

MONOPOL

Wanda Czełkowska (1930, Brest, Belarus – 2021, Warsaw, Poland) was a key figure of the Polish avant-garde. She studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow between 1949 and 1954, at a time when socialist realism was the prevailing artistic doctrine. Czełkowska was a member of the seminal Second Kraków Group (1968–1982), whose other members included Tadeusz Kantor, Erna Rosenstein, Maria Jarema, and Maria Pinińska-Bereś. In 1963, she participated in the III Biennale de Paris, where she resided with Alina Szapocznikow and Roman Cieślewicz until her departure for a cultural fellowship in Rome.

Her oeuvre was defined by an investigation of the limits of different artistic forms and disciplines, encompassing sculpture, installation, painting, drawing, and photography. She placed particular emphasis on the intellectual and analytical dimensions of the artistic process. Thus, the central motif in Czełkowska's work was the head, initially reflecting the stylistic conventions of Etruscan sculpture and later developing into an abstract form in her remarkable *Heads* series. From the 1970s, her work moved towards conceptual realisations, of which *Table* (1968–1971) and *Absolute Elimination of Sculpture as a Notion of Shape* (1972) are the most significant examples. In 1972, Czełkowska was invited to Edinburgh by Richard Demarco to participate in the exhibition *Atelier '72*. Due to technical difficulties, she presented *Conceptual Information about the 'Table'*. In lieu of an actual installation, the artist situated the plaster heads directly on the ground between two panels, illustrating the initial concept of the piece.

Despite her pioneering body of work, Czełkowska's oeuvre remained underrecognized for much of her career, gaining wider recognition only in her later years. In 2016, the National Museum in Warsaw organised a comprehensive exhibition of her work, entitled *Retrospection*, which was followed by an international symposium. In 2023, her first major retrospective outside Poland, *Art Is Not Rest*, was held at the Muzeum Susch in Switzerland.

Her works are part of numerous institutional collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, the National Museum in Krakow, the Silesian Museum in Katowice, the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko, and the Zamoyski Museum in Kozłówka.

Selected solo exhibitions:

- 2024 *Geta Brătescu, Wanda Czełkowska*, Galeria Monopol, Warsaw, PL
- 2023 *Posthuman Abstraction*, Double Q Gallery, Hong Kong, CN (with Zuza Golińska)
Art Is Not Rest, Muzeum Susch, Susch, CH
- 2019 *Betwixt*, Piktogram, Warsaw, PL (with Paul Czerlitzki)
- 2016 *Wanda Czełkowska: Retrospection*, Xavery Dunikowski Museum Of Sculpture in Królikarnia, National Museum, Warsaw, PL

- 1996 *Wanda Czełkowska*, Centre for Polish Sculpture, Orońsko, PL
- 1990 *Elegy. Reminder After*, Zderzak Gallery, Krakow, PL
- 1969 Galeria Współczesna, Warsaw, PL
- 1963 *Wanda Czełkowska*, Galeria Krzysztofory, Krakow, PL

Selected group exhibitions:

- 2024 *The Plastic Body*, Stavanger Art Museum, NO
- 2023 *Obsession I*, ECHO, Cologne, DE
- 2020 *Sour Cherries*, Arsenal Gallery, Białystok, PL
Theft and Destruction, Arsenal Gallery, Białystok, PL
On the Politics of Delicacy, Capitain Petzel, Berlin, DE
- 2019 *Under the Radar: Contemporary Masters from Central & Eastern Europe*, Q Contemporary, London, UK
- 2018 *Land of Lads, Land of Lashes*, Thaddeus Ropac Gallery, London, UK
Meditations of Fibonacci. The Corduroy Bunny | Facing Katarzyna Kobro (1898–1951), Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Wrocław, PL; National Art Gallery, Sopot, PL
Shapeshifting: Eisenstein as Method, Museum of Art, Łódź, PL
- 2016 *Around the Edge*, Broadway 1602, New York, US
121 Street, Broadway 1602, New York, US
- 2013 *From the Darkness*, BWA Sokół Gallery of Contemporary Art, Nowy Sącz, PL
- 2011 *Resistance*, Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, PL
- 2010 *The State of Dydo. Polish Contemporary Sculpture*, National Art Gallery, Sopot, PL
- 2008 *Pink Intuition*, Xawery Dunikowski Museum of Sculpture in Królikarnia, National Museum, Warsaw, PL
- 2000 *Utopia and Vision*, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
- 1996 *The Figure in Polish Sculpture of 19th and 20th Century*, Centre of Polish Sculpture, Orońsko, PL; Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
- 1995 *Generazioni e Tendenze dell Arte Contemporanea a Cracovia*, Palazzo Sinibaldi, Sant'Elpidio a Mare, IT
- 1993 *Modern Polish Sculpture 1955–1992*, Centre of Polish Sculpture, Orońsko, PL
Artists from Kraków, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
- 1981 *16th Show of Krakow Group*, Galeria Krzysztofory, Krakow, PL
- 1975 *Hommage à Xawery Dunikowski*, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
- 1972 *Atelier '72*, Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh, UK
- 1971 *4th Kraków's Meeting*, BWA Pavillon, Krakow, PL
- 1966 *Salon Européen '66*, Hôtel de Ville, Nancy, FR
- 1963 III Biennale de Paris, Paris, FR