

The Polish Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia

A real aircraft turned inside out is the centrepiece of the Flight project. This sculpture by Roman Stańczak will be presented at the Polish Pavilion during the 58th International Art Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia.

Resulting from the artist's consistently applied strategy of turning objects of everyday use inside out, the piece is a spectacular monument to the paradoxes of modernity and a commentary on Poland's transition to capitalism. The exhibition, curated by Łukasz Mojsak and Łukasz Ronduda, organised by the Zachęta — National Gallery of Art, opens on 11 May 2019.

The interior of the Polish Pavilion in Venice will feature a sculpture by Roman Stańczak, an artist renowned for his deconstructions of the material order of objects that consist in turning them inside out. This time, Stańczak applies this artistic procedure to a mid-sized aircraft. Its interior, complete with cockpit and on-board equipment, as well as passenger seats, will emerge on the outside, while the wings and fuselage will be wound inside, to the interior of the sculpture.

The Polish Pavilion will become a hangar for Stańczak's inside-out aircraft. Visitors will be able to look into the inside/outside of the airplane, thus experiencing not only the sculpture's unique form and scale, but also the effect of an unexpected 'reversal of the world'. Flight is set to become a monument to Polish reality after the country's capitalist transformation and to the paradoxes that govern that reality. This surrealist sculpture — created through destruction — has the power to become a symbol that can unite the divided society by addressing the conflict between modernity and spirituality. The piece shows how annihilation of one of these spheres contributes to the expansion of the other. As in his previous works, Stańczak seeks to prove that people are in need of a spiritual change, which they may experience in a situation that negates a familiar order of things and disturbs their safe existence in the world. An aircraft turned inside out stands as a symbol of the modern-day lack of the sense of security, which is missing despite promises made by modernity.

Flight is a piece by Roman Stańczak, an artist who debuted on the art scene in the 1990s. A graduate of the famous 'Kowalnia' — the studio of Professor Grzegorz Kowalski at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where he studied alongside Katarzyna Kozyra, Paweł Althamer, and Artur Żmijewski. Kowalski was a disciple of Oskar Hansen, and his studio continued to implement the tradition established by this visionary artist-architect as well as his seminal Open Form Theory. Stańczak's work consists in depriving familiar objects of their usual function and aesthetic value, while offering them a completely new form and meaning. His works from the 1990s, which emerged from the margins of the then-nascent Polish critical art, relied on deformation of objects, turning them inside out or tearing off their external layer — which the artist did with a kettle (Misquic, 1992), a bathtub (Misquic, 1994), a bedside cabinet, a chair, and a bookshelf — in order to launch a game with the visions and meanings attributed to those objects. 'My sculptures speak of living not among objects but among ghosts', states Stańczak, who emphasises that the process of turning objects inside out serves to prepare him for death. The artist's pieces can also be viewed as a fascinating commentary on the processes involved in Poland's capitalist transformation, during which some segments of reality moved forward in pursuit of fast-paced modernisation, while others lagged behind, condemned to destitution and material degradation. In 2016, Stańczak was shortlisted for the 'Passport' award of the Polityka weekly. This distinction came only three years after the artist's return to the art scene following seventeen years of absence. In 2013, invited by Paweł Althamer, Stańczak created the famous sculpture Guardian Angel at the Sculpture Park in the Bródno housing estate in Warsaw.

'Roman Stańczak's work . . . , the scale of the undertaking and the boldness of the concept guarantee a monumental quality of the project and its visual appeal. The artist is not afraid to see his statement associated with questions of fundamental importance for the divided political community', reads the justification of the verdict issued by the jury of the curatorial competition for the exhibition at the Polish Pavilion. The project, curated by Łukasz Mojsak and Łukasz Ronduda, will be presented during the 58th International Art Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia, titled *May You Live in Interesting Times* and curated by Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Hayward Gallery.

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Venice, 11 May–24 November 2019

Flight

artist: Roman Stańczak
curators: Łukasz Mojsak, Łukasz Ronduda
representative of the Zachęta: Ewa Mielczarek

commissioner of the Polish Pavilion: Hanna Wróblewska
organiser: Zachęta — National Gallery of Art



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Press days in Venice: 8–10 May 2019

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