

BIRGIT SCHLIEPS

P O W I D O K I
AFTERIMAGES

BETWEEN HISTORY'S
FAULT LINES
*POMIĘDZY LINIAMI
ZŁAMANIA HISTORII*

text only_engl

01–12

STETTIN – OBSERVATION FRAGMENTS SZCZECIN – FRAGMENTY OBSERWACJI

Part 1 | Część 1

A ,PERIPHERAL VIEW' OF EUROPE: THE NAYLAND ROCK HOTEL, ROYAL CRESCENT, MAY 20, 2024. — I arrive in Margate by train at noon. Beforehand, I walked across the Thames in London to Victoria Station. This took a little longer, so I take a later train than originally planned. It's not entirely clear which platform the train will depart from. I'm still hesitant about finally using my Interrail ticket for this trip. At the turnstiles, I join an Indian family who also want to take the next train to Margate. It's a sunny and very windy day. Coming from the station, I try to take the most direct route to the sea. I walk down Station Road and turn onto Royal Crescent. There stands the Nayland Rock Hotel. An imposing building, built at the end of the 19th century. The wall that separates the lawn in front of the hotel from the sidewalk is covered in bright orange lichen. As I get closer, I notice that the hotel's facade has some damage here and there and that the hotel is obviously empty. The hotel's double-eyed appearance fascinates me. Facing the street is a glazed porch with a balcony lined with balustrades, and facing the sea is a spacious, also glazed veranda. I take a photo. Unfortunately, only with my cell phone. In retrospect, I interpret the photo as a selfie: ,*The Sensitive Eye*, and the wall in front of the hotel, covered in bright orange lichen, becomes an extension of it. For me, the hotel's position – conceptually – occupies a peripheral viewpoint towards Europe. I read online that Mick Jagger chose the hotel as the venue for his parents' golden wedding anniversary in 1990, and that T.S. Eliot visited it while writing *The Waste Land*, and Charlie Chaplin visited it when his Hollywood career was on the rise in the 1920s. The view from the dining room across the bay is said to be the one that inspired William Turner's famous sunset paintings. The next day, while it's pouring with rain, I look at his paintings at the Tate Britain in London, especially the extensive collection of his watercolors, which also includes seascapes and coastal landscapes from Margate. A painting by Mark Rothko hangs next to a Turner, just as Rothko once wished. Because of the light in the painting, which also corresponded to his understand-

ding of light and color. Margate or even London are, for me, a possible peripheral point of view on Central Europe, not only because of the dividing sea but also reinforced by Brexit, which is formulating a new economic border that influences the movement of people and goods. Perhaps, however, it is also a constitutive formation of my perception of landscapes and regions that span different cornerstones, which, from certain perspectives, share cultural similarities and can enter into dialogue with one another even when far apart. My original idea of visiting Tracey Emin in Margate, also because of her newly founded Artist Foundation and the TKE Studios, was only partially realized. In a YouTube conversation with Katy Hessel at the TKE Studios on March 8, 2024, Tracey Emin talks about the neighborhood and the urban terraced houses across the street. She would have loved to repaint their front doors immediately. They were actually replaced by the administration a short time later, which Emin attributes to the positive influence of her initiative. Despite the risk of triggering future displacement processes, the project's primary goal seems to be to bring movement and hope into precarious social contexts. Tracey Emin was able to acquire the studio building, originally a municipal bathhouse and tied to a municipal profit-sharing agreement, from the previous prospective buyer for her project. In conversation with Katy Hessel, she repeatedly emphasizes that art is fundamentally something positive, a positive energy that finds its way. — On the beach, I strike up a conversation with a man and his girlfriend sitting in front of a small, open wooden cabin, set up in rows for private use. Later, I meet him again in front of his terraced house as I walk down the street toward TKE Studios. He also tells me about a gallery I could visit if, as expected, the studios are closed on Whit Monday. An artist opens the door for me anyway, and I'm able to briefly look around the anteroom, where I see two or three paintings from the current exhibition and framed old plans of the building. As I leave, I finally take a photo of the opposite side with the new doors. Curtains are hastily drawn. On my way to the train station, I pass the gallery. I'm lucky; two men are busy clearing away the remains of an evening with an audience, and I'm allowed to take a quick look around the exhibition.

POMERANIA: BETWEEN THE FAULT LINES OF HISTORY, JANUARY 31, 2024 —My maternal grandparents were born in Gollnow and the surrounding area, 50 km east of Stettin. My paternal grandparents' parents came from Königsberg. Königsberg was the capital of the Prussian province of East Prussia; with the founding of the German Empire in 1871, it became the northeasternmost major city of the German Empire. In 1910, there was a regular steamer service to Stettin. Königsberg is no longer part of Pomerania, but shares the geographical description 'the land that lies by the sea' with the wider province of West Prussia, which is derived from the Slavic *po mare*, from which the name Pomerania originated. During the Weimar Republic, Danzig belonged to East Prussia; large parts of West Prussia belonged to Poland from 1920 onwards, and a small part was annexed to Pomerania. Pomerania is today described as a region encompassing the German states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and a small part of Brandenburg, as well as the Polish voivodeships of West Pomerania, Pomerania, and Kuyavian-Pomeranian. Despite their name, the latter two are often not considered part of the core territory of Pomerania. This essentially coincides with the Prussian province of Pomerania from 1815 to 1945. —I am interested in moving between the fault lines of history, which is also linked to specific territories and constantly shifting access points. Starting with Władysław Strzemiński's 1950 painting *Wheat Ears* in the National Museum in Szczecin, I began to trace the movements of the Russian sculptor Katarzyna Kobro, who had German ancestors, and the Polish artist Władysław Strzemiński, who was born in Minsk. They met in Moscow in 1918 and studied at the SWOMAS (State Free Art Workshops), which became the VKhUTEMAS (Higher Artistic-Technical Workshops) in 1920. They emigrated to Poland in 1922 due to deteriorating working conditions for artists and established themselves within the artists' group *a.r.* in 1931. an international collection of modern art in the Łódź City Museum, now the Muzeum Sztuki. They used contacts with artist groups in Paris and the Netherlands to do this. After 1945, the collection was partially destroyed under the politically motivated dictates of socialist realism, only to be reconstructed starting in the late 1960s. In the 1980s, there was a renewed transfer of modern art to Poland in support of the Solidarity movement, such as Joseph Beuys's *Polentransport*

1981.—Strzemiński's *Ear of Grain* picture aroused my interest because it combines the representational nature of ears of wheat in the spirit of socialist realism with modernist forms. They testify to an attempt to come to terms with the social demands of the 1950s, which, in my perception, is also characterized by laconicism and ironic humor.—At the same time, I came across the story of a painting by Van Gogh: *Avenue near Arles with Houses*, dating from 1888. It was in the Stettin City Museum from 1913 to 1937. It was acquired by the founding director, Walter Riezler, who was a champion of modern art. There were only a few other Van Gogh paintings in museums in other German cities, and Berlin was not one of them. As part of the *Degenerate Art* campaign, the painting was confiscated in 1937, but was returned shortly afterwards. In April 1945, shortly before the end of the Second World War, it was taken by train to Coburg along with two hundred other paintings. The painting was exhibited there in 1962. With the Pomerania Foundation, established in 1966, it came to Kiel Castle in 1970, and in 1999, with German reunification, to the Pomeranian State Museum in Greifswald.—At the end of February 2024, I finally went to Greifswald. Despite being told that the painting would be temporarily out of the museum due to water damage—this information was preceded by several phone calls—the painting was finally hanging in its new location.

AFTERIMAGES, FORBEARANCES, JULY 31, 2023 —Władysław Strzemiński was interested in the complex processes of human vision and explored the physiological phenomena of retinal afterimages. He integrated them into his paintings as color patches of a second layer of 'reality', translating and encoding them three-dimensionally. In the 1940s, he developed a theory of vision | Teoria widzenia. One of his central concepts is 'visual consciousness' | 'świadomość wizualna', developed through culture and evolution. His conception of realism is based on lived experience against the backdrop of historical events, linked to visual, physically conditioned processes that, in turn, influence one another. He also worked with a visual field and a perceptual field in a tightly interwoven interweaving of image elements and particles. He mentions hallucinatory experiences associated with the sun and distinguishes between processes of making visible and forms

of visibility as part of a visual experience. Katarzyna Kobro's sculptural questions are dedicated to the relationship between the space enclosed by the sculpture and the space surrounding it. Conceptually, she understands sculpture as an open form within an infinite space. „A sculpture should not be the composition of a form enclosed in a body, but rather an open spatial construction in which the inner part of the compositional space is connected to the outer space.“ „The energy of successive forms in space creates a space-time rhythm.“ K. Kobro: Rzeźba stanowi | The sculpture is..., in: Głos Plastyków | The Voice of Visual Artists, nos. 1–7, 1937.

MY GRANDFATHER'S PHOTO ALBUM, NOVEMBER 2, 2023 — In 1932, the red town hall building in Stettin temporarily housed the pedagogical seminary, which my grandfather attended. The new pedagogical college was still under construction. There is a photograph of both situations. One shows the brick castle, which fills the entire frame. The other shows the view of the open landscape with trees and bushes, fences, and the shell of the building in the distance. My grandmother's photo box contains the same photograph. On the back it reads: View of the new building for the Stettin Pedagogical Academy (from H. 26, Kückenmühle). On the bilingual Szczecin-Stettin map, there is a street called Bulgarska, below which it says in parentheses: Am Kückenmühlbach. Very close by is the West Railway Station, now Szczecin Łękno. I continue my research and come across the Kückenmühler Anstalten, or Kückenmühle for short, a diaconal institution that housed mentally and physically disabled people from 1863 to 1940. Seven stream mills, including the Kückenmühle, along the stream flowing from the northwestern Eckerberger Forest (today: Leśny Arkoński Park) were converted into institutional buildings. In 1940, most of the residents were murdered in the operation known as Aktion T4. The buildings were largely preserved and have been listed as historical monuments. Today, they are part of the Szczecin Provincial Public Hospital complex, northeast of Bulgarska Street. The new building photographed from here in 1932, with a view over the allotment gardens to the southeast, should now be part of the Faculty of Environmental Management and Agriculture | Wydział Kształtowania

Srodowiska i Rolnictwa, which has been part of the West Pomeranian University of Technology | Zachodniopomorski uniwersytet technologiczny since 2009. — At the end of World War II, Stettin was 80 percent destroyed, much like Kassel, the city where I grew up. My mother, who was born in Anklam, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, tells me that her father once took her to Stettin in 1940, when she was two years old, and he had to change her diaper for the first time at the train station. They came from Gollnow | Goleńów, 50 km further east, where his parents lived. — There are some photographs in my grandmother's collection that have a stamp on the back: H. Matzke Löwen-Drogerie. I'm discovering that this must have been a store in Stettin Altdamm | Szczecin Dąbie. It's listed in a 1928 address book, which can be found at an internet address with the general categories of genealogy, former German settlement areas, and Pomeranian genealogy.

MUZEUM SZCZECIN W PRL, SZCZECIN MUSEUM OF SOCIAL HISTORY AND MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF POLAND, MAY 8, 2022 — Following the advice of a woman from Szczecin who is interested in Szczecin's old buildings and who shows and describes them in detail on Instagram, I visit a small museum run by a friend of hers. May 8th is a beautiful sunny day. Behind the box-shaped Art Nouveau church with Romanesque and Baroque influences, I drive across the small park and arrive at Ulica Śląska. On both sides are Wilhelminian-era buildings with bosses that extend above the first floor in many buildings. And at the end of the street: an eleven-story building, blocking the original street like a mountain wall that suddenly appears out of nowhere and crashes physically and psychologically into view. I am thrilled by this seemingly surreal deviation from the normally expected. I immediately think of the complaints and demands from Potsdam to remove prefabricated buildings from sightlines and central locations, and I sincerely hope that this prefabricated building will not have to give way to any demands for supposed urban reconstruction. The museum is located in the basement of the corner building and houses many everyday Polish objects from the 1950s to the 1980s, including furniture, kitchen appliances, sports equipment, pennants and badges,

and toys. All lovingly collected and arranged. In one corner, I spot the Czech cartoon mole Krtek, or later Krteček | Little Mole, who also played a role in my childhood. A cartoon depiction of him, stuck on the wall, sits in his repaired red toy car, his arms raised in joy. Once again, a sense of connection emerges, and that we, across generations and national and bloc borders, share cultural experiences that are part of a Central European identity. —Based on this memory, I also selected another photo, which I took at the end of March 2023. I can only roughly reconstruct where exactly. It must have been the Gumieńce district. I got off the train one stop early and then turned from Wroclawska onto Kruszwicka, a street with many side streets, all bearing the same name. The house in the photo could date from the 1960s or 1970s. The green and orange color scheme and the original relationship between roof and facade—the facade is integrated into the roof, which extends down to the ground floor—are reminiscent of houses that might have been built in Czech ski resorts. At the same time, the mountain hut shape and the 1970s color scheme also evoke formal connections to the animated series featuring Krteček and his molehill. —In the museum, right next to the mole, a game, usually called ‚Himmelchen‘ (Little Heaven), is staged on an artificial meadow. Inside a Plexiglas box, covered on the outside with green paper silhouettes of grass blades, is a layer of soil on which various colored and glittery papers, dried flowers, a bottle cap, and a pearl are arranged and covered with a pane of glass. The museum text provides information that girls in particular made these unique artistic compositions and only allowed access to the hidden places, which were again covered with earth, to a very narrow circle of friends. —I wonder if the game could have something to do with the digging for German treasures that was often practiced after 1945, always in the hope of finding something valuable – or even simpler things, as bearers of messages from a previous life. —I have two maps of Szczecin open on my computer: the current one from OpenStreetMap, where almost all the houses are marked, and a map from 1941. Moving the maps back and forth and comparing them creates a similar feeling of looking through a pane of glass, searching for connections that, when successfully linked, also become treasures.

MCDORIS, STARGARD, JULY 15, 2022 — In neighboring Stargard, 100 km away, there was a Vierke car dealership. I have tea towels monogrammed by Marie Vierke, my great-great-grandmother, my grandmother's grandmother. In 1920 the car dealership sold motorcycles and mopeds, and a Leuna gas station was added in 1934. By 1938, the dealership already owned an entire fleet of Opel cars. Today, there is a BP gas station and a McDonald's drive-thru on this site. Several workshop buildings still exist to the side. — The train station is just around the corner. I sit down on the steps. To the right, in the tree-lined forecourt, is an empty snack bar with a railing and three teenagers. The red letters for McDoris are visible above the greenish corrugated plastic roof. One of the girls has a middle-parted hair, metal-framed glasses, a denim jacket, sneakers, and black leggings. The other is wearing a black strapless T-shirt dress, has injected lips, and is leaning against the railing with a cigarette in her hand, her fingernails partially painted black. The boy, wearing black Bermuda shorts with the word „Los Angeles“ on it, is sitting on the windowsill of the covered food counter, smoking. — On my first trips to Szczecin, I discover wooden birds carved and painted in a small souvenir kiosk. I go there several times and buy more each time. By the last time, I feel like I've bought them all, even the not-so-pretty ones. On the bottom of each one, there's a small sticker with an address: F. H. Zamek, ul. Struga 5/2, 73–11 Stargard Szcz. In Stargard, at Jarmark Stargardzki, a second-hand goods and antiques shop on two floors, I show the owner one of the birds with the address. In the side window, several very large baby carriages stand close together. Late 19th century, early to mid-20th century, I estimate. The makers of the carved birds are unknown to the dealer. I imagine an old man pottering around in his basement workshop or at his dacha. The street mentioned on the sticker is actually called Andrzej Struga and is located right behind the Jarmark building. I meet a man at the front door, whom I also ask. He doesn't know these wooden birds, but he does know a family with that name. The old man died, and his son moved to England.

BOGUSŁAWA X, LANGIEWICZA, ECKE JADWIGI, AUGUST 31, 2024 —My temporary address is Bogusława, but the window of my room and the main entrance are on the Langiewicza side. Towards the city center, toward Aleja Wojska Polskiego | Falkensteiner Street and Plac Zgody | Bismarck Square, I take either Bogusława or Jadwiga Street. A sports field runs along Langiewicza. Parallel to it stretches a gigantic, raw brick wall with four rows of seven windows each. They were evidently installed there after the war. The wall belongs to Skola Podstawowa No. 5 im. Henryka Sienkiewicza, the former Theodor Körner School (Stolting School until 1938). Theodor Körner was a German writer and freedom fighter who participated in the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon, and Henryk Sienkiewicz was a Polish writer and Nobel Prize winner for literature, whose father also campaigned for Poland's independence. The facade facing Jadwiga Street is completely preserved; only the windows no longer have dark frames, but are painted white. Depending on the light, the raw brick wall begins to glow and shimmer, like the surface of living skin. I can't take my eyes off it. I remember the title of a book by Curzio Malaparte: *The Skin*. It's about Naples in 1943, after the Italians had switched sides and fought with the Allies against the Germans. They sold their own skin to save their own. Contrary to the events alluded to here—of prostituting themselves, selling themselves, betraying themselves, and reducing themselves to a body—something else comes to mind. When you've lost all privileges and possessions, all that remains is bare skin and memories. A kind of open field can emerge, an openness to what will happen. I can't help but think, and perhaps also feel, that at this point the city is looking at me with open eyes, looking back, examining me, examining me. At this point, we're even.

AT THE PORT OF KOPICE, SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 —Lech has just driven me to the jetty in his water taxi. I go ashore. A man sits in a green, hollowed-out bus, now comfortably furnished. A meeting place? A clubhouse? The nearest plot has a sharp corner. The new, modernist, two-story, flat-roofed house mimics the given angle at a distance of about two meters. The surrounding plot is filled with light gray pebbles. A few puny bamboo plants are scattered in between. A grinning man with red

palm tattoos on his right shoulder stands behind the fence. The property next door is very large in comparison. A well-kept lawn with a slight hill where a house stands. Peach-colored. A man in black Bermuda shorts and a black tank top also stands behind a fence. I ask him about the nearest swimming spot. I learn that his name is Jürgen and that he also has a house in Mahlow, south of Berlin. But it's quieter here, he says. His neighbor, Tomek, the man with the palm tattoos, also has another house in Thailand, which he rents out temporarily. Here in the white flat-roofed house, he has a bathtub on the first floor, right next to the window. I continue my bike ride through the nature reserve towards Wolin, where I board the train and head back towards Szczecin. There's a beautiful sandy beach near Czarnocin. Shortly before Zagórze, where the path runs close to the water before becoming a road lined with properties and new houses some distance away, there is a sign reading: PRECZ z KOMUNA !!! Won do Berlina!, which means: Down with the commune!!! Go to Berlin! It can be assumed that someone was outraged that they had not received the building land they wanted from the commune because of the designated nature reserve. A teren ochronny | protected area has now been created along the eastern side of the lagoon from Szczecin Dąbie to Zagórze. At one point there is a dedication to the biologist Janina Jasnowska, who, as a professor in Szczecin, campaigned for a network of nature reserves in West Pomerania. The associated cycle path around the lagoon, which even passes through Anklam in its westernmost tip, is a German-Polish project co-financed by the EU within the Interreg Central Europe program. It stands for the promotion of transnational cooperation within the European Union in the Central Europe program area. By spelling out the otherwise commonly used abbreviations, this name opens up a great deal of space, and I am relieved to note that, in this context, an overview perspective can limit capitalist development trends. An app that provides information about the individual possible cycling stages is simply called Pomorze Zachodnie, Vorpommern (which can also be translated as West Pomerania), and describes a cross-border region whose eastern part belongs to the Polish West Pomeranian Voivodeship. I don't photograph the new houses at the beginning of Zagórze. The light isn't right, and it would simply document the ostentatiousness,

the land-grabbing expressed in overly large plots, the oversized, dark-painted metal security fences, or the large blue and white house that looks like a caricature of a Swedish wooden house. At the end of the village, old, dilapidated, still-inhabited brick houses huddle together in small groups. Flower beds and shrubs nestle against the houses, conveying a more compartmentalized, cautious use of space.

SZCZECIN, ALEJA POWSTAŃCÓW WIELKOPOLSKICH | APFELALLEE, 2. SEPTEMBER 2, 2024 — A woman with bleached hair and a red cardigan walks toward me. Flat gold metal hoops are scattered across the cardigan. She's wearing a chain for her glasses, made of an oversized, transparent plastic spiral. The sun shines on her at just the right moment, but I don't dare take a photo of her. — This morning, the first thing I saw on Instagram was a ghost. A friend posted a drawing of his six-year-old son. It had different brown eyes with long black eyelashes. In its tiny hand, it held a multi-linked string of beads of the same size. The body itself was also outlined with a squiggly wavy line. Its mouth was open. Lydia Lunch? I laughed until I cried, and my day was saved.
(Continuation Part 2 Powidoki 07–12)

STETTIN – OBSERVATION FRAGMENTS SZCZECIN – FRAGMENTY OBSERWACJI

Part 2 | Część 2

GOLENIÓW, MORNING, OCTOBER 30, 2024 — I left Berlin at seven o'clock, taking a Flixbus and my bike. Since Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the train connection to Szczecin has deteriorated. Often, there's only one bus from Angermünde, so I can't take my bike, and it sometimes takes four hours via Pasewalk. Arriving in Szczecin, I take the next train to Goleniów. Standing next to the brick town hall, I call my uncle to ask him where my grandfather lived. Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, they once visited Szczecin and Goleniów together. My uncle drove him there. He remembers them driving along the main road into town, passing a large brick school, and then turning left. They asked a woman for directions, but her reaction was so unfriendly that my grandfather lost interest, and they both drove back to Berlin without seeing the house or stopping for anything to eat. My uncle's impression was that the person being interviewed didn't want to understand German. I couldn't find anything along the main street, so I asked at the tourist information office in the 15th-century Wolliner Gate, the only remaining gate of the city walls. The man behind the counter told me in English about a city school just beyond the still-standing rampart of the former city wall. This brick building is indeed gigantic and looks like the perfect set from a historical film. To the left, there are sprawling garage developments with prefabricated buildings in the background, painted with a historicist silhouette. To the right, there is actually more of a path than a street leading to a freshly renovated, simple, box-shaped house. That could be it. I was here once before, in 1995 or 1996. My grandfather was a rural schoolteacher in the 1930s, and I traveled around Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg, looking at all the houses he had lived in during that time. Finally, I also went to Goleniów and photographed two two-story buildings in black and white, more like cottages than buildings. This one has a gable roof with a slight slope. The lower windows have white frames, and the facades are painted in a rich gray. In front of it stands a new kit tool shed, al-

most in the same shade of grey and with white accentuated edges. — Two-meter-high truck tarpaulins hang in front of the city museum. The left tarpaulin shows the city before 1945, the right one shows it in 1948. In both pictures, I'm confused by the clarity of the structure. The houses are staggered westward, diagonally along the Ihna River, which forms a soft line. In the 1948 picture, almost all the houses are roofless, and some are destroyed down to their foundations. But strangely, all rubble seems to have been removed from the streets. There are no people to be seen either. A ghost town at zero hour? A kind of tabula rasa of a new beginning? The city of Gollnow controlled the access from the Szczecin Lagoon to Stargard via the Ihna River. The city became wealthy through road tolls. A poster found online shows the industrial furniture production of entrepreneur Willi Laabs around 1930. A machine mass-produces furniture for a master bedroom and a dining room. The timber is delivered by various forestry offices, represented as circular holes within forests surrounding the machine. Another, larger, white, emblem-like circle advertises production output in correlation with the purchasing power of the ,public.' The company name Willi Laabs Gollnow became WILAGO. Willi Laabs died in June 1945 at the age of 57 while fleeing to the Baltic Sea island of Wolin and was buried in the coastal town of Międzyzdroje.

POLOWANIE NA RYBY, AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 30, 2024 — Beyond Gollnow, I cycle along a signposted bike path along the Ihna River. Thickets and expanses alternate, and I imagine myself in Tarkovsky country. It's gloomy and colorful at once. The sky is open. Swampy terrain. Dense foliage. Then on to the Szczecin Lagoon, with a view of the smoking chimneys of the chemical factory and the shipyard facilities. South Sea romance with stark realism, or just a subtle disturbance on the edge? A small stream nearby with strangely milky-blue water testifies to real environmental pollution. — At the port of Szczecin Dąbie, where the old campsite used to be, I decide not to go to the suburban train station, but instead continue towards the city center. Even though I know it will be a nightmare for me, with all the elevated roads, motorway access roads, and other streets. Two years ago, I was still able to spend the night at the campsite – now it's closed.

It was directly connected to the marina, where even simple boats in need of repair could be moored. Facing the water are a row of older, two-story log cabins. I look through the window of one and see work clothes on the chair backs. They'll probably be demolished soon. A short time later, I actually drive past one of the most memorable scenes that testify to Szczecin's post-socialist, or rather, turbo-capitalist, development. A multi-story building with wraparound glass balconies, sliding elements, and a blue neon sign reading „Marina Developer“ on the roof stands to the side of the road. And just before that, there was a small shop in a two-story row of shops. Out of the corner of my eye, I just catch a glimpse of the word „fish.“ I brake abruptly and reverse. It's dark now. I stand there for a while, and miraculously, the lights inside the shop and the two signs outside come back on, allowing me to take a photo. The FJÄLL RAVEN lettering is emblazoned next to „hunt-fish.“ With the Marina Developer company and the small shop, two different kinds of freedom collide in close proximity: the luxury that is bought with a lot of money and the wild that is available almost for free. It is featured as something to be valued, but as a possible practice, it will most likely be increasingly suppressed. The use of different languages is sometimes very direct. „Polowanie na ryby“ translates as „fish hunting,“ – hunt-fish is more likely to translate as „hunting fish,“ or perhaps it was meant to „hunt fish.“ A hyphen between these two words is unusual in English, but perhaps it's just a list: hunting and fish—and everyone knows what's meant. Marina Developer—harbor developer—that's also an interesting, very direct company name, as if the use of English were name enough. Yesterday, I passed a blue food truck in the city center with the inscription „The Brüder Kebab.“ The owner tells me that they are three brothers who founded this company. The German „Brüder“ refers to Szczecin's proximity to Berlin, „Kebab“ is the cool Turkish dish from Berlin, and „The“ adds an international twist: fusion to the power of three. —I continue my ride toward Szczecin city center, and it's getting very tiring. But at the same time, I'm also given a feeling of freedom: I'm invisible and riding under the radar. Above me, beside me, below me, nothing but roads, cars, and a tram. Bridges connect me to the port area. Blade Runner. Dystopia. Finally arriving on the other side of the Oder Bridge, I get lost in countless construc-

tion sites, over which I have to carry my bike cross-country. My phone battery is dead, and I can no longer look for the shortest route on the map. Completely exhausted, I arrive at Bogusława Street and collapse onto the bed. What a ride, what a film. And I was right in the middle of it.

BISTRO PORTOWE, OCTOBER 31, 2024 —I drive to Ulica Stanisława Dubois to look at the oldest wooden house in Szczecin. I end up at Bistro Portowe. After first going to the neighboring café, I decide against a cinnamon coffee and return. On the counter is a tray with glasses of compote, a drink consisting of fruit water and two or three pieces of fruit. I observe how everyone naturally takes one when ordering. I know this from my travels to socialist and post-socialist countries. Naturally, I also take compote and a breaded giant fish fillet on a layer of French fries. Unfortunately, I take the plate with such a heave that almost all of the fries land on the floor. I get more, along with a heap of carrot and celery salad, cut into long strips with a wonderfully thin mayonnaise. Next to me sits a mother and child. The girl starts playing with the cars that are laid out in a small wicker basket. Others eat soup before the main course. I could have done that, too.. —Another day, at lunchtime, looking for a sunny spot, I sit down at a table in a newly opened restaurant on the corner of Aleja Wojska Polskiego. Men in T-shirts and laptops are sipping soft drinks decorated like cocktails. I order a Croque Madame and a Chai Matcha. I get a sandwich that's at least three layers high. The egg on top disappears into a cheese topping with cheese sauce that spills over the entire tower. I try to figure out where this tendency toward exaggeration comes from: post-socialist pent-up demand, rural portion control, a regional historical transference like the Liegnitz bombs, a gingerbread pastry from Lower Silesia, or simply the translation of an American gesture? —I leave the Bistro Portowe and drive towards the shipyard, always on the street closest to the water. The main gate with the large blue letters Stocznia Szczecińska | Szczecin Shipyard looks deserted. As a state-owned company, the shipyard was founded in 1948 on the former site of the Szczecin Oderwerke and the Vulkan Shipyard. There is a blue gatehouse and a red digital display on a black background. The time and date are shown alternately. Wikiped-

dia states that one of Europe's largest shipyards has been closed down here since 2009. The square in front of the factory gate is called Plac Ofiar Grudnia 1970 r. | Square of the Victims of December 1970. On the left there is a memorial and further to the side there are seven poster boards attached to the fence telling of the events of 1980. On a wall above, a poster approximately five meters high displays the house-sized signs from 1980 with the 36 demands of the Szczecin workers. The 21 Gdańsk Demands were included in the UNESCO Memory of the World list. The Szczecin residents have so far remained unmentioned, even though the first agreements with the government were signed here, leading to the founding of free and independent trade unions. On the side wall of the administrative building of the Szczecin Shipyard, there is another mural featuring five giant heads of shipyard workers. Above the years 1970 and 1980, it reads „Strajkujemy aż do zwycięstwa“ | „We will strike until we win.“ A transcription error on my part and Google translate initially produces the sentence: We are on strike for food, and I can hardly believe that it can really be said like that. I do remember, however, that the original reason for the strikes was indeed drastic price increases for food and everyday items. The more I think about it, the more I come to the conclusion: strike, if not for food, then what for? I continue along Vulkanstrasse, which today in this section is called Franciszka Ksawerego Druckiego-Lubeckiego. Vulkan is the name of the shipbuilding and mechanical engineering company founded in 1857 and is derived from Vulcan, the Roman god of fire and blacksmithing. In front of a building called „Hotel Vulcan“ – and behind it, according to Open Street Map, is a „Vulcan Training Center“ – there are seven information cubes, which, on four pages, explicitly tell „not just the political history“ | „Historia nie tylko polityczna“ of the shipyard. I am drawn to a photograph. At the celebrations for the completion of the cargo ship Schauenburg in 1973, two men in ties, white shirts and no jackets – it is obviously very warm – are walking with other men in suits next to a group of shipyard workers. A worker, his chest and chest hair exposed, turns his head toward one of the men wearing a tie. The direction of his chest hair also forms something resembling a tie, and one of his sideburns is clearly visible due to the turn of his head. The two men's eyes meet. — Back in Berlin, I watch The Man

of Iron | Człowiek z żelaza at the Wedding cinema, organized by the Polish Institute Berlin. The film was shot during the relatively liberal period from the summer of 1980 until the declaration of martial law in December 1981. In addition to fictional scenes, it also includes documentary scenes, most of which are seamlessly intercut with the movement. Ewa Maria Slaska, a contemporary witness who lives in Berlin and was invited to the screening, wistfully recalls the alert and fearless spirit that was so prevalent at the time.

KAROLINA KUSZYK: IN THE HOUSES OF OTHERS, DECEMBER 2, 2024

I unexpectedly have a printing appointment at Bethanien. I'm making two large prints of house fronts and a property boundary, their concrete walls and posts slightly crumbling and covered with lichen. In between them is a four-part garden gate, the lower section of which has rusted. The content of the image shifts here from representation to a direct, almost physical perception of materiality. The workshop manager, Andreas, recommends Karolina Kuszyk's book *In the Houses of Others*. Published in 2022, it describes the traces of Germany's past in western Poland. Houses and countless everyday objects were left behind by millions of Germans at the end of World War II. These things are now—poniemiecki—formerly German. Over the past seventy years, there have been a wide variety of forms of handling and appropriation, from willful destruction and theft to indifferent reuse and even private and public appreciation. There are even supposed to be fan clubs that dig for German treasures in groups, equipped with old maps and circulating stories, and exchange information about them in internet forums and at festivals. — In recent years, an approach has developed in academic contexts and also in relation to European funding structures that leaves the definition of national units behind and views the region as a coherent landscape across borders. I like the idea of a multi-layered landscape and the fact that one moves around it as if in a quarry, and stratifications become visible and readable. And that one has no choice between *Leaving and Staying*, but rather, in leaving, one always remains in relation to place and temporal change. The 2023 film of the same name by Volker Koepp portrays the writer Uwe Johnson. At the beginning of the film, Johnson briefly describes

important stages in his life, which he characterizes with a local reference to rivers. „I was born in Germany in 1934 in Cammin, in Pomerania on the Dievenow River, in what is now Kamień Pomorski on the Dziwna River. After the capitulation in Mecklenburg, I went to Recknitz, named after the Recknitz River. School days with changed curriculum in Güstrow on the banks of the Nebel. From 1952 to 1956, I studied German and further consequences of the war in Rostock on the Warnow and Leipzig on the Pleiße.“ My grandmother and her four children didn't make it across the Elbe River in April 1945, but my mother did in October 1961. Szczecin położony jest nad Odrą | is on the Oder River.

IMPRESSUM

POWIDOKI
AFTERIMAGES
BETWEEN HISTORY'S
FAULT LINES
POMIĘDZY LINIAMI
ZŁAMANIA HISTORII

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