Art, Life, and Beyond: Discovering Surrealism in Polish Modern Art and Culture from 1945 to 1960

by

Maya Modzynski

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University of Alberta

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of artistic groups in Poland active in the fifteen years following World War II. Particular attention is paid to modern and avant-garde artists who were aware of the art derived from the Surrealist movement as well as those who in various instances were in contact with the Surrealists. The research gathered here identifies the factors at play for the artistic production of these individuals: these include interwar artistic activity; the cultural policies of the Communist government after 1948; and the overall changing ideologies of artist practice in Europe. While a Surrealist group in Poland was never formed, traces of the movement's impact on the visual arts can be found in the work of Polish artists and identified in the themes of organized exhibitions.

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List of Figures

Figure 1. Max Ernst. Illustration 14 in the book Troisième Cahier Mardi, Élément: Le Feu, Example: "La Cour de Dragon," in *Une semaine de Bonté ou les sept éléments capitaux* (Paris: Editions Jeanne Bucher, 1934). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 2. Marek Włodarski. *Sen* [*Dream*], 1930. Oil on canvas, 64.5 x 81 cm. National Museum in Wrocław; © National Museum, Wrocław.

Figure 3. Tadeusz Wojciechowski, *Tajemnica* [*Secret*], 1933. Oil on canvas, 82.5 x 66.5 cm. Museum of Art, Łodz. Polish Art and Architecture 1890-1980, By Andrzej K. Olszewski (Warsaw, Interpress Publishers, 1989).

Figure 4. René Magritte, *Les Amants* [*The Lovers*], 1928. Oil on canvas, 54 x 73.4 cm. The Museum of Modern Art: Painting and Sculpture. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York ; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 5. Marek Włodarski, *Unoszące Się Na Niebie* [*Floating in the Sky*], 1931. Gouache, 22.6 x 36.8 cm. National Museum, Warsaw. Polish Art and Architecture 1890-1980, By Andrzej K. Olszewski (Warsaw, Interpress Publishers, 1989).

Figure 6. Fernand Léger, Study for a costume for the ballet *La Création du Monde*, 1924. Gouache and crayon on paper, 33 x 27 cm. Réunion de Musée Nationeux, Paris. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 7. Fernand Léger, *Le Miroir [The Mirror],* 1925. Oil on canvas, 129.6 x 99.6 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from the Museum of Modern Art website <http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=80147>.

Figure 8. Group Picture from First Modern Art Exhibition in 1948. *Krakow Gazette*, 16 December 1998. Nr 294; Documentation Library at the Zachęta National Gallery.

Figure 9. Man Ray, *Reversed Manikins*, 1925. Rayograph mounted on black wove paper, 29.5 x 23.5. Yale University Art Gallery. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 10. Zbigniew Dłubak, *Pozostaję w Cieniu, Radość Jest Dalej* [*I Remain in the Shadow, Joy Is Beyond*], 1948. Photograph, 29 x 38.9 cm. Museum of Art, Łodz; Dłubak i Grupa 55, edited by Mirosław Borusiewicz (Łodź: Museum of Art, 2003).

Figure 11: Zbigniew Dłubak, *Biały, Miniony Krajobraz* [*White Landscapes from the Past*], 1948. Photograph, 38.5 x 28.3. Museum of Art, Łodz; Dłubak i Grupa 55, edited by Mirosław Borusiewicz (Łodź: Museum of Art, 2003).

Figure 12. Aleksander Kobzdej, *Podaj Cegłę* [*Pass Me A Brick*], 1950. Oil on canvas, 133 x 162 cm. National Museum, Wrocław; © National Museum, Wrocław.

Figure 13. Tadeusz Kantor, *Ponad-Ruchy* [*Sur-Motions*], 1948. Oil on canvas. National Museum, Poznań; Tadeusz Kantor: Interior of Imagination, edited by Jarosław Suchan and Marek Świca (Warsaw: Zachęta National Gallery of Art, 2005).

Figure 14. Roberto Matta, *La Femme Affamée* [*The Hungry Woman*], 1945. Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 76.2 cm. Private collection, La Jolla, California; Matta in America, by Elizabeth A.T. Smith and Colette Dartnall (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2001).

Figure 15. Man Ray, *Mannequin with a Bird Cage over her Head*, [Leaf 19] from the book *Resurrection des Mannequins* 1938/1966. Mannequin by André Masson. Gelatin silver photograph, 18.4 x 13.6 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Accessed June 19, 2014 from the National Gallery of Australia website <http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=34042&PICTAUS=TRUE >.

Figure 16. Kazimierz Mikulski, *Untitled*, 1940s. Ink, pen, watercolour, paper, 33 x 21.5 cm.; Kazimierz Mikulski, by Ania Zakiewicz and Urszula Czartoryska (Warsaw: National Library, 2004).

Figure 17. Jerzy Kujawski, *Dichotomia Słońc* [*Dichotomy of Suns*], 1946; Maranatha: Jerzy Kujawski, by Andrzej Turowski (Poznań: National Museum in Poznań, 2005).

Figure 18. Jerzy Kujawski, *Untitled*, 1946. Mixed media on canvas, 114.5 x 147 cm. Maranatha: Jerzy Kujawski, by Andrzej Turowski (Poznań: National Museum in Poznań, 2005).

Figure 19. Krzszystofory Gallery, Krakow. Personal photograph by author. July 2011.

Figure 20 and 21. Jerzy Kujawski, *Untitled,* 1959. Gouache, paper, 65 x 99.5 cm. Maranatha: Jerzy Kujawski, by Andrzej Turowski (Poznań: National Museum in Poznań, 2005).

Figure 22. Tadeusz Brzozowski, *Pogrzeb Rekina* [*Shark's Funeral*], 1948. Oil on canvas, 103 x 108 cm. Private collection; Tadeusz Brzozowski: 1918-1987, by Wawrzyniec Brzozowski (Warsaw: Edipresse, 2006).

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Table of Contents

Introduction……………………………………………………………1

Thesis Structure……………………………………………..2

Surrealism: French Origins and Principles………………….3

Use of Terms/Definitions: Defining the Avant-Garde and Modernism in Poland, Adaptation of and Resistance to Socialist Realism in Poland ……………………………......7

Literature Review/ Overview………………………………12

Chapter 1: Identifying the Presence of Surrealism in Polish Modern Art Trends…………………………………………………16

Polish History………………………………………………17

1920s Surrealism and Surrealist Tendencies in Poland pre-WWII……………………………………………………19

Postwar Poland and Artistic Activity……………................23

Pierwsza Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej [*The First Exhibition of Modern Art*]……………………………………………....28

Science in Modern Art at the 1948 Exhibition……………....29

Conflicts between Socialist Realism and Modern Art in Poland……………………………………………………...…34

Cultural Hegemony and Socialist Realism…………….....…42

Cultural Life after Poland's Political Thaw………………....43

Case Study: Krakow Group's Kazimierz Mikulski…………48

Chapter 2: Methods of Integrating Surrealism into Polish Art and Culture…………………………………………………………....51

The Role of Abstraction in Art…………………………….…...51

Jerzy Kujawski, the Polish Surrealist……………………….…….56

Tadeusz Kantor between France and Poland ……………..…59

“Inaugural Rupture”: Surrealism in the Postwar Years……...61

The Phases Movement and its Association with Surrealism...63

Jerzy Kujawski and the 1959 Phases Exhibition in Poland…65

Tadeusz Brzozowski, Surrealism and Art Informel…………67

Polish Response to Phases…………………………………..69

Uniting Breton and Jaguer…………………………………..70

A Message from the Surrealists to Polish Intellectuals……..71

Conclusion …………………………………………………………76

Figures………………………………………………………………..79

Bibliography…………………………………………………..……..100

Introduction

I have chosen to study the impact of the Surrealist movement in France on artistic and cultural production in Poland in the twentieth century. I will present an analysis of the Polish artists active from 1945-1960 who incorporated a Surrealist aesthetic into a Polish artistic framework. The primary focus will be on the initiatives of individuals who belonged to artistic groups after the Second World War. It is apparent that in the development of modern types of art from 1945 to 1960, artists were open to other modes, styles and practices outside of Poland, leading to an eclectic combination of aesthetics for which Polish culture and art are known. These methods of art production came to include Surrealism. I will consider which artists and groups were key players in involving Surrealism in their work and how, combined with various styles, this work resulted in a distinct aesthetic that shaped modern art in Poland.

Surrealism in France was a creative movement and an important component in the development of the avant-garde in Europe (Aspley xxiv). Its influence was also felt internationally, with Surrealist groups emerging in other countries. Though many artists, writers and intellectuals in such countries created autonomous Surrealist groups of their own, those in Poland did not (Piotrowski, "The Surrealist Interregnum" 47). However, it can be shown that Polish artists and intellectuals utilized Surrealist ideas and practices, and that this in turn affected cultural and artistic production from 1945-1960 and onward. My thesis will demonstrate how, even without the formulation of an official Surrealist group in Poland, Surrealism's influence crossed borders into this Eastern European country. Polish art-historical timelines commonly focus on other movements that composed the avant-garde in the first half of the twentieth century, and Surrealism is not often mentioned. My intention with this study is to show how the Surrealist movement affected cultural practices in Poland. This presence exists in fine art in

Poland today, thanks to notable artists who employed Surrealism in the years following World War II.

Thesis Structure

This thesis will consider artistic activity in Krakow and to a lesser degree in Warsaw, as these cities were recognized as cultural hubs in the twentieth century, with many creative intellectuals in these locations being knowledgeable about Surrealism. Therefore, my investigation will question how specific artists, groups and exhibitions were involved with Surrealism, and how its reception and understanding by these individuals contributed to Polish avant-garde art after 1945. I will structure this thesis by dividing its content into two chapters. The first chapter will provide background and context, with historical details beginning from 1918 up to 1953, while the second will look closely at the connection between Surrealism and Polish artists in the years from 1948 to 1959. In the first chapter I will include a brief overview of Polish history with the inclusion of cultural activity occurring prior to 1939. I will also include a section discussing the interwar art group Artes from Lviv, which originated in 1920 and was the first example of a group of Polish artists who applied Surrealist approaches to their own work. Group members such as Marek Włodarski and Andrzej Wojciechowski were important precursors to those who incorporated Surrealist visual practices in their art after World War II. I will then take my investigation directly into the postwar years in order to discuss the *First Modern Art Exhibition* in Krakow from 1948. The show was significant for examining avant-garde activity in Poland due to its theme, the year it opened, and the organizers, and it will be discussed in further detail in the first chapter. In relation to the show, I will elaborate on how government authority and cultural policy were involved in the lives of Polish artists, primarily

those who were members of the Krakow Group. This policy resulted in Socialist Realism, which will also be considered based on its effect on modern art in Poland in the late 1940s and '50s. While the first chapter establishes where the building blocks of Surrealism in Polish life and art are located, the second will offer a more in-depth investigation of Surrealist practices in relation to art, abstraction, and how this correlated with the Polish creative environment in the postwar years. Examining how artists Tadeusz Kantor and Jerzy Kujawski selectively adapted both trends in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s will help to clarify where Surrealism came into play, and how it shaped modern art in Poland. Additionally, the international art movement Phases — created by Edouard Jaguer — emphasized the relation of Surrealism and abstraction, and will be discussed in relation to Jaguer's affiliation with Polish artists through a Phases art show which took place in Krakow in 1959. Kujawski assisted in organizing the show and entered one work, while three others also participated; they were Jerzy Tchorzewski, Tadeusz Brzozowski and Marian Bogusz.

Edouard Jaguer's trajectory is of critical importance to this study as he was a former Surrealist who advocated for the continuing importance of the movement after its heyday following the Second World War, and who established relations with Polish artists. The nature of Jaguer's association with the Surrealist writer André Breton proved significant for the Phases show in Poland, which was the first significant collaboration between the two groups.

Surrealism: French Origins and Principles.

The goal of this thesis is to examine how Surrealism became visible in Poland despite not being a full-fledged movement there. In doing so, Surrealist perspectives on trends in art after World War II will be considered, as this information will help to clarify how the Surrealists'

visual practices affected Polish art during this time. Connecting Surrealist art and those who produced it to the individuals they reached in Poland will be integral to understanding how knowledge was acquired and exchanged by Polish artists. Surrealism has been defined as a literary, visual, and intellectual movement; founded in 1924, it was created by a number of artists, writers and intellectuals, and was led for much of its existence by André Breton (Matheson 1). As a theoretician and poet, Breton kept himself involved in the movement's activities throughout his entire lifetime (Caws 1). Though originating in France, the group was international in its orientation, with members joining from all over Europe, and with groups forming in many countries, including Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Japan (Durozoi 286-288, 334).

Although Surrealism's ideology and visual practice changed over the years, its processes for art production remained relatively consistent. While the movement's belief system involved a revolt against moral norms, social rules and order, its art embraced *dis*order provoked by the human mind, resulting in surprising and bizarre images which could lead to another order of existence. Surrealism in painting took on the task of visually expressing internal perception, with artists creating images that were contrary to the received order of reality. This was grounded in their fascination with automatic writing, hypnosis, and mediums, and they favoured Freudian psychoanalytic theories (Caws 15, 21).

Automatism in particular was a major technique for generating creativity within the Surrealist movement. In automatism, an absence of conscious control is used in writing and drawing in order to reach new methods of creativity (Aspley 50). It was beneficial for investigating the nature of the relationship between the individual psyche and external reality. In addition to automatism, the Freudian theory of psychoanalysis and the analysis of dreams

appealed to Surrealist producers in both literary and visual fields, as the relationship between dreams and reality called into question the role of logic in our understanding of reason. Accounts of this are mentioned in the first Manifesto of Surrealism, where Breton discusses the concepts of dreams and reality to show that what is contradictory can become absolute reality or "surreality" (Caws 197).

Max Ernst was one artist who visually encompassed a number of Surrealist traits and helped to establish what it meant for artwork to combine dreams and reality to create "surreality", considered the realm of 'super' reality, which is concerned with reordering our understanding of this world. Ernst, as a co-founder of the movement, took on the Surrealist investigation of the unconscious through art. He applies the method of collage to create juxtaposition in his work, in which images from differing sources are placed together in one composition. Although collage is a Surrealist technique adapted from Cubism, Ernst championed the method as a way to create images, as in the unusual combination of individuals and creatures in the work from *Une Semaine de Bonté* (1934) **(Figure 1)**, wherein a woman opens a door to let a snake exit a room. The casual manner in which this is depicted makes the viewer recognize this action as commonplace, but the subject of a snake is unusual, to say the least. The female figure in the foreground is wearing a strange headdress, and appears to be passing a note to a man in Roman armour. The people in the room are not all from the same time period, although their body language denotes a moment captured in time. Their co-existence is an example of how the technique of collage can be used to bring together—at times—unlikely visual motifs.

The juxtaposition of distant realities is an idea derived from the poet Pierre Reverdy, which was discussed by Breton in his first Manifesto of Surrealism. Reverdy's distant realities are defined as follows:

> The image is a pure creation of the mind.
> It cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of
> two more or less distant realities.
> The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is
> distant and true, the stronger the image will be – the greater its emotional power and poetic reality
> (Reverdy in Aspley 7).

For Breton, Reverdy is describing a Surrealist practice that uses the freedom inherent in imagination to make unusual images possible. Ernst's collage demonstrates the juxtaposition of realities visually in Figure 1. Surrealists were not the only ones to utilize collage, as many artists outside of the movement found this to be a useful technique in their own art production. The method has been documented in the work of Polish artists in the postwar years, the most notable being Tadeusz Kantor.

While collage is one technique developed within Surrealist art, other methods and themes were explored, including distortion, the use of biomorphic imagery, depictions of vast landscapes, and the arrangements of objects in such a way that it challenged reason. Visual metaphor can be included in artistic practice as a way of describing something in terms of something else, and is often found in Surrealist art. It will be identified in artist Tadeusz Kantor's work, who uses this poetic method in his paintings to represent his realities living in postwar Poland. Another theme explored is that of desire, which acts as the basis of creativity in artistic practice for Surrealists wherein excitement overcomes rationality, typically in reference to an erotic subject (Caws 24 and Durozoi 57). For example, desire is an explicit theme of Kazimierz Mikulski's paintings. His depictions of women —who for Surrealists are objects of desire— are presented as fused to flower pots (See **Figure 16**). This image does not portray his given reality in postwar Poland, as a naturalistic painting would. Instead, the painting is light and airy,

quixotic and distanced from what is to be expected from a nude, or a still life — two conventional approaches to art-making. His creative decision to combine these objects together follows the practice of juxtaposing distant realities, as he brings together images from different parts of life.

Use of Terms/Definitions: Defining the Avant-Garde and Modernism in Poland, Adaptation of and Resistance to Socialist Realism in Poland

This section will outline terms and definitions that will be discussed in both chapters in order to clarify particular ideas that work in connection with understanding Surrealism's presence in Polish art. The concepts are meant to act as general background to provide context for the two chapters. This context includes defining cultural hegemony and how it relates to the implementation of the aesthetic policy of Socialist Realism in Poland. The section also includes a brief overview about what it means to define certain groups, movements and styles in Poland as "avant-garde" and "modern" based on existing definitions.

*

It is important to evaluate what artistic production looked like in Poland under censorship from roughly 1949 to 1956. Which forms of art and which movements were encouraged while others were restricted? How prominent was the aesthetic policy of Socialist Realism and what did it mean for other movements or artists that were not condoned by the government? What type of segregation occurred in art movements due to the implementation of Socialist Realism? What kind of public venues allowed art to be displayed and how were people exposed to this art? The brief investigation of this topic will help clarify artistic intentions in Poland during this particular time period. Investigating the implementation of Socialist Realism in Poland will also shed light

on the importance of alternative trends in art in a country under the Soviet sphere of influence. These alternative trends can also be considered modern or avant-garde, which will be explained later in this section. In taking this view, I will also be looking into how the concept of cultural hegemony can be used to define the nature of Socialist Realism in Poland, and more broadly, to define cultural life within the country. Although commonly discussed in reference to western regimes, cultural hegemony can be useful for understanding the direction of artistic production in Poland.

The originating definition of the term comes from the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci, active in the early 1900s (Bates 352). Gramsci was interested in how power is wielded by those who possess it. He realized that while it was important to seize the means of production and administration, it was also necessary to create and maintain a new consciousness. Therefore, cultural hegemony is an attempt to impose a normative consciousness which then is perceived as a universally valid ideology, believed to be beneficial to all of society but ultimately benefitting those in power. Cultural hegemony is meant to be invisible; it functions when something becomes common sense for the majority of the population. Critical theorist David Macey elaborates on this notion, stating that: "a conception of the world becomes hegemonic when it is no longer confined to professional philosophers or the intelligentsia, but comes to belong to a popular culture that permeates the whole of civil society" (Macey 177). What he explains here is that hegemony is achieved when the ideas of the dominant class permeate civil society (which is that part of society not associated with government). If the dominant class can successfully spread an idea through cultural outlets, and society accepts it without questioning its nature, cultural hegemony is achieved. Raymond Williams, in his discussion of the deeper complexity of the term in his essay "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory", states that the

intention of those who wish to achieve hegemony is to deeply saturate the consciousness of a society (Williams 37). With every action, however, there is a reaction and not all parts of society remain subservient, showing that no culture is completely hegemonic, even under totalitarian systems of control. Thus, the resistance to hegemony results in alternate meanings and values, opinions, attitudes and senses of the world "which can be accommodated and tolerated within a particular effective and dominant culture" (Williams 42). These are defined by Gramsci as "counter-hegemonic" cultures, groups whose ways of thinking and doing have revolutionary potential because they run counter to the dominant culture.

Applying the concept of cultural hegemony to the historical events of the second part of the twentieth century after the Second World War, one can see that while this type of dominance was attempted, it was never fully achieved in Poland. These developments began during the hegemony of the Polish United Workers Party over Poland during the 1950s (Karpiński 13). This control extended to aesthetics, in particular to the establishment of Socialist Realism, which was an official policy mandating a realistic style of art. The Polish state enforced the policies, which reflected their specific brand of socialist ideals and which were adopted by those artists who chose to be recognized as official art makers. In Stalinist Poland, officials attempted to impose cultural hegemony by implementing Socialist Realism and its approach to visual art practices in order to shape society's beliefs.

The struggle for hegemony in civil society in postwar Poland was perpetrated by socialists who competed with conservatives to convince people of their perspective. While there are problems in distinguishing between the state and civil societies in socialist societies, a similar analysis can apply to the extent that the cadres of the Polish United Workers Party now formed the dominant class. The simple fact that not all artists followed the communist authorities'

attempts to influence culture hindered the progression of cultural hegemony. Those who refused to follow the Socialist Realist style were often modern and avant-garde artists and intellectuals who did not participate in the government goals of cultural hegemony. They included members of the Krakow Group, Group 55 from Warsaw, as well as participants in the 1959 Phases exhibition in Krakow, which will be discussed throughout this chapter.

*

Artistic groups in Poland in the postwar years tended not to be bound by a unified stylistic program, appropriating instead various avant-garde concepts or visual tendencies. Thus, the categorization of artists as "avant-garde" or how their work falls under a "modern art" paradigm will need to be clarified. Starting with the broadest term, "modern" refers to art produced from approximately the late 1800s to the mid-1960s, and fits with the timeline observed in this study: 1945 to 1960 (Smith 18). It can also be used in reference to art which challenges conventional trends, in particular those which at one time were academic and imitative of reality, resulting in form becoming a point of greater interest for artists in the twentieth century (Smith 111). "Avant-garde" art is specific to the modern era as it also challenges conventions; furthermore, the term indicates a motivational factor, that those described this way are consciously putting forth the effort to create novel perspectives that may not be acceptable to other parties (Harrison and Wood 129). Yet, it can be difficult to determine what exactly falls into the category of avant-garde, as the term has been understood in different ways by scholars and art historians, and is used to define various styles and movements. I will use this term to refer to particular artists and artistic groups in the postwar years in Poland, because it is the most common term they are referred to by scholars who have researched these groups extensively. Using both of these terms throughout the study, I will also provide a

framework for understanding how eclecticism became prevalent in the work of Polish artists. Eclecticism will be used when referring to artists and groups whose art embodies more than one style, or tropes of a movement, into one painting. Like the terms "modern" and "avant-garde", eclecticism here refers to art which did not subscribe to institutional, academic, or traditional methods.

Historians who concentrate on Polish art or, more broadly, on Central-Eastern Europe, have a unique perspective on matters of modern art and the avant-garde: they combine Western definitions with their own understanding, which has specific connotations due to Poland's geographical and political circumstances. In their research, they have referred to Poland in a number of ways; in some instances, this is based on historical moments when Poland was a part of Eastern Europe, though others use the more contemporary Central European label. Geo-political implications must be taken into consideration when discussing Polish art groups and their relation to Surrealism. The Eastern European "question", as it was situated in comparison to the rest of Europe in the twentieth century, was complex in nature due to the influence of politics and its effect on communication across international borders. An anthology that discusses this is *From the World of Borders to the World of Horizons* from 2001, edited by Jacek Purchla, which is dedicated to understanding the role of Central-Eastern Europe in relation to the rest of the continent. More specifically, Andrzej Tomaszewski discusses Poland in terms of its central location and the geographical misconceptions that are part of its chaotic history. In his essay, "Central Europe as a Cultural Area", Tomaszewski defines the issues that arise in Poland in an effort to establish a cultural identity, in an area that, due to its central geographical location, is most susceptible to cultural and artistic influence from elsewhere (Tomaszewski 44). This occurrence results in an inconsistency in the way each scholar refers to Poland, neither of which

is incorrect. When discussing the country as it was in postwar years, the term Eastern Europe is often used, as this is what the region was known as during this time period. Others choose to use the term Central Europe, which is the contemporary term. In the next two chapters, I have chosen to refer to Poland as Eastern Europe; however, I use the term Central-Eastern Europe in the literature review below, and include each term when used by its respective scholars.

Literature Review/Overview

This literature review acknowledges previous scholarship upon which I will build my argument concerning the impact of Surrealism on Polish art. Specifically included in this review are historians who have looked in-depth at the shaping of art history in a Central-Eastern European context, and who have investigated the contact between Surrealists and Poles.

*

The efforts at documenting Poland's place in art history are emphasized in various texts written by art historians and critics who focus on modern art in Central-Eastern Europe. The first of these historians is Piotr Piotrowski, whose body of work encompasses Polish art and avant-garde art in Eastern Europe after 1945, and whose most helpful text is *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989,* published in 2009. Piotrowski mentions various artists who were considered modern or avant-garde in nature; they include Marek Włodarski, Kazimierz Mikulski and Tadeusz Kantor. Appropriating aesthetic practices of other cultures into their art was a common tactic for many Poles. This approach yielded varied results and provided freedom of expression to create subjectively in their preferred manner. Eclecticism can be seen, for instance, in work by members of the Artes group, primarily in that of Włodarski. In the postwar years, eclecticism is visible in paintings by artists in the Krakow Group.

Piotrowski's use of the term "avant-garde" corresponds to the common definition where there is an implication of unconventional and forward thinking in creating visual works that do not conform to the norms of culture, art and society. In his essay titled "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde" (2009), Piotrowski emphasizes that it is necessary to take a different critical approach to understanding how avant-garde art was formulated in Central-Eastern Europe, due to the cultural policies of communist regimes wanting to keep Eastern European culture away from Western influences (Piotrowski 54). He believes that due to historical and geographical positioning, these groups cannot be defined in the same way as movements in Western Europe, even though they were employing similar techniques, styles and ideologies.

Steven A. Mansbach, an art historian who also focuses on modern art in Eastern-Central Europe, has completed similar research and his findings are consistent with those of Piotrowski. In his text from 1997, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans*, Mansbach suggests that those studying the avant-garde in Eastern Europe "look beyond formal characteristics in order to understand how style was actually used: to communicate local (often literary or historical) meanings, to signal participation in a broad international movement, and to avow ideologies — social, political and national" (Mansbach 303). In other words, Mansbach reflects similar statements as Piotrowski, as he expresses the idea that artists chose to work in a style in order to be recognized as independent, knowledgeable members of their community while including themselves in a larger international spectrum of creativity.

A number of different scholars who have focused their research around uncovering and documenting cultural life in postwar Poland have found that there is a tendency for the eclectic appropriation of artistic trends by creative groups. They also recognize that Surrealist techniques

and thought processes were important to these individuals as a way to formulate their aesthetic. Mariusz Hermansdorfer is an art historian who writes about Polish artists from 1945 to the present. His most relevant work for this particular study is the text titled *W Kręgu Surrealizmu* [*Around Surrealism*], published in 2007. This book is of critical importance for its creation of a historical timeline of Surrealist activity that occurred in Poland after the formation of the movement in France. It is one of the main sources for information on understanding why Surrealism was an important factor in Polish art after 1945.

Timothy O. Benson takes diversity into consideration when discussing artistic groups, placing emphasis not on the avant-garde but on "avant-gardes" in his essay "Exchange and Transformation: The Internationalization of the Avant-Garde(s) in Central Europe" from the text *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation 1910-1930* (2002). The pluralization of this term is in reference to there being more than one avant-garde; that there are several at the same time, located in different centres (Benson 58). Similar to the other art historians mentioned in this literature review, his ideas focus on how individuals utilize diverse perspectives in the production of their art. This idea can be applied to the processes of creativity in Polish artists after World War II. The analyses worked out by all four of these historians help us to understand how particular Surrealist ideas and methods fit into the scheme of Polish artistic production, and how avant-garde ideas were spread among artistic groups.

Other sources are more concrete in defining the connections between Polish artists and Surrealism in the postwar years, including Jolanta Dąbkowska-Zydroń's text, *Surrealizm po surrealizmie: Międzynarodowy Ruch "PHASES"* [*Surrealism after Surrealism: The International Movement Phases*], written in 1994. The crux of the text discusses the Phases movement created by Edouard Jaguer in the 1950s. Jaguer, a poet and art critic who made an effort to bring

abstraction and Surrealism together, acted as one of the conduits for Polish artists to access Surrealism. The diversity of artistic production that Piotrowski and Mansbach focus on is similar to what is displayed in the Phases traveling exhibitions after the war. In this sense, the ideas set forth by Jaguer and Phases mirrored what was occurring in Polish art in the postwar years. Timothy O. Benson's discussion of simultaneous avant-gardes in play supports how various aesthetic ideologies were developed in the 1950s. In order to understand this properly, I will take into consideration what events occurred in order for Phases to exhibit in Poland, and why this was important. Tracing the impact of Surrealism on Polish artists will help to establish Phases' role in Poland. Dąbkowska-Zydroń's text on the history of the Phases movement begins by outlining the origin, writings, general activity and the Surrealist orientation of Phases. She then proceeds to discuss separately each country involved with the exhibitions. What is most significant in her analysis is the relevancy of Surrealism to Polish artists after the Second World War, their contact with Phases, and their consequent involvement thereafter.

The introduction is intended to provide a basis for understanding the background, terminology, and research in art of the twentieth century, while the following two chapters venture into the lives and practices of creative figures from both France and Poland. Together, the materials gathered present the progression of modern art in Poland during the postwar years and how it came to be that Surrealism was integrated.

CHAPTER ONE: Identifying the Presence of Surrealism in Polish Modern Art

The goal of this chapter is to identify the activity of avant-garde artistic groups in Poland from the year 1945 into the 1950s, and to recognize the cultural factors that contributed to the presence of Surrealism in the fine art of Poland. The analysis will put into context how artists from Poland formulated their aesthetic thinking and how this was presented through art production. For a historical overview, I will briefly outline the political landscape of Poland beginning with the earlier decades of the 1900s and moving into the second half of the twentieth century. This includes defining the nature of the communist government in the postwar period and the relationship between Polish and Soviet political figures. Outlining these events will help to clarify how Surrealism would eventually become a part of Poland's cultural history.

Returning to the topic of Surrealism, it is necessary to observe when artists in Poland became aware of the French movement during its first decade beginning in 1924, and what the Polish artists took into consideration when constructing their artistic oeuvres. These traces of Surrealism will then be identified through an analysis of the *Pierwsza Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej* [*First Exhibition of Modern Art*], a show put on by artists residing in Krakow in 1948. The show was significant for two reasons: it was the first postwar gathering of avant-garde artists, which allowed them to exchange their burgeoning ideas of what it meant to work in a non-academic or non-traditional manner; and it opened the same year that Polish officials implemented Socialist Realism as a cultural policy. The political environment from 1948 until 1953 had a significant impact on how Polish art was produced both in relation to form and subject matter. The concept of cultural hegemony will be used in order to gain a better understanding of the position of cultural production in Poland during these years.

Polish History

The Poland that existed at the beginning of the twentieth century bears little resemblance to what it looked like by the 1950s. Prior to 1918, the country was separated into three partitions belonging to Prussia, Russia and Austria, with the last of these partitions having been established in 1795 (Stachura 1). These states ruled over a divided Poland until after the First World War, when Poland's reconfiguration as an independent nation was established through the Treaty of Versailles (Prazmowska 2). In 1919, the Polish-Soviet war broke out between the Polish army led by Józef Piłsudski and the Soviet Red Army over territories in Poland, Russia and Ukraine (Stachura 44). Piłsudski, with his involvement in politics throughout the years, was a prominent leader of the Polish Socialist Party (founded in 1892), Chief of State (1918-1922), and Prime Minister of Poland (1926-1928, 1930) (Gomułka 12). The Polish-Soviet war is regarded by historians as a cause of the bitter relations between Poland and the Soviet Union throughout the interwar years, giving rise to hostile attitudes that would carry on until after the Second World War.

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The theme of Polish national identity had been a primary factor in the production of art, due especially to the absence of a Polish state in the nineteenth century. The question of national identity predominated due to historical circumstances involving unstable borders and foreign ruling powers, and artists created work that would act as a symbol of Polish nationality and as a patriotic or religious reminder for Poles (Piotrowski, "Modernity and Nationalism" 313). The famous late nineteenth-century Romantic artist Jan Matejko was significant not only as a creative figure, but as an intellectual who developed an understanding of the social history of Poland. Many other Romantic artists, including Artur Grottger and Maksymylian Gierymski, were

similar in that the art they produced was historical, contained a narrative, and carried with it a national message (Prazmowska 28).

However, the turn of the century became a major moment in Europe for changing perspectives in painting, when manifesting a realistic narrative onto canvas was challenged. In Poland the Sztuka group, whose founder was Jacek Malszewski, infused Symbolism into figurative nationalistic works (Mansbach 88). The pursuits of Sztuka artists marked a turning point in Polish creative channels, as they combined Romantic nationalistic ideas with a new emerging art movement. On a broader scale in Europe, the decorative became more popularized, as did the demonstration of personal thought in visual form (Mansbach 88). Polish artists in the years leading up to the First World War were responsive to these changing perspectives. The tri-partite powers also had an influence on emerging national movements, with foreign influence affecting how Polish artists shaped their creative paths (Piotrowski, "Modernity and Nationalism" 315). The years after the First World War demonstrated that a sense of modern art was not lost in the chaos of global conflict; rather it was emphasized and developed. One group in particular, the *Formisci*, or Formists (1917-1922), were artists residing in Krakow who worked into their craft particular stylistic features from Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism and Expressionism (Mansbach 101). They were named by Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, who was a founding member and a figure known today as the father of Polish modern art (Mansbach 101). The word "Formists" was attributed to their progressive practices in choosing to focus on form over content while advocating diverse styles (Olszewski 30). The Formists were the first group in Poland to embrace various modes of modern art to counter Romanticism, a movement which had defined the character of Polish art for decades. Their formation and existence helped open Poland to progressive currents from both West and East.

1920s Surrealism and Surrealist Tendencies in Poland pre-WWII

The French Surrealist movement was one of the currents from the West which found its way into the network of Polish artists active in the 1920s. Its presence was featured most prominently in the group Artes, which included individuals who first integrated Surrealism into their practice based on their exposure to the movement. Originating in Lviv, Artes was composed of artists, architects and designers whose activity paved the way for Surrealism's appearance in Poland in the years following World War I.

In 1924, Jerzy Janisch and Marek Włodarski, future members of Artes, traveled to Paris at the same time that the first *Manifesto of Surrealism* by André Breton was published (Borowski, "Marek Włodarski" 108). During their two-year visit to France, the young artists enrolled in the Parisian *Académie de l'Art Moderne*, founded by French painters Fernand Léger and Amédée Ozenfant (Wróblewska, "Artes"). In 1925, Janisch and Włodarski had the opportunity to see the first Surrealist exhibition at the Galerie Pierre, an exhibition which united painters such as Joan Miró, Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, André Masson and Pablo Picasso (Aspley xix, Wróblewska, "Marek Włodarski-The Hairdresser"). It was also at this time that Włodarski met André Breton and befriended artist André Masson (Łukasiewicz 208). To the young Włodarski, the theoretical aspects of Surrealism were not as influential as the visual motifs found in its art (Borowski, "Marek Włodarski" 110). Pictorial elements of Surrealism became so prominent in Włodarski's work that he is often portrayed as one of the leading Polish artists to incorporate Surrealism into his art, prior to and after World War II. One example of this Surrealist influence is found in his painting, *Sen* [*Dream*], from 1930, **(Figure 2)** in which he depicts a number of objects of varying size and texture. The forms overlap and exist in one space along with a hand that emerges from the right side of the composition. A collage-like thinking is employed here, as

the work presents objects together in a composition that would not be related in any other context. Additionally, the artist titles the work *Dream*, alluding to the possible source of the image.

The Artes group, officially formed in 1929 by Włodarski, Jerzy Janisch, Mieczysław Wysocki, Tadeusz Wojciechowski, and Aleksander Krzywobłocki, did not subscribe to a common program or manifesto, although individual artists in the group were interested in Cubism, Futurism and Surrealism (Olszewski 50). Many of the members found their inspiration in Paris, a city that several members, including co-founder Wysocki, visited between 1924 and 1929 (Łukasiewicz 203). As with Włodarski, many of the artists were attracted to Surrealism, yet did not adhere to Breton's theories; rather they were attracted to the art, techniques, and visual aesthetics of the movement.

The eastern location of Lviv, the home of Artes, placed the city in a unique geographical situation where experimentation with external influences from both Russia and France was welcomed, resulting in an eclectic combination of thoughts and practices (Mansbach 132). While other movements in Poland were bound to a program, Artes was separated from creative activities elsewhere in Poland. Its distance from other cultural hubs in the country and the groups within them meant that members of Artes explored alternative streams of modern art that groups such as the Formists or their offshoots did not focus on.

Many of the Artes artists were interested in creating images derived from Surrealist procedures, especially with the practice of contrasting images to create an estrangement where dream and reality appear to collide. Tadeusz Wojciechowski's painting, similar to Włodarski's *Dream*, is another example of a work with Surrealist tendencies. *Tajemnica* [*Secret*], from 1933 **(Figure 3)** questions identity and existence. Seen here is an image of an anonymous figure,

draped with a sheet, evoking a phantom-like being. The background is an open landscape with a low brick wall directly behind the man, with a strange rock formation sitting on top of it. A painterly motif above the figure can be interpreted as clouds. The painting is mysterious, as the main subject is intentionally unidentifiable. It is reminiscent of works by René Magritte, who often constructed images where facial features are in some way obstructed or invisible, as seen here in *Les Amants* [*The Lovers*], from 1928 **(Figure 4)**. A trait of the artist was to focus on familiar subject matter while questioning the logic of language and meaning, all the while playing with methods of representation (Helfenstein 72). Magritte's painting is a departure from recognizable portrayal of romantic love as the image is comprised of two figures who would otherwise be engaged in a kiss if not for the sheets placed over their heads. The effacing of specific features creates a sense of mystery and estrangement. While the subjects in Magritte's composition interact with one another, Wojciechowski's painting involves a single figure. The lone, partially veiled man can be interpreted as the artist's exploration of what is unknown about individual personality, behavior, or more generally, human existence. While mystery is the comparable theme in both paintings, the way in which objects are placed together within *Secret* also evokes an unusual scene, as they exist within a space and time derived from the artist's imagination.

Wojciechowski's painting is not as eclectic in its style as Włodarski's *Unoszące Się Na Niebie* [*Floating in the Sky*] from 1931 **(Figure 5).** This painting displays knowledge of Surrealism as well as of Léger's work, thus demonstrating an eclecticism distinct from other groups in Poland at this time. The art education Włodarski received from Léger is evident, as this painting uses similar formal features as the French artist. Two examples of Léger's work that demonstrates these similarities is a study for a costume for the ballet *Le Création du Monde* [*The*

Creation of the World] from 1924 **(Figure 6)**, and the painting *Le Miroir* [*The Mirror*] from 1925 **(Figure 7)**. The feature that Włodarski's work mimics in the study for a costume is the vertical stance of the figure, as well as the curvilinear shapes of the body. In *The Mirror*, it is the framing technique which Léger uses. While in *The Mirror*, the frame in the painting follows the borders of the canvas, in *Secret*, it creates a division between the subjects. The figure on the left is situated next to a couple whose features are rendered differently. Their implied body parts overlap to grip one another, and seem more Surrealistic than the figure on the left due to their distorted, biomorphic limbs. Włodarski's work demonstrates how members of the Artes group were interested in how Surrealism emphasized the notion of the irrational in visual form, which could be used to reveal new meanings and a deeper understanding of the psyche. The composition employs the Surrealist concept of juxtaposing distant realities as Breton had noted in his first *Manifesto of Surrealism*. These two types of figures co-exist within the composition, even within the fictionally constructed landscape of sea and sky, yet they are divided from each other.

Within a two-year period, a dozen individuals joined Artes, while others came and went (Olszewski 51). There were eleven shows from 1930 to 1932, with six in Lviv, two in Warsaw, and individual shows in Krakow, Stanisławowo and Ternopil (Wróblewska, "Artes"). There eventually occurred a move away from Surrealism, with each artist diverging to other movements such as Colourism as well as Constructivism (Wróblewska, "Artes"). The freedom to explore other schools of art played a role in the group's downfall. Art historian Steven A. Mansbach elaborates on Artes' path by stating that:

> By the mid-1930s the surrealism that had made Artes unique among Poland's avant-garde had run its short course, and the group manifested new trends that ran counter to the various forms of modernism Poland's

> diverse avant-garde had for so long championed (134).

Mansbach emphasizes that Artes' interest in Surrealist visual motifs was a unifying trait in many of the members' works. The group's cohesion was diminished when its members went in other creative directions. Ideological disputes over political positions and aesthetic directions resulted in a separation. Some artists changed mediums altogether as in the case of Wojciechowski, who went on to work in stained-glass design, while others, including Jerzy Janisch, Otto Hahn and Andrzej Krzywobłocki, created a new (but failed) Neoartes group which intended to focus on portraying social reality with a left-wing perspective (Olszewski 30, Wróblewska, "Artes").

Despite the conflicts occurring near the end of the group's existence, Artes' activities in the interwar years were significant for artist groups in postwar Poland in two ways. It was the first Polish artistic group to recognize Surrealism as a significant new movement in the 1920s; the artists' appreciation of Surrealism was manifested in the incorporation of Surrealist aesthetic principles into their work, along with other influences. Secondly, they were eclectic. In later years, when Soviet control became more stringent, similar patterns occurred, with artists becoming involved in testing out various modes of art rather than choosing to subscribe to any one movement.

Postwar Poland and Artist Activity

We will now examine the years following the Second World War, when Polish culture evolved as challenges arose each year and brought forth new developments in relation to political matters. During the Second World War, and again from the time of the Stalinist regime around 1948, communication and contact between cultural groups in Poland and those in western countries were limited.

Due to the Second World War and its devastating effects, societies experienced debilitating circumstances which led to instability in the affairs of many Eastern European countries. Twelve million people died due to these international conflicts, and many who did survive fled the region, leading to a significant drop in population. Cities were destroyed, including historic buildings and the contents within. Additionally, Poland's fate was in the hands of wartime Allies: Russia, America and Britain, whose leaders gathered in Potsdam and Yalta in the winter and summer of 1945 to determine the status of the country both geographically and politically (Syrop 146).

In the immediate postwar years, Poland's government was communist-controlled. The Provisional Government of National Unity, a group composed of various communist and socialist parties, oversaw matters with little know-how, manpower or resources to take responsibility for reparations and management of a war-torn country (Prazmowska 161). With dissatisfaction over leadership, free elections occurred in 1946 (as agreed in the Yalta accord) (Syrop 147-148). These secured a legal governing position for the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish People's Party, both of which were left-wing (Prazmowska 162). With various political groups vying for the top position in the government, Soviet officials were already working with communists to determine policies and administration within Poland (Goldfarb 69). The result was that Poland was incorporated into the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Out of these elections also emerged The Three-Year Plan, an initiative to reconstruct the economy which lasted until 1949 (Zientara 47). Simultaneous to the rebuilding of the country from the ravages of war, a new social program was introduced which was received with great enthusiasm, and which started to win the communist parties social support (Zientara 47). This resulted in improved living standards and organized forms of recreation, as well as in an intensive nationwide anti-

illiteracy program (Zientara 47). Similar reconstruction was occurring in artists' circles, which had been also severely affected by the war; many artists had died or were debilitated and unable to work. Others were re-emerging creatively with new outlooks, exploring other movements in order to inform their own creative paths; one of these was Surrealism.

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In his essay, "The Surrealist Interregnum", art historian Piotr Piotrowski discusses Polish artists who were dedicated to staying updated about contemporary developments in art and life outside of the country: "Surrealism became identified with an attitude conveying a general intellectual atmosphere of post-war Central Europe, rather than a concrete artistic program" (Piotrowski 48). Their interest in the movement indicated that they wished to participate in progressive trends in art. In particular, visual practices of Surrealism stimulated their own personal expression and their interested in these showed that they were knowledgeable about international movements. Similar to the actions of artists' groups prior to the war, postwar Polish artists wished to adapt various modes of art-making, and they explored these interests through contact and discussions with, and mentoring by, artists of the older generation. Marek Włodarski of the Artes group continued to create art with Surrealist characteristics throughout the war and directly after. As someone working within avant-garde perspectives, he was also considered a mentor to artists who were still shaping their craft after the war (Zientara 54). Włodarski is an example of how information about Surrealism was passed on to the generation of artists working after the war.

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The Young Artists Group, formed in Krakow in 1945, became one of the hubs for these activities, and included the artist Tadeusz Kantor and the art critic Mieczysław Porębski (H.

Wróblewska 73). In an article they co-wrote called "Młodzi artyści po drugim razie" ["Young Artists for the Second Time"] (1946) for the art news publication *Twórczość* [*Creativity*], they introduced the concept of "istotny realizm" which translates as 'amplified realism' — similar to the 'sur' of Surrealism in which there is also an investigation of reality (Koloski 379). In their essay, it is evident that their goal was to elevate modernism, while resisting naturalism and Post-Impressionism; Kantor and Porębski made note of the fact that their investigation of reality was not based on faithful imitation, but resulted in a new expressive form through use of the imagination (Koloski 379). As both were in support of painting and its ability to open up alternate modes of seeing, they deemed that objects chosen to be painted by an artist are considered removed from their real-life context in order to be better understood; art is used in order for an object to be explored unconventionally (H. Wróblewska 74). The *First Exhibition of Modern Art*, detailed in the next section, was an effort by organizers to bring together Polish avant-garde artists after World War II. Several of the individuals were asked by Kantor to build spatial models of two-dimensional paintings which were then displayed next to one another ; as Kantor puts it, this was "a warehouse of forms outside the frames of the pictures" (Kantor in Borowski, "Interview" 38). The initiative was modeled on the features outlined in Kantor and Porębski's theory of amplified realism. The purpose of the essay was to urge artists to express the content of socio-political changes in post-war Poland through the exploration of form. André Breton urged a similar view in his 1936 essay "Nonnational Boundaries of Surrealism", which discussed the exploration of latent content in art as a way of understanding an era's psychological complexity; for instance, the Gothic novel as a symptom of the revolutionary era. This will be further elaborated on in reference to Kantor's *Metaphorical* series, discussed later in the chapter.

Interestingly, what the two authors expressed in their theory was quite similar to the

creative ideas of the Surrealists in France, as both parties were attempting to use unconventional artistic processes to understand objective reality. In this instance, Kantor and Porębski's essay refers to this type of exploration through visual media, while Surrealism encompasses both literary and visual means. Surrealism's aesthetic principles and conception of reality would have been a conceptual framework for artists considering the guidelines established by Kantor and Porębski due to the qualities they shared, as it emphasizes probing into states of mind which can elicit the extraordinary or the inexplicable. In both cases, a new reality emerged within the painting, which was however indirectly derived from external reality. The concept of amplified realism shares concerns with Surrealism with regard to the relation between perception and mental representation and the externalization of an idea. This process was originally documented as a part of Freud's psychoanalytical theory and discussions on the nature of consciousness and unconsciousness, upon which Breton adopted in developing his ideas about Surrealist thinking (Harris 116). The steps of this include the perception of a real world object by an artist, which then exists as a mental representation within the artist's mind, which then becomes a physical image (Harris 154-155). Breton's essay, the "Crisis of the Object" from 1936, elaborates on the idea that an abstract thought, known as the mental representation in the artist's mind, moves to become real, or concrete, when it is materialized in a painting. Amplified realism is similar to this notion, in the sense that the form of the art is created out of thought about a particular object or situation.

The Surrealist movement's alternative approaches to reality, in addition to theories such as those of Kantor and Porębski, were valuable for artists who wanted to be progressive after World War II, when state-prescribed art reverted to nineteenth-century realism. This is evidenced by the art presented in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* in 1948 as well as in the years after

1956, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Pierwsza Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej [*First Exhibition of Modern Art*]

The *Pierwsza Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej* [*First Exhibition of Modern Art*], held in the Palace of Art in Krakow on December 19, 1948, was a cross-section of a number of contemporary directions in art, including Cubism, Expressionism and Surrealism, all linked to the pre-war tradition. Marek Włodarski, from the prewar Artes group, took an active part in preparing the show with artist Tadeusz Kantor, art critic Mieczysław Porębski, and other artists working in the city. The exhibition was an attempt to reunite avant-garde artists after the war; thematically, it exhibited works that demonstrated the connection between art, science and technology, and society. Bringing such elements together ultimately resulted in a focus on reality, and how reality can be portrayed in multiple ways.

At the time, Poland was governed by the Polish United Workers Party, whose orientation was communist. The show's organizers did not know the extent to which Party members would interfere in creative matters, but they were aware of the impending aesthetic policy of Socialist Realism, a style of realistic art developed out of the Soviet Union whose relevance to Polish artists will be discussed later in the chapter. In the end, government authorities deemed the show unacceptable, and in January of 1949 it was closed down (Lechowicz 32).

The *First Exhibition of Modern Art* included 37 avant-garde artists from groups that existed prior to the Second World War. There were numerous artists outside of Krakow who participated, including Marian Sigmund and Zbigniew Dłubak from Warsaw. Younger artists from Krakow participated as well, such as Kazimierz Mikulski, Jerzy Tchorzewski and Tadeusz

Brzozowski (Porębski 16) (**Figure 8**). Gathering people from two generations, the exhibition was intended to unite the modern artists who adhered to non-traditional modes of art making; this resulted in an eclectic exhibition which incorporated styles and movements representative of modernism in a broad sense. Tadeusz Kantor's documentation of the original design of the show indicates a substantial amount of artwork arranged differently for each medium in four separate rooms. The first and third rooms of the show were particularly significant, as they presented how reality played a role in Polish avant-garde art. The first room included photography in combination with scientific images of life forms, establishing the medium as a multifunctional tool in exposing various facets of reality. The third room presented the three-dimensional spatial models inspired by two-dimensional paintings, which were constructed from found and made materials and objects. According to Kantor, they were created "to show that reality pulsates through the multiple visual layers of our paintings" (Kantor 15). The skewing of perceivable reality was unacceptable to governing authorities, however, who imposed Socialist Realism shortly after the show's opening (H. Wróblewska 75). This policy, its guidelines, and how it resonated with artistic and intellectual circles in Poland will be covered later in the chapter.

Science in Modern Art at the 1948 Exhibition

One goal of the show was to establish a relationship between scientific and artistic investigations of reality. The focus on science in art was a way to offer alternate perspectives, and avant-garde aesthetic practices were the processes by which this was accomplished. This particular idea became integral to the show, and was inspired by Kantor's visit to Paris in 1937, when he spent time observing scientific objects, machines and equipment in the Palace of

Discoveries at the Paris World's Fair (Porębski 16). Porębski described the show's premise in a later essay, where he elaborated on Kantor's findings and defined the exhibition this way:

> The exhibition presented works from several disciplines of equal importance. This was dominated by the Great Metaphor spanning abstraction and Surrealism. In the end the viewers were to return to reality, but a reality transformed by the instruments of modern science and extra-scientific imagination, penetrating the infinitely big and infinitely small: a telescope, a microscope, X-rays, the eye of an omnipresent camera, as surreal and abstract itself (17).

The art critic's description emphasizes how the collection of works is meant to show how both science and modern art have an ability to investigate reality. Art, Porębski believes, was a method to open up new ways of seeing. The "Great Metaphor" he refers to may be a way to describe how the real world can be understood visually through both art and science. This term refers to the imagination, and links science to abstract and Surrealist art, indicating how each is capable of transforming our understanding of reality. Metaphor is the prescribing of a new meaning to something which already has meaning. Porębski uses the term metaphor to show how avant-garde practices in art are tools that point out ordinary things in extraordinary ways. The show's emphasis on science provides one experimental means of exploring reality, and the link to science legitimizes experimental art's own exploration of reality. Having already mentioned that many Polish artists, such as Kazimierz Mikulski and Tadeusz Brzozowski, were inclined to steer away from depicting known reality, combining art and science was a modern approach and a stimulating way of presenting alternative views of the world.

The incorporation of Surrealist practices in this initiative is both significant and beneficial, as Surrealism's goal is similar in its quest for exploring reality in unconventional ways. The latter group seeks to explore reality beyond immediately perceived reality, and this experimentation is conducted through writing as well as art; hence the term "*Sur*realism", which

literally translates as 'super', thus indicating enhanced, or amplified versions of reality. Thus, the initiatives of Poles in the show are comparable to similar investigations of the real as explored by Surrealist artists such as Man Ray, whose experimentations with photography produced images of real-world objects, but who transformed them in such a way that it provoked the viewer to question reality. The same can be observed for the works of photographer Zbigniew Dłubak, who was a participant in the 1948 exhibition.

Internationally, photography in the period directly after the Second World War was segregated from the fine arts; Zbigniew Dłubak was an important figure in changing these perspectives in Poland (Lechowicz 28). The artist was a part of the Club of Young Scientists and Artists when Porębski approached him to take part in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* in 1948, and he displayed six of his works there (Porębski 16). Placed in the entrance hallway of the show, the manipulated photographs were of real-world objects. Each image was somehow altered by Dłubak, rendering the natural object unrecognizable in certain instances; technology transformed the items into unusual images (Porębski 16). By their placement in the entrance hallway, the photographs acted as an introduction to the exhibition, as well as an invitation to viewers to change the way they understood reality: to experience an alternative approach to perception and seeing. The direction the artist chose to take in presenting highly subjective photos changed a given reality and was similar to Surrealism in that it also presented reality in an alternate light. Including the photographs in this exhibition was pivotal to establishing photography alongside other media and as a form of modern art in Poland.

Dłubak's photography was highly reminiscent of the photography of Surrealists such as Man Ray. A close look at his Rayographs from the 1920s reveals that Man Ray, like Dłubak, shared a tendency to offer an alternative representation of reality by experimenting with the

medium. As with Dłubak, technology played a role in art production, as the technique that Man Ray used to create these 'photograms' did not rely on the use of a camera, but rather on light-sensitive paper as well as the objects he chose to include in a composition (Ades 99) **(Figure 9)**. Dłubak's creative decision to experiment with the medium may have been inspired by Surrealist photography, as his intentions were to open up the way in which photography could offer an alternative view of reality, with the images he produced being highly subjective. This motivation may have been derived from time spent with Czech Surrealists in the early 1940s, including Jindřich Štyrský up until the time of his death in 1942 (Zagrodzki 121). His photography was presented in April 1948 (the same year as the *First Exhibition of Modern Art*) in Warsaw at the Polish Army House, as a part of the Club of Young Artists and Scientists (Zagrodzki 122). The photographs were similar to the ones displayed in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* in Krakow that year.[1] One photograph by Dłubak, *Pozostaję w Cieniu, Radość Jest Dalej* [*I remain in the Shadow, Joy is Beyond*], employs religious language in the title **(Figure 10)**. What seems to be an ambiguous set of shapes is, upon further inspection, an image of a tree that is intentionally out of focus. Another photograph, *Biały, Miniony Krajobraz* [*White Landscapes from the Past*] **(Figure 11),** could be interpreted as a dream-like landscape, when really it is of this world; it a close-up with an intensification in contrast. The manipulation of a given reality occurs in this work by use of magnification, the angle of the shot, sharpness of black and white, and what is being suggested to the viewer through the language of the title. Viewers can imagine themselves within the suggestiveness of the scene, where mounds and ridges, positive and negative space all co-exist.

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[1] As sources are minimal, knowing exactly which photos were displayed at the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* is difficult. The photos provided here are examples of the work Dłubak was producing in the same time period.

Experimentation like this was an equivalent of automatic writing according to Surrealists because they were not calculated compositions, as most traditional photography is deemed to be (Ades 99). Technology plays a role in this as there are a number of ways that the photographs can be arranged or altered (Bouqueret 2). Whether it is a question of double exposure, collage, photograms, framing or enlargement, experimentation is a playground for the imagination. Man Ray discussed this topic in his essay "The Age of Light" from 1934, in which he defends experimental approaches to photography at a time when the medium was used primarily as a method of documentation. He makes this point about authorship, which takes into consideration the creative processes of artists:

> For, whether a painter, emphasizing the importance of the idea he wishes to convey, introduces bits of ready-made chromos alongside his handiwork, or whether another, working directly with light and chemistry, so deforms the subject as almost to hide the identity of the original, and creates a new form, the ensuing violation of the medium employed is the most perfect assurance of the author's convictions (Ray 53).

Man Ray states a case for experimentation in the hands of the artist, and for the type of manipulation he makes with the medium of his choosing. Both Man Ray and Dłubak use experimentation to their advantage. In Dłubak's case, magnification, as shown by *White Landscapes of the Past*, is only one of many techniques he used to treat the subject in his composition. And while the subject matter chosen to be photographed was deliberate, what he captured was mysterious.

Photography was significant to Surrealism as it was believed by the group to be a useful medium for exploring the nature of dream and reality, which could be brought together by manipulating and arranging objects within a composition. The development of innovative techniques exclusive to the medium was beneficial for an alternative approach to representing

reality, given that photography's original purpose was to document and encapsulate the world directly. Dłubak's seemingly ephemeral landscape is a magnified image of a material that could be either a functioning or inanimate part of the world. Dream and reality come together in the sense that the title encourages viewers to generate their own interpretation of what they are looking at. His photographs encourage an alternate perception by metaphorically seeing one thing in another. Experiment is key here, in an exploration of reality that involves technology and science, but is used to artistic ends.

Dłubak's participation in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* included the display of his photography as well the presentation of a paper, "Remarks on Modern Art", at the beginning of which he situated modern art in relation to reality. The primary issue of the lecture was the nature of modern art, and how it breaks away from the conventional realism which Socialist Realism relied on. Furthermore, he discussed the nature of modern art and how it was thought to be implicitly opposed to the aesthetic policy of Socialist Realism; thus his motive was to use modern art to state a case for the organic progression of visual culture in Poland. "Remarks on Modern Art" will be discussed further in the next section.

Conflicts between Socialist Realism and Modern Art in Poland

For a few years after the Second World War, artistic life and discourse developed with minimal restraint. The year 1948 would change things drastically as Stalinist cultural policies — already in place for a number of other countries in the Eastern Bloc — were introduced to Poland (Crowley 72). This shift in cultural policy resulted in the marginalization and restriction of some artistic cultures, and the art scene in Poland became dominated by Socialist Realism as the only official form of art sanctioned by the state.

What had become the approved mode of representation in visual and literary art in the Soviet Union in 1934 was reinstated in 1948 as the government-sanctioned and primary mode of visual culture and communication in Poland and other newly socialized countries (Scriven 2). To follow Socialist Realist doctrine, artists needed to accept that they would be depicting societal themes in a didactic manner. In painting, this included depictions of the working class, re-distribution of land, agricultural production, political demonstrations and depictions of military heroism (Hall 35). The idealized portrayal of these themes was intended to lift up Poles and motivate them to be productive members of society, since the war had left the country impoverished and in ruins. Often placed in public venues, propaganda of this sort was visible throughout the nation.

Additionally, Socialist Realism's intended trajectory was to create art which followed a guideline of "socialist content in national form" (Crowley 72-73), where national form refers to art which was comprised of characteristics familiar to Polish society, such as the depiction of dress, customs, and scenery. This aesthetic required the aforementioned themes executed in a figurative and often academic manner (Olszewski 85). In order to portray communist ideology, Socialist Realism adapted aesthetic principles popularized in Poland in the late nineteenth century. Anything that displayed avant-garde tendencies was considered bourgeois and cosmopolitan, or defined as "decadent art" (Heller 56). The organizers of the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* in Krakow were no doubt aware that the governing authorities were about to introduce this aesthetic policy. Displaying their work with its theme of "reality" was a way to emphasize the value of modern art as an alternative to Socialist Realist policies. The new ways of investigating "reality" were unconventional, as the intentions of artists were not to define an

objective image of the world, but to present a critical, alternative rendition of it in order to see it in a new light.

Kantor was already thinking of Socialist Realism in 1946 when he wrote to a friend expressing the urgency of staying within a collective in order to present a program of modern artistic goals (Koloski 391). He was critical of Socialist Realism even when it was not yet an enforced policy, and nervous about those around him who already favoured it (Koloski 391). Although his primary concern was to explore different conceptions of realism, his participation in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* as well as his theory of amplified realism mentioned earlier are a partial result of his wariness towards Socialist Realism.

Zbigniew Dłubak's essay, "Remarks on Modern Art", written in support of the 1948 show, discusses the "modern" in relation to Socialist Realism, as in his view both art forms encouraged the portrayal of a so-called reality. Modern art did not require a naturalistic portrayal of reality, while Socialist Realism placed significant value on this traditional characteristic. Dłubak proposed the analogy of a non-mechanized plough versus a tractor to discuss how Socialist Realism looks to the past for art, while modern art looks to the future:

> Instead of returning to a wooden plough, granted it is the only tool familiar to a peasant, one teaches him how to drive a tractor — that is the essence of socialism. Modern visual art equates precisely with this tractor. However, it must be used for positive and creative plowing, rather than crushing the foundations of a new social life. Artists must take up the challenge posed by the great move of the masses towards the higher level of culture (Dłubak 55).

According to Dłubak, modern art and Socialist Realism both create depictions of the world around them, while the tools to do so diverge. In this instance, Dłubak discusses how to visually depict realities of the time in a contemporary way. However, he states that doing so in the traditional manner, as Socialist Realism sets out to do, is retrograde. Using the machine

metaphor, he explains that there is a need for new tools, which technology and modern art provide. His words communicate the idea that realism can incorporate a modern approach to art if artists look ahead for the means, rather than to the reappearance of what had already occurred in art history. Dłubak states that the art of a new reality should encompass form and context, rather than focusing too heavily on one aspect versus another (Dłubak 56).

The *First Exhibition of Modern Art* showed how reality could be depicted, although it did not subscribe to the aesthetic rules which cultural officials prescribed in the same time period. The difference between the two approaches, Socialist Realist and modern, lies in what is considered to be the necessary recreation of the given reality. For instance, the *Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków* (Union of Polish Artists), a state-controlled group in charge of artistic content and exhibition spaces in the peak years of Stalinism from 1948 to 1953, held a conference in June of 1949 in which the vice-minister for culture, Włodzimierz Sokorski, spoke about Socialist Realism (Koloski 378).There he made it clear that the term "realistic" signifies "a typical view of reality" and a "comprehensible presentation of reality which is compatible with common sense and the laws of physics" (Sokorski in Koloski 378). His third and fourth points referring to creativity and the social will be discussed in reference to Dłubak's essay, "Remarks on Modern Art".

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Examples of the first two points are the paintings of Aleksander Kobzdej, who worked in a Post-Impressionist style and became a Socialist Realist shortly after the approach was made official in 1949 (Kitowska-Łysiak). His best-known work, *Podaj Cegłę* [*Pass Me a Brick*] (1950) **(Figure 12)**, follows the movement's formula in presenting to the audience an image of work and cooperation between two laborers. The message is straightforward: reconstruction, on both a

physical and societal level, is successful through collective efforts. Although created in a Post-Impressionist style rather than a nineteenth-century academic one, the message is delivered through a traditional rendering of figures and setting.

This can be compared to Tadeusz Kantor, who in his painting, *Ponad-Ruchy* [*Sur-Motions*] (1948) **(Figure 13)** creates an image that follows his theory of amplified realism, rather than the factual realism demanded by Socialist Realism.[2] It is a composition devoid of narrative and activity, leaving the viewer to observe a figure composed of strange forms that fill the canvas. *Sur-Motions* belongs to the *Metaphorical* series. It was created after the artist's 1947 visit to France, during which time he viewed Surrealist art. This series, painting between 1947 and 1954, embodied both surrealist and abstract themes (Świca). Kantor deemed them metaphorical, as they were visually representative of what he felt was "a world of catastrophe" (Świca). The catastrophe he refers to is living in a country still reeling from its involvement in major conflict a few years prior, as well as to postwar reconstruction and political instability. Additionally, the series was an examination of space, how objects moved within this suggested space, and how objects could be manipulated (Piotrowski, "The Rembrandt Prize" 36). Singling out body parts and then placing them together to create the impression of a human, Kantor creates a plane of existence for objects in order for them to be foregrounded, as he described in the essay he wrote with Porębski in the publication *Twórczość*. He encourages the viewer to create meaning from the pictorial by eliminating narrative elements and foregrounding form; Kantor used amplified realism in his work in following what was "an independent and concrete

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[2] Due to its linguistic complexity, Kantor's title *Ponad-Ruchy* has been translated in multiple ways, with and without a hyphen. I have chosen to translate the title here as *Sur-Motions,* as this title is used most frequently, although it has also been translated as *Beyond Movement* and *Supra-Movements*.

entity which justified itself ," or, in other words, an independent reality (Kantor and Porębski in Koloski 379).

The formal elements in Kantor's work are highly reminiscent of Roberto Matta's paintings, which Kantor viewed in France in 1947 (Piotrowski, "The Surrealist Interregnum" 51). Matta's work may have been of particular influence due to his own focus on political and social issues in his paintings during the 1940s, where his compositions were believed to be a synthesis of ancient mythology and mechanization (Smith and Dartnall 21). Surrealists, including Matta, do not explicitly create imagery of current events, and this is what Kantor is avoiding as well. In the essay "Nonnational Boundaries of Surrealism" from 1936, Breton discusses how Surrealists are able to convey a sense of the latent content of the era, because they do not depict its manifest content as Socialist Realists do (Breton, "Nonnational Boundaries" 12-13). Although artworks do not explicitly depict contemporary issues of the time, they are still valuable for exhibiting the mindset of people living within the era (Breton, "Nonnational Boundaries" 15). In Matta's work, *La Femme Affamée* [*The Hungry Woman*], 1945 **(Figure 14)**, industrial motifs are integrated with an anthropomorphic figure and it exhibits a theme of struggle similar to Kantor's *Sur-Motions*. In *La Femme*, teeth curl around phallic jaws, thin fingers placed on either side of the mouth are inserted half way in, and the face itself looks to be screaming in agony. A plank with two cogs on the surface is positioned under the figure's chin, and restricts movement. Further restriction is indicated by the nails, which look to be driven into other parts of the body, while the stark red background adds an alarming tone to the work. This dark humanoid is immobilized much like Kantor's figure in *Sur-Motions*, although the latter figure is not so agonized. Kantor's figure is immobilized by the diamond shapes which bind him, keeping him in place. This, in relation to the title itself, is curious, as the prefix "sur" translates directly as "super", but could

also indicate the term "beyond", despite the absence of motion. The figures are elongated in both paintings. The representation of the figure in Matta's work is expressive of a body in conflict, and is similar to the entrapment of the figure in *Sur-Motions,* which metaphorically shows Kantor's exploration of the human struggle in terms of his current situation. By making these contextual and formal comparisons it can be observed that Surrealism has influenced Kantor's work. On a more profound, interior level, Surrealism has provided Kantor with a way to develop his own understanding of reality. Since the series was the artist's broad subjective view of the instability in political and societal affairs in Poland after the Second World War, the element that is investigated in this particular painting focuses on the human subject. Kantor manipulates the figure to produce a sense of conflict and psychological suffering, a visual depiction of a state of mind and perhaps a mental kind of going 'beyond', which the artist refers to in his title. Returning to Matta, Kantor is using the inspiration of a Surrealist who also used painting as a way to portray a sense of turmoil deriving from external issues, both social and political, issues that are very much embedded in real world experiences. *La Femme Affamée* was painted in 1945, the same year the Second World War ended. The painting is a latent, rather than a manifest engagement with the horrors of war, encapsulating the fraught inner and outer worlds of man (Smith and Dartnall 22). The influence of Matta's work, in combination with the theories Kantor has developed on his own, results in powerful images that show how reality is handled indirectly through artistic production, which are indicative of Polish modern art in the 1940s.

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Returning to Sokorski's guidelines for Socialist Realism: his third and fourth points on creativity and the social can be interpreted with reference to modern art, especially when it comes to Dłubak's proposal. The first two points concern a typical view of reality and even more

importantly— and more defiantly rejected by the participants of the modern art exhibits — "presenting reality which is compatible with common sense and the laws of physics" (Sokorski in Koloski 378). Sokorski's third point, "creativity", states that the work should present a complete picture of life in keeping with the artist's creative vision, a vision based on society's labours (Sokorski in Koloski 378). The fourth point concerns the utilitarian function of the "social", which "serves society, mobilizing its consciousness (with regard) to the struggle and to work" (Sokorski in Koloski 378-379). In "Remarks on Modern Art", Dłubak suggested that artists should immerse themselves in social life in order to create their personal rendition of reality (Dłubak 55). Throughout the essay he too insists that the notion of creativity is intrinsic to creating an image of reality. In practice, these characteristics can be applied to Kantor's and other artists' works in the show, yet the fulfillment of all of the rules by which to portray reality could not be realized according to Sokorski's mandate. Realism was applicable to art in both modes; however, it was not conducted in a proper manner by the artists participating in the exhibition, according to communist authority, as it did not suitably adhere to the visual formula nor communicate the messages set out by Socialist Realism. Trends in non-academic art in particular were criticized by authorities, as they did not cater to, or could not be understood by, all of the social masses (defined as the working people) (Crowley 72). Thus, communication that was easily understood was seen to be an important factor in disseminating information to a mass audience, which was problematic when it came to modern modes of art as they required a more knowledgeable public.

Cultural Hegemony and Socialist Realism

The concept of cultural hegemony can be applied to the nature and prevalence of Socialist Realism in Poland, as the movement played a role in disseminating visual information about how society concerned itself with the issues of struggle and work, according to Sokorski's fourth criterion. Although cultural hegemony was not completely achieved by government officials such as Włodzimierz Sokorski, some artists did voluntarily comply with this mission, and followed the aesthetic principles set out by Socialist Realism.

In his text *On Cultural Freedom: An Exploration of Public Life in Poland and America* from 1983, author Jeffrey C. Goldfarb analyzes the limitations on cultural freedom in Poland during this time. He also analyzes how the Soviet Union affected artistic production after the Second World War. In doing so, he reveals a dialectical relationship between the nature of authoritarian rule and its imposition on the individual: "Once he is recognized by the state, state support and control of the arts provide for the artist freedom to do his work and guarantee an audience through subsidies, but may silence an artist's pursuit of unconventional themes and forms" (Goldfarb 29). For artists in Poland under Soviet control, the means to an end were not solely creative, but a process that produced a highly politicized visual image; artists were "free" if they submitted to the restraint enforced by the regime. Those who chose to work outside the desired mode of art were not forbidden to practice, but they would not be recognized, supported, or funded by the state (Olszewski 86). The art which the state required was intended to be a vehicle for the message; the less complicated the artistic medium, the more easily the message could be conveyed. The drive towards cultural hegemony was evident in Socialist Realism's attempts to convince society that the art it produced was the "correct" one. If successful, the end result of this drive was that the population would no longer question communist ideals, but

willingly accept them. Artists were a means to ensure this outcome. The apparatus of Socialist Realism is a traditional system analogous to patronage, where the government becomes an exclusive patron of desired commissions. Organizations such as the Union of Polish Artists were instruments for cultural hegemony so far as artists were concerned, as they were the nuclei for Socialist Realist activity and its consequent diffusion.

The political environment in Poland permeated the cultural sphere, and led to rebellion seen and heard in "unofficial" ways. There were independent artists who chose to avoid state control. Some of these artists participated in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art*, and many of them incorporated elements of Surrealism into their artistic production. For them, one thing was certain: art was becoming an instrument for disseminating political propaganda, while autonomy in visual practice was frowned upon. Those who resisted the newly dominant art found themselves searching for alternative means to present and discuss their work. With this goal in mind, like-minded individuals came together to create something outside the official form of patronage. While Socialist ideologies were unequivocally promoted in visual art by the cultural authorities, not all artists felt that what they produced needed to be officially sanctioned. Socialist Realism as an art movement in Poland functioned in a repressive way, so it was the creative production of artists who did not follow it that shaped modern art in Poland.

Cultural Life after Poland's Political "Thaw"

A year after Stalin's death in 1953, Soviet influence decreased in Eastern Europe, resulting in major changes in the state of Poland (Curtis 41). In the years following, Poles became increasingly dissatisfied with the state of affairs. This led to Polish October in 1956, a city-wide protest in Poznan directed at the unsatisfactory wages and working conditions in

industrial workplaces (Karpiński 49). Revolts of this type showed that there was a need for new leadership, which eventually occurred after the death of President Bolesław Bierut in 1956, when Władysław Gomułka came to power (Karpiński 64). Bierut and Gomułka had opposing views about how Poland should be run; Gomułka had been critical of the Stalinization of Poland, and made it his priority to dismantle its principles (Prazmowska 185). Thus, the year 1956 became significant for Poland and the Soviet Union, as it also witnessed what was known as the "thaw" and the liberalization of cultural policies (Karpiński 41). According to Piotr Piotrowski, in his book, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, the thaw "created a veritable explosion of modern art" (Piotrowski 68). This explosion resulted in artistic groups emerging from their "unofficial" status to begin to work freely in their desired mode of art-making, without any restrictions on international communication.

The two groups most prominent in Poland's art scene after the thaw were Group 55 from Warsaw, and the Krakow Group from Krakow. The aforementioned Zbigniew Dłubak from Warsaw and Tadeusz Kantor from Krakow were the two key figures who shaped the direction of artistic activity in their respective cities, and their creative initiatives were significant in clarifying how Surrealism was adapted in the postwar years. Both artists were active prior to their involvement in their respective art groups, and each was considered an unofficial leader of a collection of individuals who varied in artistic range and definition.

Zbigniew Dłubak, co-founder of Group 55 in Warsaw, was interested in Surrealism, and incorporated some of its elements into the photography he produced throughout the 1940s. His exposure to the movement was through affiliations with the Czech Surrealists in that decade (Piotrowski, "The Surrealist Interregnum" 51). Working as independent artists after the war, Dłubak, Marian Bogusz, Kajetan Sosnowski and Barbara Zbrożyna met in 1954 and decided to

become a collective, with the driving force of disdain for the presence of Socialist Realism in Polish culture. They called themselves Group 55 due to their founding year (Borusiewicz 115). The artists convened in the *Klub Krzywego Koła* [*Warped Wheel Club*] in the Old Town of Warsaw, where the majority of socialization, activity, and exhibitions took place (Olszewski 97). As specified by Janusz Zagrodzki's retrospective account of the group, they intended to "set the sphere of the visual message in opposition to the content of socialist paintings" (Zagrodzki 124). Additionally, the group set out to discuss the impact of human psychology on form, and what direct contact existed with those looking at the work (Zagrodzki 124). With the primary focus on psychology in this instance, one idea remained similar to the core message from Dłubak's 1948 "Remarks on Modern Art" essay, in which the artist stressed the importance of progress and development in visual practices as the only proper step for the future, while a return to earlier modes of production would be a regression. At the time, Dłubak and Group 55's ideology was a return to the concerns of Polish modern art and visual culture mentioned in his essay. Incorporating Surrealism into their work was part of the group's initiative to stay progressive. In August of 1956, the group put on an exhibition, *Bitwa Z Estetyzmem* [*The Battle with Aestheticism*], which compared the state and meaning of contemporary art to that of the nineteenth century's Aesthetic Movement, whose concern was art for art's sake. This particular movement was focused on because it had appealed to Polish artists in the earlier part of the century. While Group 55 recognized it as a significant step in modern art, its members were encouraging the inclusion of content with form, thus ensuring that the show was a venue for visual communication rather than just an aesthetic event (Leśniewska 138). So far as the content of images was concerned, Dłubak found this to be an ideal platform to continue on his path of

investigating reality, as seen in this statement concerning the *Battle with Aestheticism*, made 8 years after “Remarks on Modern Art”:

> The reason for the creation of an image is not the feeling of colour (kapism), nor the registration of physiological phenomena of seeing the relations of colour to the form of an object (cubism). The reason for the creation of an image is that artist’s thought about the reality around him and its phenomena (Dłubak, “Battle with Aestheticism” 139).

Dłubak’s words indicate that he has a conviction that art should not be primarily about form. He is critical of Cubism and Kapism (also known as the Colourists) which was a distinctly Polish movement comparable to the Post-Impressionists of France. He uses these styles as a foil to the visual practices of Group 55. His statement shares common ideas with what can be found in Surrealist art principles, as Dłubak establishes how an artist relies on perceived reality to produce a work of art that expands on what is observed. The example given earlier, of his manipulated photography from 1948, demonstrates how a different image of the world can be produced by means of an optical apparatus. Group 55 is an extension of this attitude, as the members utilized techniques established by modern art (primarily in painting) to find proper expression and form in order to engage with their contemporary setting. The image created to express an artist’s thought about the world is a point of view which the Surrealists share.

In Krakow, artists demonstrated how the avant-garde and particularly the Surrealist movement were not forgotten after the Second World War. This was evidenced primarily by artists involved in the Krakow group, or formally the *Stowarzyszenie Artystyczne Grupa Krakowska* [The Krakow Group Artistic Association]. Although it was informally created in the 1930s, the group was revived and officially named in 1957 (H. Wróblewska 21). Many artists from Poland were drawn to live and work in Krakow as it was always historically known to be a highly cultural city. The *Stowarzyszenie Artystyczne Grupa Krakowska* was composed of

individuals who at times varied greatly from one other in their visual aesthetic. The artists inclined to incorporate Surrealism in their work included Maria Jarema, Jerzy Tchorzewski, Tadeusz Brzozowski, Tadeusz Kantor, Kazimierz Mikulski and Erna Rosenstein. The artists who attended the group's first gatherings in the 1930s were bound only by the experiences of the First World War (Kozakowska-Zaucha 50). Otherwise, their art did not follow a common program aside from maintaining a modern aesthetic. Unlike Artes, the Krakow Group managed to survive and continue in this tradition in the postwar years. Its modernist approach was evident in the painting that its members produced; the members agreed to avoid working with academic or prescribed methods including Socialist Realism. With the group flourishing after the decline of Socialist Realist policies, the members felt that the simple effort to affiliate with fellow artists in order to be culturally active, and to make sure to have comfortable conditions for a working environment, were more than enough to suffice for a successful initiative (H. Wróblewska 24). Maria Jarema, a founding member of the group, set out a ruling that outlined the level of respect the group maintained for independent artists. In the opening of her statement to those artists who chose to join the group, she wrote: "Long live the united front of all artists, without distinction of political beliefs, in defense of their independent creativity" (Jarema). The mention of political beliefs shows that memories of the recent past resonated with artists who were active during the Socialist Realism years. Jarema brought up the topic to promote the value of cultural freedom and independent creativity.

The Krakow Group is recognized by art scholars as an avant-garde collective due to its members' resistance to academic structure — both in style and institution — in the city. Similar to the members of Group 55, the Krakow Group artists chose to explore a variety of styles, ideologies and techniques that were progressive in nature. After the late 1950s, the ability to

acquire and exchange information across borders and sustain a position of independence from the political order provided artists with enough knowledge to adapt and utilize the views and practices of various movements, including Surrealism, in their art.

Case Study: Krakow Group's Kazimierz Mikulski

The Krakow Group artist who scholars most often cite as taking up Surrealism in art was Kazimierz Mikulski. His networking and knowledge about Surrealism developed when he was working in Krakow art institutions, and met Kantor. The two would work together for many years, sharing similar thoughts on both art and theatre (Zakiewicz and Czartoryska 17). Mikulski was one of the artists who took part in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* in 1948. Further association with these artists and thinkers occurred when Mikulski joined the Krakow group in 1957 (Zakiewicz and Czartoryska 18). Art critic Mieczysław Porębski entertained the notion that, based on his paintings, Mikulski might be the most Surrealist of all the Polish artists. This is due in part to his poetic approach, which led to unusual connections between objects, and to his rejection of rational logic in the conception of his paintings (Zakiewicz and Czartoryska 24). Porębski pointed out that Mikulski did not precisely follow Surrealist thinking, but adapted some Surrealist visual practices. These can be identified in the artist's dream-like compositions, which can be categorized as a juxtaposing of distant realities.

Mikulski was an admirer of various Surrealist artists, and appreciated the spatial composition found in the works of Paul Klee and Joan Miró (Zakiewicz and Czartoryska 18). He was also aware of Salvador Dali and Renaissance artist Lucas Cranach, who was an inspiration for some Surrealists (Zakiewicz and Czartoryska 24). In terms of the figuration of his paintings, Mikulski's work resembles that of Magritte or De Chirico as his figures are set in recognizable

spaces, and theirs is an extraordinary encounter generated by juxtaposing distant realities; that is, an encounter of unlike objects, which creates an unexpected situation. Mikulski's paintings use strong colour and contrast as well as sharp contours, while the subject matter focuses on sexualized depictions of women. In a rather cartoon-like way, these women tended to have large heads and eyes; their facial expressions vary from complicit to detached. This can be observed in *Untitled* from the 1940s **(Figure 16)**. The way that Mikulski created the women's faces, as smooth cut-out masks, is reminiscent of mannequins that have been featured in French Surrealist works such as the assemblage *Surrealist Mannequin Head in a Cage*, by André Masson **(Figure 15)**. Mikulski also portrayed elements of nature, with many of his compositions set outdoors. Cats, birds, cows, snails and insects as well as botanical motifs have all been present in his work. The highly stylized way in which they were depicted resulted in a naïve or childlike air to his paintings.

In *Untitled*, painted at some point in the 1940s, a nude woman with holes through her oversized thighs stands in a shallow pan. These holes look like they are carved out of her body as if she were an object such as a piece of wood. Her rigid vertical stance is similar to that of a mannequin or statue, and the plant life that grows out from the pan places her in the symbolic position of a tree. Set in the foreground of a vast landscape, there are only a handful of other unusual objects arranged throughout the composition. From the subject's left arm emerges what appears to be wire or a string, which pierces two flower petals. This wire leads out from the figure and then abruptly stops at the central point of the painting. Another petal, more vibrant in the very forefront, looks as if it may have also been on this wire, as it has a small black dot in its centre. Above the subject's head, in the background, the viewer sees what looks like a spool, with wires or strings wrapped twice around it. Then, directly to the right sits a narrow cage. Here,

visual motifs are repeated, as the holes in the woman's thighs are similar to the shape of the petals, the plants and the cage. Visual contrast is featured through horizontal planes while curved and geometric shapes create the forms of the woman as well as the objects which surround her. The subject matter is open to interpretation by the viewer, as Mikulski never made a succinct statement on the meaning of the work. Yet observing the work from a Surrealist standpoint, one can detect a relation between reality and invention, in which spaces and bodies are indeterminate. The composition includes items from nature placed in non-realistic situations, leaving it difficult to read the work in a singular way. Surrealism emphasizes the estrangement of objects and figures from their natural environment, arranging both in a confrontation that evokes surprise, or adds a mysterious symbolic meaning to the composition. Breton's discussion of distant realities based on Reverdy is applicable to the case of Mikulski's *Untitled*, as an unusual event unfolds to define the "surreality" of the situation. Much of Mikulski's work followed this approach, which established him as an emblematic artist of Polish visual culture.

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Mikulski, however, was only the most prominent of Polish artists who embraced Surrealism, and others are recognized for similar endeavours across the country. Tracing the history of Surrealism's presence, starting from the Artes group, demonstrates that the movement's influence was alive and well in inter-war Poland, even if no group was formally constituted. Its presence carried through after the Second World War along with other avant-garde inclinations in which Polish artists and intellectuals had been immersed, despite the obstacles brought about by government-enforced cultural policies.

Chapter Two: Methods of Integrating Surrealism into Polish Art and Culture

In this chapter, I will investigate how cultural figures and groups in Poland established contact with Surrealists in France. I will also focus on French post-war Surrealist views on the evolving perspectives in art and contemporary thinking in Europe. These perspectives include a shift in emphasis concerning the medium of painting and its use in an expressive manner, on the thought processes behind execution, and concerning changing ideologies in existing movements alongside emerging ones. Surrealists, as well as artists in Poland active in the postwar years, were involved in these shifts. Among the Polish artists whose work exhibited new ideas informed by Surrealism are Tadeusz Kantor, Jerzy Kujawski and Tadeusz Brzozowski. This chapter will look at the periods in their careers after 1945 that are most relevant to this study. Additionally, I will examine relevant commentary on figurative and abstract approaches to art-making by creative figures in France, and how this contributed to the development of groups such as Phases, an international art movement that originated in France. In the 1950s, Edouard Jaguer, the creator of Phases, made contact with artists in Poland, resulting in the organization of a Phases art show in Krakow in 1959. Learning about these events helps us to understand the way in which Polish artists incorporated Surrealism in their art. These events were also among the initial forms of contact between the two cultural spheres of Poland and France following the thaw.

The Role of Abstraction in Art

The questions surrounding representation in postwar Europe were directed at understanding a new type of abstraction that became internationally prevalent in the art world. In the European context, this new type of abstraction was closely identified with Art Informel, a

term that originated with art critic Michel Tapié (Chilvers and Glaves-Smith). Although both figurative and abstract works emerged from Art Informel, the latter appeared in contrast to geometric abstraction as an alternate art form which focused on an intuitive, spontaneous type of expression (Chilvers and Glaves-Smith). This new type of painting affected the discussion about changes in French art after the Second World War. These changes included how formal (or informal) qualities were rendered, what thought processes were required to develop these formal qualities, the overall aesthetic of the work, and the final creation. Although it was art critic and writer Charles Estienne who convinced Breton of the validity of some kinds of contemporary abstraction, the relationship between Breton and Edouard Jaguer, a former Surrealist, would also be based on the development of this discourse. Their eventual collaboration was verified by the Surrealist involvement in the Phases movement's exhibition in Krakow in 1959, where Polish artists were also taking part in contemporary developments in art.

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Surrealist art tends to be figurative. An artist or writer would initiate the practice of objectifying the subjective, meaning that an individual's imagined picture or idea from an individual (the subjective) was brought into being by the use of an artistic or literary medium to make the image exist through art or writing (the objectification). Thus the imagination was a source for generating the image onto canvas, or other media. Prior to the 1940s, abstraction in art was usually based on a constructive principle, which was inappropriate for the Surrealist approach to the objectification of the subjective. Abstraction was not useful in realizing a mental image because abstraction eliminates figurative representation. Breton and other Surrealists therefore rejected abstract art, as it was not deemed adequate for their purposes (Breton, "Crisis of the Object" 280). Among the critics of abstraction was Benjamin Péret, a poet and central

member of the Surrealist group, who went so far as to state that Wassily Kandinsky and Joan Miró had never claimed to be abstract artists, rather they were concrete artists whose thoughts found visible form (Péret 1). Breton's "Crisis of the Object" from 1936 and Péret's "Dehydrated Soup" published in 1950 develop a critical perspective on the creative process, as well as on abstraction and its role in art. These essays help to explain how Surrealists envisioned the pictorial component in art and why they were critical towards abstraction in creative practices. Eventually, Breton's and Péret's perspectives evolved and they became more accepting of some artistic trends in the 1950s. Once that occurred, there was collaboration between Surrealists and Phases, which resulted in profound contact between Polish artists and Surrealists in the postwar years.

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In 1936, Breton wrote the essay "Crisis of the Object" to complement the *Exposition Surréaliste d'objets* show at the Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris (Caws 37). In the essay, he discussed the reasons for his disparaging attitude towards abstraction (Breton, "Crisis" 280). Where many groups and movements were taking a step towards abstraction, Surrealism's stance was dismissive**.** In "Crisis", Breton discusses the role rationalism plays in Surrealism, mentioning that it is in human nature to have a desire to objectify in order to realize a relationship between a person and those things which are already in existence. The poetic object, and consequently the surrealist object, are manifested in an unusual way. The value of automatic processes, including dreaming, assists in bringing the poetic object into reality. Thus, the *Exposition Surréaliste d'objets* presented to audiences poetic objects which often possessed irrational qualities. Surrealist artists and writers were enthusiastic experimenters, drawing out various possibilities

of interpretation by compromising an object's conventional value and function. Breton makes his major significant critique of abstraction in the final parts of his essay:

> But it is worth noting that the thought processes which created all these objects moved steadily from the abstract towards the concrete, whereas a certain sector of contemporary art (abstractionism) insists obstinately on moving in the opposite direction, thus running the risk of seeing its realizations completely outclassed by – for example – objects such as those on display here (Breton, "Crisis" 280)

Breton believes that Surrealism moves from abstraction (thought) towards its realization in the world, whereas abstraction reduces pictorial motifs from nature, i.e., it moves away from nature towards non-representation. Consequently, the direction of abstraction in contemporary art was not satisfactory for Surrealism and what it strove to achieve in the world.

While what was occurring in the 1930s evoked criticism from Breton, the "lyrical" abstraction emerging in the late 1940s and 1950s was more expressive. It meshed with his ideology more than art forms such as Constructivism, Cubism and Suprematism, which had been developed in the earlier part of the century. Breton's, as well as the Surrealists', perspective changed in the years following World War II. They came to favour a different type of abstraction that was not "rigid" but rather "lyrical".

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Where in "Crisis" Breton expressed his thoughts on behalf of Surrealists prior to the war, the aesthetic battle and debate on abstraction continued in the postwar years between Charles Estienne, a writer who was an advocate for abstraction in modernist painting and Péret, who wrote a rebuttal to a 1948 article by Charles Estienne on artist and mental patient Adolf Wölfli and his exhibition at the *Foyer de L'Art Brut* (Estienne). The title of Péret's essay was "La

Soupe Déshydratée" ["Dehydrated Soup"], a satirical critique of abstraction in art.[3] (The essay also criticizes Léon Degand, another art critic in support of abstraction.) With much disdain, Péret —who as a Surrealist backed the movement's approach to creating art —verbally announced to his public that abstraction, particularly geometric abstraction, went against all that humanity had thus far achieved in art theory and its application (par. 5). He believed that abstraction was counterintuitive to what had already come into existence, as the intention of art-making is to communicate an idea of the world, or an individual view of the world. He stated: "No truly abstract art can exist because art comes from either the interior world of the artist or from the external world or the interdependence of the two" (par. 14). Recalling Breton's views, the "interior world of the artist" is the subjective element of an individual's imagination, and the external world is the object of an art based on imitation. Interdependence is the relation between perception and mental representation. The perception is what one makes of the reality around them, and the mental representation is how this is rendered in one's mind, or as Péret states, is the interior world of the artist, which can then be shown through an artistic medium. He is adamant in his belief that this is a proper creative thought process which abstraction negates. Yet what Péret initially rejected in "Dehydrated Soup" became an integral part of the art-historical timeline of the twentieth century: the onset of new abstract art and a new wave of expression. Surrealism's depiction of thought was one paradigm confronting another, because for Surrealists thought processes become concrete. The abstraction in art which Péret discusses did not utilize this method, it requires a different understanding of thought. For the Surrealists, thought always gave rise to figures in dreams or automatic writing, whereas an abstract geometric image was too rational, and the opposite of the movement's goals.

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[3] Estienne was on friendly terms with the Surrealists from 1953, while Péret's criticism "Dehydrated Soup" dates from 1950.

Péret's writing on abstraction in art was typical of Surrealist opinions about non-figurative renderings in visual practices. For the Surrealists, the problematic aspect of abstraction was that a rational idea produced rational forms, as in geometric abstraction. Péret and Breton both elaborate on the idea that taking an object and abstracting it, reducing it to a non-recognizable form enervates it. Understanding the critiques and attitudes of these two Surrealists allows for insight into the very specific ideas the movement embodied. This type of attitude had existed since the group began, but with the changing structure of art in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Surrealism began to accept the new types of abstraction that were coming into being. Figures such as Edouard Jaguer, a poet, art critic, and former Surrealist, appreciated contemporary art that embraced abstraction, particularly the kind which possessed a poetic or lyrical, i.e. an expressive, quality. His art movement, Phases, grew out of this interest. Many artists from international and local movements in the 1950s, including a number of Polish painters, joined Jaguer's initiative. Phases, and the associations between Poland and France developed from the movement, will be covered later in this chapter.

Jerzy Kujawski, the Polish Surrealist

Polish artist Jerzy Kujawski was a part of both enterprises, as he joined the Surrealist group in 1947, and soon collaborated with Edouard Jaguer in his mission to bring Surrealism and abstraction together in Phases. Although he lived in Paris from 1945 until his death, Jerzy Kujawski was a leading figure in bringing Surrealism to Poland through his brief participation in the Surrealist group in France between 1947 and 1949, and his consequent, more long-lasting involvement with Phases. He was a protagonist in the cooperation and exchange of ideas between Poland and France which was crucial to the networking of artists between the two countries.

During his time in France, he remained close friends with those artists who stayed and worked in Poland throughout the postwar years, including Tadeusz Kantor and Mieczysław Porębski, as well as other artists with Surrealist tendencies including Tadeusz Brzozowski, Alfred Lenica and Jerzy Tchorzewski (Turowski 11). Even before his move to Paris in 1945, Kujawski followed a Surrealist approach to art. However, like many artists, he would evolve to combine abstraction and figurative art by 1949, which led to his association with Phases.

Kujawski showed an interest in international avant-garde art during his academic training during wartime. Kujawski's appreciation for Surrealism began more specifically during his time in Krakow, where he attended the German-controlled School of Artistic Production, the *Kunstgewerbeschule*, otherwise known as the National School of Arts and Crafts (H. Wróblewska 24). There he met the art historian Mieczysław Porębski, who would later discuss the nature of Kujawski's work in his own writing on modern art in Poland, highlighting how the artist worked in a Surrealist style, or with a Surrealist approach (Turowski 24). He was also one of the first to take notice of Kujawski's Surrealist tendencies, and picked up on the fact that the artist "was on the trail of Surrealism" (Porębski in Turowski 20). Porębski mentioned that during their time in the academy together, the only Surrealist publication available was one issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste,* as well as an article written on Surrealism in the Polish publication *Nike* from before the war (Turowski 24). Kujawski also associated with an older artist from Poznań, Alfred Lenica, who produced Surrealist art from before the Second World War (Turowski 26). He acted as both friend and mentor to Kujawski and helped to expand his knowledge of Surrealism, as he himself was involved with the movement.[4]

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[4] Alfred Lenica was an artist who was in contact with Surrealists and incorporated Surrealist features into his work. However, he spent most of his career in Poznań, and is therefore omitted from this study as the focus is primarily on artists from Warsaw and Krakow.

After completing his education, Kujawski was driven to become even more involved with the Surrealist movement. In a letter to fellow artist Tadeusz Brzozowski, he wrote about how unsatisfying he found Poland in terms of developing his artistic production (Turowski 30). In the fall of 1945, at the age of 24, he left Krakow with fellow artist and friend Stefa Rogalanka. During his first years in France he read the publications *Cahiers d'Art* and *Les Quatre Vents*, the latter a small journal published by Henri Parisot, who was a friend and an occasional collaborator with the Surrealists (Adams 87). It is presumed that he may have also read two accounts of Surrealism published by Jules Monnerot (*La Poésie moderne et le sacré*) and Maurice Nadeau (*Histoire du Surréalisme*) in 1945, as Kujawski and Nadeau were in close contact (Turowski 38). Also in 1945, he met Edouard Jaguer at an exhibition at the Galerie l'Esquisse in Paris (Turowski 38). In 1946, Breton returned to Paris, and it was likely that Kujawski met him at the Café de la Place Blanche in Montmartre, or the Café Côte d'Or on Vivienne Street, through the social networking of Surrealists and other creative intellectuals (Turowski 36). By 1947 he was ready to officially embrace Surrealism and signed "Inaugural Rupture", which was a manifesto published by the Surrealists in the same year (Turowski 30). Confirming this new-found artistic identity, Kujawski's work was included in the International Surrealist Exhibition, *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, which took place at the Galerie Maeght (Turowski 61). The show included his work, *Dichotomia Słońc* [*The Dichotomy of Suns*] (1946) **(Figure 17),** which combines dream and reality. The painting was the second version of a similar untitled work also completed in 1946 **(Figure 18).** Both images include large drifting suns that hang low on the horizon line. In *Dichotomy*, they take up the majority of the composition, while below in an imaginary landscape a number of objects lay scattered. Among them is a semaphore on a pylon, a target, and—just as in the first version—red and white poles reaching up to the suns and slivered clouds above. Between the

arrangements of ambiguous solid blocks, a man in what may be a deep sea diving suit lays prone, while on the opposite side sits an unused steam roller. The composition is divided by a net descending from the skies, held up by the red and white poles. A potential narrative can be extracted from the image as if this were a scene from a play, in the sense that the work may be deriving inspiration from stage design, as Kujawski was close to Kantor and shared mutual views on objects in space and performance (Turowski 30). This is an imagined space of land and sea that includes items found in reality. Objects are placed together at random, some in support of each other, others simply existing in the same space simultaneously, though it is not completely certain why they are there. Also present are five suns from parts unknown in various distances from the foreground. The landscape is surreal in that its dream-like quality is prominent, and that it depicts the juxtaposition of distant realities in a space of fantasy. Compared to Kujawski's later works, *Dichotomy of Suns* is a highly representational painting. It was executed in the period during which Surrealism was a prime focus for the artist. By the time the Phases movement reached Poland, Kujawski was already working in a more expressive abstract style and had taken a more Art Informel approach similar to other artists in the 1950s. These paintings will be covered later in the chapter.

Tadeusz Kantor between France and Poland

While Kujawski resided and worked in France, his friend Tadeusz Kantor in Krakow was investing time in familiarizing himself with Surrealism as well as abstraction. The members of the artistic circles Kantor belonged to during his career in Poland were all, in one form or another, exposed to Surrealism, due to his own interest in the movement, his international connections, and his procurement of Surrealist documents which he shared and discussed with

fellow artists.

Developing his practice as an artist with non-traditional motives prior to the Second World War, Kantor's beginnings were promising until the conflicts in Europe impeded his endeavours; yet he continued to create avant-garde art despite debilitating social and political circumstances. In the postwar years he resumed his creative initiatives more explicitly to help formulate a modern art community within Krakow. These included his relation to and identification with Surrealist concepts in his creative understanding of art, expression and creativity, as well as his incorporation of Surrealist motifs in the canvases he produced from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. In 1957 he joined the officially formed Krakow group (Zientara 51). As a mentor for a younger generation of artists, and highly regarded in artistic social circles and networks, Kantor was known to be a knowledgeable source about the art world. He was also important to the proliferation of avant-garde groups in the 1950s once Socialist Realist doctrine became less hegemonic. In 1947, Kantor won a scholarship from the Polish Ministry of Culture and Art for a trip to Paris (Plesniarowicz 52). Jerzy Kujawski, who had known Kantor prior to his move to France, accompanied him as a guide for the duration of the trip (Plesniarowicz 53). During his visit, the artist made a number of gestures that signaled his admiration for the Surrealists. Kantor was particularly taken by the work of Max Ernst and Roberto Matta, the latter of whom was mentioned in the first chapter in regards to Kantor's 1948 painting *Ponad-Ruchy* [*Sur-Motions*]. Kantor also spoke about his admiration for Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee (Plesniarowicz 52). He returned to Poland with a copy of Breton's *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*, as well as a catalogue of the exhibition *Le Surréalisme en 1947,* from the Galerie Maeght (Piotrowski, "The Surrealist Interregnum" 49, Durozoi 466). This would suggest that he would have viewed Kujawski's *Dichotomy of Suns*, and that he read "Inaugural Rupture", the

manifesto published by the Surrealists shortly before the opening of the exhibition (Durozoi 466). During his time in Paris, the artist educated himself about the movement and its currents, and upon his return to Poland he would make his own personal revisions to his artistic production. Kantor incorporated more than Surrealism into his work, as his travelling would also expose him to other art forms, and he also took into account the practices of Art Informel in later years (Piotrowski. "The Surrealist Interregnum" 49). These movements left lasting impressions on the paintings he would make in sets or series, as he would return each time to Krakow with new tools to apply to his own art-making. His consequent working process shows a sense of versatility that is reflected by many other artists working in Poland after the Second World War.

"Inaugural Rupture": Surrealism in the Postwar Years

As previously mentioned, Surrealists shifted their political position and attitude to abstraction after the Second World War. In 1947 the Surrealists published "Inaugural Rupture", a manifesto which offers insight into how the movement's views had changed since its beginnings. Breton and other members were looking for new directions for the movement's future which had begun with their dissatisfaction and then break with the French Communist Party in 1935 (Durozoi 464). In 1947, the Surrealists expressed the opinion that:

> To follow the Communist party today in its present class collaboration contradicts the motivations which once impelled surrealism to undertake political action (which are as much immediate demands of the spirit, and most especially in the ethical domain, as the pursuit of the distant aim of the total liberation of humanity) ("Inaugural Rupture" 43).

The Surrealists believed that the Communist party in France was becoming opportunistic and serving the interests of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. This was due to its decision to

join a postwar coalition government, similar to the moves made in Italy and Eastern Europe ("Inaugural Rupture" 42). Therefore, "Inaugural Rupture" was both an announcement of Surrealism's continuing activity in the postwar years and a critique of the options available to revolutionaries: Communist, Trotskyist and anarchist, while taking a step away from explicitly supporting political parties (Durozoi 465).

At the time of "Inaugural Rupture", a number of artists and writers separated from the Surrealist group. A *Surréalisme révolutionnaire* group was created in 1947, animated in particular by Noël Arnaud and Christian Dotremont (Turowski 42). All of its members still respected Surrealism, but their dissension was based on divergent perspectives on political matters. The splinter group, *Le surréalisme révolutionnaire,* wanted to restore the relations with the French Communist Party that had been broken by the Surrealists in 1935 (Dąbkowska-Zydroń 17). Revolutionary Surrealists were, incidentally, also more interested in other modes of contemporary art, including abstraction, than Breton or Péret were in 1947. Jaguer was one of the individuals who formed this group (Dąbkowska-Zydroń 17). *Le Surréalisme révolutionnaire* only lasted a year, and Jaguer continued his Surrealist writing, while pursuing an interest in other artistic trends during his establishment of the avant-garde group Rixes in 1949 (Dąbkowska-Zydroń 19). He was especially interested in what he called lyrical abstraction, which the Surrealists were apprehensive about until the 1950s (Dąbkowska-Zydroń 19). The new form of art-making, according to the description by the historian of Surrealism Gérard Durozoi, "had, in appearance, nothing in common with the conventional image of Surrealist art: no dream images, no arbitrary metaphors. Rather the gesture was deployed on the canvas in response to various impulses that emerged from different inner recesses" (Durozoi 549). Durozoi points out that lyrical abstraction does not follow Surrealist ideas found in art. However, expression was directly

transposed onto canvas, rather than being cultivated in the mind until figuration was achieved. This idea is similar to automatism which was the basis of many Surrealist artworks. With the onset of lyrical abstraction, Jaguer took it upon himself to create Phases in 1952. Both groups sought to relate Surrealist ideas and processes to contemporary art. Although the movement began in France, it was recognized as an international movement due to the contacts that Jaguer established with artists and writers around the world (Durozoi 553).

The Phases Movement and its Association with Surrealism

Phases was an art movement which sought to bring together artists who operated in various styles and whose work was an example of the contact between Surrealism and lyrical abstraction (Durozoi 553). In 1955, the *Première Confrontation Internationale d´Art Expérimental* [*First International Confrontation of Experimental Art*] (Dąbkowska-Zydroń 27) was held in Paris. Jaguer supported both abstract and figurative contemporary art, and wrote about both kinds in his publication of the same name, which began in 1954. Although the movement did not lean toward any specific method of creation, some of the artists who participated had been Surrealist, while others were once a part of movements such as Cobra, Spatialism, and Futurism, in addition to independent artists working in various styles (Pellegrini 288).

When Jaguer began organizing exhibitions, the goal was for the imaginary to be a prominent factor in art (Pellegrini 283). Jaguer believed that expressive art can be achieved when an artist liberates his imagination. Ultimately, the goal of Phases was to create a cultural hub to explore the imagination. Jaguer's own words described Phases like this: "Long live the painting of the imaginary! The only one worthy to express fully that knowledge of the world and that will

to transform it which constitutes the primary moral qualification of the whole human search" (Jaguer in Pellegrini 284). Jaguer highlighted the notion of pure invention and how it has the potential to be manifested visually through the materiality of canvas, or in the components of a sculpture. This is very similar to Surrealism, except that Surrealism did not emphasize materials or formal considerations so much as stress process. This foundational concept of pure invention gave creative freedom to artists, despite their varying experience, knowledge and education; it was this orientation which determined what they would contribute to Phases.

Phases' significance lies in its effort to put Surrealism in dialogue with contemporary modes of art-making. This is due to the identification with certain ideals that were developed out of the movement, particularly those which focused on automatic processes as an expressive way to produce art. Stylistically, Phases imposed no restrictions on how an artwork was to be rendered, allowing for artists to adapt both figurative and abstract methods in the creative process. However, as Phases developed as a movement, Surrealism was one of its strongest components during the period of collaboration between the two groups, as it was an attempt to align Surrealism and contemporary art. It can also be noted that some Surrealists chose to participate in Phases as they appreciated another outlet for creative exploration. In his catalogue text for the Phases exhibition in 1959 in Poland (mentioned in more detail in the next section), Jaguer explains the development of thought when it came to the creative intentions of Phases:

> Meanwhile, painting, thanks to its ability to immediately, purely and physiologically stimulate the imagination, is perfectly suited to transpose that event, the plane of the lyrical, to praise it as a concrete manifestation, as a "phase" of absolute being, without limits of space and time (Jaguer).

Jaguer could accept an expression of thought remaining abstract, while Surrealists up to the 1950s had been of the view that it needed to become an image in order to be meaningful. Jaguer

emphasized that an image did not need to be figurative. Those who participated in Phases exhibitions, including Polish artists, were interested in the use of the imagination comparable to that of the Surrealists. While figurative works were also displayed in Phases exhibitions, some artists delved into abstraction even further, and pursued art that would take them into the category of 'lyrical abstraction', which Phases was known to support.

Jerzy Kujawski and the 1959 Phases Exhibition in Poland

With Phases gaining recognition on an international level, it was determined that Krakow was an ideal location for artists to showcase their work. This contact could be developed due to the political thaw which had occurred only a few years before. Therefore in 1959, the Phases movement successfully organized an exhibition in Poland.[5] It was the first international avant-garde show behind the "iron curtain" after de-Stalinization, and was organized without assistance from any state or governing authority (*Le mouvement Phases* 35). It was also an important event for generating conversation about Surrealism in the country, making contact with Surrealist artists, and for avant-garde artists and intellectuals to network on an international level. Thus, I will mainly focus on discussions surrounding the Phases show in Poland in order to highlight how the country was recognized as a contributor to the European art world and cross cultural collaboration.

In the case of Poland's involvement, contact between Surrealists and Polish artists would not have been as significant if it were not for the cooperation of Jerzy Kujawski. As previously mentioned, Kujawski was a producer of figurative Surrealist art in the late 1940s, but by 1953 he

[5] Another Phases show would take place in Poland in 1971, as these contacts continued to develop and remain intact through younger generations of artists.

began creating abstract paintings (Turowski 206). Kujawski was involved with Rixes from 1949, and in 1954 he joined Jaguer in Phases, all the while being a consistent contributor to gallery exhibitions (Turowski 83). In 1959 Kujawski returned to Poland in order to assist Jaguer in setting up the Phases exhibition in Krakow.

Other organizers of the 1959 exhibition were art critics Jerzy Ludwiński and Janusz Bogucki as well as painter Tadeusz Brzozowski, the latter two of whom had temporarily resided in Paris, and who established contacts there with critic Aleksander Henisz, who was also of Polish descent (Dąbkowska-Zydroń 104). Due to his nationality and involvement with the art scene in both France and Poland, Henisz, along with Bogucki, Brzozowski, Jaguer and Kujawski, was part of the first step in creating a Phases show in Poland. The efforts in Poland to organize this show were indebted to the Polish Association of Modern Artists in Krakow, the Krakow Group, and the Section of Modern Art within the Fine Arts Society in Paris, which was under the leadership of the Polish-born Henisz (Dąbkowska-Zydroń 107). The show included four Polish artists: Marian Bogusz, Tadeusz Brzozowski, Jerzy Kujawski and Jerzy Tchorzewski. Bogusz was a member of Group 55; Brzozowski and Tchorzewski belonged to the Krakow Group; and Kujawski, who resided in Paris, had returned to Poland to take part in the exhibition. Of the 36 participants, there were 13 of Surrealist orientation; those from the current Paris group included Adrien Dax, Jean-Jacques Lebel, and Toyen (*Le mouvement Phases* 35). Two weekly artistic journals, *Plastyka* and the *Struktury,* took responsibility for advertising the show and communicating its existence to others in Poland (*Le mouvement Phases* 35).[6] Jerzy Ludwiński, who wrote an article about Phases in *Struktury,* will be discussed later in the chapter. The show took place in the Krzysztofory Gallery, a large cellar under a gothic building in the city square of

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[6] Moreover, the journals had already published translations of Surrealist writing (*Le mouvement Phases* 35).

Krakow **(Figure 19)**. The gallery's cavernous basements would often be transformed into cultural locales for artists and intellectuals of the city. Krszysztofory acted as one of these spots, which became home to Kantor's theater and to many other artists who worked in avant-garde modes.

Like other Polish artists, Kujawski only had one work included in the 1959 show (Turowski 213). Therefore, an example provided is an untitled work from 1959 **(Figure 20)** which was produced when he was associated with Phases, and which demonstrates the expressive type of abstraction that he practiced at the time. With broad brush strokes in a grid, and ample usage of paint in neutral colours, Kujawski executes an Informel work that is dynamic. Similarly, in the second untitled painting from the same year **(Figure 21)**, the direction and natural flow of line changes from a rectangular composition to a circular one with a central focus. Spots of primary colours intensify from the previous painting, accentuating particular areas of the canvas more than others. The paintings share a similar thought process and each displays shape and line rather differently, while the colour remains similar. The construction of the shapes and forms in the composition show that Kujawski's actions were spontaneous. Automatic processes could have been involved, thus being comparable to the way in which Surrealist art was made.

Tadeusz Brzozowski, Surrealism and Art Informel

For Polish artists, the appeal of the Phases movement and the Surrealist influence may have been the reinforcement of modern art practices, in which they were already interested in. One of these artists was Tadeusz Brzozowski, who was in contact with Jaguer in Paris in 1959,

prior to the Phases show in Krakow.[7] Due to their shared views on art, it was suggested that he participate in the 1959 show upon his return to Poland (Brzozowski 41). Prior to his interest in Art Informel and his expressive painting techniques, Brzozowski's work was influenced by Surrealist ideas. In particular, his use of titles would frequently have little logical connection to the works which he named, as a way to be humourous or ironic (Hermansdorfer 57). Some of these titles include *Czkawka Chirurga* [*Surgeon's Hiccup*], *Pempek Świata* [*The World's Bellybutton*], *Opuszczenie Trędowatymi* [*Departure of the Lepers*] and *Pogrzeb Rekina* [*Shark's Funeral*] from 1948, pictured here **(Figure 22).** In *Shark's Funeral*, Brzozowski offers the viewer compound perspectives of a multi-layered environment. In the composition, spaces emerge pictorially through lines. Although the painting also shows evidence of the artist's inclination toward Cubism, Surrealism plays a creative role as well. Brzozowski explains in an interview that he was not completely convinced by the ideas of Surrealism, including the ideas about automatism, but what inspired him was the opportunity to investigate the unconscious through the process of his art-making (Brzozowski 16). Brzozowski's unusual titles came to him during an earlier process of preliminary drawings. They are derived out of the everyday use of language. He titles his works in such a way as to create something illogical, an irrational disconnect between word and image. Both Dadaists and Surrealists were known to do something similar which presented at times a rather amusing and unconventional union of dissimilar elements (Oesterreicher-Mollwo 16). The irrational use of space found in *Shark's Funeral* may also indicate Brzozowski's dabbling in automatic processes to create the work. Although

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[7] Documentation of Polish artist opinions of those who participated in the Phases show is not specific due to difficulty in procurement. However, I have chosen to focus on Brzozowski as he was a participant and has explicitly discussed the Surrealist influences in his art throughout his career.

Brzozowski also produced works of a figurative nature, canvases of this type show the artist's career path and the direction that he took in creating more abstract works. His nods toward Surrealism in the past and general respect for the movement overall may have been one of the reasons why his work was included in the Phases exhibition in 1959.

Polish Response to Phases

Jerzy Ludwiński, co-organizer of the Phases show in Poland, wrote a broad commentary on the show for the magazine *Struktury* called "Phases' i odstępstwa" ["Phases and Deviation"]. In the article, he elaborates on changing European perspectives on art and where Krakow fits into this spectrum. He points out that abstraction and Surrealism once ruled as the major creative directions in art, but in the 1940s they began to lose their authority, until their convergence in Cobra and Rixes in Paris, eventually leading to the creation of Phases in 1952. Although he does not state that Phases is an authoritative direction for contemporary art, he recognizes Surrealism as a contributor to changing ideologies within the art world, and a vital component of the new movement. As co-organizer of the Phases exhibition, Ludwiński respected Jaguer's work by mentioning Cobra and Rixes, these two marginal yet important enterprises. He poetically described the various artworks in the 1959 show in the following way: "There are no more streaks of dripping paint; painted matter here is the beginning of an awareness of the tool for shaping a new space —in which spinning a strange form presents a field for the most amazing games of the imagination." Ludwiński's thoughts are similar to Jaguer's, as he too takes a Surrealist perspective while including a concern for materials. Thus he discusses how Phases has brought together two particular European currents in art. Specifically, he mentions how materiality can be used as a vessel for imagined ideas. But in a broader way, he is elaborating on

the union of two approaches in art-making. He then questions further where art may be going. His viewpoint is interesting as he discusses the pattern that Polish artists followed for most of the century. The synthesis of different perspectives, seen previously in Artes and later in the Krakow Group and Group 55, are only a few examples. Each group had the tendency to appropriate styles that had already occurred, with the novelty emerging in how they are combined. The role of the imagination as defined by Jaguer must have been appealing for those who belonged to Group 55 and the Krakow Group, as artists from both parties who participated in the Phases show adhered to such ideas. Combining styles and thoughts in art provided an opportunity to engage with international figures and create a network that in previous years had not been possible due to political restrictions.

Uniting Breton and Jaguer

In the 1950s, Breton collaborated with Charles Estienne, the art critic mentioned earlier who wrote extensively on the topic of abstraction, and who intended to keep Surrealism close to emerging trends in modern art. By this time, Breton had been convinced by Estienne to be mindful of the emerging aesthetic of lyrical abstraction; this is clear from Breton's words in the article "October Lesson" from March of 1954, which discussed the manifesto "22" written earlier by Estienne for the Salon d'Octobre in 1953: "It is time—given, in particular, the dubious way in which there has been a proliferation, with no end in sight, of art works purported to be 'abstract' in intention—that we be given the thread to the labyrinth" (Breton, "October Lesson" 338). Using rather Surrealistic, metaphorical prose, Breton remained skeptical about this new type of abstraction while attempting to explain it in relation to automatism. He identified the properties of lyrical abstraction including the unpremeditated processes that may go into creating the final

product. This is the thread which he refers to in this text, in the sense that the "thread" is a certain kind of automatic expression and therefore the commonality between Surrealism and the new abstraction. In his goal to seek out what expressive possibilities this new abstraction had, he considered the potential for an alliance between Surrealism and abstraction. Breton's "October Lesson" is one instance of Breton's critical awareness of new abstraction and its contemporaneity to Surrealism, which is perpetuated further with the Surrealists allying themselves with Edouard Jaguer and his art movement Phases in the Krakow exhibition in1959.

Differing political views as seen from the outcome of "Inaugural Rupture" kept the Surrealists and Jaguer's creative initiatives at a distance, as Jaguer in 1947 was a member of the *Surréalisme révolutionnaire* faction to which "Inaugural Rupture" had responded (Dabkowska-Zydroń 19). However, these views did not stand in the way of Breton's re-evaluation of art, as evidenced by his article on Estienne's Salon d'Octobre, which was an acknowledgement of his awareness of emerging trends, and which allowed for contact with the Phases leader. The artist Jacques Lacomblez put Jaguer and Breton in touch in 1958 (Dabkowska-Zydroń 61). This resulted in their collaboration, both in the participation of the Surrealist artists in the 1959 exhibition, and a message recorded by Breton and played at the Phases opening in Krakow.

A Message from the Surrealists to Polish Intellectuals

The show opened with Breton's voice over a magnetophone delivering "A Message from the Surrealists to Polish Intellectuals" on behalf of the Surrealists. After being played for the audience, the message was sent to the Mickiewicz Museum in Krakow for storage (*Le mouvement Phases* 35). The message was also published in the publication *Plastyka* and broadcast twice on Polish radio. While the Phases show in Krakow was the first collaboration

between Phases and the Surrealist group, the message is the most direct encounter between Surrealism and Polish cultural figures. The names that appear at the end of the statement were those of members of the Surrealist movement in 1959.[8] The statement was delivered by Breton, but was collective in its nature, thus showing the support of Surrealists in France for intellectual freedom in conjunction with the Phases exhibition participants. The importance of this event is marked not only by its debut in Poland, but by the support that the Surrealists gave to the Phases movement and its contributors.

To further contextualize the situation, the Surrealists' greetings to the Poles were interwoven with a sense of their frustration about the current affairs unraveling within their home country: political leader Charles de Gaulle had made a return to public life in 1958, writing a new constitution and founding the Fifth Republic (*Charles de Gaulle*). This stood in contrast to the tension that occurred in Polish society and with Polish communists, culminating in riots in the city of Poznań in 1956, which led to a loosening in government control. An attempt to organize an intellectual resistance to De Gaulle's coming to power was made through *Le 14 Juillet*, a review edited by Dionys Mascolo and Jean Schuster to which Surrealists, including Breton and Péret, contributed (Adler 211). "A Message to Polish Intellectuals" echoes the Surrealists' dissatisfaction with a French leader who they believed to be an illegitimate authority with a fascist agenda (Durozoi 594). Their words reflect an essay written by Mascolo called "Lettre polonaise sur la misère intellectuelle en France" ("Polish Letter on Intellectual Poverty in France"), on the process by which intellectuals came to face communism during this period (Judt

[8] Signed by Anne and Jean-Louis Bédouin, Robert Benayoun, Vincent Bounoure, André Breton, Adrien Dax, Yves Elléouët, Elie-Charles Flamand, P.A. Gette, Roger Van Hecke, Alain Joubert, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Gérard Legrand, Jehan Mayoux, Nora Mitrani, Benjamin Péret, José Pierre, Jean Schuster, and Jean-Claude Silbermann.

327).

Although art is not mentioned in the Surrealists' message, their opinions on art are tied to politics, and their remarks showed Polish intellectuals' respect for taking risks in order to realize what freedom is under an oppressive regime. The Surrealists saluted the Poles for having the courage to address the regime they were living under, while expressing their own frustration with French intellectuals and how they were handling themselves in what could be considered a situation comparable to the two regimes. The following passage in "A Message" presents the Surrealists' views on the courage of Poles:

> Braving repression, you have managed to put a colossal power, absolute master of half the world, in its place. French intellectuals do not know how to question a derisory, anachronistic power, inflated with an unreal grandeur but just as intolerable in its essence as the one that crushed you was in its existence. You risked everything, your liberty, your life, and you risked them. French intellectuals risk nothing other than their miserable tranquility, and they don't even risk that ("A Message").

Although the message is addressed to Polish intellectuals, the show was a suitable venue for the Surrealists to discuss liberty, as Phases and Jaguer's goal was to represent freedom of the human imagination in the face of political repression in whatever system or country. The message takes a stand against a regime's oppressiveness and praises the willingness of intellectuals to act independently of it. Thus the Surrealists' intent was to congratulate people in other nations who speak out against oppressive politics, and to recognize those people for taking a stand against the force that was in power. They are saluting their counterparts in Poland for showing the French how to resist an unjust regime.

The Surrealist involvement with the show in Krakow resulted from the Surrealists'

awareness of international cultural affairs and from their goal of an independent art. In previous writings, Breton had critiqued Socialist Realism, affirming how it sought only to benefit the state in avoiding the artist's personal expression (Breton, "Why is Contemporary Russian Painting Hidden from us?" 259). He believed that artists who submitted to the values and methods of Socialist Realism were sacrificing the substance of what it means to be an artist. His convictions about combining politics and art assist in comprehending the motive for the Surrealists' participation in the opening of the Phases show. The cultural theorist Jonathan Eburne wrote in the conclusion of his book *Surrealism and the Art of Crime* that "Surrealism's postwar project was oriented toward defending political and intellectual freedom against the military and ideological state apparatuses that worked to suppress it" (Eburne 269). The Surrealists did just that – defending political and intellectual freedom – by getting involved in the Phases show and publicly announcing their support for intellectuals who had resisted Soviet control. Polish intellectuals, specifically those who were artists, would have identified with the Surrealists' opening statements for the Phases exhibition, as many were active during the years in which Socialist Realism was hegemonic. Breton's words would have resonated with the many Polish artists whose aesthetic and political lives had been affected by Socialist Realism and, more broadly, by the communist regime. The message he offered to Polish intellectuals can be recognized as a gesture of solidarity between Poles and Surrealists.

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The Surrealist intervention showed that they identified and supported what Poles were doing creatively and within the socio-political environment that shaped the years following World War II. This would not have occurred if it was not for the initiative to bring Phases to Poland, which proved to be beneficial in highlighting how Surrealism's perspectives in both

aesthetics and worldview fostered international connections. For artists in Poland, the link to Surrealism was valuable, not only due to this visit, but also due to the way in which the movement's principles allowed them to create art based on their own aesthetic exploration. Key players assisted in this exploration, including Jerzy Kujawski and Tadeusz Kantor, who were advocates of Poland progressing in the art world by mentoring and building bonds within intellectual and creative circles.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the development of Surrealist tendencies in Poland in the work of artists active from the years 1945 to 1960. These years are significant as they came at the end of a major global conflict, the Second World War, which heralded a fundamental change for Poland in the form of a Communist system. The avant-garde maintained a significant position in Polish visual arts at this time, and while Socialist Realism was implemented in the late 1940s and early 1950s, artists who were responsible for modern trends in Poland were not completely thwarted by its hegemony. Throughout these years, artists were aware of the Surrealist movement and believed that what emerged from it was useful for developing their own ideas on modern forms of art-making. Looking back to the interwar years and tracing major events, groups, and discourses, I have evaluated particular moments in history when Surrealism became a valuable component of Polish visual culture. This was complemented by analyzing how Surrealism's aesthetic principles migrated from France, as well as the creative efforts of individuals from major cultural metropolises in Poland who embraced the movement in various ways.

One of the ways in which Surrealism became present in Polish art was through Polish artists traveling to France, where the Surrealist movement began. They observed works and at times were in the same social circles as the Surrealists; such artists included members of Artes from the interwar years as well as Tadeusz Kantor. Another way was through the literature on Surrealism which made its way to Poland, and was often found in fine art institutions where Polish artists had access to it. An example is the materials found in the *Kunstgewerbeschule* library, a vocational school of artistic techniques operating in the first years of the German

occupation, where many Polish artists had met one another while studying. Moreover, mentorship between younger and older generations of artists proved to be beneficial for learning about art movements, and it was most often generated through networking and socialization in artistic circles. Creative intellectuals would discuss the state of the art world and the goings-on within it, including the nature of the Surrealist movement from before the Second World War. These conversations continued in the postwar years, resulting in the *First Exhibition of Modern Art* in Krakow, where artists convened and displayed their individual perspectives on reality with modern approaches. Mieczysław Porębski, Tadeusz Kantor, Tadeusz Brozozowski, Kazimierz Mikulski and Zbignew Dłubak were a part of this show, and key players in the creation and progression of modern art in Poland.

On a broad level, artists in Poland were evolving creatively in similar ways to the rest of Europe in the sense that they were discussing progressive ideas about art. However, for Poland specifically, debates were occurring about how art can be created outside the traditional academic means at a time when Socialist Realism was prevalent; Surrealism was often included in these debates as an example of a progressive attitude in art. Furthermore, Informel was becoming a popular style in the 1950s, and was being taken up by artists nationwide. The Phases movement was an ideal hub for creativity as it sought to combine Surrealism and 'lyrical abstraction' (a type of Art Informel) in order to show how art from the past could inform contemporary movements. The Phases exhibition in 1959 brought together an international platform of artists who appreciated Surrealism while simultaneously embracing contemporary art. With the show traveling through Poland to Warsaw and Lublin, and specifically to Krakow—where many Polish artists were informed by and used Surrealist aesthetic principles in their work—there are a number of conclusions to draw. One of the most important factors was that

Poland had been identified as a suitable locale for the display of international art for both artistic and political reasons. This allowed for Polish artists to express their ideas, as well as present their own art work to other groups outside of the country.

Poland's political situation affected creative processes, as it changed how artists viewed the world, and how they chose to portray it in painting. Clashing ideologies in art are not new, as conflict between modern artists and the academy had been occurring prior to this particular instance. However, it is important to note that the presence of an intrusive aesthetic policy of Socialist Realism in Poland resulted in artists producing oppositional, modern statements about the relation between art and life. This thesis argues that many pivotal instances of Surrealism in Polish art are found in the years following the Second World War. What I am offering is groundwork for the investigation of how Surrealism continued to inform Polish artists well into the '60s, '70s, and up to the contemporary era, including artists of the popular Polish posters that became a staple of the country's aesthetic oeuvre. The events discussed in this thesis were key to their emergence.

Figures

Figure 1. Max Ernst. Illustration 14 in the book Troisième Cahier Mardi, Élément: Le Feu, Example: "La Cour de Dragon," in *Une semaine de Bonté ou les sept éléments capitaux* (Paris: Editions Jeanne Bucher, 1934). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 2. Marek Włodarski. *Sen* [*Dream*], 1930. Oil on canvas, 64.5 x 81 cm. National Museum in Wrocław; © National Museum, Wrocław.

Figure 3. Tadeusz Wojciechowski, *Tajemnica* [*Secret*], 1933. Oil on canvas, 82.5 x 66.5 cm. Museum of Art, Łodz. Polish Art and Architecture 1890-1980, By Andrzej K. Olszewski (Warsaw, Interpress Publishers, 1989).

Figure 4. René Magritte, *Les Amants* [*The Lovers*], 1928. Oil on canvas, 54 x 73.4 cm. The Museum of Modern Art: Painting and Sculpture. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York ; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 5. Marek Włodarski, *Unoszące Się Na Niebie* [*Floating in the Sky*], 1931. Gouache, 22.6 x 36.8 cm. National Museum, Warsaw. Polish Art and Architecture 1890-1980, By Andrzej K. Olszewski (Warsaw, Interpress Publishers, 1989).

Figure 6. Fernand Léger, Study for a costume for the ballet *La Création du Monde*, 1924. Gouache and crayon on paper, 33 x 27 cm. Réunion de Musée Nationeux, Paris. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 7. Fernand Léger, *Le Miroir [The Mirror],* 1925. Oil on canvas, 129.6 x 99.6 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from the Museum of Modern Art website <http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=80147>.

WYSTAWA NOWOCZESNYCH. Rekonstrukcja u Starmacha

ARCHIWUM GRUPY KRAKOWSKIEJ

Uczestnicy i organizatorzy I Wystawy Sztuki Nowoczesnej. Na pierwszym planie od lewej: Andrzej Cybulski, Ali Bunsch; siedzą od lewej: Janina Kraupe, Jerzy Tchórzewski, Erna Rosenstein, Jadwiga Maziarska, Jadwiga Umińska; stoją od lewej: Tadeusz Brzozowski, Jerzy Malina, Marek Włodarski, XX, Tadeusz Kantor, Maria Jarema, Jan Tarasin, Andrzej Wróblewski, Marian Szulc, Mieczysław Porębski, Kazimierz Mikulski, Maciej Makarewicz, Zofia Gutowska, Jerzy Nowosielski; powyżej od lewej: Marian Sigmund i Kazimierz Wojtanowicz.

Figure 8. Group Picture from First Modern Art Exhibition in 1948. *Krakow Gazette*, 16 December 1998. Nr 294; Documentation Library at the Zachęta National Gallery.

Figure 9. Man Ray, *Reversed Manikins*, 1925. Rayograph mounted on black wove paper, 29.5 x 23.5. Yale University Art Gallery. © Artists Right Society (ARS), New York; Accessed June 19, 2014 from Artstor database <www.artstor.org>.

Figure 10. Zbigniew Dłubak, *Pozostaję w Cieniu, Radość Jest Dalej* [*I Remain in the Shadow, Joy Is Beyond*], 1948. Photograph, 29 x 38.9 cm. Museum of Art, Łodz; Dłubak i Grupa 55, edited by Mirosław Borusiewicz (Łodź: Museum of Art, 2003).

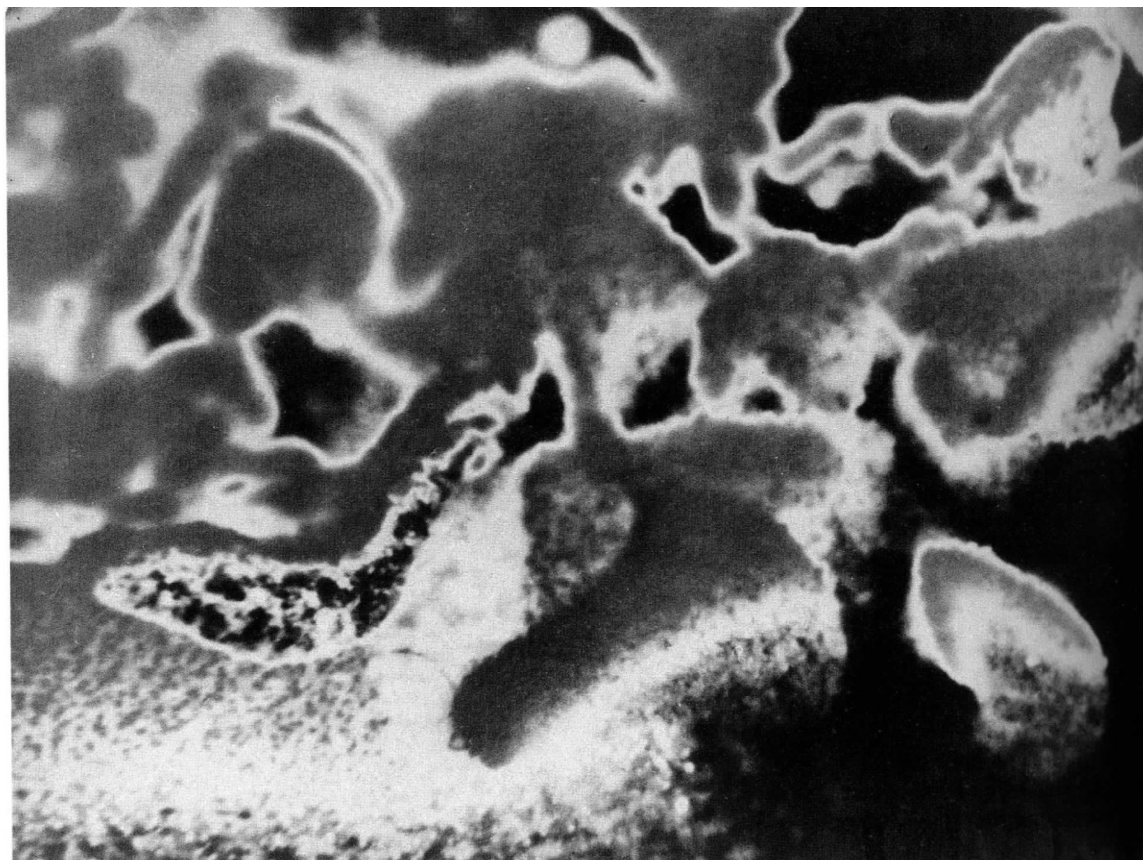

Figure 11: Zbigniew Dłubak, *Biały, Miniony Krajobraz* [*White Landscapes from the Past*], 1948. Photograph, 38.5 x 28.3. Museum of Art, Łodz; Dłubak i Grupa 55, edited by Mirosław Borusiewicz (Łodź: Museum of Art, 2003).

Figure 12. Aleksander Kobzdej, *Podaj Cegłę* [*Pass Me A Brick*], 1950. Oil on canvas, 133 x 162 cm. National Museum, Wrocław; © National Museum, Wrocław.

Figure 13. Tadeusz Kantor, *Ponad-Ruchy* [*Sur-Motions*], 1948. Oil on canvas. National Museum, Poznań; Tadeusz Kantor: Interior of Imagination, edited by Jarosław Suchan and Marek Świca (Warsaw: Zachęta National Gallery of Art, 2005).

Figure 14. Roberto Matta, *La Femme Affamée* [*The Hungry Woman*], 1945. Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 76.2 cm. Private collection, La Jolla, California; Matta in America, by Elizabeth A.T. Smith and Colette Dartnall (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2001).

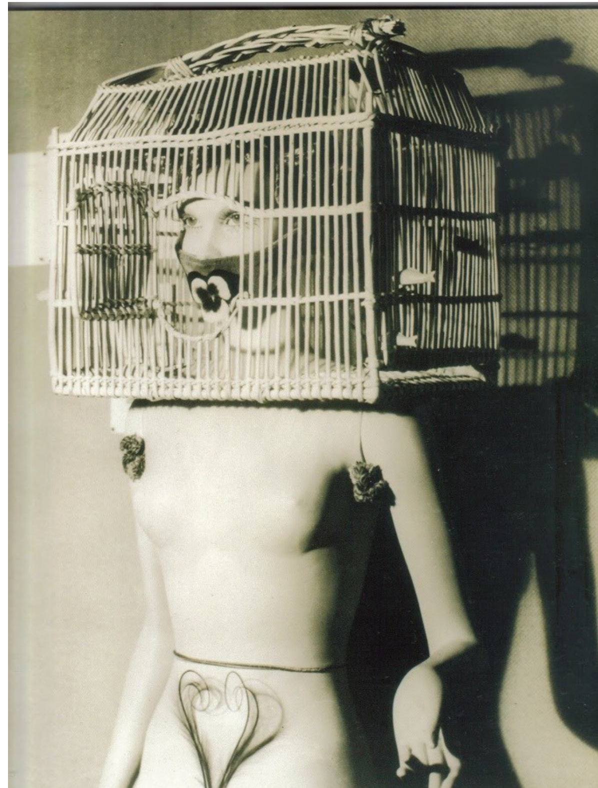

Figure 15. Man Ray, *Mannequin with a Bird Cage over her Head*, [Leaf 19] from the book *Resurrection des Mannequins* 1938/1966. Mannequin by André Masson. Gelatin silver photograph, 18.4 x 13.6 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Accessed June 19, 2014 from the National Gallery of Australia website <http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=34042&PICTAUS=TRUE >.

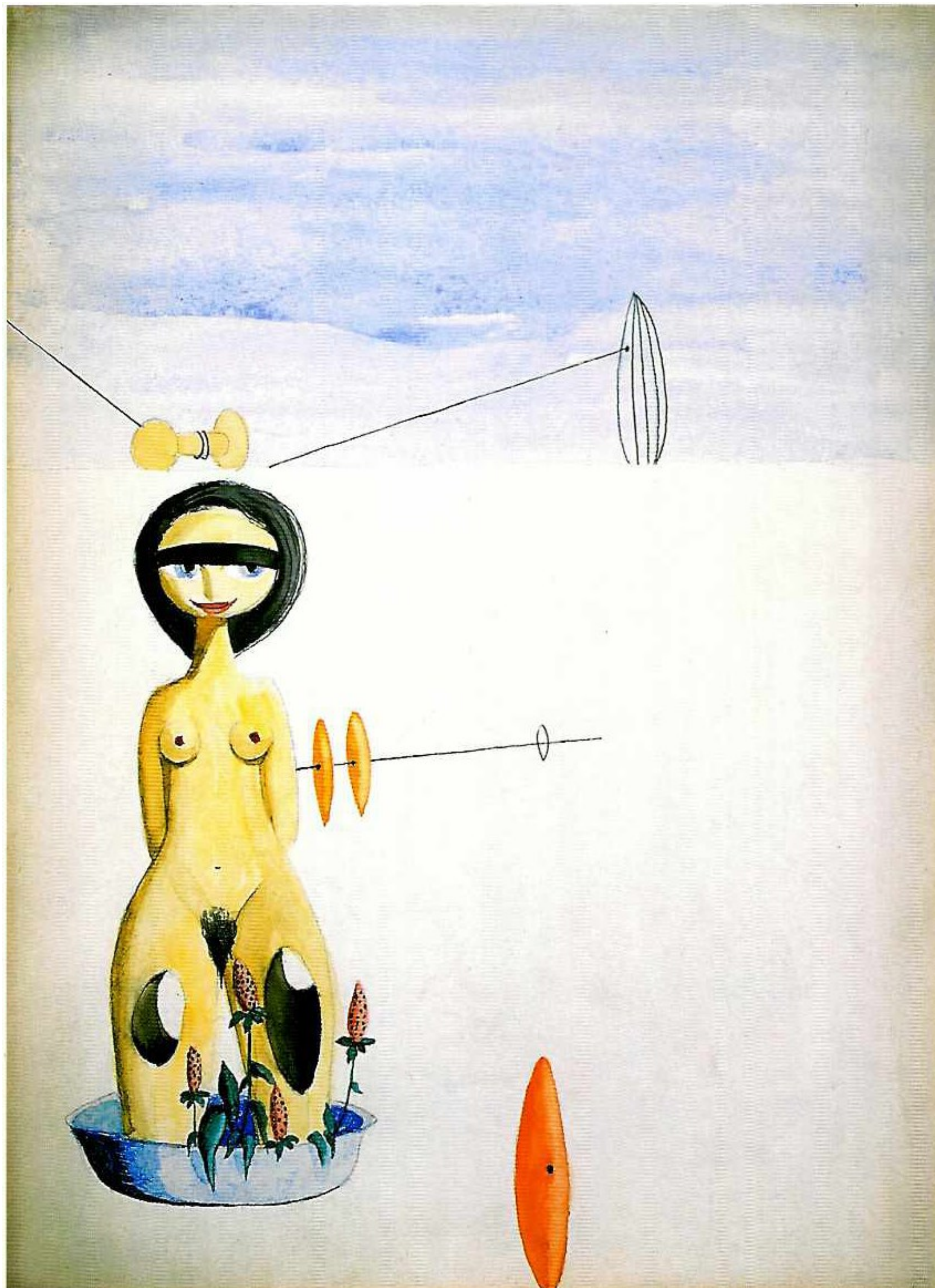

Figure 16. Kazimierz Mikulski, *Untitled*, 1940s. Ink, pen, watercolour, paper, 33 x 21.5 cm.; Kazimierz Mikulski, by Ania Zakiewicz and Urszula Czartoryska (Warsaw: National Library, 2004).

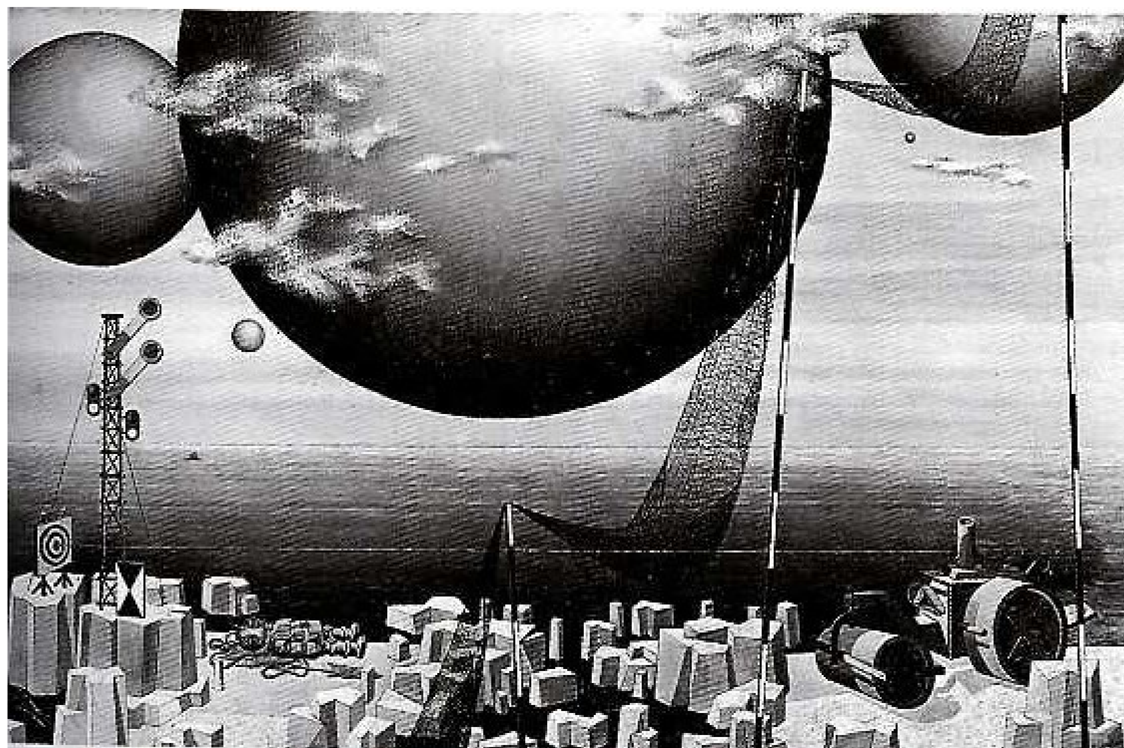

Figure 17. Jerzy Kujawski, *Dichotomia Słońc* [*Dichotomy of Suns*], 1946; Maranatha: Jerzy Kujawski, by Andrzej Turowski (Poznań: National Museum in Poznań, 2005).

Figure 18. Jerzy Kujawski, *Untitled*, 1946. Mixed media on canvas, 114.5 x 147 cm. Maranatha: Jerzy Kujawski, by Andrzej Turowski (Poznań: National Museum in Poznań, 2005).

Figure 19. Krzszystofory Gallery, Krakow. Personal photograph by author. July 2011.

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Figure 20 and 21. Jerzy Kujawski, *Untitled,* 1959. Gouache, paper, 65 x 99.5 cm. Maranatha: Jerzy Kujawski, by Andrzej Turowski (Poznań: National Museum in Poznań, 2005).

Figure 22. Tadeusz Brzozowski, *Pogrzeb Rekina* [*Shark's Funeral*], 1948. Oil on canvas, 103 x 108 cm. Private collection; Tadeusz Brzozowski: 1918-1987, by Wawrzyniec Brzozowski (Warsaw: Edipresse, 2006).

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