

the “Modular Furniture” series, 2013–) to split the unwieldy arrangement of objects—everything from toilets, light bulbs, and mattresses to fried eggs and slabs of meat—into a series of run-down living rooms, bathrooms, and bedrooms. The eggs were cooked fresh every morning for Lucas’s increasingly grubby sculpture *Two Fried Eggs and a Kebab*, 1992, and the acrid smell, in combination with the scent of the store-bought kebabs, lingered throughout the day.

Patriarchy is a major target of Lucas’s recent work; she lampoons, ridicules, and deflates the aggressive pomposity and power of the phallus as it is endlessly rehashed in popular culture. The last room of the show was dominated by two enormous, austere, cannon-like cocks and a series of phallic figures in the style of Henry Moore mounted on concrete bases. Lucas has a deliciously childish glee for all things bodily, mucky, and rude—“NUDS,” 2009—, a recent series of bundled knots of stuffed-stocking sausages, being a perfect case in point. Elsewhere in the show, the pumping, pink, zeppelin-like arm of *Mechanical Wanker*, 1999, cranked away as a noisy sound track to Lucas’s early, important work *Sod You Gits*, 1990—a blown-up double-page spread from low-rent porn-pop tabloid the *Sunday Sport* featuring a story about a female dwarf stripper. In another, more abstract though no less absurd register, a large sculpture with a multitude of stuffed-stocking “breasts” bunched together onto a mesh-wire frame was laugh-out-loud funny. Titled *Nice Tits*, 2011, after the stereotypical and dreaded street catcall, it is magisterial and goddess-like, a magnificent wall of bustling boobs towering above a pair of oversize silver disco boots. Feminism has always been part of Lucas’s work, though at times it is more in focus than in others. Here, grabbing such stupid macho phrases by the balls, she shows us just how ridiculous they are.

Lucas wears her politics lightly, yet her scathing criticism of Thatcher’s Conservative Britain of the 1980s is no less relevant today, in a time of increasing political and economic divisions. While the show reminds us of Lucas’s enduring fondness for the saucy, seaside-postcard humor of postwar Britain, most important is what that popular, familiar language enables her to do and say. Lucas prefers a wink and a nod to polemical browbeating, and her witty commentary on contemporary life is more powerful for that.

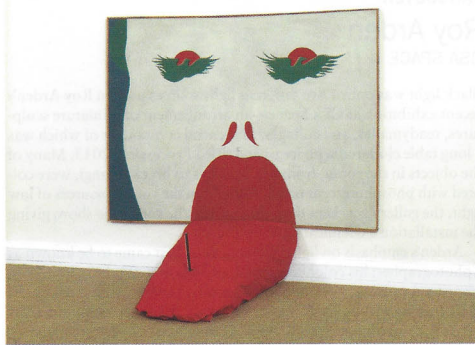
—Jo Applin

Jerzy “Jurry” Zieliński

LUXEMBOURG & DAYAN

Polish artist Jerzy “Jurry” Zieliński (1943–1980) is remembered today as a legendary maverick, brawler, and vagabond, yet this outside legacy seems to have overshadowed the artistic contributions he made over the course of his career. A traveling retrospective in Poland in 2010–11—heralded as “The Return of Jurry”—has fueled a resurgence of interest in his work, however, and has since been followed by two international exhibitions: the first at New York’s Oko gallery earlier in 2013, and more recently this show, “Jerzy ‘Jurry’ Zieliński: Paintings 1968–1977.”

From a village southeast of Lodz, Zieliński found his way into the Academy of Fine Arts in the bustling capital of Warsaw in 1962 and into the studio of Jan Cybis, a founding father of Polish Post-Impressionism—a style that still maintained a firm grip on art education across the country. There Zieliński met Jan Dobkowski and founded Neo-Neo-Neo, a two-man team for which they adopted their Western-sounding monikers: “Jurry” and “Dobson.” While they both continued to focus on painting, the medium emphasized in their education, they also experimented with other ways of working. Their first show, for example, presented in a students’ club in 1967, was accompanied by a performance, one part of which, titled “Run to Fame,” had the two



Jerzy “Jurry” Zieliński, *Bez Buntu (Without Rebellion)*, 1970, oil on canvas, pillow, nail; painting: 59 x 78¼”; pillow: approx. 17¼ x 31½ x 51¼”.

dressed in tracksuits and racing each other to a finish line marked on the floor. Neo-Neo-Neo marked a departure from the prevailing somberness of Polish painting and an audacious beginning to Zieliński’s career—one cut short in 1980 by his mysterious death: His body was found on a cold winter morning in the yard by his studio in Warsaw’s notoriously rough Praga district.

Spanning more than a decade of Zieliński’s practice, the works in this exhibition offered a clear view of his distinctive style—a pared-down palette of vibrating, contrasting colors—and recurring motifs. Frequently compared to Tom Wesselmann and other exponents of American Pop art, Zieliński favored free-floating, alluring, often intensely erotic forms that were also deeply rooted in the political context of the day. The artist did not present a straightforward critique of consumer culture; instead, drawing upon the imagery of both Communist propaganda and Catholicism, he set out to explore universal themes of the individual vis-à-vis the state, national identity, and religion, thus reintroducing a repressed personal agency into the sphere of official expression.

This strategy is best illustrated by one of Zieliński’s most prevalent motifs: lips. Typically set against an intense deep-blue background, the sensual, full, presumably female mouth is sometimes shut and overlaid with familiar symbols (such as traffic signs, Morse code, etc.), but in the pieces that were on view in London, it is open wide, revealing rows of sharpened teeth, as in *Prawo Puszczy* (The Law of the Jungle), 1976, or grinning, as in *Witajcie Kochani* (Hello Sweethearts), 1977. Perhaps the most powerful work featuring this imagery is *Uśmiech Czyli “Trzydzieści” – lac. “Cha Cha Cha” – ros* (The Smile, or Thirty Years, Ha Ha Ha), 1974, in which the lips are sealed with a triple X: at once surgical stitches, the emblem of the thirtieth anniversary of the People’s Republic of Poland, and the configuration of Russian letters that expresses mocking laughter.

Although Zieliński uses curvilinear, ornamental forms, his style is essentially geometrical. A clearly visible symmetry organizes balanced canvases such as *Wytnie nas czas* (Time Will Cut Us Out), 1976, in which an eye-shaped clock floats on the horizon framed by two feet, as well as many other works, which seem like cropped fragments of larger stencils or paper cutouts. Zieliński kept his distance from both the visually novel language of Pop art he’d adopted and his own artistic context. By proclaiming himself “Jurry – Polska B,” referring to Poland’s underdeveloped regions, mostly toward the east, he not only indicated his roots but also tried to maintain a safe distance from the established local artistic scene, a distance that seemed necessary to address the dilemmas of the age.

—Krzysztof Kosciuczuk