



Was born on January 13, 1930 in Lviv. There he attended the School of Art Industry in the period 1942-1946. After the war he moved with his parents to Opole, where he worked for a year at the “Groszowice“ cement plant as a draughtsman. He started studies in Cracow, first at the High School of Visual Arts and then in the years 1949-1954 at the Academy of Fine Arts. He first studied in the studios of *Prof. Zbigniew Pronaszko, Czesław Rzepiński and Ludwik Gardowski*, and subsequently under the direction of *Jery Karolak* learned poster composition for 4 years and studied in the studios of *Maciej Makarewicz, W. Wejman, and Jan Szancenbach*. In 1954 he received a diploma of the Faculty of Graphic of the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, majoring in poster, typography, printmaking, and photomontage.

Mieczysław Berman also exerted a significant impact on Cieślewicz's progress; he introduced the latter to the art of photomontage. The library of the Jagiellonian university, where the artist had access to publications from before WWII, also played a substantial role at the time, in an era of limited access to information about art outside of Poland and amidst an arid cultural desert. Such was also the role of Mieczysław Berman's private collection of books on contemporary art, among others the **Bloc** magazine, and works by John Hartfeld and Alexander Rodchenko.

Having moved to Warsaw in 1955, he first had an intership at the *Warsaw Graphic Works* and subsequently started working for the Centre of Film Rental (CWF), the *State Publishing Institute (PIW)*, *Art and Graphic Publishing House (WAG)*, as well as for the Workers' Publishing Cooperative RSW Prasa. His progress was made possible mainly thanks to the film posters commissioned by the CWF, which allowed for a rather free interpretation of the subject. Additionally, posters made for the Warsaw Opera House, designed by the most outstanding artists, currently included into the so-called Polish school, such as *Jan Lenica, Jan Młodożeniec, Waldemar Świerzy, Henryk Tomaszewski* or precisely Roman Cieślewicz, were a kind of acme of the graphic interpretation of theatrical subjects they suggested.

In the years 1959-1963 he was a graphics editor of the **Ty i ja** monthly, one of the most popular Polish periodicals of the time. With a print-run of 10.000 copies, it sold immediately and the readership paid special attention to new subjects rendered in a new “form“. When preparing the overall design, Cieślewicz patterned himself on Western magazines, experimented with photomontage, which in the course of time became his dominant technique.

From the start he was also actively involved in exhibition projects, which was manifested in the designs of the Polish pavilion at the **Leipzig Fair (1957)** and the Ce-Te-Be pavilion at the **Poznań International Fair (1963)**. Until the end of the 1950s R. Cieślewicz was a laureate of major awards; e.g. for his entire output in the field of poster he received WAG's Tadeusz Trepakowski Award. He took part in numerous competitions for theme posters, for which he was frequently granted awards.



In 1963, which turned out a breakthrough year for the artist, he completed work on a suite of illustrations to Bruno Schulz's *Cinnamon Shops*, which however were not favourably received by Polish literary critics and never came out in print.

At the invitation of the Krupp company he went to Essen that very year to assume the position of the chief graphic artist of the concern. However, he spent there only one month and then left for Italy at the invitation of Eugenio Carmi. In Genoa he completed a commission for the Italsider ironworks, composed of five big-sized photomontages which were to constitute a kind of decorative *panneaux* placed at the entrances to factories.

Since September 1963 he settled in Paris. He established contacts with *Peter Knapp*, photographer and artistic director of the *Elle* magazine, who commissioned photomontages for a few columns of the periodical. Soon afterwards R. Cieřlewicz was a designer of the graphic layout of the magazine, and in the period 1966-1969 was artistic director of Elle. This work helped him to become acquainted with journalist work and get in touch with the best photographers, such as *R. Traeger, G. Bourdin, D. Bailey, and A. Carrara*. In 1966, along with Antoine Kieffer, he prepared the graphic layout of the *Vogue* monthly. During these first years in Paris he met with many professionals, established relations and performed other work commissioned by publishing houses such as *La Hue, Christian Bourgois (covers for the 10/18 series), Julliard, Tchou, and Jean-Jacques Pauvert*.

From the very beginning of his stay in Paris he also met with the artists of the “**Panic Group**” circle such as *Roland Topor, Jacques Sterberg, Olivier Olivier, and Fernand Arrabal*. These were artists and men of letters who patronised their favourite cafe and discussed there as well as parodied in a subversive way the surrounding reality. This cooperation led to the publication of the **Kitsch** quarterly, issued by them in the period 1970-1971 along with Christian Bourgois, and later in 1976 to the first issue of **Kamikaze** – a news review of panic information, a full-fledged individual “publishing” project by R. Cieřlewicz.

Working on the editorial board of the Elle weekly, he designed also in the years 1967-1969 the graphic layout of the *Opus International* periodical and since 1969 was tied with the **M.A.F.I.A.** Agency of Style and Advertising in Paris. He worked in the latter for four years as artistic director. The Agency distinguished itself thanks to its methods of operation, unconventional when compared to those of other such companies; it employed prominent printmakers (*Jean Michel Folon, Michel Quarez, Roland Topor*), but all the same imposed certain limitations.



As of 1972 he decided on full independence as a print artist. Since the early 1970s he worked on a series of photomontages called **Symmetrical Figures**, which dominated his artistic thinking for a few years. **The Zoom** poster (1971) earned him the Gold Medal at the 4th International Poster Biennale in Warsaw. At the same time he collaborated with selected publishing offices in Poland and France, such as the Seuil publishing house, for which he designed the **Musique en jeu** series and the Paris-based C.N.A.C., creating a uniform suite of covers for an art monograph series issued as CNAC-Archives (1971-1974).

In 1975, commissioned by the Polish State Publishing Institute, he made 26 photomontage illustrations for Ann Radcliffe's **The Mysteries of Udolpho**. In this case he went beyond the convention of symmetry and drew on colour reproductions of old painting. Again, for the first time since the illustrations to the **Cinnamon Shops**, he suggested his own interpretation of literature based on free associations. Another consequence of the photomontage-like way of thinking was a suite of prints commenced in 1976 entitled **Change of Climate**. In this case R. Cieślęwicz created his unique, saturated vision of the world, which appears as full of tension yet in a way tamed and „named“ by the printmaker. Works of a uniform character, frequently ironic or with profound philosophical underpinnings, are at the same extremely attractive for the eye, entice with colour and visual effect arising from the extraordinary combination of a world encapsulated in old painting with its contemporary image drawn from advertising and press photography.

At that time he also commenced cooperation with the Centre national d'Art Contemporaine in Paris, designing posters and catalogues for solo exhibition organised by the Centre. Since 1975, when **Poltus Hunten** became director, these ties grew stronger and R. Cieślęwicz designed posters and catalogues for major overview exhibitions: **L'espace urbain en URSS 1917-1978**, **Paris – Berlin 1900 – 1933**, **Architecture en Allemagne 1900 – 1933**, **Paris – Moscou 1900 – 1930**, **Paris – Paris 1937 – 1957**, **Les realismes**, **Presences Polonaises**, **Design Francais**. He composed a uniform system of the visual message related to a given exhibition, consisting of an invitation, poster, catalogue, as well as designed the

exhibit (**L'espace urbain en URSS 1917-1978** exhibition, with *Jena Louis Cohen*). This was a publishing practice unprecedented in Paris.



At the same time he was active as a teacher. In the period 1974 – 1975 he was head of the Studio of Visual Forms in the Parisian Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts Décoratifs (E.N.S.A.D.), and since 1975 until his death he was head of the studio prints for the final year of the Ecole Supérieure d'Art Graphique (E.S.A.G.) in Paris.

R. Cieślęwicz became once again involved in advertising in the early 1980s, which led to two especially successful projects. One of them was the advertising campaign for *Charles Jourdan's* footwear. The proposal of the change of advertising technique from photography to photomontage was accepted and led to the creation of advertising images combining fragments of reproductions of classical canvases with photographs of Jourdan's products. The other important project consisted of photomontages and the entire graphic layout of a promotional leaflet for the **DAYN** concern from Saudi Arabia.

In the 1980s he continued cooperation with various publishing houses, designing graphic layouts and capitalizing on his experienced gained when working for the *Pompidou Centre*.

The majors projects here included *Ketschum* (1982), the Paris publishing house Fernand Hazen (1983), **Magicien – Cahiers Perroquet** series (1986 – 1988), *VST* – popular scientific monthly (1988).

Other publishing projects also date from that period; there were more individual and stemmed from the will to express oneself and comment on current events. Photomontages illustrating the book **Love Thy Enemies**, issued in Paris by the Pallotine Editions du Dialogue (1982), formally drew on the *Change of Climate* series, but as to their subject matter were clearly tied with the book's message. In the **Pas de nouvelles – Bonnes nouvelles** series of photomontages (1986), functioning at an exhibition and in the form of a thematic catalogue, he used a totally different language – ascetic and auster, arriving at the same at a more powerful interpretative effect and enhancing the critical evaluation of the present times.

This path, initiated with the first issue of **Kamikaze 1** in 1976, was later continued in subsequent issues of panic information (**Kamikaze 2** – 1991, **Kamikaze 3** – published posthumously in 1997), resulted in a regular collaboration since 1991 with the **Liberation** daily and with the **L'Autre Journal** and the **Révolutions** monthlies.

In 1989, commissioned by the National Assembly and the French Ministry of Culture, he designed the decoration of the Assemblée Nationale building to commemorate the bicentennial of the French Revolution.

Another outdoor project was the design for the decoation of the City Hall building commemorating Genreal Charles de Gaulle's hundredth birthday, commissioned by the Department of Culture of the Office of the Mayor of Paris.

Since 1955 he took part in numerous exhibitions of prints, posters, and photomontages in Poland and abroad as well as participated in international posters and applied graphic art competitions, receiving awards and mentions of honour. The most important of these events were the following: *National Exhibiton of Illustrations, Posters and Small Forms, International Poster Biennale in Warsaw, International Book Exhibition in Leipzig, International Exhibition of Posters in Karlovy Vary, Biennale of Industrial Design in Ljubljana, National Poster Biennale in Katowice, Biennale of Applied Graphic Arts in Brno, Poster Biennale in Lahti, Biennle of Graphic Art in Venice, Documenta Ill in Kassel.*

Since 1956 he belonged to the *Alliance Graphique Internationale* (AGI), and since 1984 he was President of the French chapter of this Association. Since 1956 he was a member of *the Union of Polish Artists, and since 1967 of he international Centre for the Typographic Arts* (ICTA).

He died in Paris on January 21. 1996.

