

Beyond the auctions *Circulation of artworks in Poland*

In my work I tried to analyze phenomena related to the art market in Poland. This is a market widely considered to be small, young and irrelevant. From where comes this belief? Is it a question of traditional narrative of culture, a place that takes culture in Poland or poor organization of the market? Unfortunately, the answer to this question very often remains positive.

The art market is very diverse. Design, painting, sculpture or traditional arts develops in very different ways. During one of the interviews carried out during research on Labor Market of Artists and Creators¹ I heard: *In the design I think the demand is quite large. People, according to the fashion and snobbery, need artistic things. Aesthetics of life has gone up. These are the things that make the market receptive and there is still plenty of room for other activities despite the crisis. I think objects less utilitarian, like painting, are always difficult. I would like to believe that this is also in demand.* That belief in the need for fine arts expresses some skepticism. In popular belief the market is weak, with no buyers. Is this true belief?

For several years, we noticed increasing interest in investing in art. Forecasts show that by 2020, this market should triple its value and reach about 300 to 350 million zlotys or about 68- 79 million euro. These calculations include the most common analysis of sales taking place at auctions, which year-on-year gain in popularity. However, if we avoid these auction, what will leave?

Report of Market Research of Modern Art in Poland² [P. Rowicka- Masiewicz] shows

¹ Report in Polish with English summary:

http://rynekartystow.pl/userfiles/files/raport_rynek_pracy.pdf

² Research was executed between September and October 2008 in the following galleries: Czarna, Heppen Transfer, Leto, Program in Warsaw, Pies and the Stowarzyszenie Starter in Poznan. It was a questionnaire filled in by individual visitors of galleries. Participant of research could be anyone who has visited the gallery during the trial and expressed a desire to

that among people who were interviewed *61% bought artwork at least once in their life, and 86% of this group declares its intention to buy next one in the coming year. Who are today's collectors? The average age of people interested in buying art is 40 years. (The average age of non-buyer is 27 years) more often highly educated men than women. 45% of buyers rather well assesses their material level.* The author notes, however, that these are not studies representative of the entire Poland. Unfortunately, such studies are lacking.

Undeniably, however, we have to pay attention to the development of commercial galleries. There are, of course in large cities, more and more of them. To function, they must therefore sell works of art. So it happens. When I decided to take studies on the art market in Poland I asked befriended gallery that took me to training and introduced to the secrets of their business. And so I learned that the preferred form of the sale of art works is the commission. The artist inserts work to the gallery (you can always pick them up) and gives the amount of money, he or she wants to earn. Gallery impose on the art works a margin, which allows to keep on the market. It is rare for gallery to bought works of art. It is completely understandable behavior in business. In the gallery, where I worked margin was approximately 50% of the work. It seems that quite a lot, but with a smaller margin gallery would not be able to stay on the market. On the other hand, you could not complain about the lack of customers. People better situated often buy art as a present. But they more often choose cheaper graphics or photos than expensive paintings.

In the Report of Market Research of Modern Art in Poland [P. Rowicka- Masiewicz] appeared another important topic. Answer to why we think our art market is too weak, basically non-existent. Respondents believed that the most important issue is not, contrary to beliefs, lack of money for works of art. But they noticed a large gap in arts education, without which it is difficult to interest in art. The reason also given is the lack of a tradition of buying art works in Poland. Indeed, for a long time only very wealthy people with connections could affords to buy art. The transformation of the political system brought a social change. It is believed, however, that lack of demand remained. On the other hand, often wealthier people interested in investing in art are suspected about snobbery. As if having paintings was something negative.

participate in it. The test consists answers from 94 respondents

In conversation many artists appreciate the opening of the Polish art market to the world. Not only design but also visual arts Polish authors sell with some success outside Poland- from Canada to Germany. That is why Polish galleries are increasingly looking to represent their artists in foreign markets. Participation in them not only creates a positive image of a gallery but also facilitates the sale of art works abroad. Despite this, Poland for long time hasn't have its own art fair. Only this year, in April, there was an initiative International Art Fair Warsaw. There is an international exhibition of art of the twentieth and twenty-first century. As a result, Warsaw has gained an artistic event of international dimension for which many artists, gallery owners and collectors where waited. International Art Fair Warsaw gathered 35 exhibitors, so we are far from the world largest fair, however, we set the first step.

Beata Roszkowska, director of the International Art Fair Warsaw, in Polska Times spoke about the Polish art market this way: *We are in a gray tail, we are a 2 per cent of the world market. Therefore, you need to focus on visions of what can be done and looking for people with an open mind. The reason for the weakness of our market is past. The largest collections were created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the royal courts. Saxons created a beautiful collection, but in Dresden, then Poland soon lost independence. Polish nobility had no tradition of creating a collection. The great collections formed the middle class, which in Poland was also relatively weak.* Indeed, the historical context is seen as one of the major ills of Polish art market. The global crisis has treated the Polish very gently. Of course, the crisis is the cause of the cessation of certain investments and obviously a reason of crump on still growing art market.

A summary of how art markets look in Poland and whether it is profitable let it be the conclusion of the report Market of Artists and Creators in Poland [prof. Dorota Ilczuk]. These studies have shown that there are still many Polish artists (even those with a worldwide reputation) live on the poverty line. This shows how much work is still ahead of us.

Reference list

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