

Marian Kościalkowski - he usually signed his works as Marian Kościalkowski or with pseudonyms: J. Marian, Jan Marian, Marian, Marian Kruszyński (his wife's surname) or Marian Pouillet (the surname of his French mother - Marguerite Pouillet), and Marek Hardy - was born on 1 July 1914 in Vilnius. He graduated from gymnasium there in 1932, and in December of that year, with the help of his mother's family, he took up painting studies at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris. However, he was there for a short time, less than a year, after which he returned to Poland and submitted documents to the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences at the USB. After a year, however, he interrupted his studies; he completed his military training and enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw on 28 September 1936. There, in the studio of Mieczysław Kotarbiński and Tadeusz Pruszkowski, he collected annual prizes for painting during his studies. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Kościalkowski tried to return to Vilnius to his parents. In Grodno, on 4 February, he married Gertruda Krysztofiak. In the spring of 1940, he was arrested and exiled deep into Soviet Russia, to Velsk, south-west of Arkhangelsk. His son was born and died in Russia. Released as a result of an amnesty in 1941, he joined the Polish Army in the USSR in Kermin. Ill, evacuated to Persia in 1942, he stayed successively in Iraq, Palestine, Libya and Egypt. During this period, he painted and drew, and exhibited his works in association with soldier-painters, as well as publishing them in the military press. In 1944, he arrived in Italy in the ranks of the 2nd Corps, in the propaganda unit of the 5th Border Infantry Division (attached to the so-called 'sound carts'), and took part in the battles for Monte Cassino for four months. After the end of the war, he studied briefly in Rome, exhibited, and - at the end of 1946, after the evacuation of the 2nd Corps, landed in the UK and was sent to the Polish Resupply and Deployment Corps. In 1947, together with dozens of other Polish painters, he was awarded, with the help of the English Interim Treasury Committee for Polish Questions, a scholarship at a renowned art academy - Sir John Cass' College of Art and Craft in London. He settled in London. In 1951, his first marriage was dissolved and Kościalkowski was able to marry Lidia Kruszyńska, who remained his most devoted life companion for the next 30 years, and after his death carefully secured his enormous oeuvre. In 1948, the artist had his first solo exhibition in the British Isles, at the Gimpell & Fils Gallery, which was a great success and received critical acclaim in England. During the short period of the 'thaw' in Poland, in 1958 and 1959, thanks to the painter's father's efforts, the CBWA galleries in Szczecin and Poznań organised two small exhibitions of Kościalkowski's drawings, which were lost after exposure. In 1964, he received the highly-regarded émigré 'art prize' of the magazine *Kultura* (Paris). In 1968 the Kościalkowski family bought a house in Carrara, where they spent many months each year, and where the artist began to sculpt in marble. He died after a serious illness on 14 July 1977. Marian Kościalkowski's artistic output is divided by critics into four periods - the youthful (wartime) 1947 to his arrival in England and entry into Sir John Cass' College; the Cubist phase - 1947-1959/60; the abstract period - 1959/60-1969; the classical period (2 figurative) - sculpture and etching 1970-1977.

The works on show are a gift from Andrzej Kościalkowski