



**POLISH SECTION OF AICA  
REPORT ON CENSORSHIP, DECEMBER 2021**

**Wrocław: December 2021**

Tomasz Opania's work removed from the exhibition *Ritual – Border* at the Browar Mieszkański. The organizers claim that someone intended to file a report to the prosecutor's office for insulting national symbols. The work was supposed to use a barrier, a Polish flag and a rope that, when lifted by the barrier, formed a loop.

**Katowice: December 2021**

Silesian Museum director Maria Czarnecka orders a change in the title of Michał Krawiec's work *We Are Here. Holiday 2015 / Lex Szyszko / River trip* exhibited at the Polish Graphics Triennial organized by the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice. The director orders the words "Lex Szyszko" to be crossed out. The artist agrees to change the title. Jan Szyszko, the former Minister of the Environment, allowed trees to be felled without permission, which resulted in an ecological disaster and, among others, the felling of trees in the Białowieża Forest.

**Krakow: December 2021**

The management of the Małopolska Garden of Art (a center institutionally affiliated with the J. Slowacki Theatre) removes from the *ID-Tentity* exhibition an element of Grzegorz Piotrowski's installation – a photograph of a man with naked buttocks, and Lukasz Pawlowski's video animation *Virtual Intimacy* with avatars having sex. The censorship took place after the opening, during the exhibition. As a gesture of solidarity, on December 6, 2021, the remaining artists will remove their works from the exhibition.

**Warsaw: October 2021**

Director of the National Museum Łukasz Gawęł cancels the exhibition devoted to Dante that has been prepared for three years by the curators Joanna Kilian and Jarosław Mikołajewski. It was scheduled to open in February 2022. He canceled loan agreements with international partners: the Louvre, Pinacoteca in Siena, Rodin Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Prado in Madrid, Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice, and numerous Polish institutions. The

cancellation of the exhibition comes after the management received a scenographic design by Boris Kudlička. The official reason: a pandemic. In fact, for two months prior to the cancellation, the behind-the-scenes information has been repeated that the refugee boat to be brought from Lampedusa should not be included in the exhibition. Special installations/sculptures were created for the exhibition by Anselm Kiefer and Koji Kamoji. Christian Boltanski's work was also to be loaned from the foreign collections, as well as works by artists such as Duccio, Guido da Siena, Paolo Veronese, Füssli, Franz von Stuck, Giovanni da Paolo, Giovanni Bellini, Gustave Doré, Antonio Canova, Rodin, Andy Warhol.

### **Bielsko-Biała: October 2021**

The competition exhibition of the Bielska Jesień Painting Biennale at the BWA Bielska Gallery displayed, among others, the painting entitled *Kingdom of Mushrooms* by Tomasz Kokot, depicting Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz with a hat in the shape of a toadstool. Andrzej Gacek, a councilor from the Law and Justice party (PiS), demanded that consequences be drawn by the Mayor of the city Jarosław Klimaszewski "from those responsible for putting the painting on the exhibition" and that it be removed. The councilor claimed that "the depicted painting is evidently a profanation of the person of the cardinal as well as a mockery and derision directed at the hierarchs and the community of the Catholic Church. Gallery Director Agata Smalcerz and Mayor Jarosław Klimaszewski did not bow to the pressure.

### **Białystok: August 2021**

Exhibition *In the Beginning Was the Deed!* with the participation of Karol Radziszewski in Arsenal Gallery. Radziszewski's work *Fag Fighters* about LGBTQ+ discrimination in Poland is accused of heterophobia and insulting the feelings of Christians. The Fidei Defensor Christianophobia Monitoring Center has filed a report with the prosecutor's office. The organization is sponsored by the Polish Ministry of Justice and receives a grant for each case brought regardless of the outcome. Polish Radio Białystok withdrew its patronage from the event. The gallery did not bow to pressure and did not withdraw the work from the exhibition.

### **Wrocław: July 2021**

The police took action in the case of offending religious feelings and, at the request of the prosecutor's office, secured the collage by Beata Śliwińska (Barrakuz) depicting a naked woman from one of the paintings by Amedeo Modigliani against the background of the image of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. The painting hung on the wall of one of the Iggy Pizza restaurants in Wrocław.

**Warsaw: June 2021**

Opening of Wilhelm Sasnal's exhibition *Such a Landscape* at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN. The exhibition catalog has not been published due to the controversy surrounding the text by Jan Tomasz Gross.

**Kraków: June 2021**

Cricoteka's director Natalia Zarzecka orders the removal of Krzysztof Powierża's work *Banners from Wilson Square – 30.10.2020* from the exhibition *The Gravity of the Situation* organized as part of Kraków Photomonth. The work consists of banners collected after the Women's Strike protests against stricter anti-abortion laws in Poland. As a result, curator Agnieszka Rayss decided not to open the exhibition.

**Radom: June 2021**

During the celebration of the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Radom June” (commemorating the massive protests against the communist regime in 1976), the Freedom Festival – Free(Ra)dom Festival was held. The program of the event dedicated to freedom included the *Ra(n)dom* exhibition, which consisted of posters designed by Szymon Szymankiewicz. The All-Polish Youth of Radom filed a complaint to the prosecutor's office about a poster in which the logo of the Fighting Poland was combined with the McDonald's logo.

**Łódź: June 2021**

Police intervention and confiscation of works from the Marcelo Zamenhoff *Regressive Archive* exhibition at the Off Piotrowska Center gallery (as part of the Fotofestiwal) on charges of offending religious feelings and insulting a national sign or symbol after a report by the politician and social activist Agnieszka Wojciechowska van Heukelom. The photos presented pictures of vaginas juxtaposed with, among others, a photograph of President Lech Kaczyński, a model of the plane in which he died, a photograph of John Paul II and a picture of the Virgin Mary.

**Lublin: March 2021**

The Life and Family Foundation of Kaja Godek applies to cut off the Labyrinth Gallery's subsidy for supporting the Women's Strike. The Lublin City Hall, the Gallery's organizer, does not give in to the pressure.

**Warsaw: March 2021**

The Minister of Culture and National Heritage dismisses the director of the National Film Archive - Audiovisual Institute, Dariusz Wieroniewicz. The ministry had objections about the documentaries *The Vibrant Village* by Weronika Jurkiewicz about the production of vibrators and *You Have No Distance* by Karina Paciorkowska about violence against women.

**Opole: February 2021**

Police at the exhibition *What to do while waiting?* in the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Opole. An anonymous private person reports committing a crime of insulting religious feelings by exhibiting an installation consisting of two crossed sticks on which elements resembling "worms or genitals" were placed. This was the installation by Tomasz Mróz. The gallery did not succumb to the pressure, curator Łukasz Kropiowski was questioned by the police, the prosecution discontinued the case.

**Rzeszów: October 2020**

The deputy director of the City Gallery of the Visual Arts School Complex in Rzeszów informs the organizers of the Rzeszów Photography Weekend that "due to political content, Chris Niedenthal's exhibition cannot be shown in the City Gallery of the Visual Arts School Complex in Rzeszów." The photographs depicted, among others, protests in front of the Supreme Court, the LGBT issues, or crossed-out logo of the PiS (ruling) party. The school's management had been previously informed that the *Here and Now* exhibition would feature Chris Niedenthal.

**Warsaw: September 2020**

Cancellation of the exhibition *Tomorrow Will Be Better. Artist's Thoughts in Times of Pandemic* by Paweł Susid at the Opera Gallery in the Grand Theatre – National Opera, the opening of which was to take place on 3 October 2020. The reasons were not explained. The pretext was that the exhibition containing political content (in Susid's paintings there are quotes from official or journalistic discourse) will hinder "Operational activities in the box office hall related to admitting spectators to performances and the need for a rapid flow of people through the ticket lock".

**Białystok: September 2020**

The exhibition *Fear* in the Arsenal Gallery. After the intervention of the pro-family Mom and Dad Foundation, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage withdraws funding from the exhibition. The reason for the intervention is the work *Knife in the Cunt* by the Ukrainian artist AntiGonna, which speaks about sexual violence against women during the war in Ukraine.

### **Warsaw: May 2020**

Eleven artists (Marta Czyż, Marianna Dobkowska, Magdalena Drągowska, Michał Frydrych, Karolina Grzywnowicz, Yulia Krivich, Jakub Rudziński, Julia Minasiewicz, Jan Możdżyński, Weronika Zalewska, Paweł Żukowski) walked from the Main Post Office in Warsaw to the Sejm (the lower chamber of Parliament) with a 14-meter long letter-transparent with the slogan "To live not to die" (Addressee: Sejm of the Republic of Poland. Sender: Sovereign). The action *Letter* was a repetition of Tadeusz Kantor's gesture from 1967. In this way, the artists protested against exposing the society to danger by organizing the so-called postal elections during the pandemic. The artists did not break any rules related to the pandemic, they wore masks and kept a distance of over 2 meters from each other. Despite this, the artists are written up by the police and fined 500 PLN each, which they did not accept. The police sent penalty petitions to the State Sanitary Inspectorate. Two artists, Michał Frydrych and Paweł Żukowski, were fined PLN 10,000. The police personally delivered the letters in this case to their homes. As a result of a public collection, PLN 100,000 was collected in three days, and the fines were withdrawn after the intervention of the Ombudsman Adam Bodnar and as a result of media pressure. The money collected was earmarked for a solidarity fund for victims of similar repressions.

### **Warsaw: March 2020**

Piotr Bernatowicz, director of the Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, has terminated his cooperation with the Anti-Fascist Year, which was to organize a series of seminars "Anti-Fascism for the Resistant" there. After the first meeting on 11 February 2020, during which Horkheimer and Adorno's text "Elements of Anti-Semitism" was discussed, Bernatowicz cancelled further seminars.

### **Warsaw: January 2020**

On the motion of *Ordo Iuris*, the prosecutor's office in Warsaw indicted Dominica Kulczyńska, an artist who created ceramic pendants with figures resembling Holy Mary or female genitalia. She is facing up to two years in prison for insulting religious feelings.

### **Radom: January 2020**

The far-right association The Camp of Great Poland (Obóz Wielkiej Polski) files a report to the prosecutor's office regarding the photograph of the Łódź Kaliska group *Orlica polska* showing a naked woman against the background of the Polish national emblem, at the exhibition *Polish Hiccup* at the MCSW Elektrownia in Radom. The Public Prosecutor's Office launches and then discontinues an investigation into the public insult to the emblem of Poland. In

January 2021, the Minister of Justice and Prosecutor General Zbigniew Ziobro ordered to verify the correctness of the decision taken by the district prosecutor's office.

#### **Warsaw: May 2019**

Removal of a work by artist Aldona Jabłońska-Klimczak from an exhibition at the Sokolnicki Fort organized by the Żoliborz district. The painting titled *Qvo vadis ecclesiae*, was a commentary on reports of pedophilia cases in the church and depicted a priest with a huge phallus and a little boy.

#### **Warsaw: April 2019**

Removal of works by Natalia LL *Consumer Art*, Katarzyna Kozyra *The Appearance of Lou Salome* and the video *Part XL. Tele Game* by the Sędzia Główny (Chief Judge) group from the permanent exhibition of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century art at the National Museum in Warsaw. After protests across Poland, director Jerzy Miziołek restored Natalia LL's work to the exhibition;

#### **Olsztyn: November 2018**

The Olsztyn-South District Prosecutor's Office has opened an investigation into the exhibition *Zbiorowy w galerii (Collective in the gallery)* at the Dobro Gallery in the Municipal Cultural Centre. The exhibition featured artists from the *Collective*: Jan Estrada-Osmycki, Grzegorz Jarzynowski, Wojtek Kostrzewa, Szymon Małecki, Jan Sobaszek and Michał Szudrawski. Three notices were filed by PiS deputies Iwona Arent and Jerzy Małecki, as well as city councilors from the PiS club. The prosecutor's office is to investigate whether the exhibition offended the emblem of the Republic of Poland and religious feelings, and whether the director Mariusz Sieniewicz failed to fulfill his official duties by removing from the gallery paintings that offended religious feelings and insulted the emblem. The paintings in question were an eagle resembling the Polish national emblem and a woman descending from a cross. Both the eagle and the woman were equipped with phalluses by the artists.

#### **Legnica: September 2017**

After one of the meetings devoted to performance art "Performance - an instruction manual" organized by NETCETERA Association for the Support of Artistic and Cultural Initiatives (curators: Dariusz Fodczuk, Małgorzata Dancewicz), Małgorzata Dancewicz is summoned to the office of Mayor Tadeusz Krzakowski to explain Lenka Klodová's performance during which the artist undressed and dressed. After a series of four performance art meetings, a catalog was to be published. Małgorzata Kaźmierczak's text on body art was censored – words such as "vagina", "urine" and "faeces" were deleted. The author does not agree to publish the

censored text. As a sign of solidarity, the author of another text in the catalog, Łukasz Guzek, withdraws his text and the catalog is not published.

### **Vienna: February 2017**

The cancellation of Monika Piórkowska's *Time Gates* photography exhibition at the Polish Institute in Vienna. Director Rafał Sobczak wrote in a statement that "the events at the Institute also cannot be any source of antagonizing social groups, including the Polish community living in Vienna. The activities of the Polish Institute cannot serve to violate the religious feelings of any group either." The artworks dealt with issues of gender, sex and LGBTQ+ rights.

### **Warsaw: 2017**

National Museum of Warsaw – an exhibition for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of regaining independence by Poland, curated by Piotr Rypson. During an attempt to gain financial support from one of the state-owned companies, the marketing director of the same company, *de facto* demanded that Jewish and Ukrainian works be removed from the exhibition. Later he demanded that the script of the exhibition is changed. Piotr Rypson did not take up this offer.

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