PLANS & OBJECTIVES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE
–
2026



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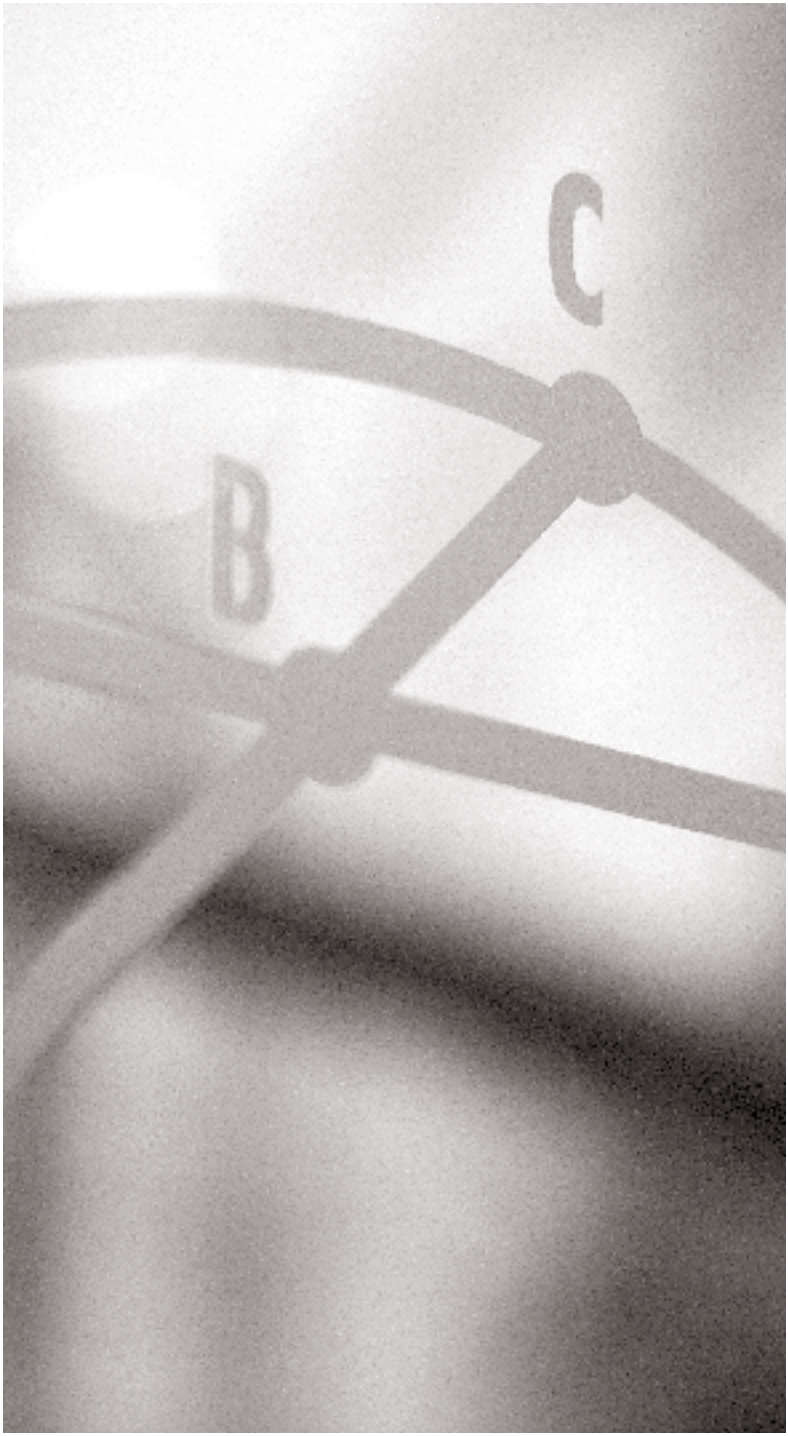
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INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE

The International Cultural Centre is a place of reflection on culture and cultural heritage in the context of the challenges presented by contemporary life. Our core areas of interest are • cultural heritage theory, philosophy, and management • memory • identity • the cultural space, art, and heritage of Central Europe • dialogue between cultures • the city as mirror of civilization • cultural policy and cultural economics. Interdisciplinary thinking is a key principle of the ICC's work. Our institution brings together a range of viewpoints, and draws on the achievements of many fields of study in order to propagate, as extensively but also as coherently and objectively as possible, knowledge regarding cultural heritage in its universal dimension.

The ICC was founded on 29 May 1991 during the CSCE Symposium (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), when representatives of the East and the West debated culture and heritage for the first time after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Since its inception, the ICC has had its seat in the historical Ravens House in the Main Market Square, a building that dates back to the Middle Ages. This location, in the centre of the city and at once at the heart of Central Europe, helps us better to pursue our mission, which is to support Europe's cultural integration and to protect its cultural heritage.

The International Cultural Centre is a national institution of culture, active in research, study, education, and information-sharing. The 34 years of its work have produced: • over 180 exhibitions presenting key trends in art and architecture • 120 international conferences and seminars attended by representatives of most European countries and many more from beyond the continent • over 100 international educational programmes attended by more than 2,600 participants from a majority of the countries of Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Africa • the postgraduate Academy of Heritage programme (since 2001) • 450 publications in Polish and other languages by more than 1,600 authors from all over the world • a specialist library numbering 45,000 inventory items • research projects conducted in collaboration with Polish and foreign partners • and active participation in international cultural bodies and networks.

FEnIKS

The International Cultural Centre in Kraków has been awarded a grant under the FENIKS programme — European Funds for Infrastructure, Climate, and the Environment 2021–2027. The funding will be allocated to the modernisation of the ICC's headquarters at 25 Rynek Główny. The project's main objective is the creation a new space for cultural and social events, which will occupy the entire ground floor and act as both an invitation to the institution and its representative showcase. As a result, 2026 will be a year of transformation and modernisation necessitating the temporary closure of the ICC Gallery and Library. A detailed timetable will be announced following the selection of contractors through public procurement procedures.

The renovation period will provide an opportunity to intensify work on the institution's strategic development.



'Modernization and adaptation of the ground floor of the "The Ravens" ("Pod Kruki") tenement house and renovation of the technical infrastructure of the International Cultural Centre in Kraków' is financed by the FEnIKS Programme European Funds for Infrastructure, Climate and Environment 2021–2027.

THE TREASURES OF KRAKÓW

Panel exhibition, available in: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bulgarian, Czech, English, French, German, Polish, Romanian

This exhibition explores over a thousand years of Kraków's history, celebrating a city that was the seat of Polish kings, a royal capital, and a centre that provided the home for one of Europe's oldest universities, a nexus for poets, writers, and artists, and one of the most important cities in Central Europe during the Middle Ages. The panels prepared for this show feature close to a hundred treasures, including artworks and buildings, but also artefacts from the sphere of intangible culture. All of these treasures are intimately connected with the city, culturally significant, and in many instances worthy of the title of masterpiece.

The exhibition was created in cooperation with the Kraków City Council, with Poland's diplomatic missions in mind.

ARCHITECTURE OF INDEPENDENCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Panel exhibition, English version

The year 1918 made dreams of independence come true for many nations in Central Europe. The architecture of the period reflects a profound need to build new states or to remodel existing ones: to erect public buildings, seats of administrative and state authority, to raise monuments, and shape spaces of national sanctity. The architecture of independence in Central Europe was, above all, an endeavour to construct the imagined community of the nation and to inscribe it in space.

This panel exhibition was based on the exhibition of the same name presented at the ICC Gallery in 2018, as a proposal for Polish diplomatic missions.

DESIGN IN CENTRAL EUROPE, 1945–1989

The popularity of post-war design continues to grow, not only among scholars, but also among collectors and the general public. The growing number of scholarly publications, as well as the presence of post-war household objects in popular culture well-illustrate growing interest. There remains, however, a lack of exhibitions that present this design current within a broader, translocal context. The exhibition being developed by the ICC curatorial team seeks to address this gap. Conceived as a large-scale panorama of post-war Central European design, it will encompass the Baltic states, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The exhibition will present both iconic designs and lesser-known works that merit renewed interpretation, while also highlighting the work of outstanding designers whose achievements remain little recognised beyond specialist circles. This will not be a conventional design exhibition. Rather, through objects, it will explore the region's history — it's social ambitions, political tensions, post-war utopias, modernising aspirations, and the realities of Cold War division. The opening is planned for spring 2027.

GALICIAN OIL

Research conducted by the Institute of European Heritage focuses less on the history of the oil industry in Western and Eastern Galicia, than on the lives of the people that built it, taking into account the transfer of knowledge, modernisation, and the industry's influence on highbrow and popular culture. The episode is examined within the context of civilisational processes in Central Europe, as well as from the perspective of the contemporary fuel crisis and the impact of fossil fuels on the environment. Scholars consider the Polish, Ukrainian, Austrian, and Jewish perspectives and adopt a broader chronological and geographic framework. Research enquiries are ongoing in museums, archives, and private collections, alongside work on the curatorial plan. The project will culminate in an international conference, a scholarly publication, and a narrative exhibition at the ICC Gallery in autumn 2027.

DISSONANT HERITAGE

The forthcoming edition of the project seeks to advance the European debate among scholars from different centres and to create a space for in-depth discussion of dissonant heritage. One aspect of this work involves updating the catalogue of architectural and planning works left behind by the Third Reich in present-day Poland.

As part of the collaboration between Polish and German institutions, a series of workshops on architecture and urban planning in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe was launched in 2024. These meetings offer a forum to reconsider key issues and research approaches, focusing on the history of spatial planning and architecture. The first workshop in this series was held in Turek in May 2024, the second in Poznań in December 2024, and the third in October 2025 at the Nordost-Institut in Lüneburg. The next workshop will take place at the ICC in Kraków.

UKRAINE – HOW TO STEAL A STATE

The project *How to Steal a State* reflects on recent history and contemporary Ukrainian culture. Against the backdrop of ongoing Russian aggression, an exhibition with the working title *How to Steal a State* will be developed. The curatorial plan will draw on research by the international Vertical Geopolitics Lab, showing how Russia has instrumentalised architecture to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. The project will also engage with contemporary Ukrainian art, offering insight into how the war is reshaping urban spaces and the social fabric of Ukrainian cities.

POSTMODERNISM

This research project focuses on architecture and design in Central Europe during the 1980s and 1990s, engaging with the broadly defined concept of postmodernism in the visual arts. Scholars examine the economic, social, and cultural causes of the transformations that reshaped the region's cultural landscape during this period. They analyse major artistic and architectural trends and explore the similarities and differences between Central European countries during the pivotal years of the collapse of communism, the onset of transition, border changes,

and the growing need to redefine symbols of identity and embed them within the cultural landscape and social life of the region. The project will culminate in an exhibition and accompanying publication. Work on their conceptual development is scheduled for 2026.

EUROPEAN HERITAGE HUB

As a partner of the European Heritage Hub (EHH), in 2026 and 2027 the International Cultural Centre will conduct research on the non-governmental heritage sector in eight European countries.

The EHH is one of the largest heritage projects financed by the European Union. The project brings together over twenty institutions and organisations from all of Europe, including the ICC and the Kraków Society of Friends of the History and Monuments (TMHIZK), and led by Europa Nostra, the largest and most representative cultural heritage network in Europe.

In concert with the Kraków Europa Nostra Heritage Hub team headed by the TMHIZK, the ICC will continue the research project begun in 2023, which culminated in the publication of the 2025 report *Mapping of the Central and Eastern European non-governmental heritage sector.* It presented the non-governmental heritage sector in ten Central and Eastern European countries, including the analysis of statistical and empirical research on its condition, challenges, and needs. In 2026, the non-governmental heritage sector of countries in Northern and Western Europe will be studied, and the next report will be prepared in 2027. Ultimately, the mapping is intended to cover all of Europe and will constitute a comprehensive analysis of its non-governmental heritage sector — the only study of its kind focused specifically on heritage.

Within the EHH framework, activities aimed at public engagement with heritage will also be undertaken, including podcasts in the Holistic Heritage series, produced in collaboration with the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Kraków, as well as networking initiatives.

THE ACADEMY OF HERITAGE

20th edition: January–September
21th edition: October–December

A postgraduate programme in cultural heritage management organised since 2001 in cooperation with the Cracow University of Economics School of Public Administration. It is addressed to employees in public administration or conservation and heritage services; teachers, museum and culture professionals; and anyone with an interest in cultural heritage. Participants attend lectures and seminars covering economic, legal, social, and political issues, and learn about contemporary heritage protection and resource management instruments. Classes are held in the following subject areas: theory of heritage conservation; legal and financial aspects of heritage protection; marketing and promotion of cultural heritage; human and resource management in institutions of culture; cultural heritage in spatial planning and public administration; tourism; and museums. The programme includes workshops on management of cultural institutions and cultural heritage sites in the form of study tours. The final element of the course is a project addressing one of the seminar themes.

THE ACADEMY OF HERITAGE FOR UKRAINE

15th edition: June–July

Training programme for Ukrainian museum staff and culture sector employees held in Kraków and selected towns in southern Poland. The first round was held in November 2023; the cyclical programme is held once a year. The focus of the fourth edition will be on key issues concerning innovative technologies in cultural heritage. The 2026 programme will centre on the use of VR and AR technologies, multimedia in exhibition narratives, AI in the daily operations of cultural institutions, the digitisation and accessibility of heritage, the presentation of the latest non-invasive conservation methods, and 3D modelling, illustrated through the work of Polish institutions. Activities within the project aim to enhance participants' skills while also maintaining relationships between institutions in Poland and Ukraine. The programme is being implemented in collaboration with the Ancient Zvenyhorod historical and cultural site, the City of Lviv, and the Polish Institute in Kyiv.

☞ *www.mck.krakow.pl/akademia-dziedzictwa-dla-ukrainy*

THESAURUS POLONIAE

33rd edition: March–August

A fellowship programme established by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and run by the International Cultural Centre in Kraków since the autumn of 2009, addressed to foreign scholars (not Polish citizens) conducting research into the culture, history, and multicultural heritage of the Polish Republic and Central Europe. Scholars from the fields of history, art history, sociology, ethnography, cultural anthropology, and related areas are eligible to apply. As in previous years, the ICC will hold two competitions for prospective fellows. Fellows reside and conduct research in Kraków.

☞ *www.mck.krakow.pl/thesaurus-poloniae*

V4 HERITAGE ACADEMY

MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES IN VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

15th edition: June–July

The week-long educational programme for employees of cultural institutions and conservation services, and students from Central Europe is organised by the ICC in conjunction with its Visegrad partners and run under the auspices of the V4 Working Group of Cultural Heritage Experts. It focuses on the management of heritage sites of supranational significance, such as those on the UNESCO World Heritage List or those awarded the European Heritage Label. It is held in a different Visegrad country every year. The subject of the 2026 edition will be the heritage of the Gemer region of Slovakia.

CENTRAL LAB

Pilot project

September

In 2026, the ICC will launch a new educational project devoted to the idea of Central Europe, aimed at students as well as professionals working in, or interested in, the region. The four-day course, to be held in Kraków and in the tri-border region of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, will focus on the heritage, culture, and history of Central Europe.

EDUCATION PROMOTING HERITAGE

Programme for adults:

- *Mature for Art* is a series of events devoted to artistic issues and topics related to cultural heritage, including the protection of historic monuments and significant trends in contemporary culture. The programme comprises lectures and discussions and, depending on the theme, group visits to selected sites or sections of exhibitions. The meetings provide an opportunity for reflection, exchange of experiences, and building relationships among people with shared interests, fostering a sense of community. They encourage intellectual engagement, personal development, and the pursuit of passions at every stage of life.
- *Decades with Art* is a series of meetings devoted to art, culture, and cultural heritage in the broadest sense, drawing on the ICC's past exhibitions. The meetings are held in hybrid format, both on site and online, making it possible all interested audiences to participate, irrespective of their place of residence of ability to travel.
- *Walk with Us* is a series of urban walks that invite participants to explore local heritage outdoors. The routes lead through various districts of Kraków, highlighting the harmony between cultural heritage and natural assets. They include not only well-trodden tourist routes but also urban green spaces and less frequented areas. The walks provide an opportunity to build social connections and foster intergenerational dialogue: whole families take part, and residents of Kraków are encouraged to share personal experiences, recalling changes in their neighbourhoods and what the visited places once looked like. Through this initiative, the ICC extends its activities beyond the institution's walls, promoting active participation in culture, awareness of natural values, and the cultivation of meaningful and active leisure practices.

Programme for families:

- During the family art workshops *MINI Encounters with Art*, participants explore themes related to the broadly understood notion of cultural heritage, traditions, art, and customs. The workshops consist of an introduction to the topic and discussion, followed by a practical session involving a creative art task that enables participants to engage more closely with the subject matter and consolidate what they have learned. The workshops are designed for whole families, fostering intergenerational integration.

Programme for children and teens:

- *Use Heritage!* Classes on cultural heritage for school groups — sessions for primary and secondary schools in which pupils explore issues related to tangible and intangible heritage, multiculturalism, and civil society while also learning how to responsibly use cultural resources online. (Available on site and online.)
- *On the Trail of Heritage: Educational Walks for School Groups* — thematic urban walks for primary and secondary school pupils, which introduce the history, culture, and art of Kraków's neighbourhoods offering deeper exploration of curriculum-related topics on tangible and intangible heritage, multiculturalism, and civil society.

ŁUKASZ GALUSEK

WYOBRAŻONE STOLICE. MIASTA MONARCHII HABSBURSKIEJ JAKO OŚRODKI NARODÓW 1815–1918 [IMAGINED CAPITALS: CITIES OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY AS NATIONAL CENTRES, 1815–1918]

Polish edition

A comparison of the map of our part of the continent today with that of two centuries ago clearly shows that five cities which are now national capitals played no significant political or metropolitan role at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These are Budapest, Prague, Bratislava, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. Yet a hundred years later, when Central European nation-states were emerging in 1918, there was little doubt — Bratislava being the exception — which of the former Habsburg cities constituted the genuine centres of their respective nations. Moreover, as early as the nineteenth century, these cities were already perceived by individual nations as 'their' capitals and, at the moment of independence, possessed an almost complete capital-city programme necessary to fulfil this role.

By analysing the relationship between the city and the nation, the book traces the formation of the 'imagined capital' as the centre of a sovereign nation — not in the sense of political independence, but rather in spite of its absence, grounded instead in a consciously experienced distinctiveness vis-à-vis other citizens of the shared Habsburg state. The publication juxtaposes five cities selected according to a specific criterion: the role they played for 'their' nations, while at the same time representing the full spectrum of Habsburg urbanity — from Budapest, the monarchy's second metropolis after Vienna, with nearly one million inhabitants at its demise, to the small, forty-thousand-strong Ljubljana.

The book also addresses broader questions, namely: how do nations without states shape the capital status of the cities they adopt as their centres? In what ways does the analysis of a city reveal the forms through which nations exist, and how they are spatially imagined? How is the imagined community that is the nation communicated through the city? And under unfavourable, yet somewhat enabling, political conditions, how have nations without their own state realised their aspirations for cultural and civilisational agency through urban forms?

Volume 24 of The Central European Library series edited by Jacek Purchla.

IVAN LOVRENOVIĆ
BOŚNIA I HERCEGOWINA. WEWNĘTRZNY KRAJ [BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: THE INNER COUNTRY]
Polish edition
Translated from the Bosnian by Dominika Kaniecka

A sweeping essay, or rather a penetrating study, that provides a detailed analysis of the process of shaping the religious, cultural, and political profile of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author examines the country's plural cultural identity from a broad historical perspective — from the Paleolithic to the breakup of Yugoslavia. Lovrenović is concerned with both the origins and the assessment of the value of the centuries-long dialogue in which different civilisational and cultural models interacted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, producing the distinctive Bosnian paradigm of 'unity in diversity'. He explores the relationships between periphery and centre, highbrow and popular culture, and addresses issues of temporal and spatial boundaries. By inviting readers into this study, he offers insight into the process of seeking a personal framework for thinking about Bosnia.

This book sheds new light on the multiculturalism almost automatically attributed to Lovrenović's homeland. It provides both a synthesis of knowledge about a country whose development was brutally interrupted by war (1992–1995) and a vision of a future — or even possible — Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Volume 25 of The Central European Library series edited by Jacek Purchla.

LAURAJANE SMITH
WYKORZYSTANIA DZIEDZICTWA USES OF HERITAGE
Polish edition
Translated from the English by Aleksandra Kamińska

In her book, Laurajane Smith challenges the view that the value of heritage is self-evident and that objects should be preserved as a matter of principle because they inherently possess significance. Instead, she demonstrates that heritage value is not intrinsically tied to physical objects or places, but rather arises from the ways in which these objects and sites are used to sustain and reinforce values that are central

to different nations and social groups. The author presents case studies from the United States, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand, discussing diverse approaches to the use of heritage worldwide.

Volume 9 of the Heritology series edited by Agata Wąsowska-Pawlik.

VALDUR MIKITA
LEŚTONIA. ESEJE [FORESTONIA: ESSAYS]
Polish edition
Translated from the Estonian by Anna Michalchuk-Podlecki

'A good book is like a cabin whose back wall has fallen down, opening the gates to infinity,' writes Valdur Mikita in the titular essay of this anthology. The Estonian writer, semiotician, and professor of liberal arts at the University of Tartu demonstrates his nation's uncommon ties to the forest, nature, and the quiet wisdom of the landscape. With his characteristic lightness, humour, and philosophical reflection, the author reinvigorates disappearing cultural phenomena and ancient, magical ways of seeing the world. This poetic volume of essays is a witty, yet meditative narrative of a spirituality deeply rooted in nature.

Volume 4 of the ISTER series.

PERIODICALS

HERITO: HERITAGE, CULTURE, THE PRESENT
Nos. 59, 60, 61
Polish-English edition

A unique forum for discussion on heritage, culture, contemporaneity, and the future. In 2026 three issues of the periodical will be published. The working themes of the forthcoming issues are *Moravia* (59), *Central Europe* (60), *Postmodernism* (61).

☞ *www.herito.pl*

Dziedzictwo, kultura, współczesność
Heritage, culture & the present
Herito

THE ICC YEARBOOK

Polish and English editions

This publication will summarise 2025 — the thirty-fourth year of the ICC's operations. It will be published in two editions: Polish and English (the latter solely as an e-book), in keeping with the style of the previous editions in terms of graphic design and editorial format.

RIHA JOURNAL

The RIHA Journal is a peer-reviewed, open-access, web-only periodical devoted to art history and visual culture in the local, regional, and international perspectives. It was launched in April 2010 as a joint project of the International Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art (RIHA), published by the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich. The ICC in Kraków is one of more than twenty member organisations of RIHA across the world, and as such operates as a local editorial office.

The RIHA Journal is indexed on the Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Current Contents/Arts & Humanities, Scopus, ERIH PLUS (the European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences), and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Since 2019 it has been indexed on the Polish ministerial list of academic periodicals. Its mission is to disseminate research results and knowledge shared by researchers from various countries and academic centres, and, in consequence, to break down borders between scholarly communities.

☞ *www.mck.krakow.pl/riha-journal*

Journal of the
International Association of Research
Institutes in the History of Art

RIHA JOURNAL

THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE LIBRARY

The ICC library gathers and offers access to collections on subjects including the history and theory of culture, cultural heritage, monuments conservation, and identity and memory in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as intercultural dialogue.

The state-of-the-art Alma library system runs on the Primo search engine, and we also have a free Academica digital loans terminal, which gives readers access to almost four million publications from all fields of knowledge, including the most recent, still under copyright.

In 2026, the library plans to renew its membership of the JSTOR consortium, which will ensure, thanks to funding from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, continued access to selected collections (Arts & Sciences II, III, VII) of the multi-disciplinary JSTOR digital library. In addition, databases of the Wirtualna Biblioteka Nauki [Virtual Science Library] will be made available under national licenses at computer workstations in the Reading Room.

Plans include intensifying the exchange of ICC publications and streamlining the management of duplicate materials, as well as expanding the collection of the *Bibliografia zawartości publikacji Międzynarodowego Centrum Kultury* [Bibliography of the Contents of International Cultural Centre Publications] and the Thesaurus Poloniae fellows' collection.

In conjunction with the planned renovation, the library will be temporarily closed.

☞ *www.mck.krakow.pl/aktualnosci-biblioteka*

International
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ICC Gallery and Bookshop
Our opening hours are updated regularly at:
mck.krakow.pl/informacje-dla-zwiedzajacych
tel.: +48 12 42 42816

Online bookshop: www.ksiegarniamck.pl
Our Customer Service Office is open
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ICC Library
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With the financial support of:

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
Republic of Poland