

Agata Pietrasik, Berlin (Germany)

Art in Crisis: Rebuilding Modernism in the Aftermath of War

The presentation analyses the early artistic practice of Polish artist Marian Bogusz in relation to questions of the efficacy of modernism in the immediate post-war period. The practice of Bogusz is a fascinating case study for not only analysing the way in which the legacy of modernism was actualised after the war, but also for tracing connections between artistic practices during the wartime and cultural production made in its aftermath.

Marian Bogusz began his practice in concentrations camp Mauthausen, where together with other inmates he organised illegal, small exhibitions of modern art during which the artists presented their clandestine works. In 1944 Marian Bogusz created architectural drawings depicting a modernist settlement intended to host artists from all over the world, and which he imagined being erected on the ruins of the camp – thus demonstrating and perpetuating the dream of a modernist utopia throughout the war, even in a concentration camp.

Yet perhaps equally startling is how difficult this dream was to realise in the dystopian reality of the immediate post-war period. After his return to Warsaw in 1947, together with visual artist and also Mauthausen survivor – Zbigniew Dłubak – as well as other likeminded writers and scientists, Bogusz established *The Club of Young Artists and Scientists*. The *Club* provided a space where the ideas of modern art were measured against the post-war socio-political reality. This presentation will focus on the main issues raised in the *Club* and seek to understand their impact on the future.