eISSN 2783-6843 | ISSN 1392-0316 | 10.37522/aaav.117.2025.299

"I Want to Go Back to Poland": Towards a History of Polish-South African Art Comradeship

Robert Kusek
Jagiellonian University in Kraków
Gołębia 24, 31-007 Kraków, Poland
robert.kusek@uj.edu.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9969-0221

Wojciech Szymański
University of Warsaw
Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00-927 Warszawa
wj.szymanski@uw.edu.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5992-0026

The article provides an overview of the cross-border and cross-continental cultural exchange between Polish and South African artists in the second half of the twentieth century, especially in the field of visual arts and in the period of the Cold War. Having identified several instances of creative dialogue between Polish and South African art (e.g., Teresa Tyszkiewiczowa, Chris Ledochowski), the essay focuses on the work of South African-born writer and playwright Deborah Levy, herself a descendant of Lithuanian Jewish immigrants to South Africa. The article aims to reconstruct and trace the trajectory of Levy's transnational affinity with Poland. Particular attention is given to the influence of post-WWII Polish visual culture on Levy's work (e.g., Tadeusz Kantor) and her collaborations with three Polish visual artists: Andrzej Maria Borkowski, Zofia Kalińska, and Andrzej Klimowski. The study also explores the conditions of South African-Polish artistic dialogue during the Cold War, including an analysis of the mediating role of the metropolis and the subject positions of those engaged in the aforementioned dialogue.

Keywords: South African literature, Polish visual culture, South African art, transnationalism.

> I want to go back to Prague; […] I want to go back to Yugoslavia; […] I want to go back to Romania; […] I want to go back to Slavia.[1]

Transnational Art "Comrades"

Although the first Poles are believed to have arrived in South Africa as early as the sixteenth century,[2] evidence of cross-border and cross-continental cultural exchange between Poland and South Africa began to surface only in the twentieth century—and almost exclusively in the field of literature.[3] Although it may be possible to trace a history of encounters and cross-pollination between Polish literature and South African literary production during this period, such a history would likely be fragmented, one-sided, riddled with gaps and omissions,

1 Deborah Levy, *Plays: I* (London: Methuen Drama, 2000), 8, 14, 19.

2 Arkadiusz Żukowski, "Polish Relations with and Settlement in South Africa (circa 1500–1835)," *Historia* 37, no. 1 (1992): 1–8. The reverse process—South Africans travelling to Poland—occurred only in the second half of the 20th century, especially after the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

3 Firstly, in the works of first-generation Jewish immigrants from the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, such as Hyman Polsky and Morris Hoffman, who, despite settling in South Africa, published their Yiddish-language short stories and poems in Warsaw (e.g., Hoffman's *Woglungsklangen* [1935] and Polsky's *In Afrike* [1939]); and, secondly, in the writings of second- and third-generation Jewish and Polish authors, such as Dan Jacobson's *Heshel Kingdom* (1998), Mark Gevisser's *Dispatcher* (2014), and Jan Glazewski's *Blood and Silver* (2022). Additionally, several other writers, including J.M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, and Stephen Watson, also developed an interest in post-WWII Polish literature. See Louis Hotz, Dora Leah Sowden, Joseph Sherman, and Marcia Leveson, "South African Literature," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd edition, vol. 19, Som–Tn, ed. Fred Skolnik (Farmington Hills: Thomson Gale, 2007), 54–60; Dan Jacobson, "Yiddish Fiction in South Africa," in *Adult Pleasures: Essays on Writers and Readers* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1988), 129–40; Robert Kusek, "From the Heart of the Country to the European Core: J. M. Coetzee and los polacos," *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 10, no. 3 (2023): 267–86. An exceptional case of cultural exchange in the field of literature is that of Lewis Nkosi, who lived and taught in People's Poland for several years. See Janina Łukanty-Nkosi, "Refleksje na temat życia i twórczości Lewisa Nkosi," *Afryka* 33 (2011): 79–85; Monica Popescu, "Lewis Nkosi in Warsaw: Translating Eastern European Experiences for an African Audience," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48, no. 2 (2012): 176–87. Finally, it needs to be stated that the global recognition of post-WWII Polish writers, such as Czesław Miłosz and Zbigniew Herbert, played an important role in fostering an affiliative (not antagonistic) cultural exchange between Poland and South Africa in the field of literature. The worldwide circulation of their works, including translations published in major American arts and literary journals, provided South African writers with direct access to Polish literature.

and buried in various personal and institutional archives. However, the same cannot be said for the visual arts, which remain a domain where no significant creative dialogue or sustainable networks between Polish and South African artists appear to have been established[4]—particularly during the Cold War era. The reasons for this state of affairs are manifold and include: the antagonistic relationship between the apartheid-governed Republic of South Africa and the communist/state-socialist countries of the "Second World," which stifled both institutional and personal forms of communication; the largely peripheral status of Polish and South African art in relation to the major centres of modern art—especially when contrasted with the global success of post-WWII Polish poetry, which was translated, read, and studied in South Africa from the 1960s onwards; and the divergence in artistic temporalities (with South Africa embracing post-WWII vernacular modernism and Poland exploring post-WWII neo-avant-garde movements), which generated heterogenous artistic fields, each with its own taxonomies, hierarchies, frameworks, and aims.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the mutual disinterest of both parties regarding each other's artistic production during the second half of the twentieth century lies in the Cape Town-based Iziko South African National Gallery. One of its rooms houses a curious painting attributed to Wawrzyniec Zupnik, depicting what appears to be the forced exile of Poles from the burning city of Tarnopol (before WWII in Poland, nowadays in Ukraine). However, this image [Fig. 1] does not represent any form of dialogue between Polish and South African art and their respective histories. On the contrary, the work's mislabelling ("Tarnopal" instead of "Tarnopol"), the absence of a date, and a scene that holds no significance for South African viewers, created by an artist unknown in both South African and Polish art histories, underscore the painting's perplexing "presence" in the Iziko South African National Gallery, which testifies to a "non-history" of creative dialogue and exchange between Poland and South Africa in the field of the visual arts.[5] Yet, it also alludes to the painting's (currently dormant) role in unearthing a shared "potential history" of Polish and South

4 Even in the first half of the 20th century, South African art was shaped by the presence and significant contributions of several Jewish artists with roots in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including Yehudo Epstein, Moses Kottler, Wolf Kibel, and Lippy Lipshitz.

5 In an email exchange conducted for the purpose of this research, Andrew Lamprecht, Curator of Historical Paintings and Sculpture at the Iziko Museums of South Africa, admitted

1. Wawrzyniec Zupnik, *Tarnopal, East Poland*, unknown date, Iziko South African National Gallery, Photo by Wojciech Szymański

Wawrzyniec Zupnik, *Tarnopolis, Rytų Lenkija*, data nežinoma, Pietų Afrikos Iziko nacionalinė galerija, Wojciecho Szymańskio nuotrauka

African art. Drawing on Ariella Azoulay's concept, it involves the "reconstruction of *unrealized* possibilities, practices, and dreams that motivated and directed the actions of various actors in the past [and that were] disrupted by the constitution of a sovereign regime that created a differential and conflictive body politic."[6]

In fact, it is possible to identify a few more instances of this potential Polish-South African art history, despite their faint visibility, frequent concealment in depleted archival resources, or lack of acknowledgement in both official and personal repositories. One example is the work of Jan

that little is known about the painting itself and its origin. According to official documentation, the painting was purchased in Britain and donated to the Museum by a Mr. Ritchie in 1947.

6 Ariella Azoulay, "Potential History: Thinking through Violence," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 3 (2013): 565 (emphasis ours).

Maciej Miszewski, an architect[7] and chief designer of the brutalist Nico Malan Opera House in Cape Town (renamed Artscape in 2001).[8] After escaping Nazi- and Soviet-conquered Poland, Miszewski fought against the Nazis as a RAF pilot, but chose not to return to his newly "people's" homeland in 1945, settling instead in South Africa.[9] Another example is Tadeusz Jaroszynski, a Polish-Finnish painter who arrived in South Africa as a child during WWII. In the 1970s, Jaroszynski contributed surrealist imagery to the Johannesburg art scene. Also noteworthy is the enigmatic figure of Witold Domański, mentioned in two of Nadine Gordimer's letters as a Polish friend of both her and her husband Reinhold (a successful art dealer), who travelled between his two homes: Warsaw and Johannesburg.[10] Domański later appears on the margins of South African art history as a collector and curator who introduced Italian avant-garde artworks to Cape Town and Johannesburg through activities undertaken by the South African Society for Cultural Relations with Italy, and as a co-founder of the Whippman Gallery in Johannesburg.[11] Still, one cannot help but wonder if Domański's visits to Poland may have also resulted in his bringing works created by artists "imprisoned" behind the Iron Curtain to South Africa – a potential history par excellence in itself.

Any attempt to narrate the history of cultural exchange between Poland and South Africa during the Cold War cannot ignore the significant role of the Ledochowski family – especially Wlodzimierz (Wlodek)

7 Prior to 1939, Miszewski started his architectural studies at the Warsaw Institute of Technology and later earned his diploma from the Polish School of Architecture in Liverpool. See Izba Architektów Rzeczpospolitej, n.d., https://www.archimemory.pl/pokaz/jan_maciej_miszewski,15270 (accessed March 21, 2024).

8 Doreen E. Greig, *A Guide to Architecture in South Africa* (Cape Town: H. Timmins, 1971), 102.

9 Artscape, June 3, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/ArtscapeTheatre/photos/throwback-thursday-the-building-that-houses-artscape-is-celebrating-its-golden-j/10158875042696858/?paipv=0&eav=AfYYjnwVRBLdAl-YUnRjD5D5F9JdBqOtHRxC8VO-39pMJBPwICYSB_nVpgcV32hG3TzE&_rdr (accessed March 21, 2024).

10 For this reason, he was able to collect Gordimer's royalties for the Polish translation of *A World of Strangers*. See Nadine Gordimer, "Correspondence: Curtis Brown Ltd., 1960–1975," in *Nadine Gordimer Papers* (Bloomington: Lilly Library, Indiana University, 1966), n. pag.; and Nadine Gordimer, "Correspondence: A.P. Watt & Son, 1965–1978," in *Nadine Gordimer Papers* (Bloomington: Lilly Library, Indiana University, 1966), n. pag.

11 Eunice Basson, "*Christo Coetzee: Paintings from London and Paris 1954–1964*, Michael Stevenson and Deon Viljoen: Book Review," *De Arte* 67 (2003): 97.

Ledochowski, a Polish aristocrat who stood against the Nazis as an emissary, soldier, and diplomat for the Polish government in exile and who, after WWII, settled in South Africa, where he worked primarily as an engineer.[12] While his contributions to Polish-South African dialogue were mostly literary (among others, he introduced his friend Nadine Gordimer to the work of Czesław Miłosz), both his sister and son also played notable roles in the nascent history of artistic relations between the two countries. His sister, Teresa Tyszkiewiczowa, a celebrated Polish painter and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, visited her brother and his family in Southern Africa twice: in 1956 and 1982.[13] During her first visit, she painted a portrait of her sister-in-law, Basha (Basia) —likely one of the earliest artworks in Southern Africa to merge tachism and post-socialist realist figuration. His son, Chris Ledochowski, a renowned documentary photographer who participated in the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003, followed a reverse trajectory. In late 1974, he left South Africa for Kraków, where he enrolled in the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts.[14] Although his stay in Kraków lasted only a few months, it could be argued that it sparked his interest in photography, which would later centre on social and political themes. It is no coincidence that during his time in Kraków, Ledochowski was hosted by Włodzimierz Puchalski, one of the pioneers of socially-conscious Polish conservation photography in the post-WWII era.[15]

However, the infrequent, random, and largely isolated incidents such as the ones mentioned above were insufficient to establish a new cultural geography that would enable sustained cross-fertilization between Polish and South African artistic fields during the Cold War. Unable to engage in what Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih describe as "minor

12 Jan Ledochowski, "Włodzimierz Ledóchowski 1910–1987" (2018), https://www.ledochowski.eu/rodzina/wlodzimierz1910.html (accessed March 21, 2024).

13 Ibid. See also Iga Knysak, "'Tylko kwistry się martwią'. Rozmowa z Janem Ledóchowskim," in *Teresa Tyszkiewicz – próba monografii*, MA thesis (2020), https://www.ledochowski.eu/Ledsite%20test%20images/Teresa%20Tysz/Iga%20K%20rozmowa%20z%20Janem%20L.pdf (accessed March 21, 2024); Janusz K. Głowacki, „Teresa Tyszkiewiczowa – szkic biografii," in Teresa Tyszkiewiczowa, *Notatki (1940–1983)* (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Książka i Prasa, 2013), 499.

14 "Chris Ledochowski," South African History Online, April 6, 2023, https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/chris-ledochowski (accessed March 21, 2024).

15 Chris Ledochowski, "Interview with Chris Ledochowski by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański," Cape Town, April 7, 2023 and April 16, 2023. Unpublished.

transnationalism"—a non-binary configuration which prioritizes the horizontal model of cultural exchange[16]—both Polish and South African artists were instead compelled to operate within the existing vertical and largely hierarchical structures of the global art world. These structures, essentially based on the core/centre-periphery model, necessitated the identification of alternative spaces where these two "peripheral" artistic fields could intersect, allowing for the successful circulation of ideas. For William Kentridge, one such space was West Berlin, where in September 1986, at Theatermanufaktur, he witnessed a live performance of Tadeusz Kantor's *Let the Artist Die* (1985).[17] In an interview conducted in April 2023 for this article, Kentridge acknowledged the Polish artist and his work—especially his celebrated "bio-objects"[18]—as a significant influence on his own artistic practice, thus suggesting an alternative genealogy of Kentridge's art, one that has not been previously addressed in the scholarship and art criticism surrounding his work. In this conversation, Kentridge explicitly acknowledged Kantor's major contribution to *Woyzeck on the Highveld*, a play he wrote and staged six years after his encounter with *Let the Artist Die*.[19] The play premiered at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg in 1992. According to Kentridge, his collaborators watched several of Kantor's plays and artworks as part of the creative process; moreover, the play itself contains a direct nod to Kantor: a wardrobe which, much like in Kantor's work, is conceived as a "room" and serves as a "repository" of memories.[20]

However, there was another setting that facilitated this otherwise unlikely exchange between Polish and South African artists: Britain. In the second half of the twentieth century, Britain became a destination for many Poles and South Africans who fled—or were forced to leave—their respective oppressive homelands. Interestingly, Britain was not the most obvious

16 Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, eds., *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

17 William Kentridge, "Interview with William Kentridge by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański," Johannesburg, April 5, 2023. Unpublished; Tadeusz Kantor, *Ostatnie dziesięciolecie: 1980–1990* (Kraków: Cricoteka, 2013), 121.

18 Tadeusz Kantor, *Wielopole, Wielopole* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984), 132–3; Joanna Zielińska, "Obiekty / Objects," in *Nic 2 razy / Nothing Twice*, ed. Joanna Zielińska (Kraków: Cricoteka, 2015), 218–39.

19 In the above-mentioned interview, Kentridge also admits to having watched Kantor's plays numerous times on video. Ibid.

20 Ibid.

place for such an exchange to occur. During the Cold War, it was still Paris rather than London that recognized and exhibited Polish contemporary art, the preferred refuge for Polish artists seeking escape (if they managed to leave at all).[21] While Britain offered Poles (and, for that matter, South Africans) a chance to break free from censorship, repressive homeland policies, or economic hardship, from the viewpoint of the Polish (neo-)avant-gardists, it remained a largely unattractive destination. Foreign artists in Britain inevitably often found themselves on the periphery of English literary and artistic modernism and post-modernism. However, this peripheral status might have had some serious ramifications for one's willingness and ability to collaborate with others who, at the time, also inhabited the margins of the British art scene.

So, quite unexpectedly—and, in fact, accidentally—it was in Britain that the most fruitful and multifaceted collaboration between Polish and South African artists during the Cold War took place. It involved the South African-born writer and playwright Deborah Levy and four Polish artists: the aforementioned Tadeusz Kantor, as well as Andrzej Maria Borkowski, Zofia Kalińska, and Andrzej Klimowski. The aim of this paper is thus to reconstruct and trace the trajectory of Levy's transnational affinity with Poland—her decades-long dialogue with Polish artistic traditions, which started in the late 1970s and culminated in the final years of the Cold War. This dialogue gave rise to a series of works shaped by Levy's creative encounters with Polish art and artists. Special attention will be given to the circumstances and conditions that enabled this South African-Polish artistic dialogue, including the mediating role of marginal spaces within the metropolis, as well the subject positions of those involved. Central to this analysis is the notion of Levy, Kalińska, and Borkowski as artistic comrades. Drawing on Jodie Dean's seminal study, this paper understands artistic "comradeship" not only as a form of aesthetic and ideological "belonging," "solidarity," or a commitment to a "shared vision of the future"—one that is not "substantialize[d] [...] via race, ethnicity, nationality"[22]—but also as a form of transnational affective affinity between different (yet parallel) forms of experience (in particular, those of exile and homelessness).

21 Piotr Majewski, "Constructing the Canon: Exhibiting Contemporary Polish Art Abroad in the Cold War Era," *Ikonotheka* 30 (2020): 135–53.

22 Jodie Dean, *Comrade: An Essay on Political Belonging* (London and New York: Verso, 2019), 9, 10, 12, 39.

Deborah Levy and Her Poles

To claim that Deborah Levy is the most Central European of all the South African writers would, if anything, be an understatement. The assertion that Levy, who was born in Johannesburg in 1959 into a family of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania might belong aesthetically, affectionally, and in terms of identity more to the Central European (grand-)motherland[23] than to South Africa (where she was born and raised), Britain (where she was educated, raised a family with playwright David Gale, and lived), or France (where she now resides), finds substantial anchoring in her diverse body of work, starting with her 1985 play *Pax*. The Keeper, one of the play's four characters and, simultaneously, an archetype of Europe and its past, repeatedly voices a longing for the "other" Europe – one that, in the aftermath of WWII, remains inaccessible to her. Again and again, she chants: "I want to go back to Prague"; "I want to go back to Yugoslavia"; "I want to go back to Romania"; "I want to go back to Slavia [...]."[24] Over the next two decades, Levy's consecutive works of fiction would become – unprecedentedly—populated by a plethora of Central European characters who, "by a strange set of circumstances,"[25] have found themselves in Western Europe. These include Lapinski from her debut novel *Beautiful Mutants* (1989), Monika from *The Unloved* (1994), Magret's Polish lover from "Vienna" (2007), Józef Nowogrodzki from *Swimming Home* (2011), or Pavel from "Pillow Talk" (2013), to name but a few. Levy describes these Central European characters as the "eerie child[ren]"[26] of a divided Europe—"disoriented, [...] walk[ing] in zigzags, [...] displaced and dizzy."[27] If, as the narrator of *Swallowing Geography* argues, "to name someone is to give them a country,"[28] then the Kafkaesque initials "J. K." chosen by the novel's protagonist

23 Deborah's paternal grandparents came to South Africa from Krekenava in Lithuania. In an interview with Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański in January 2023, Deborah Levy discusses the formative role her paternal grandmother played in introducing the idea of Central Europe to her. Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański. "'Two Silver Herrings for My Granddaughter': Central Europe, Poland, and Transnational Affinities. Deborah Levy in Conversation," *European Journal of Life Writing* 14 (2025): 31–49.

24 Levy, *Pax*, op. cit., 8, 14, 19.

25 Ibid., 46.

26 Deborah Levy, *Swallowing Geography*, in Deborah Levy, *Early Levy* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 153.

27 Ibid., 173, 148.

28 Ibid., 183.

unambiguously signal her allegiance: her (imagined) homeland is Central Europe. One may argue that it is also the chosen home of Deborah Levy herself.

In Levy's literary exploration of Central European history, temporality, and identity, Poland clearly holds a privileged position, emerging as her major intellectual and aesthetic *(grand-)matrimoine*. It features prominently across her body of work, especially in short stories ("Black Vodka," "Vienna"), novels (*The Unloved*, *Swimming Home*, *The Man Who Saw Everything* [2019]), and her "living autobiography" (*Things I Don't Want to Know* [2013]). However, any reading of Levy's literary oeuvre must first acknowledge the foundation of her dialogue with Poland: a distinctive form of comradeship between the writer and Polish visual artists that began in the 1970s and 1980s. This series of encounters and creative collaborations, one could argue, defined Levy's practice for over almost four decades.

Levy's first encounter with Polish art most likely took place during her studies at the Dartington College of Arts in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[29] It was there—in an institution that occupied a marginal position relative to the London-based art world—that she met Andrzej Maria Borkowski, an émigré Polish visual artist and performer with roots in the Polish neo-avant-garde, as well as one of the founders of the experimental theatre company Akademia Ruchu[30] (Academy of Movement/Behaviour). According to Borkowski, Levy attended one of his workshops at Dartington, designed to expose students to radical theatrical practices from behind the Iron Curtain.[31] However, their collaboration began some time later when, after

29 Levy is not the only South African to have studied at Dartington. In the 1930s, Bryan Heseltine, a South African photographer, was a student at (then) Dartington Hall School. The authors are grateful to the reviewer of this paper for drawing our attention to this information, which further underscores the school's role as a place of connection across various European and non-European artistic circles.

30 In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Akademia Ruchu visited London several times at the invitation of the Cardiff Laboratory Theatre and Richard Demarco. It was because of these visits that Borkowski decided to settle in London after escaping People's Poland. Additionally, in 1986, during the Chernobyl incident, at the invitation of Akademia Ruchu, the Impact Theatre toured Poland with a piece called *The Carrier Frequency*, created in collaboration with writer Russell Hoban. We are grateful to Claire Macdonald for kindly providing us with this information.

31 Andrzej Maria Borkowski, "Interview with Andrzej Maria Borkowski by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański," London, November 10, 2022. Unpublished.

graduating from Dartington and returning to London, Levy became part of a network of experimental playwrights, performers, and visual artists—a collective in which Borkowski was also involved. Over the next decade or so, he not only performed in the original 1985 production of Levy's play *Clam*, playing the role of Lenin, but also designed the cover for Levy's first short story collection *Ophelia and the Great Idea* (1988) [Fig. 2], and created both the cover and illustrations for the first edition of her poetic work *An Amorous Discourse in the Suburbs of Hell* (1990). Their final collaboration was a series of collages Borkowski designed and executed on the staircase of Cambridge Darkroom in 1991, serving as the backdrop for a performative reading by Levy, Claire Macdonald, and Patricia Scanlon [Fig. 3].

During his collaboration with Levy in the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s, Borkowski was also closely engaged with several British countercultural artist groups, contributing to a range of ephemeral magazines. One such publication was *Casablanca*—a neo-Dadaist and post-Situationist bimonthly that addressed various social, political, and art-related issues. It was published by an art collective of the same name, which, in the magazine's colophon, defined itself as a "non-hierarchical, non-sexist coalition of individuals, interacting creatively in an oppression-free environment."[32] The collective also described itself as deliberately "[operating] an equal opportunities policy and [having] on its payroll some of the most unemployable people in Britain."[33] Borkowski clearly felt a considerable affinity with the group's non-violent, anarcho-liberal programme and, consequently, frequently contributed artworks to the magazine. For example, in one of its 1993 issues, he published a neo-surrealist fold-out collage titled *Strawberries and Screams*. His other works—often described by Borkowski himself as "pictures cut out of paper"[34]—also appeared in the British art zine *SuperReal: The British Surreal Journal*, where he worked as picture editor.

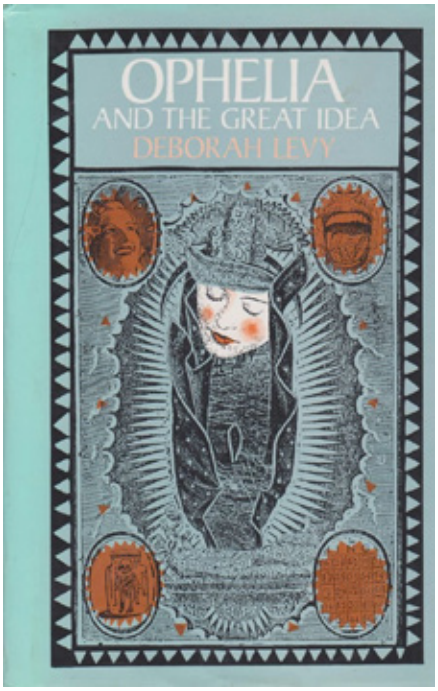
In fact, the title of the zine might serve as a perfect illustration of Borkowski's artistic approach at the time, which can justifiably be classified as "super-real"[35]—a direct and unambiguous reference to the surrealist

32 E.g., *Casablanca* 1, no. 6 (1993): 1.

33 Ibid.

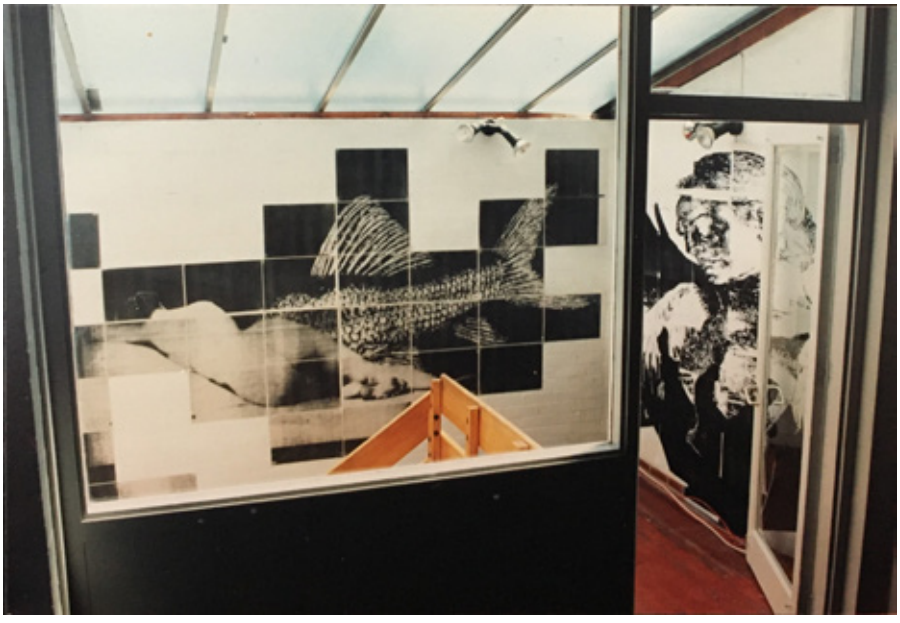
34 Andrzej Borkowski, "Strawberries and Screams," *Casablanca* 1, no. 6 (1993): 18–9.

35 This should not be confused with the American super-realist art created by painters such as Chuck Close.



2. Andrzej Maria Borkowski, book cover for Deborah Levy's *Ophelia and the Great Idea*, 1988, Photo by Wojciech Szymański

Andrzej Maria Borkowski, Deboros Levy knygos *Ofelija ir didžioji idėja* viršelis, 1988, Wojciecho Szymańskio nuotrauka



3. Andrzej Maria Borkowski, series of collages, *Cambridge Darkroom's staircase*, 1991, Courtesy of the artist

Andrzej Maria Borkowski, koliažų serija *Kembridžo* Darkroom *galerijos laiptinė*, 1991, menininko nuosavybė

tradition. His interest lay not only in oneiric and fantastic surrealist iconography but, crucially, in its central medium: collage and photomontage, techniques historically linked to Dadaism and Surrealism. However, it does not imply that Borkowski remained an epigone of Surrealism, which by the late 1980s had already become a historical (and largely defunct) phenomenon. Rather, he should be seen as a postmodernist pastiche-maker, who, both subversively and ironically, employed techniques such as recycling, re-making, appropriation, or inter-visual allusions and quotations. He stands as a postmodernist neo-surrealist, who in his heterotopic collages fused different and mutually incompatible realities and worlds to create a unified super-realist whole, where the sacred co-exists with the profane, and the high mixes with the vernacular and tawdry low. This aesthetic position can be best exemplified by Borkowski's collaboration with Levy.

As already noted, in the late 1980s, Borkowski created a series of works personally selected by Levy for her books, including both cover designs and illustrations. For the short story collection *Ophelia and the Great Idea*, he provided a collage-based cover that immediately evokes the imagery of a Queen playing card. However, instead of the traditional spades, diamonds, hearts, or clubs, the four corners of the composition feature a bingo board, a child's skeleton preserved in a jar, a smiling woman cut out from an unknown 1960s advertisement, and a pair of widely opened female lips. This interplay of erotic and, at the same time, thanatic elements is anchored by the crowned queen in the centre of the image. The cover not only exemplifies Borkowski's mastery to merge opposites but also his direct dialogue with Levy's titular (and distinctly surrealist) short story, in which violence, adultery, and infanticide are juxtaposed with images of a "destitute" and "homeless"[36] Virgin Mary. Certainly, Borkowski's mandorla-shaped queen embodies the surrealist motif of the eye in the vagina (*l'oeil-sexe*)—an image central for the surrealist poetics. However, her entire costume—a crown, a star-studded cloak, a half-moon over her head, and rays of light—directly reinterprets the iconography of the Virgin Mary, specifically, the widely revered Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn, displayed above one of the Vilnius' city gates. In this way, Borkowski's artwork celebrates an extraordinary

36 Deborah Levy, *Ophelia and the Great Idea* (New York: Viking, 1989), 53.

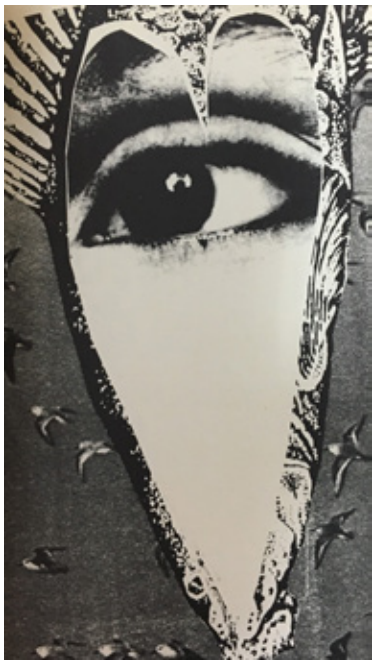
erotic and religious fusion of two distinct imaginaries: Catholic and surrealist, Polish and South African. It creates a visual space where the two "homeless" aesthetics, narratives, and identities can meet.

When, a year later, Levy once again invited Borkowski to contribute visually to her new work—a book-long love poem titled *An Amorous Discourse in the Suburbs of Hell* that reimagines Milton's *Paradise Lost* as a dialogue between a fallen (and Chernobyl-polluted) angel and an accountant living in London's "suburbs of hell,"—he submitted not only the book's cover but also seven additional illustrations. This new series continued Borkowski's paradoxical, surrealist-Catholic aesthetic, with its leitmotif being an enlarged image of an eye and tears, appearing as many as four times [Fig. 4]. This neo-surrealist travesty of Man Ray's classical piece *Glass Tears* (1932) evokes the iconography of Our Lady of Sorrows, Mater Dolorosa, aligning with Georges Bataille's notion of the religious origins of the tears of Eros.[37] Other collages that illustrate Levy's poem also incorporate citations from pre-modern art: *Melancholy I* (1514) by Albrecht Dürer, *Reclining Female Nude* (c. 1840) by William Etty, and *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* (1524) by Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen. Together, these references construct a surrealist-Catholic imaginary, where a weeping Madonna sits next to the wing of Archangel Gabriel, the severed head of John the Baptist, and the fish—the best-known symbol of Christianity. The final collage in the series depicts a Bataillean eye in the vagina—serving as a visual coda to his previous collaboration with Levy [Fig. 5].

Around the time Levy started her collaboration with Borkowski, she also encountered the work of two Polish artists who, in retrospect, can be seen as central to her artistic development: the visual artist and playwright Tadeusz Kantor and performer Zofia Kalińska. Kantor's plays, which Levy saw when they were staged at the Riverside Studios in 1980 and 1982,[38] profoundly shaped her visual and textual sensibility—particularly his explorations of repression and forgetfulness, the role of objects and images in excavating painful histories and confronting one's traumas, and his

37 Georges Bataille, *The Tears of Eros*, trans. Peter Connor (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1989).

38 Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, Natalia Zarzycka, eds., *Kantor Was Here* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2011), 182.



4, 5. Andrzej Maria Borkowski, illustrations for Deborah Levy's *An Amorous Discourse in the Suburbs of Hell*, 1990, Photo by Wojciech Szymański

Andrzej Maria Borkowski, iliustracijos Deboros Levy knygai *Pokalbis apie meilę pragaro prieigose*, 1990, Wojciecho Szymańskio nuotrauka

approach to time.[39] In an interview discussing her Central European legacy, Levy recalls her first encounter with Kantor's work—his play *Wielopole, Wielopole*—saying: "It was the making of the form, making of a whole new language that absolutely lit up my own imagination and a sense of possibilities. It was so sad, it was so skilled, it was so thrilling."[40] As for Kalińska, Levy was introduced to her through her Dartington friends, Tanya Myers and Jill Greenhalgh, who met Kalińska in April 1986 during a visit to Poland at the invitation of Akademia Ruchu. Later that year, they invited Kalińska to lead a workshop at the Magdalena International Women's Theatre Festival in Cardiff at Arts Lab. So it was in Cardiff—another place occupying a marginal position in relation to the British art world metropolis—that Levy

39 Kusek and Szymański, "Two Silver Herrings," op. cit. Jacques Testard, "Interview with Deborah Levy," *The White Review*, August 2013, https://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-deborah-levy/ (accessed March 23, 2024).

40 Kusek and Szymański. "Two Silver Herrings," op. cit.

first met Kalińska. This encounter provided an impetus for Levy's seminal 1988 journey to state-socialist Poland, where she documented Kalińska's workshop for an international group of actors and performers.[41]

Although Levy's encounters with the Polish artists are referenced in several of her works—for example, the Polish menu in *Swimming Home* is a direct transcript of one she collected during her 1988 stay in Kraków)—they are particularly evident in her "living autobiography," a semi-autofictional, semi-autotheoretical trilogy comprising *Things I Don't Want to Know* (2013), *The Cost of Living* (2018), and *Real Estate* (2021). One of the main features of the trilogy is its extended and continuous engagement with the visual arts, which matches—if not surpasses—its intertextual dialogue with works of literature. However, while Levy's writing reflects a deep "intermedial" affinity with various visual artists, the most powerful "visual" presence in the trilogy belongs to Kantor and Kalińska, the latter having performed in several of Kantor's productions. Although Kantor is mentioned explicitly only once in the trilogy, his influence permeates the entire work. One clear parallel is the trilogy's overall attitude to the past, which mirrors Kantor's belief that memory should be free from "sentimental 'memento-touting.'"[42] Another is its focus on of everyday objects, particularly so-called "poor objects," which often serve as conduits for unwanted memories or traumas—for example, a shower tap in a Berlin café, which reminds Levy of the gassing of her relatives in Auschwitz, or the "body-electric"—an electric bicycle fused with her own body ("I had wheels")[43]—can be interpreted as Levy's version of Kantor's celebrated "bio-objects." The Polish director is also an obvious influence behind the trilogy's plural realities (past, present, and future) morphing into a "new reality,"[44] as well as in its fascination with spectres and doppelgangers. Levy refers to her former self as a "spectral woman" and suggests that her past self ["she"] and her present self ["I"] "haunt each other across time,"[45] as well as the process of simultaneously suppressing and excavating "things [she does not] want to know."

41 Ibid.

42 Anna S. Burzyńska, "Objects on the Stage of History," trans. Jessica Taylor-Kucia, in *Tadeusz Kantor: Widma / Tadeusz Kantor: Spectres*, ed. Joanna Targoń (Kraków: Cricoteka, 2020), 87.

43 Deborah Levy, *The Cost of Living* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2018), 66.

44 Kantor, *Wielopole*, op. cit., 141.

45 Deborah Levy, *Real Estate* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2021), 14, 15.

Kalińska, by contrast, is explicitly acknowledged as one of the feminist "mothers" of Levy's artistic practice. She is not only the first visual artist mentioned in the trilogy but also the subject of Levy's earliest reminiscence. In the opening chapter of *Things I Don't Want to Know*, Levy recalls her visit to Poland to attend a workshop led by Kalińska in her Kraków studio—an encounter she presented as a defining moment in her creative development. Particularly important to Levy are the guidelines offered by Kalińska to her actors, which she diligently recorded in her notebook and revisited throughout her life. These principles, addressing, among others, the relationship between form and content, the measured use of emotion, and, most importantly, a woman's entitlement to "speak up," are immediately recognized by Levy as an essential part of her writer's toolbox and, by extension, the guiding principles of her "living autobiography." "It occurred to me that I had jogged along with Zofia's notes to her actors in my own writing for much of my life,"[46] Levy concludes. It seems evident that by acknowledging her debt to two avant-garde artists from Poland, Levy establishes an alternative genealogy for her practice—one that liberates it from UK—or Western-centric presumptions about its origins.

Levy's Polish affinities remained strong even after the collapse of the Iron Curtain. In 2016, she published *Stardust Nation*, a graphic novel born from an artistic collaboration with the UK-based artist Andrzej Klimowski, her colleague from the Royal College of Art.[47] This was not their first joint project; in 1989, Klimowski had been approached by the publisher Jonathan Cape to design the cover for her first novel, *Beautiful Mutants*—which he undertook.

When Levy and Klimowski met again, this time in person, Levy was teaching writing in the Animation Department of the Royal College of Art. It was there, in the College's rooms, that the two began collaborating on classes. In these joint classes, Levy would focus on some of the images and the writing, while Klimowski would examine some of the writing and

46 Deborah Levy, *Things I Don't Want to Know* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 16.

47 Klimowski was born into a family of Polish migrants who settled in Britain after the end of WWII. In the 1970s, he lived in Warsaw, where he studied poster art and animation at the Academy of Fine Arts. Andrzej Klimowski, "Interview with Andrzej Klimowski by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański," London, November 9, 2022. Unpublished; Sylwia Giżka, "Andrzej Klimowski," *culture.pl*, August 20, 2020, https://culture.pl/en/artist/andrzej-klimowski (accessed March 23, 2024).

the images, providing students with different perspectives and feedback.[48] According to Levy, when it was proposed that her short-story "Stardust Nation" be turned into a graphic novel, she immediately approached Klimowski and invited him to collaborate. "I'm very loyal to my Polish affinities,"[49] Levy confessed when asked about the origins of this visual-textual project.

Levy was not the first writer to appreciate Klimowski's extraordinary visual imagination. For example, according to the Nobel Prize-winning playwright Harold Pinter, who had the all the covers of his books published by Faber & Faber designed by Klimowski, the Polish artist always "looks at things head-on but at the same time inside out and upside down, round the corner and through a shattered keyhole. His eye is a microscope, a magnifying glass, a two-way mirror and a crystal ball."[50] Given Pinter's description of Klimowski as an artist with strong surrealist affinities—"at the same time inside out and upside down"—it is no surprise that the covers of Pinter's books were deeply influenced by surrealist iconography.

Stardust Nation is no exception in revealing Klimowski's links to the surrealist tradition which perfectly complements Levy's topsy-turvy narrative about a successful advertising executive, Tom Banbury, and his doppelgänger, Nick Gazidis, who claims the former's traumatic memories and re-enacts them in his own life. In this "commix,"[51] recognised as a treatise on memory, split identities, and chronically divided subjectivities, as well as a testament to Levy's Central European genealogy, Klimowski inter-visually engages with Surrealism. He quotes surrealist painting "verbatim" (or rather picturātim)—for instance, he appropriates Man Ray's *The Lovers* (1933).[52] He also alludes to surrealist works, such as *Mae West's Face which May Be Used as a Surrealist Apartment* (1933–34) by Salvador Dali,[53] or by drawing a moon with a human face, he directly references stills from the French illusionist and filmmaker Georges Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), a film that was surrealist *avant la lettre*. He introduces a whole repertoire of

48 Klimowski, "Interview," op. cit.

49 Kusek and Szymański. "'Two Silver Herrings,'" op. cit.

50 Harold Pinter, "Andrzej Klimowski: Biography," https://www.klimowski.com/pages/about-us (accessed March 24, 2023).

51 Art Spiegelman, "Commix: An Idiosyncratic Historical and Aesthetic Overview," in *Print* 42, no. 6 (1998): 61.

52 Deborah Levy, Andrzej Klimowski, *Stardust Nation* (London: Self Made Hero, 2016), 13.

53 Ibid., 14.

surrealist motifs, such as a boy with the body of a bird or a bird with the head of a boy, which he borrows from post-human hybrids featuring in the paintings by Max Ernst or Leonora Carrington.[54] Finally, he introduces his own visual solutions, which, despite their originality, can be seen as part the surrealist legacy of the "uncanny." These include images like a butterfly-man pinned by a massive needle or the pink-suited Sigmund Freud, whose body, resting on a table, turns out to be a human-shaped cake.[55]

Recalling her cooperation with Klimowski, Levy admitted: "[W]e [i.e., herself and Klimowski] shared an affinity, we shared a liking of the strange, of Surrealism."[56] There is no doubt that in her love of the surreal—which, for Levy, is not limited exclusively to the French tradition but also includes such Central European artists as Eva Švankmajerová or Věra Chytilová—Levy found a perfect "comrade" in Andrzej Klimowski.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to provide the first comprehensive overview of the cross-border and cross-continental cultural exchange between Polish and South African artists in the second half of the twentieth century—especially in the field of the visual arts—and, in doing so, suggest the existence of both real and potential Polish-South African art histories. By discussing several (mostly isolated) examples of various transnational encounters between Polish and South African artists, as well as the creative dialogues that followed in their wake, the essay sought to identify and explore the conditions and limitations of Polish-South African cultural exchange during the Cold War period. As a result, a number of conclusions have emerged, particularly from the study of Deborah Levy's decades-long dialogue with Andrzej Maria Borkowski, Tadeusz Kantor, Zofia Kalińska, and Andrzej Klimowski.

Firstly, it is undeniable that given the sheer impossibility of participating in a horizontal exchange of ideas, both parties had to rely on the mediating role of the metropolis. However, they often problematized the vertical structure of this exchange by initiating and conducting their dialogue not in the heart of the metropolis (i.e. in international art world centres like

54 Ibid., 22.

55 Ibid., 58, 90, 91.

56 Kusek and Szymański. "'Two Silver Herrings,'" op. cit.

Paris), but in its marginal spaces – such as Dartington or Cardiff in Levy's case. Secondly, without state-sponsorship or institutional support, cooperation between Polish and South African artists had to rely almost exclusively on alternative networks of cultural exchange: artists' collectives, experimental theatre companies, local diasporas, families, and so on. Thirdly, it is more than justifiable to assert that the cornerstone of this transnational cooperation was a shared affinity between Polish and South African writers—an affinity that was not only aesthetic (for example, the use of the surrealist poetics, re-evaluation of realism, fondness for appropriation, and an interplay of visual and performative arts) but also affective, rooted in shared passions, political positions, and friendships. What is more, what the Polish and South African artists discussed herein seemingly share is the experience of migration or exile from their oppressive homelands: apartheid South Africa in Levy's case and People's Poland in Borkowski's. Taking all of the above into account, we can conclude that the Polish-South African cooperation analyzed in this paper was forged, predicated upon, and sustained by a shared yet unique sense of comradeship. This camaraderie takes place in a peripheral space and can only be born out of a dialogue between two individuals who are essentially "bastard people"[57]—those dispossessed and in constant pursuit of their "real" home, even if such an endeavour takes them as far as the European core or the southern tip of Africa.

Received —— 2024 10 13

Acknowledgements

This research was funded in whole by the National Science Centre, Poland, grant no. 2020/39/B/HS2/02083. For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a CC-BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) version arising from this submission.

57 Dean, *Comrade*, op. cit., 30.

Bibliography

Azoulay, Ariella. "Potential History: Thinking through Violence." *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 3 (2013): 548–74.

Basson, Eunice. "*Christo Coetzee: Paintings from London and Paris 1954–1964*, Michael Stevenson and Deon Viljoen: Book Review." *De Arte* 67 (2003): 96–99.

Bataille, Georges. *The Tears of Eros*. Translated by Peter Connor. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1989.

Borkowski, Andrzej Maria. "Interview with Andrzej Maria Borkowski by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański." London, November 10, 2022. Unpublished.

Borkowski, Andrzej Maria. "Strawberries and Screams." *Casablanca* 1, no. 6 (1993): 18–19.

Burzyńska, Anna S. "Objects on the Stage of History." Translated by Jessica Taylor-Kucia. In *Tadeusz Kantor: Widma / Tadeusz Kantor: Spectres*, edited by Joanna Targoń, 85–94. Kraków: Cricoteka, 2020.

Dean, Jodie. *Comrade: An Essay on Political Belonging*. London and New York: Verso, 2019.

Głowacki, Janusz K. "Teresa Tyszkiewiczowa – szkic biografii." In *Teresa Tyszkiewiczowa. Notatki (1940–1983)*, 473–500. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Książka i Prasa, 2013.

Gordimer, Nadine. "Correspondence: A.P. Watt & Son, 1965–1978." In *Nadine Gordimer Papers*. Bloomington: Lilly Library, Indiana University, 1966. N. pag.

Gordimer, Nadine. "Correspondence: Curtis Brown Ltd., 1960–1975." In *Nadine Gordimer Papers*. Bloomington: Lilly Library, Indiana University, 1966. N. pag.

Greig, Doreen E. *A Guide to Architecture in South Africa*. Cape Town: H. Timmins, 1971.

Hotz, Louis, Dora Leah Sowden, Joseph Sherman, and Marcia Leveson. "South African Literature." In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd edition, vol. 19, *Som–Tn*, edited by Fred Skolnik, 54–60. Farmington Hills: Thomson Gale, 2007.

Jacobson, Dan. "Yiddish Fiction in South Africa." In *Adult Pleasures: Essays on Writers and Readers*, 129–140. London: Andre Deutsch, 1988.

Kantor, Tadeusz. *Ostatnie dziesięciolecie: 1980–1990*. Edited by Józef Chrobak and Justyna Michalik. Kraków: Cricoteka, 2013.

Kantor, Tadeusz. *Wielopole, Wielopole*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984.

Kentridge, William. "Interview with William Kentridge by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański." Johannesburg, April 5, 2023. Unpublished.

Klimowski, Andrzej. "Interview with Andrzej Klimowski by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański." London, November 9, 2022. Unpublished.

Kusek, Robert. "From the Heart of the Country to the European Core: J. M. Coetzee and *los polacos*." *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 10, no. 3 (2023): 267–286.

Kusek, Robert, and Wojciech Szymański. "'Two Silver Herrings for My Granddaughter': Central Europe, Poland, and Transnational Affinities. Deborah Levy in Conversation." *European Journal of Life Writing* 14 (2025): 31–49.

Ledochowski, Chris. "Interview with Chris Ledochowski by Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański." Cape Town, April 7, 2023 and April 16, 2023. Unpublished.

Levy, Deborah. *Ophelia and the Great Idea*. New York: Viking, 1989.

Levy, Deborah. *Plays: I*. London: Methuen Drama, 2000.

Levy, Deborah. *Real Estate*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2021.

Levy, Deborah. *Swallowing Geography*. In Deborah Levy, *Early Levy*. London: Penguin Books, 2014.

Levy, Deborah. *The Cost of Living*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2018.

Levy, Deborah. *Things I Don't Want to Know.* London: Penguin Books, 2013.

Levy, Deborah. ""Two Silver Herrings for my Granddaughter": Central Europe, Poland, and Transnational Affinities. Deborah Levy in Conversation with Robert Kusek and Wojciech Szymański." *Lifewriting Annual: Biographical and Autobiographical Studies* 7, no. 1 (2024): (forthcoming).

Levy, Deborah, and Andrzej Klimowski. *Stardust Nation*. London: Self Made Hero, 2016.

Lionnet, Françoise, and Shu-mei Shih, eds. *Minor Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Łukanty-Nkosi, Janina. "Refleksje na temat życia i twórczości Lewisa Nkosi" [Reflections on the Life and Work of Lewis Nkosi]. *Afryka* 33 (2011): 79–85.

Majewski, Piotr. "Constructing the Canon: Exhibiting Contemporary Polish Art Abroad in the Cold War Era." *Ikonotheka* 30 (2020): 135–153.

Murawska-Muthesius, Katarzyna, and Natalia Zarzycka, eds. *Kantor Was Here: Tadeusz Kantor in Great Britain*. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2011.

Piotrowski, Piotr. *Znaczenia modernizmu. W stronę historii sztuki polskiej po 1945 roku*. Poznań: Rebis, 2011.

Popescu, Monica. "Lewis Nkosi in Warsaw: Translating Eastern European Experiences for an African Audience." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48, no. 2 (2012): 176–187.

Spiegelman, Art. "Commix: An Idiosyncratic Historical and Aesthetic Overview." *Print* 42, no. 6 (1998): 61–73.

Zielińska, Joanna. "Obiekty / Objects." In *Nic 2 razy / Nothing Twice*. Edited by Joanna Zielińska, 218–239. Kraków: Cricoteka, 2015.

Żukowski, Arkadiusz. "Polish Relations with and Settlement in South Africa (circa 1500–1835)." *Historia* 37, no. 1 (1992): 1–8.

Artscape. "Throwback Thursday: The Building That Houses Artscape Is Celebrating Its Golden J." June 3, 2021. https://www.facebook.com/ArtscapeTheatre/photos/throwback-thursday-the-building-that-houses-artscape-is-celebrating-its-golden-j/10158875042696858/?paipv=0&eav=AfYYjnwVRBLdAl-YUnRjD5D5F9JdBqOtHRxC8VO39pMJBPwICYSB_nVpgcV32hG3TzE&_rdr (accessed March 21, 2024).

"Chris Ledochowski." South African History Online, April 6, 2023. https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/chris-ledochowski (accessed March 21, 2024).

Giżka, Sylwia. "Andrzej Klimowski." *culture.pl*, August 20, 2020. https://culture.pl/en/artist/andrzej-klimowski (accessed March 23, 2024).

Izba Architektów Rzeczpospolitej. "Jan Maciej Miszewski." *Archimemory*. n.d. https://www.archimemory.pl/pokaz/jan_maciej_miszewski,15270 (accessed March 21, 2024).

Knysak, Iga. "'Tylko kwistry się martwią.' Rozmowa z Janem Ledóchowskim." In "Teresa Tyszkiewicz – próba monografii." MA thesis, 2020. https://www.ledochowski.eu/Ledsite%20test%20images/Teresa%20Tysz/Iga%20K%20rozmowa%20z%20Janem%20L.pdf (accessed March 21, 2024)

Ledochowski, Jan. "Włodzimierz Ledóchowski 1910–1987." 2018. https://www.ledochowski.eu/rodzina/wlodzimierz1910.html (accessed March 21, 2024).

Pinter, Harold. "Andrzej Klimowski: Biography." https://www.klimowski.com/pages/about-us (accessed March 21, 2024).

Testard, Jacques. "Interview with Deborah Levy." *The White Review*, August 2013. https://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-deborah-levy/ (accessed March 23, 2024).

Santrauka

„Noriu grįžti į Lenkiją“: Lenkijos ir Pietų Afrikos Respublikos meninės bičiulystės istorija

Robert Kusek, Wojciech Szymański

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Pietų Afrikos literatūra, Lenkijos vizualinė kultūra, Pietų Afrikos menas, transnacionalizmas.

Straipsnyje apžvelgiami XX a. antros pusės Lenkijos ir Pietų Afrikos Respublikos menininkų tarpvalstybiniai ir tarpžemyniniai kultūriniai mainai, ypač vizualiųjų menų srityje Šaltojo karo laikotarpiu. Aptarus kelis šių valstybių meno kūrybinio dialogo pavyzdžius (Teresos Tyszkiewiczowos ir Chriso Ledochowskio atvejus), daugiausia kalbama apie Pietų Afrikoje gimusios rašytojos ir dramaturgės Deboros Levy kūrybą, išsiskiriančią ypatingu dėmesiu Lenkijai ir Centrinei Europai. Ji, kilusi iš Lietuvos žydų emigrantų šeimos, atgaivino ryšį su savo protėvių tėvyne Centrinėje Europoje po to, kai jos tėvas, kovotojas prieš apartheidą Normanas Levy, buvo priverstas palikti Pietų Afriką ir kartu su šeima apsigyveno Anglijoje. Būtent Jungtinėje Karalystėje Deborah Levy atrado kelių Lenkijos vizualinių menininkų kūrybą, užmezgė ilgalaikį dialogą su Centrinės Europos menine kūryba, reflektuodama bei pripažindama savo meninį paveldą (arba *matrimoine*). Straipsnio tikslas – atkurti ir nužymėti D. Levy tarpvalstybinių ryšių su Lenkija trajektoriją, prasidėjusią XX a. 8 deš. pabaigoje ir išsiskleidusią paskutiniaisiais Šaltojo karo metais. Atskirai nagrinėjamas Lenkijos pokarinės vizualinės kultūros poveikis jos kūrybai (Tadeuszo Kantoro menas) ir jos bendradarbiavimas su trimis Lenkijos vizualiniais menininkais Andrzejumi Maria Borkowskiu, Zofia Kalińska ir Andrzejumi Klimowskiu, peržengęs valstybių sienas ir paremtas skirtingų geopolitinių bei meninių patirčių susitikimu. Straipsnyje ne tik aptariami kūriniai, sukurti šių kūrybinių susitikimų kontekste, bet ir analizuojamos sąlygos, lėmusios Pietų Afrikos ir Lenkijos meninį dialogą Šaltojo karo metais (įskaitant tarpininkaujantį metropolijos vaidmenį bei dalyvių subjektyviąsias pozicijas šiame dialoge).