

The research project aims to provide an in-depth interpretation that problematizes the work of one of the greatest Polish sculptors of the twentieth century - Xawery Dunikowski (1875-1964). The most important concept for his work, indicated many times by the artist in his interviews, was the "fourth dimension", but so far it has not been possible to determine what exactly he meant when speaking about the realization of his "idea" and whether it underwent changes similar to the history of the term in science - mathematics and physics, but also in the speculations of modernist and avant-garde artists. Therefore, the second aim of the project is to investigate the collection of sources available to the artist and interpretations of the concept in the popular press, popular science publications and artistic declarations. In the Polish context the concept of the fourth dimension in art has not been subject to a separate monograph, and foreign publications describe Polish artists in a perfunctory manner, the project would complement the state of research on the relationship between art and science in the first half of the twentieth century.

The research will consist of queries in the archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Warsaw and Wrocław, the Museum of Art in Łódź, the National Museum in Warsaw and its branch - the Xawery Dunikowski Museum of Sculpture in Królikarnia, Książnica Pomorska im. Stanisława Staszica in Szczecin, the National Library in Warsaw, as well as foreign queries at the Polish Library in Paris, the British Museum in London and the Louvre. It is in these queries that analyzes of the artist's specific works and the reconstruction of individual interpretations of the notion of the fourth dimension in Polish art will be built. In addition, consultations with experts both in the field of art history and the history of science in Poland are an indispensable element of the research - they will allow to clarify individual interpretations.

The project aims to build a methodology that allows the study of difficult, and therefore less frequently treated cases in the current state of research, of artists, who, despite their deeper interest in broadly understood natural sciences, have never expressed them in the form of a clearly formulated theory of art. The emphasis put on programmatic statements shifted the emphasis in research on the fourth dimension in art to the period of European and American avant-gardes, while the queries and diagnoses made so far would indicate the presence of threads related to new geometries in the first years of the twentieth century. Modernist syncretism, characteristic of Dunikowski and his circle, in addition to interests in the concepts of evolution, psychological and anthropological speculations discussed at the time, displays a growing preoccupation with concepts in the field of mathematics, including the fourth dimension associated with the then fashionable esotericism. In order to understand its presence among questions about the broadly understood "nature of man", an attempt should be made to reconstruct Dunikowski's theory of art, or rather - the nature of his attempt to reform the sculptural rhetoric, in which a break with the academic tradition of allegory was to lead to the creation of a symbolic epic form modeled on authors such as Homer or Dante on the one hand, and poets such as Adam Mickiewicz or Juliusz Słowacki on the other. The project also aims to analyze the scale of self-censorship that is necessary to create the image of the Great Master, the complicated relationship between the public and private image.