

Summary

Gdańsk photographic community in years 1945-1989 and its artistic activities.

The subject of the work are nationwide and international artistic activities of Gdansk's photographic community between 1945 and 1986. I use the term "Gdansk's photographic community" interchangeably with the term "photographic Tri-City". Although most important institutions related to photography were placed in Gdansk, and they used the name of the city in their titles (these were: Gdansk Photographic Society, Gdansk District of the Association of Polish Art Photographers and Photography Lovers Section of Gdansk's Society of Art Friends), the creators associated with these organizations lived not only in Gdansk, but also in Gdynia and Sopot, and this is where many events took place too.

So far, the scope of artistic activities of Gdansk's photographic community has not been recognized. The examination of individual events in chronological order allowed to answer many intriguing questions. Investigating the mechanisms of the dynamics of the community led to the conclusion that there were many different forms of activity in Tri-City which had an impact on the situation of Polish art photography in the communist period. In the course of the research, a second problem emerged, characteristic for the region, associated with the promotion of marine photography in the considered society. An analysis of national and international artistic activities from the end of World War II to the period of transformation allowed us to distinguish two main periods in which the activity of Gdansk's photographic community was most visible, the first between 1948 and 1950 and the second, much longer, between 1962 and 1983. Such a distinction was mainly influenced by political and economic events in the country as well as the development of art with its changes and turns. What's more, in the context of the intensification of activities aimed at promoting the marine theme by the environment, but also by artistic criticism, the period between 1948 and 1981 can be distinguished.

The post-war organizational structures of artistic photography in Poland were divided between amateur and professional communities, which also affected Gdansk. Nevertheless, it seems that in the discussed environment we can observe extremely interesting drive for integrity. The collected materials will show that Gdansk's photographic community, devoid of the historical continuity of the place dating back to the period between two Great Wars, was an active centre between 1945 and 1989, in which various artistic attitudes were present. Using the descriptive and comparative methodology of categorized activities, I have attempted to answer many side questions, such as institutional structures, the influence of global trends on exhibiting, artistic criticism characteristic of particular stages in art or issues related to the aesthetics of the medium.

The typology of activities covered, above all, competitions, group and individual exhibitions, accompanying events, galleries attendance, as well as actions related to the promotion of the region, and their characteristic feature was the cooperation within the community and with external entities. Many of the described events were considered innovative, key and original at that time, as noted by artistic critics, therefore an important aspect of the work is also the impact of popularity, perception and consequences of those endeavours. When analysing the topic, it was necessary to focus on the aesthetics of the medium itself, having in mind national trends and historical conditions.

The aim of the work was not to comprehensively present all the activities between 1945 and 1989 created by Gdansk's photographers, but mainly to select and analyse such phenomena which support the work's aim at showing the institutional specificity of the artistic photography community in the period of the Polish People's Republic, so that it would constitute a cognitive potential.