Modern Residences of Artists as the Subject and Space of Creation

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The House of Art

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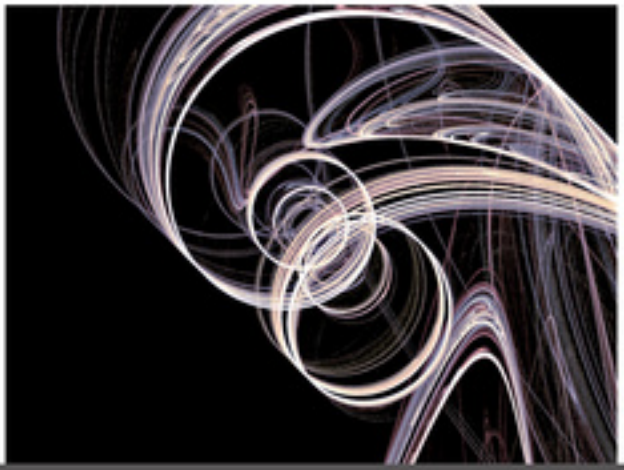

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Introduction

A room with its walls papered with sheets of newsprint may seem extravagant enough to be a creator's abode. This is exactly the way Dorothy Wordsworth papered the walls of Dove Cottage, one of the best-known houses of a writer in Europe. She achieved a most original, well-nigh uncanny[1] interior, even though the reason for this manifestation of her creativeness was practical: her aim was to provide the room with some insulation, as the inhabitants of this stone cottage suffered much in the harsh climate of the Lake District (Fig. 1). Although, naturally, this "designer" gesture belongs to neither the history of literature nor of architecture, it embodies the entire ambivalence of the phenomenon that is the focus of this study. Jotting down notes, sketching ideas for paintings or even writing artistic manifestoes upon the walls of one's own residence, as well as incorporating one's works or a part of a collection into it are the elements of an artist's perception of "being at home". From the 18th century onwards, such a manner of conduct seems to grow more frequent and more pronounced. The artist's act of arranging his living space, similarly to arranging the garden attached to his house, acquires a definite cultural weight. The latter may include organising a sophisticated open-air workspace (for instance, installing a revolving platform) or developing the final connection between the artist and his abode by arranging his grave beside or even inside the house.

Hans-Peter Schwarz defines an artist's house as one designed and/or decorated personally by the artist in the manner reflecting his or her interests, social aspirations and aesthetic taste.[2] The current book, however, deals with creators' residences understood differently, perhaps more broadly, than they have been interpreted in the above definition. The first Polish-language version of this book was written in the last few years of the 20th century and was published in Warsaw in 2005.[3] It was initially conceived as a history of apartments and ateliers of 18th- and 19th-century artists. As work progressed, my research interests expanded to include artists' gardens, and finally the even more broadly understood places of

1 In the Freudian sense of the term, as recalled by Anthony Vidler.

2 H.P. Schwarz, entry: "Artist's house" in: *Macmillan Dictionary of Art*, London and New York, 1996, vol. 2, p. 547.

3 With a summary in English. The current book is not a translation of it, but a separate work, considerably altered in some sections and extended to include new examples and with an augmented scientific apparatus.

creativity that maintain an unclear relationship to this creativity. Into this space – his atelier or the house of his creativity – the artist may annex places and objects that are imagined, as well as ones that do exist in reality, but do not constitute a part of his property. These may be transformed by the artist's hand, like pieces of furniture, walls or the garden, but they may also be, like a view, no more than "touched with the imagination" and endowed with a character by the artist's imprint, the very act of imprinting being usually identified at present as "modern". Yet, from a methodological point of view, to consider those places where the artist's intervention was of a more spiritual than real nature would be, ultimately, nonsensical: it would probably necessitate the inclusion of a given artist's every place of abode, and possibly even the places of his temporary sojourns, as well as their environs. I have also researched various modern places of creativity, such as the location for *en plein air* work, an atelier and a café frequented by a group of artists which was perceived as a venue for art-related discussions; finally, however, even though they, too, were the topic of artists' individual or collective reworking, they were left outside the scope of the current book. This is because the "house" in the book's title is perceived, even if only intuitively, as a place distinguished by the individual person's strong bond to it.

The subject of research is thus the residence of a creator, interpreted as a territory for both living and creating art, itself often subject to creative practices; thus, a territory that undergoes various forms of shaping and creative development.[4] Shaping the residence is a separate sphere of creativity, usually (although sometimes only seemingly) a substitute or marginal one. Hence, in general and with a few exceptions, architects' own houses have been excluded from the scope of the research, especially with respect to the modern era as a period of increased professional specialisation. This is because such a house can most often be seen as a work that functions within the "ordinary" order of its architect's creative actions, even if it occupies a special place within their range. A different motive prompted the exclusion, again with a few exceptions, of collectors' creativity from the scope of the current explorations, even though their creativity was always present on their blurred boundary. Even though, especially after the Romanticism,

4 The expression "teatro di vita privata" could also be applied (after A. De Poli, M. Piccinelli, N. Poggi, *Dalla casa-atelier al museo. La valorizzazione museografica dei luoghi dell'artista e del collezionista*, Milan, 2006, p. 15), as it implies a creative component, with the proviso that it is necessary to extract from this metaphor, and to focus on, the concept of theatre as a material substance, a building.

this creativity may have taken on the form of establishing a "house of art",[5] such collectors as Alexandre Du Sommerard, the Jacquemart-Andrés, John Bowes or the outstanding Polish aristocrat-collector Tytus Działyński remain outside the range of the main text as creators who did not professionally pursue any "official" form of art.

In a letter to his brother, Vincent van Gogh expressed his aim very tellingly: "I have my own plan. I want to make it really *an artists' house* – not precious, on the contrary nothing *precious*, but everything from the chairs to the pictures having character".[6] The houses of artists seem to constitute an example of a variously manifested creative compulsion, an urge that transcends a writer's writing, a composer's composing or a painter's painting. The "house of art" (which in itself, as far as terminology is concerned, is an unclear, vague denotation that does not aspire to the status of a term) will then be a product of that compulsion when it is unsatisfied in the given artist's "proper" field. Its formula is produced and developed by the creator himself, and does not necessarily have to assume an architectural or decorative form; it may constitute a part of the tradition of other artistic abodes (an artist's palace, a chalet), but most often it is an exception, an individual case. However, this personal nature of the residence, the creator's stamp on it, is less crucial to the current study, even though this reflection of the artist's personality is precisely what was customarily sought in a work of art.

"My attention is focused primarily on the connotation field related to a *sui generis* autonomy, intentionally defined by artists in the area of their 'home'", writes Elżbieta Grabska. "I attempt to deal with this area, marked by them verbally and visually, as not only an expression of their world-view. An artist's house is a vehicle for his personal, sometimes highly original impressions of himself and the world; yet the enveloping social and ideological discourse is also discernible in the expression constituted by this house. It is interesting to note the extent to which an inhabitant of a self-created house is aware, and accepting, of this envelopment, and the manner in which he rejects it. This idea (and method) of rejection, which I consider to be the *genus proximum* of the majority of houses

5 The questionable validity of this decision was emphasised by Pierre Vaisse in his polemic against some theses found in the first version of this book (although only on the basis of its English summary), in: J. Gribenski et al. (ed.), *La Maison d'artiste comme type architectural et image de l'artiste (fin du XIXe et début du XXe siècle),* in: *La Maison de l'artiste. Construction d'un espace de représentations entre realité et imaginaire (XVII–XXe siècles)*, Rennes, 2007, p. 75.

6 V. van Gogh, letter no. 534, in: *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh with reproductions of all drawings in the correspondence*, vol. 3, London, 1988, p. 31.

that are essentially worlds unto themselves, is recognisable mostly as the sphere of imagination. It may, although does not have to, call a material, architectural project into existence, or it may be expressed through its equally real verbal substitute, in which the artist's house most often reveals the significance of its sovereignty"[7] (underline mine). Let it be noted that this is one of the few texts containing a serious, if burdened with an inevitable methodological uncertainty, reflection on the nature of the phenomenon in question. For the time being, however, let us leave these remarks without comment; we shall repeatedly return to them in the later chapters.

Since such houses are often, although not always, the products of this rejection, the current book could not become a history that would forcibly place them in a logical sequence. As I was growing aware that to write a history of artists' homes was not advisable, I was also persuaded to abandon the conception of a linear overview of chronologically ordered phenomena. I did notice parallels between individual cases of marking this "sovereignty": a similarity of creative approach, occasionally a similarity of motivation and creative procedure; yet even if governed by the same mechanism, they nevertheless yielded different results in different contexts. Still, it were the themes derived from those similarities that imposed structure upon the chapters of this book. I am aware that a chronological and geographical flamboyance may turn irritating, and that the reader might be happier with a linear lecture that would put artists from the same era or environment together. Firstly, however, to present such a lecture would imply faith in the possibility of writing the history of a certain phenomenon, and thus in defining this phenomenon by enumeration; secondly, it would perforce be necessary to refrain from bringing together many singular phenomena. This would be regrettable, as such meetings often yield interesting results, illustrating as they do the existence of surprisingly similar conceptions of creativity in entirely different historical and cultural contexts. Thus, instead of a historical overview of artists' houses, there emerged a loosely structured study focused on conceptual connections; the phenomena discussed herein are not ordered into trends, groups or tradition-related developmental lines, or assume such an ordering temporarily, fragmentarily and only in places. They are self-contained; they cannot be arranged in sequences like works of art because they are

7 E. Grabska, 'Dom twórcy – weryfikacja własnej suwerenności', in: A. Pieńkos (ed.), *Pracownia i dom artysty XIX i XX wieku. Mitologia i rzeczywistość*. Materials from the conference of the Institute of Art History and the Association of Art Historians in Warsaw in 2002, Warsaw, 2002, p. 21. Unless otherwise indicated, excerpts from Polish-language texts have been translated for the purpose of the current publication.

non-works. Some of them were intentionally and ostentatiously created as non-works, in some cases they happened to occur as such, but for this type of phenomena there is no name in the terminology of fine arts.

Regarding the early modern era, it still seems useful to look for developmental lines concerning an artist's residence, since one of the mechanisms that define this era is the tendency towards the professional and social emancipation of a creator; a tendency which in the majority of cases runs along parallel lines. Additionally, the durability of ancient models (or rather, in reality, ones created as such in the Renaissance) and mutual inspirations between artists imposed similarities on some forms of behaviour and on tangible expressions of this behaviour in the form of, for instance, the artist's house. Until the 18th century the act of creating a house occurred in keeping with the norms of architecture, decoration and contents *de rigueur* in a given era and environment; this is because artists aspired to a position that demanded respecting those norms.[8] It is therefore possible to trace the development of a certain type, represented by a considerable number of edifices, with its distinguishing, sometimes formal (e.g. the creator's architectural *tour de force*), more frequently iconographic (programmes referring to art) or functional (a house-cum-atelier, a pupils' workshop, private academy, etc.) specificity. For this reason Chapter 1 nonetheless traces, in a general outline, the history of a creator's residence, or rather only of those of its distinctive aspects whose traces are recognisable later, from the 15th to the 18th century. I therefore do not focus on issues of, for instance, the arrangement of rooms and particular parts of the residence, atelier or area for collaborators/pupils, even though they are undoubtedly important to the form and functioning of a modern artist's house. This outline is not designed to provide a full historical discussion, and it emphasises only selected features or facts linked with the context of the creation of particular buildings. Hence, even though data regarding various aspects of many notable homes are now available (the residences of Renaissance artists in Cracow, French architects of the era of Louis XIV, 18th-century Lvov sculptors or some Renaissance writers, to name but a few), these homes are absent from this analysis. I am aware of this; yet I consider delineating those aspects, and expanding the list of buildings dating from before the period

8 One distinguishing mark of the early modern-era residences of artists is noted by E. Grabska: "In Renaissance houses (…) there may have been more proportion between the informative functions of the façade and of the interior, since the interior, through its iconographic programme or the various *artefacta* it contained, was to be almost tangibly parallel to the artistic world-view of its owner" (*op. cit.*, p. 22).

to which this book essentially pertains, to be of lesser importance from the point of view of the history of modern art.

Towards the end of the early modern era, traditions that had emerged in the Renaissance lost their importance, while individualism, which from then on was to be critically important to a creator's status, caused later works to be issued, historically and typologically, only in short batches. Traditional norms tottered, iconographic traditions broke down, some functions (especially those of the workshop) and displays (especially the "formalistic" *tour de force*) grew to excess. The social status of the majority of artistic professions was equalised; in the 16th century a writer's/philosopher's house was not necessarily placed in the category of the "artist's house" due to the difference in rank between a creator of writing and a creator of, for instance, sculptures, whereas from the 18th century onwards the shape of a creator's abode was influenced by similar mechanisms regardless of its owner's musical, literary or pictorial specialism. The type of the "dilettante creator" developed fully; this was precisely a man who very often turned his residence – the house or garden, or both – into the area of creativity according to principles that were new and frequently not compliant with the professional tradition.[9]

While I imposed neither a chronological nor a geographical order on the modern-era phenomena which I discuss, I nevertheless attempted to properly underline the most pertinent examples. The value ascribed to some may seem disproportionately high in comparison to others; this springs from my conviction that such a special place in the history of European culture belongs by rights to the residences of, for instance, Alexander Pope, Horace Walpole, John Soane, Victor Hugo, Fernand Khnopff, the de Goncourt brothers, Carl Larsson, Stefan Żeromski or Gabriele d'Annunzio. In addition, this book contains numerous references to phenomena pertaining to various areas of artistic production, which had to be brief due to both limitations of space and research barriers. The material limitations made it impossible to include phenomena relative to American culture, which would not be without bearing on the issues in question, as well as to Russia or the Balkans; both regions are represented here only by a few

9 Cases of enlightened rulers or aristocrats acting as architects or amateur gardeners are not valid in the current discussion because their dilettante achievement was the only expression of their creativity; yet various studies pertaining to this topic in the 18th century have proved deeply inspirational, e.g. A. von Buttlar, *Der englische Landsitz 1715–1760. Symbol eines liberalen Weltentwurfs*, Munich, 1982; A. Rosenbaum, *Der Amateur als Künstler: Studien zu Geschichte und Funktion des Dilettantismus im 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 2010.

examples. Trying not to accentuate the significance of, and concentrate solely on, the few great European cultures – an approach still dominant in the history of fine arts nowadays – I attempted to summon facts and phenomena relative to the scope of this study but pertaining to the margins of modern Europe, such as Scandinavia, Poland, Bohemia, Switzerland, and even Italy, so consistently overlooked in the history of 19th-century art. Observation of the often forgotten yet concrete traces of the creative process was meant to be one of the essential values of my effort. Since, however, my overall aim was not to present a full overview and survey of the issue in question, but to call attention to its essential features, I can only hope that the absence of many significant artistic residences will not be detrimental to that principal reflection.

The time frame for the material discussed here is set by the commonly accepted boundaries of modernity, with the Enlightenment as the starting point. I do not extend my argument beyond the period of the early 20th-century avant-gardes, since the Romantic "malady of creativity" discussed herein constitutes one of the sources of avant-garde revolutions and hence, having fulfilled its role, so to speak, it is legitimised by those avant-gardes. Since then those extraordinary phenomena, which from the 18th century onward were set on the margins of creative practices, have gained the status of works of art and have assumed their place in the regular order of those practices.

In the field of artistic production, the end of the early modern era and the beginning of modernity are located in the 18th century, with due emphasis on institutional transformations of the art world (some of which may be worth recalling here, for instance the development of academies or the dawn of museums and individual exhibitions), as well as its social and economic transformations, the emergence of the individualistic conception of creativity, and finally the development of new formulas for a work of art and new criteria for its assessment. Although the characteristics of this breakthrough and the specificity of modern art being born together with the Romanticism have long been considered obvious, recent books by the classic art historians of today, such as Oskar Bätschmann, Hans Belting and Victor Stoichita, have very considerably enhanced our understanding of the modern breakthrough.[10] Their studies have exposed the hitherto unnoticed or undervalued mechanisms and phenomena pertaining to the

10 By which I primarily mean the following: O. Bätschmann, *Ausstellungskünstler. Kult und Karriere im Modernen Kunstsystem,* Cologne, 1997; H. Belting, *Das unsichtbare Meisterwerk: Die modernen Mythen der Kunst*, Munich 1998 (extended English version: *The Invisible Masterpiece*, Chicago, 2001); V.I. Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image. An Insight Into Early Modern Meta-Painting*, Cambridge, 1997.

concepts of "creator" and "work of art". Revealed as the "other" work – a still insufficiently recognised fruit of the well-known processes of the emancipation of creativity – the artist's residence turns out to be a missing link among those phenomena.

The phenomena and processes that are well known and frequently analysed in the history of art and culture of the 19th century, such as the *peintre maudit*, bohemianism, the "official" and "salon" art, and the emergence of the *Künstlerromane*, have still not been fully described. The tension described by Bätschmann as the "conflict between the atelier and the exhibition", expressed for instance in the artistic hoax and the "hybrid artist" which was such a frequent topic of literary works about artists in the Romanticism and later,[11] can be observed in the various forms of creators' residences. It is also reflected in the tensions between the workshop space and the living area, between the façade and the interior of the house, and between the "proper" and the "unofficial" output.

Does an artist create artistic spaces or spaces for artistic creation? Are we interested in the architectural and programmatic aspect of his house or in its "emanation" in his "proper" output? Should we be researching the artist's "environment" in the same way the organisation of earlier workshops, social conditions for artistic creation etc. have been researched?[12] Perhaps, our primary concern should be to shift the weight from the traditionally understood creation of paintings, sculptures, music or literary texts in a location whose task was to provide conditions for creating them to modern creation, in which a "work of art" has blurred contours or may even disappear altogether, leaving behind the intention or just the compulsion to create. What emerges is an atelier as a crippled work, the house of an artist who does not create, a collection instead of a work, a territory of art instead of art. This last term, 'art', I accept in all the ambiguity ascribed to it in the modern era. Perhaps it ought to be avoided here; but it is precisely the phenomena of interest to us here that give a clear indication of what is happening to art in the modern era.

I comprehend the house, or residence, as a territory of privacy, which in this era is being identified with the territory of creativity. It is worthwhile to focus here on the inspiring feminist perspective to the reflection regarding the territory of creativity. As the Polish writer, Jan Parandowski pointed out, "The question of atelier would have remained in the sphere of descriptions if it had not been

11 O. Bätschmann, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

12 Cf. e.g. D. de Chapeaurouge, 'Das Milieu als Porträt', *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch* 22, 1960, pp. 137–158; R. Kasperowicz, "'Środowisko" jako kategoria w historii sztuki. Między Jacobem Burckhardtem a Martinem Warnke', in: *Pracownia i dom…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 57–70.

taken up by a woman, the outstanding English writer Virginia Woolf. Her little book adapted from a lecture, *A Room of One's Own*, imbues this seemingly trifle matter with the seriousness of deep reflection. Wondering about the insignificant number of women who over the centuries had managed to leave their mark on literature, she shows what obstacles were created by superstition and custom. Only in the rarest of cases – and usually at the cost of her reputation – could a woman gain enough independence to have her own room for literary work".[13] Also, taking under consideration the polemical methodological proposal that was formulated by Marta Leśniakowska,[14] we must perceive the "artist's house" as a product of the culture of creativity, shaped in the masculinist era of humanism and developing together with its model.

Until recently, any interest in an artist's residence was occasioned almost exclusively by his "proper" output, which may have been reflected in or inspired by his abode. It must be noted that even now, in biographies or encyclopaedic entries, very little space is devoted to outstanding artists' extraordinary homes, even in the cases when a given home has long been very well researched. Obviously, a peculiar or odd character of an artist's house is still regarded as somewhat reprehensible, possibly as something that may discredit the artist's "proper" works. The fact that as late as 2000 the interiors of Museo Vincenzo Vela in Ligornetto, one of the very few perfectly preserved artist's houses of the 19th century, were completely destroyed on the authority of the (undoubtedly outstanding) contemporary architect Mario Botta demonstrates the extent of disregard with which the manner is treated.

The issue, which, it seems, should be an obvious and natural area of research in the history of fine art, constitutes a neglected field. It is true that interest in the houses of writers, composers or artists has recently grown, but methodological reflection is still negligible worldwide.

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13 J. Parandowski, *Alchemia słowa*, Warsaw, 1986, pp. 68–69.

14 M. Leśniakowska, 'Dom artysty – strategie separacji', in: *Pracownia i dom…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–195. See also: T. Garb, *"Men of Genius, Women of Taste": The Gendering of Art Education in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris,* in: *Overcoming all Obstacles. The Woman of the Académie Julian,* cat. of the exhibition at The Dahesh Museum, New York, 1999, pp. 115–120; J. Sosnowska, *Zwyczajna kobieta,* in: *eadem: Poza kanonem. Sztuka polskich artystek 1880–1939,* Warsaw, 2003, pp.21–26; E. Mongi-Vollmer, *Das Atelier des Malers. Die Diskurse eines Raums in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,* Berlin, 2004, pp. 198–205; R. Mader, *Beruf Künstlerin. Strategien, Konstruktionen und Kategorien am Bespiel Paris 1870–1900,* Berlin, 2009, pp. 53–68.

The question arises why such a huge field of research has been so completely neglected for so long. To begin with, there are the practical reasons: in many cases the research involves an intimate sphere, access to which is often controlled by the artist's heirs, who may manipulate or obstruct research. Most of the old places of creation no longer exist; even if visitors are told they are seeing them, those spaces are usually a reconstruction – often naïve or deliberately enhanced. The attractiveness of such places to tourists is actually a two-edged blade; in the last few decades it has saved many such houses and contributed to the promotion of small museums instituted therein. On the other hand, however, many of them (such as d'Annunzio's Il Vittoriale or the Larssons' Sundborn) have been promoted so vigorously that their attractiveness, and the ostensibly huge amount of research conducted on their subject as a result, has made them an almost inappropriate topic of scholarly interest. In addition, scholars are often discouraged by the negligible artistic quality of the building itself; many of those houses are, quite unnecessarily, assessed in terms of a work of art and pronounced to be an oddity or plain kitsch.

Scholarly concern with this matter certainly requires resolving the potential conflict with the museological conceptions which shape it, the more so that those conceptions are, too, a derivative of the model according to which modern-day residences of artists are shaped. For reasons of practicality and functionality, or conservation, or theoretical assumptions, in many "personal" museums, i.e. ones that focus on a single individual artist, this sometimes well-preserved substance is, so to speak, enclosed in a protective armour. In this book, the very complex issue of museumification of creators' residences is only marginally indicated; it would, in fact, deserve a separate monograph.[15] Undoubtedly, however, the structures of personal museums, even though they spring from the same cultural tendency which is the topic of this book, are a handicap to the investigation of original forms of the phenomenon which is an artist's house.

Other obstacles to this investigation are of a more profound nature. Firstly, artists' houses do not create trends. Renaissance houses have been researched frequently because they form a relatively consistent historical phenomenon. Their forms and programmes are easily interpretable in the light of the history

15 An introductory analysis is found e.g. in F.R. Zankl, 'Das Personalmuseum. Untersuchung zu einem Museumtypus', *Museumskunde* 41, 1972, pp. 1–127; A. Da Poli, *op. cit.*. For the methodological discussion see *Atelier und Dichterzimmer in neuen Medienwelt. Zur aktuellen Situation von Künstler- und Literaturhäuser,* Bielefeld, 2005. The most recent, comprehensive study will be the book currently being prepared by Dario Gamboni.

of ideas and of the history of architecture of their era. Secondly, as it has already been mentioned, a residence may reveal a different, perhaps inconvenient "truth" about the creator. The history of literature, music, philosophy, painting, etc. usually has no need for that truth because, working upon the established, acknowledged image of an artist, it is hardly accepting of a different image, or even of the possibility of its existence. Paradoxically enough, residences of the best-known creators seem to be the least researched. The cases when the form of the house conforms to, for instance, themes found in its owner's output, and thus constitutes a reflection of that output, were utilised, if only mechanically. Yet even then such a "curiosity chamber" of a house – its architecture or interior decoration not reaching a quality comparative to the literary or pictorial output of its distinguished owner – would be shrouded in a slight aura of embarrassment. Finally, a certain technical and methodological difficulty cannot be overlooked: the subject of research lies in between disciplines. After all, it is not the history of architecture, at least not the traditionally conceived one, that should be dealing with such houses.

Many omissions were also caused by the tradition, persistent in the humanistic sciences, of eliminating the creator's life story from the study of his oeuvre. The fact that in the last few decades an artist's biography is slowly being accepted again as a field of scholarly interest has undoubtedly contributed to the increase in research studies concerning places of creation. In addition, for more than a decade now historians of art have again started pondering the issue of the methodological conditions for the investigation of the oeuvre in the context of its creator's life story and of various "traces" of artists.[16] Also, the pressure exerted by pop-science and tourism has finally forced scholars to initiate detailed research on many entirely forgotten places.

Concurrently, the ongoing process of rapprochement between the history of art and cultural anthropology began to bear fruit; for instance, in the area of architecture, scholarly concern focused on various margins of creativity, and a vogue for research in vernacular tendencies was observed. Harald Szeemann's artistic and scholarly investigations, although "incorrect" from the point of view of academic history of art, undoubtedly played a seminal role in this; in addition, Szeemann's own contribution to the discovery and preservation of some specific artists' residences is invaluable. The success of explorations which, although themselves lying outside the history of art, have greatly enriched it in the last few

16 Cf. e.g. such publications as D. Lorenz, *Künstlerspuren in Berlin vom Barock bis heute*, Berlin, 2002.

decades, for instance Krzysztof Pomian's research on the phenomena of a collection and a museum or the application of his concept of semiophores in explaining the history of collecting,[17] inspires courage to investigate similar phenomena.

Just two examples will suffice to indicate how difficult the subject matter that opens itself up for research in the areas of interest to us here is going to be for the traditional history of art: firstly, the mysterious gesture of the Polish writers Maria and Jerzy Kuncewicz who, when construction of their house in Kazimierz Dolny was commencing in 1936, had copies of their own books laid under the threshold as a cornerstone; secondly, the far-ranging issue of the artist's grave being located in his house, his garden or his museum.

The state of research is thus meagre. The few broader studies are concerned with always the same narrow group of edifices, usually the traditionally conceived "artists' houses", which are selected according to the criterion of the owner's fame and their locations are limited to a few countries. The best of these monographs are clearly influenced by research directions in the social history of art. Such assumptions are formulated by Hans-Peter Schwarz, the author of a solid work on the history of the artist's house from the 15th to the 18th century, who directly refers to Martin Warnke's conception; he understands the artist's house as a "medium *sui generis*, through which an artist may establish his position in society"[18]. Departing from these assumptions, he perceives the history of an artist's house similarly to the history of this or that type of residence, i.e. as being in a relatively simple relationship to social processes. Other no less important motivations of the house-owners' strategies seem to escape scholarly attention; this is evident in the otherwise valuable history of English artists' houses by Giles Walkley.[19]

An interesting collection of articles by various authors, edited by Eduard Hüttinger and with his extensive introductory survey, contains studies of varying quality, which unfortunately focus only on selected houses deemed important by default.[20] Hüttinger's introduction to this collection clearly shows that basic facts referring to even the most important artistic residences of the Renaissance and the 19th century were still being ascertained even as late as in the 1980s. With

17 Cf. esp. K. Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise XVIe–XVIIIe siècles*, Paris, 1987.

18 H.P. Schwarz, *Künstlerhäuser: Anmerkungen zur Sozialgeschichte des Genies*, Brunswick, 1990, p. 5. See also H.P. Schwarz (ed.), *Künstlerhäuser: Eine Architekturgeschichte des Privaten*, cat. of the exhibition at the Deutsche Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt am Main, Brunswick, 1989.

19 G. Walkley, *Artist's Houses in London 1764–1914*, Aldershot, 1994.

20 E. Hüttinger (ed.), *Künstlerhäuser von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart*, Zurich, 1985.

regard to the 19th century, the most comprehensive review is provided by the very penetrating and very solidly documented book by Christine Hoh-Slodczyk.[21] Yet, although with regard to many residences her documentation is impressive, she too limits her analysis to a canonical list of edifices, and her perception of the category of an "artist" is conventional. Both of these books constitute analyses of a certain group of buildings created for/by artists, but they practically refrain from asking whether any distinctive features of the phenomenon can be discerned.

Detailed scholarly analyses are still few and far between, even with regard to particular buildings; pertinent research acquires thus a nearly archaeological quality. In the case of many buildings, even the most basic facts are still impossible to ascertain. The market is dominated by guidebooks and similar publications, eye-catching albums making use of the fact that many phenomena in the area of interest to us are undoubtedly photogenic, and popular essays about the museums of writers or painters.[22] The growing interest in artists' houses is evident in their increasing museumification and their often very thorough restorations or reconstructions (recently, for instance, stunning work was done on the famous British residences: Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill, Walter Scott's Abbotsford and William Morris's Red House; in France on Alexandre Dumas' Monte Cristo and Pierre Loti's house in Rochefort). Yet these works rarely result in the publication of scholarly analyses or monographs.

In Poland, exceptionally advanced considerations regarding the issue of a creator's house appeared as early as over a decade ago, in texts by Bożena Mądra-Shalcross and Elżbieta Grabska.[23] These works were deliberately fragmentary and evince all the features of "founding" texts, yet they constitute an excellent basis for a broader study of the area in question.

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21 Ch. Hoh-Slodczyk, *Das Haus des Künstlers im 19. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 1985.

22 E.g. works published in Scandinavia: F. Jor (ed.), *Nordic Artists' Homes*, s.l. 1999; V. Udsen (ed.), *Living Museums in Scandinavia*, Copenhagen, 2000; also E. Reitsma [text], H. van den Bogaard [photography], *Het huis van de kunstenaar. Herinneringen aan een leven*, Amsterdam, 2001; E. Bloch-Dano, *Mes maisons d'écrivains*, Paris, 2005; P. de Rynck, *Musées d'artistes en Belgique*, s.l., 2009; D. Freeman [photography], M.O. Gotkin [text], *Artists' Handmade Houses*, New York, 2011; B. Plachta, A. Bednorz, *Künstlerhäuser. Ateliers und Lebensräume berühmter Maler und Bildhauer,* Stuttgart, 2014; the Insel Taschenbuch series, e.g. H.G. Semsek, *Englische Dichter und ihre Häuser*, Frankfurt am Main, 2001; R. Nestmeyer, *Französische Dichter und ihre Häuser*, Frankfurt am Main, 2005; or P. Braun, *Dichterhäuser,* Munich, 2003 – deserves a mention.

23 B. Mądra-Shalcross, *Dom romantycznego artysty*, Cracow, 1992; E. Grabska, *op. cit.* and several other articles which will often be referred to later on.

Recently, already after the completion of the first version of this book, interest in this research area has visibly increased; for instance, the conference at the university of Poitiers in 2005 and the academic session at Museo Vela in Ligornetto in 2009 brought both rich and varied material and methodological analysis.[24] The special issues of the international periodicals like "Kunstforum" (2011) and "Perspective" (2014) were published. Exhibitions concerning artists' residences were organised too, for instance in Munich in 2013.[25]

I conducted my research concerning artists' houses over many years and in many locations all over Europe, studying in libraries, archives and museums, and visiting the still-existing houses transformed into museums. This was made possible by, among others, scholarships from the Pro Helvetia Foundation, the Lanckoroński Foundation, the A.W. Mellon Foundation, a study period at the Institut Polonais in Paris, and above all by the two-year Polish State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN) research project entitled "The artist's workshop. The form and significance of the place of creation in 19th-century culture in Poland and Central Europe", which I conducted in the years 2000–2002. Within the framework of this project, the first Polish academic session devoted to the "Workshop and House of a 19th- and 20th-century Artist"[26] was organised in 2002 at the University of Warsaw and by the Association of Art Historians in Poland. Funding from the University of Warsaw, and especially from the Institute of Art History, made it possible for me to conduct indispensable source research in libraries and museums in Poland and abroad.

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24 *La Maison de l'artiste…*, op. cit.; G.A. Mina, S. Wuhrmann (eds.), *Casa d'artisti. Tra universo privato e spazio pubblico: Case di artisti adibite a museo / Zwischen privatem Kosmos und öffentlichem Raum: Künstlerhaus-Museen*, Atti del convegno VKKS in Ligornetto, Zurich, 2011. See e.g. books like: J.-R. Bouillier, D. Gamboni, F. Levaillant (eds.), *Les bibliothèques d'artistes (XX–XXIe siècles)*, Paris, 2010; K. Bell, *The Artist's House. From Workplace to Artwork*, Berlin, 2013; R. Esner, S. Kisters, A.-S. Lehmann (eds.), *Hiding, Making, Showing Creation. The Studio from Turner to Tacita Dean*, Amsterdam, 2013. In 2014 all the sequence of scientific conferences was organised: in Chicago ("Artists' Workspaces: Portability, Contingency, Virtuality"), London ("Houses as Museums, Museums as Houses"), Warsaw ("The space of creation – topicality of the problem in art and art history").

25 M. Brandlhuber, M. Buhrs (eds.), *Im Tempel des Ich. Das Künstlerhaus als Gesamtkunstwerk*, cat. of the exhibition at Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, 2013.

26 *Pracownia i dom…*, *op. cit.*

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