participating recipient’s experience”.⁸⁷

The above stages of the process of creating a sculptural space point towards the fundamental directions of artistic explorations. Delineated in the pioneering theory of art as expounded in *Kompozycja przestrzeni. Obliczenia rytmu czasoprzestrzennego*, they were developed during the experimental exhibitions of the 1950s, including in *Sculpture in the Garden*, and later continued in urban or industrial spaces, e.g. during the Spatial Form Biennale in Elbląg (1965) or the Artists and Scientists Convention in Puławy (1966).

After *Sculpture in the Garden*, sculpture began to be perceived in reference to the way in which its place in the human environment was described. The emergence of places where the space was being actively created may be viewed as the emergence of spheres of spiritual energy which influenced the reception process. The emergence of new fields of art in the context of everyday life, as well as the sensual experience of a place – an experience that is shared by every person who lives, works or moves in the given area – produced the opportunity to personally create one’s environment.

An analysis of the above examples of sculptures produced in the period of the “thaw” reveals a clear inspiration from the abstract artistic language of Henry Moore and the English welder sculptors. The figural form as explored

87 J. Jarnuszkiewiczowa, “Granice pojęcia rzeźby” [Boundaries of the concept of sculpture], in: *Rzeźba polska 1944–1984...*, op. cit., p. 30.

by Moore derived from an anthropomorphic source devoid of ideological contents; in the Polish context of the time, such a figural form was the most communicative and legible visual sign. As if contrary to the proposals offered by the authorities, the figural sign – officially reserved for ideologically involved representations – was revived and re-used; “modernity” as expressed through the figural form was placed in a well-known scheme and thus became intelligible and expressive. After the *Sculpture in the Garden* exhibition, when creative individualities were recognised and the critics grew sure of their judgements, the trends began to separate and arrange themselves along the basic directions of exploration, i.e. towards simplified figuration or a freely developed dynamic structure. The experiments of the “welders” were rooted in that trend of “modernity” which in sculpture was effectuated as the new avant-garde, then still unintelligible and perceived as too odd. It must be noted that this state of affairs was analogous to the pre-war one, when the works of avant-garde artists were noticed but not understood; the parallelism in the emergence of new phenomena in sculpture and in their perception is clear here.

The substance of sculptures, and the issues related to it, as conveyed by the artists to the recipients in the late 1950s and early 1960s, were a logical continuation of the achievements of the pre-war avant-garde, whose fundamental goal was to organise the surrounding space, of the experiences gained in the 1940s and of the transformations of visual awareness that occurred after the year 1956. Modernity – an artistic and ideological orientation which ruled supreme in the period of the “thaw” – was expressed through spatial phenomena that were evident in the sculptural projects created by the youngest generation of artists, above all in those exhibited at the First Exhibition of Modern Art, Second Exhibition of Modern Art and in the natural surroundings at the *Sculpture in the Garden* show. These projects were complemented by projects carried out in combination with architecture, which embraced Oskar Hansen’s concept of the “open form”. The presentation of selected sculptural projects (some of which were also displayed at painting exhibitions) confirmed the potential involved in the diversity of approaches and demonstrated the methods of the gradual emancipation of sculptural substance – an emancipation directed towards its integration with space and ultimately towards a new perception of art by means of space, a turn which is currently known as the “spatial shift”.

(Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz)

Abstract

A selection of exhibitions of sculpture held between the years 1946 and 1957 illustrates the formal transformations and diversity of methods of exhibiting sculpted forms as identified through their manner of cooperating with space. The experiments, which commenced during the First Exhibition of Modern Art (1948) and were later creatively developed at the Krzywe Koło and Zachęta galleries, were based on ideas that had been formulated by K. Kobro and W. Strzemiński in *Kompozycja przestrzeni. Obliczenia rytmu-czasoprzestrzennego* (1931), produce a diversified picture of intense formal exploration of sculpture, with the category of "space" emerging as a crucial part of the research perspective. The integrated gallery space and the setting for a work of art – which during the *Sculpture in the Garden* show (1957) included outdoor space – defined a trend that was moving towards the concept of an installation. Exhibitions indirectly connected with sculpture, e.g. *Studium przestrzeni* (1957), were used as research instruments in the process of extending the boundaries of sculptural forms to include their reaching into space.