**Two countries, more than 40 cities and 551 events – the finale of the historic UK/Poland Season 2025**

**The largest-ever programme of cultural cooperation between Poland and Great Britain, UK/Poland Season 2025, is coming to an end. This was not just a cultural exchange – it was a time of community building. In 2025, Poland and the UK spoke with one voice: the voice of art, innovation, and mutual curiosity. The programme, which included more than 500 events in the fields of film, theatre, visual arts, design, and music, opened a completely new chapter in the two countries’ relations. Attracting almost 1,5 million face-to-face participants, the Season contributed to deepening and strengthening ties between societies and artists, proving that culture is the most effective tool for building lasting trust and understanding.**

**The British Council** was responsible for organising the events in Poland, while the programme in the United Kingdom was carried out in close partnership with **the Adam Mickiewicz Institute**, **the Polish Cultural Institute in London** and **the British Council**, with strategic support from the **Ministry of Culture and National Heritage** and with the participation of **the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Polan.**

**Dialogue, Diversity, Diaspora, and Digital** are the four themes that set the course for UK/Poland Season 2025. Emphasising the value of building understanding across borders, the Season celebrated the cultural richness and diversity of both countries. For residents of both countries, it offered a unique opportunity to explore the most exciting artistic phenomena from both sides – encompassing film, theatre, visual arts, design, and music. Joint Polish-British projects and productions have resulted in strengthened ties and inspiration for future generations to undertake joint cultural initiatives.

– *The UK/ Poland Season is a testament to the strength and depth of the cultural ties between Poland and the UK. The diverse programme across Poland and four nations of the UK opened new opportunities for creative collaboration, particularly for the next generation of creatives innovating and working internationally* – says **Ian Murray, Minister of State for Creative Industries, Media and Arts**.

– *We began this year of Polish–British cooperation with the conviction that building communities – everyday, real ones – is today Europe’s most important task. Perhaps more important than ever before, because everything now depends on our cooperation and sense of unity. After a year, this idea has only grown in relevance – the unity and solidarity of Europe is not only an important ideal, but also a challenge and a guarantee of our shared security. This makes events such as the UK/Poland Season 2025 all the more significant, as well as the daily effort to build a common Europe, a Europe of solidarity, founded on shared values. Culture is not only a platform for exchanging these values or a building block of identity, but also a foundation of our security. A year ago, we spoke of soft power; today we can speak together of real power* – says **Marta Cienkowska, Poland’s Minister of Culture and National Heritage**.

– *The UK/Poland Season 2025 has demonstrated how effective cultural diplomacy can be in strengthening bilateral relations. Thanks to projects implemented with leading British institutions such as the Barbican, Victoria & Albert Museum, British Film Institute, and National Portrait Gallery, the season reached a wide British audience with an image of a contemporary, creative, and innovative Poland drawing strength from its heritage. Polish artists and designers had the opportunity to showcase their work in the heart of London, and at the renowned London Design Festival* – said **Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Marcin Bosacki**.

– *UK/Poland Season 2025 is a programme of unprecedented scale, whose true uniqueness lies in the dialogue between generations, perspectives, and artistic traditions. From the beginning, we wanted this Season to be as much a celebration of culture and an opportunity to get to know one another as it was a space for building lasting relations between artistic communities of both countries. Today, while observing a number of new initiatives taking shape, the development of initiated projects, and the growing interest in Polish culture, I can say with confidence that we have managed to achieve this. UK/Poland Season 2025 has proven that cultural cooperation is not a slogan, but a precise tool for building lasting ties. We have shown that culture does not serve as a decoration for politics, but rather as its meaning, content, and power. At a time when walls – both political or ideological – are being erected around the world, we, through authentic exchange and mutual curiosity, have built up a capital of trust that will stay with us for years –* says **Olga Brzezińska, Deputy Director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute**.

– *As the initiators of the UK/Poland Season 2025, we are not only proud of the incredible impact that this project made in both countries, but also of the fact that through this project we were able to support the formation of friendships and lasting partnerships between cultural organisations in Poland and the UK. The Season’s legacy will be continued by them –* adds **Rachel Launay, Director British Council Poland**.

*– As Zygmunt Bauman reminded us, in “liquid times” culture is not fixed, it is shaped by our encounters. This Season has been exactly that: a meeting place. I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all our partners in the UK and Poland for your hard work, openness, and trust throughout this UK/Poland Season. I had the privilege of working on the previous UK/Poland Season in year 2010. Standing here 15 years later, seeing how our cooperation with the British Council and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute has grown, feels genuinely moving. Projects created together with British partners, Polish institutions and the dedicated team at the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and Polish Cultural Institute are a prime example of the richness of Polish culture and how warmly it is received* – concludes **Anna Tryc-Bromley, Director of the Polish Institute in London.**

**New narratives: From ecology to technology**

The UK/Poland Season 2025 focused on the most current topics defining today’s reality – from ecology and future technology, to migration and multiculturalism. These issues were shown through the prism of new artistic narratives and dialogue between different generations and traditions. The diversity of the Polish art scene was represented by artists working in the fields of visual arts, classical music and jazz, photography, design, and theatre, whose works and projects built the image of Poland as an open, creative, and socially engaged country.

**Key events in the UK**

**Film:** The season opened with the **KINOTEKA Polish Film Festival** in London, and the **Kinoteka on Tour** brought Polish cinema – from classics to new releases – to independent cinemas in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

**Music:** This was the year of the Polish sound. The winning streak of artistic and attendance-related successes began with the London edition of the **Unsound** festival at The Barbican, where performing artists included, among others, Rafael Rogiński and Sinfonietta Cracovia with Mika Levi. Polish artists have performed at the **EFG London Jazz Festival**, the **Huddersfield International Contemporary Music Festival**, and **the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival**. A real triumph was the “Focus on Poland” section at the **Edinburgh International Festival** – the oldest and most prestigious arts event in the UK. For the first time in the festival’s history, Polish music resonated strongly – from **Piotr Anderszewski, the VOŁOSI group, the NFM Leopoldinum Orchestra**,and the **Wrocław Baroque Ensemble**, to interpretations of iconic works by Grażyna Bacewicz performed by award-winning **violinist Bomsori Kim** and Frederic Chopin’s works performed by the outstanding young **pianist Ryan Wang.**Major British media wrote about the performances of Polish artists, who received standing ovations from the audiences. “The Scotsman” awarded Piotr Anderszewski’s concert 5 stars, and the performance of the Polish pianist and the NFM Leopoldinum Orchestra from Wroclaw was admired, among others, by the British newspaper “The Telegraph”.

**Design and visual arts** made a visible mark with the **presentation of works by Stanislaw Wyspiański at the National Portrait Gallery in London**, as well as **a moving installation by Alicja Patanowska, commissioned by the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, and the Polish Cultural Institute in London.** This installation and an exhibition of contemporary Polish posters, **“Polish Posters Now!” at the Victoria and Albert Museum,** the largest museum of applied arts, crafts and design in the UK, **have enriched the programme of the London Design Festival 2025**.Meanwhile, the “**Radical Hope” exhibition –** with works by contemporary Central European artists from the collection of the Arsenal Gallery in Bialystok – complemented the programme with a perspective of solidarity, including in the dialogue artists from the Ukrainian and Belarusian diaspora. Significant emphasis was also placed on women’s artistic expression outside the mainstream – thanks to the exhibition **“You’re Not Alone: Women in Art 2025”** where works by outsider artists captivated audiences, not only **at the BEAF Festival in Bournemouth, but also at the Silesian Museum in Katowice**. Among the featured artists were **Ann Churchill**, known for her delicate embroideries and batiks, Romani activist **Delaine Le Bas**, and **Kwaga Sillingi**, whose work draws on African cultural traditions. In June, the Polish Cultural Institute in London, in cooperation with the Fleet Street Quarter BID, organised the event titled **“Designing Tomorrow: Polish Sustainable Design & Business for a Better Future”** showcasing the latest achievements in the field of Polish design, and as part of the **London Festival of Architecture** presented the innovative sculptural installation “Whispers” by renowned Polish designer **Oskar Zięta**.

**Photography:** The works of Polish artists could be admired at three exhibitions: at the **Belfast Photo Festival 2025**, **at Belfast Exposed during the Belfast International Arts Festival,** and at the exhibition **“Zofia Rydet: Sociological Record” at The Photographers’ Gallery in London.** Works by **Diana Lelonek, Anna Zagrodzka, Karol Szymkowiak, as well as Dyba and Adam Lach** were presented in key locations in the centre of Belfast, addressing the changing landscape of Polish ecology and society. Belfast Exposed, Northern Ireland’s premier gallery**, featured the works of female masters of Polish photography: Zofia Rydet, Anna Beata Bohdziewicz, Teresa Gierzyńska, and Aneta Grzeszykowska.** Although created in different times and historical contexts, these artists’ works share a common feature: the use of the camera as a tool of resistance and a medium for storytelling. The exhibition highlighted the unique contribution of Polish female artists to the development of contemporary photography, while also opening a wider discussion on the role of women in art and society. In turn, The Photographers’ Gallery hosted **the first such extensive presentation of Zofia Rydet’s “Sociological Record” in the UK**. The exhibition focused on rare prints made by the artist in her home darkroom.

**Theatre:** The diversity and innovation of the Polish art scene was also reflected in theatre projects. The **Theatre is Freedom** festival presented the most interesting open-air performances by such Polish companies as: **Teatr Ósmego Dnia, Teatr Biuro Podróży, Teatr Migro, Teatr HOM, and the Konin Dance Theatre** and the entire event was inaugurated by the British premiere of **“The Ball” by Teatr KTO**.Dance performances by **Alex Baczynski-Jenkins’** “**Untitled (Holding Horizon)”,** performed at the Southbank Centre, and a moving “**Every Minute Motherland” by Maciej Kuźmiński**, inspired by the refugee crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, were enthusiastically received. For four nights in a row, audiences gave standing ovations to the British premiere of **Łukasz Twarkowski’s** play **“Rohtko” at The Barbican Theatre in London**.  The Season also aimed to highlight artists with disabilities and neurodivergent artists, exemplified by the provocative performance project **“Wuthering Heights: Cathy’s Contemporary Manifesto”**. This ground-breaking collaboration between **Mind the Gap and Theatre 21** redefined strength, desire, and inclusivity, presenting them from a completely unexpected perspective. This hard work resulted in a film and performance piece that prompted reflection among audiences **in both Bradford and Warsaw**.

**The most important events in Poland**

**Visual arts:** The Season programme in Poland began with the opening of the exhibition **“St Ives and Elsewhere” at the Museum of Art in Łódź**, featuring works from the British Council Collection, Tate, and Polish museums. The featured artists and creators included, among others, **Grayson Perry**, whose works were shown at **the ŁAŹNIA Centre for Contemporary Art in Gdańsk** as part of **“Changes. Exhibition of Works from the British Council Collection” – later the exhibition moved to Plymouth under the title “Remember Respond Resist”** – as well as **Tracy Emin and Lubaina Himid**, both included in the exhibition **“The Woman Question 1550-2025” at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.**

**Photography:** An interesting perspective was also offered by the exhibition **“Here and There**”, centred around the themes of emigration, identity, and the definition of “home,” analysed from the perspective of Polish communities in Bradford and beyond, which was on view during **Fotofestiwal in Łódź** and concurrently as part of **Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture**. The exhibits explored the fascinating history of these communities through individual objects, rare archival materials and photographs.

**Digital:** UK/Poland Season 2025 offered artists and organisations the opportunity to co-create a dialogue about the future of art, which is why one of the programme’s key points of focus was the use of new technologies in the arts. The bilateral exhibition “**What is it like?”** first attracted an international audience to the **arebyte gallery in London**, and later sparked the imagination of Polish viewers at **the WRO Art Centre**. Meanwhile **in Kraków, the exhibition “May AI help you?”** presented during this year’s edition of **the Patchlab Festival**, prompted participants to reflect on how artificial intelligence and new technologies are redefining our view of the world and the narratives we construct about it.

**Dance & Theatre:** Presentations of contemporary Scottish dance at the **29th International Dance Theatres Festival in Lublin, with the participation of Scottish Dance Theatre,** won the greatest public acclaim among all performative projects. Meanwhile, the play **“Scored in Silence”** by **Chisato Minamimura**, presented first **at the 8th International OPEN THE DOOR Festival in Katowice and later as part of the Europe Beyond Access II project at CK Zamek in Poznań**, offered an important perspective of d/Deaf individuals who experienced the horror of the atomic bombing in Japan in 1945.

**Film:** The strengthening of dialogue in the area of film was also an important highlight of the Season. One of the key projects was the **“Creatures of the Night”** section at **the New Horizons International Film Festival in Wrocław**, accompanied by the exhibition **“Raise the Curtain!”** prepared **by Studio BWA Wrocław**. The crowning moment was this year’s edition of the **British Film Festival in Poznań**, which presented more than 70 films, including retrospectives of Sally Potter and Maggie Smith, as well as special screenings prepared in cooperation with BBC Studios.

**Music:** UK/Poland Season 2025 echoed throughout Poland with impressive force – from immersive installations, through festival stages, to intercultural experiments. In the summer, t**he Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw** buzzed with sound during the **“Sonics & Scenics”** festival, where audiences could experience works by **Chu-Li Shewring**, **Nikki Sheth**, **Barbara Kinga Majewska**, **and Una Lee**. I**n Lublin, the Different Sounds Festival** featured British artists **Ela Orleans** **and Dopey Monkey**, as well as **the installation “Sing the Gloaming”, by Professor Simon Kirby and musicians Tommi Perman and Rob St. John**. Meanwhile, **“Sonic Playgrounds”**, a bold and heartfelt intercultural musical experiment, captured the hearts of audiences **in Belfast and Gdańsk** thanks to the collaboration between **composer Brian Irvine and Remont Pomp** – a dynamic ensemble made up of neurodivergent artists.

There were also **parallel conferences and industry meetings** for curators, cultural managers, directors of institutions, as well as artistic producers from Poland, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland. These meetings have laid a solid foundation for future projects and are an investment that will bear fruit for years.

**Closing of the UK/Poland Season 2025**

The finale of the Poland-based programme of UK/Poland Season 2025 took place on 23 November 2025 at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. The event’s highlights included the lecture “Collecting for a nation: feminist strategies, institutional challenges and change” by Lucy Askew, Chief Curator at the National Galleries of Scotland, as well as a guided tour of the exhibition “The Woman Question: 1550–2025”, followed by a reception at Rumory Bistro.

The closing ceremony of the British-based programme of UK/Poland Season 2025 was held on 3 December 2025 at the Polish Hearth Club in London. The event was graced by a recital performed by pianist Adam Kałduński, winner of the 19th International Frederic Chopin Piano Competition.

**Media contact:**   
Klaudia Gniady   
e-mail: [kgniady@iam.pl](mailto:kgniady@iam.pl)

**The Adam Mickiewicz Institute** **(IAM)** brings Polish culture to people around the world. Being a state institution, it creates lasting interest in Polish culture and art through strengthening the presence of Polish artists on the global stage. It initiates innovative projects, supports international cooperation and cultural exchanges. It promotes the work of both established and promising artists, showing the diversity and richness of our culture. The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is also responsible for the Culture.pl website, a comprehensive source of knowledge about Polish culture. More information: <https://iam.pl/en.>

**The Polish Cultural Institute in London** focuses on promoting Polish culture and heritage to British audiences while fostering collaboration and building bridges between key cultural and academic institutions in Poland and the UK. By nurturing these relationships, providing access to cultural resources, and offering financial support, the Institute successfully presents the best of Polish art, film, theatre, music, literature, science, and heritage to the UK’s diverse communities. <https://instytutpolski.pl/london/>

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