Academic News & Notable Events

The Art of Zbigniew Libera

In January 2006, the Copernicus Endowment and the School of Art and Design are planning a comprehensive exhibition of the work of Polish visual artist Zbigniew Libera. The exhibition will present works of black-andwhite photographs, video projection and video installation, large color photographs, and three-dimensional objects; it will be the first comprehensive exhibition of his work in the U.S. The School of Art and Design has invited Libera to be "artist-in-residence" for a month during which time he will deliver the Annual Penny Stamps Lecture on January 19, 2006 and participate in the Copernicus-sponsored symposium on the "Polish Avant-Garde, 1980-2005," In addition, Piotr Westwalewicz will teach the annual Polish mini-course "Rock Kills Communism," modified to encompass Polish counter culture with special emphasis on visual artists such as Libera.

Zbigniew Libera (b. 1959) is one of the most recognized contemporary visual artists in Poland. Together with a group of young sculptors, photographers, film makers and architects, he was active in the 1980s in the avant-garde group "Strych" ("The Attic"). Under the martial law regime in the early 1980s. Libera was arrest ed for printing political cartoons, flyers, and booklets. Later in the decade he continued his involvement with "Strych," whose improvised film festivals, performances, street actions, and happenings remained consistently rebellious towards all three of the great Polish centers of authority at that time: communism, the political opposition, and the Church. This programmatic questioning of all sources of Polish and European authority and mythology remained the distinctive feature of Libera's art from the



1990s until the present, just as it did for many artists who worked and performed on the fringes of the "official culture."

 Marysia Ostafin (left), Executive Director of the Copernicus Endowment, planning the U-M exhibition with artist Zbigniew Libera in Warsaw.

Academic News

Study Tour

In May, the Center for Russian and East European Studies (CREES), the home of Polish studies at Michigan, once again offered the popular study tour to Poland "Many Polands: A History of Multiculturalism in Northeastern Poland." The three-credit course explored the communities that comprised the Republic of Poland and Lithuania and their situation today. Fourteen students participated in the course which began with two weeks of classroom work in Kraków, day trips, and an extensive tour to Lublin, Białystok, Seiny, and Gdańsk, ending in Warsaw. The course was taught by our Polish historian. Brian Porter.

Outstanding Students

Raymond Patton, a graduate of the University of Georgia, is the 2005-2006 Copernicus Fellow. He is an incoming doctoral student in the Department of History, Ray is studying the dichotomy of "resistance" and "compliance" under Stalinism in Poland and the Soviet Union and will be working with Polish historian Brian Porter. The Excellence in Polish Language Studies Award went to Matthew Sikora: and summer research fellowships to Poland were awarded to Anna Cichopek (History), Sylwia Eimont (Comparative Literature), and Ioanne Hsu (American Culture). Two students, Luciana Aenasoaie and Martha Skup, received \$1,000 each from the Amelia Kulesa Konopka Endowment for their participation in the Polish study tour, "Many Polands: A History of Multiculturalism in Northeastern Europe."

Alumni News

Art historian and artist Pamela Z. Kladzyk is a faculty member at the Parsons School of Design where she teaches courses on the history of architecture, and lighting. She received her BFA from the University of Michigan; MFA from Eastern Michigan University: and was the first American to receive a Ph.D. from Catholic University, Lublin. Her recent photo exhibition. "Way off the Grid: Vestiges of European Vernacular Lighting." featured the architecture of wooden churches, prayer houses, mosques, and rural shrines in Poland's eastern borderlands with Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine — her favorites are in Zakopane — and her fascination with ancient, traditional buildings that rely on natural light. We hope to bring Pam and her work to the U-M in the future.

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Wedding Anniversary

this important fellowship program: we hope to make many John J. Świderski awards available to worthy students in the coming years.

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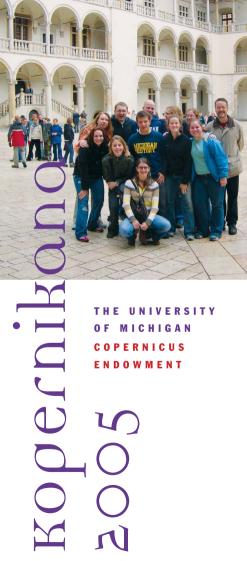
University of Michigan in 1973 to celebrate the sooth anniversary of the great Polish astronomer's mutifaceted genius. Initially created with the cooperation of students, faculty, and the Polish-Americans of Michigan, the Copernicus Endowment is sustained today by the energy and financial assistance of hundreds. of individual supporters. The principal goal of the Endowment is to enable faculty appointments, programming, and student fellowships in Polish studies. Income from the Endowment makes the Annual Copernicus Lecture possible, and ensures the continued scheduling of public events dedicated to advancing a deeper understanding of the people, culture, and politics of Poland.

he Copernicus Endowment was established at the

The Amelia Kulesa Konopka Endowment

This fund was established in 2001 by the family of Amelia Kulesa Konopka to improve knowledge of Poland's culture and history among undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students at the University of Michigan. In 1913, Mrs. Konopka came to the U.S. where she studied her new language and culture. These fellowships memorialize her quest for knowledge and her Polish heritage.

The John J. Świderski Fund This fund was established in 1997 for the support of student research and travel abroad. We are grateful to Suzanne Świderski Gruhl for her generous gifts in honor of her father and support of



FROM THE DIRECTOR

have just returned from taking a group of University of Michigan undergraduates on a month-long trip to Poland — a trip made possible by the generous support of the Copernicus Endowment, Our study-tour, "Many Polands," focused on the rich legacy of cultural diversity in northeastern Europe. The students learned that Poland's current religious, linguistic. and ethnic homogeneity is a relatively recent development, and that "multiculturalism" was an every-day reality in Poland centuries before it became a buzzword in the United States. In addition to the usual lineup of glorious Polish destinations (Kraków, Czestochowa, Lublin, Gdańsk, Warsaw), we visited some special out-ofthe-way sites that exemplify Poland's diversity: the village of Bohoniki, where Muslim Tatars have sustained their faith and community for more than 400 years; the Orthodox shrine of Grabarka, to which the faithful have made pilgrimages for centuries: the magnificent synagogue of Tykocin, long a spiritual and intellectual center of Polish Judaism, and the "Pogranicze" [Borderlands] Foundation in Sejny, which is working to develop and teach methods of interethnic cooperation in Eastern Europe and around the world. Throughout the trip we met with cultural, intellectual, and political figures from many backgrounds and perspectives, and the students came away with an appreciation of the complexity, the heterogeneity, and the subtle beauties of Poland's many cultures.

On April 2, the members of the University of Michigan Polish studies community joined the world in mourning the passing of one of the towering figures of the 20th century: Pope John Paul II. To mark this sad moment we quickly organized a public forum to discuss the Pope's legacy, drawing a large crowd and the attention of the southeast Michigan media. Joining me at this forum were **Gabriele Boccaccini** [Near







Eastern Studies), **Anna Grzymała-Busse** (Political Science), **Michael D. Kennedy** (Sociology), **Father Tom McClain, SJ**, (the Pastor of St. Mary's Student Parish), and **Geneviève Zubrzycki** (Sociology).

A more joyous moment came on February 17, when **Adam Zagajewski**, one of Poland's most innovative and eloquent poets presented the Copernicus Lecture. He joined Professor **Linda Gregerson** (English) in a literary discussion and gave a memorable reading of his work (in Polish and in English translation) to a standing-roomonly audience at the Rackham Amphitheatre on February 18. Hearing him read his poems in person brought their imagery and beauty alive, and gave us all a renewed appreciation for this master of the Polish language.

Next year we at the Copernicus Endowment will continue to study Poland's culture, history. politics, and society, and organize events that spread public awareness and understanding of the country that we all hold so dear. Highlighting the 2005–2006 academic year will be a visit by the artist Zbigniew Libera and the first ever retrospective of his groundbreaking work. In September and October, our distinguished faculty will be helping Americans understand the implications of the upcoming Polish parliamentary and presidential elections and what is certain to be a fundamental shift in Polish politics. The Copernicus Endowment will continue to support students interested in Polish studies, and to offer classes related to Poland in the Departments of History, Political Science, Sociology, Slavic Languages and Literatures, and more. All ongoing efforts in Polish studies depend on your generous donations. particularly at a time when so many other funding sources for higher education are being cut. On behalf of all my colleagues, I thank you in advance for your kind support.

BRIAN PORTER Program Director

The Annual Copernicus Lectures

Since 1980, the University of Michigan has hosted prominent political, cultural, and academic figures from Poland as part of the Annual Copernicus Lecture series. Prominent presenters in this series include Leszek Kołakowski, Czesław Miłosz, Stanisław Barańczak, Timothy Garton-Ash, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuroń, Krzysztof Penderecki, Henryk Górecki, Krzysztof Zanussi, Ryszard Kapuściński, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Kora Jackowska, and many more.

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the dew."

— Adam zagajewski

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