

A similarly engaging work, this time narrow and pointed, may well have once been part of the structure of a house. Lance, needle, umbrella or flagpole, with long and elegant proportions, this predominantly wooden object is both partly covered in a beautifully folded canvas cloth and the point of origin for this material, which seems to flow from inside the cylinder itself. With the canvas simultaneously tucked in, pulled out, and wrapped around, it isn't clear whether we are witnessing a moment of revelation or, conversely, of concealment and protection. Ultimately both and neither of these things, it is the acute autonomy of the sculpture as a loaded but independent entity that makes this such an intriguing work.

Barlow's exhibition was more than an accumulation of diverse sculptures. The discrete elements of this display cohered to form something akin to a miniature museum of curious tools, vital devices, and obscure objects abandoned in mid-usage. Encountering the strangely familiar, so evident in Barlow's practice, can be a most productive provocation.

—Peter Suchin

#### Oronsko, Poland

##### "Material-Space/ Object/Narrative"

Center of Polish Sculpture

Installed at the majestic Współczesnej Museum, "Material-Space/Object/Narrative," curated by Aleksandra Manczak, fully exploited its surroundings.

Dominika Maniek's *Obiekty 1,2,3, and 4*, four solid, overbuilt metal cases with handles, anchored the gallery entrance. Dark oxides smeared their outer surface like soot. The heavy containers stolidly protected their precious contents of a single or small group of feathers illuminated from beneath. Plexiglas coverings caused the feathers to appear suspended in liquid, as container and contained struggled to overcome gravity's determination.

Five small wooden frames contained Piotr Redziniak's selection

of ripped paper edges. Lines visible from the original notebooks moved in different rhythm across *5 Miniatur*, creating a reference to the passing of time as the piece murmured like the line of a heart-beat monitor. Izabela Wyrwa's *Transitoriness of a Moment* also pulsed with an inner pressure: the fragile cellulose linen paper outer structures supported even more fragile interior constructions that threatened to break out while at the same time protecting the piece from closing in.

Janusz Kucharski commanded the space of the immense cathedral ceiling, defining his forms as weightless and free in spite of their repetitious reference to mechanical or machine-like means. His carpets of connected jacquard cards and collections of computer paper formed expansive bird-like structures.

Kamil Kuskowski's small photographs on canvas were connected by strings suspended 105 inches along the wall, three rows high and 11 wide. Each part of *The Old Beggars of Czystochwa* was separated by space but psychologically connected. Kucharski alternated details of threadbare clothing and buttons with complete photos of men and images of a young woman's hands. The buttons signified how individuals are pinned to existence like butterflies, with the string connecting the fate of all lives, young and old, beautiful or weathered, by the common experience of birth and death.

The structures in Marcin Nowak's *Trappist Wagon* created a suspended image within a window cut into trapezoidal, coffin-like forms. The three layers formed a fused reality: to see the whole you could not focus on any one layer specifically. For instance, a bicycle inner tube seen against the sky beyond suddenly looked like a dormant bone—its history of use displaced by uselessness if the viewer worked too hard to decipher the mirage.

*Man, Human, Body*, a wire and screen "drawing/sculpture" sus-

**Right: Marcin Nowak, *Trappist Wagon* (detail), 1999. Imitation leather, Plexiglas, light, photographs on foil, and objects, overall 18 x 266 x 6 in. Below: Janusz Kucharski, *Group*, 2000. Paper and twine, 72 x 48 x 48 in. Both works shown in "Material-Space/Object/Narrative."**

pended six inches from a graphite image of water and sky, became a theater for parts of woven wire to act as figure, head, leg, and torso. Light reflecting off the bright silver wire created the illusion of movement in front of or behind the screen and revealed the metallurgical source. Magdalena Bretznajder's forceful form almost faded to invisibility as reflections moved across the textured surface.

The transformative and redemptive purpose of Polish art was reinforced by the exhibition's ability to exhale an urgent and gritty determination to be present while suggesting the possibility of being someplace else. Materials were



transformed into new identities by the twist of a wire or obsessive attention to the metaphysical purposes of feather, button, or paper. Each work magnified the integrity of a country whose historical iconography transcribes idealism into action.

—Stephanie Bowman

