

VISUAL STUDIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

RSVP to vsri@usc.edu. See <https://dornsife.usc.edu/vsri/> for updated information.

FALL 2024 EVENTS

Graduate Student Focus



Between Moscow and Paris: Museum of Art in Łódź and the Transnational Avant-Garde Network

ANNE FRIEDBERG MEMORIAL LECTURE:
WERONIKA MALEK-LUBAWSKI

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Art History, USC

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29
12:30-2pm PST
ZOOM

In 1931, the International Collection of Modern Art opened in Łódź, becoming the first permanent display of contemporary abstract art in a European museum and the cornerstone of the Museum of Art in Łódź which expands on and continues the collection's legacy to date. The collection included artworks that represented all major movements of Western avant-garde from the 1920s (ranging from Pablo Picasso's Cubist painting to Alexander Calder's kinetic sculpture) and were donated by artists for a promise of a permanent display in a public institution. It was artists, not museum professionals, who solicited these works from their colleagues and initially collected and organized the collection. Władysław Strzemiński, a painter and art theorist, initiated this enterprise and based the idea on his experience in curating post-revolutionary contemporary art in Russia and on his firm belief that the masses can be taught to appreciate radical art forms. This talk examines the history of the collection, its significance as a case study of an avant-garde art institution, and its place in the industrial, multicultural city of Łódź where it faced both political support and public backlash. The tensions around the collection exemplified the clashes between nationalist and more internationally oriented visions for the cultural identity of interwar Poland. Drawing on the archive of French-Polish diplomat Jan Brzękowski (who helped solicit the artworks in Paris), the newspaper discourse in Łódź, the visual materials promoting the museum, and the artworks themselves, I reconstruct the institutional history of this unique collection and examine how its initially fraught status was ultimately solidified.

RSVP
to
vsri@usc.edu

Image Credit: Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi
<https://zasoby.msl.org.pl/mobjects/view/3096>

