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Avant-garde art display recreations historised: Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź as a referential case?¹

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Avant-garde art display recreations historised: Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź as a referential case?

Museums can no longer pretend to be mere containers of art or other cultural treasures; their fascinating legacy for posterity is definitely not just the respective collection, but also its idiosyncratic articulation and ulterior resignification. This essay surveys sifting trends in the re-staging of modern museographies; but instead of using New York's MoMA as the obvious paradigm, pride of place is given here to the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź (Poland). Its original Neoplastic Hall survived only from June 1948 until October 1950; but it was reconstructed ten years later, prefiguring other museographical remakes of avant-garde art displays. Thereafter, it also became, in many ways, a typical example characterising postmodern museological trends. All in all, it could perhaps be discussed nowadays in the light of critical museology as a referential case in the history of heritagised museographies.

Keywords: museographical reconstructions, museum history, critical heritage studies

It seems a long-established axiom for museologists to vindicate that the subject of our studies is not just the museum, but also the ways in which cultural heritage is musealised. Thus historic display strategies could be precious museographical testimonies, which deserve to be reconsidered, not just to say with arrogant assurance that “they were wrong and we can get it right” but to illustrate how any specific installation has a major effect on what one sees.² In this spirit, museums should develop self-awareness, and museum professionals have become concerned that they must conserve, study, exhibit, and interpret certain idiosyncratic arrangements and iconic mementoes of past ways of seeing, which can also be a valuable cultural legacy. This challenges the procedures of some fanatics of modernity, who used to build canonical *white cube* presentations spitefully covering or even destroying outmoded interior architecture, yet a tolerant reassessment should be accorded to good-hearted modern museographical remodels of avant-garde art displays.

Indeed, they could be considered test cases for succeeding museological shifts: such is the role attributed in this essay to the changing uses of the Neoplastic Hall at the Art Museum

¹ This article comes as a result of the research project “Cultural districts of museums, galleries, establishments and heritagised urban landscapes” funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (ref. PGC2018-094351-B-C41) led by Jesús Pedro Lorente, member of the Institute of Heritage and Humanities of the University of Saragossa and coordinator of the group Aragonese Observatory of Art in the Public Sphere (OA-AEP), financed by the Government of Aragon with ERDF funds.

² ALPERS, Svetlana. The Museum as a Way of Seeing. In: *The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington-London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, p. 31.



Pict. 1. *Permanent display of the International Collection of Modern Art of the “a.r.” group at the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art, [in] International Collection of Modern Art / Collection Internationale D’Art Nouveau. Catalogue no. 2, (Łódź: The J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art, 1932), Archive of the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź*

in Łódź, an institution nowadays emblematic of the latest museum policies in many ways. As it is distributed in a triad of buildings, it has appropriately been compared with the Tates in Great Britain and other institutional flagships of ambitious urban revitalisation projects, geographically distributed in separated cultural districts, where the museum is respectively housed in remarkable historic buildings which are all themselves considered architectural landmarks.³ Yet a distinctive feature which makes it a very special case is the consideration given to a double historical legacy of modernity: the collection of avant-garde art and its museographical layout. The Neoplastic Hall and its art contents are now recognised as two differentiated cultural assets which can be viewed separately but interpreted as a single treasure. This is the outcome of a long process, evolving in tune with changing criteria worldwide.

The International Collection of New Art, set up in Łódź by avant-garde artist Władysław Strzemiński and his fellows of the “a.r. group”, was a grass-roots project, based on unconditional donations by kindred artists, which was crystallised in the opening in February 1931 of a modern art section with crowded rooms at the Municipal Museum of History and Art (Fig. 1). However, after World War II this modern collection was transferred to Poznański palace, where Strzemiński created a purposely designed museographical installation, the famous Neoplastic Hall with white, yellow, red, and blue walls, inaugurated in June 1948 (Fig. 2). But it would only survive for two years, until October 1950, its experimental museography seemingly outshone

³ JAGODZIŃSKA, Katarzyna. *Museums and Centers of Contemporary Art in Central Europe after 1989*, Abingdon-New York: Routledge, 2020.



Pict. 2. *Władysław Strzemiński, Neoplastic Room*, exhibition view of 1948-1950, Archive of the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź



Pict. 3. *Władysław Strzemiński, Neoplastic Room*. Reconstruction by Bolesław Utkin; exhibition view of 1960-1966, Archives of the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź

by the international paradigms of modern museums gaining momentum in the Cold War.⁴

Nevertheless, the room was reconstructed in 1960 with painstaking fidelity to the original by a disciple of Strzemiński, Bolesław Utkin, in collaboration with the museum director, Marian Minich (Fig. 3). All in all, this could be linked to the taste for the recreation of monuments in postwar Europe. The frantic reconstructions of Dresden or Warsaw city centres were the epitome of architectonic “clonations”, often including the integral restitution, both outside and indoors, of churches, theatres, and some civic buildings.⁵ Bombed façades of many museums and art centres were also scrupulously returned to their pre-war situation, but more often than not everything inside would be freely adapted to the latest developments in museum architecture. That was not to be the case here, and somehow the meticulous interior reconstitution at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź of Strzemiński’s Neoplastic display, which had been knocked down ten years before, revealed a very special effort. Soon, other facsimile replicas of memorable modernist shows followed the trend, some being reproduced in permanent galleries and others in temporary exhibitions.⁶ Obviously, their motivation was not primarily

⁴ But not the whole architectural structure was destroyed - only polychromy: window and skylight frames, lamps’ covers, furniture remained. Cf. SUCHAN, Jarosław. The Avant-Garde Museum. In: Agnieszka Pindera & Jarosław Suchan (eds.). *The Avant-Garde Museum*. Łódź: Walther König & Muzeum Sztuki, 2020, pp. 18-45.

⁵ HERNÁNDEZ MARTÍNEZ, Ascensión. *La clonazione architettonica*. Milan: Jaca Book, 2010.

⁶ In particular the *Kabinett der Abstrakten*, created by El Lissitzky on the second floor of Hannover Landesmuseum, followed by László Moholy-Nagy’s *Raum der Gegenwart* to conclude the art historical itinerary arranged by director Alexander Dörner. This famous cabinet of abstract artworks had been dismantled by the Nazis in 1937 and remade from scratch in 1968 at the heart of the then renamed Niedersächsischen Landesmuseum in room 45 of the ground floor: a displacement further stressed by its transfer in 1979 to the new building of the Sprengel Museum, where renewed replicas were re-elaborated in 1983 and 2017. Cf. TEJEDA MARTÍN, Isabel. La copia y la reconstrucción: un recurso visual en las exposiciones de arte moderno desde los años 60 del siglo XX. In: *Arte, Individuo y Sociedad*, 24(2), 2012, pp. 21–226; ANDA, Carolin, BIALEK, Yvonne, DURKA, Cornelia, KARPISEK, Alexandre, POHLMANN, Natascha, SACK, Philipp (eds.). *Aura-Politiken. El Lissitzkys Kabinett der Abstrakten zwischen Musealisierung und Teilhabe*. Braunschweig: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg, 2017.

architectural conservation; they intended to pay homage to some experimental arrangement of avant-garde art, very often entailing place transfers. Such dislocations, ironically enough, were enforced while the apostles of *nouvelle muséologie* were vindicating musealisations *in situ* of all sorts of communal heritage! If historic displays are also a cultural legacy, shouldn't they be restored in their original locations?

This subsequently became a hot issue in heritage studies, as critical discourses questioned henceforth the supposed convenience of replicating, even in the original emplacement, some pearls of modern architecture expressly conceived as *machines à exposer*, since their exhibition contexts are forever lost.⁷ On a more positive note, museologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett associated mimetic installations of the past with subjective metonymies “whether in the form of period rooms, ethnographic villages, recreated environments, reenacted rituals, or photo-murals [...] even when they seem to do nothing more than relocate an entire house and its contents, brick by brick, board by board, chair by chair”.⁸ Likewise, in times of growing aesthetic “historicism” in art and architecture, some scholars insisted on distinguishing it from proper “historism” in spaces where modernity was worshipped.⁹

A self-conscious exercise in reconstruction could henceforth be recognised as a museum highlight, whose value would be based in its reflexive discourse, not in the accuracy of the reproduction. Hence, rigorous experts in architecture instead welcomed temporary shows displaying didactic re-enactments of historic displays, including Strzemiński's Neoplastic room, restaged by the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno on the occasion of an exhibition in 1994.¹⁰ Another bone of contention emerged in Germany apropos the legacy of the Folkwang Museum originally inaugurated as early as 1902 in Hagen by modern art collector Karl Ernst Osthaus, whose inheritors sold both the collection and the denomination of that private museum to the municipality of Essen; thus, in Hagen there was just an empty building after World War II, which became again an art museum, nostalgically aimed at recovering its former lustre. That ambition led to the restoration in the 1990s of the original *art nouveau* interior designed by Henry van de Velde, vindicated as the heart of the institution, which was rebaptised Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum; but, of course, the collection did not match the original contents, generating a tricky *musealisierung* dilemma.¹¹ This was playfully solved by the then director, Michael Fehr, who argued:

this museum building is not bound by the fundamental principle governing ‘normal’ museums, namely, to present exhibits in a neutral and academically legitimate manner. It calls rather for ‘responsive or reflective hanging’ or, to put it

⁷ This was a point raised in the polemics regarding the German Pavilion designed by Mies van der Rohe for the 1929 International Exposition in Barcelona, re-erected *in situ* and opened in 1986 as an isolated tourist attraction in its own right. Furthermore, some sceptics raised the objection that visitors could be confused and might believe this was an exact replica, instead of being told the differences between the original and its copy. Cf. MONTANER, Josep Maria. El pavelló Mies a Barcelona: una reconstrucció polèmica. In: *Temes de Disseny*, 2, 1988, pp. 47–54.

⁸ KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT, Barbara. Objects of Ethnography. In: *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington-London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, p. 388.

⁹ POINSOT, Jean-Marc. Large exhibitions. A sketch of a typology. In: *Thinking about Exhibitions*. London-New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 64, note 9.

¹⁰ LAYUNO ROSAS, María Ángeles. Exponerse o ser expuesto (La problemática expositiva de las vanguardias históricas). In: *Espacio, Tiempo, Forma*, 7(10), 1997, p. 351, fig. 12.

¹¹ CRANE, Susan A. Memory, Distortion and History in the Museum. In: *History and Theory*, 36(4), 1997, pp. 44–63.

another way, for the development of a *Gemeinschaftskunstwerk*.¹²

Switching from primeval modernity to contemporary revisionism, that space was thus offered to related installations by living artists to establish creative historical connections with Osthaus's avant-garde impulse. While modernity exalted novelties, in many ways postmodernity would be time and again obsessively coming to terms with the past. The "museification of museums" became indeed a universal quandary discussed by many theoreticians, sometimes with inspired metaphors: "Like the strata on an archaeological site, the museum today displays the various layers of its own history. At the core is the collection, surrounded by the vestiges of former modes of display as well as the architecture's own history".¹³ Similarly, James Sheehan, prestigious historian of German museums, argued that "among the significant artifacts that museums contain are the intellectual, institutional, and architectural traces of their own history, residues of their own past".¹⁴ Unlayering former structures and revealing their politics of representation in a reflexive museum was indeed the plan launched in 2003 at the Haus der Kunst in Munich by its director, Chris Dercon, with the label *kritischer Rückbau*—critical reconstruction.¹⁵

Yet the lure of the past in other cases was not always condensed in original architectural samples; instead, a fashionable trend of postmodern nostalgia inspired reinvented *vintage* museographies. Museum curators turned interior decorators were refurbishing galleries of old masters in cluttered displays of pictures hung on colourful clothed walls or even recreating palatial decorations with copies, irrespective of the true historical precedents in the respective institution.¹⁶ On the other hand, a parallel museographical quest for historical glamour was then the conversion of former factories, silos, and warehouses into museums, particularly for centres of modern/contemporary art, whose architectural styles and urban location could be loaded with political symbolism, especially in former communist countries. In Poland, for example, the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art, established in 2005, found its first headquarters in a residential building across the street from the Palace of Culture and Science, with a new purpose-built edifice being thereafter erected nearby, on Parade Square. Meanwhile, in Łódź a huge nineteenth-century textile factory in the old suburbs of this industrial town became the

¹² FEHR, Michael. A Museum and its Memory. The Art of Recovering History. In: *Museums and Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, pp. 50–51.

¹³ SCHUBERT, Karsten. *The Curator's Egg. The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day*. London: One-Off Books, 2000, p. 132.

¹⁴ SHEEHAN, James J. *Museums in the German Art World from the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 189. As a practical substantiation of the latter point, the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, whose building underwent an ambitious campaign of works for its 125th anniversary, reopened in 2001 with a small room—Saal 1.04—discreetly left unchanged, keeping its original mosaic floor, marble columns, and dark green stucco wall. Today, a Raffael statue made in 1877 by Ernst Julius Hähnel still stands in the middle, as a memento of the former hall for sculptures; a bust by Alexander Zschockke portraying Ludwig Justi pays homage to the museum director who set up the displays in 1910–14; while other documents in showcases and framed photos recall further details of the history of the institution. Thus, this little "time capsule" is not only a memorial of the former building but also a condensed institutional autobiography, as an illuminated sign at the entrance explicitly declares: "Geschichte der Nationalgalerie".

¹⁵ RECTANUS, Mark W. *Museums Inside Out. Artist Collaborations and New Exhibitions Ecologies*. Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2020, p. 57.

¹⁶ "In substituting replica for reality," wrote Victoria Newhouse about a notorious case, "context replaces content." NEWHOUSE, Victoria. *Art and the Power of Placement*. New York: Monacelli Press, 2005, p. 102. See also GÓMEZ MARTÍNEZ, J. *Museografía al filo del milenio. Tendencias y recurrencias*. Gijón: Trea, 2016, pp. 231–237.

new heart of the city: a cultural and leisure complex called Manufaktura, where in 2008 the former spinning mill houses became a new branch of Muzeum Sztuki, called ms², specialising in modern and contemporary art. But it was decided to keep the reconstructed Neoplastic Room in ms¹ in the building for which it had been originally designed. The idea was to use Strzemiński's impulse as a catalyst for reinterpretations and reflections by contemporary artists, which has been the aim of the *Open Composition* programme carried out there since 2010 (Fig. 4).



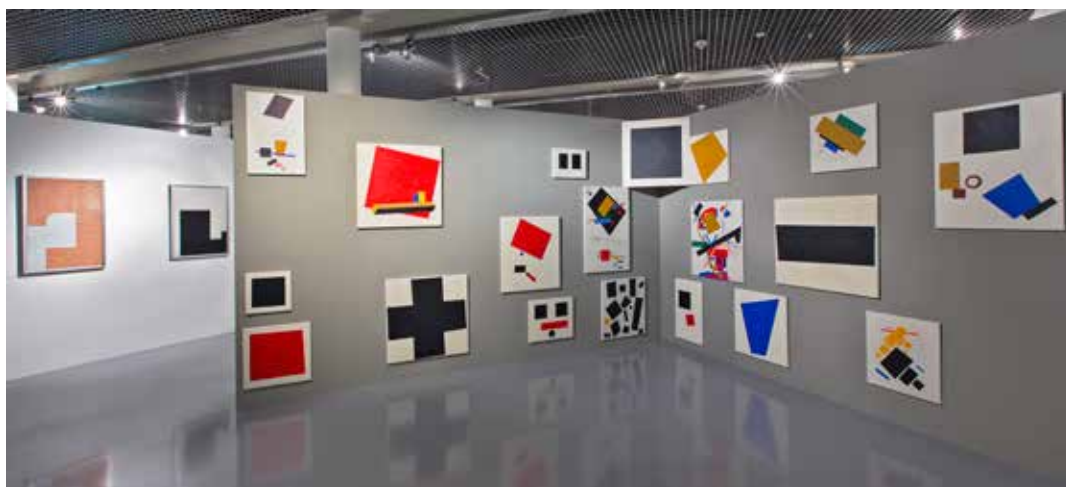
Pict. 4. *Exhibition view: The Neoplastic Room. Open Composition, 2013*, photo P. Tomczyk, Archive of the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź.

Site-specific installations of contemporary art in museums were then gaining momentum, in a second wave of “institutional critique” in which instead of external attacks against the art system launched by individual artists one would find questioning art-interventions commissioned by museums. The examples and specialised bibliography on this topic would surpass the intended length of this paper, but the most relevant point here is to consider that, under the spell of what Stefania Zuliani has called the “museum effect” in contemporary art, modernist displays became one of the favourite fronts open for artists’ revisionism.¹⁷ In fact, it was an artist, Brian O’Doherty, who had divulged the critical concept of the *white cube*—although this and other similar expressions like “white box” were already in use before—to denigrate the ideology of an enclosed space that, in reality, had never existed, not even in New York’s MoMA.¹⁸ And

¹⁷ ZULIANI, Stefania. Alexander Dorner, The Way Beyond Museum. In: *Piano b. Arti e culture visive*, 1(1), 2016, pp. 321–340. See also BAWIN, Julie. *L’artiste commissaire. Entre posture critique, jeu créatif et valeur ajoutée*. Paris: Editions des Archives Contemporaines, 2014.

¹⁸ KLONK, Charlotte. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 218.

other contemporary artists were in charge of the rather symbolical re-enactments in influential art galleries of historic avant-garde displays like Malevich's *Last Futurist Exhibition* emulated in Máribor in 2008, or László Moholy-Nagy's *Raum der Gegenwart*, El Lissitzky's *Abstraktes Kabinett*, and Lina Bo Bardi's display for the MASP re-staged in Eindhoven in 2010/11.¹⁹ However, such museographical "re-readings" by artists could not have been possible without the personal support of curators and their respective institutions, eager to showcase visual quotations—not detailed reconstructions—so as to induce reflective comparisons between modern artists' experimentalism and postmodern museological concerns. In many ways, this sort of



Pict. 5. *Exhibition view: Atlas of Modernity. The 20th and 21st Century Art Collection, 2014*, photo P. Tomczyk, Archive of the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź

comparative reassessment has been given pride of place in Łódź with the changing displays of the modern collection at ms² and the postmodern memorial of the Neoplastic Room at ms¹ (Fig. 5).

What should now be the way forward? Different paths can be chosen, as at a crossroads. If the history of exhibitions and museums has become a cardinal feature for art historians, it must also be of interest for museums themselves and their articulation; but the best option is no longer to rebuild more deceiving replicas of missed museographies.²⁰ Gustavo Araoz, President of ICOMOS, has argued that former architectural conservation policies should be replaced by some tolerance of changes allowing continuity of use, which can then be

¹⁹ HANSEN, Tone. *(Re)Staging the Art Museum*. Berlin, Revolver Publishing, 2011, p. 47. BISHOP, Claire. *Radical Museology, or, What's "Contemporary" in Museums of Contemporary Art?* London: Koenig Books, 2014, p. 33.

²⁰ A most controversial case of this dilemma in later times has come about at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, designed by Lina Bo Bardi in 1968. Her stunning modernist parade displaying its permanent collection in a forest of more than 100 glass and concrete easels had been discarded in a 1996 refurbishment, yet it has been more or less back in place again since 2015. An information panel installed at the entrance by Bradesco, the bank company sponsoring this recreation, describes it as "rescate preciso de uma peça icônica"—precise rescue of an iconic piece—even though the work done, following professional restoration recommendations to make the new intervention recognisable, is in fact just an approximative recreation. LORENTE, J. Pedro. O auge das reconstruções de expografias e de museografias históricas após a crise do cubo branco moderno. In: *Museografia e Interdisciplinaridade*, 5(10), 2016, pp. 34–42.

acknowledged as a new paradigm in critical heritage studies.²¹ A second option is to avoid architectural reconstructions, using mock-ups, dioramas, photo montages, or other didactic materials. Faithful to this strategy, the Museum of American Art in Berlin, inaugurated in 2004, didactically presents small-scale reproductions of historic exhibition displays of American modernity, mainly referring to the shows curated by Alfred Barr or Dorothy Miller for the MoMA in New York. More abstruse can be the erudite homage staged at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, in a space reserved for the collection bequeathed by its most famous director, Pontus Hultén, whose memory is honoured there by placing these artworks in a storing/display system that recalls the mechanical devices implemented by him when he was director of the Museum of Modern Art at the Pompidou Centre in Paris.²² Such a stage-set led the way to further dramaturgical re-enactments, by means of theatrical props and digital technologies.²³ A middle way, between the two extremes, was marked in 2012 by the extension of the Barnes Foundation from the founders' home in the suburbs of Merion to a new building in the centre of Philadelphia, after bitter judiciary conflicts. Although Albert Barnes had bequeathed his house and collection stating in his will that all his modern paintings should remain in the exact same place, this has been freely interpreted as a reference not to the edifice, but to the arrangements of pictures, which are hung again in roughly similar ensembles, recreated according to the collector's taste and ideas, which are described to visitors as forming part of Barnes' cultural legacy.²⁴

Similarly, the art museum in Łódź is now paying homage to Władysław Strzemiński's multifaceted museographical legacy, which is not only the collection of avant-garde art he gathered or the rebuilt architecture of the Neoplastic Room, but also his other experiments in curatorship. The imaginative efforts of that modern visionary are reinterpreted from our present perspective in temporary shows and educational initiatives. It seems obvious that such curatorial legacies should also deserve to be self-referentially highlighted in museums and exhibitions. Paraphrasing Marshall McLuhan's famous dictum, we could state that for critical museologists the medium is now part of the message to be reflexively considered. Indeed, museums across the world are now proudly informing their visitors about, for example, the historic interest of their old dioramas, dating sometimes back to the early twentieth century. Some institutions are still pursuing the ambitious idea of replicating historic exhibitions. However, this is an almost impossible task, because even if we could reunite the same contents in the same space, conserved and scrupulously unaltered, our present professional standards of

²¹ ARAOZ, Gustavo F. Preserving Heritage Places under a New Paradigm. In: *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 1(1), 2011, pp. 55–60. Cf. also WITCOMB, Andrea & BUCKLEY, Kristal. Engaging with the Future of 'Critical Heritage Studies': Looking Back in Order to Look Forward. In: *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19(6), 2013, pp. 562–578.

²² BURCH, Stuart. Past Presents and Present Futures: Rethinking Sweden's Moderna Museet. In: *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, 9(2), 2012, pp. 97–111.

²³ SOMPAIRAC, Arnaud. *Scénographie d'exposition: six perspectives critiques*. Genève: MétisPresses, 2016.

²⁴ LAWRENCE, Amanda R. Preservation through Replication: The Barnes Foundation. In: *Future Anterior*, 12(1), pp. 1–15.

public appreciation and safety have totally changed.²⁵ That should be the ultimate scientific goal in museums, unlike some popular versions of historic re-enactments which encourage empathy and celebrative engagement distorting history and discouraging critical thinking.²⁶

It would perhaps be a logical corollary to complement original museographic heritage with added interpretations, which should be problematised explanations, rather like the way a “critical edition” of a reconstructed text comes with variants and remarks in the footnotes. This can be done with small budgets, as in the precedent set in 2018 by the National Museum of Modern Art at the Pompidou Centre in Paris for the celebrations of the bicentenary of its ancestor, the Musée du Luxembourg, hanging some works from the collection on walls covered with black and white photos of former museum displays, so as to make people aware of the different exposition criteria now and then. Taking a step further, the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź is carefully exhibiting the actual artworks separated from the evocations of former displays, in order to make clear that our way of putting treasures of modern art on view is based on present professional principles. Museums recalling idiosyncratic presentations from other times today are not necessarily intending to glorify the past; their goal is to develop curatorial self-awareness.²⁷ Indeed, the Neoplastic Hall is a room devoted not to the museum’s modern collection but to the museum’s own history, which can be considered yet another inkling of the momentous advance of self-reflective stances in museums and museology.²⁸ Thus the museum exhibits itself, not intending to cultivate nostalgia for the past, but simply as a public commemoration, in the literal sense of collective remembrance: a public memory particularly appropriate in the case of institutions with the pedigree and the importance of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź. If the history of exhibitions and museums has become a cardinal feature in critical heritage studies, it must logically be a matter of interest for museums themselves.

For more photo documentation of exhibitions and events please visit the website of the Muzeum Sztuki resources: <https://zasoby.msl.org.pl>

²⁵ This was a lesson learned in the first decade of the new millennium at the Tate Modern and other museums where the tantalising challenge of re-doing legendary art shows has been revealed as unattainable, although highly regarded for educational gains in critical self-reflection, as Helen Rees Leahy declared, in an essay suggestively entitled “Making an Exhibition of Ourselves”. In it she ponders to what extent an exhibition of an exhibition is a (re) production, or an exhibitionist display of institutional capacity for self-critique. REES LEAHY, Helen. Making an Exhibition of Ourselves. In: *Museums and Biographies. Stories, Objects, Identities*, Woodbridge, Newcastle University-Tate Boydell Press, 2012, p. 150.

²⁶ WATSON, Sheila, Emotions in the History Museum. In: *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies: Museum Theory*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2015, p. 290 & 296.

²⁷ By self-referentially retrieving former displays, museums are thus offering us a reflection of themselves as narratives under permanent (re)construction. Confronted with historic museographies, visitors are sometimes provoked to espouse critical reviews from a new perspective. Sheila Watson put as an example the Museum of Political History in St Petersburg, founded in 1957 to glorify the Great October Socialist Revolution, exalted in painted murals and displays many which have been safeguarded, but radically reinterpreted with ironic comments. Cf. WATSON, Sheila, Emotions in the..., p. 292.

²⁸ What is ultimately exhibited is not the Neoplastic Hall, as it is clearly explained at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, making the public aware that what they see is a historic reconstruction which has experienced many changes in its use. Since May 2020, in the wake of the Covid-19 lockdown, the website of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź offers a *Virtual walk around the Neoplastic Room*: a digital recreation coordinated by Aleksandra Żabowska. <https://msl.org.pl/virtual-walk-around-the-neoplastic-room/>

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