Press release, 7 March 2025

**UK/Poland Season 2025 marks a new chapter of creative collaboration**

The UK/Poland Season 2025 has officially launched at BFI Southbank as part of the Opening Night Gala at the annual KINOTEKA Polish Film Festival.

The event included speeches from **Chris Bryant**, Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism; **Hanna Wróblewska**, Minister of Culture and National Heritage and **Anna Radwan,** Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The **UK/Poland Season 2025**, initiated by the British Council,features over 100 events across dozens of cities in both countries, celebrating a milestone year in the cultural relationship between Poland and the UK. It opens a new chapter of collaboration, revitalising cultural dialogue and strengthening ties.

For those both in Poland and the UK, the Season offers a unique opportunity to discover the work of the most exciting talent across both nations’ artistic scenes, from film, theatre, and visual arts to design and music. Events in Poland are organised and funded by the British Council, while in the UK they are led by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Polish Cultural Institute, and the British Council. The organisation of the Season in the UK would not be possible without the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Poland.

Despite three quarters of a million Poles currently living in the UK and Polish being the second most spoken language there, studies show that cultural exchange between Poland and the UK has weakened significantly following Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. The Season aims not only to promote culture but also to create a platform for dialogue and collaboration among artists, institutions, and communities. By strengthening connections, challenging national stereotypes, and fostering enduring relationships, the programme embodies values such as tolerance, openness, diversity, and dialogue. Migration is one of key themes, reflecting the long-established Polish community in the UK and Poland’s recent role as a haven for people from Ukraine and Belarus. Artists from these countries living and working in Poland form a vital part of its cultural landscape, and their presence is an important aspect of the Season’s programme.

**Chris Bryant**, **Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism, said:**

*"The UK and Poland have been close cultural cousins for decades and the launch of the UK/Poland Season 2025 marks the start of an exciting chapter of collaboration to help our cultural relationship to flourish and ensure we continue to be world leaders in the cultural and creative sectors.*

*By expanding our work together in arts, culture and education, we are contributing to a better world where young people have greater opportunities."*

**Hanna Wróblewska, Minister of Culture and National Heritage, said:**

*“This year marks the 15th anniversary of Polska! Year, the Polish Season in the United Kingdom. Launched in response to the wave of Polish emigration to the UK following Poland’s accession to the European Union, the programme aimed to bring Polish culture, art, history, and contemporary life closer to British society. It showcased Polish artists and fostered a dialogue that challenged prevailing stereotypes about Poles.*

*The past decades have brought significant changes in both Poland and the United Kingdom—political, social, and economic transformations, but also shifts in the cultural landscape. Our countries—and not only ours—are now facing new challenges, unimaginable 15 years ago. New topics have emerged in public debate, while others have gained or lost significance. New institutions and artistic phenomena have appeared, but most importantly, a new generation of artists and cultural audiences has come to the fore.*

*The future of our dialogue—and the shape of the European community—will depend on them. This is why supporting young artists in developing their careers is so crucial. This is why promoting active, everyday participation in culture—one that is vibrant, current, and contemporary—is so important. Culture resonates most strongly through constant engagement with its audiences. I invite you to take part in this dialogue."*

**Anna Radwan, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Polan, said:**

*“15 years have passed since the last Polish Cultural Season in the UK and this year's season which will include over 100 events in both the UK and Poland, offers a unique opportunity to further strengthen the important relationship between our countries.*

*Close cultural cooperation is a natural state of affairs between two countries with such close societies, common values and views on the world and who share a common responsibility and commitment to the security of Europe and its neighbourhood.*

*The UK and Poland also enjoy close relations in other areas. In 2023, a record level of trade was recorded between the two countries, reaching EUR 23.6 billion and Polish is still the second most commonly spoken language in the UK.*

*The UK/Poland Season offers the chance to showcase our continued close relationship even further, as the numerous cultural events organized in Poland and the British Isles, across a variety of cultural mediums, will inspire and help to reveal the close bond between our two nations also in the realm of culture.”*

**Olga Brzezińska, Deputy Director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, said:**

*“After many months of intensive collaboration with the British Council, the Polish Cultural Institute in London, and partners on both sides of the Channel, we are delighted to inaugurate UK/Poland Season 2025.*

*This exceptional programme not only illuminates the contemporary cultures of Poland and the United Kingdom but above all, emphasizes dialogue—between generations, perspectives, and artistic traditions. Our ambition is to inspire a new generation of creators and audiences to delve into shared experiences and worldviews. The programme addresses the defining issues of our time—from climate change and future technologies to migration and multiculturalism—viewed through the lens of art and innovative narratives.*

*We aim for this Season to serve not merely as a celebration of culture, but as a space that fosters lasting relationships between artistic communities in both countries. We believe the UK/Poland Season 2025 will spark long-term collaboration, encouraging the discovery of Poland and its dynamic artistic life.”*

**Magdalena Grabianowska, Deputy Director of the Polish Cultural Institute, said:**

*“Poland is a vibrant and dynamic force in the European cultural landscape, with a cutting-edge and progressive sector leading the way. From innovative contemporary art and design to experimental music, theatre, film and culinary scenes, the UK/Poland Season 2025 offers an unparalleled opportunity to show audiences in the UK exactly what makes contemporary Poland stand out as such an impressive and unique cultural destination - proud of its rich cultural heritage, while also forging a vibrant and pioneering new path and open to new connections and collaborations.*

*From March- November 2025 some of Poland’s most exciting creatives will be coming to the UK in 2025 to showcase their work and build new connections. The season is therefore both a platform for inspiration, connection and ongoing collaboration – reigniting strong international relations between the UK and Poland as well as an invitation to come and see and experience the thriving cultural scene that Poland has to offer.”*

**Scott McDonald, CEO of the British Council, said:**

*“I am delighted that the UK/Poland Season 2025, initiated by the British Council and organised in partnership with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and Polish Cultural Institute in London, is now officially launched.*

*The British Council has been working in Poland since 1938. So we have been building understanding and trust between the UK and Poland for 87 years, helping individuals and organisations to develop mutually beneficial relationships. And for more than 100 years now, the links between the United Kingdom and Poland have been defined by mutual respect, collaboration and friendship.*

We currently face many challenges around the world – notably in Poland’s neighbourhood. I think there has never been a better time for the UK and Poland to create together, learn together, and – perhaps most importantly – to imagine future collaborations through cultural exchange.

The UK/Poland Season 2025 does just this. It opens a new dynamic chapter in cultural exchange between our two countries, bringing Polish culture to new audiences in the United Kingdom, and introducing Polish people to the best of the UK.

The Season will deliver over 100 events in more than 40 cities in Poland and the UK across all artforms, providing extraordinary opportunities for individuals, artists, and institutions of our two nations. ‘’

**EVENTS IN THE UK**

From March to November, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Polish Cultural Institute in London and the British Council will present an ambitious UK programme, showcasing projects across a range of art forms, including classical music, jazz, experimental music, visual arts, photography, theatre, and film.

**FILM**

**KINOTEKA Polish Film Festival**

From **6 March to 25 April**, KINOTEKA – the Polish film festival organised by the Polish Cultural Institute in London since 2003 – brings together another compelling line-up of contemporary and classic Polish cinema. Venues for the 23rd edition include BFI Southbank, BFI IMAX, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Cine Lumiere, The Garden Cinema, the Barbican, Bertha Dochouse, The Phoenix Cinema, Southbank Centre, JW3, Ognisko Polskie - The Polish Hearth, Swedenborg House, Samsung KX.

This year, KINOTEKA will also head across the UK for **KINOTEKA on Tour**, with regional editions in 8 UK cities organized in cooperation with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and in partnership with Klassiki, an online platform showcasing films from Central and Eastern Europe. Selected films will be shown in cinemas in Canterbury, Hull, Nottingham, Newcastle, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds and Oxford.

**MUSIC**

**Lutosławski at the London Philharmonic Orchestra**

On **29 March**, Finnish conductor Eva Ollikainen, along with the London Philharmonic Orchestra will perform a concert featuring *Symphony No. 3* by Polish composer Witold Lutosławski. The programme will also include *Symphony No. 1* by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, and a three-part *Water Concerto* by Chinese composer Tan Dun. Colin Currie will be the concert’s solo percussionist.

***The Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass* performed by Grażyna Auguścik and Bester Quartet at the Institute of Contemporary Arts**

As the Closing Gala of the Kinoteka Polish Film Festival, on **25 April,** the Institute of Contemporary Arts will host a screening of *The Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*, an adaptation of the novel by Polish writer and artist Bruno Schulz. This will be accompanied by a performanceby Bester Quartet and renowned jazz vocalist Grażyna Auguścik, with arrangements from composer John Zorn to commemorate Schulz.

Bester Quartet is a new iteration of The Cracow Klezmer Band, formed in 1997 in Kraków by Jarosław Bester – a composer and accordionist.

**Polish Jazz Series at Ronnie Scott’s**

From **May to October**, three contemporary Polish jazz bands will perform at the legendary Ronnie Scott's:

* **hoshii**, led by acclaimed saxophonist and producer Kuba Więcek, brings new ideas from collaborations with hip-hop and alternative music artists. The band features Grzegorz Tarwid on piano and synthesizers, Max Mucha on electric bass, and Miłosz Berdzik on drums. Their music tells the story of an entity named hoshii from the planet Versus, exploring new experiences on Earth. Downbeat magazine picks Kuba Więcek as one of the musicians who has potential to shape the sound of jazz in the future alongside names like Shabaka, Yussef Days and Joel Ross.
* **Joanna Duda Trio**, known for its innovative sound, blending electronic elements with traditional jazz. The trio includes Joanna Duda on piano, Maks Mucha on bass, and Michał Bryndal on drums. They have established themselves on the European music scene, performing at major jazz festivals.
* **EABS** (Electro-Acoustic Beat Sessions) seeks to redefine jazz by mixing it with contemporary urban music. The band features Marek Pędziwiatr on piano, synths, and vocals, Paweł Stachowiak on bass, Jakub Kurek on trumpet, Olaf Węgier on tenor sax, and Marcin Rak on drums. Their latest album, *Reflections of the Purple Sun,* focuses on rhythm and the history of Polish jazz.

**Polish Focus at the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival and Edinburgh International Festival**

Between **17-20 July**, Polish bands and soloists will appear at the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival. Following this, from **9-18 August** at Edinburgh International Festival (in collaboration withNational Forum of Music and Polish Music Publishing House) there will be a series of concerts and events from Polish musicians, as well as pieces created by Polish composers and performed by British artists. Full details of the programme will be announced by the Edinburgh International Festival on 13th March.

**Scotland and Poland: A Celebration**

A live concert performance from the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on **25 October** will celebrate the cultural ties between Scotland and Poland. Links between Scotland and Poland date as far back as the mid-15th century with Scots trading and settling in Poland. Today, there is a thriving Polish community to be found throughout Scotland.

**London Sinfonietta at the Huddersfield International Contemporary Music Festival**

In **November**, in collaboration with the London Sinfonietta, one of the world’s finest contemporary music ensembles, there will be a programme at the festival that celebrates the artistic relations between Poland and the United Kingdom.

**Polish presence at the EFG London Jazz Festival**

Between **15-16 November,** incollaboration with Serious, London's leading promoter of contemporary music, this year's EFG London Jazz Festival will showcase a broad presentation of Polish jazz. The festival will feature a project aimed at fostering cooperation between Polish artists and a UK headliner, along with a series of smaller events highlighting emerging Polish talent on various stages and jazz clubs across London. Few weeks before the festival, on September 28, a special event will take place in collaboration with the organizers of the EFG London Jazz Festival.

**THEATRE**

**Outdoor Polish Theatre Festival**

From **5-2 September** Watermans Arts Centre (WAC) in West London, supported by Arts Council England and local authorities, is set to host the Outdoor Polish Theatre Festival in 2025. This festival will feature 16 performances by eight Polish theatre companies over consecutive weekends in September (Friday, Saturday, Sunday). Performers include Teatr Studio, Teatr Ósmego Dnia, Teatr Biuro Podróży, and Teatr KTO, and the festival is curated by Jan Lennox. Admission to all performances is free.

**ART, DESIGN, PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Stanisław Wyspiański Portraits Display**

From **27 March – 13 July**, for the first time in the UK, 16 of Stanisław Wyspiański’s most admired portraits, many never seen outside Poland, will be displayed at the National Portrait Gallery. Wyspiański (1869-1907), a pivotal figure in Poland’s visual culture, was a leading artist in the modernist movement, Young Poland. This movement, based in Kraków, sought to create a new national art rooted in folk traditions, playing a crucial role in Poland's path to independence in 1918. The exhibition celebrates Wyspiański as a painter, designer, poet, and originator of modern

Polish theatre. His portraits are known for their bold colours and emphatic lines, with figures either pressed tight against the picture plane or leaning away at sharp angles.

**Designing Tomorrow: Polish Sustainable Design and Business for a Better Future**

In **June**, this event will showcase the best of contemporary Polish design in collaboration with Fleet Street Quarter BID. In addition, Polish design will be highlighted at the London Design Biennale and the V&A, with acclaimed Polish artists presenting installations at both venues. More details to be announced.

**Furthermore, from September 13 to October 13, Alicja Patanowska’s works will be presented at the V&A Museum as part of the London Design Festival.**

***Metamorfoza* – Polish Photographers at Belfast Photo Festival**

Between **2-29 June**, Belfast Photo Festival in partnership with Fotofestiwal Łódź will feature exhibitions, events, screenings, and public activations in collaboration with Polish artists: Diana Lelonek, Anna Zagrodzka, Karol Szymkowiak, and Adam and Dyba Lach. *Metamorfoza* invites audiences to explore creative responses, experiments, and published works all considering the rapid changes within Polish ecology and society. All four artists will visit Northern Ireland during the festival, collaborating and hosting a range of public events to stimulate discourse, debate, and understanding of the works and issues raised.

Polish photography enjoys great interest from the British audience and will be also featured in exhibitions at The Photographers' Gallery in London and Belfast Exposed during the Belfast International Festival. More details coming soon.

***Records of Waiting* at London Design Biennale**

From **5-29 June** Poland will return to London Design Biennale with an installation curated by Jakub Gawkowski, Monika Rosińska and Maciej Siuda exploring the politics of waiting and the tension of suspended time, by transforming the intangible state into tangible form. Drawing from the Polish Highland tradition of woodcarving while waiting, the project reimagines this ornamental practice as a visual record of passing time.

**Zofia Rydet at Photographers’ Gallery London**

From **October 2025 to February 2026**. The landmark Polish photographic project *Sociological Record* by Zofia Rydet (1911-1997) is a sweepingly comprehensive documentary portrait of Polish domestic life which spans decades, eras, regions and cultures. More details to be announced.

***Radical Hope* – Exhibition of the works from *Collection II* of Galeria Arsenał in Białystok**

*Collection II* of Galeria Arsenał in Białystok, one of Poland's most significant modern art collections, showcases the Polish and Eastern European art scene of the last 30 years, and will be on show at the Golden Thread Gallery in Belfast from **13 September to 8 November**.

Curated by Monika Szewczyk, the exhibition features works by artists Hubert Czerepok, Zhanna Kadyrova, Diana Lelonek, Lada Nakonechna, Marina Naprushina, Konrad Smoleński, and Piotr Uklański. Inspired by Jonathan Lear’s book *Radical* *Hope*, the exhibition explores how to find meaning and hope in a world that seems to have lost both. It questions whether art and artists can guide us to new possibilities and solutions.

***Planetary Awareness. Ecosystems of Care* at Modal Gallery, School of Digital Arts (SODA), Manchester Metropolitan University**

Inspired by sociologist Roland Robertson's concept of planetary awareness, this project addresses the global challenges faced by social and human sciences. It emphasises the Earth's exploitation and neglect, while also highlighting the growing empathy and care towards our planet. The exhibition features artists from Poland and Ukraine, utilizing XR technology alongside traditional media like video and installation. The exhibition will be on display from **31 October to 28 November**. Partners include Modal Gallery, School of Digital Arts at Manchester Metropolitan University, Galeria Arsenał in Białystok, and the 3D Studio and Virtual Events II at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

**LITERATURE**

**Focus on Poland at the Cheltenham Literature Festival**

A series of events with contemporary Polish writers. More details to be released. The festival runs **10-19 October**.

**Joseph Conrad Festival**

In partnership with the British Library and Cine Lumiere Institut français du Royaume-Uni, a celebration of one of Poland’s most influential writers Joseph Conrad between the 7th - 15th November. The festival will feature:

* **Book Launch:** *The Resonance of Conrad in Contemporary Culture* by Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech, exploring Conrad's impact across literature, film, comics, and graphic novels
* **Panel Discussion**: Renowned scholars and critics will discuss Conrad's lasting influence on modern culture and his relevance today
* **Film Retrospective:** A curated selection of films inspired by Conrad’s works, showcasing his narrative themes in cinema

These events aim to honour Conrad’s cultural legacy and his influence on global dialogue across various forms of art and media, encouraging both academic and public engagement with his work.

**EVENTS IN POLAND**

The Polish programme will include film, theatre, visual arts, music, literature, and design. Concerts, exhibitions, author meetings, workshops, and other events will be held in numerous Polish cities, including Gdańsk, Sopot, Poznań, Bolesławiec, Wrocław, Katowice, Łódź, Lublin, Kraków and Warsaw.

Select highlights from the Polish programme include:

* ***Changes*** – a collaboration between Łaźnia Centre for Contemporary Art in Gdańsk and The Box in Plymouth, which will showcase works from the British Council Collection. It draws on the contexts of Poland and the UK, exploring instability as something that unites both countries in the way they face new political environments, climate change, migration, conflict, and issues of freedom and independence.
* ***Tu i Tam (Here and There)*** – Exile, identity and the nature of home come into focus at this captivating exhibition exploring Polish communities in Bradford and beyond. The exhibition explores the fascinating histories of these communities through unique objects, rare archival materials and photographs. The exhibition is a partnership between Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, Łódź Fotofestiwal and Tim Smith.
* ***What Is It Like?*** – is a group exhibition at arebyte, London, in partnership with WRO Art Centre, curated by Helen Starr. Showcasing works by British, Polish, and international artists, it explores subjective reality through soundscapes, VR, game engines, and the metaverse.
* ***Togetherness***– Remont Pomp together with composer Brian Irvine creates a new Audio-Visual piece that is premiered as part of a larger piece of work in Belfast in October 2025 with the Ulster Orchestra and other Nothern Irish groups. The performance is then taken to Gdansk Poland 2025.
* ***Different Sounds*** – Sonica Festival presents three works at Different Sounds Festival in Lublin: Audio visual artist Ela Orleans performs live; duo Dopey Monkey perform tuba and euphonium plus a new composition in collaboration with local musicians; Simon Kirby, Tommy Perman and Rob St. John bring their outdoor sound installation Sing the Gloaming.

**-ENDS-**

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Press imagery can be downloaded [here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/4nm76c1jnomj0mg3562ez/ACaN7QgQgY1YvD3m2QndEPw?rlkey=pjme9ms6e1lxto0h40avynfpt&e=1&st=ay5rtrou&dl=0)

**Notes to editors**

**The Adam Mickiewicz Institute (IAM)** connects Polish culture with global audiences. As a state institution, IAM nurtures long-term interest in Polish culture and the arts, bolstering the presence of Polish artists on the international stage. It initiates innovative projects, supports cross-border collaboration, and promotes both acclaimed and emerging Polish creators, showcasing the diversity and richness of the country’s cultural landscape. IAM also manages Culture.pl, a comprehensive online resource on Polish culture.

**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.

**The British Council** is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries.