

Wola Cultural Centre



Wolskie Centrum Kultury



Wola Cultural Centre

is a district cultural institution with several branches:

- **Wola Cultural Centre**, Działdowska 6
- **Community Home**, Obozowa 85
- **Family-Friendly Młynarska**, Młynarska 35a
- **Open Colony**, Górczewska 15
- **Amphitheatre** in Józef Sowiński Park, Elekcyjna 17
- **Historical Education Centre**, Wolska 46/48
- **Współdzielnik (Community Sharing Space)**, Górczewska 124 – Wola Park

The mission of Wola Cultural Centre is to build a creative and integrated community of creators and consumers of culture, who work together to create a cultural offer and support its implementation.

The vision of Wola Cultural Centre is an institutional and district space that has been reclaimed and handed over to the community, a space for culture-shaping activities based on relations and partnerships.

#neighbourhoodrelations / proximity / roots

#moderntrends / topicality / involvement

#education / growth / originality

Wola Cultural Centre pursues its mission and vision through an artistic, educational and community-engaging programme.

We are active in various fields.

A red-tinted photograph of a modern building with a large mural of a man's head. A white tent and people are in the foreground.

VISUAL ARTS / EXHIBITIONS



Kora's Madonnas

(24 May – 8 June 2019)

The exhibition took place as part of the Hipolit and Ludwika Festival (organized by the Wawelberg Colony Residents and Friends Association operating in the oldest residential estate in Warsaw located in Wola). Apart from the Virgin Mary figurines painted by Kora, the late singer of Maanam, on display were photographs of the Madonnas by Szymon Sipowicz and photographs of the artist by Jacek Poremba.

In cooperation with Wawelberg Colony Residents and Friends Association



Empty Sign

(20 September – 20 November 2019)

The exhibition brought back conceptual empty signs, collections and gestures found in innovative 1970s artworks from Poland, which art history has wrongly considered peripheral to mainstream contemporary art. It also attempted to reveal a relationship between the capital of contextual art and objects found in the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy archive. Artists: Vahram Aghasyan, Zbigniew Dłubak, Daniil Galkin, Sharon Hayes, Marzenna Kosińska, Barbara Kozłowska, Jarosław Kozłowski, Zbigniew Libera, Jerzy Lewczyński, Nikita Kadan, Anna Kutera, Romuald Kutera, Witek Orski, Harout Simonyan, Tomasz Szerszeń, Jan Świdziński.



Szymborska's Views

(4–28 September 2020)

The exhibition offered an opportunity to get to know a more personal side of the poet. It was built around unique (and often very funny) collages created by Wisława Szymborska for her friends in the course of 40 years.

In cooperation with Wisława Szymborska Foundation, Wawelberg Colony Residents and Friends Association





WOLA 1944: Wiping Out.

Photographs from the Heinz Reinefarth investigation
(7 August – 2 October 2021)

The exhibition presented at Wawelberg Colony, on the 77th anniversary of the Wola massacre, was based on a collection of over a hundred photographs from the investigation file in the Reinefarth case carried out by the Flensburg prosecutor's office between 1961 and 1967. This was the last chance and the most important, albeit regrettably failed attempt to put the main perpetrator of the Wola massacre on trial. In cooperation with Pilecki Institute



Mural commemorating Jacek Kuroń (2020)

Untitled (Jacek Kuroń) (2020), a mural at 58 Żłota Street, on the wall of the Jacek Kuroń Secondary School no. 69, was designed by Wilhelm Sasnal, one of the most recognizable contemporary Polish artists.



Polish August '80 mural (2020)

Polish August '80 is a project carried out by Wola Cultural Centre in cooperation with several institutions: Pilecki Institute in Berlin, the Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin, StreetArt Berlin, Brain Damage Gallery and the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation. It was created on the 40th anniversary of the August Agreements and the foundation of 'Solidarity' – one of the most important and largest social movements in the world. The mural was designed by Paweł Ryżko, a Polish artist associated with the Brain Damage Gallery from Lublin.





Mural commemorating Jan Lityński (2021)

Bruno Neuhamer's mural dedicated to Jan Lityński is yet another initiative of the Wola Cultural Centre aimed to commemorate great Poles who contributed to the creation of free Poland. The series of activities is linked to the 30th anniversary of Poland's regained sovereignty in 1989, where in addition to iconic figures we recall the values that gave rise to the dream of a free and better Poland. We want our projects to foster positive civic attitudes and provoke a deeper reflection on the current shape of public life.



Organism of the Place art residency

The open call for projects for our first artistic and social residency at the Wola Cultural Centre was published in June 2021. We were looking for works from the sphere of art, community engagement and social activism focused on the local context of Wola, the Koło housing estate and Wola Cultural Centre, concurrent with the title slogan 'Organism of the Place'. The winning project, I'll Help the Best I Can by Martyna D. Modzelewska, was carried out in August and September 2021. The prosocial, meta-modernist project was not focused on material results, but rather on gestures of tenderness and responsibility towards the public space, on performing and promoting attitudes of being attentive and kind to each other and offering neighbourly help – traditions that seem to be fading. The artist played the role of a 'good spirit' of the neighbourhood, wandering for hours every day through the streets of Wola and carefully looking for places and situations that could be 'fixed' or 'made easier' with small gestures.



Social Housing Estate Lab

The Social Housing Estate Lab focuses on urban themes, the history of the Koło estate, and the visual arts. We organize exhibitions, meetings on urban life and architecture, outdoor audiovisual events and art projects combining modern technologies (VR and AR) with archival materials. Our plan is to create a virtual museum and meeting space that can be accessed from any location using a computer or VR goggles. We view the Lab as a place of modern education and continuous exploration and experimentation.



Overstay art residency

During his more than one-year artist residency at the Social Housing Estate Lab, visual artist Mateusz Kowalczyk produced a series of artworks using AR and VR techniques. The documentaries created using 360-degree camera, which allow the viewer to immerse themselves in the space, offer a completely new, more engaging experience. The use of modern technology allows us to discover hidden, overlooked aspects of reality, highlights the structural character of the matter, and constitutes an unconventional approach to presenting local history. In his works based on 3D modeling, the artist reconstructs places that no longer exist or creates completely new virtual worlds in which he hides various pre-recorded stories of the Koło estate residents. In his AR works, Mateusz Kowalczyk presents, among others, 3D scans of objects encountered during his numerous walks around the Koło estate.



MUSIC / CONCERTS



Fala Dźwięku (Soundwave)

Music and social event taking place since 2009, since 2019 in cooperation with Wola Cultural Centre. The series brings together various intergenerational artistic practices, focusing on women artists and emerging talent. It likes being on the fringes and unconventionality. It fosters relationships, looks for emotions and new experiences. So far, over 200 artists have been showcased at various editions of Fala Dźwięku. In cooperation with Trzecia Fala Association of Creative Practices



Mobile Music Scene (2020)

Project aimed at supporting up-and-coming bands in the first steps of their music career. This is a space for interesting bands not yet been signed by any record company, who would like to grow and reach a wider audience. Wola Cultural Centre helps organize gigs and offers promotional support. Each band gets a set of 6 workshops with professionals to train their vocal and instrumental skills, learn how to raise funds for artistic activities and write projects and how to record a video and album. The programme received the 3rd Warsaw Cultural Education Award.



Retro Thursday

A series of concerts addressed to the older visitors of Wola Cultural Centre. Retro music and free entrance.



Od Bikiniarzy do Hipsterów (From Beatniks to Hipsters) Festival

This interdisciplinary artistic event focuses on the most important movements in Polish counter culture of the 20th century. The project combines lectures and conversations with experts (sociologists, cultural experts and practitioners of culture) with concerts of artists representing the given movement and aesthetics, both pioneers of the style and their creative epigones. In cooperation with Trzecia Fala Association of Creative Practices



The Amphitheatre of Wola Cultural Centre

in Sowiński Park is a cult spot created in the 1940s, right after World War II. Since then, it has hosted the biggest names in popular music. This is the venue for our largest artistic events.





WarszeMuzik

The festival, organized by Sfera Harmonii Foundation, including our colleague Ania Karpowicz, offers intimate backyard concerts in old Wola tenements and in front of the Umschlagplatz memorial. We have been providing organizational support to the event since 2019.

A man and a woman are smiling and looking at plants in a greenhouse. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. They are both looking towards the right side of the frame. The background is filled with various plants and foliage. A large white arrow points from the left towards the center of the image.

ECOLOGY



ECOsistem

The ECOsystem project was launched in 2018 as a unique mix of ecology and art. We combine an environmental focus with cultural events, mostly in the scope of visual arts. We organize meetings with printmaking, gardening, bee-keeping and vegetarian cuisine. Residents may gain knowledge related to ecology in contact with nature and art. The main aim of the project is to show the residents of Wola and Warsaw that systemic activities may rebuild both the natural environment and neighbourhood relations. By acting together, we act for the benefit of our local communities. ECOsystem is a series of workshops, meetings and experience sharing possibilities. So far, we have created a greenhouse, a social garden, an eco-village with an apitherapy house and apiary – this is the ‘biotope’ of our activities for the ecosystem.





The Social Garden

was launched in 2021. It is run by around a dozen volunteers – residents of Wola. With the support of Wola Cultural Centre, they plant and cultivate vegetables, fruit, herbs and ornamental plants. The crops are used to organize events at the Sąsiedzka club and café, such as making preserves together. The biggest asset of the garden is the greenhouse, where residents can grow exotic plant species.



Jadłodzielnia (Foodsharing Spot)

This is one of several dozen foodsharing spots in Warsaw. The fridge and cupboards encourage local residents to share food and save food products from going to waste. In cooperation with Foodsharing Warsaw.





Pasieka (Apiary) Bee Group

together with an apitherapy house, was created on a specially designated area of Księża Janusza Park, near Lasek na Kole. The Bee Club holds regular workshop and apiary meetings. In cooperation with the S.O.S Friends Association.



Współdzielnik (Community Sharing Space)

This is the first eco-friendly Local Activity Spot located in a shopping mall. This is a place where residents of Wola and Warsaw can meet, spend their free time and broaden their knowledge and skills in the scope of conscious consumption and a zero-waste lifestyle. The activity of Współdzielnik will involve various groups, ranging from young people to families with children and senior citizens. Współdzielnik includes:

The Free Shop – in line with the circular economy principles, anyone may bring their unwanted things there and take what they find useful.

Foodsharing Spot – the space will include a fridge and cupboards to encourage visitors to share food and save food products from going to waste.

Workshop room – a place for meetings and educational workshops centred around building an environmental and climate awareness, including the broadly understood zero waste.

Repair workshop – a workspace where you can repair everyday objects, e.g. renovate a chair or fix a minor fault in your liquidizer.

Plant sanatorium – this is where you can give your sick pot plants a new lease on life and then put them up for adoption.

Relaxation zone – area equipped with comfortable furniture, modelled on a neighbourhood space.



NEIGHBO- URHOOD RELATIONS / LOCAL FOCUS



Men's Shed / Neighbourhood Toolbox

Our Men's Shed is inspired by the Men's Shed network, created and operating in Australia. Despite the name, this is a space open for all – the age and sex are of no importance here. All residents can use the specialist carpentry tools available on-site and renovate an old piece of furniture or make a dream-object from scratch. We offer professional support of volunteers on duty at the Men's Shed. Our experts will happily give advice and help out with the tools. Strategic partner: JULA Poland. Part of Men's Shed is the Neighbourhood Toolbox – a set of basic tools that the neighbours can borrow from us.



Sąsiedzka club and café

This is the heart of our Działdowska 6 branch. A place where you can relax with a book, meet your neighbours, spend time with friends, play board games and drink a cup of good tea or coffee. A space where we hold cooking and creative workshops for youth, parents with children and senior citizens.

We want it to be a place where everyone – irrespective of age – will feel OK, like at home. With our support, the place is co-run by a local neighbourhood association.



Youth Activity Centre

This is a space created to address the needs of local kids aged 10–15. The young people did minor redecorations of the rooms themselves and feel that they are the hosts. Under the supervision of our volunteers and with our full assistance, they will shape the programme and character of the place. The place is open for youth from Wola.



Family Friendly Młynarska

This place welcomes families. We are especially open to parents or guardians of children aged 0-3. We want to both respond to their needs and shape specific attitudes, e.g. parenting based on empathy, respect, closeness, making children sensitive to aesthetics, building the parent-child bond without screen time and excessive stimuli, etc. The space is open to the initiatives of parents and residents and available to hold local and neighbourhood meetings. At Family Friendly Młynarska, you'll also find our Casual Playtime Area inspired by Waldorf education and the ideas of Emmi Pikler and Janusz Korczak. All toys and furniture in the room are made of natural materials (wood, fabric). Children can climb, walk on balance boards, stack, hide, roll, move... Parents may support their child's development by just being around them. This is also an opportunity for them to meet other adults.





ARCHI- TECTURE / CITY



Museum of Glass Houses (2019–2020)

Participatory exhibition about the TOR and BGK Modernist housing estates in Koło and the Syrkus estate developed right after the war. The exhibition was shown on the first floor of the historical Cultural Centre of the TOR Housing Estate from 1935 – the only cultural centre in Warsaw that has been continuously active in its original location since the 1930s. This area of Warsaw, slightly forgotten by residents of the capital city despite its importance for the legacy of Polish Modernism, has been retold and reconceptualized thanks to the cooperation between Wola Cultural Centre and local residents. The exhibition presented Koło and other locations from the standpoint of the idea and practice of creating social housing estates, dedicated for less affluent residents, providing equal access to culture, education, kindergartens, clinics, green areas – in a nutshell, to decent living conditions. The history of pre-war housing estates fits in with the idea of a modern, independent Poland, so the exhibition was also a space for reflecting about the dreams of modernity, of living in a well-designed home, city and state. Together with the residents, the exhibition talked about the fulfilled and unfulfilled dreams of modernization – the Warsaw dream of glass houses.



Searching for the Idea of a Social Housing Estate

This exhibition has many protagonists: Helena and Szymon Syrkus, who co-authored the concept; local residents, who co-authored our exhibition and gave us access to photographs, documents and accounts; the so-called social establishments and – most broadly speaking – the Koło Housing Estate in Wola, Warsaw, which delimited our area of interest.

As part of the exhibition, we created the Social Housing Estate Lab – a space for exploring, observing and researching the public space of Koło estate, its history, present and future.





Urban Planning Section

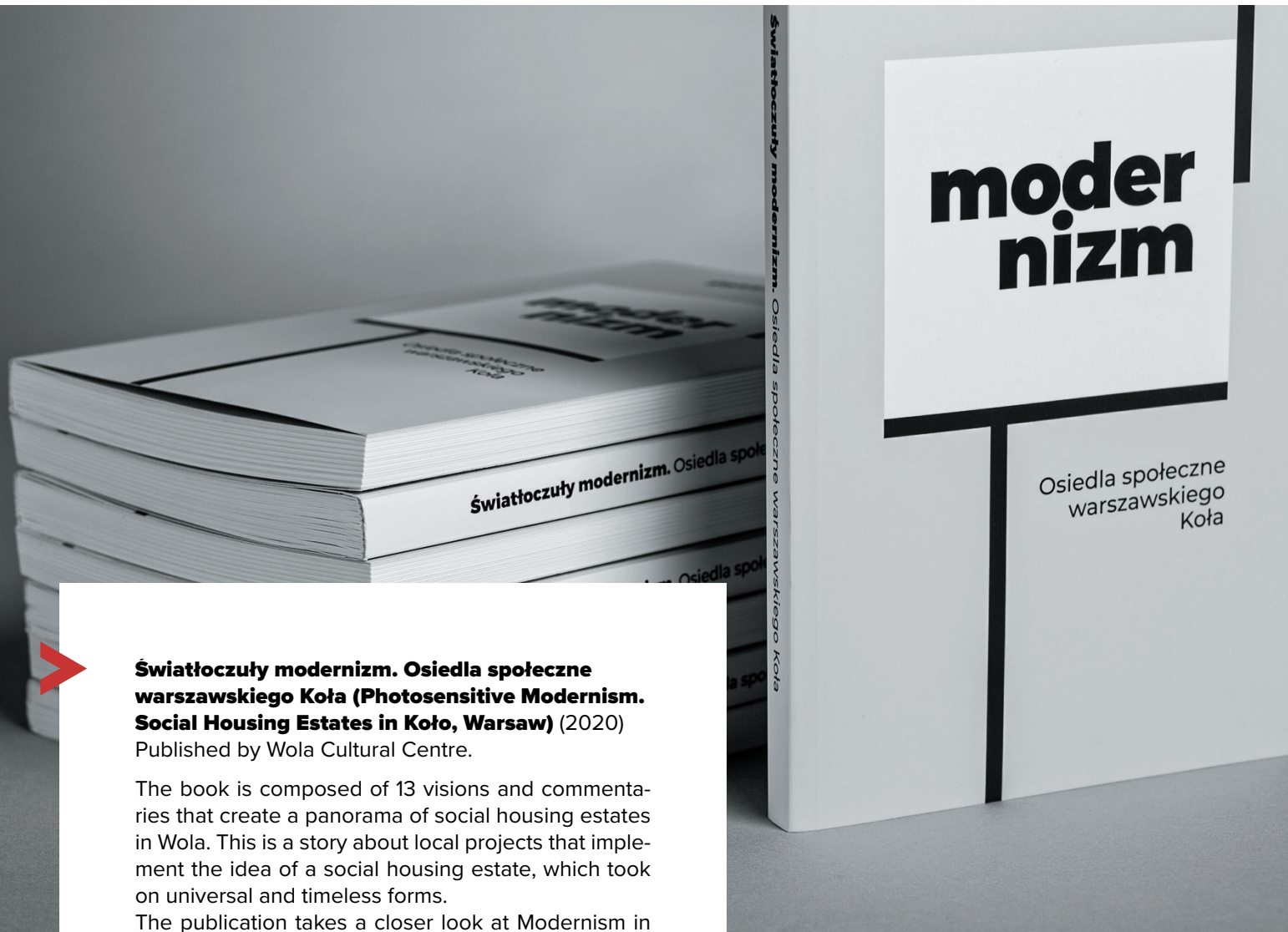
A series of meet-the-author events centred around the themes of their books, where we discuss subjects that concern the city in its broadest sense and closely analyse the ways of using, planning and thinking about urban space. Together with guests representing various fields of knowledge, we examine the many different perspectives one may adopt when talking about the city, space and our everyday life.

The series accompanies our exhibition-cum-laboratory Searching for the Idea of a Social Housing Estate. The talks and their documentation feed into the laboratory's library, creating a script for those wishing to expand their knowledge of the city.



Photosensitive Modernism (2019)

A series of observation walks around Modernist housing estates in Koło and open-air backyard lectures on the history of Modernism, on the example of the Koło housing estate. The open-air lectures were given by experts in Modernist architecture and history. The walks, on the other hand, were guided both by external specialists and residents of the Koło estate – local guides, custodians of history, persons knowing unique anecdotes and facts often unknown to researchers. With this project, we wanted to go outside the walls of our institution, to the maximum possible extent, and enter the space of the housing estate. The project was aimed at arousing sensitivity to the historical value and aesthetics of the neighbourhood and stimulating local identity. The series of walks and lectures took place over 15 weeks. An important part of the project was making the offer available to people with disabilities. A total of 15 events were organized with assistance for blind and deaf participants and adapted to the needs of people with mobility issues.



➤ **Światłoczuły modernizm. Osiedla społeczne warszawskiego Koła (Photosensitive Modernism. Social Housing Estates in Koło, Warsaw) (2020)**

Published by Wola Cultural Centre.

The book is composed of 13 visions and commentaries that create a panorama of social housing estates in Wola. This is a story about local projects that implement the idea of a social housing estate, which took on universal and timeless forms.

The publication takes a closer look at Modernism in Wola, using several analytical perspectives, ranging from history, urban development and Warsaw studies to literature and sound studies. It is divided into two parts, Theories and Practices, and can be used in several ways. The classic option is to read it from beginning to end, entering deeper and deeper into the details and nuances, but you can also meander around the perspectives offered by specialists, residents, researchers and aficionados of Modernism and Wola.



ARTISTIC GROUPS



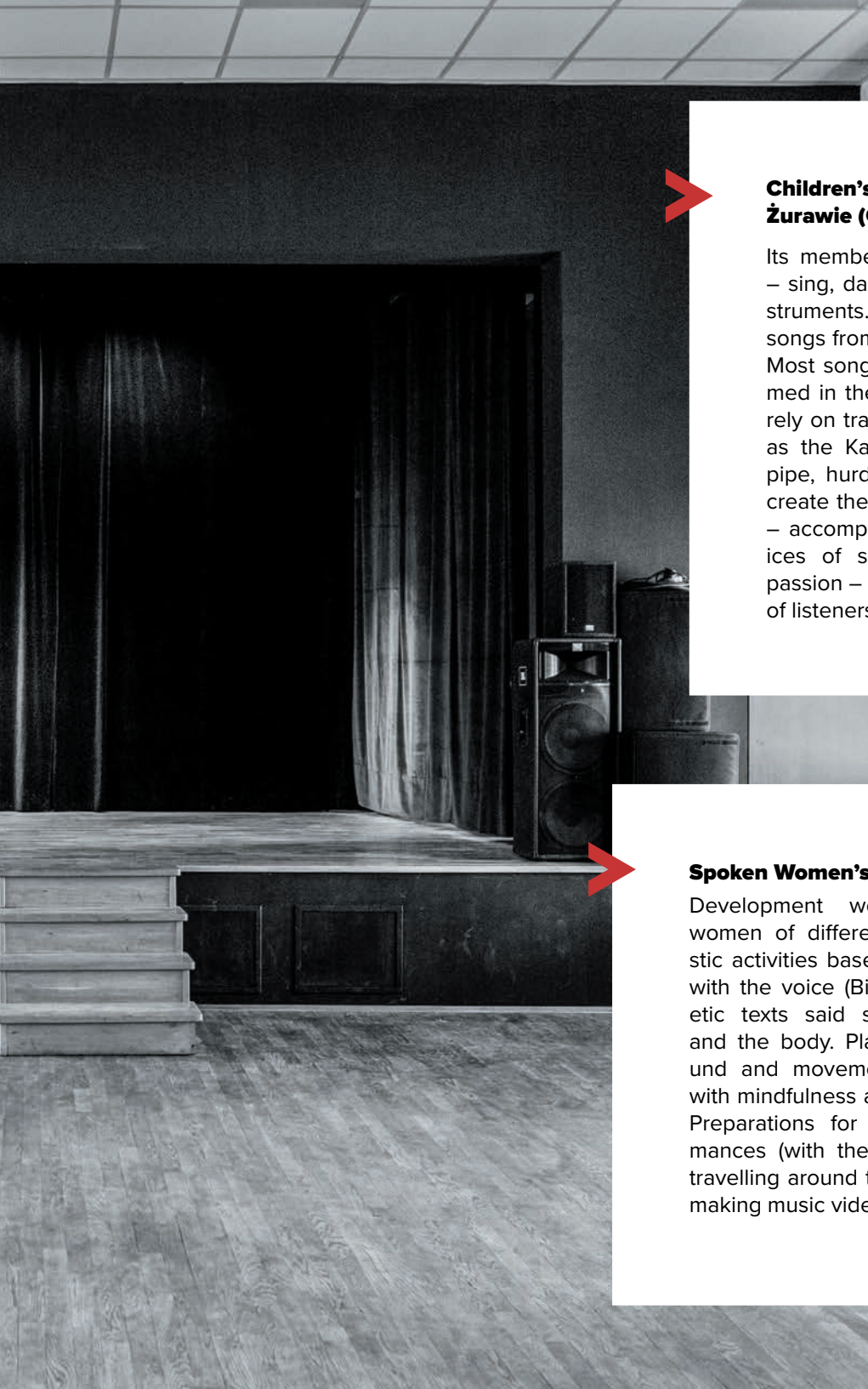
Kurdesz Artistic Ensemble

Kurdesz brings together retired amateur artists who want to develop their passions and hobbies. The ensemble has a number of thematically diverse programmes under its belt, from the songs of Polish composers to popular and cabaret music. The idea of the group is to present songs with elements of the Polish tradition. Kurdesz has won several awards at various reviews and festivals.



Penelopa Artistic Weaving Workshop

The workshop has been active for 30 years, bringing together several members creating traditional, artistic tapestries. Penelopa has exhibited its work many times, winning awards and distinctions, including the prestigious 'Golden Shuttle'.



Children's Folk Music Ensemble Żurawie (Cranes)

Its members – children and youth – sing, dance and play rare folk instruments. The repertoire includes songs from many regions of Poland. Most songs and dances are performed in the traditional way. Żurawie rely on traditional instruments, such as the Kashubian burczybas, bagpipe, hurdy-gurdy and dulcimer, to create their beautiful sounds, which – accompanied by well-chosen voices of singers and performative passion – guarantee the satisfaction of listeners and musicians alike.

Spoken Women's Choir

Development workshops for women of different ages. Artistic activities based on working with the voice (Biblical and poetic texts said synchronously) and the body. Playing with sound and movement interlaced with mindfulness and relaxation. Preparations for stage performances (with the prospects of travelling around the world) and making music videos.



Pasjonata Handicraft Workshop

The workshop was launched 12 years ago and is addressed to adults of various ages. Activities on offer include decoupage, the basics of scrapbooking, felting, creating macramés, making jewellery out of beads, creating foamiran flowers and painting dotted mandalas. Participants are introduced to the rules of composition and colour matching, they learn how to use stencils and preparations for cracking and ageing, work with structural pastes and Sospeso Transparente film, and above all, are taught a creative approach to the objects around them. Pasjonata specializes in holiday decorations (baubles, Christmas decorations and painted eggs).



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME



Over 70 different educational and artistic activities to choose from, addressed to the youngest children, schoolchildren, youth, adults and seniors. The diverse programme is provided by external instructors.

