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*Konstanty Brandel and contemporaneous European Art*

This article contains a series of new proposals as well as corrections that its authoress, occupying herself for a period of over forty years with the art of this Polish painter and graphic artist (1880-1970) who lived in Paris on a permanent basis from 1903 onwards, wishes to contribute to the current state of research into this artist.

The first part of this article comprises a critical assessment of the most recent proposals for dating graphic works by Brandel together with the handwritten catalogues compiled by the artist himself. These proposals have been presented in a recently published catalogue of graphic works by this artist preserved in the Emigration Archives of Toruń University Library (2005). An annex placed at the end of this article appraises seventeen works selected by the author whose dating, in her opinion, arouse the greatest reservation.

The second part of the article comprises a discussion on the place Konstanty Brandel's creative work occupies among the main currents in European art during the period he was active. Here, specific attention is given to the painting and graphic art of German

Expressionism, this being an area of Brandel's artistry thus far ignored by specialists which the authoress wishes to point out while postulating the necessity of detailed research in the future.

These propositions and corrections are based on the authoress's own recollections from her work and conversations with the artist himself – no less than that of others actively interested in his creative works, both at the same time as her and earlier – the personal materials, photographs and notes that form a part of her personal collections, as well as the results of research she has carried out recently into materials concerning Konstanty Brandel preserved in previously inaccessible collections of manuscripts of the Polish Library in Paris. These collections had not been available to researchers for an extended period due to prolonged renovation lasting many years which followed the Polish Library's closure.

The propositions presented here are the outcome of reflections that have been maturing over many years on this artists' creative work; reflections that the author believes to constitute a full stop to her research on him.

*Translated by Peter Martyn*

HANNA DŁUGOŁĘCKA

*Ex-libris by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*

Article written by Hanna Długolecka is a synthetic work on book plates made by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. The author discusses all previously known works created by the artist, showing not only their value and graphic technique, but she also portrays the person for whom works were recreated. Each time she describes the relationship between them and Witkacy. The most important element of the article is to present to wide audience sensational discover-

ies made in the magazine of Warsaw School of Economics Library, and therefore to present two completely unknown so far, book plates created by Witkiewicz. The author carefully examines mentioned works, putting them in the context of the tumultuous experiences of the artist in the years 1914-1918, thus giving a holistic overview of the activities of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz in the field of small artistic form, which is ex-libris.

MAŁGORZATA LISIEWICZ

*“Sala Neoplastyczna”: From the woman of ornament  
to one of instrument*

The objective of this article is to conduct a revision of the meanings attributed in Polish art history to a piece of work regarded as an ‘iconic’ Polish museum piece by Władysław Strzemiński, a leading representative of constructivism, titled *Sala Neoplastyczna*. The text proposes considering afresh the tangle of evidence relating to the rise of this work, such as the time its creation required, the title its author chose to give it (“*Oeuvre néoplastique*”) and that artist’s works in the field of theory and practice in the designing of spatial forms. This last-mentioned aspect, in the opinion of this author, demands revision in respect to the fact that Strzemiński suffered from monocular vision; a disability that must have influenced the painter’s spatial imagination. The main axis of the here-contained analysis of *Sala*

*Neoplastyczna* is above all else the work itself (or rather this design’s reconstruction), and in particular an arrangement in its range of works by the artist’s wife, Katarzyna Kobro, the eminent sculptress. The spatial solution, based among other factors on the monotonous rhythm of repetition contradicts the theoretic postulations of both artists. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned postulations, the analysis presented here sets out anew how the spatial arrangement proposed by Strzemiński might be interpreted, demonstrating it, among other things, as an attempt to adapt his concept of art to the ideological visions of those times, as well as a form of coding in artistic form the compensations of his male ambitions in his manipulating of Kobro both as a human being and sculptress.

*Translated by Peter Martyn*

KRZYSZTOF LIPOWSKI

*Transcending ut pictura poesis. A visualisation  
of phraseological expression and metaphor in the painting  
of Bronisław Linke*

In his searches for creative inspiration, Bronisław Linke (1906-1962) also made use of phrasal forms. There thus arose many works composed in the main as propaganda material for the Polish communist system of the 1950s. The artist made use of the picture contained in the ‘linguistic tissue’ (author’s terminology) of phraseology in his bid to almost literally ‘render’ it into image form by making it visible to the language of art. A numerous group of drawings intended to unmask the true character hidden behind the exterior image thus arose. Among these was ‘Eisenhower aiming at politics’ (*Eisenhower celuje w polityce*) (ill.1), presenting the American general and president pointing (i.e. aiming with) his machine gun. Linke also sought to depict a true likeness of Eisenhower. In this way, the artist ‘played’ with (Polish) literalness, in the shared phrasal connection as in his visualisation of the pri-

mary function of the verb “celować” (aim). This above all else is what Linke based his idea, since as much as the phrasal link in the caption has no negative connotation, the artist’s visualisation possesses a clearly pejorative colouring (a distinguishing feature of Eisenhower’s politics being to provoke military confrontation). The dependence on literal meaning also reveals itself in two further drawings by Linke: ‘The Clock of Socialism – Don’t delay the clock of history’ (*Zegar socjalizmu [Nie zatrzymacie zegara dziejów]*) and ‘We back peace with all our heart’ (*Jesteśmy całym sercem za pokojem*) (ill. 2). The unmasking feature is again prominent in Cannon-Fodder (War – Money-making machine) *Mięso armatne (Wojna - maszynka do robienia pieniędzy)* (ill. 5); cf. Alfred Kubin’s Ger.: *Kanonenfutter*.

An altogether different drawing arose in ‘Pouring emptiness into the void’ (*Przelewianie pustego w*

*pró;ne*) (ill. 3), presenting a literal image of this popular expression in Poland, which accurately, as opposed to literally, translating into English as 'speaking twaddle'; i.e. in communicating without substance, or conducting conversation devoid of meaning. In the cartoon, Linke resorted to deformation and fragmentation, conceiving an open head with no face holding two glasses. The image of one empty glass having its non-contents poured into another provides an additional connotation of split nature with a 'habit' of conducting meaningless arguments that has come from the tendency to automatic repetition.

A somewhat variegated visualisation of Linke's was drawn from the phrase 'God's finger' (*Palec Boży*) (ill. 4), a term taken from the Bible alluding to a phenomenon understood to be an omen and thus sign of intervention by metaphysical powers; i.e. Divine intervention. For his image, Linke drew on the notion of a 'finger' descending from above that presses down and crushes helpless people. While this alien 'finger' has wings of a kind, it hardly can be said to have reached down from a celestial higher world. Of considerable importance is the rule of scale applied by the artist, whereby the 'divine finger' crushes to death human beings. Linke's drawing makes no attribution to God, thereby divorced from the otherwise Biblical phraseology. Providence as perceived in a Christian context as belief in Divine power shaping history is treated by the artist as a wholly negative sign.

The phrasal connection is not always present in the title of Linke's work in a full 'dictionary' sense. The artist on occasions subjected the phraseology to certain forms of modification, creating through this approach a facultative variation. For example, the drawing titled 'In such fire meat can be roasted' (*I przy takim ogniu mo;żna upiec swój pieczeń*) (ill. 8) underwent a certain degree of modification. Polish has adopted the phrase 'to cook in another's fire'; much as Linke altered the phrase 'Knock on a window', meaning 'Exert oneself', 'Make demands in a Government office'. Linke's title reads: 'The Atomic winter is knocking at the window' (*Zima atomowa puka do okna*) (ill. 9).

In some drawings the iconic message's contents are clearly anchored in phraseology, one such example being 'Individuals' (*Indywidualiści*) (ill. 10), presenting human figures attached by ropes to their homes. Each of these people is pulling 'their home' in the direction of their choice. In spite of the ironic title chosen by Linke, he was also alluding to another saying: 'Each pulls in their own direction' („*Każdy ci;gnie w swój stronę*"), alluding to motivation for selfish ends. A further drawing on phraseology is depicted in 'Pigheadedness (Sordid

language)' *Chamstwo (Plugawa mowa)* (ill. 11).

Bronisław Linke also composed works in which numerous personifying and objectifying metaphors appear. One example is *Doll (Lalka)* (ill. 14), composed of a child's toy placed in a surreal backdrop with little more than the head readily familiar. The body resembles that of a robot, revealing a nevertheless human heart; a Linke creation connoting a life devoid of privacy. A series of objectifying metaphors may be found in both Schuman – puppet (*Schuman – kukiełka*) (ill. 15) and 'General de Gaulle delivering a speech' (*Gen. de Gaulle przemawia*) (ill. 16). The images of French politicians were reduced to the status of objects; a puppet and clockwork mechanism, with 'iconic' signals of the relation between two parties included within the space of both pictures in the form of a hand holding the puppet and the inscription 'USA' placed on the key operating the speaking machine. France and French politics are thus visualised as being controlled by Washington DC.

Another metaphorical depiction by Linke is that of Adolf Eichmann, titled plainly *Adolf Eichmann* (ill. 18), taking the form of the masque of a face that has been 'removed' to reveal the true, 'ideological inside' to the figure in the title: the crematorium oven of a concentration camp. The artist leaves no illusion that Eichmann played an active part in the mass extermination carried out during the last war. This image not only provides an example of synecdoche of objectification, since the picture's construction reveals how it was based on anything up to three Polish expressions: 'have something on your mind' (*mieć coś na głowie*); 'have something off your mind' (*mieć coś z głowy*); 'know what you're doing' (*mieć dobrze w głowie*).

An especially original group comprises paintings and drawings that bring together a theme relating to the metaphors of flags. This motif appears in Linke's sketchbooks and drawings, with clear allusion to awakening patriotic feelings. Nevertheless, in correlation with the previous 16 years the artist had lived in postwar Poland, this motif was subjected to numerous forms of transformation; from the flag rising from the ruins via the Polish United Workers' Party standard to the 'flag of consumption' depicted in his painting 'Circus' (*Cyrk*) (ill. 16).

Linke's paintings are themselves dominated by language. The works of the artist under examination demonstrate the harsh confrontation between the word and the painting was effaced. Linke in his creative work ignored the crossover from word to picture and back again, since the borderline between them was from his perspective an illusion. Should, in that case, his works be treated as an argument in favour of a thesis that questions Lessing's differenti-

ation between arts of space and time? It cannot be ruled out that at some point in the future, under the influence of the contemporary media, there shall crystallise a new status for the word and picture.

How shall the heterogeneity so clearly visible in Linke's works relate to this crystallisation, should it become a feature of each form of media: a work of art, film or equally a piece of literature?

*Translated by Peter Martyn*

MAREK MAKSYM CZAK

*Towards a realism. The depictions of chauffeurs  
by Andrzej Wróblewski*

The subject of his article are the depictions of chauffeurs by painter Andrzej Wróblewski. A collection of these works arose between 1948 and 1956. The most famous of the pictures comprising this cycle are two oil paintings titled 'The Blue Chauffeur' (*Szofer niebieski*), dating from 1948 and 'The Chauffeur' (*Szofer*) of 1956. The enormous popularity of both studies, comprising alongside the series 'Executed by Firing Squad' (*Rozstrzeliwani*) the most frequently reproduced of the artist works, to some extent led to the presentations in gouache and watercolour of the same artist's drivers.

The lack of interest in Wróblewski's gouaches, and indeed gouaches in general, may be explained by how people had become accustomed to the idea that a 'work of art' is represented by an oil painting on canvas. Applying, in comparison the gouache technique on paper or a watercolour, seen at the most to represent a sketch or workshop study are each of secondary importance in comparison to a work in oils. In the case of the Wróblewski works under consideration, this situation has proven exceptional. It turns out that the nature of the relationship arising between the given oil painting and taking up of the same subject in gouache and watercolours is more complicate than is usually marked by a straightforward dependence between the finished work and the draught outline. Not only did the artist make use of the gouache technique in order to produce sketch work, but primarily as a means to create paintings, in which respect the questions relating to his oil works find both their solution and fulfilment.

In making repetitions of the chauffeur motif in applying an alternative technique, Wróblewski subjected the said motif to a certain degree of modification. Moreover, this modification closely corresponds with the works' meaning, as characterised by the altered nature of this medium. It appears that the change occurring within the range of representations of the chauffeur from oils to gouache and watercolour parallels the alteration in the actual works' semantic content. The meaning carried in the oil painting diverges, at least to some degree, from that characterised in the gouaches or watercolours. These contrasts in semantic content should not be read as incoherence arising between these particular works, but should be seen as a change of meaning carried out in categories of mutual dialogue, linking the particular declarations. In connection with the above, it turns out that within the scope of depictions of the chauffeur one common problem makes itself present that concerns the elimination of compositions devoid of subject from the figurative scenes. Put in another way, a mechanism makes its appearance at this point aiming to render as real the depiction of reality. The said process leads from composition presenting a scene unnatural in character, as in *Szofer niebieski* (oil on canvas, 1948) towards a realistic work, as in *Szofer w mieście* (gouache on paper, 1956). Seen in this light, the gouaches and watercolours are worthy of particular attention, since they constitute declarations that may develop the problems contained in painter works, present the fulfilment of these problems or otherwise achieve both ends at the same time.

*Translated by Peter Martyn*