

MUZEUM SUSCH

Jadwiga Maziarska: Assembly

Muzeum Susch

15 June – 2 November 2025

Opening: 15 June 2025

Curated by Rhea Anastas and Barbara Piwowarska



Jadwiga Maziarska, *Untitled*, ca. 1985, 50 x 70 cm. Courtesy of GM Collection.

Assembly is the first institutional survey of the artist Jadwiga Maziarska presented outside Poland. The extensive exhibition at Muzeum Susch brings together around 100 of the most important works from her diverse body of art from museums and private collections. The show's title "assembly" speaks to Maziarska as engineer and bricoleur of source materials and methods, producing an abstraction which is uncategorizable within the postwar Krakow Group and beyond.

Her artistic processes are rooted in the physicality of assembling as a response to concepts of reproduction and modernity. Maziarska turns out to be one of the most important voices of the avant-garde in Poland, alongside her – recently recognized – closest friend and interlocutor Erna Rosenstein. Active from the 1940's through to the 1990's, Maziarska was informed by science, phenomenology, mass photography, printed reproductions and newspapers clippings, out of which she developed autonomous structures.

Maziarska always dreamed of visiting Switzerland, but travel was limited in Poland under communism and she never made it. This show in Engadine valley holds an after-the-fact poignancy. In a letter from 1947 to Erna Rosenstein, who was staying in Zermatt, Maziarska expressed her query: *"I'm staying in Sosnowiec and continue to admire it. Moreover, my small garden provides me with a wealth of emotions: I find here the power of exotic landscapes, virgin forests with cultural monuments. Besides that, I go to the photoplasticon. I've seen Manchuria and China, and now Spain. All of this is almost here with us already. I dream of travels like Tartarin of Tarascon, I see the oceans through the aquarium. I would be very grateful if you could send me some postcards, i.e., picture postcards from Switzerland."*

In the 1990's the role played by a collection of images and photographic source materials found in the artist's studio was identified by art historians for the first time, and elaborated in 2003. Maziarska's

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ironic comparison to Tartarin proves that projections overlap with what one sees and does. The modern artist is part flâneur and part collector. Artists sought to capture the entirety of the cosmos in its fragments: the universe in a drop of water. Each fragment had to be processed into passions of discoveries: hence Tartarin's collection of exotic trophies and his adventures; hence Maziarska's collection of clippings and her process-based paintings and objects. She wanted to embrace the whole universe, evidenced in her diverse series of works, and in her letters, interviews, and TV documents. For Maziarska, abstraction was an intensification of perception. Over years, her works were the result of the actions of her hand and the metabolic forces of the body yielding fragmentations, repetitions, and new haptic models by gridding, mixing paint with wax and other materials. Here bricolage and assembly have a biological sense.

Maziarska examined the conditions of possibility for things to appear in the mind. She was fascinated with anatomy, atomic theories, fission, medical photography, and its early imaging measures utilizing optical tools. In 1932, before going to study at Art Academy in Kraków in 1934, she was enrolled at the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, where she also attended lectures on psychoanalysis and psychology, but most importantly, the seminars of Maksymilian Rose, renowned neurologist and psychiatrist, an author of the first atlases of the functioning of the brain.

Maziarska's work was informed by the albums and books brought by Tadeusz Kantor from Palais de la Découverte from Paris in 1947. They also inspired the historically significant 1st Exhibition of Modern Art at the Palace of Arts in Kraków in 1948, curated by Kantor and Mieczysław Porębski, in which Maziarska showed her paintings and collages, alongside Rosenstein, Wróblewski, and Zbigniew Dłubak, among 37 participants. Besides abstract and surrealist works, this show included magnifications of the tissues, x-rays of bones, lungs, plants, and other abstract structures existing in nature, but not visible to the naked eye. It was described by artists and organizers as "intensified realism" and proposed as a counterpoint to Social Realism, which lasted in Poland from 1949–1955. Maziarska survived that period by working as a stage designer in a Puppet Theater in Opole.

Grażyna Kulczyk, founder and director of Muzeum Susch, comments: *"I first presented Jadwiga Maziarska's works over a decade ago at the Stary Browar in Poznań, in the exhibition "Parallel Systems" — alongside the works of two other extraordinary individualists: Gego and Rosemarie Trockel. They were united by a deep independence — creative courage that allowed them to forge their own paths, far from the dominant trends and expectations of the time. Gego and Trockel have already been recognized by the world, taking their rightful place in the mainstream of art history. Maziarska — equally expressive, equally bold — remained in the shadows for years. Her works, which have been part of my collection for a long time, still seduce me with their precision, delicacy, and extraordinary intellectual intensity. I felt sadness and a certain discontent that such a fascinating artist is known almost exclusively in Poland. That's why I decided to organize a large monographic exhibition of her work at my Swiss Muzeum Susch — so that the international public can experience the depth and uniqueness of her art."*

Jadwiga Maziarska: Assembly presents historical works from 1947–1950, including those shown at the 1st Exhibition of Modern Art in 1948 (a spatial form made of threads, colorful abstractions, collages), as

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well as abstract appliqué. The exhibition continues with wax reliefs (1960's–1970's), oil and mixed media paintings (1950's–1990's), acrylic paintings (1980's), sculptures (1960's–1980's), and photo-collages (1940's–1990's). Also included in the exhibition is a collaboration between Maziarska and the German photographer Lothar Wolleh (1978), as well as a film-tribute by the Polish video artist Józef Robakowski titled *For Jadwiga...* (2009).

In October 2025, Muzeum Susch and Hatje-Canz will release the publication *Jadwiga Maziarska: Assembly* with contributions by Rhea Anastas, Masha Chlenova, Barbara Piwowska, Matylda Taszycka, and Andrzej Turowski. It will also include excerpts from Maziarska's extensive correspondence with Erna Rosenstein (1947–1995).

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Listing details:

Exhibition dates: 15 June – 2 November 2025

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Address: Muzeum Susch, Surpunt 78, CH-7542 Susch, Switzerland

Tickets: Regular 25 CHF/ reduced 20 CHF *

Website: www.muzeumsusch.ch

Instagram: @muzeumsusch

About Jadwiga Maziarska

Jadwiga Maziarska was born in 1913 in Sosnowiec, Poland. In 1932 she enrolled in the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences at *Stefan Batory University* in Vilnius and also attended seminars on psychiatry and psychoanalysis. Between 1934–1939 she studied at the Faculty of Painting of the *Academy of Fine Arts* in Kraków (with Erna Rosenstein and Tadeusz Kantor). During this period, she was closely associated with the *1st Krakow Group* and the *Cricot Theatre*. In 1937, together with Rosenstein, she took part in the performance of the *Ephemeral Puppet Theatre—The Death of Tintagiles* by Maeterlinck, directed by Kantor.

At the beginning of WWII, she actively helped the underground movement, acting as a liaison with the *Kraków Ghetto*. She also joined the *Polish Workers' Party*, started a job in the conservation studio of Stanisław Pochwalski (her future husband), and helped secure and hide historical artworks. In 1946 she took part in the *Young Artists' Exhibition* in Kraków, co-founding the *Young Artists' Group* (the so-called “*Moderns*”). From 1947 she created abstract paintings and appliqué. In 1948 she participated in the historically significant *1st Exhibition of Modern Art* at the *Palace of Arts* in Kraków (alongside Kantor, Rosenstein, Wróblewski, among others).

In 1949 she collaborated with the *Office of Production and Supervision of Aesthetics* at the *Ministry of Light Industry* in Warsaw, designing patterns for printed fabrics. Between 1954–1956 she worked as a stage designer at the *Puppet Theatre* in Opole. In 1955 she took part in one of the

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first “Thaw” presentations of modern art—*Exhibition of 9 Painters* in Kraków—at that time introducing wax into her paintings. In 1957 she became a member of the *Zaglebie Group* and a founding member of the *2nd Krakow Group (Grupa Krakowska)*, exhibiting with both groups from then on. In the same year, her first solo exhibition took place at the *House of Visual Artists* in Kraków, and she also won a scholarship to travel to Paris, where she started collaborating with *Galerie Stadler* (which represented Antoni Tàpies, Karel Appel, Claire Falkenstein, Paul Jenkins) and *Galerie Louise Leiris* (founded by D.H. Kahnweiler).

She took part in many exhibitions in Poland and abroad, including *Exhibitions of Modern Art* at the *Zacheta Gallery* (1957, 1959) and *Espaces Abstraits*, curated by Michel Tapié at the *Galleria d’Arte Cortina* in Milan (1969), which also featured Lucio Fontana, Jackson Pollock, and Wols. Apart from painting, she created collages, reliefs, appliqués, spatial forms, and sculptures.

In 1991 her first monographic exhibition was held at the *Palace of Arts* in Kraków, and in 2001 she received the *Jan Cybis Award*. She died in 2003 at the age of 90. Recent exhibitions include the retrospective *Atlas of the Imaginary* at *CCA Ujazdowski Castle* in Warsaw (2009) and a solo show *Jadwiga Maziariska: 1913–2003* at *Galerie Johnen* (now *Esther Schipper*) in Berlin (2013).

About Rhea Anastas

Rhea Anastas is an independent curator, a cofounder of *Orchard*, a collectively run art space in New York (2005–2008), and a professor of art at the University of California, Irvine. Anastas received her BA (1990) and MA (1995) in art history from Columbia University; she received her PhD (2004) in art history from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Within *Orchard* and across her collaborations and work as a writer and curator, Anastas has innovated with research, exhibition-making, and publishing as artistic forms.

Anastas is curator of numerous exhibitions including *New Cuts* (K8 Hardy); *Christine Kozlov* (co-curated with Nora Schultz); *Louise Lawler: Edits and Projections* (a collaboration with Lawler and Robert Snowden); *Josephine Pryde: The Flight That Moved Them* (co-curated with Robert Snowden); *The Deep West Assembly* (Cauleen Smith, co-curated with Mia Locks).

Anastas is editor and contributor to numerous publications including *THE CLIP-ON METHOD* (with Cady Noland); *Louise Lawler: Receptions*; *Josephine Pryde: The Enjoyment of Photography*; *Witness to Her Art: Art and Writings by Adrian Piper, Mona Hatoum, Cady Noland, Jenny Holzer, Kara Walker, Daniela Rossell*; and *Eau de Cologne* (co-edited with Michael Brenson).

Currently, Anastas is working on an exhibition of artwork by one of the earliest voices of Conceptual Art, *Christine Kozlov*, and her peers at Raven Row, London.

About Barbara Piwowarska

Barbara Piwowarska is a curator and art historian specializing in the legacy of avant-gardes. She was a recipient of the Kosciuszko Foundation scholarship at the Museum of Modern Art (*MoMA*) in New York

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and of the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University in Cambridge. She curated numerous monographic exhibitions, such as *Jadwiga Maziarska: Atlas of the Imaginary* at CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw; *Erna Rosenstein: I Can Repeat Only Unconsciously* at the Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw; *Erna Rosenstein: Organism* at the Art Stations Foundation, Poznań; *Aura Rosenberg: Statues Also Fall in Love* at Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, and curated numerous group projects, including: *The Third Room* at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw; *Polish New Wave: The History of the Phenomenon That Never Existed* at Tate Modern, London (together with Stuart Comer and Łukasz Ronduda); *Warhol, People and Things* at Casa São Roque, Porto (together with Alaina Feldman).

Piowarska is also the author and editor of numerous books: *Jadwiga Maziarska: Atlas of the Imaginary, Kolekcjonowanie swiata. Jadwiga Maziarska. Listy i szkice, Star City: The Future Under Communism* (together with Alex Farquharson and Łukasz Ronduda); *Erna Rosenstein: I Can Repeat Only Unconsciously* (together with Dorota Jarecka); *Footnote 14: Angel of History*.

In 2017 Piowarska was curator of the Polish Pavilion for the 57th Venice Biennale, featuring *Little Review* by Sharon Lockhart. From 2019–2024 she was the Artistic Director of Casa São Roque – Centro de Arte in Porto, where she organized, among other exhibitions: *Ana Jotta Inventória* and *Jean-Luc Moulène Técnico Libertário*. In 2024 she joined the team of Muzeum Susch as Curator of OBJEKTIV.

About Muzeum Susch

Being simultaneously a site of contemplation, and intervention, MUZEUM SUSCH opened in January 2019 as a space for debate and research. Founded and created by Grażyna Kulczyk, the Polish entrepreneur and long-term supporter of contemporary art, it is specifically (but not exclusively) informed by a deep understanding of women artists; and, as such, seeks an emotional connection to art as a matrilineage of the sometimes omitted, the overlooked or the misread. The museum is housed in an extraordinary campus in the Engadin Valley of the Swiss Alps, located on the site of a 12th-century former monastery and brewery in Susch, a remote town situated on the ancient pilgrims' route to Santiago de Compostela. The multi-faceted project comprises 1,500 m² of gallery spaces, which show site-specific and permanent artworks, and boasts a regular programme of temporary exhibitions, conferences, concerts, and residencies. Due to its unique programming and award-winning architectural layout, MUZEUM SUSCH has become a “must see” attraction in Switzerland.

About Grażyna Kulczyk

Grażyna Kulczyk is an entrepreneur and patron of the arts whose business endeavors have made her Poland's most successful businesswoman. In 2004, after many years of involvement in the art and philanthropy sectors, Ms. Kulczyk set up her cultural flagship venture: *Art Stations Foundation*, housed in the carefully restored *Stary Browar (Old Brewery)* in Poznań, Poland, which has received numerous Polish and international awards.

In 2015, she began construction on *Muzeum Susch* in the Swiss Alps, which opened its doors in 2019. It quickly became one of the most important museum institutions in Switzerland and is recognized across Europe for its dedication to international modern and contemporary art. The Foundation's activities also

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include the residency program *Temporars Susch*, while *Instituto Susch* has initiated the global feminist *Research, Conference, and Publication Programmes*.

Ms. Kulczyk's areas of interest and her art commissions encompass a range of themes, such as the development of new technology and start-ups aimed at changing the world. She is particularly engaged in fostering entrepreneurship among women as well as promoting the equal presence of women in *STEM*.

From 2012 to 2018, Ms. Kulczyk supported *Tate Modern* as a member of the *International Council* and *REEAC*. She has also been a member of the board of the *Modern Women's Fund Committee* of the *Museum of Modern Art*, New York, and a board member of the *Museum of Modern Art* in Warsaw.

Ms. Kulczyk was distinguished as the *European Cultural Investor of the Year 2019* and has been repeatedly recognized as one of the *200 Top Collectors* in the world by *ARTnews*.