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Exhibitions, narratives and the institution – the case of the National Museum in Kraków

The National Museum in Kraków is the oldest and the largest museum of national character in Poland. Its current activities are based both on the contemporary challenges to museum practice but also on the recognition of its past. The importance of such “self-consciousness” of the institution will be analysed through particular case study – the exhibition “#heritage” organized in 2017/2018. It was based exclusively on the museum collection seen as the residue of multifaceted and evolving national memory. The exhibition included objects from the Middle Ages to present day and was organized to celebrate the centenary of regaining independence of Poland. The lecture will also point out to the future plans of the Museum and opening of its new branch in the building of a former modernist hotel from the 1960s. It will be dedicated to design and architecture, subjects largely absent in Polish museums, broadening thus the idea of what can be called the national heritage.



Bio: art historian, director of the National Museum in Kraków and lecturer at the Institute of Art History of the Jagiellonian University. He also lectured at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main (2003) and at the University of St. Andrews in Great Britain (2004). Recipient of scholarship and research grants in Poland and abroad, including University of Oxford, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich, Università per Stranieri in Perugia. Laureate of the City of Krakow Award (1996), the Awards of the Rector of the Jagiellonian University and in 2018, the annual Award of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage in the category of “Protection of cultural heritage”.

Author of publications on Polish and Central European art and architecture in 20th and 21st century including: “Modernizations. Art and Architecture in the New States of Central and Eastern Europe 1918–1939” (Łódź 2010); “Four Modernities. Texts on Polish Art and Architecture of the 20th Century” (Kraków 2015); Views of Albion. The Reception of British Art and Design in Central Europe” (1890–1918) (Oxford 2015), “Transformation. Art in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989” (Kraków 2018). Curator of exhibitions including “Symbolism in Poland and Britain” at Tate Britain in London in 2009, “Modernizations 1918–1939. The Future Perfect” at the Museum of Art in Łódź in 2010, “The Power of Fantasy. Modern and Contemporary Art from Poland” at the BOZAR Center for Fine Arts in Brussels in 2011, “Lviv 24th June 1937. City, architecture, modernism” at the Museum of Architecture in Wrocław (2016), “#heritage” at the National Museum in Krakow in 2017. Recently he curated exhibition “Young Poland. An Arts and Crafts Movement 1890-1918” in William Morris Gallery in London (2021-22).