



## A PUBLIC – SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Villa Decius is a laboratory of ideas and good practices with a European reach, where the tradition of Renaissance humanism meets the challenges of the contemporary world. We develop solutions in the fields of public diplomacy and cultural management making culture vibrant, accessible, and responsive to change.

A modern cultural institution is a co-created space; therefore, our work is grounded in a pioneering **public–social partnership model**. This innovative and open approach to cultural governance brings together public resources with the energy and mission of the civic sector. Villa Decius is founded on the partnership of the **City of Kraków and the Villa Decius Association**, which enables us to combine the stewardship of a unique historic landmark and the delivery of public responsibilities with the creativity of the social sector. Thanks to this synergy, Villa Decius is an inclusive place — managed transparently and co-curated by our residents, partners, and artists.

*The year 2025 marked the thirtieth consecutive year in which Villa Decius drew on the rich heritage of this site, expanded its nationwide impact, and further strengthened its international recognition. The outcome of Villa Decius's work is the reinforcement of a critical infrastructure of empathy—a **network of relationships among institutions, artists, and cultural audiences, resilient in the face of contemporary crises of values, trust, and agency.** Media visibility, together with Villa Decius' engagement in international networks, expert panels, and leading sector conferences, consolidates our position—as an institution based in Krakow, Poland—on the map of European cultural exchange and public diplomacy.*

Dominika Kasprowicz  
Director, Villa Decius

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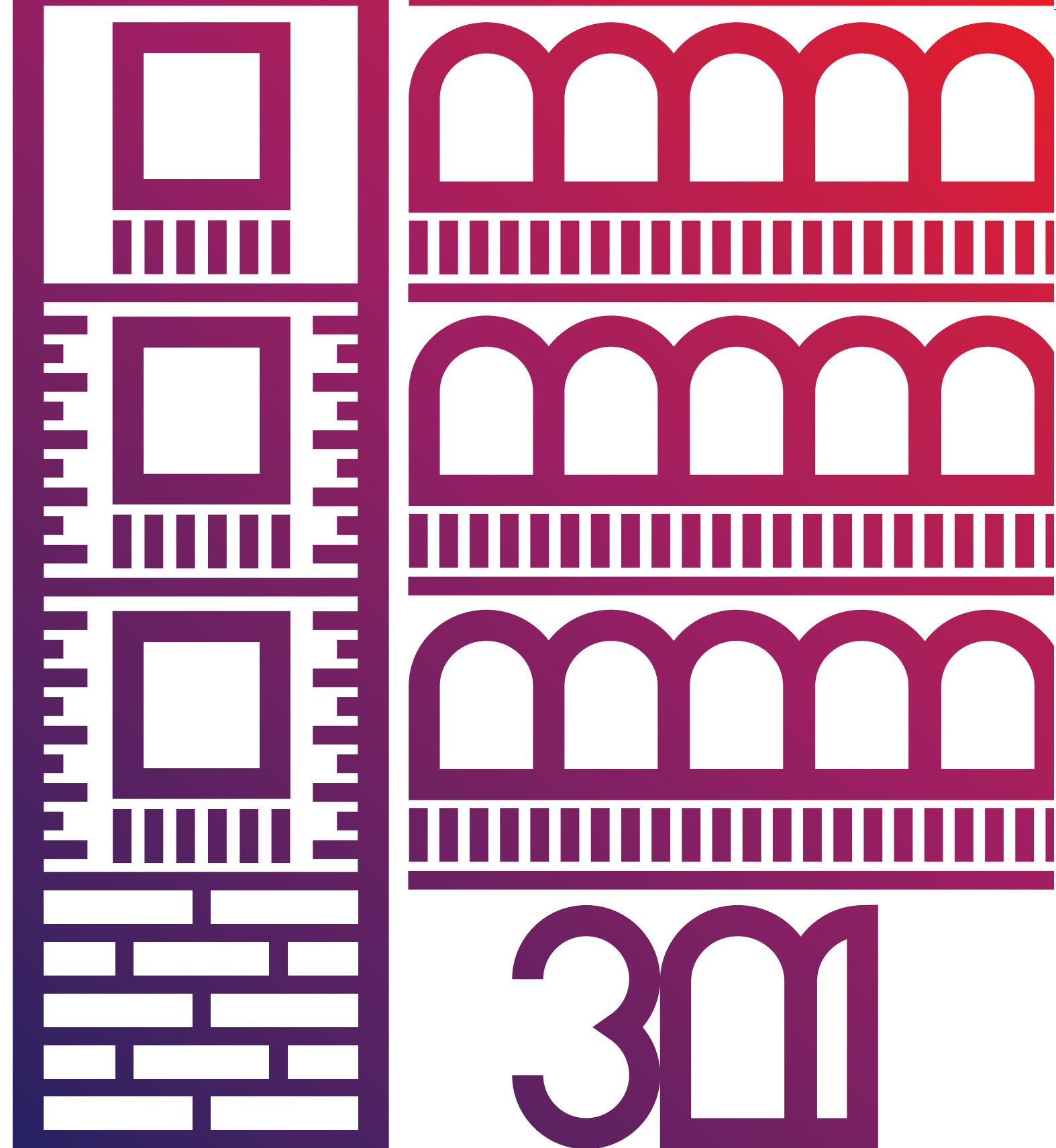
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# Villa Decius

a meeting place



## Villa Decius is a recognised participant in the international circulation of culture, an important national reference point, and a lasting part of Kraków's local ecosystem.

In 2025 more than 25 programmes, 500 events, 175 partner institutions, 25 residents from 13 countries, 28,000 direct participants, and over eight million people reached through communications demonstrate the success of **a model in which cultural activity is not a collection of events, but a process—rooted simultaneously in place, community, and the European context.**

## For 30 Years — In Support of Dialogue Between Nations and Cultures

Villa Decius is a place where the ideas of freedom and intercultural dialogue take tangible form.

→ **The Polish Prize of Sérgio Vieira de Mello**, named after the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is a focal point where the most important strands of our mission converge. For 23 years, we have recognised leaders and organisations from around the world who uncompromisingly defend human rights and the dignity of every person.

→ **The Visegrad Summer School** is the flagship Polish project of the Visegrad Group. Since 2002, it has brought together more than 900 alumni and experts, building a unique and lasting platform for capacity building and regional cooperation.

*When I try to grasp, in synthetic terms, the diversity and multi-directional richness of the activities carried out at Villa Decius, three key words come to mind: exchange, trust, and understanding. Exchange—because culture is enriched through dialogue, through meetings of communities and individuals, in creative exchange. Trust—it is indispensable for exchange to be fruitful and for openness to the values proposed by partners. Understanding—because today's world, full of challenges, suffers from a deficit of understanding, which the Villa seeks to address by providing a sense of security and opening perspectives towards the future.*

Henryk Woźniakowski  
Chair of the Board,  
Villa Decius Association



photo: Beata Zawrzel



photo: Pawel Mazur

## Villa Decius — Kraków, Europe, the World

### Art as a Tool for Understanding

Villa Decius is a place where literature becomes a bridge between communities and nations.

**In 2025, we helped shape the Polish and European literary and artistic landscape through i.e.:**



photo: Michał Malecki

→ **“Radar” Magazine** — the only trilingual literary periodical in Europe (PL/DE/UA), demonstrating that the language of culture transcends national borders.

→ **Literary Residencies** — we provide Polish and international writers and translators with space to work, recognising that literature requires time, attentiveness, and freedom.

→ **The Karl Dedecius International Prize and the Visegrad Literary Award** — we honour those whose work builds solidarity and mutual understanding in Central Europe and beyond.

*Villa Decius is one of the most reliable places in Central Europe that truly supports artists. It is a place that helps people who want to create something new—to create without pressure or disruption. This is truly invaluable.*

Ivan Štrpka  
Slovak poet, prose writer, essayist,  
and translator

*By reading the anthology Literature in Exile, you will encounter ten exceptional authors from Angola, Belarus, Iraq, Cuba, Syria, and Turkey who have taken risks in their lives. These are writers forced to leave their homelands because they refused to give up the freedom of what they think and write. Each of them carries a unique story worth listening to. Without freedom of speech, democracy slowly—yet inevitably—suffocates and dies.*

Helge Lunde, Director of the  
International Cities of Refuge Network  
(ICORN)

### The Right to Culture and Freedom of Its Creators

Genuine dialogue is possible in spaces where people feel safe. As an institution that promotes human rights and supports the well-being of artists and creators, **since 2013 Villa Decius has been a home where those whose voices are at risk can find refuge:**

→ **The ICORN and Scholars at Risk networks** — support programmes for writers and scholars persecuted in their countries of origin.

→ **Triangle for Ukrainian Artists** — in 2025, we continued our mission of supporting a free and democratic Ukraine, focusing in particular on artists and cultural professionals.

→ **The Villa Decius Publishing Series**, including, among others: Literature in Exile: An Anthology of the International Cities of Refuge Network ICORN in Poland (Krakow, 2025)

## A local International Institution

Strzelnica na Woli, a historic site revitalised in 2025, has become a place **where the care for heritage goes hand in hand with concern for the well-being of Kraków residents.** It is an example of a “third place” — a space for meeting, cooperation, and personal development, regardless of age. In just four months of 2025, 3,240 people visited us, co-creating 74 initiatives. By collecting unique stories—from family memories to accounts of the changing Zwierzyniec district—we began building the Wola Justowska Community Archive: a safe haven for these narratives, protecting them from being forgotten and strengthening local identity.



photo: Pawel Mazur

### Investing in the Future: Decius Ducats and the Youngest Audiences of Culture

Villa Decius' activities address diverse age groups. For 15 years, Decius Ducats — an educational programme shaping civic attitudes and the competencies of tomorrow—has brought together hundreds of students from Krakow and the Małopolska region each year, fostering critical thinking and teaching budgeting skills and the principles of entrepreneurship. Justus Decius, a visionary of economics and management, continues to inspire younger generations to plan creatively and responsibly.

## Active 60+ — Sensitive and Accessible Culture

The Senior Activity Centre at Villa Decius (CAS) is one of several key local programmes addressed to older adults. Its distinctiveness lies not only in the scale and regularity of activities since 2018, but above all **in the way we think about people, regardless their age—as active participants in cultural life, co-creators of the programme, and fully entitled residents of the city.** From the outset, the initiatives addressed to older adults have been based on the conviction that culture is one of the fundamental tools for sustaining intellectual, social, and emotional activity in later life.

### Heritage Protection

In 2025, we have continued conservation and modernisation works which — although sometimes less spectacular than major events—are in practice decisive for whether the monument remains safe, resilient, and increasingly accessible. **Safeguarding the historic fabric of Villa Decius is an expression of our care for an important part of Europe's heritage.**

*I am very pleased that, thanks to these inspiring initiatives, we have had the opportunity to rediscover not only Strzelnica na Woli itself, but also other places connected with Wola Justowska, as well as more distant regions and cultures. I believe a strong direction has been chosen for the development of this place, which is once again full of life and truly open—to ideas, to meetings among neighbours, and to encounters with other residents of Kraków.*

Justyna  
Resident of Wola Justowska;  
participant in events at Villa Decius  
and Strzelnica na Woli