**The 40 years of ”Panorama of the Battle of Racławice” in Wrocław**

**The very first meeting of the descendants and members of the families of the painters who created the famous Panorama of the Battle of Racławice, the opening of the exhibition “From a sketch to the Panorama”, the plein-air display showing the complicated post-war fates of the canvas, a competition of dedicated films entitled “My Panorama”, and the nationwide advertising campaign – these are the most significant events marking the celebrations of the forty years of “Panorama of the Battle of Racławice” in Wrocław.**

The painting was created in 1893–1894 in the then Lwów [now Lviv] to commemorate the victorious Battle of Racławice (4 April 1794), fought by the insurrection forces led by Tadeusz Kościuszko against the Russian army. The idea of painting ”Panorama Racławicka” originated from the local artist, Jan Styka (1858–1925), who then invited Wojciech Kossak (1856–1942), a prominent painter of battle scenes, to participate in the project. They were also aided by Ludwik Boller, Tadeusz Popiel, Zygmunt Rozwadowski, Teodor Axentowicz, Włodzimierz Tetmajer, Wincenty Wodzinowski and Michał Sozański.

The canvas of ”Racławice Panorama” arrived in Wrocław in 1946, yet nearly forty years had to pass before it could be shown to the public. The ‘inconvenient’ subject of the painting – a triumph of Polish troops over the Russian army – was a cause of concern for the Polish authorities at that time, who stalled making a decision about showing it in public. However, during all these years ceaseless efforts were undertaken to exhibit this work. As early as in 1947 a Commission for Renovating the Racławice Panorama was established,which in 1956 was followed by the constituting of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Panorama. A year later a competition was announced for designing a rotunda to house the painting, with the winning project created by Ewa and Marek Dziekoński. The construction of the rotunda commenced in 1966 based on the design of Engineer Jan Weryński was completed in record time from 12 to 23 June 1967, yet the building remained unfinished for the following 12 years.

The political changes and the events of August 1980 finally led to reaching the long awaited decision about the conservation and public display of “Racławice Panorama”. The conservation work started on 1 December 1981, but very soon after – on 13 December – martial law was declared in Poland. The team of conservation specialists directed by Stanisław Filipiak did their utmost to continue with the work, even introducing a night shift in the workshop to prevent its closure.

Following over four years of concerted effort on the part of the Social Committee for the Panorama of the Battle of Racławice headed by Professor Alfred Jahn, the Realisation Team managed by Danuta Wielebińska, and the Conservation Team led by Stanisław Filipiak, and on 14 June 1985 the official opening of “Racławice Panorama” took place. From that day it has become the most important tourist attraction of the city and continues to receive the unfailing interest of visitors. So far the painting has been viewed by 12 million persons, with the highest number of 508 882 recorded in 1988, whereas in the year of the COVID-19 pandemic – ‘merely’ 60 875. Recent years showed a marked increase in viewing figures, and in 2023 and 2024 the Museum ”Panorama Racławicka” noted the second and third highest number of visitors in its history (in 2023 – almost 477 thousand, and in 2024 around 472 thousand).

The jubilee celebrations held on 14 June 2025 will include persons with the highest merit, thanks to whom it was possible to put “Racławice Panorama” on public view in 1985. Among those invited are Ewa Dziekońska, architect and co-creator of the building, Jan Weryński – engineer and author of the construction project, conservation specialists who prepared the canvas for display, as well as the driver who transported the painting returning to Wrocław from Warsaw. The guest list also includes the previous and present staff of the Museum “Panorama Racławicka” – Branch of the National Museum in Wrocław, who for these four decades have dedicated their efforts and care to maintaining the condition of the painting and ensuring comfortable viewing for millions of visitors.

For the first time in the history of ”Racławice Panorama”, Wrocław will host a meeting of the descendants and family members of the painters who created this unique work. Participation has been confirmed by representatives of the families Styka, Kossak, Axentowicz, Rozwadowski, Sozański, Tetmajer and Wodzinowski.

On 14 June 2025, in the Main Building of the National Museum in Wrocław, the opening of the exhibition “Od szkicu do panoramy. 40-lecie udostępnienia »Panoramy Racławickiej« we Wrocławiu” [15.06–12.10.2025] takes place, showcasing sketches, designs and preparatory drawings which illustrate the creative process leading to the completion of the monumental Panorama of the Battle of Racławice by Jan Styka and Wojciech Kossak. The highlight of the exhibition, providing the focus of its entire narration, is “Mała Panorama Racławicka” – a small version of the canvas – on loan from a private collection.

Residents of Wrocław and tourists alike can learn about the complicated fate of the painting thanks to the plein-air exhibition organised in the vicinity of the Rotunda housing the canvas. The National Museum in Wrocław has also prepared a film competition ”Moja Panorama”[My Panorama], and asked for sharing personal recollections connected with the Panorama. The main prize is PLN10 thousand, and the second and third winner will be awarded PLN 5thosand and PLN 2 thousand, respectively.

The jubilee celebrations of the Branch of the National Museum in Wrocław are also accompanied by promotional campaigns. The nationwide campaign is centred around a dialogue between the Panorama of the Battle of Racławice with symbols of other Polish cities, whereas the local campaign, #LiczySięPanorama, is focused on the surprising anecdotes linked with creating the great canvas. ”Racławice Panorama” will be promoted by a special tram and a commemorative mural painted on one of the historic tenement houses in the centre of the city.

The following publications commemorate the jubilee:

* *Od szkicu do panoramy. Czterdziestolecie udostępnienia Panoramy Racławickiej we Wrocławiu,* by Natalia Sienkiewicz
* *Panorama Racławicka z bardzo bliska, czyli zoom na detal,* by Izabela Trembałowicz-Chęć with photographs by Wojciech Rogowicz

as well as:

* *Panorama Racławicka. Przygoda z Super-Tadem*
* New edition of the album *Panorama Racławicka,* by Romuald Nowak
* *Panorama Racławicka. Idea – Kontekst – Współczesność,* by Romuald Nowak and Beata Stragierowicz
* *Panorama Racławicka* (with a leporello), by Romuald Nowak and Beata Stragierowicz

**Programme of the celebrations**

**13 June 2025**

**11am–12pm** – press conference [the MNWr café]

**4pm–5pm** – preview of the exhibition [”Od szkicu do Panoramy. 40-lecie udostępnienia Panoramy Racławickiej we Wrocławiu”] for the Society of Friends of the National Museum in Wrocław [MNWr, room 216]

**14 June 2025**

**12–13.20pm** – meeting with descendants and families of painters of “Racławice Panorama” [main reception area MNWr]

**3pm–4.30pm** – jubilee celebrations in the Museum “Panorama Racławicka”

* speeches
* unveiling a commemorative plaque dedicated to Stanisław Filipiak, conservation specialist
* ceremony of awarding the Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture
* viewing the plein-air presentation dedicated to the history of the Panorama of the Battle of Racławice in Wrocław

**4.30pm-5.30pm** – viewing in the Museum ”Panorama Racławicka”

**6pm** – official opening of the exhibition “Od szkicu do Panoramy. 40-lecie udostępnienia »Panoramy Racławickiej« we Wrocławiu”[From a Sketch to the Panorama. Forty Years of Viewing the Panorama of the Battle of Racławice in Wrocław] at the National Museum in Wrocław.