



MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Cultural mediation by the example of
Andrzej Wróblewski “

verfasst von / submitted by

Carolina Zawada, BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2017 / Vienna 2017

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 835

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Kunstgeschichte

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Dr. Friedrich Tietjen

Mitbetreut von / Co-Supervisor:

Index

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Research Question and Hypothesis	3
1.2	Methodology	5
1.3	Research Review	8
2	Andrzej Wróblewski – A brief overview	13
2.1	Duality in style	14
2.1.1	The use of different styles	16
2.2	Perception during his life	19
2.3	Posthumous perception.....	21
3	The meaning of Wróblewski’s work.....	27
3.1	Stein’s four meanings of art	30
3.2	Wróblewski in the context of renowned artists	34
4	Cultural mediation	39
4.1	Recuperating aspects of history.....	41
4.2	Wróblewski’s mediation with political art	44
5	Branding Wróblewski’s art	49
5.1	Branding tools	52
6	Conclusion.....	55
7	Abstract	57
8	Appendix	59
9	Bibliography.....	61
10	List of figures	67
11	Picture credits	81
12	Statutory Declaration.....	83

*“Neither myth nor legend
are tolerated in the science”¹*

1 Introduction

Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship dictum “Neither myth nor legend are tolerated in the sciences”² can be applied in many fields of scientific studying. A myth or a legend is something unverified, whereas the sciences make it their responsibility to verify theories and ideas based on studies and facts. Inspired by that notion this paper aims to look at one of Poland’s most famous painters, Andrzej Wróblewski, who achieved the status of a legend. His importance today and his role as a cultural mediator will guide the paper. It will explain why the painter is considered a legend and explore how his recognition helps his current international promotion. The opening statement of the 2015 exhibition catalogue “Andrzej Wroblewski: Recto/Verso” in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid reads: “The painter (...) has attained the status of a legend in his homeland (...) seemingly speaking with several voices at the same time, his paintings suggest a rare consensus between abstraction and figuration, and open confrontation between the individual and private, the social and collective spheres.”³ This quote introduces the reader to an artist operating between vastly dissimilar, or even opposing, subjects. Particularly the part “seemingly speaking with several voices at the same time”⁴ suggests the wide range of representational aesthetics as well as moving between different themes within his art. This movement shall be investigated as an act of cultural mediation and is a the key factor of his current promotion. Going back to the statement the author references Wróblewski as a “legend”, a term often used in connection to the painter. The term implies a high level of achievement, as well as it is assigning importance to him as an artist. It is this importance and high expectations that must

¹ Goethe 1997, page 277.

² Ibidem.

³ Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport 2015.

⁴ Ibidem.

be introduced first in order to comprehend his role as a cultural mediator. Without his status he would not be able to be promoted in a way that it is happening right now. His “legendary” status therefore aids the function of a mediator between past and present. This paper will demystify Wróblewski by looking at how art institutions charge his work with meaning and brand him as a national hero worthy of representing Poland. The institutions and personas mentioned in this paper are mainly Polish art institutions and curators like the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (hereafter abbreviated as MSN) and The Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation.⁵ Following Walter Benjamin’s credo “there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism,”⁶ the thesis will lay out how Wróblewski is being exploited in favour of Polish culture and art history. The quote is objecting a concept of history that manipulates past events as extraordinary cases. Translating this to Wróblewski, the document of civilization is the painters way to express history and interpersonal relations through his art, which cannot exist without the art institutions. The barbarism, then, is how art institutions position him in order to accomplish a successful branding and acknowledgement of the artist. In other words: exploitation of an artist’s work for one’s own good is the atrocity. The outcome of that strategy would be an internationally renowned Polish artist who stands for both Poland during the communist times and Poland today. The act of embracing and re-using an established artist and revive him in a post Cold War time awakens the speculations as to how Wróblewski’s art and duality in style has the power to act as a cultural mediator between the past and the present and recuperate aspects of Polish history.

⁵ The Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation, in particular, is eager to widen the popularity of the painter by playing a key role in organizing exhibitions and can play a key role to help mediate between Wróblewski and the audience.

⁶ Benjamin 2009, page 256.

1.1 Research Question and Hypothesis

Joanna Mytkowska, director of the MSN, states in an interview with Polish magazine *Gazeta Wyborcza*, it is her aim to promote Wróblewski to the status of an international legend: “Andrzej Wróblewski is our big legend and we dream about him becoming, if not also becoming a legend for everybody, then at least a recognizable artist at the international art scene.”⁷ Keeping in mind that Wróblewski (1927-1957) passed away over fifty years ago and was almost invisible on the international art stage, the possibility of him becoming a “recognizable artist” relies only on the promotion of today’s art institutions and personas. Reliance upon art institutions for the construction of a painter’s reputation and relevance allows re-interpretation of the inner meaning within his work. What, then, does Wróblewski have that makes him desirable to art institutions in order to promote him over other Polish artists and how can he be relevant today? It is probably a variety of factors between his different aesthetic ways to address his viewers and the often with the painter connected the term “legend”. The title almost guarantees a certain greatness. But what makes a legend and how can it be accepted in the science of art history? Authors Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz (hereafter abbreviated as KK) attempt to give answer in their 1934 book “Die Legende vom Künstler – ein geschichtlicher Versuch” (“The legend of an artist– a historical approach”), an investigation of which certain aspects will be discussed later on. Given the previous thoughts and questions the following research question will structure this paper:

Does Andrzej Wróblewski’s status of a “legend” amongst Polish art historians help him to be transferred as a relevant artist into an international art scene? And if so, does his art help mediate between Cold War Poland and life today by recuperating aspects of history?

Thus this is not a paper about Polish history, it is crucial to comprehend the political situation throughout Wróblewski’s work in order to understand the possibility of a mediation attempt. After the Second World War in 1945, Poland is governed by the former Soviet Union, it’s political ideology and communist system. Many of Wróblewski’s works mirror themes regarding not only the post-war situation but also the new circumstances in Poland past 1945. Commonly known he was a supporter of the communist

⁷ Mytkowska 2013.

party. His views and beliefs are very much influenced by the government, as can be found in his diary.⁸ For a country, that now wants to regain autonomy and be respected as a democracy, it seems odd why they pick an artist who was friendly with a system that is overthrown since 1989 and abominated. Wróblewski lived through the Second World War and, as an adult, in communist Poland. Experiencing the horrors of war first hand and being a firm believer of the political ideology during the Cold War his art is immensely influenced by that notion. Still he is highly promoted today, which is why in response to the aforementioned research question the following hypothesis is proposed:

Andrzej Wróblewski's established status in Poland and his variety of styles allow Polish art institutions to create an internationally known art persona of the painter. The today entrenched reputation and acknowledgement adds interest for both national and international curators and therefore exhibitions. More importantly however, through this exposure he can act as a cultural mediator for spectators between communist Poland and Poland today as well as the Cold War and Europe today. Assuming that viewers have a certain preconception of the country, which itself is trying to recover from the oppressed past, Wróblewski's art can help to recuperate this aspect of history.

The psychological desire to give reason and cause to certain circumstances and conditions forces the academic discipline of art history to attribute meaning to an artwork. This leads to the presumption that Polish art institutions create a new possibility to add meaning to his work by letting his art act as a mediator. Edgar Degas's statement "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see,"⁹ is exactly that: It is not Wróblewski's art, but how the Polish art institutions position and make the audience see. An investigation into how Wróblewski is being staged for others to perceive him and how that adds to his status quo will follow. The ultimate goal for this thesis is to add a new vantage point on how the painter's status helps institutions to re-position him and how he can be seen as a cultural mediator.

⁸ Wróblewski's diary is not of importance to this thesis which is why it will not be discussed any further. Nevertheless it is important to know that he did support and wanted to join the communist party but has been rejected. His images very often have symbols and themes relating to the political and social situation in Poland at that time. That however is exactly why he can act as a mediator and will be discussed further on in the paper.

⁹ Degas 2016.

1.2 Methodology

The generated data is collected from three main sources: literature, public lectures and one expert interview. Different sources are used to reduce the bias of opinion and information. The literature is primarily used as a tool to showcase how other writers view Andrzej Wróblewski, to comprehend his art and to offer a broad introduction of his life. Most literature sources are written by Polish art historians and focus on the painter as a leading figure in the history of Polish art. They do not address the question of how his movement between figurative art and abstraction is advantageous to art institutions seeking to promote him as a “legend” nor is his role as a mediator discussed. This reveals a research gap, which this paper will attempt to fill. A review of analyzed literature and its importance for this theme will follow in the next chapter.

Additionally the paper will utilize certain arguments by international experts given in lectures as part of a public online conference “The life and work of Andrzej Wróblewski (1927-1957) – a legend of Polish post-war art”¹⁰ at the MSN in 2013. Considering modern art is understood as a space for re-interpreting individuality it is crucial why this post-war painter is being given the space in a museum of modern art. The placement in the MSN supports a new understanding of his imagery. Here he is given the context with other modern or contemporary artists, which in itself creates a new dialog and interpretation between artwork and audience. During the conference the broad international representation of art historians shows how the painter gains interest amongst institutions abroad as well as the effort by Polish art representatives to rekindle the conversation again by having eighteen online speeches about the life and work of the painter.¹¹ All lectures have been watched but not all will be included in this paper, for not all

¹⁰ Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw 2016.

¹¹ The following scholars have been involved in the Wróblewski conference: Karolina Ziębińska-Lewandowska (curator and art historian, PL), Jérôme Bazina, Dorota Jarecka (art critic, PL), Katarzyna Bojarska (assistant professor at the Institute of Literary Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences, PL), David Crowley (Professor in the School of Humanities at the Royal College of Art, London GB), Tom McDonough (associate Professor and Chair of Art History at Binghamton University, State University of New York), Ulrich Loock (Art critic and curator), Anda Rottenberg (art historian and art critic, PL), Joanna Kordjak-Piotrowska (Art historian and curator associated with the National Museum in Warsaw), Jan Michalski (Art historian and art critic, publicist and publisher), Magdalena Ziółkowska (Art historian and curator, PL), Wojciech Grzybała (Art history graduate, PL), Jean-Francois Chevriera (art critic and curator, FR), Éric de Chasse (director of the French Academy in Rome and Professor of Contemporary Art History at the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon, FR), Serge Guilbaut - professor of Art History at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (Canada) and Łukasz Ronduda (curator at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, PL).

add to the discussion. The main interest about the acknowledgement the painter achieved, the ongoing promotion and justification of that status is given in the lecture by French art historian Serge Guilbaut.

Finally the interview with art expert Agata Pietrasik, interviewed on June 15th, 2016 in Warsaw by the author will provide important insights. Pietrasik works as an art journalist and is currently finishing her PhD at the Freie Universität, Berlin. She has written numerous essays and publications on the subject of Polish art. The interview is conducted due to an initial recommendation of Prof. Noit Banai, who regards Pietrasik as a source of expertise on past and present art historical events in Poland.¹² Pietrasik was also involved in the latest Wróblewski publication “Avoiding Intermediary Spaces”, which additionally makes her a reliable expert on the subject.¹³ Respecting the three interview approaches by Stöber (standardized, partly structured and narrative interview), the interview was held in a less structured more narrative-based style.¹⁴ As Atteslander points out, the advantage in an interview with little structure and few standardised questions is the opportunity to take the initiative and broach topics that enrich the conversation and information exchange.¹⁵

Analyzing works of the painter and comparing it to the given literature and other painters is an act of qualitative research and will also play a part in this paper. Mainly the paintings with scenes of the Second World War and Cold War will be used to analyze the possible mediation attempt between Wróblewski’s art and the audience.

This paper and its theoretical investigation will not include the diary of Wróblewski, except when looking at the self-perception during his life. Some memoir notes illustrate his mental and physical state quite well and can be used to understand why it is only after his death that he gains interest. The significance of this investigation, though, lies in the way other people position, argue for and interpret the painter’s work, which is why his private thoughts are of little value to the thesis. Moreover, some examples of his work will be included to showcase the act of mediation but there will not be a complete analysis of his work. It is not necessary to have an investigation on his entire oeuvre – the picked examples in this paper will be enough to showcase the case.

¹² View appendix.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Stöber 2008, page 193.

¹⁵ Atteslander 2006.

It has been tried to collect data from several and international sources, even though the main sources are Poland based. That can be a disadvantage but it can also enable to see how the machinery behind promoting the painter works and what arguments are being adapted by the international media.

1.3 Research Review

The research review will summarize the most relevant academic opinions and stand points on the investigated topic. Given the fact that different methodological approaches are used to generate the data the research review is divided into literature and the MSN online lectures.

Literature:

There are two distinct periods of publications regarding the painter: before and after the millennium. This has to be seen in a historical context: Wróblewski's paintings often address scenes of war and subsequent communist aftermath. Seeing that Poland became a democracy in 1989 scholars did not have enough emotional distance and interest to study and discuss circumstances they experienced first hand. These circumstances change after Poland transitions to a democracy. A slowly newly gained distance to the Cold War and communist regime emerges and allows the public to obtain a new interest in the painter's works. This is visible in a comparison of newspaper articles from pre- and post-2000. Not many pre-2000 articles feature varying opinions on Wróblewski's art, but they allow an understanding of the development of his public perception. Slowly starting in the 1960's the term "legend" occurs around the artist and with the help of influential personas his reputation and status is shaped. Polish film director Andrzej Wajda and art historian Mieczysław Porębski add to the "meaning" of the painter's work by supporting him with public statements and personal interpretations. They mediate between him and the audience with by explaining his art from their point of view.

The 1934 approach by Kris and Kurz to define a "legend" in art history provides potential answers what that means in the context of Wróblewski. Both authors take a look at artists as legends from psychological (the artist's perspective) and sociological (the audience's perspective) viewpoints and analyze the concept of "the artist as a legend" from ancient times. The book doesn't focus much on the life of an artist, more on how the society sees and wants to see him. Both authors depict a certain pattern that can be more or less applied to artists from the ancient times until today. The simple heritage of an artist for instance is a typical anecdote that can lead to the building of a legend. The

detachment of facts and the beginning of a legend is in the case of Wróblewski the dating of his paintings. His mother dated posthumous most if not all of his paintings and adds a meaning and context to something that might not have been there.

The other available literature provides little aid in depicting the argumentation for an revived meaning in his work and style, although most publications state at some point his status of “legend” for the Polish art scene without giving arguments for a motive. Two main reasons however can be summed up: his variety of pursuits (painter, writer, scholar) and his relevance as an artist then and today. Another stimulus for his reputation is his role as a pioneer for future artists, such as those of the artist collective “Wprost” (in English: Straightforward). The collective, founded in 1966 in Krakow, has a characteristic style, which relates to the raw expressionism found in Wróblewski’s work. A later comparison will show how members of the group make a clear reference to the Pole in their work.

Jan Michalski and Marek Sobczyk enter an in-depth discussion on his socialist realism style, but neglect the aspect of abstraction in his work. “The Execution” cycle is discussed and considered both the most recognizable and relevant work by Wróblewski. That is why it is a part of the qualitative data collection. Focussing on the meaning of his work and his status of a cultural mediator the meaning is crucial in the study of art history. George P. Stein discusses that in the 1971 volume of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, which will subsequently be evaluated and applied to Wróblewski’s work in chapter three of this paper. He gives different types of meaning that can be applied when talking about the arts. This is crucial for understanding Wróblewski in the context today and will be discussed in more depth in chapter three.

An important source for Wróblewski’s *Gesamtkunstwerk* is the book “Avoiding Intermediary States”, published in 2012 with essays from different international art historians. As the 751 pages book is published bilingually (Polish and English), the book gives one of the widest overviews on Wróblewski’s life and work. Publishing a book of both the size and ability to reach such a large international audience is a main project by the The Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation. Initiating as well as organizing several promotional events and publications this book has for international propagation for the artist. The essays attempt to showcase not only his biography and posthumous career but also make connections to other artists, such as Mondrian. The repetitive phenomenon of

Wróblewski being compared to other artists is relevant in so far that it goes along with Kris und Kurz. The Pole is being compared with artists from different times and different styles, which shows that he can be put in any position possible. Wojciech Szyman-ski argues Wróblewski is a romantic painter, whereas scholars at an art history conference in the 1950's labelled him a pop art pioneer, two opposing depictions which ultimately show the different positions he can be positioned in. Today the act of comparing him with renowned artists like Pablo Picasso Mark Rothko is an important mechanism for the promotion of Wróblewski. Following chapters will show, Wróblewski is as well often exhibited in connection with Polish modern artist Alina Szapocznikow. The importance of that comparison will follow in the lecture review shortly.

Lectures:

The before mentioned online lectures give information on how the painter is being promoted and how his art can mediate between the Cold War and Poland today. Firstly having lectures as part of an exhibition is an act of mediation between audience and oeuvre. The hypothesis states Wróblewski's art is being used as cultural mediation in which case having lectures beforehand and as part of an exhibition can be seen as a tool used to mediate between spectator and artwork. Interestingly enough a similar mechanism of promotion has been used by the MSN with Alina Szapocznikow in 2009. Through the promotion, exposure and also prominent support by Wajda the female painter exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In an interview, the director of the MSN states: "Wróblewskim jest trochę inaczej niż z Szapocznikow, którą zajmowaliśmy się wcześniej. Obecne w jej twórczości wątki kobiece, eksperymenty formalne czyniły ją artystką dość uniwersalną. Wróblewski, ze swoim kluczowym tematem - wojną i formalnym rozdarciem - wydaje się być postacią trudniej przetłumaczalną na inne języki. Ale dla międzynarodowej publiczności interesujące może być u niego to napięcie między abstrakcją a figuracją; nowoczesnością a socrealizmem oraz jego zaangażowanie polityczne."¹⁶ (Translation CZ: "With Wróblewski it is a little bit different as with Szapocznikow, who we focused on earlier. In her work she has mainly feministic matters and experiments formally which makes her an universal artist.

¹⁶Joanna Mytkowska 2013.

Wróblewski with his key theme – war and formalistic carnage – seems to be not as easily translated into other languages. Nevertheless it can be interesting for a broad audience to depict his tension between abstraction and figuration: modernism and social realism as well as his political engagement.”)

The most interesting lecture is given by Serge Guilbaut. He draws comparisons between renowned painters and Wróblewski, which automatically catapults the Pole into a similar position as the compared artists. Such acts justify the reputation and relevance of the painter and are a mediation attempt between audience and painter by Guilbaut, which will be discussed in more detail later in the paper.

2 Andrzej Wróblewski – A brief overview

Born in Vilnius in 1927, a city annexed by Poland in 1920 and still in a state of turmoil as tensions remain between Poland and Lithuania, Andrzej Wróblewski moves to Krakow in 1945, where he spends the majority of his adult life. He starts the study of art history and fine arts at the Academy of Fine Arts and the Jagiellonian University. The curriculum and doctrine soon start to agitate him, and, feeling unduly restrained, he begins to criticize the teaching methods and refers to professors as “asocial”.¹⁷ As a sign of protest and self-liberation, he establishes a self-education group in 1948, where he tries to teach on his own fine art methods and theories. Members of this group include amongst others Andrzej Wajda. Between 1948 and 1956, the Polish painter changes his artistic style several times, mainly moving between abstract geometric forms and figuration in the form of mainly post-war expressionism. This division between aesthetic approaches is a crucial duality for his status as an artist. When it comes to his acknowledgement as an artist he does not achieve much recognition during his lifetime. In fact he can be considered a struggling painter, evidence for which is contained in his memoirs and can be inferred from his multiple jobs as an editor and art critic trying to earn money to support his family. He dies in 1957 at the age of twenty-nine in a mountain accident. To this day the causality of the accident are unsolved, which surrounds the artist with a certain glow of the unknown. Taking into account that according to KK the undocumented childhood can be a starting point for a legend, it seems to be death in this case. The following chapter will introduce his twist between two styles, evaluate the perception of his art during his lifetime following his death and address how art institutions charge his work with meaning in order to promote him.

¹⁷ Kordjak-Piotrowska 2015.

2.1 Duality in style

The term duality in style refers to two dominant stylistic approaches and visual communication choices within a painter's *Gesamtkunstwerk*. There are two distinct areas regarding duality: the significance for the painter and the significance for art institutions. According to KK that can be classified into a distinction between psychological and sociological elements that the authors describe as having an influence on an artist. According to KK there are certain biographical factors that impact the masses to be in favour of and consider an artist a legend. Most importantly, the quality of his work is not responsible for his reputation as being interesting and relevant, it is the “significance” of his work to others.¹⁸ That supports the claim as to how the painter comes to his significance. If an artist moves between two styles, it guarantees a higher likability and acknowledgement within his audience.

While the authors do not focus on specific pieces or trends in an artist's work, it is important to differentiate between intentional duality and experimentation. To use different stylistic methods is nothing out of the ordinary for an artist. The use of different styles, particularly realism and abstraction, is a phenomenon that can be linked to two political oppositions during the Cold War. Through the two dominating political parts the arts are in a competition as to how art should be performed. Assuming the duality to be a common approach for artists it is however curious why Wróblewski manages to stay relevant today even though he died too young to carve his own way. Comparing the Pole with Gerhard Richter shows that both experiment with different ways of aesthetic depiction. What Richter, also a started Post War painter, has was the time to mature as an artist and shape his trademark. Wróblewski's art suggests blunt jargon and a certain disillusion with history but he could not break out of the suppressed doctrine that was applied also to artist of the ruling government. Instead he moves between an unresolved battle of conflicting stands. The division is shown by French curator De Chassey, who points out Wróblewski is going back and forth between styles.¹⁹ His oeuvre of approximately 200 paintings and 800 works on paper is full of different methods and styles. According to De Chassey this can result from experimentation²⁰ but it can also mirror a

¹⁸ Kris/Kurz 1934.

¹⁹ de Chassey 2015a.

²⁰ Ibidem.

psychological uncertainty how to paint after the war. His abstract art, mainly made of geometrical forms, is predominant when it comes to nature and space, while figurative art, respective social realism, is applied when showing images that discuss current political and social situations. Subtracting from the stylistic division De Chassey categorizes Wróblewski's work into three parts: the beginnings (1948-1949), observational themes (1950-1955) and restart (1956-1957).²¹ Calling a category "restart" suggests the painter has trouble coming to terms with one particular style. Additionally it suggests that he is not confident or satisfied with his performance of his visual communication. When mentioned before, that external party's charge Wróblewski's art with meaning, it proves correct in this very example by De Chassey: Categorising the painter's art chronologically like he does, proves difficult, as many of his pieces are undated.²² This chronological and stylistic uncertainty gives liberty to art institutions to instrument his paintings, in this case, in a timeframe and add meaning where there might be no deeper significance. The painter himself does not date most of his works. His mother plays a large role in attributing dates after his death, while his work is being organized and recorded. Studying his dated works, it becomes evident that the time periods are not stylistically bound, which is an additional support that the painter is torn between two styles. His digression could be due to historical and political circumstances, which surely affects Wróblewski's state of mind, as being unable to settle down with one style may be a manifestation of psychological pressure. A closer investigation of 1948-1949 pieces reveals that figurative social realism paintings are catalogued as well as abstract works, which in this paper are defined as mainly geometrical forms, such as circles and squares. In this time period he creates paintings as "Sky over mountains, Sky" (Fig. 1), or "Geometric Abstraction" (Fig. 2), as well as what can be counted as expressionist post-war paintings like "Execution against a wall, execution IV" (Fig. 3), "Execution, execution VII" (Fig. 4) or "Painting about the horrors of war" (Fig. 5). His experimentalism with styles can be understood as a process of maturing as an artist, but, at the same time, his work is a testimony for a young painter mentally divided on a personal level. This creates the opportunity for institutions to use his "indecisiveness" and position him in whichever way suitable for a successful promotion. More so his art can act as a mediator between the past and present, the suppressed and the free by speaking to a

²¹ de Chassey 2015b.

²² Ibidem.

vast audience. Not having established a direction of his own the search for his significance becomes a matter of the public and comes alive for everybody.

2.1.1 The use of different styles

His duality in style is crucial for the created meaning and mediation in Wróblewski's art as well as his acknowledgement as a "legend" on an international level. Two exhibition examples will show how art establishments pick a certain aspect of his oeuvre in order to legitimize such a presentation. Referring back to the MSN quote used in the introduction, he is confronting the audience with "the individual" and "the social collective spheres"²³. With his help history can be put in a new light and help people make peace with it. Encountering the Polish audience his art can show a part from history that shapes the Polish culture still today. It can be a crucial factor, that Wróblewski is did not create any works post 1957 – this way he as an art persona and his work catapults the audience into the mindset a of person experiencing the shows images first hand. Encountering the international audience, his work gives insight how Poland experienced the war and allows them as well to understand Polish history and culture.

The exhibition „A Vision of Central Europe“, curated by Luc Tuymans and Tommy Simoons, is part of the 2010-2011 Brugge Centraal Festival. It focuses mainly on artists active from World War Two until today. That includes artists like Alex Katz, Andy Warhol, Gerhard Richter, and Andrzej Wróblewski. In a group exhibition with Tadeusz Kantor and Alina Szapocznikow the protagonist of this paper is displayed with artists, that adds significance to him as a painter but also to his work. The group exhibition, outlines the reconstruction of Poland after being razed to the ground during the war, Wróblewski is shown with paintings like "Mother with dead child" (Fig. 6). A Woman is sitting on a chair holding what seems to be her dead child. The infant, painted with a blue palette, is moving up to put his arms around his mother, even though the colour suggests that he is not alive. Two opposites are combined in one piece: dead and alive. Like many of Wróblewski's paintings blue stands for loss, fear and grief. A common

²³ Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport 2015.

colour use, as will be shown later on in this paper.²⁴ Currently the painting is shown in an exhibition in Italy, that aims to forwards the “the feeling of being projected thousands of light years away to view our current world as if it were a fossil, geological eras from the present time, resulting in a feeling of being suspended in a limbo between a now distant past and a still distant future.”²⁵ The mentioned “limbo between a now distant past and a still distant future”²⁶ is what institutions use in connection with Wróblewski today. Showing a post War painter and promoting him suggests his art might be relevant on a reconciliation level between the past and the today.

While “A Vision of Central Europe” shows several artists and focuses on political art, the 2015 “Recto/Verso” solo exhibition shows paintings of both styles and spotlights Wróblewski’s double-sided canvases. The presentation with both sides of the canvas visible to the audience is not a novum. The curator De Chassey has however an unique exhibition proposition: He claims, that a dialog between both sides of the canvas is intended by the painter. Not interpreting the double-sided canvases as sheer “recycling” and resource saving but as an intentional strategy. That is another way to add meaning to Wróblewski’s work. At the same time, it shows how his duality and experimentalism with canvases can be manipulated and positioned in order to create an argument for an exhibition. Other double sided canvases retaliate the argument, that there is a connection between the subject of the painting. One of the double-sided canvases presented in this exhibition is “Geometrical Abstraction in Grey” and “Geometrical Abstraction”, on the opposite side of “Portrait of a young man”. One side of the canvas features abstract art while the other has figurative imagery. De Chassey sees a thematic connection, following again Degas quote that it is not what somebody sees but what in this case the curator makes the audience see through reasoning. For a generation of Polish artists, who, according to Wajda, do not have enough money to simply buy a new canvas and paint as many works as they would like to, it is a common habit to use both sides of the canvas. Art historian Maria Poprzęcka agrees with that statement and strongly criticises the additional “meaning giving” De Chassey creates. According to Poprzęcka, Wróblewski double-sided canvases are also shown in 1948 exhibition, which shows,

²⁴ The painting is also shown during the exhibition “The Reality of the Lowest Rank” where texts from Alison Gas, curator of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) explained Wróblewski’s works.

²⁵ <http://www.andrzejwroblewski.pl/en/news/mother-with-dead-child-and-execution-in-italy/>

²⁶ Ibidem.

that the approach is not new. Going back to the argument the two sides have a connection other double-sided paintings have no evident connection to each other, are rather quite random.²⁷ De Chassey seems to entitle the painter the role of a mediator who's "images illustrating disasters of war with an image celebrating a possible future."²⁸ The contradiction in opinion between De Chassey and Poprzęcka shows though, how multiple interpretations are made due to the lack of clear style in Wróblewski's work or the fact that distinct meaning in his work is yet to be established.

According to biographer Joanna Kordjak-Piotrowska, Wróblewski believes, that in order for art to work, it must be "communicative, legible, themed and aiming for a wide social reception."²⁹ Analogously, if successful art must feature a "wide social reception"³⁰, it must be achieved firstly by pleasing a wide audience, and, secondly, by creating imagery that is relatable for the spectator in order to cause an emotional connection. The varied components of the aftermath of the war collectively saturate numerous aspects of daily life in Poland. Wróblewski's observant nature is mirrored in his paintings as he is displaying them on several occasions. His decision to incorporate two different styles and subject matters in his art reflects his aspirations as an artist. Founding a self-education group and "rioting" against the establishment, his approach can be compared to the art collective ZERO, founded in the late 1950s by the German artists Otto Piene and Heinz Mack. Together with other artists they foster artistic discovery by promoting a new environment, unconstrained by past artistic traditions. Like the Polish painter they want to free themselves from previous doctrines and reinvent art after the Second World War. The name ZERO marks affinities with minimalism, simple forms and colours. While Wróblewski does not proclaim the use of new materials, he does experiment with colours and shapes. Comparing his geometrical forms (Fig. 2) with some art from the ZERO movement, there are parallel elements: Geometric rectangular and square shapes or the separation of bright colours. The need to break out of the known is therefore a phenomenon not limited to the painter but a general tendency amongst artists after World War II.

²⁷ "Earth" on the other side of "Dark Sky", "Geometrical Abstraction" the other side of "Sun and other stars" or "Liquidation of the ghetto" on the other side of „Blue chauffeur”.

²⁸ de Chassey 2015a, page 71.

²⁹ Kordjak-Piotrowska 2015.

³⁰ Ibidem.

2.2 Perception during his life

There are four approaches to look at Wróblewski's reputation during his life: witnesses from his time period, newspapers, correspondences and, with one exception, his own diary notes. Wróblewski's personal diary reveals some insights into his own perception of himself as an artist and his work. Not seen as objective truths, the use of those notes will be very limited and rather enable an understanding of his career through his self-awareness. In an undated letter he writes: "Life is very hard, and recently I almost lost my spiritual balance because I failed to find enough cash for the exhibition."³¹ This diary extract shows he has difficulties financing his career. Seeing his status today his struggling past that gives room for speculation as to why he wasn't popular. Applying *lex parsimoniae* (Occam's razor), the simplest explanation is that he isn't selling any pieces, because his art is too revolutionary and not yet accepted by the broad audience and secondly because his themes are ones that people want to forget.³² Previously mentioned sources conform, that he is a struggling artist. In 1949 he is part of a group exhibition at the Palace of Art in Krakow where thirty-seven artists show their work, one of them Tadeusz Kantor, a painter often connected with Wróblewski today.³³ Brought to life by the Krakow Artists Club, the exhibition shows "lively art, that is developed based on experimentation rather than confirmed achievements."³⁴ That solidifies the notion that Wróblewski in 1949 has no considerable achievements – at least not in the eyes of the art establishment. A review from the magazine "Echo Krakowa" states that half should be thrown away and the other half put in "golden frames".³⁵ No artist is mentioned by name, but relating to his lack of success the review may refer to Wróblewski's work in a negative way. Looking at three international exhibitions, which are all taking place during his lifetime, and all in fellow communist governed countries, it shows that on an international stage Wróblewski's art is very often included in group exhibitions and does not receive much attention.³⁶ Another confirmation of his lack of success is provided by Andrzej Wajda. In an interview 2016 he says Wróblewski is a rejected painter, not approved by the Academy, not understood in his art, not exhibiting

³¹ Michalski 1993, page 270.

³² Occam's razor refers to William of Ockham's philosophical principle that claims the simpler answer of at least two explanations is the better one.

³³ Introduction to the exhibition of modern art in Krakow 1948.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Maczewski 1949, page 2.

³⁶ 1953 Bukarest, 1955 Kijów, 1956 East Berlin.

or selling during his lifetime.³⁷ At the same time Wajda defends Wróblewski and turns the argument by saying he is a visionary painter who understands that “the world has changed”³⁸ and that it was time to establish a distance from Polish art stars, like 19th century painter Jan Matejko, and begin a new era with abstraction. That goes along with the previously mentioned relation to the art collective ZERO. While the German art collective is founded in West Germany during the Cold War Wróblewski is experiencing his rebellion with the manifested art doctrines in occupied Poland. Looking at his perception during his lifetime Wajda’s opinion and public statements have a definite impact on the perception of the painter’s works and will be shown in the following chapter. Should there be a shift in relevance after his death, it would proof how important the artist’s death is for manipulating his status. Particularly the uncertainty of how he died adds mysteriousness to his persona and may evoke curiosity in the audience for him and his art.

³⁷ Dzieje 2016.

³⁸ Dzieje 2016.

2.3 Posthumous perception

Having established the character of Wróblewski's recognition during his lifetime, this chapter will show the posthumous awareness surrounding the artist. The first relevant moments after the painter's death are two solo exhibitions in 1958 in Krakow and Warsaw. They decidedly set the tone for the following five exhibitions that are held in the same year. The total of seven exhibitions highlights the interest and demand for the previously less-attractive artist. The first posthumous exhibition in 1958 in the Palace of Art in Krakow exhibited 259 works and was co-organized by Andrzej Wajda.³⁹ The exhibition then travels to Warsaw, Łódź and Sopot.⁴⁰ A review from that time reads: "Andrzej Wróblewski was a relatively little-known painter in Krakow. Every now and then you must have seen his work in local exhibitions. They made little or no impression [...] The fact that the painting has such a strong influence on the spectator is also the merit of Andrzej Pawlowski and Andrzej Wajda."⁴¹ This review reveals two important conclusions: The perception of Wróblewski as a non-prominent artist during his lifetime and Wajda's role as a strong influence for the perception of the spectator. Taking into consideration that the exhibition travels to several cities across the country, it must be assumed that audiences would embrace his art. From the exhibition catalogue it is known, that amongst other paintings "Executed Men, Execution with a Gestapo Man" (Fig. 7), "Execution of Hostages" or "Execution against a wall, execution IV" (Fig. 3) are exhibited. Only thirteen years after the Second World War, the themes still mirror past events ostensibly very vivid in the spectators' eyes. Given that, Wróblewski's diverse Gesamtkunstwerk can be seen as a tool that enables varied spectators to identify with his imagery due to his vague style, true to the motto "there's something for everybody". His different subjects help his art appeal to a wider audience, and, when they can relate to his work, they thus sympathize with the artist. His art is loaded with meaning that runs parallel to – and in some way in conjunction with – the pervading Polish psyche and the constantly evolving and changing national identity. Even years after his death, the tear in society that the regime change left, remains evident and the analogy can be made between this and his work. Divided between the abstract and figurative,

³⁹ Grzybala/Ziolkowska 2015.

⁴⁰ The following exhibitions showed 199 works by the painter and not the 259 pieces, that were shown in the opening exhibition in Krakow.

⁴¹ Skrzynecki 1958, page 3.

one can choose his own side on the rift. The painter brings people together with different preferences, views and history. It can be argued that he tries to use his art as a contemporary mediation at that time with the pervading Polish psyche but can't really achieve much due to lack of exposure. Now after his death and with the Andrzej Wróblewski foundation eager to promote a wide exposure his art is being used to mend the current state and psyche with what is going on pre 1989. How his art specifically act as an mediator will be discussed in more detail in chapter four but already it can be said, his perception after his death and particularly after 1990 and 2000 is increasingly positive.

After an eventful 1958, twenty-seven further Wróblewski exhibitions are held in Poland over a time span of fifty-three years. With an approximate interval of two years, the solo shows have one large interruption between 1973 and 1987. Regardless the interruption, the consistency and presence of the painter shows that he is a permanent part of the discourse of Polish art history and within Polish art institutions. Considering the lack of exhibitions in Western Europe, the question arises as to the reason why. Due to the ideological differences the West does not agree with views and art subjects provided from artists of the Eastern Bloc. Countries like England or Western Germany have no interest in exhibiting his works. Additionally the access to his work is limited for art institutions outside of the Communist Bloc and vice versa. Artists have limited opportunities to travel western countries and promote their works. Wróblewski does visit Eastern Germany and the Netherlands, but there is no data found that confirms his art is interesting to Western art institutions before the end of the Cold War. Not only is it difficult for artists like Wróblewski to promote their art in Western countries – the circumstances of production are difficult. The cultural infrastructure does not provide artistic liberty and censorship is common. That can be a reason why his works circle around the same subjects. His oeuvre testifies the horrors of war and shows the aftermath in Poland imagery of the communist regime, which according to Pietrasik, is an “exotic” factor for an audience that is interested in Poland pre 1990.⁴² “Exotic” for those from western countries as well as the new generation, who knows about the past from textbooks, and relatable for those, who lived through the circumstances themselves. His art brings

⁴² Appendix.

two parties together and creates a discourse that is encouraged by art institutions and curators.

Following the chronological order of his posthumous exhibitions the first solo event abroad in a non-communist country takes place in Eindhoven, Netherlands forty-four years after his first Polish solo show in Krakow. Curated by Polish national Magdalena Ziółkowska, the exhibition shows sixty-five works of the Polish painter. In the exhibition catalogue Ziółkowska writes his art has the ability to “satisfy many different kinds of spectator, from those craving the Avant-Garde to others content with social realism.”⁴³ Asserting this in a public statement as the organiser of the show gives the comment more weight than, for example, an outside opinion. It shows how she intentionally uses his lack of artistic clarity to please a broad audience. It is not unusual that a curator would play to the strengths of an artist, but, put on an international stage, this is an important step towards Mytkowska’s goal: turning the painter into an international legend. It is, in itself, a statement to exhibit a dead painter with then-little international relevance to an universal audience, because it shows the certainty of a successful presentation: “The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, which – for the first time – discloses the history of Wróblewski to an international public.”⁴⁴ Looking at the posthumous perception of his work this exhibition sets the start of an international awareness.

A significant addition in the study of Wróblewski’s work is the book “Avoiding Intermediary States”. Initiated by The Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation, the book is a pre-promotion tool for the 2015 “Recto/Verso” exhibition in Warsaw and, later, Madrid. International newspapers like Spanish “El Mundo” or Italian “Atribune” comment on this exhibition and on his early death.⁴⁵ Following KK it creates the impression that his art is secondary, or at least only important in the context of his demise. In the “El Asombrario & Co” a review of the exhibition in the Palacio Velazquez Madrid compares pieces by the Pole with works by Picasso and Goya.⁴⁶ The context of Wróblewski and renowned artists helps to position him and legitimise his status. It may be that the narrative of an artist’s life, or death, increases the intrigue and overall perception of his work. Besides KK Polish art historian Maria Poprzęcka and professor at the University

⁴³ Ziółkowska 2010, page 8-9.

⁴⁴ Van Abbe Museum 2010.

⁴⁵ <http://www.elmundo.es/madrid/2015/09/05/55e9fede46163fc21b8b45a4.html>

⁴⁶ <http://elasombrario.com/andrzej-wroblewski-un-goya-polaco-en-tierra-de-nadie/>

of Warsaw, supports the claims that a premature death characterizes the typical topos for artists accepted in the canon of the great.⁴⁷ Seeing that his early death plays a role in reviews shows that there is a need for legitimising his display and status for art history.

Wróblewski's works can also be seen in galleries. The Isabella Czarnowska's Gallery in Berlin will be used as an example of his posthumous perception. Run by Polish national Isabella Czarnowska the gallery sees itself performing "an important role in introducing exceptional contemporary artists to the Western European public."⁴⁸ This introduction is now possible that political circumstances have changed since 1990. Her repertoire includes Northern American, South African and Belgian artists as well as Polish artists, such as Tadeusz Kantor and Alina Szapocznikow. Putting aside the fact that Wróblewski is not so much contemporary as post-war, the context in which he is placed is interesting: Tadeusz Kantor, a prominent artist and director with considerable international recognition and Alina Szapocznikow, a Polish sculptor, who, as previously mentioned, exhibited at the MoMA.⁴⁹ Placing Wróblewski amongst two renowned Polish artists can be construed as a strategy to increase awareness and focus attention on Wróblewski by claiming Wróblewski is of the same standard, despite him never receiving comparable levels of international recognition. An analysis of exhibitions featuring Wróblewski shows that Polish nationals are strongly involved in influencing his promotion abroad. It can thus be concluded that the painter speaks especially to Poles, which is why they feel strongly about him being recognized abroad. The intended increase of international interest in his work might be pushed especially due to his status of a "legend" in his home country. Polish citizens see him as a representative and spokesman of their history, which is why international acknowledgement of his art can equal international acknowledgement of historical cruelty and brutality experienced by many Poles. Accepting Wróblewski as an important Polish painter on the global art scene would mean recognizing the history. He becomes the mediator between Poland and the world, between the communist past and the democratic today.

Looking at the perception after his death amongst fellow artist shows that he holds a place as a relevant painter. His influence on the Polish art scene is most recognizable with the artist collective "Wprost". Founded in 1966 by former students of The School

⁴⁷ Poprzeczka 2015.

⁴⁸ Czarnowska Gallery 2016.

⁴⁹ Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2016.

of Fine Arts in Krakow, they express their emotions and thoughts in a direct and sometimes brutal way following the precedent example of Wróblewski.⁵⁰ Based in the same city Wprost is not only linked geographically with the painter but also shares similar approaches in style. Rather than following the conventional approach of leading artists, members of the collective want to create avant-garde, straightforward art, much like Wróblewski. Dissolved shortly after 1984, his influence upon this group is no longer current, yet it marks an important development in Polish art history: What Wróblewski lacks, is developed by members of “Wprost”. An example shall be given in a comparison: Wróblewski’s “Waiting Room I, The Queue Continues” (Fig. 8) and Zbysław Grzywacz’s “The Queue still continues” (Fig. 9). The pieces of the same composition show three on chairs sitting people, facing the same direction. Being portrayed in a still position the painting shows no emotion – almost like mannequins the people wait patiently. It is a metaphor for political and economical circumstance, for everyday life in Poland during the Cold War, where People have to wait in line for every purchase, sometimes even months. While Wróblewski allows room for interpretation of the visible facial expression the later painting by Grzywacz is free of any human mimics. A big red arrow guides the way the queue is going. By picking up the same theme and composition of his colleague, Grzywacz is reaching out to Wróblewski and taking the painting a step further saying that nothing has changed, and if, then only for the worse, now that the queuing people are seemingly anonymous citizens, deprived of their human facial attributes. By using Wróblewski’s ways of expressing subjects bluntly and directly the group is honouring him after his death and keep him relevant.

On an international and more recent Luc Tuymans, a Belgian painter, who has been shown in significant art institutions like Tate Modern, becomes involved in the Wróblewski discourse. During an open dialogue in 2016 he states he „discovered a dual meaning in the Polish artist’s work as it revealed drama and spectre with which to reinvent history painting. The trauma of memory, the constant repetition in series and spatial meaning in Wróblewski’s narrative would be decisive in approaching the modern-day painting that lies between realism and abstraction.”⁵¹ With that statement he accounts the painter a contemporary relevance and his art a mediating function.

⁵⁰ Gorzadek 2006.

⁵¹ Museo Nacional Centro del Arte 2016.

The posthumous perception is increasingly positive and growing. The support and recognition not only by Polish art associations but also international news papers, curators and artists shows an expanding interest for the painters work and his significance for the history of art.

3 The meaning of Wróblewski's work

In the book “Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence” Jonathan Sacks claims “Homo sapiens is the meaning-seeking animal. If there is one thing the great institutions of the modern world do not do, it is to provide meaning. Science tells us how but not why. Technology gives us power but cannot guide us as to how to use that power. The market gives us choices but leaves us uninstructed as to how to make those choices. The liberal democratic state gives us freedom to live as we choose but refuses, on principle, to guide us as to how to choose.”⁵² That can be applied to art and the meaning-seeking tendencies found in the study of art. Assuming Wróblewski is being revived and reframed, art establishments have to adjust the meaning of his work, as presented in this chapter. When attempting to determine the meaning of a piece of art, first the context and subsequent definition of the term “meaning” must be understood. Whether an implication is given or taken, a significance exists only in the mind of an audience. It is a subjective flowing entity and can be influenced by anything that alters a person's perception. It is a fundamental feature of art that allows for nuance and distinction, but it can also grant access to the artistic parties other than the artist themselves. The paper concedes the difficulty of quantifying “meaning” and who, if anyone, gets a monopoly on meaning? The famous adage “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” supports the claim that there is no such thing as absolute control over a perceived “meaning”, but the field of art history puts weight on an artist's concept, where and how it is placed, and what that means in regard to society as a whole. From a psychological perspective, the question as to why the broad audience looks for meaning in an artwork is answered by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi's comparison with religion. Though art is not a sacred ideology, “both art and religion are based on human imagination, and emotional involvement (or emotional ‘arousal’).”⁵³ Extrapolating on the idea from KK, a comparison of the divine and the “legendary” status is not so absurd. Although this is largely due to social and cultural factors, art is historically inexplicably linked with religion. Rooted in Plato's Theory of Aesthetics, the Renaissance elevated the artist to a medium

⁵² Sacks 2015, page 13.

⁵³ Beit-Hallahmi 1937, page 237.

through which the divine could be expressed.⁵⁴ The reason this paper considers this of value is the almost mythic property of a “legendary” status and what that means, especially when applied to Wróblewski and his reputation in Poland. As Beit-Hallahmi points out, “human imagination” is a crux of both fields, and it is the imagination and creativity that drives the so-called “emotional arousal” in the aesthetic perception of the mind. The high emotional involvement causes the audience to search for a meaning, and the artistic idea creates a resonance that, according to Beit-Hallahmi, is deeply rooted in the unconsciousness of the public.⁵⁵ By definition, an unconscious reaction is not a deliberate one, so can it even be possible for art establishments to position and display art in a way that affects the unconscious reaction? The simple answer is yes, and the fact that art establishments are appealing to a “deeply rooted unconsciousness” allows the tactics to go largely unnoticed – essentially the positioning and the rhetoric act as a “subliminal message” – affecting the reaction unobtrusively. Therefore, the aesthetic experience has to be accessible in order to assure success. Applying this to the Polish painter, it can be argued that, in order to create a connection between audience and medium, his work must be displayed in a political context. Relating this to the emotional connection between audience and artwork, Wróblewski's pieces create feelings as curiosity for the “exotic” socialist Poland, compassion towards the victims in his paintings and in reality as well as anger towards the regime.⁵⁶

When searching for meaning in Wróblewski's work and leaving the possibility open that his work evokes emotions, it has to be acknowledged that animosity is a very strong emotion. Creating an intense feeling in the audience, eventually having the painters work speak for the audience, assures a deep compassion and popularity for his work. A similar effect can be observed in Picasso's work. In reference to African masks he study's during a visit at the Le Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in Paris he notes: “The Negro pieces were *intercesseurs* ,mediators [...] they were against everything – against unknown threatening spirits...I understood; I too am against everything. I too believe that everything is unknown, that everything is an enemy! Everything! I understood what Negroes used their sculpture for [...] they were weapons to help people avoid coming under the influence of spirits again, to help them become independent.

⁵⁴ Kris/Kurz 1934, page 74.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Interview Pietrasik 2016, view Appendix.

Spirits, the unconscious emotion – they were all the same thing. I understood why I was a painter.”⁵⁷ The masks act as a mediator between an African culture and not noted inner feelings the painter has and his conscious mind. Seeing the exhibit as a bizarre and curious object the unknowingness of life behind the Iron Curtain makes Wróblewski's paintings act as a curious, exotic object, seemingly mediating between the audience and his work.

In the movie “Wróblewski According to Wajda”, the Polish film director explains after seeing the painter's work, it becomes clear to him: everything he ever wanted to express in fine art, has already been expressed by his colleague.⁵⁸ The ability to speak to the deep unconsciousness of the audience through his art can be used as a tool to create either memories of war and its aftermath or empathy by the new generation. Assuming those feelings are triggered in the spectator, his art automatically has meaning to recuperate those aspects of Polish history and “make peace” between today and past. Because his art is relateable, according to George Stein, Wróblewski gains relevance, which influences his popularity. How Stein understands meaning of art and how it can be applied to the here discussed artist, will therefore be analysed in the following chapter.

⁵⁷ Huffington, Arianna Stassinopoulos, 1998, p. 90.

⁵⁸ Wajda 2015.

3.1 Stein's four meanings of art

For George P. Stein meaning in art can be distinguished between relational, interpretive, contextual and referential meaning. Each meaning will be explained by the example of Wróblewski's „Executed Man, Execution with Gestapo Man“ (Fig. 7). The 120x90 cm. oil painting shows a uniformed man standing with the back towards the spectator. Across his green jacket he wears a holster. Over his blue pants his black jump boots are visible. The painting of his body ends with his back, his head is not visible to the audience. With one arm behind his back and the other arm bent forward he points towards the man opposite him. The victim has a surreal body shape, painted in all blue with his torso upside down. With bear feet and one bear hand, a dead face expression he is the victim of the man facing him. Not only the title of the painting but also the outfit of the assailant suggest a violent scene from World War II.

Even though by analogy paintings are often recognized as meaningful in all four categories, the first meaning according to Stein is the “relational meaning”. Emotional response, as outlined with the comparison of art to religion, is connected to the relational meaning: “Picasso, Barque, Mondrian, Miró, Kandinsky, Brancusi, even Klee, Matisse and Cézanne derive their chief inspiration from the medium they work in. The excitement of their art seems to lie most of all in its pure preoccupation with the invention and arrangements of spaces, surfaces, shapes, colours.”⁵⁹ In regard to Wróblewski's work, particularly his paintings concerning political subjects, its relational meaning is triggered in terms of relational meaning through the discussed external element of the work. In Wróblewski's case the Second World War and the following Cold War. Relational meaning, based on “Executed Man, Execution with Gestapo Man”, is found in the painting's depiction of war crimes against humanity and the painter's fellow compatriots. The meaning is given by making a connection between a past event in the painting and today. He does not invent a scenario, rather, he references to events happening during his lifetime. Having the head cut off the Gestapo man automatically put the viewer in his position and catapults him into 1944. Especially today, as global politics are entrenched in uncertainty and conflict, his paintings create a relation with the audience and serve to remind the viewer of the horrors of war. Achieved through his artwork with

⁵⁹ Richards 1934, page 267.

subtle violent imagery, for this particular painting has no blood or wounds, yet it portrays a war crime, the real horror happens in the mind of the spectator. Much like in horror movies, an image that triggers an emotion without giving too much away, the audience is drawn to it. There does not need to be any reference to a specific conflict – portrayals of any such conflict can evoke similar responses, which is why his work functions in a contemporary art context. With paintings that show bleak, abominable actions, such as the indiscriminate shooting of the civilian population, an emotional connection is made even with viewers from a completely different generation than the one the painting depicts. Looking today at Goya's "The Third of May 1808" from 1814 a cringe feeling is still evoked in the audience. The painting shows a brutal shooting scene from the Peninsula War, when Spanish citizens resisted Napoleons armies in 1808. Much like Goya, Wróblewski's paintings commemorate the war and it's victims and allow to feel compassion.

The painter's attitude toward some aspects in life and that, which occupies his mind is visible in his oeuvre through the language of colour and stylism. He uses blue to show death and depression – a colour often associated with such emotions in life and in art, a famous example of the latter being Picasso and his Blue Period. By analyzing the painting further, the "rational meaning" for the painter is the artistic report on everyday situations, though the effect for the audience can be more deeply rooted. Relating once more to Beit-Hallahmi's "unconsciousness", this is what is triggered in the spectator. Without thinking too much about his work it does cause an emotion. Drawn to it by bright colours, opposite techniques, opposite styles as well as having multiple themes the painter speaks to a variety of viewers.

Looking at Wróblewski's IV Execution from the perspective of an interpretive meaning, the comparison with religion and its psychological urgency is crucial. Whereas the relational meaning is based on a factual context, the interpretative meaning occurs on a personal level. Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, discusses how art comes to its meaning from an interpretive perspective: "to those who are not artists the gratification that can be drawn from the springs of fantasy is very limited; their inexorable repressions prevent the enjoyment of all but the meagre day-dreams which can become conscious. A true artist has more at his disposal. First of all he understands how to elaborate his daydreams so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears and

become enjoyable to others; he knows too how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected. Further, he possesses the mysterious ability to mould his particular material until it expresses the ideas of his fantasy faithfully.”⁶⁰ By superimposing Freud's perspective on how Wróblewski relates to events in his memory to create works of art, the painter is using his “fantasy” to recollect or connect memory and imagination. Further on in Freud's “A General Introduction of Psychoanalysis”, he attempts a psychoanalytical study for meaning of a story, which shows that the consumer needs a mediator to comprehend, in this case, the intentional meaning. In the here discussed painting Wróblewski expresses his idea and need of processing the past.

The contextual meaning, similar to the relational meaning, goes from the unconsciousness in Freud's case into the actual environment. Stein argues that in order for an object to be classified as art it has to purposefully create a discourse between the surrounding and the audience. Seeing that Wróblewski portrays scenes from everyday life, his art is not only legitimized as art, but that act in itself – “revealing to us the sources, movement, and culmination of the sorts of interactions we have with our (physical or cultural) environment”⁶¹ – gives his art a contextual meaning. He shows pictures from the everyday not only with the executions, but also with scenes from life behind the Iron Curtain, like the previously discussed “The Queue Continues” (Fig. 8). Wróblewski draws further inspiration from photographic documents and newspaper reports, as Guilbaut shows. The contextual meaning is one of the most important types of meaning for positioning Wróblewski. To contextualise him with political art makes him relevant today and potentially facilitates an emotional connection between him and the audience. The emotional connection enables the audience to acknowledge the environment through the eyes of the painter and share “prior values, visual and emotional states.”⁶²

The last meaning Stein introduces is the referential meaning. In a comparison with a painting by Mondrian, Stein claims that a colour can create a memory, a reference and therefore give the work a relational meaning. Looking at the here used example the colour blue, as in many other pieces by the Pole, refers to death and loss. If it is enough for an object to create a reference to an event, political or social circumstance in order to be

⁶⁰ Freund 1938, page 327.

⁶¹ Stein 1971, page 108.

⁶² Ibidem.

considered significant than an unlimited amount of references occur due to the wide range of spectators, which according to Stein justifies the wide variety of relational meanings. By that logic a correlation between his work and anything else is enough for the spectator to feel involved and create an emotional bond between the work and the person, thus anything that evokes a feeling or a reference can be viewed as art. In terms of the contextual meaning of Wróblewski's work it is especially the connection between him and other artists that is made by art institutions that is relevant for his current perception and therefore the approach to reframe and revive him.

3.2 Wróblewski in the context of renowned artists

Contextualising an internationally relatively unknown artist can be done through a strategy, where the artist's work is placed parallel to the works of established artists. In relation to Wróblewski the literature has two main comparisons: Pablo Picasso and Piet Mondrian. Author Piotr Bernatowicz is one of the supporters claiming Wróblewski's style is connected to Pablo Picasso. One of the reasons for this comparison is according to the Polish scholar the use of the same colour palette and colour combinations.⁶³ An example is provided by illustrating the relationship between Wróblewski's "Son and dead mother" (Fig. 10) as well as "Mother with dead child" (Fig. 6) and Picasso's Blue Period. The Polish painter uses the blue colour palette to show death and express melancholy and sadness. Picasso's blue period, evoked by the suicide of his friend in 1901. Using blue as an expression of death is not only quite common but lies close to the imitation of nature. Polish painter Jarosław Modzelewski sees the dead body turning blue which makes the use of a blue palette to show the passing only natural.⁶⁴

In Wróblewski's before mentioned paintings the dead person is almost always portrait as a blue body with blue clothes. Considering that blue is a cold colour it is only suitable to use it for the description of death so the comparison between Picasso and Wróblewski might be legitimized but is not consistent. Bernatowicz further reason for comparing both is the choice of motive – the social status of the average person, which is in this case low. He compares Picasso's "La Vie" (Fig 11) to Wróblewski's "The shootings VIII" (Fig. 12). Picasso's oil painting from 1903 shows a group of seven people. Mainly painted with shades of blue, the foreground displays two groups each with two standing bodies visible to the audience. The group on the left portrays a man standing frontally in his underwear, with a naked woman leaning in her profile against him. With his hand he points towards the corpus of a dressed woman facing the duo while holding a sleeping infant. In the background of the paintings centre human bodies are contained in two square boxes. The bottom square incorporates a sitting person, whose head is facing down in despair, whereas the top box shows two people, one facing the viewer, the other huddled up and facing down. The one facing the audience is the only person in the painting breaking the fourth wall. Characteristically for Picasso's Blue

⁶³ Bernatowicz 2006.

⁶⁴ Modzelewski 2016.

Period, all protagonists have bare feet. This is a painting with people of no high class – it must be the average person who experiences life as something cruel and long. Bernatowicz points out similarities in the way the figures are displayed. According to him both Picasso and Wróblewski paint the bodies flat, almost “wall-like”⁶⁵. Furthermore, he sees in both paintings a division into two parts – the foreground and background. It can be argued Picasso's painting is divided into three parts: the couples in the front as two parts and the huddled people in the squares as one. Making this compositional parallel in addition to stylistic devices, specifically the bare foot figures and the blue colour, Bernatowicz puts Wróblewski close to his famous colleague. It is possible that the Polish painter sees a role model in Picasso's work for it was “revolutionary” and “new”, which is something he aspired to. Additionally the Spanish painter joined the French communist party in 1944 – an ideology both painters agreed with. Even though the paintings from the blue period didn't sell well and mustn't have been a great international success at that time, it is likely Wróblewski emphasizes with the topic of death and despair and wants to adapt the style somewhat in his own works. In 1948, writing as an art journalist he has Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee and Marc Chagall side by side in his articles.⁶⁶ That shows he does know about Picasso and in fact admires his art. Two other Polish authors confirm this. Jarosław Modzelewski and Marek Sobczyk compare and support the theory of Wróblewski and Picasso sharing a mutual destiny and style or, at least, that Wróblewski, in his art, mirrors Picasso. On a more personal note Wróblewski's wife confirms her husband liked the late phase of the French painter.⁶⁷ Here it is not Wróblewski's art mediating between spheres, it is Polish authors who create a context between two painters, which vindicates Wróblewski's role as a mediator. Bernatowicz mentions the “highly emotional reactions”⁶⁸ Picasso's works provoke in the Polish audience, which, as demonstrated previously, in terms of relational meaning can be adapted onto Wróblewski's art especially in his role as a mediator. Guilbaut mainly drew parallels to the post-war time, when artists have to establish a new way of expressing themselves and are still in shock from past events. In regards to Picasso, the French art historian sees in his blue paintings „contained violence in muted colours.”⁶⁹ The same violence is found in the “Execution” series and shows how he as a Post War

⁶⁵ Bernatowicz 2006, page 212.

⁶⁶ Andrzej Wróblewski, kat. wyst., TSP Zachęta, Warszawa 1994, page 4.

⁶⁷ Andrzej Wróblewski nieznany, op.cit., page 65.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, page 219.

⁶⁹ Guilbaut 2013.

painter tries to overcome his sorrow with new techniques and styles but doesn't have the chance due to the rejection of the political doctrine. Being reframed today as a relevant artist, gives not only the Pole an exposure but allows a delayed testimony of war crimes and the Cold War by the audience.

Looking at further comparisons by Non-Polish reviewers the international press compares the painter also with Picasso and Francisco Goya. The editor for "El Asombrario & Co", Julia Luzán, compares in an 2015 article Picasso's "Guernica" and Goya's "The Third of May 1808" with Wróblewski's war and execution paintings.⁷⁰ Picasso's 1937 black, white and gray oil painting is acknowledged as one of the most relevant anti-war art pieces and relates to Goya's 1814 piece. Both paintings show violent war scenes. Luzán takes that two-man chain and adds Wróblewski, who addresses the same topics: violence, war crime and suffering. The created parallel of the painters immediately categorizes the Polish painter alongside two widely known artists.

While the comparison with Picasso focusses on figurative works the other observation looks at the abstract side of Wróblewski's art. 2008 De Chassey dedicates an entire room in the exhibition "Starting from scratch" for placing Wróblewski's works next to works from Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. Creating an aesthetic context between two major representatives of Post War American Abstract Expressionism and an unknown Polish painter is an act of charging his work with meaning and drawing attention to him. In an interview de Chassey states that colleagues were quite surprised about the decision to place antagonistic painters right next to each other.⁷¹ However this is not the first time the Polish painter is exhibited with the Pollock and Rothko. In 1956 a show held in former Yugoslavia centres around modern artists from the United States and shows works of the before mentioned American painters as well as Wróblewski. Then the exhibition has the aim to value Western art "as a role model for the development of modernist idioms in Yugoslavia."⁷² Turning this argument around, looking at the context of Wróblewski with Pollock and Rothko today, the American painters now add value to the Pole. He is shown with important modern artists, which suggests he is one of them. In terms of mediation, Wróblewski's art is a gateway to add value to Western art in 1956 and today, being exhibited alongside Pollock and Rothko his art adds value

⁷⁰ Luzán 2015.

⁷¹ Sural 2015.

⁷² Dimitrijevic 2014.

to the historical display of Cold War art. How this helps the painter on his way to international stardom is reflected in the outcome of the show. After seeing the Polish painter for the first time, Spanish museum director Manuel Broja-Villel decides to show the painter in Madrid at the Reina Sofia. Following this show, a German curator decides to include Wróblewski in his show. That displays the mechanism and impact a single exhibition has for the reputation of an artist if the placement is successful.

Another connection is the one to painter Piet Mondrian. The comparison to Mondrian has elements of traceable inspiration to it. In 1948 Wróblewski travels the Netherlands and sees works by the Dutch painter, who is known for his simplicity of forms. With paintings as "Tableau I" (Fig. 13) from 1921, Mondrian drastically reduces forms and creates, with clear black lines and crass colours, a new "aesthetic language"⁷³. He narrows his compositions and colour palettes to mainly off-white backgrounds grounds, which are separated by black lines that often frame a rectangular shape. "Tableau I" shows a new approach to reality and the refusal to stick to old methods. Wróblewski too, as previously established, tries new aesthetics and experiments with minimal geometric shapes and can very well see an inspiration in the Dutch painter. A parallel is made by De Chasse: "[...] his way of painting is profoundly honest, his utopia are always awkward, they never achieve a state of completeness, complete harmony, stability. Sometimes it looks like Mondrian except that it's awkward. It's not awkward because he does not know how to paint but because he is also registering the failures of this utopian dream."⁷⁴ The influence can be observed in paintings like "Geometric Abstraction" (Fig. 2). While Mondrian clearly divides his forms Wróblewski who draws rectangular shapes cannot perform a straight cut. His painting, two horizontal thick bars in white and red over two shorter horizontal shapes in green and blue have a richer colour palette even though the colours are not as bright as in the Dutch painting. While his shades are overlapping it does show he is experimenting with forms. This is shown in the oil painting "Sky over mountains" (Fig. 1). On an off white background, much like Mondrian who also used off white, the Polish painter draws what seems to be turning suns and moons over a surface of standing out triangles. It seems Wróblewski is on the verge of a new art form but doesn't have the experience and knowledge to make the final step.

⁷³ The art story 2016.

⁷⁴ Sural 2015.

To bring the frame of reference between the Pole and renowned artists into context with how this has an effect on the meaning of Wróblewski's work and mediation, Philip Fisher raises an interesting question: "how [does one] turn a style into a brand?"⁷⁵ The branding of an artist and its importance for Wróblewski's role as an mediator will follow in the next chapter, but it appears important for an artist to have a distinct style and "clear identity"⁷⁶ to become a unique brand. He evidently lacks a clear identity, which is why contextualisation with artists like Picasso or Mondrian rubs off their meaning on to his work and art persona. Therefore, it is not how the meaning of his work is to be understood in the discourse of other painters, but rather how they add meaning to his work. This can be answered in two ways. First, significance is added to his work when the recognition of his work is higher due to the placement of his work with pieces of already accepted artists. Additionally, Post-War painters like Pollock and Rothko enable a better reframing of Wróblewski's work. They show how a new art movement is a global trend at the time and that the Polish painter might as well been a well known artist if it wasn't for his short life and the isolation in Poland. They can be seen as intentionally placed mediators who create a contextualisation for an audience, which can then better understand his work. As to how his pluralism in style helps Polish art institutions – and evidently art institutions generally – to position him, the painter's breadth of styles offers a freedom of choice in where he may be displayed. The painter's oeuvre contains a wide range of imagery with a rich repertoire of works. Thanks to that, art establishments have the advantage to pick whichever placement strategy seems most promising and thus focus on capitalizing off this placement. From what has been stated so far, it appears that his abstract pieces are not the most relevant and that the main focus of the art establishment is on his works. The meaning that is given to his work, therefore, is primarily political.

⁷⁵ Johns 1990, page 313–354.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, page 313.

4 Cultural mediation

Mediation, in a traditional sense, when used in the context of displaying works of art – is essentially the act of helping an audience to comprehend what they are looking at. This is by no means exclusive to Wroblewski, in fact it is relatively rare for any piece to be featured ‘naked’ or with no source of information. It refers to the ability of art to traverse history, conquering cultural, social, and political gaps, ultimately leading to a better understanding between the opposing sides of each circumstance. Applying this to Wróblewski is multi-faceted, as he deals with many aspects of Polish history, which is steeped in cultural, social, and political change. Looking at the European Biennale of Contemporary Art Manifest, one programme dedicates its entire focus on art education, or as they call it “art mediation”. It sets itself up to create a long-term conversation to build “strong links between both European and international artists and art audiences.”⁷⁷ Using the Recto/Verso exhibition, the MSN offers several opportunities that can be considered a form of mediation between audience and exhibition. They allow the viewer a responsive interaction during the director’s guides, audio-guides, lectures and written information in the form of hand-outs, wall texts, catalogues and additional information provided online. Each of these mediation methods helps to intercede between artist, piece, and audience. Especially tours with the museum director, where guests can discover the works and concepts from a point of view of a “professional”, while also having the opportunity to share their personal associations is most certainly a safe way to integrate the audience and make them feel part of the storytelling. A direct transfer of information from one to another is a typical format of cultural mediation and makes Wróblewski’s works understood as intended by the exhibiting art institution.⁷⁸

Interactive possibilities designed specifically to enable children an insight into the meaning behind art works with additional online guides to the exhibition show how even small visitors get the opportunity to playfully experience history. This leads to a deeper sense of what can be considered a cultural or social mediation. Explaining the context of his works allows a reviving of him as an artist and reframing his relevance

⁷⁷ Manifesta 2017.

⁷⁸ http://www.kultur-vermittlung.ch/zeit-fuer-vermittlung/download/pdf-e/TfCM_0_Complete_Publication.pdf

for a new generation, who has not experienced the past, that is still effecting Polish culture and mentality. The country, even though a democracy since 1991, is marked by its past. That is visible in the physical world and in the psyche. The Aftermath is most visible in the Polish infrastructure and architecture. In the centre of Warsaw the Palace of Education and Culture marks a reference point and reminds of the communist times. Built in the 1950's it was first unpopular for it stands for the totalitarian communist system of the cold war, but is now a popular place for the new generation. It shows, how symbol for a passed suppressed history is embraced in the present – a strategy that can be an option for Wróblewski's art. On a mental, or in this case spiritual note, Polish society is very close to the Roman Catholic Church: in a 38 million people inhabited country 32 million consider themselves catholic.⁷⁹ The strong religious position is linked to major crisis that have its start before World War II and the Cold War. Faith allows citizens a feeling of stability and unity and is an important identification factor. Now being able to live in a democracy and leave the traumatic intrusion behind it seems curious why Wróblewski, a painter who is supporting the communist ideology but denied membership in the political party, is being promoted. Being understood as art produced during the communist times, it is produced "by the means of the privatisation of the mental and symbolic territory that has been left behind by the Soviet ideology."⁸⁰ Nevertheless his art is not a communist art per se seeing that his images have been rejected by the regime. Here the recuperational factor within his oeuvre, the continuous globalisation and the new generation, who views his art from a distance, allows a new international perspective of his art.

⁷⁹ <http://www.pope2016.com/polska/o-kraju/news,452566,kosciol-w-polsce-w-liczbach.html>

⁸⁰ Groys 2008, p. 166.

4.1 Recuperating aspects of history

The attempt of cultural mediation in the context of the Polish painter, is connected with the recuperation of historical aspects within Polish history and society. The term “recuperation” itself is understood as the healing process between past and present events. Wróblewski’s art allows war images and ideas to be understood and accepted as part of today’s culture. The ability to analyze culture and society within the creative process of an artwork gives the opportunity to see certain circumstances from a distance and form a new opinion on history, even help accept, it as it shaped Poland, Polish mentality and culture. The act of recuperating and “healing” through art is not new: Friedrich Nietzsche claims according to theorist Gilles Deleuze artists and philosophers are the “physicians of civilisation”⁸¹. By deducting the causes and symptoms of post-war Polish society the painter manages to translate this into his art. He stands for a new depiction, rebels against old doctrines and revives the past today with great international attention. The newly gained attention gives Polish citizens a representative they can not only identify with within the Polish borders, but somebody who tells their all story to Western Europe. His art takes up a role of a mediator by not only being well known, but by portraying normal people, normal situations that every Pole who was born pre 1991 can relate to.⁸² The struggle mirrored in his paintings – moving between styles – allows spectators to identify with his art. His work shifts between the hope of a better tomorrow and legitimate ambiguity of the promised outlook of an improved government in the form of communism. Even though he is committed to the ruling authority, his paintings “are always awkward, they never achieve a state of completeness, complete harmony, stability”⁸³. The awkwardness portrays the ideological issues of post 1945 Poland, which presumably is intended to reassemble society. The two options “visionary abstractions or socialist realist tableaux”⁸⁴ create a range of imagery showing the Polish audience a part of their heritage and culture. Even though the past is dominated by unpleasant memories, it is what makes the country what it is today. Exhibiting a painter

⁸¹ Bogue 2003, p. 194.

⁸² Example: „Waiting Que“ Fig. 8

⁸³ E. de Chassey, quoted in Agnieszka Sural, ‘Wróblewski or the Unwillingness to Reconcile Contradictions: An Interview with Éric de Chassey’ (February 2015), *Culture.pl* [website], 25 March 2015, available at <http://culture.pl/en/article/wroblewski-or-the-unwillingness-to-reconcile-contradictions-an-interview-with-eric-de-chassey> (last accessed on 05.07.2015).

⁸⁴ McDonough 2015.

who is active in those times is in itself an act of reconciliation. By accepting a supporter of the communist regime and his art is simultaneously an acceptance of the past.

Understanding from the examination of the previous chapter Wróblewski's art is in the 1950's a representation of a then freshly re-established cultural as well as political association. Focussing attention on him today with establishing the Andrzej Wróblewski foundation and creating international exhibitions a reframing of Polish culture is possible. This shall be explained by the example of his execution paintings. The pieces, painted between 1948 and 1949, focus on war crimes and the destruction of human life. Showing the paintings now between the subjects of a historic testimony and processing trauma Wróblewski's art can challenge viewers to overcome the historic past. He is offering viewers violent themes in a relatively non-violent manner allowing war events to be seen from a distance. While knowing that the past has an enormous impact on Poland and its culture, his paintings don't always focus on facts but on transmitting a feeling. Using images that have subtle ways of showing brutal scenes, his art allows a psychological discussion between each viewer and the art work. While scenes of executions have been partly an element of everyday life during the war, the general subject of political themes in art, which the executions are, is a common subject. Not exactly recuperating history but by placing the viewer in the place of the executioner it is as if for a moment the person in the exhibition is a part of that history. Not a dialog but a "taking somebody by the hand" to guide them to a time when horror and fear are ruling the world. "Executed, executed with Gestapo man" (Fig. 7) allows the fear of a brutal confrontation with one's own death, with the role of a victim and the role of the predator. Being able to put oneself in the position of such opposite emotional cases can change the view of history and create a recuperation. Being shown with this and other paintings at the Haus der Kunst exhibition in Munich Wróblewski's art adds to the global discussion on the (post-) war period. By putting the audience in the role of not only an observer but seemingly as an active part of the painting his personal demonstration of history comes alive before the eyes for the spectator. His art suggests that images, drawn from a critical Cold War perspective, that is still current today have, an effective outcome in recuperating this aspect of history for both Poland and Europe. Therefore the legacy of the painter's work is being promoted to not forget the past.

Looking at the German Democratic Republic (hereafter abbreviated as GDR), or better yet the reunited German Republic and their commerce with the GDR art shows a very different approach. While Polish art institutions support a socialist painter GDR art is generalized as a past that should be left behind. Georg Baselitz, an important Post War painter, says in a 1990 interview the GDR didn't have artists' only assholes, who support a "criminal system".⁸⁵ This negative attitude occurs as well amongst art institutions, who quickly replace GDR art from their exhibitions. That allows a re-start for artists and a historical standpoint itself. Poland on the other hand is promoting a socialist realist painter who with his imagery supports the ideals of communism and who with his executions stays close to a traumatic past. His national and growing international acknowledgement and his status in his home country do allow Poland to rekindle the artist. Starting international exhibitions from 2010 ongoing shows that twenty years after the end of the Cold War the Polish psyche gained enough distance to reframe Wróblewski in an international context and use his art and a representation of Polish trauma, which in a global context with Pollock etc. recuperates history by accepting the artist as an important part of Polish culture. On the other hand the attitude towards the past is not "mature" enough to dare a clear break between Cold War and today. As previously mentioned the mentality and everyday landscape is still very much influenced by the past. That is why Wróblewski's art allows an acceptance, which hopefully in the future will bring a new focus. Otherwise there can be a risk of what Nietzsche warns, that too much historical direction can cause lack of creativity.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Hecht/Welti: Art 6, 1990, p. 66-70.

⁸⁶ Nietzsche 1998 [1874].

4.2 Wróblewski's mediation with political art

According to Plato's "Republic", art and politics are conditional in character. Most famously, he excludes poets from his scriptum for he believes Hesiod and Homer are creating improper stories by giving unrealistic images of the gods. This example is seen as a mark of political proscription of art, which by *argumentum e contrario* links art and politics. Fine art has always been used as a way to document and criticise legislature as shows the before mentioned non Wróblewski example Francisco Goya's 1814 "The Third of May 1808". Today, more than 2000 years after Plato, art is still linked to politics. It is arguable, with the fast exchange of information on a global level, political art has become even more relevant and therefore more powerful. Additionally, art is no longer limited to an audience of a certain social class. Everyone can visit cultural institutions and thus participate in the conversation surrounding art. This creates a great starting point for Wróblewski's art. Assuming that Polish viewers see his images with a collective experience of the past, they comprehend his imagery and it can work arbitrating. That features accessibility through avenues including events, art fairs, exhibitions, and the internet, art can be seen as a fourth power, requiring to be political in order to be relevant. This relevance is visible in the positioning of Wróblewski on the global art market. His *Gesamtkunstwerk* addresses, as the paper shows, two main political circumstances. Therefore he is reframed from an unknown artist to a Polish legend to an international spokesman for Polish culture and history within an international art scene. Following the example of current artists, who successfully use art as a mouthpiece, like Ai Weiwei, Willy Doherty or Wafaa Bilal, now Wróblewski is put into a position whose art functions as a mouthpiece for his country. The aforementioned "exoticism" of his art in terms of portraying a past subservient country can be interesting for a broad audience. It is especially educational for those, who have not lived in a suppressed country. It can be seen as a warning signal to not let history repeat itself. Being exposed to young generations his art gives testimony to an audience who will shape its own future. Mainly known as a social realist painter, his art is used today as a visual witness of this time period. Positioning an artist as political makes, according to Leo Simons, an artist likely to succeed. In an interview following his "Borders" exhibition, Simons says art must

always be political.⁸⁷ Two exhibitions reflect the relevance Wróblewski gains through a political art placement.

Exhibition “Recto/Verso”

Recto/Verso is held 2015 at the MSN in Warsaw. Acknowledging the current “trend” for political content, the Viennese Kunsthalle states, “Rapping politicians, YouTube clips aimed specifically at young people, TV formats and pop concerts that present political themes and aim to make prejudice socially acceptable – these are all part of the current political media landscape.”⁸⁸ The before mentioned target group of young people who is most likely Internet affine is confirmed with a broad online program offered by the MSN. Online lectures allow a contextualisation of the artist and his works independently from the exhibition. The claim to make preconceptions more tolerable is adapted and leads in the argumentation of the here presented paper.

On a similar note, the Polish exhibition is, as the curator puts it, placed in a way that “we can gain something more if we agree to look at such work from a global perspective.”⁸⁹ This “something more” is the acceptance of the past and the international acknowledgement of Wróblewski as a relevant Post War painter, who simply didn’t have the time and circumstances to achieve accessibility and importance until today. A global perspective is supported with the parallel exhibition “Lest The Two Seas Meet” on the first floor of the MSN’s building. Curated by Egyptian Tarek Abou El Fetouh, the group exhibition of artists from all over the world displays their political views and commentary on the current state of the private and the collective sphere. With the artist commentary, El Fetouh acts as a mediator trying to create a neutral position between life and death, the so-called “barzakh”. The concept, developed by 13th-century philosopher Ibn ‘Arabi, refers to “an invisible line that separates two seas, each with its own density, salinity and temperature.”⁹⁰ A neutral space between the living and the dead is not only tried to be achieved in Wróblewski’s paintings, by reframing his art today in a

⁸⁷ Haamann 2016.

⁸⁸ Kunsthalle Wien 2016.

⁸⁹ De Chassey 2015b, page 60.

⁹⁰ E-Flux 2015.

global context a new, neutral start can allow the painter international posthumous recognition.

In that space there is also room for Wróblewski's drawings with messages of death and loss. Placing the painter in a contemporary exhibition, with only current artists, enables a discussion about his art. That is confirmed with the following official statement: "Lest the Two Seas Meet is an exhibition delivered as a conceptual dialogue with Andrzej Wróblewski's legacy through the prism of contemporary political events."⁹¹

One particular work, shown in this context, is then as today current and relatable: "Painting About the Horrors of War" (Fig. 5). On a 72x100 cm. canvas the viewer sees a group of dead fish with their bodies chopped off from their heads. One whole fish is upside down, like fish are when they are dead. Painted in a muddy green, that reminds of the jacket worn by the Gestapo man (Fig. 7) the painting does not mask the brutality of death. It is a metaphor for ordinary everyday life: just like animals, men are being slaughtered. The painting first shown in 1948, is accompanied with a guideline for viewers. Wróblewski's intention are the "unpleasant pictures like the smell of corpses" that remind the audience of "war and imperialism, the atomic bomb in the hands of the wrong men."⁹² By showing the work today the Polish trauma is translated into today's politics and threats. His images as seen in Figure 5 enable a relatively neutral historical frame, which is why spectators from every time can identify with the visual language. He uses the same plain white background in "Painting About the Horrors of War" (Fig. 5) as well as in "Executed Man, Execution with Gestapo Man" (Fig. 7), having the figures seemingly floating on air. The neutral environment makes the paintings not seem like a classical historic painting, where the scenery has an impact on the historical classification. It stays almost neutral enough to transport the protagonists of his paintings into the today and treat his art as a contemporary testament and warning.

Exhibition „Postwar“

Another discourse is "Postwar – Art between the Pacific and Atlantic, 1945–1965", where Wróblewski's art represents the Post-War scene in Poland. The exhibition project

⁹¹ E-Flux 2015.

⁹² Wróblewski in Ziółkowska 2010, p. 19.

includes a broad spectrum of events, conferences and publications, of which the international conference “Postwar — Art between the Pacific and Atlantic, 1945–1965” is the first. The conference is organized by the Haus der Kunst, in collaboration with Tate Modern, the Institut für Kunstgeschichte, LMU München, and the Zentralinstitut for Art History, Munich. This immense international committee shows how global interaction influences the success of a show. Pietrasik claims, that the curator of this exhibition sees the Pole for the first time in Madrid and is interested in showing him in Munich. That shows how the machinery of promotion in connection to a new context raises a modern significance of the painter.⁹³

Collaborating with the Tate Gallery and the Centre Georges Pompidou, the exhibition examines the impact political events have on culture and storytelling of a historical past.⁹⁴ Wróblewski’s art is used as a testament for a time and political state that has to be shared with an audience. One of the main ideas is “the confrontation of social systems [...] frequently expressed in contradictory functions which play out in culture – for example, in the irreconcilable debate on realism and abstraction between the communist and capitalist systems.”⁹⁵ By bringing artists together from around the world Wróblewski is placed in a global context. That allows a new understanding how his art is connected to a global phenomenon that artists are searching for a new way of expressing themselves after the war, which adds value to his work as a representative of art behind the iron curtain. In order to be understood as a representative a lot has to do with the external branding of him as such. That will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁹³ Interview Pietrasik view appendix.

⁹⁴ Kulturstiftung des Bundes 2016.

⁹⁵ Ibidem.

5 Branding Wróblewski's art

The importance of artists branding by reference of the following example: after English contemporary artist Damien Hirst achieved a certain level of international acknowledgement, his name as a brand is enough to justify extraordinary prices. The journalist A.A. Gill wanted to sell an old painting by an unknown artist that shows former leader of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin. Gill purchased the painting for 200 British pounds. After both auction houses, Christy's and Sotheby's, reject to offer the piece at their auctions, the journalist asks Damien Hirst, a friend and one of the most expensive living artists, to paint a red nose on Stalin's face, which results in the painting selling for 140.000 British Pounds.⁹⁶ In this case the "living legend" and successful branding of one artist is enough to encourage the buyer to purchase. By examining the annual Biennale in Venice or Art Basel Miami Beach, it becomes evident that art is a consumer good on the current global market and therefore equally follows marketing and placement strategies used to reach the target group and sell. Assuming that Wróblewski is being promoted to become an internationally known art persona and mediator, the following chapter evaluates how institutions and curators attempt the branding of his work.

Colbert defines culture marketing as a good that reaches market segments by adjusting commercial variables like price, placement and promotion of the product and not vice versa.⁹⁷ Culture marketing, to which art marketing counts, is not marketing a product that is needed by the majority of the public, but is marketing new cultural offerings. Assuming this, cultural goods require the "supply-push" strategy. Push advertising tries to advance products towards customers using big advertisements and attention grabbing claims to put products into the minds of customers.⁹⁸ Applying that to Wróblewski, "big advertisement" strategies can be found in the form of renowned personas who are put into context with the painter. A direct example is Wajda who actively speaks out and indirect advertisement through context are exhibitions that place the Pole next to established painters like Pollock. Using key words like "legend" is a trigger to account great-

⁹⁶ Thompson 2008.

⁹⁷ Colbert 1999, page 16.

⁹⁸ Günter/Hausmann 2012, page 10.

ness to the person and can be also seen as an advertisement technique. The following promotion strategies can, in addition, be identified:

- Promoting exhibitions and academic conventions on an international level
- Initiation and participation in Polish and international research projects related to editorial international publications

An acceptance of a previously internationally unknown “product” is a crucial factor in the marketing of goods, which are not necessarily demanded by the broad audience. Through a certain regular visual penetration and simultaneous representation, for example, in the form of exhibitions, the audience is steadily confronted with an artist. That leads to the following assumption: The status quo increases in an audience that is regularly exposed to a single artists work.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the reference to an artist as a brand does not only imply success, but can also hold a negative connotation in the form of questions, such as why does this artist become a brand and how is his status connected to the instrumentalization of a marketing strategy? In the case of the here discussed painter the active promotion post 2010 can be explained with the change of market. Poland, still recovering from the Cold War is open for new art. Globally Polish art institutions have the ability to organize events outside their own borders, which automatically requires a higher promotion. Was Wróblewski to become an internationally known artist, the increased monetary value of his art would be a positive side effect of his growing reputation. A similar positive effect occurred with Polish artist Alina Szapocznikow, whose prices, after exhibiting at the MoMA, increased about massively. That indicates relevance on the art market adds to the pricing of art and is dictated mainly by distributors, often in the form of museums and established “star” art galleries with renowned curators. In examining Wróblewski's placement at the previously-mentioned Isabella Czarnecka Gallery, he is intentionally put into context with renowned Polish artists to raise his level of relevance. Placing him amongst better-known painters itself charges his work with referential meaning, as the previous chapter discusses.¹⁰⁰ The example of the Czarnecka Gallery can be understood as a contribution to the relevance of Wróblewski's work for placing him amongst renowned Polish artists in a Western Eu-

⁹⁹ Günter/Hausmann, 2012, page 10.

¹⁰⁰ In a 2014 exhibition she shows the often-combined trio Alina Szapocznikow, Tadeusz Kantor and Wróblewski with works on paper.

ropean Gallery. The gallery's website introduces seventeen works by Wróblewski, mainly watercolours, gouache and ink pieces. Stylistically, Czarnowska shows abstract, geometrical forms, and figurative pieces by the Pole. The press statement regarding the painter on her website reads: "His oeuvre is characterized by a gradual transition from abstract to figurative painting"¹⁰¹ should be evaluated with scepticism. Studied literature and the study of his works show that there has not been a "gradual transition" from one style to another. On the contrary, even characteristically for the painter he oscillates back and forth between two styles. If his art, as stated on Czarnowska's website, goes through a clear development from one style to another, the positioning and branding would be more difficult as he would be a less-flexible artist in terms of marketability and interpretation. Having such public statements on a sales platform, such as a gallery website, shows a potential attempt to add meaning to his art. The statement takes the liberty to use his indecisiveness in style to create a clear development in order to reason his representation in this gallery.

It shows that during the process of reframing Wróblewski's art and his meaning for Polish culture and art history anno 1945 there is not one direct line and argumentation as to how is to be positioned.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.artsy.net/artist/andrzej-wroblewski>

5.1 Branding tools

To successfully market and sell an artist, careful branding must occur using a variety of tools, which, in the Polish artist's case, are exemplary influential personalities, who add to the international status of an artist. The role of influential personalities and institutions for the success of an artist, is explained by author De Nooy: "The prestige of artists and institutions are intertwined. Artists derive their prestige at least in part from their affiliations with art organizations, and the prestige of organizations is based on the artist which they are able to take on."¹⁰² The intertwine is observed with current Wróblewski exhibitions and results to additional international exhibitions that expose to painter to a new audience. Allowing a contemporary public to re-interpret his work from a non-communist perspective sends a message to Poland. It shows how the past is accepted and empathized with by Western Countries. On one side his images ought to be despised on the other side his status helps viewers to be open towards his imagery and see it in a global context. That causes an acceptance of past events on a cultural level. When it comes to the terms "charging art with meaning" and "branding" both must be separated. Whereas one does not necessarily have a monetary and economic value associated with its meaning, the other term is interested in financial profit. So far the artist is being branded with the help of prominent "testimonials" as a visionary painter and revolutionist.¹⁰³ Art historian Mieczysław Porębski claims "what he [Wróblewski] did in his time was something completely new, fresh, unexpected"¹⁰⁴, which is arguably true in the context of Polish art. Comparisons, however, between Wróblewski and non-Polish art colleagues show that he was very much inspired by already existing thoughts. The tangible significance given by Porębski to Wróblewski's work is that it is "something completely new"¹⁰⁵, ergo he is a visionary and revolutionary in his field. Supported also by Wajda this is a tool to push the painter as a new "product" – somebody who could co-responsible for a new art agenda if the circumstances in his country would have allowed him to be seen by a bigger audience. While the painter has an acknowledgement amongst Polish scholars and artists as a revolutionary the understanding and context for foreigners is not established. Positioning the

¹⁰² De Nooy 2002, page 147.

¹⁰³ Particularly Wajda portrays the painter in his latest documentary as a genius painter and visionary.

¹⁰⁴ Porębski 2004, page 130.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem.

painter as a crucial painter can be seen as a characteristic of recuperation. It can change cultural attitudes towards Poland for both international and Poles.

Using painters in a movie is not necessarily a direct branding tool, it does change the perception of one though. The art gains viewers and is relevant enough to be placed in a film. Wajda keeps Wróblewski relevant with "Everything's for sale" ("Wszystko na sprzedaż") from 1969 and the documentary "Wróblewski according to Wajda" ("Wróblewski wedog Wajdy") from 2015.

The first homage by Wajda is his movie "Everything's for sale" ("Wszystko na sprzedaż") and tells the story of a group of friends looking for a missing actor, who turns out is already dead after a train accident. The movie is considered a reference for a former friend and Polish actor Zbigniew Cybulski, who died in 1967. Wajda does not produce a documentary on Cybulski the way he later does for Wróblewski. The indirect commemoration is not as clear and brand creating as for the painter. One scene can however be counted as homage to Wróblewski. The protagonist enters a gallery that currently exhibits pieces by the Pole. Wajda places his works symbolically as ones of a "true artist" by confronting the protagonist with ideals of youth and revolution.¹⁰⁶ The status of a legend resonates here as well. More clearly and more directly interpreted as a branding tool is his recent documentary. In the trailer, which is connected to an exhibition organized by the film director, he, as well as Porębski, points out the new way to display art like the painter does. He shares his memories and opinions with the audience and discusses the aesthetic context of the works.¹⁰⁷ Wajda not only attributes greatness to the painter, he states that he has not been appreciated enough in his own time, which is a legitimisation of the late promotion today, in which the director plays a key role.¹⁰⁸ The success of branding the painter as a legend can be observed with international articles when the media adapts the term and sets a certain expectation to the reader.¹⁰⁹

Another promotion tool and brand creation is the 2012 founded Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation with the aim to „contextualise“ Wróblewski as an artist through exhibitions, and ultimately contributing to his recognition abroad.¹¹⁰ His pluralism in style might not

¹⁰⁶ Chyb 1988, page 24–28.

¹⁰⁷ Dzieje 2015.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁹ Luzán 2015.

¹¹⁰ The Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation 2016.

be, per se, an attribute used to promote him, however, the Foundation is organizing exhibitions and those are using his polystylism to position him. A promotion tool for these exhibitions was the release of the book “Andrzej Wróblewski: Avoiding Intermediary States”. The title itself suggests that there is an intermediary state that is to be avoided. It can be argued that the state is Wróblewski's indecisiveness between the two artistic styles.

6 Conclusion

The Cold War marks Polish society and mentality until today. Visible in architecture, infrastructure as well as the intellectual conditions the culture is affected by the Post-War trauma. While the GDR, after the fall of the wall, eliminated almost all socialist realist art, the Polish art institutions show loyalty to Polish Post War painter Andrzej Wróblewski. They eagerly promote his importance not only nationally, but internationally. Reframing a Post-War painter for the current art debate confirms the not yet healed events from the past. The painter is acting as a mediator between Polish citizens, the opportunity of identification and acceptance of the past as well as between Western countries, who have an increasing interest in showing his works in a global Post War context. Not dismissing social realist art, Poland has the chance of a critical contemplation of their own heritage and culture. Still living in a landscape shaped with old socialist ideals, the promotion of Wróblewski's art marks a continuance of a nowadays re-framing of socialist objects. His images from the Second World War and the Cold War allow reconciliation, while the aesthetic debate between art and a modern Europe is an important testimony of the past and the future.

While his works range from different topics he is eagerly promoted by Polish art institutions and historians, who attribute him high relevance in the art historical course. His status in his home country and the ongoing promotion by established personas such as Andrzej Wajda enable a promotion on a nationally already paved stand. That seems to facilitate a global promotion that is also backed up with Western Post War artists that allow to see Wróblewski's work in a global context. The MSN and The Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation are eagerly trying to open a new international debate on the relevance of the painter. Reception-aesthetics have an impact, which, through a distinct placement, tries to trigger certain emotions in the audience to evoke a meaning. The emotional connection between audience and medium is crucial for a recuperation. It is not his duality that institutions use today as a promotion argument, though it does simplify the positioning. Wróblewski stands for a re-interpretation of the past and a new debate of Polish culture, which is necessary to make peace with the past. That allows the conclusion that his status of a legend does help him to be transferred onto a global

art market, which will re-frame him into a global context. That gives Polish society and culture a persona who speaks for them and their past trauma. In terms of recuperation, it is an act of such to exhibit a painter to stands for everything that is despised by Polish culture. His art and his international acknowledgement today allow a new discourse for Polish identity, culture and history. Returning to Goethe's quote, the legend of Wróblewski is more a constructed national hero, created by art institutions. Nevertheless his importance as a "visual archive" of historical events have an important role for a new generation to learn and accept the past. Having a successful artist abroad with images showing the suffering of Polish society gives Poles pride, which allows a new harmony between East and West and past and today.

7 Abstract

Die hier vorliegende Arbeit befasst sich mit dem Polnischen Nachkriegskünstler Andrzej Wróblewski (1927-1957) und dessen Bedeutung für die kulturelle Schlichtung der Polnischen Gesellschaft. Der Fokus von besonders Polnischen Kunstinstitutionen, die bei der Vermarktung des Künstlers immens involviert sind, liegt auf dem Maler als politischen Nachkriegskünstler, der jetzt, in einem demokratischen Polen als relevanter für die Kunstgeschichte Künstler wahrgenommen werden kann. Die Promotion eines Künstlers der mit seinen Sozialistisch Realistischen Werken an eine Vergangenheit erinnert, die für das Land und die Kultur traumatisch war, zeigt das es einen Nachholbedarf der Versöhnung gibt. Durch die Bedeutungsaufladung seiner Kunst wird eine emotionale Basis zwischen Publikum und Werk geschaffen. Das ermöglicht eine höhere Eingebundenheit und somit eine breitere Popularität zwischen beiden. Die Arbeit legt nahe, dass der „Legendenstatus“ des Polen lediglich auf einer erfolgreichen Positionierung und emotionalen Einbindung des Publikums basiert. Die internationale Popularität, gewünscht vor allem von Polnischen Kunstvertretern, basiert auf einer erfolgreichen, stringenten Positionierung und der emotionalen Verbindung, die zwischen Künstler und Publikum geschaffen wird. Die Wertevermittlung und Möglichkeit sich in die Vergangenheit, mit Hilfe seiner Werke, einzufühlen ermöglicht nicht nur Polen, sondern auch Europäern ein besseres Verständnis der Vergangenheit und des Erbes, dass Polen bis heute zu tragen hat.

8 Appendix

Interview with Agata Pietrasik

Translated from Polish into English by Carolina Zawada

Carolina Zawada (CZ):

Why is Polish painter Andrzej Wróblewski being promoted in such an active way and not any other Polish painter?

Agata Pietrasik (AP):

He fits very much to the current trend in the art history by showing political themes in his art and having particularly a connection with Polish communism.

CZ: You studied in Warsaw. How relevant is Wróblewski in the curriculum of art history?

AP: For the “inner circle” of the art academics Wróblewski definitely has the status of what we call a “legend”. When I had courses about him it was always two things dominating the opinion: he died young and his art was leading on a strong opinion.

CZ: If one of the biggest factors to claim him a legend is that he died young – how much of a legend is he then really?

AP: It appears, that in the context of western art he is definitely loaded with meaning in order to give the polish art history a figure that would be on demand now.

CZ: It seems that Polish culture institutions generally focus a lot on the Second World War. With that in mind and the historical circumstances it appears that Poles have trouble finding their role and identity on a bigger scheme of thing. Assuming that art always is being charged with meaning, can Wróblewski’s art

subliminally be understood as a mirror for this lost identity by reflecting the torn soul between figuration and abstraction?

AP: His art fits very well to themes still relevant in today's society as mentioned: Second World War, communism. But that simultaneously is what other western countries want to see and expect. In a way it can be seen as something exotic: how did a country function during communist occupation and the trauma of the war? For those reasons his art is a good object because it simply fulfills the audience's expectation.

CZ: How much is The Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation involved in promoting him?

AP: The founders Marta Wróblewska, Magdalena Ziółkowska, Wojciech Grzybała have a sentimental relationship with the artist and they care for his art and work to be acknowledged. Of course that too is involved in the market mechanisms. Having founded the institution that in itself lays a good groundwork for any further studies, exhibitions etc. His daughter is not the leading person in this foundation. She simply passed on her rights to the co-founders in order to realize projects such publishing books with works of the painter. Conceptional things are more to Magdalena and Wojciech.

9 Bibliography

Literature

ATTESLANDER 2006

Peter Atteslander, *Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung* (11th circulation), Berlin 2006.

BANAI 2014

Noit Banai, *Figuracja eksperymentalna w stanie wyjątkowym. Avoiding Intermediary States*, Warsaw 2014.

BAUMGÄRTEL 1995

Bettina Baumgärtel, *Die Tugendheldin als Symbol kirchlicher und staatlicher Macht*, in: Bettina Baumgärtel und Silvia Neysters (Hg.), *Die Galerie der starken Frauen. La Galerie des Femmes Fortes*, Munich 1995, page 25–60.

BEIT-HALLAHMI 1983

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *Understanding religion through psychology of art*, Vol. 16, No. 3, page 237.

BENJAMIN 2009

Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, London 2009.

BERNATOWICZ 2000

Piotr Bernatowicz, *Picasso zaraz po wojnie*, Warsaw 2000.

BOGUE 2003

Roland Bogue, *Deleuze on literature*, New York 2003.

COLBERT 1999

Francois Colbert, *Kultur- und Kunstmarketing: Ein Arbeitsbuch*, Vienna 1999.

DE CHASSEY 2015

Éric de Chassey, *Starting from scratch – twice* in Andrzej Wróblewski, Warsaw 2015.

DE CHASSEY 2015

Éric de Chassey/Andrzej Wróblewski, *Introduction*, Warsaw 2015.

DE NOOY 2002

Wouter De Nooy, *The Dynamics of Artistic Prestige*, *Poetics*, 30 (3), New Orleans 2002.

FREUND 1938

Sigmund Freud, A general Introduction of Psychoanalysis, Vienna 1938.

GROYS 2008

Boris Groys, Art War, Cambridge USA, 2008.

GRZYBALA/ZIOLKOWSKA 2014

W. Grzybala/M. Ziolkowska, Folklore, Modernity and Death: Wroblewski's Visit to Yugoslavia, in M. Ziolkowska, W. Grzybala, Avoiding Intermediary States: Andrzej Wroblewski (1927-1957), Ostfilder 2014.

GÜNTER/HAUSMANN 2012

Bernd Günter/Andrea Hausmann, Kulturmarketing (2. circulation), Wiesbaden 2012.

HECHT, AXEL/WELTI, ALFRED 1990

Axel Hecht/Alfred Welti, Ein Meister, der Talent verschmäht, Interview mit Georg Baselitz, Art 6 (1990), page 66-70.

HUFFINGTON 1998

Huffington, Arianna Stassinopoulos. Picasso: Creator and Destroyer. New York, Simon and Shuster, 1998, page 90.

JOHNS 1990

Jasper Johns, Strategies for Making and Effacing Art, in: Fisher, Philips Critical Inquiry, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Winter, 1990), page 313-354.

KORDJAK-PIOTROWSKA 2015

Joanna Kordjak-Piotrowska, Andrzej Wróblewski, A Biography, Warsaw 2015.

KRIS/KURZ 1934

Ernst Kris/Otto Kurz, Die Legende vom Künstler, Vienna 1934.

MACZEWSKI 1949

Bohdan, in: Echo Krakowa, issue 19, 1949, page 2.

MICHALSKI 1993

Jan Michalski, Wróblewski nieznany Kraków, Krakow 1993.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT 2015

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Andrzej Wroblewski: Recto/Verso. Warsaw 2015.

NIETZSCHE 1998

Friedrich Nietzsche, Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben, Stuttgart 1998 [1874].

RICHARDS 1924

Ivor Armstrong Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism, New York 1924.

SACKS 2015

Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*, New York 2015.

SKRZYNECKI 1958

Skrzynecki, P. Andrzej Wróblewski“, *Echo Krakowa*, issue 16, 1958, page 3.

STÖBER 2008

Rudolf Stöber, *Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaften: eine Einführung*, Munich 2008.

THOMPSON 2008

Don Thompson, *The \$12 Million stuffed shark*, London 2008.

Newspapers and exhibition catalogues**TSP ZACHĘTA 1994**

Andrzej Wróblewski, *kat. wyst.*, TSP Zachęta, Warsaw 1994, page 4.

ZIÓLKOWSKA 2010

Magdalena Ziółkowska, Andrzej Wróblewski. *To the Margin and Back*. Eindhoven 2010.

Online Sources

AKADEMIA POLSKIEGO FILMU 1988

Akademia Polskiego Filmu, Historia Polskiego Filmu. N.p., 1988. Web. (08.09.2016), URL: <http://www.akademiapolskiegofilmu.pl/pl/historia-polskiego-filmu/artykuly/malarstwo-w-filmach-andrzej-wajdy-krajobraz-po-bitwie/526>.

ANDRZEJ WRÓBLEWSKI FOUNDATION 2016

Andrzej Wróblewski Foundation, on andrzejwroblewski.pl 2016 (02.03.2016) URL: <http://www.andrzejwroblewski.pl/en/foundation/>.

CULTURE 2016

Culture editor, Grupa Wprost on culture Warsaw 2016 (23.07.2016) URL: <http://culture.pl/pl/tworca/grupa-wprost><http://culture.pl/pl/tworca/grupa-wprost>.

DEGAS 2016-09-25

Edgar Degas, Art Quotes. on BrainyQuote. 2016 (03.06.2016) URL: http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_art.html.

DZIEJE 2016

Dzieje Editor, Premiera Filmu "Wróblewski Wg Wajdy" W Madryckim Muzeum Reina Sofia." *Dzieje.pl*. Dzieje.pl, 11 Feb. 2016. URL: <http://dzieje.pl/filmy/premiera-filmu-wroblewski-wg-wajdy-w-madryckim-muzeum-reina-sofia>.

GALERIE ISABELLA CZARNOWSKA 2016

Galerie Isabella Czarnowska, About. Berlin 2016 (23.07.2016) URL: <http://galerie-czarnowska.de/contact/#about>.

HAAMANN 2016

Florian J. Haamann, Kunst Muss Immer Sehr Politisch Sein. in Sueddeutsche, 07 Apr. 2016. (03.05.2016) URL: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/fuerstenfeldbruck/ausstellung-kunst-muss-immer-sehr-politisch-sein-1.2937482>.

KULTURSTIFTUNG DES BUNDES 2016

Kulturstiftung Des Bundes, Postwar. in Kulturstiftung des Bundes (01.09.2016) URL: http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/cms/en/projekte/bild_und_raum/postwar.html.

LESCAZE 2015

Zoë Lescaze, Mondrian Sells for \$50.6 Million. *ARTnews*. Art News, 14 May 2015. (08.09.2016) URL: <http://www.artnews.com/2015/05/14/mondrian-sells-for-50-6-m-a-new-record-at-christies-202-6-m-impressionist-modern-sale/>.

McDONOUGH 2015

Tom McDonough, Andrzej Wróblewski, Our Contemporary in Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry Volume 40, Issue, pp. 116-126 URL: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/684221>.

MODZELEWSKI 2016

Jaroslav Modzelewski in Culture.pl (02.01.2016) URL: <http://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jaroslav-modzelews>

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART 2016

Museum of Modern Art, Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone 1955–1972. New York 2016 in MoMa, (01.09.2016) URL: <http://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1224?locale=en>.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART 2016

Museum of Modern Art, Conferences. Warsaw 2016 (23.07.2016) URL: <http://artmuseum.pl/en/doc/konferencje>.

MYTKOWSKA 2013

Joanna Mytkowska, Andrzej Wróblewski, Czyli Eksport Polskiej Legendy. Warsaw 2013 in *Wyborcza* (23.06.2016) URL: http://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/1,72738,14554270,Andrzej_Wroblewski__czyli_eksport_polskiej_legendy.html#ixzz3UGiu0aTA.

POPRZĘCKA 2015

Maria Poprzęcka, Po Drugiej Stronie Lustra - Maria Poprzęcka O Wystawie Wróblewskiego. in *Wyborcza*, Warsaw 27 Feb. 2015. (01.06.2016) URL: http://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/1,143553,17496765,Po_drugiej_stronie_lustra___Maria_Poprzecka_o_wystawie.html?disableRedirects=true.

RIAÑO 2015

Peio H. Riaño, El Pintor Que Sobrevivió a Hitler, Stalin Y a La Abstracción. In *El Espanol*: 18 Nov. 2015 (08.09.2016) URL: http://www.elespanol.com/cultura/20151117/79992049_0.html.

10 List of figures

Fig. 1:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Sky over Mountains", 1948, oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, Starmach Gallery, Kraków.	68
Fig. 2:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Geometric Abstraction", 1948, oil on canvas, 119 x 69 cm, private collection.....	69
Fig. 3:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Executions against a wall, execution IV", 18-20.05.1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm, Museum of the Polish Army, Warsaw.	70
Fig. 4:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Execution, execution VII", 1949, oil on canvas, 120,5 x 90,5 cm, private collection.....	71
Fig. 5:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Painting about the horrors of war", 16-18.11.1948, oil on canvas, 72 x 100 cm, Lubelskie Museum, Lublin.	72
Fig. 6:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Mother with dead child", 13-16.03.1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm, Collection of Grazyna Kulczyk.	73
Fig. 7:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Executed, executed with gestapo man", 1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 90cm, Privat Collection.	74
Fig. 8:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Waiting Room I, The Queue Continues" 1956, The National Museum in Warsaw.	75
Fig. 9:	Zbyslut Grzywacz: "The Queue still continues", 1973, Acryl on canvas, 135 x 170 cm, Muzeum Narodowe, Kraków.....	75
Fig. 10:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Son and dead mother", 1949, oil on canvas, 119,5 x 70 cm, National Museum, Krakow.....	76
Fig. 11:	Pablo Picasso: "La Vie", 1903, oil on canvas, 196,5 x 129,2 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio.	77
Fig. 12:	Andrzej Wróblewski: "Execution VIII (surrealist)", 1949, oil on canvas, 130 x 199 cm, Collections of the National Museum, Warsaw.	78
Fig. 13:	Piet Mondrian: "Tableau I", 1921, oil on canvas, 65 cm x 75,2 cm, Sammlung Museum Ludwig Cologne.	79



Fig. 1: Andrzej Wróblewski: "Sky over Mountains", 1948, oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, Starmach Gallery, Kraków.

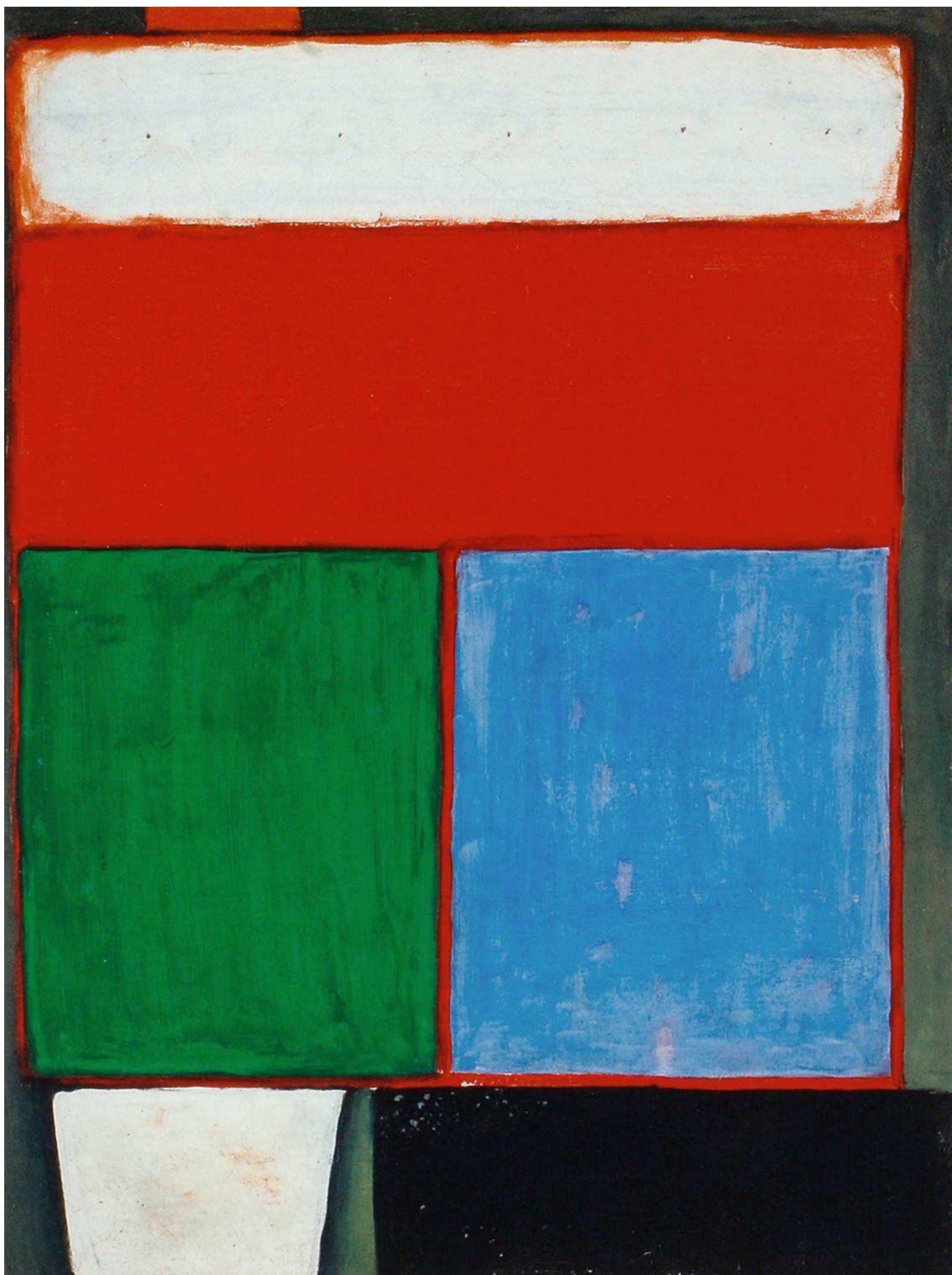


Fig. 2: Andrzej Wróblewski: *“Geometric Abstraction”*, 1948, oil on canvas, 119 x 69 cm, private collection.



Fig. 3: Andrzej Wróblewski: "Executions against a wall, execution IV", 18-20.05.1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm, Museum of the Polish Army, Warsaw.



Fig. 4: Andrzej Wróblewski: *"Execution, execution VII"*, 1949, oil on canvas, 120,5 x 90,5 cm, private collection.



Fig. 5: Andrzej Wróblewski: "Painting about the horrors of war", 16-18.11.1948, oil on canvas, 72 x 100 cm, Lubelskie Museum, Lublin.



Fig. 6: Andrzej Wróblewski: "Mother with dead child", 13-16.03.1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm, Collection of Grazyna Kulczyk.



Fig. 7: Andrzej Wróblewski: *"Executed, executed with gestapo man"*, 1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 90cm, Privat Collection.



Fig. 8: Andrzej Wróblewski: "Waiting Room I, The Queue Continues" 1956, The National Museum in Warsaw.

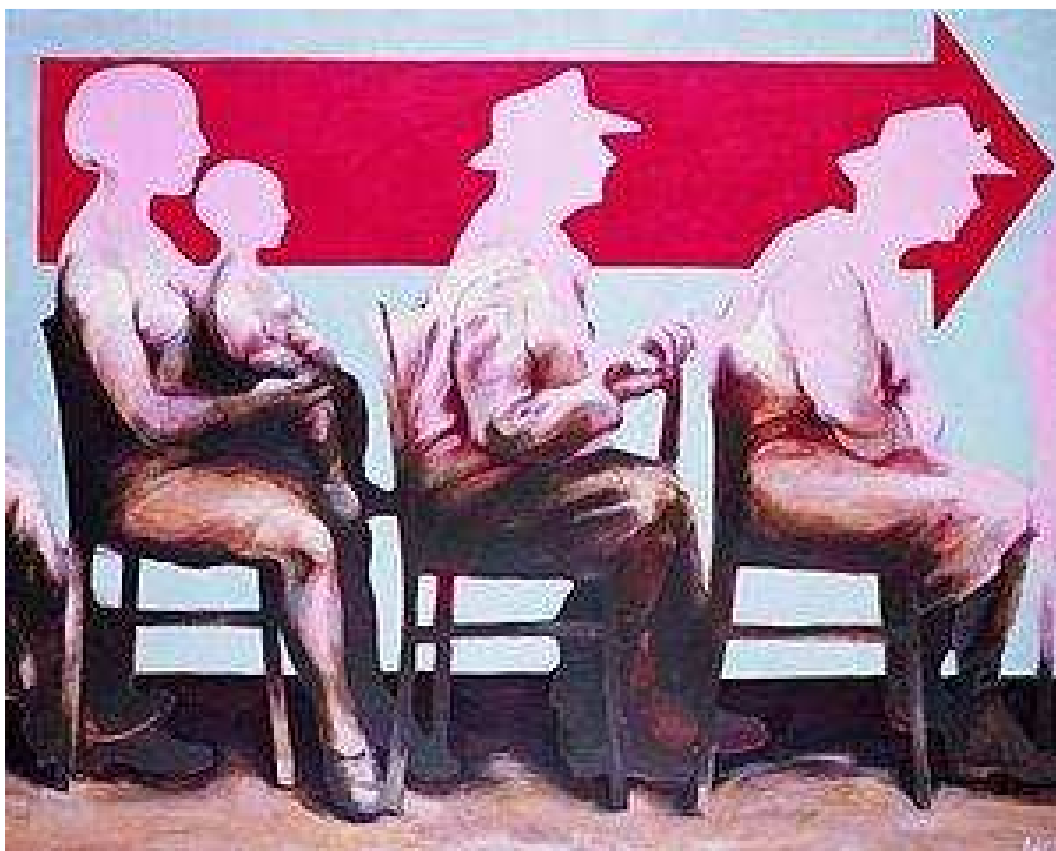


Fig. 9: Zbysław Grzywacz: "The Queue still continues", 1973, Acryl on canvas, 135 x 170 cm, Muzeum Narodowe, Kraków.

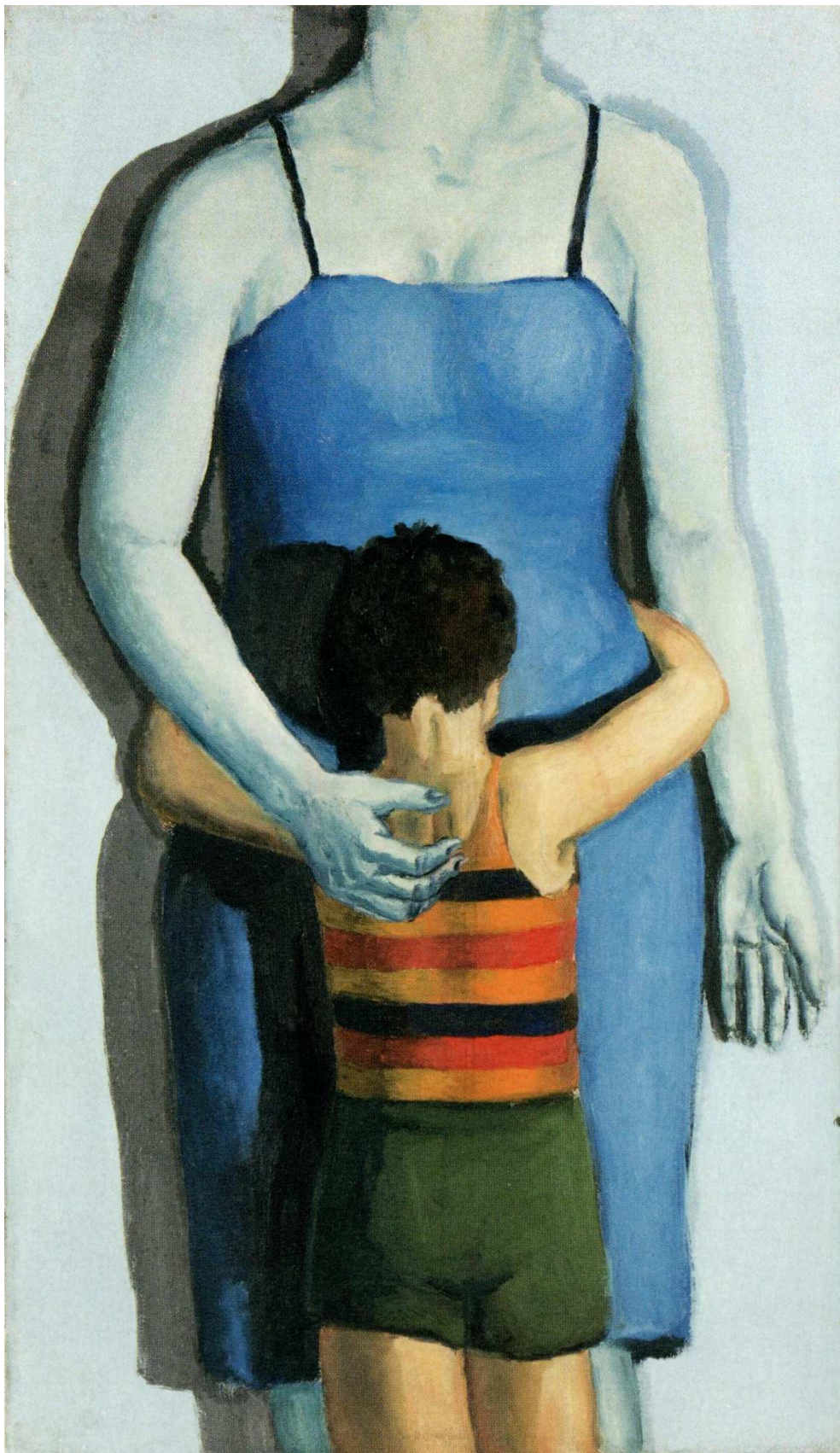


Fig. 10: Andrzej Wróblewski: "Son and dead mother", 1949, oil on canvas, 119,5 x 70 cm, National Museum, Krakow.

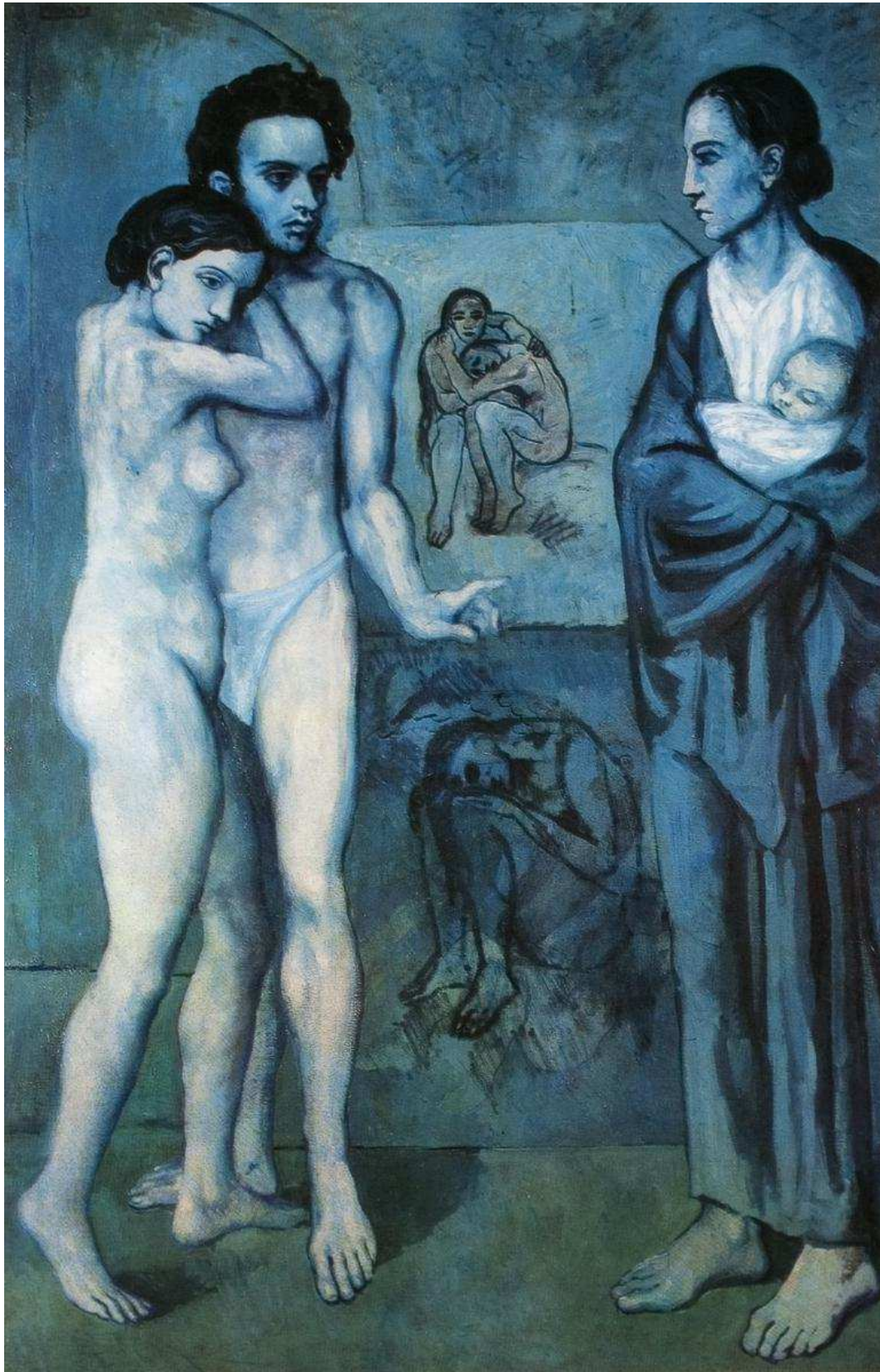


Fig. 7: Pablo Picasso: "La Vie", 1903, oil on canvas, 196,5 × 129,2 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio.



Fig. 8: Andrzej Wróblewski: *"Execution VIII (surrealist)"*, 1949, oil on canvas, 130 x 199 cm, Collections of the National Museum, Warsaw.

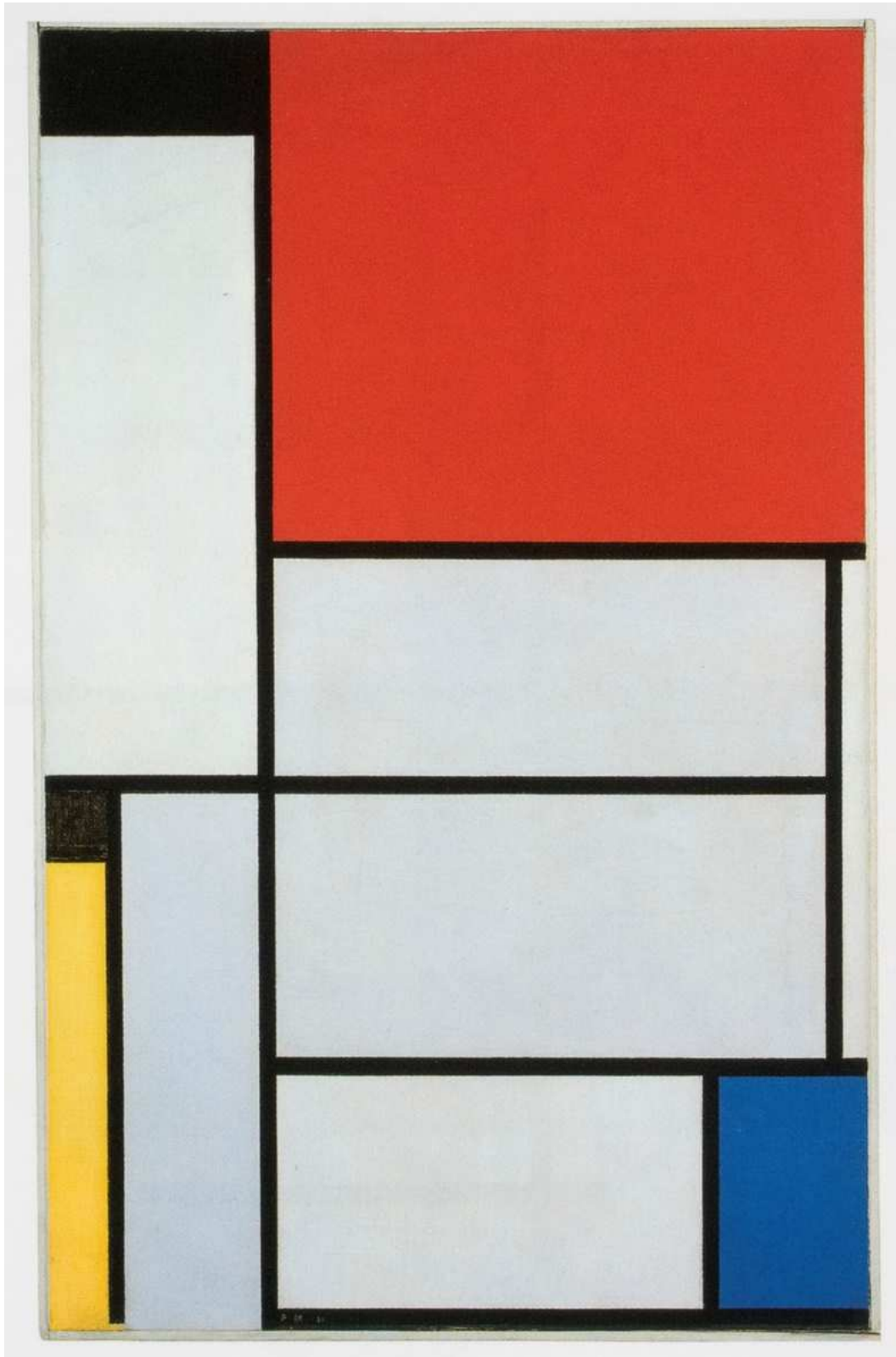


Fig. 9: Piet Mondrian: "Tableau I", 1921, oil on canvas, 65 cm x 75,2 cm, Sammlung Museum Ludwig Cologne.

11 Picture credits

All used images have been accessed over the database of the Prometheus database.

12 Statutory Declaration

I declare that I have authored this thesis independently, that I have not used other than the declared sources / resources, and that I have explicitly marked all material that has been quoted either literally or by content from the used sources.

Hamburg, 19.03.2017

Carolina Alexandra Margaret Zawada