

# INTERVIEW

Grażyna Kulczyk\*  
talks to Marta Smolińska and Wojciech Szafrąński

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## “My new things to do as Art project ripens”

**Wojciech Szafrąński:** Grażyna, we are glad we can have a talk with you now, one of the reasons being that the magazine to publish the interview has the name Santander in its title. The 2014 show at the Santander Art Gallery – the collection was entitled *Everybody is Nobody for Somebody* – was one of the major projects for you as an art collector.

**Marta Smolińska:** I am very curious of how it all happened: Santander calling you one day, asking you to display the collection, and so on.

**Grażyna Kulczyk:** Paloma Botin, Art Advisor with the Banco Santander Foundation, has decided that, along with West European or American collections, the Foundation would be ready to provide room for the art from Central and Eastern Europe. She was advised about my collection by Joanna Mytkowska, Director of the Modern Art Museum in Warsaw. Paloma visited me in Poland and saw my collection; she offered me to organise, in February 2014, an exhibition at the gallery owned by the Santander Bank Foundation, and I felt particularly distinguished by her offer. Although we had only six months to go about preparing the exhibition, I didn't resist the task as I believed the Foundation team were able to take well organised and efficient joint action.

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\* **Grażyna Kulczyk** is a Polish investor, art collector, and contemporary art lover. She is member of the Modern Women's Fund Committee of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and of the Tate Modern Russian and Eastern Europe Acquisition Committee. Her collection was exhibited at the Santander Art Gallery in 2014 (“Everybody is Nobody for Somebody”, Boadilla del Monte, Madrid).

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**MS: Oh yes, the pace was really frenetic.**

Given my personal character and the challenges I am used to pose to myself, I am aware that you need to work fast to achieve the goal. The time available for the preparation was short, and pretty intense. We needed to have a curator in place soonest. I considered Timothy Persons an ideal choice: we had met before and, most importantly, he had partly known my collection. Timothy's approach to what he does is exceptional; moreover, he sets strict requirements for himself and for those he works with. Additionally, he is open to a dialogue and making suggestions. This is always really important. Soon it turned out we could understand each other very well. It's because of Timothy's and my own input, and that of the Foundation people, that everything finally came to a marvellous end.

**WS: As a collector, how much of a say did you have as far as the choice of the works to be shown went?**

My influence was considerable. All in all, I am pretty independent in the choices I make, never completely yielding to what even a most experienced curator or associate of mine might suggest. Timothy Persons has identified two major threads about my collection: a large group of Conceptual and Minimal artists and a considerable representation of female artists. As for myself, I found such grouping of the collection by an expert very interesting, opening a new way of perceiving my own collection of art.

**MS: Given the context of this particular exhibition, Polish art, as related to international art, probably acted as a "third force" of the sort as well – am I right? I mean, this must have been a great asset.**

My intention was throughout to make a presentation of Polish artists in the context of creative artists of the world. It was the first opportunity ever for works of Polish artists to be shown on this scale along with some great individual names, and I am greatly proud to state that the Poles performed excellently in this "contest". I am convinced that it was the event's greatest success.

**WS: Today, as I take it, your collection is completely formed as regards Polish artists, foreign artists being appended to it from time to time, so to put it. Isn't that right?**

Well, not quite: the directions along which I have decided to develop my collecting activity have been shaped up, yes. And I never cease discovering artists I did not know before. One such artist being Julian Stańczak, whom I have discovered, to an extent, through Marta and, partly, thanks to some other people too. Artists such as Anuszkiewicz or Mieczkowski have become part of my collection as well.

**MS: In fact, the entire Anonima Group is represented, as we can see a consistency to it: you have bought your Mieczkowski and then on go Francis Hewitt and Ernst Benkert.**

True. Therefore, I cannot tell I have closed the Polish chapter, not ever intending to resume it. Let me give you an example: my last purchase of a Jerzy Nowosielski work. I have already got some works by this painter, and it could seem this was a “complete” representation. Now, I have added this new purchase to those previous works, taking delight in it. Moreover, I have bought a small-sized painting – an icon – painted by Nowosielski. I should think the finest place for its display would be some small church, in the mountains, Switzerland, perhaps. So, I haven’t been freed from purchasing Polish works! I think I would find it really hard to resist a new good painting by Wojciech Fangor, although the prices are really high nowadays. But I primarily take interest in works of those artists who have not joined my collection yet.

**WS: Do you follow some name list?**

I sure do.

**WS: How often do you rule an item off?**

Well, pretty often. Items are not diminishing, though, as I continually add new names of artists whose works I should like to have within my collection.

**WS: Is there any specific item numbered one?**

Fontana has been there, not perhaps as “number one”, but certainly part of the top ten. Recently, my dream came true and I’ve finally bought a Fontana.

**MS: You have? Marvellous!**

Yes, the painting is rather late-dated, but I believe it perfectly renders the idea behind this artist’s creative work and his revolutionary approach toward space and surface of the painting. I was not quite looking for one of those boldly coloured pictures with the canvas cut across, for something tells me they are valued primarily because of their decorative qualities, rather than of what is essential to this art.

**MS: A scholar has used an excellent phrase with respect to Fontana’s works: a “glamour of violence” is how she puts it. Part of it is, inherently, a decorative quality, isn’t it.**

Well, there’s probably a grain of truth to it. The work I have bought gives you an impression, I should admit, as if it were painted the moment he began firmly grasping the canvas and interfering with it, as if he was discovering his way to Spatialism at that very moment. The way Fontana makes you aware of the existence of matter though the lack of matter is out-of-the-ordinary; the same is true for how he feels the space beyond the canvas by using simple but very firm gestures. I am delighted to have a Fontana work, that is representing all these aspects of his art.

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**WS: Once you have purchased a new piece of painting, would it accompany you in some special moment in your life, or would it rather be put in a storeroom?**

Well, it varies by case. I do not have an opportunity in each case to display the new acquisition, as there is not enough space. But I do take the opportunity to commune for some time with the newly purchased work, so I can make the best of it. The last purchase I concluded a couple of days ago was a wonderful work by Louise Bourgeois.

**MS: You already had one Bourgeois in your collection before, right?**

Indeed. The first object I had was a large bronze cast entitled C.O.Y.O.T.E.; the new one I've got is made of fabric. I've daydreamed of such a piece!

**WS: This makes the representation of females even stronger.**

Yes, but at the same time, a work by César impressed me extraordinarily recently. When Chamberlain crashed metal elements of cars in the United States, César did the same, at the same time, in France. He enjoyed a great esteem there. I still have in my memory the characteristic thumb of his. Once, when in a fair event, I spotted among the works displayed there an unusual object: a tit! A beautiful one! I am using the word "tit" [cyc] as the gallery's owner is a Jewish woman; cyc means breast in Yiddish. And, she moreover said, in Polish: "I've got a cyc!" And I said, "I can see it! And I want it!"

**MS: What is the cyc made of?**

Polyester resin. In addition, there's an interesting history behind it. It is a cast of the breast of a model named Hélène Rochas, who at that time in Paris was widely known, and considered an extraordinary beauty. Later on, she got married to the owner of Rocher, the cosmetics company.

**MS: What is the size of the object?**

Ninety centimetres, roughly. It is a white cast, a most beautiful one. Carl Andre is also on my list, but so far I have not found his work that I could bear financially and could fancy it, that I would be really moved by.

**WS: When you're buying a work of art, what is it that makes you do it: the mind, or the heart?**

The heart, mostly – and rather unfortunately so, 'cause afterwards, once I've bought a work of art, I start pondering how I can get the money to pay for yet another work of art. For the time being, things have been functioning all right.

**MS: This is marvellous: when you're talking about your collection, it's not only that you're telling the story almost with your whole body – how big the joy, and**

**what a passion there is when buying a work, and then another one, to add to the collection: you moreover use words such as “appetite”, “I’ve gone nuts for”, “been moved”, and the like. You’re describing your unbelievable desire. Tell us, please, and be frank: is that an addiction yet?**

Yes, it is an addiction.

**WS: And the sickness is getting even worse?**

Yes, I become concerned about the prices I’ve entered. It is changing these days. On a December auction, a Szapocznikow work will be offered, as I’ve heard – and it will probably be sold for more than one million zloty. A Fangor painting has now been sold for nearly a million. Thus, also Polish artists are becoming dear, which is a good trend.

**WS: Poles tending to buy Polish collectibles abroad and draw them back to their home country: this is, all in all, a rather unusual process. The buyers seek for such *polonica* in foreign auctions as works of Polish artists are still available there at cheaper prices than in Poland.**

The prices of Wojciech Fangor’s works are soaring, outside Poland as well. One gallery I am on friendly terms with has sold all the Fangor works it exhibited during the Frieze fair in London. They had a beautiful stall there, quite an ascetic one. All the paintings were of the same size. They came from a certain American collection and represented an early stage in Fangor’s biography as an artist; their prices were significant.

**WS: It was this particular gallery that offered a Fangor painting for the Art Basel. The price was really extraordinary.**

That’s true. But I still am of opinion – and I’ve had many opportunities to observe this – that, related to the other artists from this part of Europe, the prices of Polish artists have been growing rather slowly. The Slovak artist Maria Bartušova has entered the market with very high prices. There’s the Romanian Ana Lupas, who has been exhibited at the Tate, with pretty high prices to her credit. Roman Opałka, who for me is an outstanding, unapproachable artist, has hit a price ceiling and cannot top one-million zloty. And I do regret this, since the other good artists become successful in the art market rather soon, whilst the Poles – apart from Fangor – are very seldom as successful. Abakanowicz, who has really excelled on the worldwide stage and has proved that she is a great artist, featured in many collections, still makes it at a medium level, given the international circumstances.

**WS: Is there a chance that your activity may cause the foreign museums to have Polish artists as part of their collections, and to exhibit them? Would they appear in all those important places such as Tate Modern, or the MoMA? For, once you have donated a Krasieński, this might be considered an act of promotion on your part.**

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I should hope so. Otherwise, what would be the point of being there, with those assemblies? Speaking of the Tate, I could see how important was the role played by the Romanian team in promoting Ana Lupas. In our body, the Russia and Eastern Europe Acquisitions Committee, several Romanians are represented, and it was them who have prepared the defence excellently. Although the work by Lupas, an exquisite large installation, was very expensive given the budget we had at our disposal, their resolute attitude and solidarity finally convinced the other members and all supported the acquisition, as a result. What it shows is that our influence on what may be added to the collections of those eminent institutions is significant. My donation to the MoMA was not insignificant, either: Edward Krasiński owes to it his noted appearance at the exhibition *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960-1980* in New York City. We've got a Polish artist amidst an international group of his peers in one of the world's major art institutions, so this is certainly an important thing.

**WS: You can say, the first element in the process is the individual who can display the artist; then come the institutions, and then on, the market or other collectors that imitate these institutions. In our opinion, who of the Polish artists has a chance to “spring into being” in large institutional collections?**

Krasiński is already there. There is certainly Fangor, too. I think that the Zofia Kulik acquisition into Tate, which was approved in April 2015, paves a new way open for this artist. It is important that an artist's works form part of the collections of important institutions and be exhibited to a broad public. The art market responds virtually instantly in such cases. I think of Opałka, whose art has been in international circulation for years now. Althamer is widely recognised, particularly in the States. He is known everywhere, for he comes out to the public with his art, and this is very important. He creates happenings in certain districts and has the public reacting spontaneously to his art. Wilhelm Sasnal has achieved a stabilised position, too.

I am pretty moved by a meeting I last had with the young artist Agnieszka Kurant. I first met her via a foreign gallery. She is represented by Tanya Bonakdar, the gallery I once bought an Ólafur Elíasson from. At the N.Y.C. Frieze event, I saw sculptures that drew my attention owing to the material they were made of. As it turned out, they were made by a Polish artist whose name was Agnieszka Kurant. Still not too well known in Poland, she is moving on abroad. I recall the meeting with her, and a very interesting conversation we had on this occasion, with joy. There certainly are Polish artists whose potential we have not discovered yet in Poland.

**MS: Agnieszka Kurant had an individual exhibition at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Torun in 2012, which was called *Phantom Capital*. It was an excellent exhibition. I can remember it very well, as I was heavily impressed by it. Joanna Sandell of the Botkyrka Konsthall was the exhibition's curator. This means that the project**

**was suggested by a foreign team: at the time, a cycle *Focus Poland* was being held at the Centre, according to the idea proposed by Dobrila Denegri. The foreign curators invited by Dobrila proposed works of Polish artists. Rainer Fuchs from Austria showed Marzena Nowak then; Joanna Sandell chose Agnieszka Kurant. Presently, a Jarosław Kozłowski exhibition is being held in Torun.**

I talked to Jarosław Kozłowski and he reminded me of his exhibition, which you described as a big retrospective overview. Based on what I know, it will be shown at the MOCAR Centre for Contemporary Art in Krakow in 2016. In my opinion, Kozłowski is one of the best and most interesting artists, not only in Polish cultural sphere.

**MS: This exhibition is unbelievable. I think gallery operators are looking around in there, for Jarosław Kozłowski has drawn out from his atelier things that have not yet been displayed or were exhibited back in the seventies, and never documented. These works are gorgeous! I think the market will very quickly respond to what is shown there – and I wonder whether it is the home or a foreign market to respond.**

**WS: Have you come across anyone of a foreign gallery team travelling across Poland and taking a closer look at Polish artists?**

I do not know what representatives of foreign institutions are travelling the country and taking a look at someone. What I know is that more and more Polish artists are represented by galleries which are really well-thought-of – and these galleries have a significant say in the shaping of our contemporary artistic world.

**WS: Your own collection is rather specific, as it has been created by a single individual, who is a woman, rather than by a whole team of people. I reckon you probably receive a plenty of offers to buy.**

In spite of appearances, the number of offers I receive is not that big. I buy the works mostly at fairs, sometimes through auctions. I frequent galleries which can offer me something I would like to have. There are galleries I consider my favourite: there I go with pleasure, or they contact me. There is not a throng of offers that I would be getting, but some do come over to me from time to time.

**WS: There are pretty many collections created by married couples and, possibly, by males. While talking to other collectors, do you get the impression that their perception of a woman-made collection is different? Is the gender of any importance in this case?**

No, it is of no importance. There are other women creating art galleries – or at least such who are known as the only makers. One example I can quote is Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, the Italian from Turin, and her exquisite collection.

**MS: But there are not too many females: the business is continually, definitely, a “male” one.**

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Indeed. And this is why meeting Re Rebaudengo was so important for me. When I visited the fair in Turin last year [2014], I could see the space she had created to display her collection. Her foundation building excels with its extraordinary functionalism, elegance, and nobility of form. I also drew my attention to the quite deliberate strategy of how to shape the gallery space and how to create exhibitions to make them attractive to the public. For me, this is a model that sets an interesting direction of thinking about modern art of arranging exhibitions.

**WS: Collections basically reject the option to be mobile. They would stay where they are, rather than move from one place to another, not only for preservation-related reasons but also because they are settled in a specific place.**

**MS: You are selling the Stary Browar. This means there will be nothing left in Poznan.**

Stary Browar will stay there, I am not going to dislocate it!

**MS: OK, but what about the exhibitions, the gallery there?**

I don't know what future will bring. There will be no more exhibitions run by Art Stations Foundation in Stary Browar, that's for certain. The *Nieczytelność* [Illegibility] exhibition for which Marta is the curator, due in February 2016, will be the last one. But my involvement in the exhibition business is not coming to an end, because I still hope I will have a museum in Warsaw built. My museum building project in Switzerland is underway: the locality is called Susch, it is where I have bought an old brewery building. My idea is to make a possibly best use of the potential offered by the space I have come across at that place, and to make this space available to artists. This is one of the reasons I recently kept in touch with Jarosław Kozłowski, whom I would like to offer to develop a space within the museum building. The Switzerland museum is a very interesting project, also because of the venture's pioneering nature. It is for the first time ever that a Polish woman is to build a museum in Switzerland whose number-one task would be to promote Polish art. I wouldn't say it is a "Polish" museum, one that would function "under the white-and-red banner, full stop". Rather than that, the project will provide one more opportunity to exhibit Polish artists in an international context.

**MS: All right then, Jarosław Kozłowski – and, who else?**

Piotr Uklański and Mirosław Bałka will certainly be there.

**WS: Ah, just male artists.**

**MS: Any women?**

There'll be Paulina Ołowska and Monika Sosnowska, the latter already preparing a piece fitting within the space. Rosemarie Trockel, highly valued in Switzerland, will join them. I have bought an installation she has authored, already exhibited by

a Cologne museum; in Susch, it will occupy a dedicated space. I cannot tell you all the names yet. In total, there are about ten rooms to be used.

**MS: What size are those rooms?**

Various. To give an example, one of them is five metres high, sixty square metres of floor area, and is chiselled in rock. I thought that Miroslaw Bałka might develop a space like this, since it is gloomy, harsh and humid, and his works may fit in such an environment very well. The project makes me pretty satisfied but calls for extraordinary concentration and is time-consuming. The museum will offer 1,200-1,300 metres of exhibition space. There is no larger cultural institution in that part of Switzerland.

**WS: How about the surroundings of the museum?**

They are beautiful. To expand the museum's activity, I have bought an adjacent building, in which ateliers for artists will be arranged, for them to come over and make their works on the spot. Now, I am about to plan a promotion strategy and the activities related to the functioning of this institution on the demanding, though fascinating, arena of Swiss culture. On the initial stage, care should be taken about creating some artistic havoc in the new milieu, so that people start sharing the news that in Engadina, the region where Susch is located, a museum is being developed which will be open to various suggestions. I have already employed curators from Switzerland to work on the core programme.

**MS: How would the curators influence the selection of what you are going to exhibit there? Is the final decision yours?**

As for the permanent space, I have made the decision. I obviously have influenced the character of the museum's programme, one reason being that my collection forms the basis. The space dedicated to temporary exhibitions will alter twice in a year, and will be managed by the curators. The old section of the brewery I have mentioned, where the core exhibition will be housed, is my homage to the artists I respect and believe they ought to be memorised by those who will visit the museum. Incessant change and astonishing artistic experiment is what section needs. I will certainly be open to the genre of performance art as well as a number of other actions.

**MS: Do you think this concept can be reconciled with the idea to build the museum in Warsaw? How will you manage to be here and there, controlling both projects at the same time?**

I already am in different places simultaneously, these activities, and more, being well organised and supported by a trusted team of professionals. This has also been the case with the Stary Browar, which I have left in good hands – and I do believe it will continually be managed to a top standard, excelling with its creative and ex-

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traordinary approach. I never feared new challenges and oftentimes entered into several projects at the same time, as action and activity is my element. I have with me a well-prepared group of associates who, like I do, are capable of finding their way in new situations. The two major challenges I am facing now include, precisely, the museum in Switzerland and the museum in Warsaw.

**WS: I think, the time has come to sum up. What is it that you find the most successful, about Stary Browar and the exhibition?**

I am convinced that the Poznan downtown area has changed, as has the locals' way of thinking about public spaces. I consider this to be the Stary Browar's greatest achievement. This venue has showed people how to make use of public space, opened the new opportunities and perspectives for proactive participation in public, or social, life. The exhibitions held by my Foundation were ever more interesting; the events, just to mention the Art & Fashion Forum, was of ever better quality. I spared no effort on making the projects and undertakings more and more attractive every year.

**WS: Your projects hit the target in virtually every single segment. What I'm referring to is public space as a general concept, not just your art project. You've found your way to children, for instance: the sandpits, the colour sand!**

This is what I'm talking about while referring to creating public space: a completely new quality of using common places. Stary Browar has a programme targeted and tailored to every social and age group.

**MS: Tell us, please, what will happen with the Tarasewicz columns, for that matter?**

The works of art will remain there, within the Stary Browar space, as a deposit. While they are, and will be, part of my collection, I wouldn't like to take the columns you mention away from that place.

**WS: Which is also probably true for the Mitoraj work.**

The Mitoraj is rather hard to remove, as the work has been installed at the Atrium, before the roof was constructed. I think it is good it will stay where it is.

**WS: An understanding has been signed recently between Gdansk and Warsaw for setting up a Modern Art Museum in Gdansk. Poznan would probably not expect an agreement like this in many years to come. I know that your Warsaw project is a different museum of modern art – based on what I know, it is to function under such a slogan. How powerful your own narrative would be in that particular place? You have a way to narrate art of your own, because if we walk across the museums in Warsaw, we would never meet a Stańczyk, or a Mieczkowski, or any Minimal Art pieces there.**

This is true also for Judd, Jenny Holzer, or Agnes Martin; or, for Albers. For quite many, as a matter of fact.

**WS: And you're not taking those pieces with you to Switzerland?**

No, I'm not. My collection is big enough to form on its basis, without any problem, a museum in Warsaw and plan a core exhibition for Switzerland. For the time being, I am waiting till the decision is made to enable the development of the institution in Warsaw.

**MS: Are you still waiting to get the reply? Poznan has discredited itself entirely in this respect, and the museum project never became true there; now, Warsaw seems to be protracting the process.**

We are in the middle of talks right now.

**WS: Is there any limit of your patience?**

There is one, for certain. I am focused on the talks now, not willing to make things unnecessarily hasty. It might be that the institutions or the authorities need more time to make their decisions. But on the other hand, the situation doesn't seem much complicated to me. I should like to donate to Warsaw a museum with an unusual collection I have been building over the years. My activities as a collector have implied the idea that the collection should be made publicly available: my intention is to share with the others what I have managed to create. My plans would not curtail the public budget; I want to organise all this with my own money.

**WS: Some decision-makers think, perhaps, that constructing this museum in Warsaw would significantly debilitate some of the public institutions from the standpoint of visitors, recognisability, and so on. I know an example from Bavaria where the emergence of a private museum brought about the fall of a local public museum, for the private enterprise had a more attractive architectural form and more interesting objects on display. Would you say this is part of the context too?**

No, I wouldn't; this is the first time I come across such a point of view. In Poland, a very small fraction of the public are interested in contemporary art, and thus we still have a lot of work to do, particularly with respect to education. The institution I have devised will be no competition for the National Museum, or the Modern Art Museum, or to any other cultural centre. Each of these places has a programme of its own and a determined scope of action, which determine the specificity and the character of the respective institutions. I am positive that the broader the choice is, the better for the public. In my opinion, the diversity and the choice offered is what this country's society needs in the context of artistic education.

**WS: Have you considered the fact that if you are not successful in building the museum and it becomes apparent that you are taking your collection away, to another**

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**country, then administrative or legal obstacles might appear with respect to the objects that require a permit for them to be moved across borders, due to their age and value?**

I haven't thought about this, either, for I do constantly believe that all these works will remain in Poland. I still believe we are a society that, apart from the mundane and basic issues of everyday life, feels the need for an art that makes one think. I wouldn't like to figure out the entire collection going abroad: it is needed in this country, and not elsewhere. I have managed to form a collection that is really worth remaining here in its entirety, non-diffused.

**WS: "What happens after I go?", is the problem normally faced by art collectors. "What will happen to/with my collection then?" I meet collectors who tell me, "Wojtek, go find some affluent thirty- or forty-year-olds for me, so they repurchase from me the *clou* of my collection." This is impossible in your case. So, what will follow afterwards?**

I don't know. I ask myself the question every day. I reckon the only solution would be to place the entire collection in a museum, so as to prevent the works from spreading out across the world. When I read auction catalogues and it turns out that a whole chapter is dedicated to a collection that was created over years by a family, it really distresses me. I can figure out the emotions and endeavours that accompanied the collecting over the years; then, the hard work is brought to naught, the collection losing its cohesiveness and shape.

**MS: I still cannot get past the fact that Tadao Andō's design, whose model I saw at your home, was not delivered near the park adjacent to Stary Browar. I think that the status of Poznan would change then, as the city would gain something unique on the East Central European scale, which would attract visitors. The short-sightedness of local municipal authorities is terrifying. I am curious what Warsaw will do now. Let's hope the decision will be positive. Have you got an architect already, the one you would demand for your project?**

There are a few names coming to my mind, but not until I have got the place and the certainty that the museum will finally be there, I am not going to talk to eminent architects and get them involved in the project. I am aware that those great architects (and I would like the project to be done by someone of a significant name and considerable experience in creating objects of the sort) are pretty time-poor and free time in their schedule is a rare occurrence.

**WS: In your personal history as a collector, you must've met hundreds, and thousands, of people. Marta and I can feel that the story called "Stary Browar" is coming to an end. Among those who worked on the project, or who you have accidentally met there, is there anybody special, someone who would have impressed some extraordinary stigma on you?**

Let me shun naming anybody in specific, for there have been many such extraordinary persons, every one of them inspiring me in his or her peculiar way, and we exchanged our perceptions and thoughts for a good many years. This has all remained within the walls of Stary Browar. People are afraid that Stary Browar will change, but I do not share these fears. Those with whom I built Stary Browar will stay there; an excellent operational team remains in place, of those who have won my trust and, primarily, the trust among Poznan people. I should think Stary Browar is a wonderful adventure that I have come across in my life.

**WS: I have recently seen new mappings of art in Poland, with localities plotted and descriptions of what is going on. When it comes to Poznan, we are told that everybody is moving the house, the only thing remaining is the Stary Browar and the Grażyna Kulczyk collection remaining (the decision was not made yet).**

This is pretty unfortunate.

**MS: It is, but on the other hand, you have done everything to have it right here! To no avail, regrettably. I write on a monthly basis my recommendations to the municipal publisher IKSA about the must-sees in Poznan. And I recommend every single exhibition held at your place. Ever since I took over the column, I have written of *The Second Autumn* and *Let's Dance*; most recently, I have covered Iza Gustowska, as these materials are prepared in advance. This means that I will soon have nothing else to write about!**

**WS: Indeed, ever since the gallery appeared, your art and the choices you make have been present in Poznan. Now, the story is at its end, for not too many people would be able to watch these works at your home.**

I find this particularly regrettable as this is my family town. I have attached myself personally and business-wise to Poznan; it seemed at some point that I would live there till my very last days. It was after years and years of my exhibition organising activity that I managed to create a broad public at the Stary Browar. Together with the Foundation, I performed a pioneering work and discovered a number of new phenomena to the public. At the outset of the performative scheme, we had a few spectators coming to see our spectacles; today, there are often no seats available. It was all achieved through hard work. In Warsaw, where the public is larger and responds more spontaneously to any event appearing, the situation is different.

**WS: The Art project will still be underway; this is probably not true for the Dance project, right?**

Using the tentative name “Museum of Contemporary and Performance Arts” in the title of my application to the Municipality of Warsaw, I remarked that performance art would be part of the programme.

## INTERVIEW

Grażyna Kulczyk talks to Marta Smolińska and Wojciech Szafrąński

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**MS: You are perfectly making yourself part of what is described these days as a performative turn in visual arts – and, in humanities at all. Your museum would then become a perfectly fitting part of such a most modern trend.**

To support my presentation at the Warsaw town hall, I requested to prepare a demonstrative design. I wanted to make the officials aware of how I imagined the space of this building and the role it was to play as far as delivery of the basic assumptions behind the institution are concerned. There was, obviously, a stage to perform modern dance, a performative theatre, a large library, and educator's props. I should hope these ideas will be delivered, their germs having appeared based on the best cultural institutions worldwide.

**MS: How large would be the area, in square metre terms, that you would like to make an exhibition space?**

I earlier on had various ideas about it: ten, or even fifteen thousand square metres. But certainly a part of the space will be used as a storeroom. The area would certainly be quite large, with several thousand metres of exhibiting space.

**WS: I think quite a lot of people will frequent the place precisely for the reason you've mentioned: part of the Warsaw society will consider it fit to show off there.**

**MS: Certainly, no big effort would have to be made to make people come over, contrary to what was the case in Poznan or, for instance, at the Torun Contemporary Art Centre. In Torun, it has become en vogue even for lower-secondary-school students to attend opening parties: you simply have to turn up at the Centre. The art exhibited there obviously somehow penetrates into the minds of those young people; so, the effort yields a good result.**

**WS: And in your museum, works not only by Polish but by top world artists will be seen, in the first place.**

This is true: in fact, no Polish museum has shown some of these artists yet.

**MS: Grażyna, thank you very much for having talked to us.**

Thank *you* so much.