

**Dominika Łarionow**

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6920-6360>

Department of Art History, University of Łódź

[dominika.larionow@filhist.uni.lodz.pl](mailto:dominika.larionow@filhist.uni.lodz.pl)

## **ARTISTS TALK ABOUT WAR – AN ANALYSIS USING SELECTED EXAMPLES**

**Abstract:** The Futurists glorified war as the hygiene of the world, until they themselves began to die on the fronts of the first world armed conflict between 1914 and 1918. Artists who served in the army at the time, after 1918, talked about in their works: anxiety, the horror of gas clouds and the wheezing of flying shells (Otto Dix). Aby Warburg, as an art historian, spoke of overpowering fear and helplessness of ordinary people caught up in the cogs of war. Against this background, one wonders about Roger Caillois, who just before the outbreak of the Second World War published an essay condemning, but also in part glorifying war. Mieczysław Porębski noted that after 1945, art was to have a therapeutic function. The researcher's statement was only partly true, as for many artists the shame of being a prisoner of the Nazi camps outweighed the desire to express themselves on the subject. The author analyses various war narratives in the works of artists such as Tadeusz Kantor, Alina Szapocznikow, Józef Szajna, Marina Abramović and Zofia Lipecka. Each of them spoke of or provocatively kept silent about the war, perceiving it either through their own experiences or treating the visibility of tragic frontline events only through the prism of media cognition. The article diagnoses changes in the narrative of war, which, in the course of 100 years, has moved from an affirmation tying the notion of war to modernity, to active, topical, critical commentaries that make the artist an outright activist. Nowadays it is the artist who must speak up, who must take a stand for or against, creating art that comments on reality.

**Keywords:** war, Tadeusz Kantor, Alina Szapocznikow, Marina Abramović, Józef Szajna, Zofia Lipecka

On 20<sup>th</sup> February 1909, the Manifesto of Futurism, whose main author was Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, at the time a little-known Italian poet and publisher, appeared in the Parisian daily "Le Figaro". This text and the writer's clear gesture to reveal his views so boldly made him a well-known figure, quickly uniting a large circle of artists around him. The Futurists became the first global avant-garde movement of the twentieth century. The currents that followed were characterised by progressive gestures and theories proclaiming progressiveness in every field of artistic activity. With our undisguised fascination with modernity, we often forget that the Futurists quite emphatically shouted that war was the necessary hygiene of the world. In this conception, it was meant to destroy. However, such action was deliberate in order to strive for a change in aesthetics, art, or technology, even to force the desire to build new states, cities, or social relations. Of course, neither Marinetti nor the artists around him thought that the century which was emerging before their eyes would create a different kind of armed conflict, replacing the notion of the local with the global. Certainly, the First World War, which took place between 1914 and 1918, was a shock to the intellectual circles of Europe. Its consequences not only involved pervasive poverty but were combined with a socio-political change visible in all the countries involved in the conflict. Artists who had until recently celebrated the ideas of war died on its frontlines. In contrast, those who survived the nightmare of starvation and hiding in trenches stretching for miles, documented the fear, horror and hopelessness of war in their works (for example, Otto Dix's prints). Their message seemed simple at the time, saying that modern armed conflicts bring only death, and create nothing but humiliation for the defeated, and misery and disability for all who fight. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, known as Witkacy, a tsarist soldier fighting in Russia during the 1917 revolution, thought similarly. In his works *Szewcy* [*The Shoemakers*], 1934; *Tumor Mózgowicz*, 1920; *Pożegnanie jesieni* [*Farewell to Autumn*], 1927), he described dramatic violent disintegration of the socioethical order. However, the conflagration, bringing with it equally theatrically depicted destruction, did not become the hygiene of the world. Such a vision of revolution deprived it of its futuristic creative power, because in the story spun by this intellectual, artist, but above all ex-soldier, war was unable to build anything, but destroyed everything. The narration of Dix's or Witkacy's works stemmed from their status as witnesses and to some extent linked their views on war to their personal experience.

Aby Warburg, who is an art historian, not an artist, looked at war as a record of certain images that change the perception of reality. His experience of war was linked to the situation of civilian victims and to a personal experience of a profound mental crisis. An indirect effect of Warburg's depressive disorder was the idea for *Mnemosyne Image Atlas* which he realized between 1924 and

1928. This work, unfinished by the author, was intended to depict historical iconographic migrations of symbols, signs of European culture. Ryszard Kasperowicz, an art historian who recognised that for Warburg "image becomes a tool for mastering fear, a means of symbolic transposition of anxiety, an attempt to explain and tame the world by means of pictorial substitution".<sup>1</sup> However, fear perceived by the contemporary scholar is not associated with the mud of trenches, the swish of flying bullets or the smoke of poisonous gases. The German art historian had seen lame men on the streets of German cities during the war and just after the surrender, and had also analyzed photographs published by war reporters in the daily press of the time. Warburg's fear, then, was different from that of artist-soldiers who had survived a few or several months in the trenches. It was an experience of the helplessness of a man who, because of his age and many illnesses, has to remain in civilian life, i.e., was not able to stop the course of history with his heroic frontline deeds. It seems that, thanks to narratives of artists and scholars such as Warburg, war ceased to be seen as a creative force, building modern quality of social life, and began to be associated with notions of destruction or decay.

In 1939, Roger Caillois published the anthropological essay *War and the Sacred* in the volume *Man and the Sacred*. From a contemporary perspective, the researcher's text is extremely surprising, as there are many contradictions in it. War is presented as a special time, with a status comparable to folk or religious festivals. In the theory presented, it is a period considered necessary after years of peace, treated as a moment of stagnation and a halt in social development. Caillois wrote: "[...] war and festivity remain images of disorder and chaos. This is because, both in celebration and in war, deeds are permitted which, outside of these occasions, are regarded as the gravest sacrileges and the most unpardonable crimes [...]".<sup>2</sup> Then he elaborated: "War elevates to a pedestal not only the mere extermination of the enemy, but the totality of acts and attitudes condemned by the ethics of peaceful life [...]. Lying and deceit acquire the status of virtues. Even theft becomes permissible; when it is a matter of obtaining a minimum of food or even certain surpluses, all means turn out to be good, and fortes rise in price at the expense of scruples. And when it comes to killing itself, as is well known, it is forced, it is rewarded, and it is the rule".<sup>3</sup> The French scholar was aware that war triggers both fun and cruelty. Surprisingly, the essay echoed a note of fascination with war, which was perhaps a reflection of the mood in Europe in the late 1930s. Caillois's text was not

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<sup>1</sup> Ryszard Kasperowicz, *Obraz w koncepcji Aby'ego Warburga*, „Polska sztuka Ludowa - Konteksty”, no. 2-3, 2011, p. 37

<sup>2</sup> Roger Caillois, *Żywioł i ład*, transl. Anna Tatarkiewicz, (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1973), p.165.

<sup>3</sup> Caillois, *Żywioł i ład*, p. 166.

published in Poland until 1973 and it is difficult to say today what impact it had on artists. Certainly, his theses confirmed the development of certain artistic narratives, such as those evident in the works of Tadeusz Kantor. There are many paradoxes to be found in the work of the Krakow artist, especially considering their wartime context.

The founder of the Cricot 2 theatre is above all famous for his evocative images of the Holocaust, which he created in many performances as recurring clichés of memory. This was the case in, among others: *Kurka wodna* (1967), *The Dead Class* (1975), *Wielopole, Wielopole* (1980), *I Shall Never Return* (1988), up to *Today Is My Birthday* (1990/1991). The message created by the director was primarily linked to the tragic events of the Second World War. In the years 1939-1945, Kantor was a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, so he experienced the war as an adult man, aware of the horror of the events taking place around him. This is probably why in Cricot 2 he created sequences full of drama, of grief for the lost Jewish culture. However, in his theatrical work and beyond, we also find references to the First World War that are of a slightly different nature. Scenes depicted by Kantor are close to theses linking war with the notion of festivity, because they are treated as a peculiar kind of play. This was evident, for example, in *Wielopole, Wielopole*, a performance from 1980. There, the character of a widow of a local photographer, taking a photograph of a regiment of recruits dressed in Austrian army uniforms from the years 1914-1918 before they set off to war, turns the camera into a machine gun that annihilates the soldiers. This androgynous heroine shoots them while laughing, thereby performing a remarkable sublimation of the act of murder. Her demonic and to some extent comic character can be explained through Kantor's biography. The artist was born in 1915, at which time his father Marian Mirski Kantor was a soldier in Emperor Franz Joseph's Austrian army. Thus, the First World War was, for the Krakow artist, a reference to the world of childhood – a period of perpetual play, on the one hand, and a time of his father's necessary absence from home, on the other.

In 1965, Kantor created an *emballage* entitled *Marmarosz Sziget*. The enigma of the work remained unresolved for many years. It referred to a forgotten event from 1918. The title is a Polish version of the name of a town in present-day Romania that belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire a hundred years ago. Between June and October 1918, a complicated trial of soldiers of the Second Brigade of the Polish Legions, in which Marian Kantor served, took place there. His memoirs entitled *Od Rarańczy do Kaniowa. Wspomnienia legionowe 1918 roku* [*From Rarańcza to Kaniow. Legionary memoirs of 1918*]<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>4</sup> Marian Mirski Kantor, *Od Rarańczy do Kaniowa. Wspomnienia legionowe z roku 1918*, Sosnowiec 1934.

published in the form of a small booklet in 1934, proved extremely helpful in unravelling the mystery that Kantor had deliberately hidden in the work.

It concerned a mutiny of soldiers in the Austrian army after the Treaty of Brest was concluded by the governments of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, and Russia, with the participation of observers from the newly formed Ukrainian People's Republic. Representatives of the Polish Kingdom, established in 1916, were excluded from the process. The Brest Peace was intended by the leaders of the states to end the war. In fact, at that time only Russia formally ended the conflict by signing the concluded resolutions. This was the reason for its subsequent elimination from the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. On 13<sup>th</sup> February 1918, General Roman Górecki was to deliver a speech to soldiers of the Second Brigade of the Legions stationed in Rarańcza, informing them of the terms of the treaty. This was because it was considered a betrayal of the newly established Polish statehood. Mirski described this speech accurately, reflecting the mood that prevailed among soldiers of Polish origin at the time. Emotions led to a mutiny in the Austrian army on the night of February 13-14, 1918. On 15<sup>th</sup> February 1918, bloody riots of legionaries in Rarańcza began. Some of them were captured after three days of fighting. Rebel soldiers attempted to get across the front line and join the First Brigade of the Legions under Józef Piłsudski. Only a few in this group succeeded and the rest were captured. After the mutiny, Austro-Hungarian authorities disbanded the Polish corps. Those interned were imprisoned in camps in Marmaros-Sziget, Hunszt and six other towns: Dulfalva, Talaborfalva, Bustyahaza, Szeklencze, Szaldobosz and Taraczkös. A total of 175 officers and about 3.500 noncommissioned officers and privates were incarcerated.<sup>5</sup> An unusual trial was held in Marmaros-Sziget, as the legionaries were accused of desertion. Court sessions took place from 8<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1918. Eight Polish journalists were allowed into the courtroom, giving the proceedings of many hours of hearings an unprecedented media dimension. Historians even estimate that, for several months, the entire Polish population living in Galicia lived on their daily reports. On 28<sup>th</sup> September 1918, the Marmaros-Sziget court was notified of the abolition by telegraph, and a month later the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed.

Of course, Kantor's work does not refer to the martyrdom of the interned legionnaires, but to his father, Marian Kantor-Mirski, who was a lucky escapee, or deserter, from the imperial army. These soldiers had the status of heroes at

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<sup>5</sup> Przemysław Stawarz, *Internowanie oraz proces żołnierzy legionowych w Marmaros-Sziget w roku 1918 - we wspomnieniach księdza pułkownika Józefa Panasia - kapelana II Brygady Legionów Polskich* in: „Acta Universitatis Lodzianis, Folia Historica” no. 92, Łódź 2014, pp. 83-105.

the time – heroes who, for moral and patriotic reasons, managed to outwit the Austrians. On the canvas, Kantor's father was portrayed wearing the characteristic cap of an imperial legionary. His face was depicted rather schematically. It appears in the upper right corner, which is meant to resemble the shots of figures known from the style of postage stamps. The image of the father was painted in profile and is placed in a window separated from the entire composition. The fact that the figure is positioned in this way may also suggest activity of the protagonist, who is seemingly outside, peeping into the situation. In the central point, at the top of the canvas, the name Marmarosz Sziget appears. In addition, a canvas parcel tied with string is attached to the painting, connected by a painted leather strap to an object shaped like either a door or a guillotine, although it could also be a church kneeler. In Kantor's composition, there is neither tragedy nor horror accompanying all the media hype that was part of the Austrian court proceedings. One might even consider the artwork to be trivial, perhaps referring to simple childish drawings.

Each war experienced by Kantor as a historical and political event undoubtedly became an important source of artistic inspiration from which he drew emotion to spin his stories. There is a distinction, however, as the First World War, which Kantor perceived from the perspective of a child, was a kind of a theatrical reference for him. *Marmarosz Sziget* documented his father's heroism rather than the horror of the situation faced by the young legionaries in 1918, incarcerated in Hungarian internment camps. The Second World War, on the other hand, became an evocative image of the triumph of death for the creator of *Cricot 2*, visible, for example, in a scene of repeated shooting of the figure of Rabiniek in *Wielopole, Wielopole*.

At the end of the last century, Mieczysław Porębski noticed a clear aesthetic change that emerged after the period of destruction of the humanist system of values caused by both wars. The art historian noted that artists creating after 1945 moved away from the sublime and towards the extreme to return "to essentialist questions of an ontological and axiological nature"<sup>6</sup> through progressive degradation of subject matter (penetrating border states: love, pornography, betrayal, violence, crime). In this conception, the mission of art was even linked to psychological therapy of nations. Ebullition of extreme feelings became the creative weapon of art, aiming to divert people's attention from traumas resulting from war tragedies. A desire to tease the viewer to revive the world by playing on emotions also appeared in art.

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<sup>6</sup> Mieczysław Porębski, *Nauki humanistyczne a etnologia (tezy)*, „Polska Sztuka Ludowa”, no. 2, 1981, p. 81.

Porębski is correct, especially as his inference was made at a time when the experience of World War II was commonplace. However, from today's perspective, small but significant differences are readily apparent. Real traumas experienced by artists as protagonists of tragic war events are told in a different language. A distinct style is used by artists who know armed conflicts and mass murders from stories or through media information, but their knowledge of the threat of war is not combined with a sensory personal experience. This is evident when we juxtapose the narrative of war experience evident in the works of, e.g., Alina Szapocznikow and Józef Szajna, prisoners of concentration camps, with imagery used by Marina Abramović or Zofia Lipecka, artists born after the Second World War in countries of the so-called Eastern European bloc. The language of propaganda in Yugoslavia or the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) between 1945 and 1990 often used the Second World War to build a strong founding myth that would justify the political necessity of creating states based on the communist system, in servile dependence on the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). In this political conception, the war was even used as a bogeyman to quell freedom tendencies of peoples dependent on the great Soviet state.

Many years after the war, Szajna wrote that, as a prisoner of Auschwitz and then Buchenwald, he did not feel any significant change after liberation. This was because being freed from a Nazi slave labour camp was associated with a sense of shame and had nothing to do with the heroism of soldiers fighting in the trenches of the First World War. This is probably why later works of this set designer and creator of original plays did not immediately echo traumatic visions. Szajna's work gradually revealed his experiences of war through iconographic metaphors, as evident, for example, in the *Akropolis* performance based on Stanisław Wyspiański's drama, produced in 1962 with Jerzy Grotowski at the Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole. Szajna's later *Replicas*, fully authored productions created in various versions between 1971 and 1986, did not show a camp but a devastated world after the events of war. In contrast, certain literalness in showing the experience of occupation was revealed by Szajna many years after liberation in a specific work from 1991, a collage entitled *Number*. In the work, the artist used his own striped cloth with the camp number 18729. The horror of the situation was encapsulated in a very personal performance, which, in combination with the story of an artist-hero described in the essay *The Bottom*,<sup>7</sup> which was also published at the time in

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<sup>7</sup> Józef Szajna, *Dno*, „Teatr”, no. 3, pp.22-25, no. 4/5, pp.42-44, no. 6, pp. 42-45, 1992 or in: *Józef Szajna i jego świat*, Wydawnictwo Hotel Sztuki, Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej Zachęta, Warszawa 2000, pp. 247-259.

the "Theatre" magazine, became something like a self-portrait using things and signs, but without the body. A representation that does not show facial features or a silhouette becomes only the shadow of a person enchanted by the number given by the Nazis as a depersonalised symbol of a human being.

Alina Szapocznikow, who was imprisoned in the ghettos of Pabianice and Łódź and in the concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt, approached her wartime experience differently. The artist simply never spoke about it. For all the somewhat exhibitionist nature of the sculptor's art, the war was overlooked, even repressed. Although critics see reflections of personal experiences in her compositions full of dismembered bodies, it is in vain to look for strong war metaphors in Szapocznikow's work. There seems to be one exception to this rule. In 1955, she created the sculpture *Exhumed*, which was supposed to refer to political events mentioned in the author's commentaries. The work is sometimes read as a reckoning with the era of socialist realism, but also as a reaction to the murder of Lászlo Rajk, a Hungarian communist, in 1949. It seems to be a special work in the history of war iconography. Szapocznikow showed decomposition of the body of a man who may be a political or a starved camp prisoner. The bronze body features some kind of hidden vitality, although it may only be a reference to a dead body. Apart from *Exhumed*, the sculptor is resolutely silent about her experience.<sup>8</sup> For her, art as a form of action was not therapeutic. It rather became, towards the end of Szapocznikow's life, an activity that tamed anxieties associated with the development of cancer. In her last works bearing the evocative title *Tumours* we find minor references to war, but it appears only as a pathogenic factor.

The experience of prisoners of the Nazi apparatus of oppression does not seem to have been directly translated into artistic narratives. Associated traumas were gradually revealed by artists, and often hidden behind carefully composed metaphors. It is different when artists talk about war, seeing and understanding its horror but not experiencing it directly. In their works, we are much more likely to find willingness, noticed by Porębski, to echo extreme, drastic gestures. Works of Marina Abramović<sup>9</sup> are a good example. Her performances were full of the artist's aggression towards her own body. The 1975 *Lips of Thomas* began with the artist stripping herself naked in front of the assembled spectators. She then ate a kilogram of honey, drank a litre of wine and finally cut the skin on her stomach in the shape of a five-pointed star before lying down on a block of ice in the finale. The drastic nature of the message was interpretively entangled with the history of Yugoslavia and the performer's personal

<sup>8</sup> Marek Beylin, *Ferwor. Życie Aliny Szapocznikow*, Karakter, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Marina Abramović, *The cleaner / Do czysta*, exhibition catalogue, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Berlin, 2017.



experiences as the daughter of a married couple of committed communists. The same was true of her other performances, including *Rhythm 0* (1974) or the later *Balkan Baroque* (1997). In the former, the audience was not only confronted with the artist's nudity but also given an opportunity to make a free gesture towards her body. There were 72 different objects (including a rose, a needle, a safety pin, a candle, scissors, but also a gun) in front of Abramović on a table covered with a cloth, which could be used against her. The peculiar experiment proved that people quite quickly shed their elegance and easily turn to acts full of unjustified violence. It also showed that human aggression is not something exceptional or disposable, contrary to what was said in attempts to explain war behaviour at the time. Abramović seemed to support Caillois' thesis that a person can turn into a villain at any time and does not need the sacred state of war to do so. The *Balkan Baroque* performance was realised at the 1997 Venice Art Biennale. It lasted four days and six hours. During this time, the audience could see Abramović singing Balkan folk songs and at the same time peeling meat off beef bones. Photos of her parents and herself were projected on the walls of the room where the performance took place. The action was intended to draw the audience's attention to the ongoing war in the area of the former Yugoslavia. The bones were not only a reference to the annihilation of peoples living on the Balkan peninsula, but also influenced viewers through the fetor of their decomposition over the course of several days. The stench sensation was to be linked to the discomfort of the historical consequences of the war, at the base of which Abramović placed the communist state created after the Second World War.

Zofia Lipecka, a contemporary Polish-French artist whose paintings and text became a commentary on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the political situation that began on 24 February 2022, looks at and talks about war differently. Although less drastic than Abramović's, her works have become a unique record of the historical time that began on the day that Russian troops invaded Ukraine. Lipecka documented the state of initial horror, which she quickly defined as a decisive moment to define the contemporary in terms of the war mission of art. The artist asked: "To ignore war? To represent war? [...] Suddenly art seemed to me something of little importance. [...] The projects I was working on at the time no longer interested me. I couldn't take my mind off news on the situation in Ukraine. The awareness of the war completely took over my psyche and imagination. I felt that I had to find a way to express this drama in painting, to manifest my opposition to the war and my support for Ukraine."<sup>10</sup> In this conception, the need to paint is linked to the conviction

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<sup>10</sup> Zofia Lipecka, *Jak malować w czasie wojny?* <https://wszystkoconajwazniejsze.pl/zofia-lipecka-jak-malowac-w-czasie-wojny/> [accessed: 30.09.2023].

that "art is essential as a form of resistance" because "it affects minds. It may not end the war, it may not stop the crimes, but it can be a critique, a therapy, and a catharsis". In 2022 she produced a series of paintings related to current political events, including: *Recit 8, Blast, Draw the unknown, Recit 5 Bucza/Boutcha*. A feature of Lipecka's work are her pictorial compositions, which, like rebuses, constitute signlinguistic puzzles for the viewer. The paintings fascinate us through their multifaceted semantics, attracting the viewer's attention through an almost infinite permutation of rational unravelling of the mystery of the arrangement of numbers, letters and painted forms that refer to real objects or plants. War as a reference to the theme of the Holocaust appeared in Lipecka's work much earlier, for example in the famous installation *Po Jedwabnem [After Jedwabne]* (2003) or the painting series *Treblinka* begun in 2004. This time, the artist's stance was somewhat different, as she painted in relation to the perception of current events, which became a real experience of war seen only from a geographical, rather than historical, distance. This caveat is important when analysing the paintings, as Lipecka painted the events of 2022 with extreme restraint. Firstly, she limited her colour palette to colours from a range of browns, greys, and blacks with only small accents of vivid hues. Secondly, the compositions are economical in terms of signs, using unambiguous associations, such as a schematically drawn man shooting at another person standing over a great precipice, or a saw suspended in space in the face of a large *Boutcha (Bucha)* inscription. The artist commented on her compositional choices in the following way:

"I have tried to avoid two mistakes: realism and propaganda. Realism would compete with horrific images from the media and films. In addition, I have no confidence in the aesthetics of horror and transgression, which aim to shock or provoke the viewer. [...] So I had to find some territory between the aesthetics of evil and the aesthetics of good; a form that hints at the problem but is not spectacular. While rejecting realism, I did not move away from the figurative. While avoiding pushy slogans, I have not abandoned the use of writing. I have created compositions made of ideograms, signs, words, and rebuses. The images have become some kind of boards to be read, prompting the viewer to create meaning."

Both Lipecka's text and her 2022 painting compositions became a commentary on current events through her own iconographic language. In this case, the war became such a strong reference that it required a refinement of the painting narrative, even to achieve new expressive power through sign simplification. At the same time, the paintings are accompanied by the author's text in the form of an almost organic complement. Lipecka's statement, like a manifesto against war, confirms the need to define a new role for the artist

in contemporary society. Perhaps he or she has now become someone whose role resembles that of a medieval bard, commenting on politics or important events in progress.

Artists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have learned to document the flickering of the world, its political, conflictual, and social entanglements. They react to traumas, analyse current events, recall forgotten heroes, like Tadeusz Kantor did in *Marmarosz Sziget*, or point out that war is a symptom of the decay of only seemingly arranged relations, like Marina Abramović in *Balkan Baroque*. Zofia Lipecka, on the other hand, documented a moment of horror that was part of her sensory feeling of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in the early spring of 2022. The contemporary artist has been caught up in events and discourses going on around them, and their art cannot be indifferent or isolated from the world. This enforced activism makes art an important factor in contemporary social and political life. It seems that such a place for art in the postmodern world was also intuited by Aby Warburg when he created complex *Atlas of Mnemosyne* paintings.

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## ARTYŚCI MÓWIĄ O WOJNACH – ANALIZA NA WYBRANYCH PRZYKŁADACH (streszczenie)

Futuryści wielbili wojnę jako higienę świata, dopóki sami nie zaczęli ginąć na frontach pierwszego światowego konfliktu zbrojnego w latach 1914-1918. Artyści, którzy służyli wówczas w wojsku, po 1918 roku opowiadali w swoich dziełach o: lęku, grozie chmur gazowych i świszczaniu lecących pocisków (Otto Dix). Aby Warburg jako historyk sztuki mówił o obezwładniającym strachu i bezradności zwykłego człowieka uwikłanego w tryby wojny. Na tym tle zastanawia Roger Caillois, który tuż przed wybuchem II wojny światowej opublikował esej potępiający, ale też po części sławiący wojnę. Mieczysław Porębski zauważył, że po 1945 roku sztuka miała pełnić funkcje terapeutyczne. Konstatacja badacza była po części tylko prawdziwa, bowiem dla wielu twórców wstyd z faktu bycia więźniem obozów nazistowskich przeważał nad chęcią wypowiedzenia się na ten temat. Autorka analizuje różne wojenne narracje w pracach, takich twórców jak: Tadeusza Kantora, Alina Szapocznikow, Józef Szajna, Marina Abramović i Zofia Lipecka. Każdy z nich mówił lub prowokacyjnie milczał o wojnie postrzegając ją albo poprzez własne doświadczenia, albo traktując wizyjność tragiczności wydarzeń frontowych tylko przez pryzmat poznania medialnego. Artykuł diagnozuje zmiany w narracji wojennej, które w ciągu 100 lat przeszły od afirmacji wiążącej pojęcie wojny z nowoczesnością, do aktywnych aktualnych komentarzy krytycznych, które czynią z samego artysty wręcz aktywistę. Obecnie to on musi zabrać głos, musi opowiedzieć się za lub przeciw, tworząc sztukę komentującą rzeczywistość.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wojna, Tadeusz Kantor, Alina Szapocznikow, Marina Abramović, Józef Szajna, Zofia Lipecka

**Dominika Łarionow**, PhD, assistant professor at the Institute of Art History, University of Łódź. Her research interests focus on 20<sup>th</sup> century Polish art. So far, she has published more than 60 scientific articles in Poland and abroad. Author of the books: *Spaces of paintings by Leszek Mądzik*, Lublin 2008; *Just open the door... Objects in the work of Tadeusz Kantor*, Łódź 2015. Co-author of three volumes of monographs: *Changing Setting. Polish theatrical and social scenography of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries*, Warsaw 2020. Her publications have received awards of the Polish Society for Theatre Research and the Committee of Art Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences.