

# Adam Sobota

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## The Pitch-In Spectrum

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

by a series of workshops organised under a name "We invite you to work" between 1987-1989 in Karlino and in 1990 in Darłowo. The initiators and first artistic curators were Andrzej Słowik and Maria Idziak who in 1989 entrusted the function to Wojciech Zamiara and in 1990 to Andrzej Ciesielski.

Also important for the functioning of the Koszalin community within the Poland-wide circuit was the Presbitery (Na Plebanii) Gallery run by an artist Andrzej Ciesielski and between 1986 and 1990 there were 35 meetings organised in it.

As the author states, the Pitch-In Culture was born out of the need for a totally different way of presenting one's own artistic practice, the exchange of information and joint action. Without friendship, knowing one another, a willingness to work and even without some personal antagonisms, the whole movement would not have had a chance to spread so broadly around the country and accept so many versatile artists as for example as it happened in Koszalin.

### **Grzegorz Dziamski** **The Pitch-In Culture thirty years later**

The "Pitch-In Culture" began functioning at the end of 1981 within a circle of people connected with the Łódź Kaliska group, but very soon its strongest presence was reflected by the Artist pilgrimage, Long live art! (Łódź 2-4.09.1983). This was when two meanings of the term "Pitch-In Culture" emerged: a narrow one, meaning people connected with the Łódź Kaliska group and those whose concept of art was closely associated with the group and broader interpretation – meaning the way the artists acted who wanted to keep their independence during the martial law. Józef Robakowski on the occasion of an exhibition organised in Belgium entitled The Polish avant-garde wrote that the Pitch-In Culture was "independent of politicians, police, church, administration and artists themselves", it expresses in gestures and slogans, "that is why it may be everywhere, in our homes, streets, forest, bar, park, tram, queue at the butchers shop and even on the train from Łódź to Koszalin and back". Martial law forced artists to search for new forms for their activities, but this did not blur the previous personal and artistic differences. For Józef Robakowski the Pitch-In Culture was a new form for the activities of independent artists; for Łódź Kaliska it was a new artistic form. In the first case the 'Pitch-In Culture' was only a means; in the second – it was an aim. Of course, the second is more interesting but it requires us to answer a question: what was the art form about? Some critics thought of Jacek Kryszkowski as one of the Pitch-In Culture leaders, although he considered that the Pitch-In Culture was supposed to break with the production model of art. Kryszkowski never explained how this post-production art shall look. Today, even though Kryszkowski would not have been happy about this, since many times he attacked the dependence of Polish criticism upon art terminology and theories worked out in the West, we could say that post-production art actually resembles the relational aesthetics of Nicolas Bourriaud.

### **Adam Sobota** **The Pitch-In Spectrum**

An artistic phenomenon called the 'Pitch-In Culture' distinguished the Łódź artistic scene, although it actually reflected the situation in the whole country during the eighties and that is the reason why it attracted artists from different towns and various generations. The most radical arts programme emerged across the entire spectrum of independent artistic activities in Poland after martial law and it was different from art directly connected with political opposition or religious motives. I observed some 'Pitch-In culture' actions in Łódź, however I prefer to talk about the way the phenomenon was situated in the broader context of the situation for the arts communities in Poland. Since the mid fifties the art circuit had become stronger and stronger, becoming an alternative to official culture. The totalitarian system was conducive to bureaucratic stagnation, so young artists, who were interested in new media and a non-conventional means of expression, created their own network of artistic groups, galleries and events, most often associated with so called 'student culture'. In the seventies these artistic communities was numerous and multi-generational. Their basic need was self-education and generating a network of private contacts in the country and abroad

as well as mutual support within art groups and collective shows. The situation after martial law strongly underlined the need to continue to communicate, deepen the knowledge and keep contact with the essence of modern art. The fight for an artistic awareness ran parallel to the fight for political freedom and historical truth. It was not about randomly adding whatever, but moreover about adding something that was considered valuable to the culture that was practiced at the time. For me, as an art historian it was important to broaden the knowledge and preserve the facts about modern art history. Independently of my work in the museum, I participated in a team directed by Professor Aleksander Wojciechowski, who worked on the history of the neo-avant-garde in Lower Silesia. Jerzy Busza also appointed me a member of the editorial board of the *Obscura* bulletin (1982-1990), in which we published important texts that had not been published before in Poland and which explained the sense of modernist and post-modernist ideas. The monthly edition was published as the Federation of Amateur Photography Associations allowed us to publish it as their bulletin. This may all be described as progressive activities in the face of the lack of institutional support at the time for various forms of culture.