

Exhibition 17 November 2015 – 28 February 2016
Parque del Retiro. Palacio de Velázquez

Andrzej Wróblewski

Recto / Verso



Chauffeur, (Blue Chauffeur), 1948. Private Collection, Warsaw

**MUSEO NACIONAL
CENTRO DE ARTE
REINA SOFIA**



MINISTERIO
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Andrzej Wróblewski (1927–1957), despite the brevity of a career cut short by an untimely death, has attained the status of a legend in Poland, where he is something of an idol tied to a specific time and place. The retrospective exhibition *Andrzej Wróblewski: Recto / Verso* seeks to present to an international public the artist's profoundly idiosyncratic work, created during turbulent times. Wróblewski's paintings and graphic work acknowledge the traumas of the Second World War and its aftermath, as well as the dreams of a better new world. They explore the most intimate feelings and represent the grimmest reality. They oscillate between, and frequently combine, an invented pictorial language, sometimes utterly abstract or metaphorical, and a pointed realism, sometimes voluntarily subservient to political demands. They are the fascinating experiments of an artist who confronted head-on the contradictions of the modern period.

In less than ten years, Wróblewski, who was born in Vilnius (Lithuania, former Poland) and moved to Kraków (Poland) in 1945, created a rich and diverse body of work (around 200 paintings and 800 works on paper), encompassing such contradictory genres as abstraction and descriptive realism, often in rapid succession or at the same time—even, sometimes, in the same work.

The exhibition focuses on two momentous phases in his work: the beginning (1948–1949), when, starting from scratch, he invented his own painterly language; and the end (1956–1957), when, after a period of faith in Stalinist socialist realism and voluntary submission to its mandatory guidelines, he attempted to redefine himself—as if starting from scratch again. These two phases are connected in Wróblewski's art, both in

subject and form, by a unique and highly personal approach to modernity and the avant-garde. His numerous double-sided paintings and works on paper created in these periods are the material sign of his being torn between political engagement and artistic experiment.

The narrative of the exhibition is based on Wróblewski's double-sided works, which have most often been exhibited one side at a time, with the choice of a specific work's side decided by the paintings' owners and exhibition curators. The artist's use of both sides of these canvases or works on paper was neither an accident nor coincidence, nor was it purely the result of economic need. Double-sidedness was a sort of program for Wróblewski and a fitting symbol for all his work: the two sides are often contradictory,



Museum, Group Scene n° 987, n. d. (1956), Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw

each questioning and complicating the other, even if by chance.

Wróblewski's double scenes thus appear contradictory: on one side, cosmically inspired biomorphic abstractions; on the other, resettlement camps, execution squads, bodily dismemberment, and intimate scenes of Brechtian estrangement. An aesthetics of fragments and social protest, surrealist organicism and uncertain identities, imposed nationalities and geometric abstraction ... all of them seemingly irreconcilable. Even so, among them are connections that can be seen.

Expanding and enriching the key motifs present throughout his oeuvre, they dismantle our expectations of what established pictorial genres or modes entail. The coexistence of statements whose form and content differ

radically is Wróblewski's pointed way of addressing viewers, who must at times literally take sides while simultaneously accepting the existence of dual images as dual complex problems and dual solutions. This is also an expression of the conviction that an artist is an active participant in reality, with the goal of his or her art being the proposal of temporary solutions.

The multilayered divisions so materially present in Andrzej Wróblewski's art embody the philosophical questions and artistic answers that arose after the Second World War, while his lack of compromise in facing irreconcilable contradictions and ideological demands makes his work particularly relevant in our contemporary situation.

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

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Opening hours

Monday to Saturday
and public holidays
from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Sundays

from 10:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
opens the whole Museum,
from 2:15 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
visit to Collection 1
and one temporary exhibition
(check Website)

Closed on Tuesdays

Exhibition rooms in all venues
will be cleared 15 minutes
before closing time.



www.museoreinasofia.es

Palacio de Velázquez

Parque del Retiro, Madrid

Opening Hours

From October to March
Every day from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Related activities

*Encounter Centred on
Andrzej Wróblewski.*

Participants: Éric de Chassey
and Marta Dziewańska.

November 18, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Sabatini Building, Auditorio

A propósito de...

Andrzej Wróblewski. Recto/Verso

Guided visit led by the Mediation team
Sundays at 12:30 p.m.

Education program developed
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