

In the Shadow of War: Exhibitions of Johann Georg Pinsel's Sculptures at Wawel Royal Castle Museum

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The military conflict in Ukraine has, of course, had a tangible impact on the preservation and presentation of its cultural heritage. Some exhibitions have brought it to the attention of the European public. This article focuses on the gallery presentation of old art from contemporary Ukraine in a Central European context. Using the last two years' exhibitions of Johann Georg Pinsel's famous sculptures at the Royal Castle of Wawel in Krakow as a model, it explores the possibilities of intimate presentations of iconic exhibits from Ukrainian collections. The pair of small-scale exhibitions in question reveals the potential of these quasi-marginal projects in the dramaturgy and image-building strategy of large museum institutions.

Keywords: Small-scale exhibition, eighteenth-century art, Ukrainian art collections, Johann Georg Pinsel, Wawel Royal Castle

Every armed conflict has a negative impact on all spheres of life, including culture and cultural heritage. Although the latter naturally recede into the background in the face of extreme situations and existential problems, as an important element of the identity of the attacked society, they may become a target for the attackers, with the eradication of the invaded country's cultural heritage becoming an element of the military strategy. Such actions belittle the significance of the attacked society, nation or state. At the same time, appropriating works of art as spoils of war is a traditional mark of triumph. Safeguarding material cultural heritage at risk because of war depends mainly on the capabilities of the institutions, volunteers and local communities concerned, as well as on disinterested assistance from the outside.

This is the case with the conflict that has been going on in Ukraine since February 2022,¹ the start of which prompted action by – alongside national institutions – relevant international organizations such as ICOM.² Their objective was to safeguard monuments of culture on site, as well as safely deposit collections both within Ukraine and outside its borders.³ In addition, there have been various exhibition projects outside the country. Apart from protecting exhibits by temporarily removing them from areas affected by the hostilities, these actions serve other important functions, as reminders of the assets and values of a culture under threat and of the ongoing conflict itself. Concerning the war in Ukraine, the widest resonance has been generated by a project entitled *In the Eye of the Storm: Modernism in Ukraine*,⁴ providing the first comprehensive look at early twentieth-century Ukrainian modernism, which remained in Russia's shadow for many years. Although the project was devised for Spain's Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid, it was prepared as a touring exhibition, facilitating broader promotion of this unique artistic phenomenon and, consequently, of Ukraine's culture and history, which are not very well known in Europe. Thanks to this initiative, a Ukrainian modern art project has recently been presented at the Lower Belvedere in Vienna.⁵ The project's concept makes it possible to divide it into two smaller exhibitions. This option was chosen by the Slovak National Gallery, which in 2024 presented the component highlighting Art Nouveau.⁶

Owing to the practicalities of exhibition projects, exhibitions of younger, especially contemporary Ukrainian art and so-called 2D multimedia presentations are becoming increasingly numerous. A more complicated situation is spatial artefacts, especially ancient works of art. Such exhibits are much more demanding when it comes to storage, transportation (often also conservation work) and presentation itself. For this reason, they are exhibited abroad less

¹ ROSŁAN, Grzegorz. Protection of Cultural Heritage in an Armed Conflict. What Poland can Learn from Ukraine? In: Proceedings of 3rd International Conference CNDGS'2022, pp. 195–202. Research shows that without sufficient community involvement, the protection of cultural heritage often turns out to be fruitless. Improving the protection of cultural heritage on the basis of the local community should take into account the development of methods of increasing public awareness of the damage caused to cultural heritage.

² Accessed 1 June 2024, <https://icom.museum/en/news/statement-russia-invasion-into-ukraine/>. On the ICOM website it is possible to find many free and accessible online tools which can help in crises. They include the ICOM and UNESCO *Museums Security and Disaster Preparedness in Running a Museum: Practice Handbook*, ICCROM *First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis – Toolkit* or UNESCO and ICCROM *Endangered heritage: emergency evacuation of heritage collections*. In addition, the ICOM points to the importance of civil society in protecting museum buildings and their collections. Accessed 1 June 2024 <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20230821-the-fight-to-save-ukraines-cultural-spaces-and-heritage>

³ We can cite the initiative Museums for Ukraine, supported by European museums and galleries. For example the Louvre helped to evacuate sacred icons from Ukraine and then displayed them in June 2023. D'SILVA, Beverly. The battle for Ukraine's cultural gems. BBC, 22 August 2023. Accessed 1 June 2024, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/the-louvre-has-displayed-sacred-treasures-rescued-from-ukraine-as-part-of-its-partnership-with-local-museums-2321764>

⁴ The project was launched on the initiative of Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid as an expression of support for Ukraine and way of protecting works of art against the Russian invasion. Accessed 4 June 2024 <https://www.museothyssen.org/en/exhibitions/eye-storm-modernism-ukraine-1900-1930s>. The exhibition was accompanied by the following publication: AKINSHA, Konstantin. *In the Eye of the Storm: Modernism in Ukraine, 1900–1930s*. Thames & Hudson 2022, p. 248.

⁵ Accessed 21 February 2025, <https://wawel.krakow.pl/wystawa-czasowa/ekspresja-lwowska-rzezb-rokoka>

⁶ Accessed 4 June 2024 <https://sng.sk/sk/sng-bratislava/podujatia/v-oku-burky-umenie-secesie-na-ukrajine>. *V oku búrky. Umenie secesie na Ukrajine (22.06.2024–22.09.2024)*. AKINSHA, Konstantin – DROBOTIUK, Maryna (eds.). Bratislava: Slovenská národná galéria, 2024.

often and in a more limited selection. This highlights the significance of the exhibition projects organised in Poland by Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków: *Ekspresja. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa* (31 March–22 October 2023) and *Emocje. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa* (21 June–15 September 2024). Designed as complementary, both present unique works from the workshop of Johann Georg Pinsel (which Europe came to know – although in a different setting – before the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine). The works clearly testify to the wealth and high quality of items in Ukrainian museums and galleries.⁷

The organiser of the two exhibitions, Wawel Royal Castle, is an iconic site for Polish culture and statehood, stemming from the centuries-long history of the former royal residence, its historic works of architecture and art of exceptional artistic quality. No less important is the fact that since 1930, it has housed one of the most important museum institutions in Poland: Wawel Royal Castle Museum. This potential is supported by the museum's active exhibition policy, which made Wawel Castle the only Central European art museum among the world's top 20 most-visited institutions of this kind.⁸ In 2023, the number of visitors reached 2,500,000, an increase of 43% on the previous year (which was still marked by the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic). The museum presents its unique collections in several exhibitions, the main objective of which is to provide an insight into the appearance of the historical royal residence from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. In addition, it offers a picture of the history of Wawel Castle from the late eighteenth century until the present at the *Wawel Odzyskany* exhibition, which showcases the renovation of the building and its furnishings, as well as its vaults and lapidarium, jewellery workshop, armoury and porcelain room.⁹ In addition to castle exhibitions as well as large exhibitions such as *Obraz Złotego Wieku* (2023) or *Wawel Wyspiańskiego* (2024), Wawel Royal Castle successfully mounts smaller-scale ventures.¹⁰ Over the last two years, it has been precisely at smaller-scale exhibitions that visitors have been able to get to know Johann Georg Pinsel's works.

Although the exhibitions organised in Kraków in 2023 and 2024 are not the first foreign presentations of works by the masters of Lviv Rococo sculpture, they are among the few such events. The sculptures were shown for the first time outside what was still then the Soviet Union at the Národní galerie in Prague in 1989, with the same exhibition subsequently being

⁷ KOLBIARZ CHMELINOVÁ, Katarína. Johann George Pinsel vo Viedni. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo* 5(2), 2017, pp. 203–207. KOLBIARZ CHMELINOVÁ, Katarína. Himmlisch! Der barockbildhauer Johann Georg Pinsel. Recenzia katalógu výstavy. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo* 5(2), 2017, pp. 208–211.

⁸ The top 100 most often visited museums in 2023 from Central Europe include only six institutions from three cities: Kraków, Warsaw and Vienna. The leader among them is Wawel Castle. See: The 100 most popular art museums in the world—blockbusters, bots and bounce-backs, accessed 30 May 2024, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2024/03/26/the-100-most-popular-art-museums-in-the-world-2023>

⁹ Accessed 30 May 2024, <https://wawel.krakow.pl/en/exhibitions>

¹⁰ Accessed 18 February 2025, <https://wawel.krakow.pl/wystawa-czasowa/obraz-zlotego-wieku>; <https://wawel.krakow.pl/wystawa-czasowa/wawel-wyspianskiego>. The museum provides an average of eight temporary exhibitions of a smaller format at the castle each year. Accessed 18 February 2025, <https://wawel.krakow.pl/archiwum-wystaw-czasowych/1>

mounted in 1990 at the Wilanów Orangery and the Museum of Architecture in Wrocław.¹¹ This first, brief period of cooperation with foreign institutions ended with a monumental exhibition at the National Museum in Poznań in 1993.¹² The next overseas exhibition of the sculptures from the Lviv gallery did not occur until two decades later, at the turn of 2013, when the works were exhibited at the famous Louvre, which allowed them to be appreciated by art lovers in Western Europe for the first time.¹³ A similar role was played by the exhibition organised in 2015/2016 at the Winterpalais Prinz Eugen in Vienna.¹⁴ The last overseas exhibition of the Lviv Rococo sculpture before the Russian attack on Ukraine was in Vilnius, Lithuania, in early 2022, after which it was transferred to Pilsrundāle, Latvia.¹⁵

Both exhibitions prepared and presented at Wawel Royal Castle featured outstanding works. The first comprised pieces that were once part of the furnishings of the parish church in Hodovytsia (Hodowica), while the second displayed figures from the Church of the Missionaries in Horodenka. Both sets of religious sculptures share authorship, having been made in the workshop of Johann Georg Pinsel, the most outstanding representative of the so-called “Lviv Rococo sculpture”. The name refers to a unique phenomenon of woodcarving art in Europe, which emerged around the mid-eighteenth century within the territory of the Ruthenian Province, then part of the Kingdom of Poland (united with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to form the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth), and lasted until the early nineteenth century (after the First Partition of the Commonwealth in 1772, part of the Habsburg Monarchy). The artists who were active in Lviv (Lwów) and its area (primarily Buchach) developed a unique style of figural sculpture. Their emotional sculptures, sometimes even irrational in their extreme expression, represented a highly anti-naturalistic approach to constructing human figures. They attract attention by virtue of their dynamic poses and excessive gestures. An important medium of expression is the unreal draperies, constructed autonomously to movement. Strongly cubistic, massive and tangled, in extreme cases they assume almost abstract forms, often dominating the visual perception of the work. No less expressive are the exposed body parts with strongly exaggerated detail: ascetic physiognomies, skinny limbs or rippled torsos. Another striking element is the extraordinary popularity of the formal modes, which quickly became a common formula among the sculptors of Lviv, introducing a stylistic homogeneity rarely seen across the entire artistic milieu. Works produced in various workshops fit perfectly with a clearly defined

¹¹ The shows were essentially a reduced version of the exhibition previously designed by the Lviv Painting Gallery for the Olesko Castle. More: WOŹNICKI, Borys. *Mistr Pinzel. Legenda a skutečnost*. Praha: Národní galerie v Praze, 1989. WOŹNICKI, Borys. *Mistrz Pinzel. Legenda i rzeczywistość. Wystawa rzeźby XVIII w. ze zbiorów lwowskich*. Warszawa: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1990. ROSZKOWSKA, Wanda. *Opus sacrum Mistrza Pinzla we Wrocławiu*. In: *Nowe Życie*, 192, 24/1990. BETLEJ, Andrzej, PAŁKA, Joanna. *Zamiast wstępu. Kariera wystawiennicza lwowskiej rzeźby rokokowej*. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Ekspresja. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa*. Kraków: Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, 2023, p. 9.

¹² KALINOWSKI, Konstanty (ed.) *Teatr i mistyka. Rzeźba barokowa między Wschodem a Zachodem*. Poznań: Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, 1993. BETLEJ, Andrzej, PAŁKA, Joanna. *Zamiast wstępu...*, pp. 9–10.

¹³ OSTROWSKI, Jan K. and SCHERF, Guilhem (eds.) *Johann Georg Pinsel un sculpteur baroque en Ukraine au XVIII^e siècle*. Gent: Snoeck, Paris: Louvre éditions, 2012. *Passim*. BETLEJ, Andrzej, PAŁKA, Joanna. *Zamiast wstępu...*, p. 10.

¹⁴ HUSLEIN-ARCO, Agnes, HOHN, Maike, LECHNER, Georg (eds.) *Himmlisch! Der Barockbildhauer Johann Georg Pinsel*. Wien: Österreichische Galerie/Belvedere, 2016. *Passim*. BETLEJ, Andrzej, PAŁKA, Joanna. *Zamiast wstępu...*, p. 10.

¹⁵ DOLINSKAS, Vydas, TADAROVSKA Gintarė (eds.) *Baroko skulptūros mistyka. Jobanas Georgas Pinzelis ir kiti XVIII a. Lwivo meistrai*. Vilnius: Nacionalinis muziejus Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės valdovų rūmai, 2022. BETLEJ, Andrzej, PAŁKA, Joanna. *Zamiast wstępu...*, p. 10.

stylistic framework, differing only within a narrow scope of individual creative manners. The range of influence of the Lviv Rococo sculptures was huge, encompassing nearly the entire Małopolska region, from the Vistula River to almost as far as the Kyivan Province and from the Carpathians to Podlasie.¹⁶

The artist who – alongside Sebastian Fesinger and Antoni Osieński – had a decisive influence on the style of the entire movement was Johann Georg Pinsel, author of the sculptures presented at the Kraków exhibitions. The available modest biographical information gives us no place, date of birth, or stages of Pinsel's artistic education. Diverging hypotheses usually suggest that he came from Bohemia or southern Germany. After arriving in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the sculptor settled not in the capital of the Ruthenian Province, Lviv, but in Buchach (Buczacz), a small, private town belonging to the Startost of Kaniów, Mikołaj Bazyli Potocki, an adventurer with a scandalous reputation, but also an excellent patron of the arts. Despite the fact that Pinsel functioned on the peripheries of the major art centres of Central Europe, it would be difficult to overstate his artistic contribution. This is because of not only the sculptor's great artistry but also his collaboration with the architect Bernard Meretyn. In the 1740s and 1750s, Meretyn carried out the most important construction projects in the region, almost achieving a monopoly on the art market in Lviv and the surrounding area. As the decision-maker concerning the choice of subcontractors making figural and ornamental decorations, he entrusted this task to Pinsel, as a result of which the sculptor had an opportunity to work not only for Potocki (making, for example, figural decorations for Buchach Town Hall or the Church of the Missionaries) but also for patrons from the capital (for example, sculptures decorating the Greek Catholic Cathedral of St George or the Church of the Trinitarian Order) and nearby localities (for example, the figural decorations of the church in Hodovysia).¹⁷ Another factor making Pinsel exceptionally important to Lviv sculpture was his workshop, from which came prominent representatives of the younger generation of the Lviv Rococo style – above all, the brothers Maciej and Piotr Polejowski. After the master died in 1761, they became independent professionals and by successfully developing Pinsel's style they contributed to its popularization.¹⁸

Unfortunately, history – especially recent – has not been kind to the art of the former Ruthenian Province. The Soviet Union's attack on Poland in September of 1939 and annexation of its eastern territories was followed by a time of systematic annihilation of old art, including works with religious and secular themes associated with Poland's heritage that were inconvenient to the Soviets. The process intensified after the end of the Second World War. It is estimated

¹⁶ GEBAROWICZ, Mieczysław. Prolegomena do dziejów lwowskiej rzeźby rokokowej. In: *Artium Quaestiones* 3 1986, pp. 7–9, KALINOWSKI, Konstanty. Wstęp. In: KALINOWSKI, Konstanty (ed.) *Teatr i mistyka. Rzeźba barokowa pomiędzy Zachodem a Wschodem*. Poznań: Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, 1993. DWORZAK, Agata. Fenomen lwowskiej rzeźby rokokowej. In: *Sztuka znywieża! Polska, Ukraina, Kresy. Adam Myjak – refleksje*. Przemyśl: Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej w Przemyślu 2023. Chmelinová indicated the connection of the issue with the specific expressive art developed in various countries along the actual southern border of Poland. However, this phenomenon of eighteenth-century art is still under-researched in the broader (Central) European context. CHMELINOVÁ, Katarína. *Skarby baroku między Bratysławą a Krakowem / Treasures of the Baroque between Bratislava and Krakow*. MNK Kraków 2017, pp. 208–213.

¹⁷ For the current state of research on the artist and his oeuvre, see OSTROWSKI, Jan K. Johann Georg Pinsel. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Ekspresja...*

¹⁸ For the current state of research on the subject, see DWORZAK, Agata. *Polejowsky. Karta z dziejów lwowskiego środowiska artystycznego w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*. Warszawa–Kraków 2020.

that barely 30% of historic items that were present in 1939 have survived.¹⁹ In most cases, the magnificence of the original designs is demonstrated by archival photographs, which were fortunately taken in the course of pre-war inventory taking.²⁰ In the case of surviving elements of furnishings of Catholic churches – which were the most affected by destruction – these works are usually kept in museum collections. A perfect illustration of this situation is the turbulent history of the numerous sculptures originating from Pinsel and his workshop. This highlights the importance of the initiatives presenting them, including the exhibitions organised by Wawel Royal Castle.



Fig. 1: *Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków, Ekspresja. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa, the first exhibition room.* Photo from the collection of Wawel Royal Castle.

Both Kraków exhibitions were small-scale ventures lasting several months; both were presented in the same fairly small rooms on the second floor of Wawel Castle designated for temporary exhibitions.²¹ As a result, it was relatively easy for the organisers to use the concept of a dark, minimalist exhibition space with matching artificial lighting. Such an arrangement made it possible to display the works – which were not numerous – in a manner that created a kind of “jewel case” effect. Despite the limited scale of the two exhibitions, their curators faced a difficult task: how to appropriately and relevantly present works that were primarily

¹⁹ GEBAROWICZ, Mieczysław. *Prolegomena...*, p. 13.

²⁰ Even before the outbreak of the Second World War, two richly illustrated studies on Lviv Rococo sculptures were published (BOCHNAK, Adam. *Ze studiów nad rzeźbą lwowską w epoce rokoka*, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1931 and MAŃKOWSKI, Tadeusz. *Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa*, Lwów: Towarzystwo Miłośników przeszłości Lwowa, 1937) as were a number of articles.

²¹ The museum used the same space and exhibition format to present other exhibitions. For example, from November 2023 to February 2024, between the presentations of Pinsel's sculptures, the Museum organised an exhibition entitled *Masters of the Italian Renaissance. Bellini. Titian. Bassano* Accessed 20 February 2025, <https://wawel.krakow.pl/en/exhibition-temporary/masters-of-the-italian-renaissance-bellini-titian-bassano>.

known to art lovers familiar with the collections of Ukrainian museums? Although the 2023 exhibition *Ekspresja. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa* presented the surviving fragments of the sculptured decorations from the church in Hodovytsia for the first time in Poland, the works had been on display since the 1990s at an exhibition in the Johann Georg Pinsel Museum in the former Poor Clares' Church in Lviv, which subsequently became a branch of the Borys Woznytsky Lviv National Gallery of Art. The works had also been presented abroad. For these reasons, the curators of the Kraków exhibition, Joanna Palka and Agata Dworzak, decided to arrange the sculptures uniquely, drawing on the original artistic concept from Hodovytsia. The exhibition's core was made up of figures placed in a way that alluded to their original arrangement in the reredos (Figs 1 and 2). Placed on various levels, spot-lit by light of varying intensity, the sculptures acquired, in addition to their immanent expression, a monumental nature achieved through minimalist means. The audio background was a discreet musical setting of masterpieces by Johann Sebastian Bach.



Fig. 2: Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków, *Ekspresja. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa*, the first exhibition room. Photo from the collection of Wawel Royal Castle.

Two works were added to the sculptures brought from Ukraine, which were kept in Poland. The first was *Crucified Christ*, attributed to Maciej Polejowski, his only piece in the Wawel collection; this work had never been displayed before. The second work was a processional cross from the church in Hodovytsia, which was brought to Wrocław by Father Jarosław Chomiczki, the last parish priest, in the spring of 1946 during the expulsion of the Polish population from the Eastern Borderlands. In order to better understand the original context of the exhibits, the exhibition was complemented by display boards as well as a video presentation with descriptions, archival photographs and contemporary photographs of the ruins of Hodovytsia Church. At the same time, the curators decided to expand the exhibition to include topics relating to early modern sculpture workshops, which had hitherto been neglected in the presentation of the

works in question. The topics were presented – again in a minimalist manner – in a striking display case, alongside the sculptures from the Hodovytsia pulpit preceding them, in the small space of the second exhibition room (Fig. 3). The display case contained prints, engravers' tools, and 3D printed reproductions based on scans of Pinsel's original *bozzetti* (three-dimensional sculpture sketches), which are currently kept in the Bavarian National Museum in Munich. The exhibition's contents – including the workshop-related aspects – were also reflected in the programmes accompanying the exhibition.²²



Fig. 3: *Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków, Ekspresja. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa, the second exhibition room.* Photo from the collection of Wawel Royal Castle.

The collaboration of Wawel Royal Castle with the Borys Woznytsky Lviv National Gallery of Art and the support it extended in the field of culture to war-torn Ukraine continued with another exhibition the following year (2024), *Emocje. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa*. The same curator duo prepared the presentation of more works from Pinsel's workshop based on a similar exhibition concept (Figs 4 and 5). This second presentation of the oeuvre of the Buchach master was focused on the masterpieces from the Church of the Missionaries in Horodenka (1755–1757). Over twenty works were borrowed from the Borys Woznytsky Lviv National Gallery of Art and the Precarpathian Art Museum in Ivano-Frankivsk (Stanisławów).

²² It should be noted that the exhibition *Expression. Lviv Rococo Sculpture* was the second most visited exhibition in Poland in 2023 with 124,000 visitors. The success of the exhibition confirmed the value of presenting the masterpieces of Lviv Rococo sculpture to the public and drawing attention to this still little-known artistic phenomenon, which is one of the most important and expressive trends in early modern European sculpture. Accessed 6 May 2025, <https://wawel.krakow.pl/wystawa-czasowa/emocje-lwowska-rzezba-rokokowa>



Fig. 4: *Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków, Emocje. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa, the first exhibition room.*
Photo from the collection of Wawel Royal Castle.

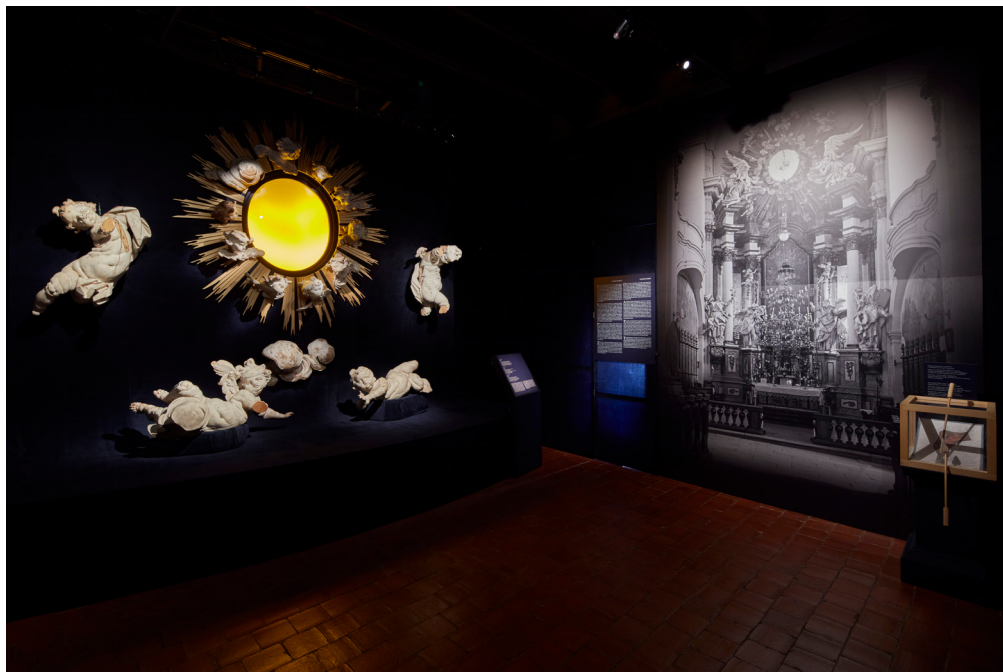


Fig 5: *Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków, Emocje. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa, the second exhibition room.*
Photo from the collection of Wawel Royal Castle.

In designing both exhibitions, the curators opted for a gallery approach, highlighting the individuality of the displayed items. The most important requirement was the work's aesthetic

quality and the associated visual information system.²³ The latter made up a balanced composition of the basic data about the objects on display alongside information expanding the context, and was presented to the visitors in Polish and English. In addition, a rich accompanying programme was prepared for both exhibitions, encompassing professional guided tours as well as various forms of popularization and workshops for various age groups. The programme of events accompanying the first J. G. Pinsel exhibition in 2023 consisted of the traditional art-historical lectures and curatorial tours which focused on discovering what the phenomenon of “Lviv Rococo Sculpture” is – not only in Polish but also in world art – and why it can be described as the most expressive trend in European early modern sculpture. These were complemented by thematic guided tours for young people and adults, as well as specialised guided tours of the exhibition led by a restorer of the sculptures. All of them had the possibility of using translation into Polish Sign Language. In addition, Wawel Castle presented sculptures by artists who lived in different periods during the *Lump, Form, Sculpture Walks*. Of particular interest were art workshops of three types, inspired by the problem of Baroque sculptors’ workshops presented in brief in the exhibition. Moreover, special educational material for children and young people was also produced for the exhibition and is available online.²⁴ The structure of the accompanying programmes for the 2024 exhibition was similar. However, in addition to artistic creation (specifically wood carving), the artistic workshops also conveyed the emotional themes of the exhibition through performance art and pantomime.²⁵

Although both exhibitions were small-scale, they were accompanied by ambitious catalogues with a similar composition and layout. The catalogues were an important element of the whole exhibition venture, providing scholarly insight into the works on display. The first part of each publication featured an introduction and essays. The latter are particularly valuable, as they discuss topics that relate directly to the exhibits and the broader context of the phenomenon of Lviv sculpture. In the case of the exhibition *Ekspresja. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa*, the publication opens with short texts providing a complete list of previous exhibitions devoted to Lviv Rococo sculpture²⁶ with a foreword by Taras Vozniak, Director of the Borys Woznytsky Lviv National Gallery of Art.²⁷ They are followed by three extensive studies on the life and work of Pinsel,²⁸ the parish church of Hodovytsia²⁹ and the graphic models that provided the basis of the sculptor’s invention.³⁰ In turn, the catalogue of the exhibition *Emocje. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa* features, in addition to an introduction,³¹ two essays which again shed light on the topics relating to the place from where the sculptures came (in this case, the church in

²³ For comparison, see ŚWIECIMIŃSKI, Jerzy. The content and form in museum exhibition: The problem of their mutual relation and the designer’s responsibility for their accuracy. In: *Museological News 11: Bulletin of the International Committee of ICOM for Museology*, pp. 219–255.

²⁴ For more information see website, accessed 6 May 2025: <https://wawel.krakow.pl/cykl/ekspresja-lwowska-rzezb-rokokowa>; <https://wawel.krakow.pl/blog/karty-pracy-1/emocje-rekonstrukcja>

²⁵ Accessed 6 May 2025: <https://wawel.krakow.pl/cykl/emocje-lwowska-rzezb-rokokowa>

²⁶ BETLEJ, Andrzej, PAŁKA, Joanna. Zamiast wstępu..., pp. 9–12.

²⁷ WOŹNIAK, Taras. Наближення до Пінзеля / Slovo od dyrektora Lwowskiej Narodowej Galerii Sztuki im. Borysa Woźnickiego. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Ekspresja...*, pp. 15–16.

²⁸ OSTROWSKI, Jan K. Johann..., pp. 19–65.

²⁹ DWORZAK, Agata. Kościół parafialny w Hodowicy, jego twórcy i znaczenie dla sztuki lwowskiej drugiej połowy XVIII wieku. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Ekspresja...*, pp. 67–112.

³⁰ BETLEJ, Andrzej. Translacja: mechanizmy i meandry wzorców graficznych rzeźb Johanna Georga Pinsla i dekoracji kościoła w Hodowicy. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Ekspresja...*, pp. 115–143.

³¹ PAŁKA, Joanna. Slovo wstępne. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Emocje. Lwowska rzeźba rokokowa*. Kraków: Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, 2024, pp. 9–11.

Horodenka³²) and a study on ornamental decorations in Lviv Rococo.³³ These essays were the fruit of many years of research on Lviv Rococo sculpture. Written by eminent specialists, they sum up the research, proposing, in some cases, a new perspective on the issues of attribution and workshop stemming from a greater awareness of how artists functioned in the early modern era. The concept of the catalogue significantly strengthened the scholarly component of the analysed exhibition projects, providing an important complement and a counterbalance, as it were, to the aesthetic experiences generated by the perception of the artefacts.³⁴

In recent years, Wawel Castle Museum's exhibition strategy has taken the form of a thoughtful mosaic of projects that respond to the need to represent an important historical site and its artistic assets. It encompasses diverse aspects including art and culture research, collecting activities and expansion of the institution's collections, as well as forms of experience-based learning. The exhibitions and other programmatic activities reflect the clearly defined cultural policy of the institution, which builds its brand based on relevancy, openness and inclusivity. Wawel Royal Castle Museum is a place of aesthetic experiences where visitors participate in "knowledge-building" by experiencing "visual arguments". It reflects the contemporary definition of an art museum, modified based on the critical analysis carried out throughout the 1980s. A museum is no longer an archive or a temple but a place of dialogue, of a discursive and presentational art history practice. Such an institution treats an exhibition as an interpretative practice that changes depending on the complex historical conditions at a given moment.³⁵ The presentations of Pinsel's works at Wawel can be considered a model example of small temporary exhibitions, popular in museum practice and regarded as a very effective form of communication. They are preferred by most big galleries or art museums, both individually and as a part of cycles. In Central Europe, a good example in this respect is Vienna's Belvedere Gallery, which has been using this format for years as a case study of old art.³⁶ Its strength lies not only in boosting the exhibition strategy of a given institution and creating new attractions to entice visitors: it also allows museums or galleries to join the scholarly and popular cultural discourse and respond to current events.

Regarding this last aspect, a good example is provided by the analysed Wawel exhibitions organised during the ongoing war in Ukraine. In addition to providing direct assistance in the safe placement of iconic artefacts of ancient Ukrainian art outside the war zone, they highlight a less visible but important aspect of the conflict: eradicating the cultural heritage

³² DWORZAK, Agata. Uwagi na temat kościoła Misjonarzy w Horodence. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Emocje...*, pp. 15–73.

³³ BETLEJ, Andrzej. Inspiracja – transmisja – przeszczep? Meandry ewolucji i konstruowania „sztuki rocaille'u” w lwowskim środowisku artystycznym. In: BETLEJ, Andrzej (ed.) *Emocje...*, pp. 75–105.

³⁴ For information about requirements concerning temporary exhibitions, see DOLÁK, Jan. *Múzeum a prezentace*. Bratislava 2015, p. 46.

³⁵ LOCHER, Hubert. The Role of the Museum in the Formation of the Art Historical Discourse. In: *ARS*, 38(1), 2005, pp. 3–19. For more on the subject, see: Efekt múzea: predmety, praktiky, publikum. ORIŠKOVÁ, Mária (ed.). Bratislava: VŠVU; AFAD press, 2006. On Central Europe, see HANÁKOVÁ, Petra. Teoretické koncepty kritickej muzeológie. In: *ARS* 38(1), 2005, pp. 20–41. ORIŠKOVÁ, Mária. Museums That Listen and Care? Central Europe and Critical Museum Discourse. In: MURAWSKA-MUTHESIUS, Katarzyna – PIOTROWSKI, Piotr (eds). *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015, pp. 163–178.

³⁶ The IN-SIGHT exhibition series at the Upper Belvedere is held three times a year and focuses on unique features of the museum's own collection in a broader context. The series includes catalogues with a considerable amount of text in a smaller A5 format. In 2024 an exhibition commemorating the 300th anniversary of F. A. Maulbertsch's birth was presented as part of this cycle. Accessed 20 February 2025, <https://www.belvedere.at/en/sight-franz-anton-maulbertsch>

and identity of the attacked side. Wawel Royal Castle Museum does this without simplification, combining a visually attractive presentation of the works with scholarly aspects. It does so via a medium typical of museum institutions – the exhibition. It is a medium with a strong cultural and political potential, as it contributes to public discourse and can permeate, disseminate, influence, transform and change culture.³⁷

By organizing the two exhibitions, the institution stressed the need to safeguard cultural heritage during every armed conflict.³⁸ At the same time, it sent a clear signal of solidarity in the sphere of culture, not only with the Ukrainian nation fighting on the front but also with Ukrainian citizens currently living in Poland. This is reflected in the words of the director of Wawel Royal Castle, Prof. Andrzej Betlej, spoken in connection with the 2023 exhibition:

The historic works displayed at the Wawel exhibition determine the uniqueness of Lviv art in Europe; providing them with safe refuge from the war started by Russia was obvious to me. We feel a strong bond with Ukraine, both emotional and historical. It is, therefore, no coincidence that Johann Georg Pinsel's sculptures are presented at Wawel.³⁹

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³⁷ Interview with Mary Anne Staniszewski, *On Curating*, 4 (May 2009): 3, https://www.on-curating.org/files/oc/dateverwaltung/old%20Issues/ONCURATING_Issue4.pdf. Cf. Michael Neumeister: Politics of display <https://stedelijkstudies.com/journal/the-politics-of-display/>

³⁸ For more on the subject, see ROŚLAN, Grzegorz. Protection of Cultural Heritage in an Armed Conflict. What Poland can Learn from Ukraine? In: *Proceedings of 3rd International Conference CNDGS'2022*, pp. 195–202.

³⁹ Accessed 21 February 2025, <https://wawel.krakow.pl/wystawa-czasowa/ekspresja-lwowska-rzezba-rokokowa>

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