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**Aesthetic Education in Visual Arts in the Prussian Partition from 1815 to 1918:  
Art in the German Provinces**

The scientific aim of the project is to investigate the history of aesthetic education in the Prussian partition. The chronological timeframe of the research will span the period from 1815 to 1918. The inquiry will focus on the reception and development of the transnational concept of aesthetic education in a region that was peripheral to the Prussian centre of power. The idea of aesthetic education is understood in line with its 19<sup>th</sup>-century interpretation: as a pedagogical-philosophical project which presumes the possibility of sensitizing to beauty through a targeted formation process - *Bildung* [Karolak, 2006; Kunicki 2006]. The Enlightenment concept involved certain assumptions about the place of art in the process of education and popular education [Legler, 2017]. Thus, the research centres around visual arts, notably the teaching of drawing as a basic formative tool. For a broadest possible determination of the impact of the idea of aesthetic education on the domain of visual arts in the region in question, this inquiry will be concerned with Actors in the art world: artists, drawing teachers, students, collectors, art dealers, dilettantes and works of art themselves. Secondly, attempts will be made to reconstruct the network of connections between them, including the art market, the mechanisms of artistic life, the political transfers of artworks, the circulation of knowledge concerning visual arts. Finally, it will be necessary to examine the functioning of the nodal institutions (schools, museums, galleries, etc.) engaged in professional and non-professional art education, popularization, research (antiquity) and distribution of artworks.

The above aspects will be analyzed from a postcolonial perspective, particularly in terms of territorial imagology [Said 2005; Czapliński, 2016]. The latter concept presumes the existence of a geography, distinct from its empirical equivalent, created by cultural imaginaries, narratives and stereotypes operating in the cultural sphere. Such a theoretical framework makes it possible to capture the complicated Polish-German relations based on national conflict, as well as to identify interactions between the periphery and the centre that transcended this dichotomy and significantly influenced the dynamics of artistic life in the region.

The approach adopted here gives rise to the following research questions: 1. Did aesthetic education create a coherent image of visual among the inhabitants of the Prussian partition? 2. Was aesthetic education an instrument of Germanisation or a field in which Poles and Germans cooperated? 3. Is there a connection between the spread of the idea of aesthetic education in public discourse and the artistic condition of the region? 4. How was the idea of aesthetic education adapted to regional conditions in relation to the original and Weimar concepts? 5. Did aesthetic education in the Prussian partition have its own local specificity, given the processes taking place in German education? 6. Was the idea of aesthetic education perceived positively in the light of Polish aspirations for national liberation? 7. What visual canon was disseminated through newspapers and teaching materials? 8. Was there a single paradigm of art education in the schools of the Poznań Province? 9. Did the practice of art instruction at schools comply with the guidelines of the central educational authorities? 10. Was there a difference between aesthetic formation at school and extracurricular education in the Prussian partition?

The sources include philosophical writings of the time (e.g. Karol Libelt's *Estetyka, czyli umnictwo piękne* and Bronisław Trentowski's *Chowanna...*), newspapers and archival documents (the records of the Kultusministerium - Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz; school records - the State Archives in Poznań and its branches in Gniezno and Bydgoszcz, the State Archives in Piła; school annual reports - the Wielkopolska Digital Library).