

ELEMENTS OF ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE AS INSPIRATION FOR CONTEMPORARY WORKS – IGOR MITORAJ VERSUS KRZYSZTOF BACULEWSKI

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ABSTRACT

Twentieth-century art remained under the influence of ancient cultures, with artists frequently reinterpreting classical myths and employing mythological motifs. For instance, James Joyce, in his novel *Ulysses*, presented a classical myth within a modern context. Artists also used figures such as Niobe and Icarus to express universal truths about the human condition. Polish artists – sculptor Igor Mitoraj and composer Krzysztof Baculewski – likewise drew inspiration from antiquity. Mitoraj's sculptures, renowned for their fragmentary form and enigmatic character, combine ancient beauty with modern sensitivity. The distinguished Polish composer Krzysztof Baculewski, a student of Olivier Messiaen among others, featured photographs of ancient columns, friezes, and amphitheaters on the covers of his albums as evidence of his fascination with classical art. His compositions *Frisium* and *Meander*, which contain direct references to ancient architecture, will be analyzed in this study, as they have never been previously examined or discussed in scholarly literature. In my research on the influence of ancient architecture on contemporary sculpture and music, I employ both a descriptive method – aimed at explaining how elements of antiquity are reflected in musical and sculptural works – and a comparative method, which enables the identification of similarities between specific artistic features and elements of ancient culture.

Keywords: inspirations, ancient, sculpture, Igor Mitoraj, Krzysztof Baculewski

INTRODUCTION

Ancient influences in twentieth-century art manifested themselves in diverse ways. Artists of this period frequently engaged with classical mythology – both through reinterpretation and by incorporating mythological motifs. A prominent example is *Ulysses* by James Joyce, which reimagines the classical myth within a modern context. Mythological figures such as Niobe and Icarus also appear in twentieth-century artworks, serving symbolic functions and expressing universal truths about the human condition. Artists likewise drew inspiration from ancient literary genres and poetics, reinterpreting them in ways that resonated with the challenges of modernity. A distinctive feature of this phenomenon lies in the creation of new interpretations and prefigurations, in which ancient paradigms are employed to articulate contemporary social and existential concerns.

The objective of this study is to present an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of sculptural and musical works inspired by ancient art. The research employs a descriptive method to examine selected contemporary works by sculptor Igor Mitoraj