

Summary

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In Poland after the World War II, under *de facto* occupation by the USSR, a Socialist system was established in accordance with Soviet models. The stylistics of “Socialist Realism” was prescribed for the visual arts, literature and film. After the crisis of 1956 (the uprising in Wielkopolska), individual ownership of land was restored, clergymen and soldiers of the Polish army, veterans of the fight against Germany, were released from prison. The doctrine of “Socialist Realism” was not revoked, but its practice was discontinued. The Association of Polish Artists and Designers encouraged free artistic creativity. Various styles, those known in Poland from the period of interwar independence and those currently imported from the West, were widely followed. In 1956, two original, new artistic ideas appeared in the visual arts: Structuralism in Lublin (the Zamek group) and Sensibilism in Wrocław (Teatr Sensibilistyczny). Between 1966 and 1974 in Wrocław these two trends combined in the activity of an art critic and theoretician who graduated from the Catholic University of Lublin, Jerzy Ludwinski (Museum of Current Art, Art Gallery “Pod Mona Lisa”, Wrocław Visual Arts Symposium ’70). The visual artists organised ideological art groups and “alternative” art galleries, there also appeared activities outside the official exhibition schedules and publications outside censorship (Studio of Emotional Composition, “Babel” Gallery). During and after the Martial Law period, independent cultural activity was continued outside state cultural institutions, with the participation of the absolute majority of the visual arts community, within the structures of the Catholic Church (the national symposium “Droga i Prawda” (The Way and the Truth), “Na Ostrowie” art gallery – Branch of the Archdiocesan Museum). Of the new artistic forms, the Wrocław centre was characterised by paratheatrical practices (happenings, performances), visual text (poetrygraphy, concrete poetry), video installations, assemblages, system and sensitive visual arts, conceptual art, landscape works, multi-image compositions, structural painting and spatial compositions. Despite the limitations of the political system all the way from the Elbe to Vladivostok, Wrocław (as the only one) was a lively centre of original, new phenomena in artistic creation, including theatre and literature.