

Myth Foksal

Katarzyna Krysiak // Living Archives

What tells us the Foksal / Living Archives about the artworld in Warsaw from 1966 till today?

The Foksal Gallery or Galeria Foksal is a small non-commercial art gallery in Warsaw, Poland established in 1966, that shows works by contemporary avant-garde artists.

Foksal Gallery was founded in 1966. The idea of founding a gallery with a focus on searching out and highlighting radical approaches to contemporary art, was developed by art critics, such as Wiesław Borowski, Anka Ptaszkowska, Mariusz Tchorek, and artists, including Tadeusz Kantor, Henryk Stażewski, Zbigniew Gostomski, Edward Krasiński and Roman Owidzki. The gallery was named after the street at the end of which it can be found. Foksal Gallery has never identified itself with just one avant-garde artistic movement or a group following a defined artistic programme; rather it has preferred to outline certain landmarks in the specific geography of modern art. As a rule, the gallery fully cooperates with artists in shaping the programme of exhibitions. Close relations between critics and artists, meetings, debates and even disputes have influenced the design of some exhibitions and have even resulted in theoretical reflections on the sense of the gallery's activity (Theory of Place / Teoria miejsca, Living Archives / Żywe archiwum). Many of the gallery's presentations, demonstrations, actions or activities were pioneering and have become a part of the history of art. Many international artists have collaborated with Foksal (like Tadeusz Kantor, Henryk Stażewski, Edward Krasiński, Zbigniew Gostomski, Lawrence Wiener, Daniel Buren, Ben Vautier, Christian Boltanski or Alan Charlton)

TALK:

Monday //

22nd May 2017 //

5:00 pm //

Sparta room 216

In the beginning Foksal Gallery was run by Wiesław Borowski, Anka Ptaszkowska and Mariusz Tchorek, and later, for nearly 35 years, it was nominally directed only by Wiesław Borowski. In the 1970s the gallery co-operated with art critic Andrzej Turowski, later joined by Milada Ślizińska, Jaromir Jedliński and others.

The archives of the gallery are open to the public and are used by a wide circle of art critics and art researchers, and also by sociologists and cultural anthropologists.

From the outset Foksal Gallery has been a not-for-profit project. As a public institution, it went through various stages of reorganisation shaped by top-down decisions. Until 1984 it operated within the structures of the Visual Arts Studio (Pracownie Sztuk Plastycznych), and later it came under the direction of the Warsaw Agency for Art Exhibitions. Currently, it is a part of the Mazovian Institute of Culture (previous Mazovian Centre for Culture and Arts) financed by the Marshal Office of the Province of Mazovia.

In 1997 the Foksal Gallery Foundation was formed (by Adam Szymczyk, Andrzej Przywara, Joanna Mytkowska) to widen the scope of activities of the gallery. Initially based within the Foksal Gallery, the Foksal Gallery Foundation moved out in 2001 and now operates, as an independent and commercial entity, that has nothing to do with the Foksal Gallery activities whatsoever.

Katarzyna Krysiak is an art historian and curator. She has headed the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw as the Chief curator since 2008, where she works since 2002. Together with Katherine Carl (James Gallery CUNY) and David Se-nior (MoMA, NYC) she curated an exhibition: Thoughts Isolated: The Foksal Gallery Archive 1966-2016, presented in the James Gallery CUNY, NYC on November-December 2016, which is now on view at MoMA, Warsaw until June 4, 2017.