

Instagram as a Communication Space for Painters

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Instagram is a social network platform intended for communication between the creator of information and its recipients, as well as between the recipients themselves. The driving force of Instagram has been recognised by many artists that decided to promote their creative work on this platform. This social network is also used to fulfil advertising contracts that the artists have concluded with companies. The question therefore is whether the number of followers is mainly affected by the artistic achievements of their authors or by out-of-art marketing activities? Instagram contains many profiles of people involved in other branches of art, including painting. It seems that due to the field of art they deal with, the private life of an artist painting pictures is not as interesting as the life of popular actors or singers. As a result, their profiles are mainly concentrated on presenting artistic achievements using a platform that helps them reach a broad spectrum of viewers. This article provides a selective review of popular profiles of artists, taking into consideration the way in which they present their art on the Internet and how the artist communicates with users, as well as how the communication between users themselves looks.

KEYWORDS: Instagram, painter, art, communication, followers

Introduction

In the contemporary world, people are accompanied by digital technology every step of the way. Social networking sites have become a crucial communication tool. Such platforms are used as a distribution channel for promoting oneself as a person, a company or brand, which may bring some profits.[1] It should be noted that not only companies advertising their products take advantage of the promotional values of social network platforms. Members of the art world are looking for opportunities to reach a broad spectrum of viewers and therefore, the use of such platforms seems to be a perfect solution. Hence, many actors, musicians or singers have started using this communication channel

and have set up their profiles even on several platforms.

Instagram has become a very popular platform in the artist's world. When going through Instagram, there are many popular actors or singers that post photos and videos not related to their professional life, but to private situations. Such content sometimes provokes heated discussions between followers of a given profile. It can be seen that more and more artists involved in the visual arts, including painting, take advantage of Instagram. Thanks to this social network platform, the viewer does not need to go to a gallery or museum to see an artist's work; all a viewer has to do is to click on a selected profile and plunge his or her soul into contemplation. According to the source literature, viewers can be divided into: the elite – upper-class backgrounds with very high cultural and economic capital (intellectuals, famous artists), the middle class (with higher economic capital than the lower class), and the lower class, who seem to be absent online.[2] On Instagram, anyone can be a viewer,

[1] A. Zalewska-Bochenko, *Portale społecznościowe jako element społeczeństwa informacyjnego*, "Studia Informatica Pomerania" 2016, no. 2(40), p. 88.

[2] A. Matuchniak-Krasuska, *Emocje w polu dóbr symbolicznych. Od Leonarda da Vinci do Jerzego Dudy-Gracza*, "Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej" 2013, no. 9(2), pp. 47–48.

as economic considerations or location-based problem do not occur here. On the other hand, this unlimited availability of artwork may bring damaging consequences to its value because, as A. Matuchniak-Krasuska notes, the improper and simplifying perception of a piece of art is more harmful than a lack of understanding it, as *society destroys works of art by trivialising them*.^[3] This results from the fact that the perception of an artwork is the only evidence of the social value of the piece and, at the same time, the public expression of its fate.^[4]

The interaction of the artist with the art viewer is of key importance. Karolina Breguła, a young Polish artist, set up the online Art Translation Agency 2010. It was based on the assumption that in order to understand a work of art, contact with the viewer is invaluable. On the project's website, the viewer may place an order for an interpretation of a selected artwork that they find incomprehensible.^[5] Instagram may serve as an office for this purpose. Thanks to the services provided by such an office, the artist may explain his or her work and answer questions in real time in case of any doubts.

The aim of the research set in this article was to analyze how painters communicate with the recipients of their art via Instagram. On this basis, the following research questions can be asked: how painters communicate with their viewers in the virtual space of social media? Do they use this social media solely to promote their art? Are private-related posts published and, if so, are they frequent, as in the case of, for instance, actors? Do they share photos of themselves, their close friends and relatives, their life activities and if so, for what purpose? Do individual posts encourage people to make comments, in what quantity and what is the nature of such comments? Does a discussion arise between the Internet users and also between the artist and followers? The analysis in this article concerns the course of interaction of artists with recipients and between recipients with each other, as well as the way in which painters present their works on the social medium of Instagram. The selection of profiles was

guided by their popularity among observers, so those that stood out in terms of the number of followers (both in Poland and in the world) were discussed.

The paper consists of an introduction, which provides basic information on Instagram and the opportunities that this platform offers for artists. This is followed by a review of selected profiles of painters from Poland and other parts of the world. The conclusion includes a summary of the issues discussed.

Instagram as a marketing platform for promoting artistic achievements

When analyzing Instagram as a platform for presenting the achievements of painters, it is worth mentioning the theory of mass culture. The term mass culture was probably first used by Max Horkheimer in 1941, but he more often referred to it as the cultural industry. In 1944, in *A Theory of Mass Culture*, Dwight Macdonald criticized the phenomenon of mass culture, describing it as a cancerous growth on high culture. According to Macdonald, it is thanks to mass culture that passive recipients appear in society, content to receive top-down entertainment and norms. Polish researchers in this field include Antonina Kłoskowska, the author of *Kultura masowa*. Her work contains both criticism and defence of the claim that the genesis of mass culture should be sought in the Industrial Revolution.^[6] Kłoskowska also describes the term "mass communication," which "applies to the process of disseminating information and

[3] Eadem, *Problematyka komunikowania w socjologii sztuki*, "Przegląd Socjologiczny" 1981, vol. 33, p. 233.

[4] M. Golka, *Socjologiczny obraz sztuki*, Wydawnictwo ARS NOVA, Poznań 1996, p. 156.

[5] K. Niziołek, *Sztuka społeczna. Koncepcje, dyskursy, praktyki*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Białostockiego, Białystok 2015, p. 156.

[6] P. Wenderlich, *Kultura masowa – aktywni konsumenci, bierni obywatele? Implikacje w sferze publicznej*, "Świat Idei i Polityk" 2015, vol. 14, p. 415; A. Kłoskowska, *Modele społeczne i kultura masowa*, "Przegląd Socjologiczny" 1959, no. 13(2), p. 46.

various types of cultural content to the general public through mass circulation magazines and non-periodic publications, radio, film, television,”[7] and would now add social media to this.

Contemporary artists use social media, including Instagram, in order to mark their presence. One of the greatest marketing channels of our time, Instagram can be used for content-related marketing activities, placing paid advertising and communicating with viewers. This online platform was launched in 2010 and was initially addressed to the photography community using iPhones. It offered many editing and beautifying options by means of various photo filters. In the subsequent years, Instagram was modified and expanded. Instagram made it possible for its users to upload video content, broadcast adverts and post videos available for 24 hours (‘Insta Stories’), among other things. In 2012, this social media was acquired by Facebook but continues to operate as a separate platform. However, there are some common elements, such as login and account management.[8]

Instagram was founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. They noted that although

Facebook users are very keen to post photos there, they do not take advantage of the full range of possibilities offered by the platform. As a result, they decided to create an application that would allow photos to be uploaded photos easily. The first prototype of Instagram was a web app called Burbn, which was created by Kevin Systrom. However, this application proved to be too complicated and me with little success. Next, together with Krieger, he created an application called Scotch, but this was also unsuccessful. Finally, the Instagram app was launched on 6th June 2010. On the day of its launch, Instagram racked up 25,000 users. On 12th December 2010, the number of users reached one million. On 20th September 2011, Kieger and Systrom released the second version of Instagram with new filters, which allowed only those images to be selected that met the users’ requirements. This proved to be a great success, and by March 2012, the number of users had reached 27 million. On 3rd April 2012, the Android app was released, which was a breakthrough moment in Instagram’s history. Within the first 24 hours, there were more than one million downloads of this app. No other app has been so successful to date. At the moment Instagram was purchased by Facebook, the platform’s value was estimated at \$1 billion, which is the amount Mark Zuckerberg paid for it.[9]

At present, Instagram is one of the most popular media social platforms. Instagram has 1.22 billion active users every month. These users are usually aged 18–34 (60%) and spend an average of 28 minutes per day on the platform. In Poland, there were 9.8 million Instagram users in 2021, of whom more than half were women (59.1%) and one in five were aged 18–24.[10]

Instagram has met the expectations of artists, content producers, public figures and influencers by offering them a creator account.[11] Creator, business and personal accounts are free of charge. Instagram indicates three main advantages of switching a profile to *creator account*: ease of profile management, convenient communication, and a social media toolkit for profile development.[12] However, there is no

[7] K. Chobot, *Instagram jako skuteczny instrument komunikacji marketingowej*, “Studenckie Prace Prawnicze, Administratywistyczne i Ekonomiczne” 2019, vol. 30, p. 49.

[8] R. Tadeusiewicz, *Jak powstały Instagram i TikTok*, Rzeczpospolita, 18.02.2021, <https://www.rp.pl/historia/art8668171-jak-powstaly-instagram-i-tiktok> (accessed: 12.10.2022).

[9] A. Roguski, *Użytkownicy social media w Polsce i na świecie*, Why So Social, 2021, <https://www.whysosocial.pl/uzytkownicy-social-media-w-polsce-i-na-swiecie>, (accessed: 15.10.2022).

[10] E. Wolszczak, *Konto twórcy czy firmowe na Instagramie?*, Marketing w Pigulce, 2019, <http://www.marketing-w-pigulce.pl/social-media/konto-tworcy-czy-firmowe-na-instagramie> (accessed: 17.10.2022).

[11] W. Teofilak, *Czy warto założyć konto twórcy na Instagramie?*, Beeffective, 6.01.2020, <https://beeffective.pl/blog/czy-warto-zalozyc-konto-tworcy-na-instagramie/> (accessed: 7.11.2022).

[12] *Rozdzielczość zdjęć udostępnianych na Instagramie*, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com>.

data on how many painters have decided to set up an account on Instagram and promote their work in this way. Instead, there is a great deal of advice on how to present artworks on this platform and how to earn money.

The number of art hashtags on Instagram proves that this platform offers numerous possibilities for promoting creativity. By 14th October 2022, #instaart appeared 90,264,639 times, #art 951,249,725 times, #gallery 35,808,515 times, #museum 23,786,227 times and #painting 153,459,871 times. What makes particular artworks catch the viewers eye on Instagram and gain popularity on this platform? It should be noted that the manner of content presentation and knowledge of the platform's technical requirements are of key importance. According to Instagram's official FAQ, the ideal photo aspect ratio is between 1.91:1 and 1:4.5 with a minimum width of 320 px and a maximum of 1080 px.^[13] With regard to the manner of presentation, the work of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama should serve as an example. The aesthetics of her psychedelic works may be easily transferred to photos. Photos showing her artworks make them memorable and it is not possible to ignore such pieces of art. In 2013, Kusama's immersive installation called *Infinity Mirrored Room – The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away* at the David Zwirner Gallery in New York won the hearts of critics and Instagram users. A mirror-lined room with coloured LED bulbs proved to be a perfect place to take a selfie. Julia Joeron, a partner and director of marketing, publications and press at the David Zwirner Gallery, said that this exhibition was a breakthrough moment, as it showed the driving force of social media. Art-goers endured three-hour waits for the Kusama exhibition and the Mirror Room was used four times as a marriage proposal place.^[14]

Not only individual artists have recognised the power of Instagram but also cultural facilities such as galleries and museums. The most followed museums on Instagram worldwide are the MoMa (Instagram: @themuseumof-modernart) (5,026 posts; 5.6 million followers),

the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Instagram: @metmuseum) (4,533 posts; 4.1 million followers) and the Tate (Instagram: @tate) (4,391 posts; 4.1 million followers). In order to make the content interesting for users, the idea of a profile image is important. The MoMa experiments with quizzes by showing fragments of artworks and asking followers about their authors. As a result, Instagram users are engaged in comments.

Consistent and engaging content posted on Instagram is supported by dedicated applications. These make it possible to plan posts, grid layouts or select colour ranges. For visual artists, it is important that posted works are of high quality. This can be done by Instagram Grid, thanks to which it is possible to split tiles into 3, 6 or 9 images. A well-thought-out layout will make the content exciting, well-organised and attractive. The following applications are worth listing^[15]:

- Later, Planoly, Preview – social media planner applications,
 - Hashtagify.me – hashtag tracking tool,
 - Websta.me – hashtag analyser and a tool for tracking the development of profiles,
 - Autohash – an application intended for finding the best hashtags for Instagram photos
- This application recognises the different elements in photos and generates related hashtags,
- Sotrender – a tool designed to support social media efforts on social networking sites (including on Instagram).

com/help/instagram/1631821640426723 (accessed: 20.03.2023).

[13] *Jak Instagram zmienia świat sztuki, Czy popularność #artselfie kształtuje strategie artystów i galerii?*, i-D, 2016, <https://i-d.vice.com/pl/article/pab5ym/jak-instagram-zmienia-swiat-sztuki> (accessed: 20.11.2022).

[14] *Promocja artystów na Instagramie*, Media&Work, 30.01.2019, <https://media-work.pl/promocja-artysta-instagram> (accessed: 18.11.2022).

[15] A. Rycicka, R. Brasse, *Dismaland. Makabryczny park rozrywki*, DW, 27.08.2015, <https://www.dw.com/pl/dismaland-makabryczny-park-rozrywki/a-18677676> (accessed: 17.11.2022).

Instagram is constantly expanding the range of applications for various groups of creators, including artists that use this platform to present their artworks. The platform's developers analyse the market and the needs of users, and adapt its functionality based on such analysis.

World's painters on Instagram

Instagram has many accounts dedicated to the art of painting. Painters usually perceive this platform as a kind of virtual gallery. An example of global phenomenon is Banksy (Instagram: @banksy). Banksy was born in Bristol, yet his identity still remains a mystery. He is a street artist painting on walls and pavements who gained popularity based on anonymity. He is also the owner of a hotel located next to the controversial separation wall in Israel. Banksy also created a satirical theme park named *Dis-maland*, which he describes as a *family theme park unsuitable for children*, due to the fact that there is a significant amount of horror and dark humour in it.^[16]

Banksy's Instagram profile, where his profile photo is a black circle, has 12.3 million followers, while Banksy himself does not follow anyone. Banksy's posts appear very rarely, the first having been posted on 1st October 2013 and the last on 23rd December 2023. For 10 months of 2022, Banksy did not add a single post. On 22nd February 2024, there were a total of 136 posts on his profile. The posts show Banksy's works, as well as videos and photos from events featuring the artist. The last post is a video on the sale of

Banksy's T-shirts carrying the images of four people accused of toppling Edward Colston's statue in Bristol. Banksy declared that the profits from the sale would go to the accused so that they could go for a beer after their release from custody. Banksy's posts have millions of video views and likes, along with thousands of comments. In addition to making comments on Banksy's artistic work, Internet users also encourage him to get involved in social or political issues. Under the last post, Internet users posted #mahsaamini, which was created after the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman who died on 16th September 2022 under suspicious circumstances in a Tehran hospital. The Guidance Patrol, Iran's morality police unit, arrested Amini for wearing a hijab contrary to government standards, accusing of wearing her headscarf too loosely. The Iranian media announced that Amini had suffered a heart attack while being detained by the morality police. Eyewitnesses to the woman's arrest, however, said that she was severely beaten and died as a result of police violence.^[17] Despite numerous comments under the posts and calls for discussion, Banksy does not interact with the Internet users. When posting, Banksy usually refrains from any additional comments or simply adds short captions. This was the case with the short caption *My wife hates when I work from home*^[18] which was posted with a photo showing a bathroom surrounded by rats painted on the walls. The post generated the highest number of comments on the profile to date, i.e., 31,100 comments and 2.8 million likes.

Banksy is a leader on Instagram in terms of number of followers and number of comments under posts among painters. However, there are other artists on Instagram that reach millions of the Instagram users. These are usually artists that create digital works, such as Mike Winkelmann (Instagram: @beeples_crap), whose monumental digital collage, the first purely digital artwork (NFT), was sold in March 2021 for more than \$69 million.^[19] Winkelmann has accumulated 2.2 million followers on Instagram so far.

[16] M. Funk, *Została brutalnie zabita za to, że spod chusty wystawały jej włosy*, Onet, 4.10.2022, <https://kultura.onet.pl/wywiady-i-artykuly/shah-rzad-osterer-o-smierci-mahsy-amini-hidzab-jako-symbol-opresji/94t5067> (accessed: 5.13.2023).

[17] @banksy, https://www.instagram.com/p/B_AqdH4Jd5x/?hl=en (accessed: 7.02.2023).

[18] *Beeple's opus*, Christie's, 2022, <https://www.christies.com/features/monumental-collage-by-beeple-is-first-purely-digital-artwork-nft-to-come-to-auction-11510-7.aspx> (accessed: 19.03.2023).

[19] *La vita e le mostre*, Roberto Ferri, 2022, <https://www.robertoferri.net/biography/> (accessed: 19.03.2023).

Contemporary popular painters who create their works in the traditional manner gather hundreds of thousands of followers at most. One of them is Roberto Ferri (Instagram: @robertoferri_official). Born in 1978, he is considered the Caravaggio of our days, as his works are strongly influenced by Baroque painting.[20] Ferri has 783,000 followers on his Instagram, follows 558 profiles himself, and posted a total of 1,050 posts in the period between 12th August 2012 and 22nd February 2024. While the vast majority of Ferri's posts are photos of his paintings accompanied by their titles, there are also short videos documenting the creation of the artwork, as well as information on the upcoming exhibitions. In addition, there are some photos of the author at work or photos taken at exhibitions. The posts generate thousands and even hundreds of thousands of likes, yet there are few comments below them - usually a few dozen or a few hundred. Ferri does not interact with the Internet users, nor does he answer or respond to their questions. Internet users themselves usually make positive comments on the photos posted and rarely discuss among themselves. These comments are mostly emoticons with hearts or single words or sentences, such as *Love it*. Ferri's posts are in Italian or English and the discussion takes place in these languages. All in all, the profile is run in a consistent and well-thought-out manner, with the painter also including separate galleries, categorised by individual press titles, with excerpts from press articles concerning his work.

The painter Flora Yukhnovich (Instagram: @flora_yukhnovich) is behind the most desirable works in today's art world. In 2021, she signed a contract with the Victoria Miro Gallery and the auction record was set at £2.3 million. Her Instagram profile provides information on her preparations for an exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in 2023. Together with another artist, Daniel Crews-Chubb,[21] she is preparing for this event. Yukhnovich is inspired by Rococo painting; she reimagines the dynamism of works by eighteenth-century artists such as Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, François

Boucher, Nicolas Lancret and Jean-Antoine Watteau through a filter of contemporary cultural references including film, food and consumerism.[22] On Instagram, she has gathered 75,200 followers and she follows 1,979 profiles. She posted her first post on 12th July 2017 and as on 22nd February 2024 there are 141 posts on her profile, mainly showing photos of her paintings, along with several of the painter herself. Flora's posts have thousands of likes and dozens of comments. Yukhnovich runs her profile in English and gives heart-shaped likes under almost every comment made by the Internet users, but rarely responds by posting a comment. The users on Yukhnovich's profile also do not discuss among themselves, but only make comments on her work, which are always positive.

Polish painters on Instagram

With regard to Polish painters, an artist that is an active Instagram user is Karol Radziszewski (Instagram: @karoradziszewski). As Karolina Plinta writes in "Szum" magazine, he is *one of the few Polish artists who know what Instagram is for*. [23] Born in 1980, Radziszewski is involved in painting, film, photography, installations and creates interdisciplinary projects. His work has many cultural, historical, religious, social and gender references (Instagram: @karoradziszewski). Radziszewski regularly updates his profile, on which he shows the projects in progress. He has 16,700 followers and he follows 564 profiles mainly related to the art world. His first post appeared on 11th May 2014 and shows the author's selfie, since when he has added 444

[20] *Beeple's opus*, op. cit.

[21] *Flora Yukhnovich*, Victoria Miro, 2022, <https://www.victoria-miro.com/artists/225-flora-yukhnovich/> (accessed: 19.03.2023).

[22] K. Plinta, *Instagramy polskiego świata sztuki*, Magazyn Szum, 20.01.2017, <https://magazynszum.pl/instagramy-polskiego-swiate-sztuki/> (accessed: 21.03.2023).

[23] *Piotr Uklański: Ottomania*, Luksemburg + CO, 2019, <https://luxembourgco.com/exhibitions/66/works/> (accessed: 20.03.2023).

posts, some of which were posted every few days. In addition to photos of his works, his profile contains photos of exhibitions in which he has taken part. The profile contains a great many photos of the young men he works with, some of whom are models, while others are fellow artists or favourite celebrities. These photos show naked men, whose intimate areas are covered with a white circle. The posts have received very few comments but hundreds of likes. Radziszewski adds captions to posts in English and a great number of hashtags related to the content of the photo, such as: #boningtongallery #sztukapolska #queerhistory #queerhistory-matters #polskiqueer #polskaszuka #queerarchives #queer #queerart #queerculture #untoldpride #lgbthistory #malarstwospółczesne #historialgbt #instaqueueer #instahomo #instagay #gay #gej #sztukawspolczesna #queerheritage #lesbianpride #malarstwoakrylowe #lgbtpolska #lgbtq. It should be noted that he responds to the Instagram users' posts, giving thanks for their positive opinions, or replies to comments, which is not typical for painters. He also adds heart-shaped likes to comments. His followers' comments are short, usually limited to emoticons, single words or sentences, for instance, *beautiful, what a charming cutie*. The discussion on the profile takes place in Polish and English.

One of the most well-known and recognised Polish painters of our days is Piotr Uklański. He became famous in 2008 when his painting titled *The Nazis* hanging in the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw was cut up by the actor Daniel Olbrychski with a sabre. In 2014, the painting was sold for £570,000 (PLN 2.7 million). As

a result, Uklański's painting^[24] became the most valuable artwork at that time. His profile on Instagram (Instagram: @piotruklański-official) contains only 24 posts and has 1013 followers, while Uklański himself does not follow anyone. His posts have a few dozen likes each and several comments under them. The first post appeared on 21st May 2018 and the last is dated 6th January 2023. Unlike most painters, Uklański does not focus on showing photos of his works on the platform; he usually posts information about exhibitions of his work, including photos of his advertising posters or the buildings in which the exhibitions are held. Uklański reacts to the Internet users' comments by adding heart-shaped likes, but does not interact with them.

Another Polish painter currently enjoying popularity is Wilhelm Sasnal. In addition to painting, he is also involved in drawing, comics and film. His works can be found in the collections of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, the Saatchi Gallery, the Tate Modern in London, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Guggenheim Museum and in numerous private collections.^[25] Born in 1972 in Tarnów, Sasnal is considered by many critics to be the leading painter of his generation. He selects objects for painting on the basis of his emotional relationship to them. His contemporary canvases feature various objects typical of the aesthetic experience of his peers. These are album covers, comic book covers, t-shirts of favourite bands, cars, bicycles, as well as echoes of important political events (for instance, the arrest of Pinochet), spectacular disasters (for instance, the *Kursk* submarine), situations from social life (*Patrycja stopped eating meat*), and scenes from family life or references to contemporary art.^[26] Of the artists discussed here, Sasnal started using Instagram most recently. His first post appeared on 4th February 2020 (Instagram: @Wilhelm Sasnal) and his profile contains 30 posts. He is followed by 18,800 people and he himself follows 72 profiles. Sasnal adds posts without any comments or cap-

[24] M. Welman, *Ich obrazy kosztują miliony. Kim są najdrożsi współcześni polscy artyści? Jak wyglądają ich dzieła?*, Wyborcza.pl, 2018, <http://cojestgrane24.wyborcza.pl/cjg24/1,13,23171428,146952,Ich-obrazy-kosztuja-miliony--Kim-sa-najdrozsi-wspo.html> (accessed: 21.03.2023).

[25] E. Gorządek, *Wilhelm Sasnal*, Culture.pl, 2014, <https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/wilhelm-sasnal> (accessed: 23.03.2023).

[26] K. Plinta, op. cit.

tions and only shows his paintings in photos. He does not interact with the Instagram users and does not like their comments. His posts have between a few hundred and a few thousand likes, yet there are few comments under them, and these are written in both English and Polish. All of them are positive and appreciate the author's work.

Plinta writes that the Polish artistic community on Instagram *starts to get their profiles going*.^[27] This is an accurate observation, taking into consideration the number of followers of the profiles of native painters, the number of comments under the posts and the number of likes. In comparison to top contemporary painters recognised worldwide, these numbers are not impressive. However, painters are increasingly acknowledging the power of social network platforms. As a result, they take the opportunity to promote their work through such means of communication.

Conclusions

This paper presents a selective review of the Instagram profiles created by painters that could be considered influencers of the art world. This is because they have gathered a great number of followers and within the art community they are recognised and respected artists, whose works are sold at mind-boggling prices. However, their profiles on Instagram are quite different from those run by well-known actors or singers who are considered, often unfairly, to be celebrities. Painters do not post photos of their family nor ones showing them travelling or meeting with friends. They do not cooperate with companies nor advertise products on the Internet for commercial purposes; they simply show their works and activities related to the process of their creation or subsequent exhibitions. Internet users comment only on photos of the works presented, and do not post hateful comments or criticise the appearance of the artist, even if such a person has posted his or her photo. An exception to this may be Banksy, who, due to a great number of his followers, provokes others to post comments, for instance,

on the need to get involved in social cases. In short, there is no room for hateful comments within the Instagram painting community – the comments are positive and Internet users appreciate the works by liking the photos and making brief comments. Nor do users discuss with each other, and the artists themselves rarely respond to comments posted by them. The profiles discussed are run in a consistent and well-thought-out manner. In the header, painters usually add links to the pages that transfer users to their portfolio.

On Instagram, there are also profiles run not by painters but about painters and their art work. An interesting overview of such profiles was provided by Alicja Cembrowska. In the view of the author of this article, special attention should be paid to the following profiles^[28]:

- Niezła sztuka (@niezlasztuka) – reviews, descriptions of monuments, picture galleries, essays on art and interesting facts on artworks by Polish and foreign artists are posted,
- Classic Art Archive (@classicartarchive) – paintings created by well-known artists from the past and contemporary painters of classical art are posted here,
- Obrazomowa (@obrazomowa) – the most important information on famous paintings, an in-depth analysis of them and interesting facts are posted,
- Damian o sztuce (@damianosztuce) – featuring photos together with historical information on the works, not only related to painting but also, for instance, fashion,
- Przewodnik historyczny (@przewodnik.historyczny) – a profile and a podcast on historical aspects of creation and the fate of individual works of art,
- Art News (@artnews) – a profile of ART-news magazine, founded in 1902, providing

[27] A. Cembrowska, *Dziś Światowy Dzień Sztuki, a ona cię dalej nudzi jak w szkole? Zajrzyj na te 7 kont i odczaruj ją*, na: *Temat*, 15.04.2022, <https://natemat.pl/406894,najlepsze-konta-na-instagramie-o-dzielach-sztuki> (accessed: 21.02.2023).

up-to-date information on the most important events in the art world.

To sum up, Instagram is an application that works perfectly as a platform for promoting creativity. Many painters have already discovered the opportunities that Instagram offers and have therefore started using it. However, the platform will not replace real contact between humans and a piece of art and will not bring the distinctive atmosphere of a gallery or museum to the user. However, IT specialists are constantly working on making the virtual world as close to the real world as possible. A Virtual Reality (VR) headset is designed to make a user feel like as if he or she has been transported somewhere and cultural facilities have started organising virtual walk-throughs, which was imposed by the pandemic to a large extent. Nevertheless, although online platforms provide excellent opportunities and are attractive form of engaging with artworks, direct contact between the viewer and the piece of art is not threatened, as this form of communication remains intimate, tangible and emotional.

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