

Body Politics: A Symposium on Feminist Art from Poland accompanying the exhibition Maria Pinińska-Bereś

7 and 8 February 2025

With: Susanne Altmann, Iwona Dorota Bigos, Alexandra Ivanciu & Jolanta Nowaczyk,
Agata Jakubowska, Heike Munder, Dorothé Orczyk, Outside the Box (Verena Triesethau,
Magda Wlostowska & Katharina Zimmerhackl), Karolina Rosiejka-Magierowska,
Gabriele Stötzer, Jarosław Suchan

7 February

5 pm

Welcome & Introduction

5:15 pm

Impulse Iwona Dorota Bigos: On the situation of women artists and
feminist art in the People's Republic of Poland

Iwona Dorota Bigos is an art historian and director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, which is part of the National Museum in Wrocław. The Maria Pinińska-Bereś exhibition was on display there before it came to Leipzig. In her impulse, she presents selected examples to provide insights into the situation of artists in the People's Republic of Poland before the political change in 1989.

5:45 pm

Susanne Altmann and Gabriele Stötzer: ... *hab ich euch nicht blendend amüsiert?* [... didn't I amuse you brilliantly?] A conversation about feminist art and working as a female artist in the GDR

Gabriele Stötzer is one of the most important German artists in the field of feminist art. Her performances, Super 8 films and photographs – especially those created in the 1980s together with the Erfurt artists' group in the GDR – have been shown in numerous exhibitions and contextualized in recent publications. Her artistic work was strongly influenced by her experience as a woman and as a victim of political persecution in a repressive, patriarchal system. Susanne Altmann is a researcher and curator. The focus of her research is on the artistic production of women in the former GDR within an Eastern European frame of reference. In her work, she challenges the persistent practice of viewing artistic positions from the perspective of Western art history.

Following the discussion, the Super 8 films *signale* (1989, 28'34') and ... *hab ich euch nicht blendend amüsiert?* (1989, 6`) will be shown

8 February

11 am

Welcome and introduction

11:20 am

Lecture Agata Jakubowska: Exhibiting Maria Pinińska-Bereś in 1970 and 1980 and the discourse on women's art in State-Socialist Poland

In this lecture, art historian Agata Jakubowska speaks about two exhibitions – a 1970 solo show by Pinińska-Bereś, and the Women's Art Festival in which she participated in 1980. Jakubowska shows how the artist's work and position evolved over this decade, and how the discourse surrounding women's and feminist art developed in Poland during the same period.

11:50 am

Lecture Dorothé Orczyk: Performance art as female resistance. On the performances of Maria Pinińska-Bereś

For her PhD project on performance art as resistance, Dorothé Orczyk looks into the artistic practice of four female Polish performance artists whose work revolves around the position of women: Natalia LL (1937-2022), Zofia Kulik (1947), Ewa Partum (1945) and Maria Pinińska-Bereś (1931-1999). In this lecture, scholar Dorothé Orczyk provides insights into her current research with a focus on Maria Pinińska-Bereś.

12:20 noon

Dialogic tour of the exhibition *Maria Pinińska-Bereś* with Heike Munder and Jarosław Suchan

Heike Munder and Jarosław Suchan are the curators of the solo exhibition currently on view at the GfZK, with important sculptures, objects and performance documentations by Maria Pinińska-Bereś. In this tour, they discuss the theses and questions that arose from lectures and discussions on the artworks presented.

1:30 pm

Joint lunch at the GfZK Café

2:30 pm

Talk & reading with Magda Wlostowska, Verena Triesethau and Katharina Zimmerhackl from *outside the box*: Queer and feminist struggles in Poland

outside the box – Zeitschrift für feministische Gesellschaftskritik is a magazine collective founded in Leipzig at the end of 2008. It has published eight issues to date, combining art, theory and practice. The most recent issue, #8, was published in 2023, on the topic of "Struggles". Together with political scientist Magda Wlostowska, editors Katharina Zimmerhackl and Verena Triesethau explore queer and feminist struggles in Poland. Among other things, they examine the history of reproductive rights and the feminist struggles that surround them, providing insights into the queer movement and the current situation in Poland.

From this perspective, they also examine the growth of regressive tendencies worldwide, accompanied by increased struggles for sexual self-determination. They also read and discuss articles from recent issues.

3:45 pm

Lecture Karolina Rosiejka: Visual Resistance. The Aesthetic Landscape of Poland's Black Protests and Women's Strikes

In this presentation, art historian Karolina Rosiejka examines the visual culture associated with the Black Protests and Women's Strikes in Poland, movements that have persisted since 2016 in response to legislation restricting women's abortion rights. The analysis will encompass artistic works, artifacts and visual practices linked to activist efforts. These elements share a common purpose: to critique the condition of Polish women under increasingly restrictive abortion policies, to articulate opposition to this reality and to envision an alternative future beyond the constraints of the prevailing socio-political order.

From 16:30 pm

Performance and get-together with Alexandra Ivanciu and Jolanta Nowaczyk: About Flowers and Choice

The aim of the performance *About Flowers and Choice* is to initiate a discussion on access to abortion, bridging the gap between former healers and witches and contemporary activists through storytelling and shared experience. The donations gathered during the performance are used to buy morning-after pills, which are donated to collectives and distributed to individuals in countries where access to emergency contraception is restricted. The project represents a call for solidarity and an invitation to take action, providing a hospitable and welcoming space for existing ideas and actions related to reproductive justice. They have gathered more information on access to abortion in Central Eastern Europe here: www.libraryofcollectivedisobedience.com

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