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‘NATIONAL COLLECTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ART’: PROGRAMME OF THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE TO FINANCE PURCHASES OF CONTEMPORARY ART WORKS IN 2011–2019 PART 1. HISTORY: FINANCING

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The way to the creation of the ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ Programme¹

Financing of the purchase of contemporary art works for public collections after 1989 was neither of continuous nor uniform character. In 1989–2021, strongly varied periods of activities supporting financing of the processes of creating or developing collections of contemporary art can be pointed to. They differed in both the programmes as such, as well as the ideas to allocate funds.

Owing to the lack of financial means, with the old purchase structures in the form of central purchase funds having been dissolved, practically speaking until 2004 Poland lacked a new comprehensive programme of purchases for public collections of contemporary art. Despite the fact that already as of 1996 ephemeral proposals of creating a special fund and a relevant entity, a kind of a central purchase committee, of key importance for contemporary art, were voiced, it was only in 2004 that the ‘Signs of the Times’ National Culture Programme was launched. It assumed the

establishment of an Encouragement Society for Fine Arts in every Voivodeship city (TZSPs, 15 finally) which were to collect pieces of contemporary art basing themselves on the 50 to 50 financing formula; it meant that the financing acquired for the purpose from local governments and the private sector were boosted with a Ministry grant of the same value as the collected financing (multiplier effect). As part of the *ex post* evaluation of the Programme's advantages and disadvantages (bearing in mind that many of the latter could hardly be foreseen by the Programme's authors), let us point to the main of those which actually affected the future financing of contemporary art collections.

Both the successes and failures of the 'Signs of the Times' National Culture Programme, but first of all the fact that new public institutions directly dedicated to contemporary art were created (and in multi-branch institutions contemporary art was the most omitted section as for the purchases), with almost an entire lack of subsidies for the collections from the institutions' organisers, caused the grassroot aspiration to create an overall and long-standing programme of financing contemporary art collections. Of key importance at that point were the actual changes occurring. As part of the 'Signs of the Times' National Culture Programme (2004) and subsequently 'The Signs of the Times' Operational Programme (2005–2008) the financing at almost PLN 11, 200, 000 was used (2004: PLN 4,197,500; 2005: PLN 1,646,622; 2006: PLN 1,328,200; 2007: PLN 2,042,000; 2008: PLN 1,982,000). However, when the 'Signs of the Times' were practically absorbed by the 'Artistic Events' Programme: 'Visual Arts' Priority, the total of PLN 1,542,400 was spent, and neither the national institutions nor the co-run ones could apply. Therefore, for formal reasons, the chance to obtain these resources was not available to such entities as MSN, Zachęta, Ujazdowski Castle CSW, Orońsko CRP, etc.

However, from the Ministry's budget within operational programmes to finance the purchases of contemporary art in 2004–2009 the sum of PLN 12,738,722 was spent. At that time it was believed that a long-term plan of financing purchases of contemporary art dedicated mainly to museums dealing with such art was going to be created.² The demands of the Congress of Culture in 2009 were relevant in this respect, however, not decisive for the future programme. Still, what proved the most important, was the political will, and to a greater extent even the determination of definite individuals for such a programme to be created at all. In October 2009, the regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage was issued on founding task teams at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, whose result was the establishment of, e.g., the Team to Protect Creativity³. It was precisely that Team composed of: Andrzej Przywara, Donata Jaworska, Monika Zielińska, Grzegorz Sztwiertnia, Dorota Monkiewicz, Jarosław Suchan, and Hanna Wróblewska that worked in late 2009 and early 2010 on the proposals to change means of collection financing. The key figures at this stage, but also later, were Hanna Wróblewska and Donata Jaworska who on the one hand prepared a preliminary document *Collections: Past and Present Forms of Financing Collections of Contemporary Art in Poland, Proposals for Change*⁴ (*Collections*), and later were the ones responsible for the success of the first stage of creating and operating of the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme.

The above-mentioned document *Collections* pointed in particular to the natural autonomy process of museums dedicated exclusively to the art of the 20th and 21st century, and the need to create and develop in Poland international collections of contemporary art. At the same time, a sort of confirmation of a kind of mapping with respect to the already existing institutions was conducted, and the conclusion was reached that it was precisely Warsaw, Cracow, Wrocław, and Łódź that should be the key cities: there the decision to either create a museum of contemporary art has been made, or such a museum already existed. The programme being designed then: 'Art 21' (Collection +) was to be composed of two priorities: a three-year-one for museums which were to create or develop an international collection of contemporary art and a short-term one. Additionally, plans for many-years' Expert Council at MKiDN on contemporary art were made and a list of experts in contemporary art was prepared; the latter contained potential candidates for a committee to assess applications, but also to choose the institutions' directors.

In 2009/2010, people involved in creating a new financing system believed in and recommended the solution for financing of contemporary art collections to be provided not as part of operational programmes, but as a long-term programme as of 2011 in a three-years' formula. The proposals were such that each year the financing would stand at PLN 50 million (PLN 40 million allocated to building the so-called main collections, PLN 6 million to the development of regional collections through competition; PLN 3.5 million to contemporary art within public space; and PLN 0.5 to programme operation).

The debate 'Strategy for Collecting Contemporary Art' held at MKiDN in early March 2010, and constituting the next stage of working out means of financing collections was participated by: Deputy Minister Piotr Żuchowski, Donata Jaworska (MKiDN), Mirosław Bałka, Piotr Piotrowski (MNW Director), Joanna Mytkowska (MSN Director), Jarosław Suchan (MSŁ Director), Andrzej Przywara (Foksal Gallery Foundation: FGF), Monika Szewczyk (Arsenał Białystok Director and President of TZSP in Białystok), Dorota Monkiewicz (MWW Deputy Director and Deputy President of the Dolnośląskie TZSP), Edwin Bendyk ('Tygodnik Polityka', Collegium Civitas), Hanna Wróblewska (Zachęta Deputy Director). Importantly, it was not merely a discussion on the means for the collections, but first of all, on the very importance of contemporary art collections, with a strong emphasis on educational elements. At the same time the assessment of the so-far solutions and proposals for the new 'Collections of Art of the 21st Century' Programme were presented.

Back then it seemed that the creation of a many-years' programme, so-called investing programme for contemporary art: quite distinct, and quite exclusive (for a small group of entities: 3–4 within the largest financing section) having the budget at PLN 40 million was possible, or at least such signals came from MKiDN. On 13 April 2010, a subsequent meeting dedicated to these issues was planned, however, in the meantime the Smolensk crash happened, and the questions of collection financing lost their prominence.

It is hard to unequivocally judge from today's perspective what caused that an extensive project was finally implemented in its almost minimalist version (versus the genuine one), both as far as the budget and the very Programme formula were

Table 1. Systemic financing of the purchase of contemporary art works in 1989–2021

Years	Brief description	Financing formula
1989–1992	Liquidation of the remains of the Purchase Fund and Fine Arts Fund of the Ministry of Culture and Art: permanent funds serving the extension of museum collections (also contemporary art).	
1992–2004	No programmes meant to finance the extension of contemporary art: overall tough financial situation of cultural institutions; as of 1996, plans to establish a special fund	
2004–2008	Operation of the ‘Signs of the Times’ National Programme of Culture (2004) and the ‘Signs of the Times’ Operational Programme (2005–2008)	In the initial assumption a kind of partnership of the Ministry financing and the resources of private and local-government entities (50 to 50 formula); in reality, Ministry’s grant programme
2009–2010	Absorption of the ‘Signs of the Times’ Programme by the ‘Artistic Events’ Programme: ‘Visual Arts’ Priority	Loss of the possibility to apply for financing by national institutions, such as Museum of Modern Art (MSN), Zachęta, Ujazdowski Castle Centre of Contemporary Art (CSW), Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko (CRP), and co-run institutions, e.g., the CSW Signs of the Times in Toruń
2011–2019	Operation of the programmes of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage: – ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ (project: 2010, 1 st edition: 2011) – ‘Regional Collections of Contemporary Art’ (1 st edition: 2012)	public resources, necessary institution’s own contribution (15% at the minimum)
Since 2020	Operation of the ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ Programme being an evaluation of two previous programmes related to national and regional collections of contemporary art	Public financing, necessary institutions’ own contribution: compared to the total budgets of the earlier programmes the budget of the new one almost by PLN 1 million smaller (at PLN 9.200.000 in 2021)

Source: Author’s own study

[The below acronyms of the institutions’ and museums’ names are mentioned in the table above and throughout the paper: Museum of Art in Lodz (MSŁ), Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw (MSN), Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow (MOCAK), Wrocław Contemporary Museum (MWW), Zachęta National Gallery of Art (Zachęta), Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko (CRP Orońsko), Ministry of Culture and National Heritage – MKiDN – WS]

concerned. The decision was made in the summer of 2010. The many-years’ government programme in this domain was rejected, and instead, in 2010, a pilot operational programme (for 2011) was launched; it formed part of Priority 7 in the ‘Artistic Events’ Programme (detailed elaboration of the Project: Donata Jaworska). The goal of the first Programme was to create and develop strategic international collections of contemporary art as a tool for social dialogue and education. Thus, apart from the very extension of the collection of contemporary art it was also important to effectively use it as a basis for widely accessible educational programmes as an element of promoting a modern image of regions. The possibility to submit applications was limited to state and local-government cultural institutions listed in the Museum Register for whom contemporary art of the 20th and 21st century was the main statutory goal. They could apply for PLN 1 million at the minimum (the Programme budget stood at PLN 4 million), with the maximum subsidy at 90%. The Zachęta National Gallery of Art became the operator of the first programme.

In 2011, a separate MKiDN ‘Collections’ Programme was created, and so the ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ Programme was transferred from the ‘Artistic Events’

to the ‘Collections’ Programme of investment character (which was of key importance), fed with three more other programmes: one that served consolidating collections of contemporary art: ‘Regional Collections of Contemporary Art’ and two remaining ones: ‘Museum Collections’ and ‘Composers’ Commissions’. It was crucial that out of the event-focused, the programme was shifted to the investment sector. The formula of the ‘Collections’ Programme made up of four components survived until 2016. In the 2017 application call the Programmes: ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ and ‘Regional Collections of Contemporary Art’ fell within the ‘Programmes within Artistic Creativity and Cultural Education’ (‘Museum Collections’ within the ‘Cultural Heritage Programmes’), while in the last two editions: 2018 and 2019 without any particular attribution to an overall programme.

The ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ Programme: Financing⁵

In 2011–2019 there were ten editions of the ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ Programme (among

them one extraordinary) as well as eight editions of the 'Regional Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme. Since 2020 the formula has changed; by combining the two programmes a new one called 'A National Collection of Contemporary Art' Programme has been created (two editions having taken place so far).

The 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme was elaborated in such a way that the number of applicants was limited only to museums of contemporary art (although differently worded in different editions, this actually meant the same thing). Therefore, in reality the Programme was addressed to four institutions: Museum of Art in Lodz, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Museum of Contemporary Art in Cracow, and the Wrocław Contemporary Museum. In the last Programme's edition, namely in 2019, the following entities could also submit their applications: Zachęta, Ujazdowski Castle CSW, Orońsko CRP (actually, only the latter entity submitted the application). Other entities who wanted to apply had their applications rejected at the stage of formal evaluations. The greatest beneficiary of the Programme was MSN participating already in

the first edition of the Programme in 2011 which was granted almost PLN 21 million in subsidies, and in 2012–2019 it purchased works for over PLN 21 million for its collection, contributing with their own resources at almost PLN 3 million. The second in line was MSŁ which acquired over PLN 13.27 of the Programme grants, thus almost PLN 7.5 million less than MSN; what is more, MSŁ has the worst balance for the ratio between the grant and own contribution, since the Minister on two occasions exempted the Museum from the requirement to have its own contribution. MOCAK was given almost the same grant as MSŁ, however bearing in mind the fact that in one edition it did not gain any financing at all (owing to a low assessment of the Steering Committee), this result can be regarded as really high. MWW generally in the majority of competitions would take the third or the fourth place in the rating, however, the subsidy volume it received is substantial, similarly as the overall sum spent on the purchases for the collection. What strikes is the fact that in the case of all the applicants the sum applied for at the initial stage of the process was almost the same as the actual grant obtained (greater differences result mainly in the

Table 2. Advantages and disadvantages of the 'Signs of the Times' Programme

Advantages of the 'Signs of the Times' Programme	Disadvantages of the 'Signs of the Times' Programme
Its very establishing and functioning as an initiating element imitating the French model; regional collections as PPPs	Lack of a systemic solution as for the future of the collections created in this way: some are today property of the museums, e.g. at MSŁ collections donated by TZSPs; some have been dispersed, others have remain property of TZSPs and continue to be developed with the use of subsidies as part of the MKiDN's 'Regional Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme
Some of the created collections were immediately deposited with museums, at the time being the only new acquisitions in the domain of contemporary art of those institutions (without museums' own contribution for the purpose)	None of the established collections was of an international character, although e.g., the Podlasie and Małopolska TZSPs made efforts to purchase the works of the best Polish artists, contrary to TZSPs in Kielce or Opole where works by local artists were acquired as part of an aid system
Real boost of urban collections in which TZSPs were created at the existing institutions, e.g. the Podlasie TZSP – Białystok Arsenal (synergy effect)	A significant local character of some TZSPs, thus their really small collections of strictly regional character
The Programme led to creating entirely new institutions of contemporary art in some regions, e.g., 'Signs of the Times' CSW in Toruń	The Programme manifested the weaknesses of the private sectors in some regions as for the capacity (or willingness in general) to finance collections: an exception being the Wielkopolska TZSP giving up its autonomous collection for the sake of financing MNP's purchases, plus art within public space
Over 1.000 works purchased for TZSP collections (by 2009)	Varied artistic quality and value of the works: some TZSPs treated the selected purchases for the collection as merely financial support to local artists
The Programme accompanied, and sometimes was a catalyst for change in establishing new contemporary art museums in Poland	
The Programme favoured the enlivening of the contemporary art market, particularly of the primary gallery market which was at the time at the stage of creating or consolidating itself	

Source: Author's own study

Table 3. Overview of financing (applied for, grants, own resources) for respective applicants in all editions of the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme

Entity	Total amount applied for in the programmes in PLN	Programme grants in PLN	Own resources in PLN	Volume of purchases in PLN
MSN 2011–2019	21,851,681.44	20,811,935.50	3,222,571.96	24,034,507.46
MSŁ 2011–2019	14,072,377.94	13,268,020.00	1,977,537.19	15,245,557.19
MOCAK 2012–2019	13,902,203.00	11,335,165.00	2,610,650.89	13,945,815.89
MWW 2012–2019	10,071,885.00	9,472,337.00	1,667,577.00	11,139,914/00
CSR Orońsko 2019	3,006,900.00	2,000,000.00	531,000.00	2,531,000.00

Source: Author's own study

Table 4. Ratio between the financing allocated to the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme and the sums spent following contracts between MKiDN and the applicant

Edition	Programme budget in PLN	Financing spent in PLN	The difference in PLN	Comments
2011	4,000,000	4,000,000.00	0	
2012	8,000,000	7,109,471.78	-890,528.22	
2013	7,000,000	6,722,882.00	-277,118	
2014	7,000,000	7,400,000.00	+400,000	The financing spent exceeded the allocated budget
2015	7,000,000	7,340,000.00	+340,000	The financing spent exceeded the allocated budget
2016 ⁶	7,000,000	6,715,142.64	-284,857.36	
2017	7,000,000 (+1,050,000 appeals)	6,599,961.08	-400,038.92 and -1,050,000	
2018	7,000,000 (+1,050,000 appeals)	5,000,000.00	-2,000,000 and -1,050,000	
2019	7,000,000 (+1,050,000 appeals)	6,000,000.00	-1,000,000 and -1,050,000	
In total	61,000,000 (+3,150,000 appeals) = 64,150,000	56,887,457.5	-4,112,542.5 and -3,150,000 = 7,262,542.5	

Source: Author's own study

last 2019 Programme edition), which shows that the competition among the applicants was not strong, while the financing available in the Programme budget was often bigger than the entities applied for. On the one hand, we can speak here of the effect of own contribution as a certain limiting factor in the applications, on the other, with the possibility (as much as extraordinary) to apply for being exempted from own contribution, it has to be pointed that the formula existing in the Programme of maximum level of the admissible sum for an application by a given entity was not used.

In the course of the implementation of the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme applicants, as part of their own contribution often resorted to the process consisting in pointing to definite works which were to be purchased with own resources while they

wanted to purchase others entirely with the financing coming from the grant. Thus the principle was not fulfilled (and as such it was not a precondition in the Programme) for each purchased work for the collection to share both financing with own resources and the grant. Such a situation caused that beginning with the repeated 2016 edition of the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme when the Steering Committee was entitled to show works which owing to their artistic quality (substantial overestimation, etc.) should not be purchased, the works could not be rejected because of the own resources allocated to their purchase. This also altered the ratio of own resources to the grants.

In total, the financing allocated to the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme in 2011–2019

amounted to PLN 64,150,000 of which the sum spent was PLN 56,887,457.5, which means that PLN 7,262,542 of the allocated money was not used.

It was only in 2014–2015 that the sum spent was higher than assumed; in 2018–2019 the sum of over PLN 5 million was not used (together with the financing allocated to appeals). In those years, however, the situation had an entirely different cause. In 2018, all the entities in total applied for financing at PLN 6,717,432 (while the budget together with appeals stood at PLN 8,050,000). In this way the applicants themselves were unable to consume the total of the resources; additionally, in view of the fact that MOCAK was not awarded financing, practically speaking each applicant received the sum they applied for.

In the 2019 edition the situation was different. The total sum applied for by all the entities participating in the Programme amounted to PLN 9,666,241.88, while the total sum awarded in the edition stood at PLN 6 million out of PLN 8,050,000. The last edition of the Programme and the financing spent in the way that practically resembled ‘measuring with a ruler’ effect: a million to each of the applicants and 2 million to CRP Orońsko, suggested a change in the perspective of MKiDN on the Programme (significant interference on the level of decision making with respect to awarding financing, and not the work of the Steering Committee) and the promise of the Programme’s evaluation.

In all the editions, the Steering Committees were made up of experts appointed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage from among the individuals who should boast appropriate competences and by this token be able to evaluate the

applications factually (most commonly, they were art historians coming from different academic centres and institutions). It should be regarded as a good solution (and also praxis) that the Minister considered Steering Committee candidates from among those proposed by the Association of Art Historians (SHS) or the Polish Section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). In some cases (particularly in the later editions), the proposed candidates for Steering Committee were not approved of by the Minister.⁷ Owing to the new requirements and modification of programmes in subsequent editions, the essential change in the composition of the Steering Committee has to be pointed to: in 2015, in order to verify the evaluations, a specialist within the art works’ market had to be appointed; earlier, also a specialist in conservation of historic monuments had been assigned. In subsequent editions, a specialist in art market was no longer member of the Steering Committee awarding points, but his advisor.

Over the period of 2011–2019, bearing in mind the fact that one Programme edition, in 2016, was repeated, albeit under a different name, in total 27 individuals were assigned members of the Steering Committee. A substantial majority of them participated in the Programme only once. Waldemar Baraniewski remains an unquestionable record breaker in this respect, since he was its member in 7 out of 10 editions (including the first one); he is followed by Agata Jakubowska: four times (also the first edition) and Wojciech Szafranski (four times, including the first edition); next come Anna Markowska (also the first edition), Maria Poprzęcka, Gabriela Świtek, Maria Hussakowska-Szysko i Monika Jadzińska, all of the latter having served three times as Committee members.

Table 5. Eighth edition of the ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ Programme 2018

Applicant	Task total sum in PLN	Sum applied for in PLN	Own resources in PLN	MKiDN’s grant in %	Contract Volume in PLN
MSN	2,353,218.03	2,000,000.00	353,218.03	84.98	2,000,000.00
MSŁ	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00	None	100.00	2,000,000.00
MWW	1,180,000.00	1,000,000.00	180,000.00	84.74	1,000,000.00
MOCAK	2,019,333.00	1,716,432.00	302,901.00	84.99	none
In total	7,552,551.03	6,716,432.00	836,119.03		5,000,000.00

Source: Author’s own study

Table 6. Ninth edition of the ‘National Collections of Contemporary Art’ Programme 2019

Applicant	Task total sum in PLN	Sum applied for in PLN	Own resources in PLN	MKiDN’s grant in %	Contract volume in PLN
CRP Orońsko	3,538,000.00	3,006,900.00	531,100.00	84.99	2,000,000.00
MWW	1,281,393.00	1,071,543.00	209,850.00	83.62	1,000,000.00
MSN	2,460,098.76	2,090,837.94	369,260.82	84.99	1,000,000.00
MSŁ	2,124,791.94	1,804,357.94	320,434.00	84.92	1,000,000.00
MOCAK	1,991,302.00	1,692,603.00	298,699.00	85.00	1,000,000.00
In total	11,395,585.7	9,666,241.88	1,729,343.82		6,000,000.00

Source: Author’s own study

Table 7. 'Regional Collections of Contemporary Art' 2012–2019: total amounts granted in the Programme, own resources, and total value of Programme purchases for collections by all applicants

	Sums awarded by MKiDN in the Programme in PLN	Applicants' own resources in PLN	Total value of the purchase of works for the collections thanks to the Programme in PLN
2012 Edition	2,552,382.00	719,565.00	3,271,947.00
2013 Edition	3,206,580.00	709,503.00	3,916,083.00
2014 Edition	2,145,000.00	766,738.00	2,911,738.00
2015 Edition	2,478,587.00	908,604.00	3,387,191.00
2016 Edition	1,606,970.00	568,214.00	2,175,184.00
2017 Edition	2,600,871.00	1,016,136.00	3,617,007.00
2018 Edition	2,315,000.00	936,208.00	3,251,208.00
2019 Edition	1,897,000.00	681,121.00	2,578,121.00
In total	18,802,390.00	6,306,089.00	25,108,479.00

Source: Author's own study

Apart from the members of the Steering Committee, the key figures in implementing the Programme at its various stages have been: Donata Jaworska and Hanna Wróblewska (both mentioned above), and Arkadiusz Kosowski and Dorota Błońska in a later period. As a rule, it is ministers, deputy ministers, and department directors that are mentioned as people important for programmes; with certainty, among such individuals mention has to be made of Agnieszka Komar-Morawska who has 'struggled' for the Programme recently. It is institutional memory that is vital in implementing such programmes which in real life is with the individuals actually running them: the continuity of their work is important for a successful finalizing of a given programme edition and for the applicants.

Instead of a conclusion

The 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme was dedicated to definite subjects who have over the recent years applied for financing standing at around PLN 7 million (until the eighth edition there were 4 entities, in the latest ninth edition there were seven entities, of whom only five submitted their applications, since two remaining ones applied for financing from the 'Regional Contemporary Art Collections' Programme). Thus we can emphasise a relatively small competition among the applying entities who were often granted collection financing (exceptional rejections of the applications resulted from formal errors). The lack of competition also resulted from the fact that in principle there existed the obligation to introduce own resources by the applicant, while the financing within the Programme could reach at most 85%. Although the minimum sum applied for stood at PLN 1 million, while the maximum at PLN 4 million, in practice no applicant ever applied for the maximum sum (the highest application volume in the latest edition stood at over PLN 3 million; it was connected with an intervention purchase of M. Abakanowicz's deposited works). Thus it was the threshold of own contribution, and really seldom lack of a coherent idea that caused applying for lower financing.⁸ Occasionally, the Programme financing was not fully used, however, the resources could not be

transferred to the 'Regional Contemporary Art Collections' Programme, nor used for intervention purchasing.

The 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme significantly contributed to the implementation of the idea of its initiators and authors for the priority access to financing to be given to the contemporary art museums being currently created (plus the Museum of Art in Lodz boasting already a long tradition), and thus to consolidate their collections. In this respect the Programme has fulfilled its goals. Its unquestionable major advantage, this being worth emphasising, is its duration, thus the awareness of the relevant entities of its coming subsequent editions. This has allowed museums to plan their participation in them, and to consider enlarging their collection as well as accumulating own resources with future purchases in mind. Thus the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme guaranteed the applicants the comfort of action and participation in the projects, which cannot be said about the entities applying for financing in the 'Museum Collections' or 'Regional Collections of Contemporary Art' Programmes. In the case of the latter two the situation was different: as part of the Programme related to regional collections the total project sum, i.e., PLN 2,300,000 (in the recent years) was applied for by 35–40 entities on average, of whom 75–80% really represented high level, and competed much more strongly within a smaller budget. The variety of those entities, not just with respect to their organiser, but also the size and organizational capacity, as well as the ideas for their collections to stand out, caused that the Steering Committee, when conducting the factual assessment of the applications tried to control such financing level (in percentage) so that it encompassed more entities whose applications deserved financing who, however, owing to the natural project's financial limitations could not be awarded the financing.

The above juxtaposition shows that if we were to compare the financing volume only for the strongest entity in the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme, namely to MSN, with the sums in the 'Regional Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme, the sum of the financing for MSN exceeds the total budget used for all the applicants who acquired financing in the regional collections

programme. Such a comparison, however, does not show the most important aspect, namely that the museums like e.g., MSN were to be the flagships among autonomous museums of art of the late 20th and early 21st century, and more importantly, consolidating international collections of art, while the applicants within the 'Regional Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme practically in 98% focused on domestic art.

Paradoxically, the interest in these programmes on part of the high-ranking political decision-makers, in particular Ministers of Culture and National Heritage: Bogdan Zdrojewski, Małgorzata Omilanowska, and Piotr Gliński was slight in the sense that the programmes were not subjects of positive publicity, i.e., they were not 'boasted about', despite their high implementation ratings. Additionally, more serious interventions on part of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage into the Programme are visible only under

Prof. P. Gliński (in particular, it is the boost of the role of the members of the Political Cabinet of MKiDN, mainly with respect to the appeals and the level of financing distribution). The 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme was treated by the Department of State Patronage at MKiDN responsible for it as a kind of an exclusive programme: there had never been such MKiDN programmes with a similarly closed formula for so few entities before. At the same time it had to fit within the overall formula of other Minister's programmes, that is why demands were often formulated for it to alter and show greater flexibility, but these were never implemented. To conclude, it can be said that despite unquestionable advantages of the analysed Programme, for many years it was not widely appreciated by its addressees, namely not so much the applicants themselves, but directly the artists or other entities present in the primary art market.

Abstract: The 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme run by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (MKiDN) in 2011–2019 constituted the most important since 1989 financing scheme for purchasing works of contemporary art to create and develop museum collections. Almost PLN 57 million from the MKiDN budget were allocated by means of a competition to purchasing works for such institutions as the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (MSN), Museum of Art in Lodz (MSŁ), Wrocław Contemporary Museum (MNW), Museum of Contemporary Art in Cracow (MOCAK), or the Centre

of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko (CRP). The programme in question and the one called 'Signs of the Times' that had preceded it were to fulfil the following overall goal: to create and develop contemporary art collections meant for the already existing museums in Poland, but particularly for newly-established autonomous museums of the 20th and 21st century. The analysis of respective editions of the programmes and financing of museums as part of their implementation confirms that the genuine purpose of the Ministry's 'National Contemporary Art Collections' Programme has been fulfilled.

Keywords: 'National Collections of Contemporary Art', programmes of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, financing, public collections, public museums, museums of contemporary art.

Endnotes

- ¹ The present paper deals neither with the analysis of processing modes, applicants' 'behaviours', nor points to the milestones in the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme; neither does it analyse the works purchased with it or strategies of respective entities (applicants). The Author is intending to dedicate part 2 of the paper to the above.
- ² See *Mniej burzy, więcej wahania* [Less Storm, More Hesitation]: Bogna Świątkowska's interview with Joanna Mytkowska, http://2014-2017.beczmiara.pl/czytelnia,1019,mniej_burzy_wiecej_wahania.html#/page/1 [Accessed: 25 May 2021].
- ³ Ordinance No. 20 of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of October 29, 2009 on the establishment of task teams at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (Official Journal of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage 2009.4.42).
- ⁴ This study to be found in the documents connected with the Programme (1st edition) at the Department of National Cultural Institutions, MKDNIS [Ministry of Culture, National Heritage, and Sport].
- ⁵ Legal regulations related to respective editions of the 'National Collections of Contemporary Art' Programme are available at the MKDNIS website. However, it does not contain full data related firstly to financing (e.g., institutions' own contributions or the actually spent financing within respective programmes), but only the primary results which altered in the course of the implementation. Therefore, all the information related to financing in the present paper has been elaborated on the basis of the data coming from MKiDN for the purpose of the programme evaluation project as commissioned by the Department of National Cultural Institutions at MKiDN: W. Szafranski, *Finansowanie kolekcji sztuki współczesnej. Ewaluacja Programów MKiDN – Koncepcje „PoWidoki Kolekcji” – „Polish Art Fund”* [Financing of Contemporary Art Collections. Evaluation of MKiDN Programmes – 'Collection's Afterimages – 'Polish Art Fund'], Poznań-Warszawa 2019.
- ⁶ As the program 'National Collections of Contemporary Art', as the earlier program 'National Collections of Contemporary Art', due to low scores by the Steering Team, resulted in the failure to award funds to all applicants.
- ⁷ Additionally, in 2015 (with reference to the 2016 edition), the whole Steering Committee, initially accepted by Minister Małgorzata Omilanowska, was subsequently dismissed by Minister Piotr Gliński.
- ⁸ Recently, together with the regulation change it has been possible to exclude particular works from purchase and thus lower the grant volume.

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