



STUDIO / WORKSHOP

Performance Art. Perspective and synthetic educational strategies.

Janusz Bałdyga

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Poznań 2016

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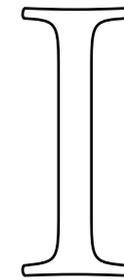
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Performance Art Studio
The Faculty of Sculpture and Spatial Actions
at The University of Arts in Poznan

Professor in charge:
Prof. Janusz Bałdyga
Assisting lecturer:
Marta Bosowska, PhD

The title of research:
Ephemeral Art and its educational strategies – on a borderline of sculpture, installation
and drawing. (Educational strategies of Performance Art)

The research has been done by the following research team:
Prof. Janusz Bałdyga and Marta Bosowska, PhD



Studio

introduction

The educational process in Performance Art Studio ties with a broad spectrum of artistic practices dominated with a need for direct contact. It is based on two fundamental pillars of performance art: overt process and presence, which implicates the present time as the primary condition for the event. We are witnesses and participants. We participate in the shaping of its structure and strategy of behaviour. The overt process, in other words, the openness resulting with an ability to access the essence of artwork at every stage of its development, makes it an efficient educational and self-educational tool even in moments when we have not got a specific intention to initiate an educational process. The openness of performance art and a contact with an observer, which accompanies the act of creation, pose a task of a permanent presence in the building process of a message. It often is fused with doubts, mistakes, but also with brilliant solutions. Performance sets the rules of action during its development. The form of the artwork is often created as a result of the observers' reactions, a sudden decision, or realising the weight and meaning of decisions taken at a particular moment.

The concept of education achieved through workshop activities seen as creative acts initiate methods grounded in an actual space and time. It puts great emphasis on co-presence and co-responsibility. The area of education, in this case, is in the studio. It may be described as a set of independent personalities. People who are engaged in various degrees, with different levels of awareness, and who formulate in a variety of ways their aims and aspirations. Studio treated as a group creates a social space which serves as a context for individual activities. They are the essence of the process of education. Even when we understand the role of the studio in building the group's awareness, we need to retain a sense of individual responsibility and personal creative insight. We learn to act in solitude, not in loneliness.

An important segment, which completes the educational process of Performance Art Studio is a project developed by Marta Bosowska, a junior lecturer working with me. It is entitled 'Checkpoint'. The project is based on a particular, un-researched place in a selected by Bosowska time.

It consists of a series, overlapping actions in an open and simultaneous order. The place is always carefully selected. It usually culminates in the form of an architectural or a communicational element. The part in question introduces the participants of the project into an open social space. The social character is set by the place in public space and a contact with an outside observer, who sometimes becomes a participant. This open formula enables all to take part in the action. Checkpoint gathers not only students from our studio, but also supporters and artists, who identify themselves with Bosowska's concept. It is worth mentioning here some names of participating people, for example, Zygmunt Piotrowski, Przemysław Przepióra and Marta Bosowska, of course.

Participation in an educational process catered for in the studio should make room for an initiation of personal auto-didactic concept. Performance Art Studio is located in the context of sculpture and object – this is not a random choice. This particular decision belongs to a simple strategy of development envisaged by The Faculty of Sculpture and Spatial Actions. For me, it represents an excellent context for actions as both an artist and a teacher. We put forward questions about the essence of understanding sculpture in the framework of an event. We want to delve into the meaning of space between created object and a human – the creator of a new artistic entity. A man and an object find a specific binding agent in an effective gesture filling the space 'between' and in time dedicated to the artwork creation. Space, its study and description are starting points for building the strategy of action, its scale and language character. While considering the studio's rich collection of experiences, I selected several projects that were open, public presentations. My choice was determined by an active participation of students in new situations, where an institutional context (being a host and a producer), as well as a status of an observer, set the boundaries of a traditional studio's model.

It is necessary for the concept of education developed within a university to be tested in the context of workshops and educational actions carried out in art galleries, culture houses, or during art festivals. Another important aspect is in the art practice of the lecturer. It is always an important reference point for both educational processes worked upon at Performance Art Studio, as well as during workshops outside the university.

Janusz Bałdyga

1

Students' projects outside the Studio

UNEASE

UP Gallery

Berlin 2015



The participation of our students in a project entitled 'Unease' in Berlin's UP Gallery was a significant experience in the educational process. It is worth noting here the inspirational role of the unique gallery's floor-plan. It determined all actions. The choice of space was a critical decision. As a consequence, we faced new possibilities, but also new boundaries. The gallery plan – divided into four, connected, rectangular rooms, one large front window and a long narrow corridor – determined the performances of our students. The scale of performances and their public character depended greatly upon the tradition of the place, its social meaning and popularity. While being aware of that, we felt responsible for studying as well as for possible social, social and economic conditions of the workplace. I accepted the place and its plan as the primary impulse for action. Following that, I would like to base my reflection on Paulina Pankiewicz's work entitled 'Plan'. Her underlying assumption was based on an idea of tracing the complicated, elaborate gallery plan with a soft textile tape. 'I position my references against a place, which I did not know the day before. I draw the gallery's plan with the black line; I trace meticulously every room, centimetre after centimetre. I surround the space with black tape. Next, I destroy the traced plan by taking it outside, moving it somewhere else – black line becomes a substitute of the place.'¹ The space of corridor is a communication sphere. It is a place for constant change. It is an introduction to transitional action, in which stopping or reminding motionless goes against the sense and character of the space fragment. A corridor and tunnel are communication

¹ Pankiewicz, Paulina *Notatki robocze - rękopis [Notes - Manuscript]* Warsaw 2015

buildings, which organise the relocation of a human by the principles of sensible space use. Both features have got a character of lead which directs our steps in an appropriate direction. The corridor may accept a function of a trench, therefore a military unit. In army tradition to gives protection, but it is also a safe space to prepare an attack. A tunnel, as a physical form is close to us. While at the same time, it limits the scale and expression of an action, it is a sleeve of our shirt. Well-fitted to the proportions of our body and figure character, it represents an unmistakable guide for our hand. A sleeve guides well the hand to the cuff 'portal'. On the other hand, the physicality of an air corridor is a category of invisibility, valueless structure, which allows for the knowledgeable to manage without collisions the flights of planes. What happened in this narrow corridor of UP Gallery in Berlin was the act of universalising and expanding the meaning of that concept. A narrow passage posed specific requirements. It became a passage of permanent presence in constant, oscillatory, trace-leaving, linear performance by Mateusz Smoczyk. Another place was the main window of the gallery. It allowed for double-sided observation of action: from the outside to inside of the closed space (we see then the image of the interior as a background for action); and from the inside out. We could watch the figures of the performing artists with the street and passers-by going past the gallery, or standing in the street watching the show as background. There were cars and lights passing. Another thing that came about as a result of that place's choice was a projection, which took the shape of a double-sided

Dobrawa
Deczkowska,
Justyna
Kuchta,
Gallery UP,
Berlin 2015,
photo by
Marta
Bosowska



Paulina Pankiewicz, UP Gallery, Berlin 2015, photo by Marta Bosowska

reflection in the window. I am talking here about Dobrawa Deczkowska's and Justyna Kuchta's performance in the gallery window. Particular features of a place, its shape, which arises from static elements such as walls, ceiling, stairs, but also close to the sphere of abstraction a crack or a slant, they all determine the character of our presence and undertaken decisions. Let us imagine space in which the ceiling is suspended at the height of 150 cm. Adaptation of those conditions for existence is not a question of choice, but the necessity. The above-listed conditions have got very significant influence on the process of forming a performer's body; he may build a figure, therefore a sign of his presence between bending and lying position – we are talking here about border points of our expression and communication condition. Are those the only points? Probably not. Let us not forget that there are people amongst us who are shorter than 150 cm. Boundaries which determine their actions shall have different parameters. With that in mind, uncommonness of the chilling height in question may not be noticed. In this case, the gesture of transforming the elements bounding the space loses its power. Working in a place, which changed its function, but it reminded strongly infused with meanings and emotions requires a decision concerning a context, which became history. Or there may be a need to search for an exit point freed from erosion by passing time meanings. I have had an opportunity to work in buildings that used to serve as Catholic churches, for example, a well-adapted for art the church in Perugia. All signs of its former function were eliminated. There was also a different case where I was suggested to work in a similar (by definition) solution. In that case, however, the concept of 'post-sacral space' was defined in a different way. Late-baroque church on an island Faial, Azores, was strongly infused with sacral icons-sphere. There was also a devotional layer visible.



Mateusz Smoczyk, UP Gallery, Berlin 2015, photo by Vitalii Shupliak



Performance Art Meeting

Labirynt Gallery

Lublin 2015

It was stripped of its sacral function many years ago by taking away an object that represented the clue of a religious ritual – The Holy Sacrament symbolised by a red light. The rest of the space was left untouched with all its meanings. I had a choice whether to accept the curator's offer and undertake actions in response to the context of the church, or the traces of its function. Indifference for such strongly signalled context was not possible in my view. Time erases the meaning of places we happen to work in. We need to be aware that we superimpose on a found surface of meaning new ones, which we are in the process of formulating. We work in galleries, theatres and art centres. All these places used to be shops, sacral buildings, slaughter houses or synagogues. The act of undertaking an often forgotten context or a conscious overlooking it is our choice. We find ourselves in conditions shaped with stable structure of space in place and its meanings coded in traces, memory and tradition of a place. I am writing about formal consequences of researching the potential of a place to highlight the importance of the first gesture of performer's creation, which I see as a selection of an area.

Dobrawa
Deczkowska,
Justyna
Kuchta,
UP Gallery,
Berlin 2015,
photo by
Marta
Bosowska



Participation in a workshop project, where there is a meeting of students from two studios is a remarkably valuable experience. Especially when there is a great difference in their studio programmes and culture. It creates an internal field of confrontation. There is room for observation, and there is scope for attempting to transform the line of division, co-operation and sometimes what is inevitable a conflict.

A curator and director of Gallery Labirynt in Lublin, Waldemar Tatarczuk, juxtaposed two studio of performance art, both of them have their unique programmes: the first one was designed by Nigel Rolfe from London Royal College of Art and the second one by Janusz Bałdyga from University of Arts in Poznań. The sense of this invitation is hidden in differences of approach to both the way of building performance work and to educational practices. It seems to me that the practice encouraged in Poznan studio opens space for the new, often very involved in reception experience. There is no force for a spectacular effect. However, we need to realise that outside the context of public presentation in a professional art gallery, there is also a context of the educational process, which is consistently worked upon by a young artist. The actions of Poznan students, which happened simultaneously, and which stepped outside a schema of following one after other presentations, provoked a discussion about the strategy of action, time and a concept of presence within an actual event. I am also thinking about works which left the space of a gallery. They excluded a possibility of public company and observation. In this group, there are works, which were 24-hours-long in contrast to those, which duration could be described as a 'flick of a moment'. A concept of an educational project, where there is a participation of two equal subjects results with a decisive change of the educational plan. It exposes the difference and confrontation.

A plan of positioning school benches at the level of classroom structure sets a direction and a character of a predicted encounter. On one side there are students oriented towards the same direction, on the other, there is a teacher in opposition. Talmudic schools have accepted a different idea of space organisation. Benches are positioned facing each other. In this way what is achieved is a confronting attitude in the young participant of an educational process. A teacher is a dynamic, moving element, who provides opinions, or who intervenes when necessary. A model suggested by us in Lublin may be compared to the second situation. It assumed a confrontation as a mechanism, which we use to build individual concepts of art messages.

Janusz
Baldyga,
Balustrada
[Railing],
Gogol Fest,
Kiev 2014,
photo by
Marta
Bosowska

Together with presentations by the students of Performance Art Studio from the University of Arts in Poznań, Janusz Baldyga delivered a lecture entitled 'The Railing 2014-2015, or a story about a tube', and performance named 'Pole Dance'.



„The Railing 2014-2015, or a story about a tube.”

Performance as a story about a voyage / A journey as a metaphor

It has been a year since a performance I did in one of Kiev streets. It was entitled 'Stairs - the railing'. Even though the action was stretched out in time, I retained in my memory one image - this is a sequence in a photographic form, which I took outside the field and time of action. It shows a man hanging under and fixed under a slatted line of a steel railing. A sign was rather easy to interpret. It is possible to question it through juxtaposing: hidden - revealed or restricted - free. The presented photograph is an icon of a single sequence. It is devoted to the preceding the performance interpretation or a substantive justification. I could title the photo: 'I do not know what this photograph is talking about'. In my opinion it was sneaking into an already existing structure and permanence. A static image and long motionlessness gave an opportunity to assign this performance to growing in popularity concept of a duration performance - an action, which has got features of exposition. I achieved, however, a change of sense of the presented image. As a result, it became a sequence of a longer and more elaborate performance. As a starting point, I see an attempt to find an optimal initiation place, and therefore embarking on a journey or wandering. I think that the second term is closer to me. I treat performance as a story about a journey, which aim is only sensed.

Janusz Baldyga,
Taniec na rurze
[A Pole Dance],
Performance
Art Meeting,
Labirynt Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by Marta
Bosowska



Janusz Bałdyga,
Taniec na rurze
[A Pole Dance],
Performance Art
Meeting,
Labirynt Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by Marta
Bosowska

Or perhaps just like in a story about wandering, where the aim is aimless and moving in an indeterminate way. Wandering as a norm of performative action frees us from the rigours of a predicted result. Moving; a relocation gives a change in all spatial relations. What follows is freedom freed from meanings conditioned by context. Michel de Certeau in his book *The practice of everyday life* writes: 'IN MODERN ATHENS, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai. To go to work or come home, one takes a "metaphor" – a bus or a train.'² Almost every story speaks about moving; it is a story about a journey, which we can treat as practising space. If I want to describe a strategy of performance to happen, I use a 'map'. I delineate routes and borders by focusing the content in points of particular exposition. Using the space creates places; a usable space with a clear intention of a direct message is the area of performance.

I base the matter of performance on uniting an object, which I created. It is subjected to the criteria of my figure with all message senses, or reflection realised in that particular moment. Everydayness organises a position and moving of our body. It uses directions, prohibitions and requests – stop, forsake, turn back – or the opposite – run, go, execute.

Performance as an elementary gesture

While applying a planned object and done in accordance with the performance idea, I simultaneously design a strategy of its actions. The elementary activity is an ideal. It should be

as simple as lifting up, going past, a throw or rotation. Those actions, without an ideological vector of a result, become what they should be in their primary meaning. We can describe them in dimensions, weight or colour. But the sphere of meaning is left to be settled in time and event's space.

I would like to quote here a Hasidic story: When once Rabbi Bunam did someone an honour in his prayer house by asking to blow the ram's horn, that man was preparing himself for a long time, considering the meaning of sounds, and Rabbi finally shouted: "you fool, blow!"³. While considering the meaning of this wise story, I would like to make the last three words a call for performance – you fool, blow, or you fool, run etc.

Sometimes I return to my actions in the 1990s. I remember the titles of performances based on the mechanics of action, but not essential, a priori nominated meanings, for example, steps, throws, leaning out, and so therefore go, throw, lean out.

After performance – objects, traces, recordings

An object, which I use in performance is a sign of the beginning and a sign of ending – a residue, a material result of performance. Traces, transformations, defects – they are all iconic points in the development of performance. They assume a function of an action representative, not the doer.

We are dealing here with a mechanism of a form projection, a particular jump in the future. Let us see a spatial form as a source of emission. We feel intrigued more by an elongated or deformed shadow of a form than the form itself. It usually represents a hidden source and only an object of projection. In a cinema, we focus our attention on the screen. We are not interested in the complexity of a film projector, or a character of a celluloid frame. In the unbearable heat, the focus is a shadow of an umbrella, not its colour or shape, even though it is the reason of the state. In the above-mentioned situations, we are the users of the form projection effect, not the form itself. I focus on a physical aspect of a form since we are always accompanied by double-vector projection into the future and the past. I am thinking about a reconstruction, revitalization and analysis of traces in the first one, and about futurology and science fiction in the second case. Following this path, I arrive at issues related to a delineation of a scope and limits of utopia as a field of our imagination and often hidden dreams. Projection seen in this way supersedes a dichotomy past – future with possible – impossible. While facing such possibilities of choice, I tend to move towards the impossible. Present time in performance is time of its ephemeral, disappearing materialisation. I shall recall a few sentences by Richard Schechner from 1995: 'The sources of performance fade as quickly as they are produced, no note, reconstruction, or a film, no video recording can preserve it. One of the primary tasks to challenge performance researchers is to create a language and methodology, which could capture performance in its directness and ephemerality'⁴. I would

2. Certeau, Michel de, 1984, p 115: *The Practice of Everyday Life* University of California Press, Berkeley

3. Miłosz, Czesław, 1985, p 15: *Ogród Nauk* Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin

also like to quote Peggy Phelan from 1993: 'Performance cannot be preserved, recorded, or documented. It cannot participate in a different way in the circulation of representation, by seeking into it, it becomes something else from performance [...] the essence of performance [...] is done through the act of disappearing'⁵. The consequence is disappearance as a process linked with multiple repetitions until it is gone. It all is related to the strategy of action or energy exhaustion.

Performance as a multiple gesture.

Since the idea of my performance is linked with multiplicity, not repetition, I treat it as a process of multiple transformations based on an object – instrument. The function, possibilities and tradition of that object have not been fully identified. A definition of action seen as an act based on an unidentified object suits me very much. The code of performance is being created without unclear meanings of a constructed, found or ready-made object. I would like to draw the attention to a frequent usage of a ready-made object and an inclusion of it into a structure of performance. We are dealing with transformation of its form and meaning through a change of context, but also a physical interference into its shape, colour, etc. Another convenient mechanism is multiplication, and therefore including the object, the concept and gesture into a series of multiplicity. Multiplicity in everydayness, repetition of everyday gestures put our life into a rhythm. They order the meanings of transformations developing in time. Multiplication provokes and regulates the processes of change.

While talking about moving, relocation, I would like to direct our attention to the vehicle of that journey – a metaphor, which I have already mentioned in this lecture. It is an object, a sculpture brought into a state of anxiety, unceasing vibration. I am talking about an object, towards which it is tough to assume a definite stand. This is an object which Richard Nonas while being asked about features of a good sculpture, described as 'I enter the space of its severe domination, it happens that it is tight, stuffy, I approach, and it is looking at me'⁶. Nonas speaks about a necessity for a remarkable concentration, about a discomfort, about a unique projection of our identity. It decides to a great degree about a recognition of the meaning and importance of viewed work. 'I approach, and it is looking at me' – this is the first step. Nonas interrupted his story, but he did not talk about withdrawing. He suspended his voice and thus left the situation open. We are talking about an object entangled in the event, potentially, not fully identified.

An object in performance space takes responsibility for an initiation of the event since it creates an image expanded in time and space, an image of action, a starter for an event.

An image-sign transforms into an event. Its conversion, for example, being in the process of multiplicity, is a consequence of passing the time.

The structure of message throws the sign into a stream of constant transformation. The sign

sinks in; it transforms itself in following sequences of changes. Andrzej Partum called that process 'a vortex of eternal changes'. New positions of the object, traces left after it and traces made with it add up to form signs. Thanks to them we may attempt to reconstruct the string of sequences.

Paweł Kuligowski says that leaving a trace is leaving yourself with fragmentary nature of life; thinking, marking are attempts to transcend its incomplete nature. Therefore we thrive for settling an unstopping string of signs, or one icon, which represents the string.

Performance as an autonomous recording

There has been a legend retold by students at The Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, which was about a student, who in Printmaking Studio, drew a picture of a fish using a smoked mackerel. In principle, it was an example of graphics, if we assume that the fish was a matrix, or a drawing, we see it as a fat pencil or sanguine. Fish, which changes in front of us changes its image; it participates in an event, which surprising development dominates over the result; we are dealing with auto-recording, which had been initiated by an expressive gesture of a rebel.

While talking about an autonomous recording, I would like to relate to the concept of an icon. I shall recall here my work entitled 'Kołem się toczy' [It goes round]. The first performance was done in public gallery spaces. It had all features of an unpredictable action, which was exposed to crisis, catastrophe or too early exerted energy. I am presenting a photograph, whose author was trying to keep in shoot the performer in a position referenced to a tradition of Russian icons. To retain the standard of an icon has a meaning in interpretation of a yellow



Janusz Baldyga,
Light Move
Festival,
Lodz 2012,
photo by
Janusz Baldyga

4. Schneider, Rebecca, p 5: *Performance pozostaje za: RE//MIX [Performance remains for: RE//MIX]* edited by Tomasz Plata and Dorota Sajewska, translated by Dorota Sosnowska

5. As above, p 20

6. Nonas, Richard, 1991, *Notatki robocze – rękopis [Notes – Manuscript]*, Łódź



circle behind performer's head – it is a place in the frame, which confirms its meaning as a halo. The second performance was done in front of a static camera without any possibility of correcting the frame. The static frame points toward an unequivocal meaning of movement inside it: a rotating yellow circle and the process of sliding down the action. That movement is the key to the performance 'It Goes Round'. I believe that this recording, by moving the idea of performance, represents an independent and autonomous entity. I am showing here three performance recordings, which for the use of this lecture, I shall call iconic. They show the following performances: 'It Goes Round', 'Deceived – Saved', 'David's Triangles'. The selected elements of documentation underwent a transformation into an iconic record written into a traditional structure of triptych. The division into three, identified by a photograph or a film, is aided by symbols or written in slogans ideas: 'Be careful, glass', 'This is a fairytale about you even though it uses a changed name', 'Play back'. 19th-century aesthetician, Henryk Struve, while ordering types of arts through joining them into sibling-pairs, situated sculpture right next to oratory skills, or dramatic art. The thinker saw sculpture as the most beautiful form of quiescence, a form of perfect cessation of movement. It brings to my mind a folding chair used by Tadeusz Kantor in the show entitled 'Kurka wodna'. It was exposed in a glass cabinet in a theatre lounge. There was a description next to the object with text engraved on a brass plate, and it created a remarkable status of the object. The situation may be perceived differently by the fact that during that time in a gallery in Cracow's Krzysztofory,

Janusz Bałdyga
 1. Deceived - Saved, 2009
 2. It Goes Round, 2014
 3. David's Triangles, 2009



the revellers were sitting on the same chairs which Kantor used in his show 'Cricket 2'. At the back of the gallery, there were several more of them, broken, waiting for a repair or being trashed.

The question appears of if a sculpture entangled in the process of action may represent this action in the future by becoming its icon or a subjected trace. I believe that it is possible. But it is difficult for definitive opinions considering the fact that time just before performance is time preceding the principal resolution. It does not allow for responsible declarations. In short, we do not know what may happen. We stop 'before' because the artwork understood in traditional terms is not present yet. 'The work' shall be realised – we speak about future time to gradually move into past time. For performance, the present time is the domain in which the work is exposed so that shortly after its completion we consider it within the discipline of oblivion stretched between remembering and complete erasure from memory. We ask a question about ethical status of a documented performance and its documentation or a physical trace as a result of the entire process. If we apply an unconditional, often idealised ethical categories, we must question the existence of mechanical documentation of performance. By resigning from an archive documentation, or the stock-taking of the performance elements, we stand face to face with an autonomic fact that we are ready to forget or to keep in our memory a vanishing message. An image documenting an event is the direct consequence; a question arises about the function in the process of communication,

Akademia Ruchu, Everyday life after the Great French Revolution, Warsaw 1980, photo by Jan Pieniążek

or to be more precise in the process of transformation of the message. A documenting record creates an illusion and unauthorised sense of being present in the event. An example of questioning rules, which draw us closer to a standard of illusion is a series of photographs documenting monuments in Poland. It was created by a distinguished Polish artist Andrzej Dłużniewski. The monuments, which were erected to give honour, to remember and to glorify were photographed with a camera placed behind them. What was achieved was a collection of monument backs, they were freed from symbols, information and pathos. Taking a particular position of observation and recording defines a relationship between the documenting person and recorded reality. The act of making a portrait or a photograph for a passport with a view from the back is absurd. But those absurd activities are re-defined by art through an autonomic reality of the new message. Andrzej Dłużniewski in a conversation with me used a term 'performance's strategy', not 'performance script'. Understanding the difference allows noticing the sense and dynamics of repetitions in performance art.

At this point, we need to expand the scope of documenting. An event, which I would like to recall in the context of a strategy of recording is a show from 1979 by Academia Ruchu entitled 'Everyday life after the Great French Revolution'. The show in an unequivocal way defined the focus of observation. To be honest, it was an uncompromising delineating of one point of view on the extension of its axis, which is extended by a camera by entering the structure of the show. Changing the angle of perception, using trans-foculation or manipulating the frame were excluded. The particular 'optical object' – the architecture of the show – excluded that type of manipulation, it is eliminated. The show gives the cameraman – or let me put it in a better way, the camera specific tasks. Failing to achieve them would result with falsehood. I have an impression that the recorded image is in a way 'authorised' by the logic of the show's development. For that reason alone, a minimal deviation from the rigid rules of recording deforms the message of the show. The camera must record written into edges of the image performer's gesture. It cannot be released from the frame's context even for the moment. A film frame or a photo frame composes itself into a shot operative in this specific performance. Camera operator loses influence on its transformation; the show poses hard rules of game.

2

The Participants

Patrycja Plich
Julia Popławska
Szymon Kula
Léann Herlihy
Dobrawa Deczkowska
Zofia Kuligowska
Mateusz Fabiś
Mateusz Smoczyk
Justyna Kuchta
Berenika Pyza
Martyna Hadyńska
Adam Łuczak
Paulina Pankiewicz
Vitalii Shupliak
Paweł Tymcio
Valentin Merchan

I asked the students of Performance Art Studio, who took part in the project Performance Art Meeting to share their insights:

Patricia Plich

'A quick time event is when you're basically watching a scene you have no control over, and then you're asked to hit a button or two to "win" the event. Failure to do so may make you repeat the sequence, or it could cause your death; depending on how much the developers hate their audience. The idea being something really cool is happening, and you should watch, but you also have this thin illusion of control.' Ben Kuchera: Quick time events: 'tap "A" if you're tired of them' arstechina.com, 2009-10-19 [accessed on 2010-03-07]

You buy it; you bring it home, you connect it. In the first action you find out what it is. The original message. If we remember about it, or not, it is the first time when we have control over one of the mysterious forces. We want to receive feedback. We embrace our database; we do not want to let it go until we build a beautiful webpage for it. We need to remember, however, that when a computer was built, it did not have any applications. In a strange way, I started forgetting about it. [Patrycja Plich, An Update error]

The present time is defined by the speed with which changes occur. Contemporary human being is a person of progress. Determining present time is becoming more and more complicated. It is more and harder to define our being in present moment. Does it have value? Is there

Patricia Plich,
Quick time
event,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Patricia Plich



a value in jumping into the future and a projection of what is to happen? The concept of self-determination seems in principle to team up with a need to take control of the self and the control of the situation, which we want to merge into the meaning of our existence. Presence seems to be the key notion in performance art. But it is more and more re-defined considering the obvious progress located at the meeting point of the real and the translocated, the expanded and relative visual world. We are double present; we summon our re-birth in the visual world. We meet our relatives, we meet unknown people, and we confront with ourselves, by creating a mirror reflection of a human and a new environment for his entity. The reflective material here is a code and number wall. The wall of immaterial goods for the global and infinitive use. Trace, control and infinity. We stretch amongst those concepts, while at the same time we try to fit ourselves in the definitions imposed by the finite zero-one system. Measurability, translocation of and mutual ability to translate those two worlds are scopes subjected to constant reflection hovering over the concept of being in the present, but not surprising digital times.

Julia
Popławska,
Peace,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kołczewska

Julia Popławska

The space of Labirynt Gallery is built on a square. The action of the performer focused on running between the corners, which highlighted the size of space. When the artist was in the corners of the gallery, she would turn abruptly, and she would energetically show the audience the international peace sign while shouting a sentence: 'It's such a huge space, and I have only one gesture'. The words were directed at British-Polish students. The aim of the action was to appeal to end competition between the groups. It also aimed at turning the attention to the fact that there was enough gallery space to perform activity for all young artists.

Szymon Kula

My basic assumption while working in Performance Art Meeting was an open attitude. It was based on a direct reaction to a context in which I found myself. The final artwork was shaped upon not only a priori gestures or ideas but most of all with place, time and people in mind. In my understanding the action, although it is showed to viewers within a specific moment in time, does not have a precisely defined beginning and end. As the body is the



key element in performance, the process of working to complete the artwork is bound to it. For me, the work started a long time before the actual arrival in Lublin's Labirynt Gallery. Observation of the reality functioning is the field of my reflection and a source issues to work on. The body has got the function of litmus paper in reaction to a thing, object or space. It becomes a reference scale, and it mediates in the construction of meanings. The aspect of intuition has got for me the principle role, for that reason, I restricted myself to define materials which I want to work with. The rest was left for spontaneous decision. A significant stimulant in the process was a meeting with the students of Royal College of Art from London. In confrontation with their art attitudes, I had an opportunity to re-value many concepts. Co-operation or an artistic dialogue in the field of personal language, which I see in performance, requires great mindfulness and subtlety. It also opens a way to new qualities. This stage of the meeting was a crucial moment for me, and it directed my further work. A decision to undertake simultaneous actions during the group presentation was in a sense dictated by those experiences. The time together, but also space provoked a natural correspondence of individual utterances. In such situation, the responsibility was paradoxically divided amongst different people, but in each case, it remained intensified. The concentration was engaged not only through personal action but also through mindfulness towards the other actions. Defining your attitude carries the responsibility to respect answers to the actions of others. The selection of place, the force of gesture and relations with the viewers must be rooted in the awareness of constructed connotations. Such a situation lies bare the elements which occur in single actions. For example, a restriction to one gesture, an element of resignation, a direct reaction or improvisation. Clean and monumental space of Labirynt Gallery is a demanding background for performance actions. By trying to locate myself in this over-scaled 'white cube,' I assumed a strategy of relocation. By switching between fast step into run, I was moving amongst the public and my friends in their actions. In a natural way, The circle of my action was being marked. Finally, the place to stop was defined by exhaustion which disabled all other movements. The material, which I used to work with, was limited to the surface of my body. Shoes covered with white substance left delicate traces on the floor of the gallery. To recognise for viewers where the material came from occurred in the moment of moving it from the shoes to the face - it was cream which you normally apply to the face. The multiplication of that gesture resulted with the fact that the body stopped absorbing it. The white paste of cream created a mask not only on the face but also on hair and neck. The process lasted for as long as the material was taken from the shoes onto the skin. For the gallery context, the performance was performed and finished. But its consequences were prolonged, not only regarding fat, which was difficult to wash the body and hair, but also the gesture was documented, and it stayed in the memory. In a sense, it became part of a unified meta-narration together with other preceding and following actions. If we can talk about a painter that he paints all his life one painting, then an application of this saying in performance seems to be even more applicable.



Szymon Kula,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin, 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kołczewska

Léann Herlihy

The Point?

The artist in the institute

A man stands starkly - either from one's own volition or stipulation. Four bare concrete walls mimic his disrobed stature, hemming him acutely to the floor's centre point. The emphatic sound of dead air shackles him to muteness. Traced on the hard surface, his shadow lingers. Hindering any direct contact between warm flesh and cold concrete is space; the inner has become walled-up by the outer. Disturbances originating from within are of a different character from what lays beyond the walls; they are only brought about by the human being himself. All appearances that are traditionally familiar because of their singular expression, become mute to him. He no longer reacts to their appeal and is surrounded by silence.

The gathering

The bluntness of such an actuality brings with it a bleak after-thought, but for those of us who wish to benefit from this eventuality, we should first coin together a handful of brief diagrams, illustrating this above reality; that of a centrally-place point - the man - lying on a surface which is square in shape - the four walls - (Fig.1).

By it's very nature, the point may be defined as the smallest elementary form in the above illustration, however, this remark is not exact. It is difficult to fix the exact limits of the concept 'smallest form'. If another point was to enter the square, the points would become one, as they are increased by one another, until they inevitably cover the entire ground plane (Fig.2). One after the other, these inner

Léann
Herlihy,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kołczewska





Léanna Herlihy, Labirynt Gallery, Lublin 2015, photo by Diana Koczevska

tensions come out of the depths of its being and radiate their energy, and the erstwhile mute surroundings begin to speak a language which becomes increasingly clear. In this way, the lifeless signs turn into living symbols and the dead is revived. The point becomes a living thing.

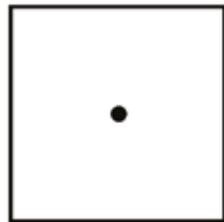


Fig. 1

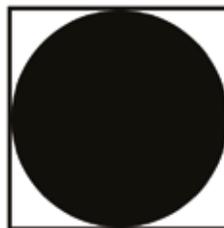


Fig. 2

The institute as a vessel

Ultimately, the institute's architectural foundation acts as just a mere vessel. Through the fragile — although hard and firm — pane of glass, the imprisoned are left to observe the outside (Fig. 3). With the principle of movement being unfathomable, the situation can only remain exactly as it is — like a percolated vectorial bubble rather than a smoothly flowing stream. Every insight is exhausted by its laborious attempts towards relocation; the actuality contains no surplus, and thus is only determined by its current situation. Momentum is lost and progression has been yielded to.

The empty vessel

By tipping the vessel over, the contents falls out. The point has rolled so far from the once full container, that it has lost all connections with the previously dominant institution (Fig. 4). In the latter, by tearing the point out of its restricted cubicle of customary influence, it has freed itself

from dependency. As it moves towards a sense of what it really needs, the point's inner attributes —which were silent until now— make themselves heard more and more. Point by point, they roll from the container. Latching onto one another, their circumferences expand. Finally, they come to a halt (Fig. 5). At this moment, they begin their life as independent beings, as they are awoken neither by their own powers nor by the world outside, but by the swarming landscape within. Here, their receptive eye and ear transform the slightest vibrations into impressive experiences. Voices arise from all sides, and the world rings.



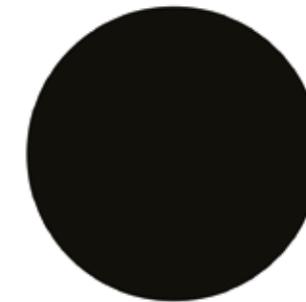
Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Dobrawa Deczkowska

'A typical performance situation — a naked woman or a woman with a dirty cloth'. According to this opinion, all performances with a topless woman, or a woman using a cloth have a similar



Dobrawa Deczkowska,
Labirynt Gallery, Lublin 2015,
photo by Diana Kolczewska

and schematic reception. The viewers are not interested in the artist's message. They focus on a particular, single gesture or a situation, which they saw. They categorise it as a typical, dull and boring.

We need to consider the essence and character of differences when we see an undressed woman, for example, combing her hair or half-naked using some other medium in her actions. An interesting question to ask is if a woman hanging dirty clothes, washing the floor or executing some other activities is a participant of the same performance. I wonder if we cannot, or we do not feel like understanding what task the artist posed for him or herself. We cannot say if a particular situation or gesture should mean the same. We cannot focus on things that are the most obvious, the spectacular elements. What counts is the detail, things in the middle, for example, a place, inspiration, clothes and medium. I do not believe that a woman always undresses and uses a cloth for the same reason. Before we share our impressions and insights out loud, let us think for a moment and let us try to understand the artist.

The opinion quoted at the beginning of the text surfaced after the first day of performances in Labirynt Gallery in Lublin, where the students of the University of Arts in Poznan showed their works, including me - the woman with a cloth.



Zofia Kuligowska

Cosmos

Two groups of people worked together for two days to present the effect of their work to the viewers at Lublin's gallery.

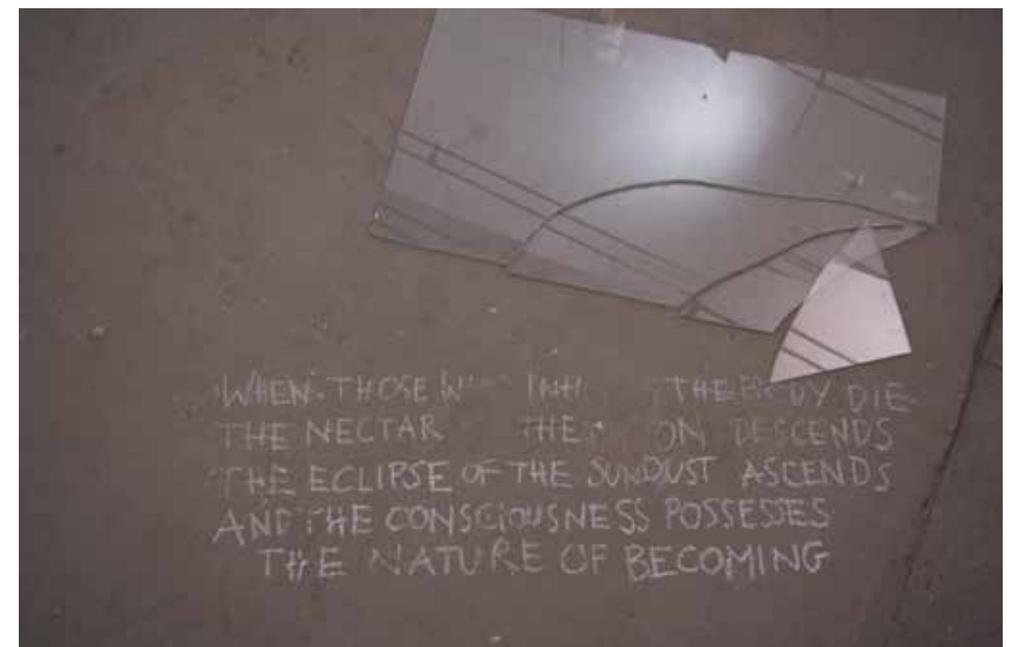
We met, we got to know each other, and we started work. The only thing that should have been of interest to us was our attitude to performance art. The meeting took a form of a workshop; it was aimed at enriching our experience with a possibility of exchange between two schools of two masters.

The dynamics of that event was different. Instead of workshop, a conflict appeared a friction, which although it could have been natural - it was not. In performance art, we may use everything that surrounds us. We may be inspired by every detail, which we experience. The experience of a conflict could also be creative. But a conflict which leaves both sides with negative emotions does not influence creativity. We tend to see good things in places they absent from. We, the artist, learn to draw inspiration from various experiences; it is an indispensable skill for us. People are organisms physically similar to each other; if something works in an adverse way for us, entire creative energy is used up to save the balance.

We received the first task. It was aimed at helping us to mix. We created 5-people-teams, in which we worked for several hours to show each other who we were. While forming groups, we learnt that London students, who were more experienced, would help Polish ones. The work was hugely inspirational and exciting. We talked a lot, and we asked each other about the way we worked. We discussed the interests in performance art. We were looking for materials with which we wanted to work.

The London students tried to animate the team's work. But as soon as we started working in the groups, individuals became separate creators, who created - mainly with the use of intuition - the group's wholeness. The action lasted an hour; the audience came closer to the end of the event.

Zofia
Kuligowska,
Cosmos,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kolczewska



It was a real work process, without setting any limits. A crucial experience. Joint responsibility, individual creation.

The conflict appeared after all group's presentations. It concerned a presumed inappropriate behaviour of one of the Polish students towards a member of the British group. It was the end of the workshop, during which we were supposed to work together.

There were questions about the aim of such form of meeting, about the conditions of mutual evaluation, about the sense of security (our security and the security of other group members), about expectations. It was a discussion, in which many of us did not feel comfortable. We could not recognise a field of agreement and a desire to work in workshop form. Nigel Rolfe assumed an offensive attitude, some of his students joined in. Janusz Bałdyga, diplomatically, turned our attention to interesting elements, which appeared as a result of the conflict, so that we as students could benefit from it.

The situation of a conflict during a workshop of that type (two-days-long workshop – two-days-long presentation) is not typical – if it occurs, it may make our work tough. For precisely that reason, the situation was intriguing. There were accusations of chauvinism, judging political views, moral backwardness, indelicacy, lack of tenderness. All of that was thrown at students who deal with the same art discipline – the work with body in front of viewers/performance art. That aspect was in the entire meeting the most interesting; it brought about a particular dynamics. The main dominating topics between the participants were the already mentioned accusations, their principles, the exchange of observations upon own suffering, injustice. Such work conditions may prove to be very fruitful if the period of hurt does not last too long. It is not a thing to be planned. It depends on the maturity of the participants, the strategy of the workshop leaders and responsibility divided amongst over 20 people.

It is a complete test, a test of personalities and motivation to work, a test for a performer.

Zofia
Kuligowska,
Cosmos,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kołczewska



We learnt that an experienced teacher and performer was capable of judging after a few minutes if an adept/student was fit enough to become a performer. Such a teacher has got a position based on his experience which cannot be impeached, not even to suggest an attempt of impeachment. The years of work stand a testimony to the quality of art created. There is no space for mistakes (as a result of an experiment), and we should approach the viewed art in absolute terms, see is from one perspective; if the views disagree, we should negate them.

I observed a clash between the cult of the principal, convinced about the superiority of the master and observing cult, convinced with the aim of the following one after the other events of a master and students trying to assume some portions in that situation. I saw young people searching their truth and expressing it surely, and I saw those who accepted the presiding truth. You teach young people performance art by making copies of yourself, and you can also teach them without defining the effect.

The shows happened one day after another. They were consistent and vigorous in expression. Students from Poland on Wednesday did works, which were inspired by the events from Monday and Tuesday. We discussed it; we talked about what we feel, how we understand what was happening. We poured out our grievances, and we tried to uplift ourselves. We worked together so that everyone could relieve the tension.

On Thursday the students from Great Britain presented the works, which they brought with them. There was no trace of the events from last three days. The works were refined, detailed, strong. There was very good dynamics while showing them one after another. They expressed deep engagement in searching for the material and a variety of using it.

Can you choose between a work inspired by the present and work prepared in advance?

Can you choose between stringency and acceptance?

Can you feel safe and brave with yourself, or perhaps is it better with your master next to you?

Do we need to develop a compromise? Do we have to judge and incite a conflict?

What is the need for conflict if you do not use it?

Can a group, which is elevated over another, co-operate?

The conflict, which happened to us was very precious. We had two days to appreciate it and to pose the above questions. We didn't do it, because we wanted to avoid the easiest way-out – to be judged again. Emotions did not allow us to distance ourselves, but their presence manifested an avalanche of questions. I am waiting for a meeting with the same group, for a discussion about what was left unspoken.

I was observing the situation from a side; I was creating a history about the way a group of students from London came to Poland and tried to start a conflict using our national features: irritability and distrust. It is as if I was not there as if I did not exist between. A casement window from a kitchen, a typical element in Communist flats protecting people from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Mateusz Fabiś

Sky can wait, and hell is too far away – 24 hours of sleeping.

One day I was travelling back home on a night bus. As it usually happens, there was a radio on. One of the songs after a moment of uncertainty brought my thoughts to a situation. It was around the Arctic Circle. I used to live there for a short time. It was night; the sun was shining, I was coming back from school, where I was correcting my BA dissertation after a check from my supervisor. I was packed because the following day I was travelling back to Poland. I went to a house of students I met on my way. As it turned out, they were celebrating the final of Eurovision contest. Most of the participants had colourful wigs, they drank beer, and they were lying on sofas. The voting was nearing its end; the winner was selected, the fun started, in the background, we could hear the winning song. The switched on tv was probably one of the hundreds of tv sets in the world transmitting the event. The distance in the context of a polar day coupled with a distant place away from the centre of continental Europe. This cold and so quiet reality of Northern Norway situated everything in a dream-like state. No worries, no pain, no problems, the distance was unimportant; the divisions were unimportant. Everything was suspended or stopped for a moment. Everyone is subjected to a fleeting happiness. Its perception and permanence depend on the point of view. For some this absence is a blessed state, to paraphrase the words of the winning song – we become the hero of our time. The best way to escape from everything is sleeping and although in many cultures sleeping is also perceived as a state of reality, in European tradition what we dream about is not seen as reality, even though, while dreaming, to quote lyrics of a song, 'we dance with demons'.

Mateusz
Fabiś,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kołczewska



Amongst other events, this one gave me an insight that in most of my performances I become absent. The body is brought to a function of participation. This body is struggling physically with some problem. That is what happened when I did not get up from bed and I did not engage in any contact with anyone. I slept for 24 hours in public view.

I started my action from being a man in the audience; next, I put on pyjamas, I took out toothpaste, and I cleaned my teeth. While doing it, I walked the gallery space, where my friends were also performing. Next, I went to sleep, and I got up after 24 hours, I cleaned my teeth again, and I peeked at the actions of other performers, I put on the clothes which I wore the day before and I immersed myself in the crowd of audience. My action was finished. It fastened two days of performances – the first one when I went to bed and the second one when I woke up. After the performance, I was left with a headache, because for 24 hours I did not give my body a drop of water. I felt shaky, and I was weak. My reflection at that moment concerned people who spent many years in coma. When they wake up, they experience a burnt out energy of their bodies, which has to be re-built soon.

I placed my bed in the middle of a narrow corridor, which is normally used by the administration of the gallery, in the evening hours it is used as a passage for the viewers. Around myself, I created a home/private atmosphere/sphere, because next to my bed made of pallets I positioned a lamp with a lampshade. There was also a rug, which the viewers had to walk through. Many people left some dirt on it. During the action, there were moments in which for split seconds, I would regain some consciousness. I would understand single words or sounds. I remember for example that someone was trying to convince a dog to jump into my bed. Such a long sleeping process would not have been possible without exhausting my body. I assumed that it may have worked the other way round and I would get up after an hour refreshed. In case I should have any problems with the sense of time, I left an alarm clock under my pillow to wake me up. It was not necessary, however, because I was woken up by the public. One of the people whispered into my ear: Wake up, it's time.

The time I spent in the gallery required for a security guard to be present with me at night. So, therefore, part of my action was supervised by a guard. I do not remember that time, as my first waking up happened when there were workers already in the building. For a long time, I was not thinking about it. During my long sleep-process, I did not have any dream I could remember. Chris Burden, who spent in bed in gallery 22 days, without any contact with anyone, in his recollections talked about acclimatisation. He mentioned that with every day spent inside it was more and more difficult to imagine that there would be a moment, in which he would have to leave. The scary thing is that the bed, due to our physical needs, becomes a tormentor. We experience the situation as a Stockholm syndrome. Being our tormentor, it shall never let us run away.

When I returned from Northern Europe, during days, which were getting longer, I was struggling with insomnia. In my case, it was a completely new thing, because I have never had a problem

with sleeping. I managed to take control of it when I started to pull the curtains earlier to deceive my body.

Szyborska wrote:

'What else to do.

Sleeping and waiting'.

Mateusz Smoczyk

How to avoid wild animals?

Being a human requires a reason. We achieve it, for example, by differentiation, the acts of singling out from the world. The question how to avoid wild animals may be a metaphor inquiring into humanity. A suit is a gesture which highlights belonging to the highest in Aristotle's hierarchy of entities or biblical tradition group – the people. Getting rid of it, which took place at the end of the action, was a desire to unsubscribe from the group. It talked about a need to relinquish the constituted anthropocentric thought in Western culture. At the moment of transforming into the status of elite human, there is a confrontation with biology. I used a subtle gesture. The suit is drizzled with condensed human sweat – a medium for deterring animals. During the process of application, the viewers are asked the question in title. They react faintly, finally they burst out with nervous laughter. Although the smell quickly filled the gallery space and it seemed difficult to endure, the viewers stayed. They wanted to prove in spite of their biology their humanity to themselves or me (it was all about experiencing the physical incapacities in the name of art). They were saved by an arrival of a taxi. The first part of my action was finished – it had a form of a traditional performance. The second part happened inside the taxi with the driver. What occurred was condensation: a smell in a tight car space, public audience in the person of a taxi driver. The last one, what is peculiar, did not pay attention to the smell. He agreed to take me to the forest, and he was interested in the action. During our conversation, he found out what performance is and he changed his attitude to it. He moved from contemptuous to understandingly neutral.

He also noticed the environmental aspect of the action. He talked about moose wandering around the car park of a shopping centre. When we arrived, it turned out that forest was mostly cut out due to development of a ring-road. The forest seemed deserted. The driver took active part in the action. He offered to light up the wall of woods so that I could leave my clothes there and document it. The suit left there determined an area protected from the animals or the opposite. It was a warning against the presence of a human. Because the forest was cut out, it turned out to be an empty gesture and unnecessary warning. After leaving the suit, the taxi took me back to the gallery.

Justyna Kuchta

'Where nothing is in its place, there's disorder. Where everything is in its place there's nothing there, and that's order.'

Bertold Brecht, *Conversations in Exile*

The above quotation was a starting point for the action I did in performance Art Meeting in Lublin. The beginning of the analysis over what is a place – locating oneself in space, order – the act of ordering. The principle question for me was an organisation of space: creating an autonomous figure, which would simultaneously function unified with my friends' actions. Following that, I wanted to make a comment and close the situation of the workshops.

The biggest room in Labirynt Gallery gave me a possibility to find my space – what is interesting, without a discussion, in a natural way we selected our position and by doing so, we became one. A valuable experience for me was an exchange of energy. Aimed or not, it had to take place.

The situation of my action was planned with precision. But later on, it turned out to be a delicately spontaneous. It was open for changes. My tool was dental floss measuring 25 meters. Strings were hanging in loops several meters high. I used them in a gesture of ordering until they were coloured in blood and they were torn. I tried to make words from the quote using their fragments fallen on the floor. But it did not want to form as a result of people and energy moving around. However, the process of putting them in a shape/writing was a discovery for me – what we assume to be an order, or not.

Berenika Pyza

There happened in Lublin a review of movement. From being motionless to free movement. Whatever movement it was, it absorbed the attention of viewers for a moment. The event usually does not leave any material traces in space. Only the memory of viewer may capture a slight ghost (a different case is documentation – from a definition – 'a testimony of an object').



Mateusz Smoczyk,
Labirynt Gallery, Lublin 2015,
photo by Marta Bosowska and Diana Kolczewska

Justyna
Kuchta,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Marta
Bosowska

A particular situation had to happen when we become obliged to use from / limit ourselves in an appropriate space. It conditions a choice between an agreement and objection against a particular space. It makes us delineate common and personal space. Since we always are 'somewhere', the contexts of place never tend to be overlooked. I grew up in Lublin... What does it mean? I do not even know what is where in that city. This trifling statement turned my attention to various ways of reception and space discovery in the conditions of a constant and stable situation as well as under the influence of an unusual situation. Something extraordinary and in a way extreme. For the time being the city of Poznan consists in my thoughts of spaces: already known and to-be-known. Whereas Lublin is time.



It would be logical to recall here the definition of time as continuity. I assert here, however, that time is composed of constant switches: switch, and there it is, switch, and it disappears. And again – it is.

Before the sliver string is torn and the goblet of gold is broken.

A plastic bag appeared in my awareness at the moment of constant attempt to order my desk by hiding everything into a drawer. That bag behaved in accordance to its predispositions – it did not want to be squeezed, it started to expand, it did not want to hide, and it made it very difficult to close the drawer. I was struck by that unconditional, stubborn and delicate movement of a bag.

There is in things and small phenomena a special type of beauty.

This is a common beauty – special because it is overlooked on a daily basis. It is not recognised immediately, and it cannot be assigned to any status of importance.

This mechanical, simple self-expansion may bring to mind the heartbeat. It is probable that I followed too simple considerations over the will to live. I ask myself a question: how is it that everything flows forward, the world exists, and it does not fall apart in the face of evil and suffering, great catastrophes (caused by a human and for a human), but also small spitefulness, which people give each other regularly.

The world flooded with plastic bags seems to be a nightmare. However, an isolated bag may (but it is not necessary) deliver the experience of beauty. Or any other great feelings, commonly not assigned to the nature of bags (everything depends). Attention! There is in text a sign ':' – it is a 'lying colon'. Lying colon is between a colon (which suggests a continuation) and ellipsis (which expresses an unsuspected interruption). It is as if a colon (for various reasons) 'froze' and consistently decided to lie down..).

Marta Hadyńska

I had never before experienced a group action. What to do to feel free – to relocate the energy in the group evenly. Perhaps the fact that one person is more visible is also ok. How to do it so that the performances are not directed, and they remain consistent. Perhaps we need to throw away thinking and open up for here and now with great trust in yourself and the group. I believe we should seek a balance between thinking and feeling. It is not too far from working on your own, but you need to expand the field of mindful thinking-feeling over the other five people. It becomes an entirely different experience. The act of developing what is known takes us to the unknown. Trying something new opens a person. Sometimes we do not know what we are being opened for. The new comes in unexpectedly. It becomes assimilated, and it is the next building brick

Berenika
Pyza,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kończewska



in our creative attitude. Performance Art Studio is super because it opens our heads and gives possibilities to create new bricks thanks to frequent trips.

Adam Łuczak

'Soap Opera' was a performance inspired by the location of Labirynt Gallery amongst the streets and crossroads. The windows in one of the rooms, overlooking a busy city infrastructure were turned into screens. The viewers while listening to the performer could follow the fate of some fictitious heroes projected onto the images of some real people, who were on the other side of the window. The story unfolded by the artist in real time concentrated on some everyday situations. There were also some ironic commentaries concerning the simplicity of a city, soap-like life.

Paulina Pankiewicz

THE TEST

The figure I assumed during my performance made references to a popular exercise amongst climbers. It is used to exercise endurance. A person stands with arms outstretched. It may seem rather simple, but the weight of the arms turns out to be unbearable. I felt the gradual weakening of my muscles, which reshaped my skeleton. A rather insignificant weight of a small water bottle,

Martyna
Hadyńska,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kołczewska



which I used after a few minutes changed my position. While looking for balance within the growing tension, my body started to twist in an unnatural grimace.

The water absorbed the shaking from tiredness. I was observing its minimal fluttering. Turmoil. There was something unnoticeable under the skin.

The generated patience of a body turned out to be bigger than the one rationally predicted. Time did not matter to me. The weight of being was deforming my body in an equally unexpected way.

Vitalii Shupliak

Play / an interactive video installation

The work consisted of two video projections, which were screened simultaneously one on top of the other and the same screen (a wall). The first was a documentation recorded during Donbas war events; the second one was a computer game Counter Strike 1.5 with a possibility of playing live. The artist during Performance Art Meeting invited the viewers with a question: Do you want to play a game? The viewer then could sit in a comfortable armchair at a desk with a computer and play. The computer screen was switched off. The only available image was a projection on the wall. By superimposing two projections, the process of playing the game was difficult because the two images were interlaced. The interactivity of the work gave viewers a provocative chance to shoot

Adam Łuczak,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kołczewska





Paulina Pankiewicz, The Test, Labirynt Gallery, Lublin 2015, photo by Diana Kolczewska

at fictitious game heroes. But the whole thing changed into aiming at real people, soldiers. In that way, the work 'Play' touched the problem of earning a border between the real war conflict and a media fiction, which is often far from reality and, which is often more similar to a computer game than a real life.

Paweł Tymcio

Standing in one place, an endurance of a material and a situation in place are the concepts which I took into consideration while thinking about performance in Lublin Labirynt Gallery. Sticking to your decisions is a tough task in internal work. It is very easy to succumb to a variety of situations. Workshop situation was far from its planned course. What happened was a clash, an atmosphere created a paradox status and rules of the internal fight. I realised that my project was adequate considering the situation. I wanted to stand like a pole. I wanted to create a tension in motionlessness, so my figure assumed a shape of a pole

holding a washing-line. I took away my face; I wrapped the rope around a motionless hand to start with. The effect of breathing, muscle tension was moving the construction, which together with a white shirt hanging in the middle was slowly dropping into a basin filled with red wine. The tension of time linked the audience with the observed artist. There was some fear of the consequences of his actions and fear of the consequences for the artist. That tension was building a connection between the audience and artist. It became an expected moment of non-verbal communication.

Valentin Merchan

About the PAM in Lublin

The Performance Art Meeting in Lublin was the first time I had the opportunity to participate in a performance workshop in partnership with an art gallery. It was the very first time I would show my performance in front of a public that is neither my university teachers or other students. It was also the occasion to meet and work with Nigel Rolfe and the graduates from the Royal College of Art from London.



I felt a real connection with Nigel Rolfe and his students vision of performance art, and the contact and discussions with them really helped me hone my vision of my own practice. It made me realise how much I could learn and turn things over in my head by simply being with people I share this enthusiasm for performance.

The people from the gallery and from the performance studio from Poznań where incredible. Their support and help was inestimable but I must admit that what happened on that fateful Monday still stay in my mind as one of the most eye-opening experience I lived through.

In my opinion, conflict is something that artists should not be afraid to confront head on, even if it,s between students and teacher or artists and artists. However, conflict in this kind of setting shouldn't be about who is right and who is wrong, but how to solve a problem. This incredible workshop made me think about how to work preparing a performance, what to be aware of in a performance, what kind of mindset to have in a performance or what philosophy of art can be seen through the practise of performance.

All those new interrogations made me realise much unique and peculiar performance art is. It's a practise that is very humane, sensible and political by nature, but it cannot cohabit with the ego of an artist. A performer has to be able to leave himself out of a performance, to become a tool to convey an image. He has to be able to forget himself as a subject to become an abstract object.

'Dust' was my first public performance, and such became something really precious to me. I appreciate the fact that the documentation is composed with photography and not film, as it gives this performance a malleable nature, dependent of my own memory and mood. I could let

Vitalii Shupliak, Play, Labirynt Gallery, Lublin 2015, photo by Diana Kolczewska



Paweł
Tymcio,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kolczewska

myself omit mistakes. The lack of filmed documentation let me concentrate on the conceptual nature of the performance and not the practical and concrete event itself.

'Dust' was also a way for me to begin working on something I'd like to pursue, to think about in depth. At first, it looks like a simple game of balance between the performer and the chair, an inevitable fall that is bound on happen. As the performer, I am indeed cutting the legs I'm resting on, provoking my own fate, like the old gag where the lumberjack saw the tree branch he's sitting on. But 'Dust' is about subverting this expectation. This performance is less about what is destroyed - the chair - and more about what is created : wood dust. This precious powder that cannot be taken with you, cannot be kept, cannot be sold, represent for me the true time of the performance. The duration where time itself is made abstract, then given a form through the wood dust.



From the author:

I shall leave without a commentary the insights of the students presented above. I shall, however, draw attention to the variety of approaches and differing attitudes to the planned and realised action. We are dealing here with a broad spectrum of views and analysis - from a substantive gesture and object stock-taking to a deep reflection written from a perspective of passing the time. That diversity is not normalised or systematised by the lecturers running the studio. It remains as a testimony of attitudes and artistic concepts developed in Performance Art Studio. I would like to draw attention to the expanding field of meanings and references during the project. It encompassed such concepts as conflict, crisis or ethical dimension of cooperation. Some of the students included in that field the scope of critical reflection. I find it very significant.

Valentin
Merchan,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kolczewska

next page:
Szymon Kula,
Julia
Popławska,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2015,
photo by
Diana
Kolczewska



3

A selection of issues studied
in Performance Art Studio

Intermedia in Performance Art Studio

At the beginning of my considerations about Intermedia in our studio, I would like to cite here the description of the term formulated by Dick Higgins in his essay entitled *Intermedia*. Higgins wrote: 'The vehicle I chose, the word "inter media", appears in the writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1812 in precisely its contemporary sense—to define works which fall conceptually between media that are already known'⁷.

While opening a possibility for the students to place a figure in the centre of space, I never define its function, meaning. Or I define less or more dominating role, because both the term: intermedium, as well as a definition of a figure, do not have an arbitrary character, they do not provide a recipe for ready-made solutions. They suggest participation and co-creating the space of new strategies. We are talking about actions freed from limits of rules firmly defining separate disciplines, articulated so forcefully in the culture of the Renaissance. It was then that the categories were introduced. They found their mirrors in culture and social thought which divided the society into the aristocracy, noblemen, artisans, peasants and labourers who had no land. That was what we called a feudal concept of the Great Chain. The idea of building an intermedia space is a contemporary practice of shaping human environment. We usually deal with multiple functions. They would react to the needs of a person, to the dynamic existential space, where a division, colour, the changing scale and broadly understood the mechanism of projection, build the space of an intermedia performance.

The structure of a university where there is a studio of free choice defines our studio as the one selected by students constructing their learning process. They base their selection considering the issues of their interest and methods. The consequences of such university's structure are rich, multileveled practices developed in studios of free choice. The result is diversity arising from experiences, aspirations and particular students' skills from different faculties meeting in Performance Art Studio.

The studio functions within The Faculty of Sculpture and Spatial Actions. In academic year 2015/2016, it was built by students of sculpture, scenography, intermedia, painting and art education.

Dick Higgins contrasts the term *Intermedia* with the term *mixed media*, which is often wrongly used: 'This last is a venerable term from art criticism, which covers works executed in more than one medium, such as oil colour and guache. But by extension, it is also appropriate to such forms as the opera, where the music, the libretto and the *mise-en-scene* are quite separate: at no time is the operagoer in doubt as to whether he is seeing the *mise-en-scene*, the stage spectacle, hearing the music, etc'⁸.

7. Higgins, Dick *Intermedia* Leonardo, Vol.34, no.1, p 49, 2001, MIT Press
8. As above, p 52

In the intermedia works there is a full integration of often distant means of expression, techniques or methods of language formation. We are dealing with an integral, autonomous, though often multi-layered, undivided, message.

Excess – 'Enough or too much...'* William Blake

The excess is a norm. It is a concept which features the time we live in. The restraint, which delineates the limits of the needs and an aesthetic horizon of a human, has lost its meaning. The excess of information tightly surrounding our life erases the communicative result. The noise appears it is often abstract in the sphere of sound freed from facts.

Blake says: 'Enough or too much'. This sentence talks about the impossibility of freeing the excess by a human who is looking for at least the smallest margin of security. That margin, treated as a space of reserve and assurance confirms the temptation of excess. It tells us to leave in the sphere of our action unnecessary for now elements, tools and medium, but perhaps they would come handy in the future.

Does a feeling of safety, bringing to mind the concept of a reserve, inevitably leads to the creation of continually modified excess?

Excess move the limits of necessity. It results in an overload, interruption, crossing – so it links with concepts related to a catastrophe seen as a consequence of a crisis.

If we see the word excess as the keyword to describe the issues we deal with, then we may recall here the opposite word which is coded in such concepts as selection, reduction or choice. Excess creates space. This is where the limits of moderation, economical sense and physical harmony have been surpassed. While returning to language freed from the excess of expression and nonsensical repetitions, we refer to the concept of reduction. Therefore it is all about the process of eliminating unnecessary things, as a result also the practical ones, but not necessary. In the acts of purifying meanings and medium, we arrive at the essence of a message, the root around which a sign is built. We are aware of the discovery the necessary elements. Questioning them is subjected to failure. We arrive at the role of a holder of such concepts as necessity, excess, deficit or minimum. The reduction is a carrier of an artwork ideas both at the level of construction and emotional solutions. 'In many individual creative types of research, which fit within the aspiration for reduction of visual language medium, for elimination of information excess, we find a declared drive to the synthesis of knowledge and emotions, the knowledge of reasoning and sensing. Analytical approach in such researchers is seen as contradictory to the essence of art. Works by some artists [...] prove the validity of the diagnosis of the state of the art and fruitfulness of aspirations for creating the synthesis of experience, which in some cases

* Blake, William *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 1790-1793

takes the shape of a secret beauty, perhaps close to what Piet Mondrian called the "beauty of constructing". In the reductionist works – even though those works used the medium of mathematics, geometry, and technical knowledge, all of which are accompanied by the rigour of mind – from the first moment of contact with them we find the rejection of analysis, which leads us nowhere in the art. I would like to recall here the confession of Roman Opałka, who in a seemingly extreme discipline of arithmetic ('Opałka 1965/1') highlighted the emotions, which co-occurred while working. He revealed the emotional culminations in his – it seems – monotonous work and existence. "Those culminations are linked with a state, which can be called an enlightenment obviousness of existence conditions and its termination. Arriving at the reality never ceases to be an emotion, an obscurity of mystery should not overwhelm us"⁹.

A minimal gesture, motionlessness and silence as concepts standing in opposition to excess may become arguments confirming the emotional and expressive power of created space of mystery. A similar function may be assigned to an excess which allows for hiding in space described by the multiplicity of repetitions a meaningful, single message.

In 2013 in National Art Gallery in Sopot a festival of performance art took place. It confronted two models of action: one based on the excess of medium and expression, the other one based on works reduced to a minimum. I give voice to the curator of the project Arti Grabowski: 'PIGS & RABBITS is a project where two groups of artists represent two different stylistic forms. I put together minimalism with an elaborated score, order with a mess, emotional restriction with improvisation and chaos'¹⁰.

Sequences – Stages – Segments

We are dealing with multipart actions, which strategy is based on a succession and continuity of events resulting from each other. The result of the previous one is the basis for the following fragment. We are witnesses of a linear narration, which sense can be compared to the development of literary, theatrical or film action. This type of action is called sequential performance. It stands in opposition to actions based on one, determined gesture building one sign around the figure of a performer. While speaking about the space between those two types of actions, it is worth asking a question about the function of time and the role of sign functioning in constantly changing performance space.

The reason for this particular focus on the issue is, on the one hand, the concept of duration performance, gaining more and more in popularity. It is an active presence of an artist in a performance lasting many hours. On the other hand, there are sequential actions, which I shall consider below in the examples of works by students of Performance Art Studio.

9. Jedliński, Jaromir, 1991, p 9: *Redukta* CSW, Warsaw

10. Grabowski, Arti, 2013 *Ulotka Programowa [Programme Leaflet] - Pigs & Rabbits* PGS Sopot

Amongst duration performance strategies, we find actions based on repetition (multiplication of a sign), being in motionlessness, which takes us to live sculpture or extended narration, I wrote about those at the beginning of this text. By selecting three concepts, I simplify a description of a phenomenon of long performance, but this abbreviation serves as a medium to create a clear description of concepts related to time, its attraction but also related to the pain of waiting, passing and finally tiredness.

A significant reference point is found in a performance by Léann Herlihy which was done in February 2016 during a field study in Skoki. Two sequences resulting from each other were based on a precise discipline of figure and face, which attracted the viewers' attention. A piece of pig's fat was a dominating matter. It was used twice. In the first sequence, it was used to grease the table top. The surface became shiny after precise and consistent rubbing it with slimy, organic thing. It questioned, but it did not negate the function of the table.

In the second part, the fat was placed on the floor. It was a fundament or plinth for a naked foot of the artist standing on it. The thermal process, expanded in time, resulted with the fat melting. It glued itself to the body of a person in one organic trace, which was represented by a negative print of a bare foot. What remained after the action were shining, fat traces left after the woman.

What counts in remaining things after a performance, seen as a content of an archive, are key elements or those which were remembered as key ones. In my belief, there is no place in them for a table, which sense was ousted by the following sequence. The last image closes the process. It becomes an icon of a passing event.

Léann
Herlihy,
Skoki 2016,
photo by
Marta
Bosowska



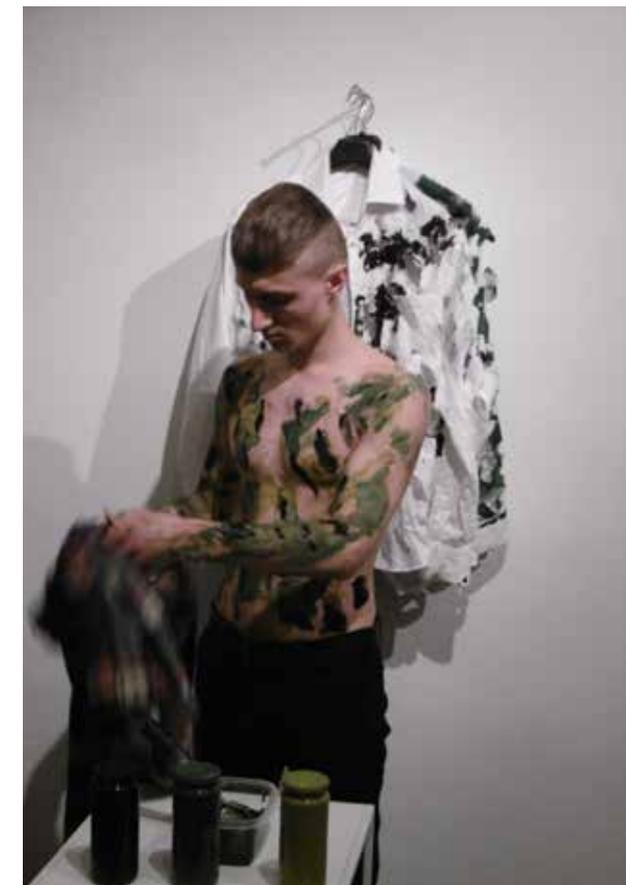


A performance by Vitalij Shupliak entitled 'A tattoo. A War body' had the same sequential or narrative character. Shupliak focused on a dramatic, contemporary historical fact – crisis in Donbas. It was a starting point for the design of actions series. Apart from the described below action, the artist's dissertation work also concerned that issue.

In his performance, the artist used three elegant shirts, which acted as stencils. He marked his body with war colours – green, grey and black. The colours were transferred onto the body through the shirts with the use of painting roll. The following phases of transfer, very similar to polychrome, completed the three-colour camouflage pattern. They were as if the print made, one action after the other. The shirts, the artist, was hanging, served as a testimony of the underwent 'marking'. But they also were an object to use – the war still goes on. The last sequence of the performance was an act of putting on a previously used, private shirt. It covered the artist's body ornamented with war markings. The recorded message was hidden, but this concealment was only apparent just like the neutrality of the man standing in front of us. The war carries on, even though its end was hailed many times.

on the left:
Léann
Herlihy,
Skoki 2016,
photo by
Marta
Bosowska

Vitalii
Shupliak,
UP Gallery,
Berlin 2015,
photo by
Janusz
Baldyga



A few short stories

Attempts to formulate topics in Performance Art Studio

I would like to present a few short stories.

The first one is about a strategy of action. A wooden granary, a small house, stood in a courtyard of a Podlasie village. It represented a static point. You could define the position of moving elements for example cars, people or animals against it.

A few years ago, the granary was to be moved to a place, several kilometres away. Because, the construction of the building was very straightforward and logical (it consisted of wooden beams joined with spigots) taking it apart, moving and putting it back together in a different place seemed an easy and obvious process.

However, the carpenters decided on a different strategy. They chose to drag it behind a tractor as a whole. For several minutes, the wooden house became a mobile object and the main hero of a spectacular event.

Here is the second story:

I am presenting two identical objects – white A4 pieces of paper. Their semantic function is very limited. They may bring to mind the meaning of white, a rectangle, emptiness, etc. I did a simple operation, which required using a relative symmetry of my body. The first piece of paper was folded with right-hand several times following the structure and order of a rectangle. As a result, I achieved a multilayered and deformed rectangle, which retained its shape. The left piece of paper was crushed and hidden in a closed left hand. It does not possess features of a rectangle. It represents a shape of the inside of my clenched fist.

Two actions – two strategies – two results.

Here is the third story:

A popular photograph shows the most famous Warsaw monument – a column of Sigismund III Vasa. It was funded by his son, King Wladyslaw IV. The column is one of the capital's icons. It is a vertical object; it dominates the square. A few meters away from it, you can see two previous versions of the column destroyed during the war. They are lying alongside the walls of King's Castle. They create horizontal orders. They are traces of catastrophes, the falls and traces of elapsing time.

Vertical – triumph, horizontal – defeat.



I would like to present the history of a village Tokary. After WWII as a result of moving state's borders, the village was divided into two parts. The Polish side had a church, school and some buildings. The Soviet Union gained cemetery and an orthodox church. There were some farms divided – one part on one side of the border, the other on the other side. A line was created. It talked about the drama of the villagers. Old people say that for many weeks they paid moonshine to Russian army surveyors to correct the border connecting two elements of the place divided with a line so that a shed could also be on the Polish side. For a few weeks, the line was a dynamic

Janusz
Badyga,
Future of
Imagination 9,
Singapur 2014,
photo by
Watan Wuma



value, but at some point, it froze, and it demarcated an absolute border of the division. On one side, there was a village named Tokary, on the other Tokari.

The hero of the following story is a famous Polish hand-ball player. When he started the career, he said a famous sentence: 'Every Polish sportsman dreams about playing in a shirt with an eagle on it' (the emblem of Poland is the white eagle on red background).

A few years later he emigrated to Germany. He took German citizenship, and he joined the German national team.

Many years later, when he returned to Poland, he said a crucial sentence: 'My dream about playing with an eagle came true, but the background for the eagle changed' (the emblem of Germany is a black eagle on yellow background).

Next story is about urban planning and ideology. I am presenting a photograph of one of the main crossroads at Marszałkowska street. Right before us, there is The Constitution Place constructed in 1952 according to the doctrine of social realism art. It was declared in 1948, and it introduced a political ideology in art, so also to architecture and urban planning. On the axis of Marszałkowska street, there is a historical church of the Saviour; the church's spatial domination stood in opposition to the ideology of the authorities. The architects and city planners received the task to eliminate the silhouette of the church as a dominating sign. The effect was a correction of the Marszałkowska street and closing a square with a new building (Hotel MDM). The function was rather obvious – it was supposed to be a curtain, which would adequately cover, eliminate the church from the city image. Urban planning approached the function of an ideological theatre.



To confirm the relations, mutual relations, even perhaps integrity of the above-mentioned reflections and forms of teaching done at the university level, I am presenting a programme of Performance Art Studio formulated in 2010, which is done within the structures of the Faculty of Sculpture and Spatial Actions at University of Arts in Poznan.

Performance Studio

BA programme

Space – time – presence

The aim of teaching in Performance Art Studio is acquiring the skills necessary to construct an action and performances based on recognition of structural and social spatial conditions.

The programme focuses on practical knowledge of such concepts as space, place, distance.

We introduce a concept of proximity, which encompasses observation and theories while using space by humans.

The teaching process takes into consideration the meaning of concrete forms (object, elements of architecture, nature), they are treated as factors modelling human behaviour.

The studio teaches skills of shaping the place as a key point in the space of action. A conscious choice of place is a consequence of analysis. It pertains to fragments of limited space such as centre, edge, peripheries. This provides room for discussion on the consequences of social and aesthetic choices.

The following aim is learning the mechanisms of language creation in performance art. We learn a concept which strongly determines a performer; his or her presence in the space of action.

The scale, proportions of human and anatomical order play the significant role in programming the language of performance.

We construct a sign around performer (body, figure, silhouette, trace, memory).

One of the most elementary concepts analysed in the studio is time.

We treat performance as an open process in time. The use of time seems to be a crucial element.

But also the awareness of the passing time is seen as a mechanism of performance expiration.

We analyse the concept of the end as a result of a strategy logic, but also physiology or energy burn-out.

Seeing performance as an Intermedia fact, we are searching for relations (borderline, influences, diffusion) with such disciplines as sculpture, drawing, visual text, etc.

MA programme

Strategies of action

The aim of the studio is to build a plan of action. In this process, the key role is played by a message based on performer's presence in a selected space.

We become aware of the performance language modification in contact with private and public space.

We need to be conscious of crossing the borders between internal and external gesture.

An element of the strategy is an ability to create tensions related to building critical states.

We analyse the transgression of senses and meanings (custom, physiology, taboo, quality).

We know that a critical point exists, we predict the consequences of transgressing it.

In spatial actions, we take into consideration the role of an object as a human partner.

We need to have an awareness of the potential and visual meaning of our body, figure, etc.

A significant element in the process of constructing a message is an ability to operate in overt and privy space. We may then build strategies based on such concepts as mystery, fragment, selection, marginal things. A consequence of using a privy sphere may be a deficit resulting with searching for an equivalent.

Looking for alternative solutions is one of the elements of building a performance strategy.

Public space, seen as an alternative for a lab character of private space, poses the requirements of new strategy.

An artist – a performer, becomes an initiator of a social fact. We re-value such concepts as range, scale, language, observer.

An observer of a performance represents an important, demanding context of performance, and it is in particular important in public space.

Another issue pertains to the educational functions of performance as an open discipline.

It represents an alternative for the observer searching for a new form of communication. It is based on the quality of direct contact with the other person.



Dissertations in Performance Art Studio

Zofia Kuligowska

Léann Herlihy

Vitalii Shupliak

on previous
page:
Vitalij
Shupliak,
Poznań 2016,
photo by
Stepan Rudyk

The dissertation works done in Performance Art Studio aim to confirm the skills of the graduate student related to actions in a particular space. They also are meant to create a scope of personal experience based on an original art utterance. Ability to use the space and to create its new features while relying on the rules of proximity gives room for an independent initiative in the area of such visual arts as performance, installation, sculpture or even theatre.

Those abilities, representing specific values, we could, while referring to academic categories and applying measurable criteria of evaluation, call craft.

The second key element from the perspective of the art is a message based on an autonomic, independent language. It is all about an ability to build a communicative sign around your body. Final work should possess a two level dimension. There should be a closure and knowledge confirming recognition of forms and communication strategies. There should also be an opening of a new perspective, which gives a chance to undertake independent creative decisions. This concept of a final work cannot be freed from doubts and risk. It may turn out (and it usually does) that the margin provides room for the development of the graduating student. I am presenting three concepts of dissertations done and defended in Performance Art Studio between 2014-2016: MA work by Zofia Kuligowska from The Faculty of Sculpture & Spatial Actions, BA work by Leann Herlihy (the same Faculty), and MA work by Vitalij Shupliak from The Faculty of Art Education.

Zofia Kuligowska

A description of theoretical work (with an outline of dissertation's artwork)

The work entitled 'Does performance art exist in the 5th dimension?' relates performance art to so-called M-theory. It is an advanced version of superstring theory in physics, which assumes that the surrounding world and we exist in 11 dimensions. In my work, I also focus on psychological and neurobiological aspects of empathy (mirror neurones) and emotions felt during the reception of artwork. There is an emphasis on its particular type – performance action. The research linked with writing the work delineated the direction of art action. I enriched my knowledge about the unconscious influence on other people, which we all possess according to the research done in the frequency of the electromagnetic oscillation emitted by a human body. While taking into consideration the physical and emotional aspects of a human body in artwork making, I was inspired most of all by my experiences from the last eight months. Performance action, which was the core of my dissertation, entitled 'The horizon of events' talked about the types of relations, which I have with people. I divide them according to the degree of engagement dictated by the closeness of a particular person, or a group of people. There seems to be a paradox. Relations, which are less demanding – more distant, may require from me a greater effort. This is related to an inability to set out the limits of my world, an inclination of letting strangers too close when they need it, and as a result underlooking closer relations and



Zofia Kuligowska, Event horizon,
Poznań 2015,
photo by Marta Bosowska and Maciej Bernatowicz





Zofia Kuligowska, Event horizon, Poznań 2015, photo by Marta Bosowska and Maciej Bernatowicz

relationship with myself. The horizon of events is a concept in physics. It describes the biggest (jointly moving) distance from which the light could travel to the observer (the viewer) in whatever future while taking into consideration the constant expansion of the Universe.

The description of dissertation artwork

The horizon of events, 19 June 2015, 3:10 p.m. I ask my dad, and we take the windows out together. Two regular ones, and a balcony window. I push them onto the balcony. Some water is gushing from a gutter of a building next door. The balcony window is resisting. It's hard to take it out through a hole of that size. I thank my father. I approach the table. I drag and roll it towards the windows lying on the floor. I enter on top of the windows with the table. I keep on rocking like a horse swing. The table is covered with a white tablecloth, in the middle, there is a bowl. I take a pestle from the balcony. I rub, scrape with the mortar, I hear croak and croaking of the frogs from the pushed out windows. They put me out of the scraping trans. I am no longer thinking about it, and I am looking through the window towards the sound. I tear out the centre of the cloth, the middle. I put a pen on the table. I reach underneath my dress, and I fight with a tank top, which I pull from the inside through the opening for arms and head. I leave it hanging, and I reach again, I pull another layer. It is hanging on my neck, on top of the other two layers. I begin writing on the table a quote: 'The heart breaks and breaks, and lives by breaking.

It is necessary to go through dark and deeper dark and not to turn'. While writing I am saying: 'First, you see a mirage of five lights. Second, it brings to mind the moon. Third, it is like the sun. Fourth, it brings to mind darkness. Fifth, just like the sky is free of clouds, so is the un-thinking rising free from the centre and circumference'. I confuse 'deeper' with 'greater', 'types' with 'colour', 'circumference' with 'rim'. I keep on repeating the quotation until I finish writing the first one. I walk around the table, and I stand opposite myself, I write the second quote while speaking the first one. I make a mistake, and I cannot write and say different things. I speak what I am writing. I thank. I feel that arriving at the end is what I have been waiting for. I feel unreal; it was not me who did it. The feeling of completing gestures through entering the space beyond the laws of physics. I feel within me an activity, aimed presence. Apparently, I was needed there for them.

Léann Herlihy

Léann Herlihy selected principal objects for her performance. Their visual attraction and mechanical potential determined the gesture and figure shaping, and what follows, the character of the utterance. The selected objects: saw blade band – a steel loop measuring around 140 cm and steel anvil weighing several kilogrammes delineated the direction and vector of action. The tools represented border points in performance space. They were very close regarding the matter, but their images and functions were extremely different. We found ourselves between

below: Léann Herlihy, Poznań 2016, photo by Marta Bosowska

on next page: Léann Herlihy, Poznań 2016, photo by Marta Bosowska





light, springy steel band, which assumed the body shape and was consistent with a human gesture, and heavy, unyielding to the strength of one man steel object. Leann Herlihy did several operations which integrated the gesture and body with the selected objects. During the performance, we had an impression of a full anastomosis. It seemed then that signing the objects with a symbol 36,6 C was fully reasonable.

Photographs – images provided a reliable commentary on the iconic layer of the performance. It was worth expelling the mechanism of reversing the pure physicality of the steel anvil. Positioning it on top of layered fat, 'annulled' its mass. From that moment, the act of subjecting to the will of human resulted with movement – a delicate gesture of moving and changing position. The performance of Leann Herlihy, based on the figure of the performer and internal context of the space, discussed human determination towards unconditional resistance of matter. This is a performance awarded with a triumphing gesture of hanging the trophy or marking a won space with a tribal totem.

Vitalii Shupliak

The topic of the work by Vitalij Shupliak is related to the current issues in Ukraine. It is tough for the young Ukrainian artist to put his mind at rest. There is war in Donbas; it is a historical fact. Regarding art concerns, we may talk about an outer fact. War happening nearby creates a precise iconosphere based on the signs of terror, violence, transgression, but also escape, fear, camouflage. Vitalii Shupliak talks about stigmata left by the war in consciousness and memory of people directly involved in it. War uniform treated as a camouflaging tool is an icon for black-grey-green reality of a war participant. The graduate moves that surface up to the layer of a human body. By doing so, he confirms the failure of escape. Taking a uniform off is only an empty gesture without consequences, a war stigma remains on the body and in the mind of even the most passive war participant.

Performance, which leads to that conclusion, is all about bringing in the ornament of a camouflage pattern. It is done by cutting out its shape in an elegant suit, shirt and under-top the performer was wearing. We were witnesses of an almost surgical process of cutting through three layers of textiles a three-colour army camouflage. From a distance, it looks like a 'war wound' on civil clothes.

An outer object and a dominating element of the installation is a steel safe cabinet – it is a sign of safety and a good hide-away from danger. Unfortunately, its role turns out to be delusive. When it is pushed over during the performance from the wall, we see that it did not have the back. This act unveiled the superficiality. Although it could be locked from the front, behind it was open for aggressions and an operative attack. It was vulnerable.

The last sequence of the performance was 'hiding' the uniform in the safe. It was an apparent hiding just like the neutrality of a man standing in front of us.

conclusions

Vitalii Shupliak, Poznań 2016,
photo by Marta Bosowska
and Vitalii Shupliak



We ask ourselves a question about the basis of building a programme strategy in Performance Art Studio. While proposing our educational programme, we need to root it in a reflection stemming out of personal art practice and personal attitude shaped by ethical choices, position towards a conflict, crisis, etc.

The studio is a living organism. It does not unify its members, the opposite. It stimulates their personal, independent choices. As a result, it may provoke distancing from each other. With all certainty, we take a stand towards defining our work space as personal and in opposition to common space. There is an encouragement for individual attitudes and activities that loosen the group tights. This is done through asking at some point a question about the sense of group's existence in the form of a closed organism. I am a supporter of individual choices and personal choices in unknown, recognisable and recognised spaces.

Performance Art Studio represents a dynamic form of one of those possibilities.

The moment of realisation the state of knowledge about the space shaped by physical limitations and dynamics of the participants has got a detrimental meaning for correct and independent functioning in a team.

While describing the issues suggested to your students, I encourage them to question its elements from their experiences, skills and views in life and art.

The skills of posing a question, and therefore delineating the field of work based on uncertainty, doubts, and the need to face them, seems to be the critical task from the very start.

The art of formulating questions is often the outset of outlining ephemeral, dynamic scopes and equivocal answers.



II

Workshop

introduction

A significant form of art education, which is seen as an active presence in art and issues challenging it, are workshops. They help to awaken the sources, own intentions and articulations. Those mentioned come from within, and so, therefore, they are freed from presiding norms, doctrines, techniques and specialisations.

Educational process, which is done in a workshop form represents a unique alternative towards education at art schools. In our contemporary times, I believe workshops belong to the education's major segment. They may either last a few days or even hours, but still, they question in a natural way characteristic for academic education long-term process unconditionally leading towards an assumed result.

A workshop is an educational event, or to use a better word self-educational. It is done by a group usually collected in a short, precisely set time. The act of formulating the group's status, a definition of tasks and action strategies belongs to its primary responsibilities, necessary at the moment of starting the work. I am talking about a workshop group initiated by the workshop leader, who in some conditions may be seen as a leader, or a guide, but never as a master. That function I would like to leave to someone running a master's class. Those classes are usually focused on the excellence of execution – I abstract from that in this text. I pay attention to workshops, in which the function and role of a guide are somehow negotiated by all workshop participants.

We may talk about a sphere of negotiation, and therefore a compromise. Academic studio minimises that area in favour of a responsible, but often risky decision.

We are talking about a singular discussion in a straightforward and explicit process, which perspective is always mapped out in solitude, even when we have a partner in a person of a professor running the studio.

The workshop is done in a different time scale. That in turn often exerts the rapidity of a decision. It is freed from the necessity of defining motivations and predicting the consequences.

on previous page:
Janusz Baldyga,
Pigs & Rabbits,
PGS Sopot 2013,
photo by
Monika Sobczak

It happens that in the actions of workshop participants are dominated by improvised behaviours – often behavioural or intuition based. That feature of a workshop, which puts in question the correction and search for alternatives, elevates the status of a gesture and immediate result.

A workshop is looking for new methods and educational strategies as well as extraordinary spaces. The initiators try to communicate with some other, alternative receiver – a participant of a workshop. For that reason, we witness an attempt at running workshops in prisons, psychiatric hospitals, or non-formal communities for young people in a difficult social situation.

A form of workshop education has been for several years 'sneaking into' areas dominated by academic education realised in master-pupil format. In this context, I would like to mention a short-lived entity – a guest studio. We are talking about a particular academic structure, but we need to say that workshop methods found their place in educational programmes of many distinguished artists-lecturers, professors of art universities.

Art disciplines defined as live art; action art; performance; poetic slam; create an excellent space for workshop education. They thrive in the programmes of art schools.

Presence and openness of a creative process generate a new language of communication and tools of a new, contemporary reality. A concept of 'contemporary' is justified because workshops happen here and now, they determine the present status of a creator, observer, place and time. They may be later forgotten, written down, replayed, etc.

This way or another, workshop relates itself to social context by inspiring relations in a group and outside it. A studio may develop an educational process in the form of dialogue abstracted from complex social relations.

A result of a workshop work, even though it may be rooted in the context of art discipline close to it, remains free from rigours and expectations related to a defined medium. It functions well in the space of a sketch, note, finished, simple gesture, its trace or elementary record.

1

Workshops outside the structures of art universities

The need to initiate workshops in my case was linked with lack of dispute about the values at the academy I studied in, and a desire to connect educational actions with present issues in contemporary art. Before I present some of the projects, which I did, I would like to go back to the history of workshops. It all started for me in the mid-1970s. The opening of that path was definitely in 'Pracownia Dziekanka'. It was a place set up in 1976 by three students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (Janusz Bałdyga, Jerzy Onuch, Łukasz Szajna). It grew very fast to become a centre of self-education workshops. It was there that a process I am talking about started. The school of my dream happened there, and it shaped the value systems present in my art practice. Workshop method, which meaning I felt in an intuitive way, emerged with the first, historical workshop led by Jan Berdyszak in 1977. It was him who started the process of shaping a hierarchy of importance and definition of a starting point of my path. I understand now that an element of workshop education, seen as a necessity, has always been one of the most significant experiences.

The feel of that time is well-reflected in a fragment of text describing the programme of Pracownia Dziekanka quoted below. The text was published as a leaflet in October 1980:

'Recognizing the structure and functioning of cultural institutions as formal and stifling in terms of creative initiatives, PRACOWNIA determines its status and objectives as an open educational, artistic and information institution. The programme of PRACOWNIA is based on proven forms of artistic and self-educating work tested in the Centre of Artistic Environments SZSP Dziekanka. A practical method of implementation of this program is: to continue and develop a series of teaching activities (seminars, lectures, workshops, exercises, presentations, meetings, etc.) prepared by invited individuals possessing great, original creative achievements; the implementation and disclosure of young art projects and cooperation in the implementation of individual proposals to organise facts stimulating the development of culture.'

An important aspect of the proposed formula of art education is to confront new phenomena in contemporary culture (visiting artists, theorists and scientists from Poland and abroad) with experiences of self-education conducted in PRACOWNIA. Information about developed here, experiences and values will be continuously given to the interested cultural and educational centres. PRACOWNIA is ready to cooperate with institutions, organisations and individuals interested in implementing, developing and promoting new techniques of self-education.

Janusz Bałdyga, Janusz Banach, Jacek Kryszakowski, Jerzy Onuch, Zygmunt Piotrowski-U-kiYo, Tomasz Sikorski, Łukasz Szajna – October 1980¹¹.

Perhaps from a perspective of time, the text may sound native, but it represents a valuable testimony of our aims and aspirations, their meaning was confirmed later in adult life.

I have been running workshops since the beginning of the 1980s in galleries, art centres,

but also in theatre centres in Poland and abroad. I have realised many times workshop projects in European culture centres. A theatre context was important in the phase of creating a programme concept of a workshop linked with my project and the programme of Academia Ruchu, which I became a member of in 1979.

I would like to present three workshop projects here. To start with I would like to discuss the first one which was carried out in a several-years-long cycle.

It is Lviv Performance School – a workshop project commenced in 2008 as a result of my participation in the art week in Lviv. I was offered to run a series of workshops for students and young artists. The work in the project was to be finished with an open, public presentation of workshop results. The school project has been repeated annually since then with a full support of Lviv art community grouped around the gallery and art centre DZYGA, as well as with a close cooperation of Waldemar Tatarczuk. The idea assumes individual, done in full responsibility actions of all participants.

An important, outside experience for the school was a project Timetable, which was done in Lublin. It finished with a public presentation. It was significant for another reason. Thanks to an initiative of Labirynt Gallery in Lublin for the first time the school workshop was done outside Ukraine.

It seems that apart from the workshops developed within PRACOWNIA educational series, another stimulating experience was in cooperation between PRACOWNIA and Onuch and Szajna, who were then our friends from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. It is explicitly declared in the below presented statement.

'From the moment of our meeting and declaration of joint operations we have faced the problems posed by cooperation. This situation forced us to create such a deliberate model, which would become the basis for the further, meaningful activity. Every new project forced us to design new objectives for the next project, which in turn verified those assumptions. As a result, the basic problem was a constant act of creating and analysing the model of an artistic group functioning; analysing the relationships that exist within the group, between the art and social setting - October 1976¹².

11. Pracownia – ulotka [Pracownia – leaflet], Warsaw 1980

12. Pracownia Dziekanka Bałdyga Onuch Szajna - ulotka rękopis [Pracownia Dziekanka Bałdyga Onuch Szajna - leaflet manuscript], Warsaw 1976

Workshops in Public Space, *Timetable*

Labirynt Gallery

Lublin 2012

Timetable,
Labirynt
Gallery,
Lublin 2012,
photo by
Diana
Kolczewska



The workshop was accompanied by a leaflet, which was distributed in the form of a leaflet: *The aim of the workshop is to create a strategy in which the key role is played by the dynamic message based on the idea of a nomadic journey. The journey of a particular group, or a specific community has got strong cultural connotations, which should be mentioned here. In this project, I'm interested in the myth of the road and the strategy of the movement, in „rolling” of an expressive, visual structure created by the participants. This strategy is based on ‚timetable’ developed at the beginning of the workshop, a kind of map of space and time of action. The point is that the expressive, connecting all the participants’ action should include individual expressions, characters and ideas. The awareness of the existence of a group does not eliminate the individual intentions. It creates a context which requires the creation of a specific discipline. The action of the artists will become a kind of vehicle plugged into the existing fabric of the dynamic Lublin’s center*¹³.

While writing this text, I assumed constructing a mobile roller, a vehicle, that would roll down Krakowskie Przedmieście in Lublin. It would mark the course of its movement with the signatures of individual utterances of each and every participant of the project. I was aware that a compromise between the autonomy of the individual’s utterance and expressiveness

13. Rozkład jazdy – ulotka [Timetable – leaflet], Lublin 2011

of a street manifestation was a risky enterprise due to unrecognised distinctiveness between those values.

The participants were looking for the coherence of individual and group project in the form of unity of tools assigned to each them. They were two two-meters-long pine boards, 12 cm wide. What came out of it was a fence several meters high – it was shaky, but at the same time it was strong through the stability of people. The form diving the street and the role each of us had made us aware of the importance of one of the most important postulates in performance art – the necessity of presence. The transparency of the process and conscious presence define the space of a potential activity. The form – an openwork wall, thrown before us and raised again to the vertical position – was moving in the direction of the Cracow’s Gate. The action was driven by rhythmic, repetitive gestures of the performers. The ‘Rolling’ wall was moving the accompanying observers like a wave.

Urban Games - The City of Imagination

European Performance Art Festival EPAF

The Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle

Warsaw 2011

While seeing a city as a place concentrating human activity, we may read it as a particular form of an explosion theatre, war theatre or space theatre. I use the word ‘theatre’, with a military concept in mind – the theatre of war.



photo by
Diana
Kolczewska

We are therefore entitled to seek the scenes, behind the scenes, the audience, etc. We find differences in the determination of our actions between the staircase (backstage), yard (scene), and some open windows (the audience). We recognise the city as a creative place; we try to impose our activity on the recognised grid of urban behaviours, by correcting them, by modifying them, or by entering into a dialogue with their manifestations, which interest us.

An important aspect of the process of learning the city is a reflection on the phenomenon of its particular image, which is a map. A map - a recognisable sign depending on the experience, it is a graphic image of a country, city, area, etc. The contour of Poland is easy to read thanks to the school's experiences and everyday information iconography for example presented daily in the TV weather forecast.

Let us consider the icons of our personal, private experiences related to a particular place.

A map with frequent adjustments is not a universally readable icon except for the fragments containing particularly distinctive layouts of streets and squares.

In case of maps of the city, we have to deal with other, poorer potential information. We recognise flawlessly the outline of Italy, while the contour of Rome is a challenge for us.



So, we are looking for tools to identify the phenomenon of the city and its creative, dynamic reflection. This is where the 'Urban Games' come in.

An interesting example of an intervention into the city's plan is the concept of the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind. Hexagonal plan clearly indicates the inspiration – the star of David. The urban plan, which the building of the museum is written into, finds an alternative in the shape of a personal plan. There, the essential points are the places of residence of Berliners co-creating the great culture of Berlin. They are Germans and Jews. Lines connecting individual points create an alternative grid depicting human relationships, influences and links. In fact, the urban order of the city written into planned streets, squares, and parks was omitted.

'The proper context for Libeskind is not a real existing context of urbanisation. The context for it is an imaginary city. A city, which is described by the relationships amongst the people living in it, without creating any objective graph (for example a map, or a cartographic grid), but an irrational invisible matrix'¹⁴.

This solution is an objective deconstruction of the urban topography in its cartographic terms. I suggest the following method of identification and description for an active urban space.

1. The art of describing an urban space

a) Line - the European concept

b) Point - the Asian concept

Polish and Japanese flags (the potential of a line and point) as an example of a sign dominating over the contour of a city, for instance, a flag over a parliament building, a flag lowered to half-mast.

Describing with a line - the streets, avenues, the order of numbers – odd and even.

Describing with a point - intersections, places in particular dangerous.

2. The marginality of urban space.

Recognition and exposition of the city elements seen as marginal, trivial, devoid of any meaning. The search for their new role in a new view and a newly created by us urban city order. Each city has been equipped with history, tradition, and sometimes manipulations dressed in a recognisable icon. It may be a part of a city, building, monument, landscape, etc. These icons are typically multiplied in many situations for different purposes. They write themselves in our collective memory, and they create a kind of a set, a collection, etc.

To give a few examples, let me mention three icons of cities important to me.

14. Lubiak, Jarostaw, 2000, p 76: *Berlin – Miasto spektaklu* quoted in: *Rzeźba polska* vol. IX: 1998-1999, *Teatr miasta. Utopia i wizja*, Polish Sculpture Centre, Orońsko

WROCLAW:

- an image of the town hall multiplied on a popular postage stamp;
- Grunwald bridge;
- Racławice Panorama written into the public consciousness as a remarkable value without any counterpart in the Polish material culture.

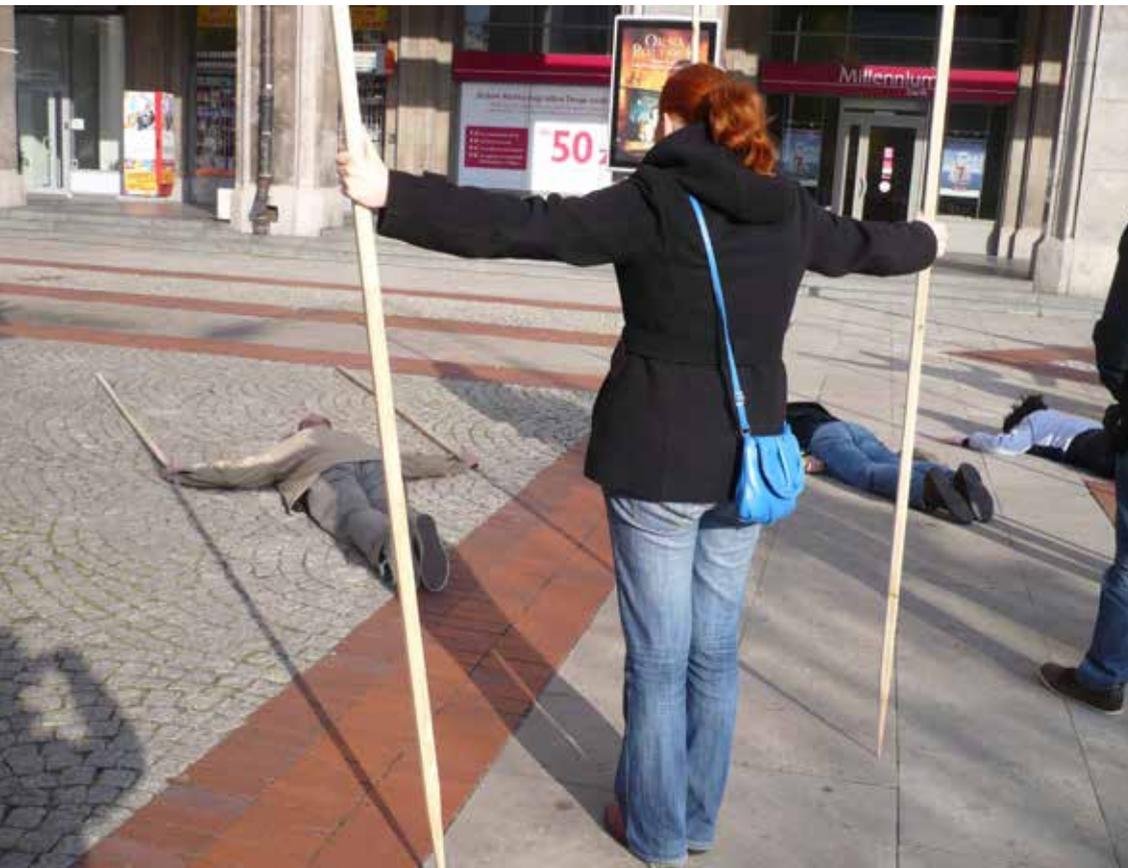
LUBLIN:

- Cracow's Gate;
 - The Lublin Castle - in the seventies and eighties a visual sign of a regional Lublin television;
- The Union of Lublin as a fact written in historical consciousness.

WARSAW

- Sigmund's column;
 - The view of the church of St. Anna from W-Z the route;
- The palm at Jerusalem Avenue as an attempt to achieve a contemporary iconography.

Urban Games –
– City of
Imagination,
EPAF, CSW,
Warsaw 2011



Bearing in mind the above examples, we may wonder whether the following have an icon, or whether they might have it, for instance, Mętne village, Tokary village or Borysowszczyzna hamlet.

They might have it, but their range is very local, often only private, restricted to a circle of those, who know it, or people assigned to those places. Also, the impact of the media does not exist, or its scale is minimal (a cable TV in Bartoszyce town).

So there are icons of cities, recognisable, famous and prominent, but there are also marginal, unknown places, because there is no reason to promote them. These places are often private, personal, but also they represent unwritten cards. Those unwritten cards have the potential that can aspire to the status of an icon as the trace left after the bricked-up window opening, beaten up path, or a pavement fragment. We can use them to record a personal story and further on, the mythology of tribal places.

3. Urban spatial form as our point of orientation.

The paradox of a recognisable monument (stillness) and an identifiable public transport means (mobility).

4. Projection - light in the urban culture and aesthetics.

5. Minimal gesture repeated as a tool for interference and enrichment of the urban agenda action.

6. Strategic places. The energies of pedestrian crossings, escalators, a drawbridge.

7. First places. Objectives, criteria, alternative.

8. The city of secrets. What is behind this wall? What is around the corner? What is on the other side of the river?

9. The paradox of opposites. Warsaw - Buenos Aires, Warsaw - Borne Sulinowo. Legend and the likelihood of empirical knowledge.

10. Utopia. An ideal city.

A series of individual actions, used as starting points, is based on a terminology discovered in the urban space - pedestrian crossing, trespassing prohibited, dams opened with a code (initiation), red light, green light, postbox, etc.

The reference to the board game makes us delineate the field of game, and so the borders (circuit) of the board.

Entering the board starts the game. Mechanics and rules are formed during the operation, the first move is necessary, it opens the prospect of further moves.

An attempt to build your code, for example, like in Chess or Ludo is the task of each of us; we must be aware that the board is a surface part of the city with its physical and semantic structure. On the one hand, it is described by a paving stone, on the other - the white stripes on the black surface of the asphalt.

The boundaries of space

An introduction to the workshop. The school of performance

Dzyga Gallery

Lviv 2013 - 2014

Introduction - about the boundaries and distances

A border-line treated as a concept subjected to historical processes seem to mark a major consideration in the dynamics of boundaries. The boundaries often form a relatively ambiguous, unpredictable variable, not always relying on the natural lines plotted by the line of rivers, coast or a mountain chain.

Physical boundaries result with a historical origin in the shape of the countries borders. Borderlines are a powerful testimony of time, they code in the course of their line pressure, aspirations and divisions. The acts of diverging regarding ethnic, political and geographical borders create an interesting field of overlapping influences, analogies and oppositions.

The dynamics of borders create signs written into the culture and iconosphere of a given period, for example, the Chinese wall, the Berlin Wall, the Jordan River and Bug river.

The border is both a barrier and a bridge between different, often antagonistic spaces; it is similar to a fact or even the ritual of transgression.

Faced with the opposites and undisputed flow, we realise the fact of participation in the process of releasing significant and unusual energies. This awareness always accompanies us when it comes to decisions, in which we can select the borderline and connected with its crossing, the critical point. We gain the awareness of the passing, which often overlaps with an unaware border ritual.

'Borders are where wars start'¹⁵ - wrote Hastings Donnan so that we can treat them as places of the beginning and end, initiation and exhaustion of all processes. The nature of the border certainly affects the nature and dynamics ongoing at the time of the crossing and after the crossing. In a lecture inaugurating the school in Lviv, I referred to my recent works, a series of performances entitled 'Performance of a dual flag'.

The series is related to the issues of meanings born out of the border ritual. The analysis of natural behaviours and conventional gestures confronts us with a very interesting problem of the effectiveness of crossing, and on the other hand, with the cultural sense of ciphering the moment of transition from one zone to another.

A definition of a border, differences in values before and after it, limit the possibility of crossing, or a demonstration of intent if the crossing is a utopia.

Another concept, which we describe the space in the context of the border, is distance. I am thinking about the distance between concepts close - far away, low - high. A relational description of someone who uses these categories results from the structure of experiencing, and the uniqueness of human body.

The value that determines and modifies the status of the performer is distance. While applying the criteria of distance, we put forward the coordinates of the place and a point of our current existence, even if this is a flick of our experience. We operate with distance to avoid collisions, to give a real chance to delineate and manage places for other users of space. Performance art requires an absolute clarity in dealing with a distance in relation to creating a place and creating communication processes.

Distance determines the use of private space, or even an intimate one by such actions and gestures as touch, whisper, or emission of smell. An element, which radically changes the situation is an extreme shortening of the distance. This leads to the state of crowding, breaking the discipline, which directs the participants towards a collision. This collision as an expected result of crowding may create an absorbing strategy.

Can rules of the culturally shaped informal distances, observed in all social behaviours (a queue, a hospital, an airport) be applied in the practice of performance art?

An introduction to considerations on performance art

Are we able to analyse contemporary drawing, outside the activities of the drawing, and sculpture - while discounting the time and process of carving? Can we analyse a marathon, while focusing only on the exhausted athlete's body standing at the finish line?

Performance art brings to light the reasons, giving the highest rank to the process irrespectively of the achieved result. While looking at classical sculpture, we pay attention to a mark of a tool, because it allows us to reach to the process of reaching a such and not different outcome. We receive a testimony or even signum of a contemporary sculpture in time.

The mark of a tool draws attention to the process, just like the worn shoes of an Ethiopian marathoner stand a witness to an exhausting run. While being the advocates of transparency, we are even more aware of the realm of mystery and secrecy. Leaving marks of a tool, or marks of a process results in a disclosure of the plot leading to the result, we are witnessing at the moment.

That is why the concept I often use - performance-object is justified here as a tool of transparency, or a tool used in the act of revealing.

Actions directed at border states allow perceiving the potential of functioning in the areas near borders. They indicate the possibility and even the inevitability of the crisis resulting in

15. Donnan, H., & T. Wilson, 2001, p 95: *Granice tożsamości, narodu, państwa* [in:] *Antropologia kultury*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw

critical states. Following that, one of the core performance parameters is location. The most potential seems to be on the outskirts, in a dynamically evolving area of a border.

A few years ago, at one of the American universities, there was a conference dedicated to performance, it was entitled with a hybrid word - „glocalisation“. They combined in this way two, in a sense antagonistic concepts: localisation and globalisation. So, we were looking for our own, personal and even intimate location in the unlimited space. It is almost a ritualistic removal of borders, which makes us remember about their non-existence when we select a place. While seeking privacy, we involuntarily recall the context of globalisation. Therefore, in the non-existence of borders, or trends for their removal, we are trying to find the most personal border points. Regarded as a place of location for our gestures, expression and stillness, they will allow us to discover the borderlands with their primary advantage - the potential of no man's land.

In my work, I pay attention to the function of a sign included in the processes of performance art. I treat a sign in performance practice as being the first, elementary and indivisible. The entire course of my work confirms the desire to search in the external the substance of a sign of the inner. Regardless of the location and territorial considerations, I treat sign in performance art, as an internal signal and an internal message.

I, therefore, confirm the adjective 'internal' as an essential element of performance language description, which radiates onto the whole area of performance art. That discipline of art introduces an interior imperative as a space of a personal ritual. A lit candle becomes the cause of a secure existence in spite of the lightning. A candle becomes an element of, a sign of a tight border; the fire of lit candles creates an impassable line, supported by the faith and intention of the users.

I would like to draw attention to the often unappreciated or unnoticed educational aspect of performance art. The process of education and self-education based on the experience of the art performance, I treat as an intermedia fact, located in the autonomous space between the disciplines and defined problems.

Performance art as a public action, which reveals the process of creation, has very strong connotations and even educational tasks. Freed from the current canons, we are looking for a discipline and codes of the new, an autonomous language based on own media choices.

Reflections and the facts cited in this text are intended to define and name the problem, draw the space, scale and duration of my performance. I am aware that everything shall happen between the border points described in this reflection, once again through setting my current status. This involves the need to enlarge my space with the use of a positive message. I conclude with a declaration, which belongs to the earlier statement 'analysing

my gestures and my actions, I declare that I want to be on the side of those who add value, or signal this desire if they are not able to do more.'

Space and place

The geometry of space at the start of performance builds my relationship with the observers, seeing me standing in the centre of space, drawing a circle the point of my stillness; what is in action is the logic and a certain automatism of social organisation of space. The space permeating everything determines the structure of place of the accompanying the performer viewers. I am visible from the front, left, right, and from the back, everything depends on the occupied place on the line running around the circle. I am aware that my activity changes the relationship of visibility, which is important for the observer and me.

When the first recorded performance image is my figure located at the edge of space, facing towards the entering audience, I see, and I am seen, we are dealing with the position of overt confrontation outside the sphere of the hidden, outside the sphere of the mystery. And then just one gesture, rotation around my axis to the status of visibility, which is key in performance art, would fundamentally change. Not seeing leaving observers, I confront myself with essentially only their presence, the space of intuition. The visible space is at the moment a peripheral margin. It is hidden behind the back; I begin the action against an invisible audience. This relationship intrigues, of course, I am aware of talking about models, which in the undistorted form do not exist, but for me, it is a very important evidence of the structure of the output performance, a first sign. It starts from the process of shaping the language of a specific performance, and it determines the parameters of a potential agreement. The scale of the space between the sender and recipient of a message can not be reduced to the category of distance because it is never alienated from the context lines, phrases, and group dynamics. Positioning the observer is an essential part of shaping the zero point, in the process of initiating a capital fact of performance.

The status of presence in space performance

Can we hold true a sentence that it may happen, that the absence of a performer and the sign substance, which is created, decide on the essence of the message?

An argument in defence of this statement may be seen in the activities of Alistair McLenn especially the Lublin performance, which he did at the symposium 'Performance Now' in 1990. The performance focused the attention of observers on a spectacular absence of the artist contrasted with an announcement of the performative presence in a particular time and place. This fact evokes a sense of lack, and it focused the attention even more on the absent. In fact, the presence of the performer realised in the dimension of mental causes created an expectation and desire for the fulfilment of presence.

The condition for the fulfilment of such a performance strategy is a strong signal of absence. The absence is severe; an acute lack causes the opposite concept - presence perceived ambiguously, often based on ideas and cultural patterns.

It seems that the absence regarded as lack, or as drastic, severe lack of something, may open the field of performer's presence. An intriguing is a moment of the first step initiation, crossing a line, behind which there opens the space of performance. It is initiated, the boundary line is crossed or, paradoxically, the operation was started without crossing it, for instance in the marginal space.

The problem starts when we are aware that the role of an imitator, a guide, a mentor was unfulfilled due to the absence of performer. We are left alone. We formulate, or we feel the status of our presence, and we are aware that it shall be in force in that specific situation.

Once again, we deal with the functional design of opposites. While analysing the energies of the overlapping contradictions, we are looking for the commonness of meaning between mobility and an extraordinary value of immobility. The contradiction is the desired state, which often creates necessary energies of the opposites.

The body - figure, an equivalent or an opposition?

What does this question for the performer, artist mean, when the basic tool is their body oriented on many layers? I would like to recall here an opinion of Lukasz Guzek, according to him human corporeality locates itself in the centre of the performance issues:

'A human is the fundamental matter of the action; this means that the foundation is a psychophysical condition. We are talking about a particular man in a particular place. The body, in this case, assumes the function of subject and object. This dual and contradictory position of the body in performance is the source of tension. The greatest tension and the greatest emotion give rise to radical gestures towards the body. In performance, the essence of the issue is linking the work with corporeality or figurativity. The form of performance is shaped by individual body experiences; it is the body and its experience that creates the material dimension of performance. It is noticeable in the strongest way, in the most spectacular way in situations where the body is confronted with a threat'¹⁶.

The notion determining the constructed by a performer sign is the body.

This body and its particular characteristics underlie the marking process. An act of intentional replacing of the notion of 'body' with 'figure' is merely a semantic facilitation, which does not change the essence of things.

'The body is the first, most natural tool of a man. Or more precisely: it is the first, the most natural technical object and medium'¹⁷.

16. Guzek, Lukasz, 1999 *Metaxis przedmiotu* QQ Gallery, Krakow

17. Mauss, Marcel, 2001, p186: *Sposoby postugiwania się ciałem* [in:] Godlewski, G., Kolankiewicz, L., & R., Sulima [edited by] *Antropologia kultury*, Wydawnictwa UW, Warsaw

A message - consistent, harmonised with anatomical order and potential of performer's movement, forms itself around the person/figure. The created sign defines its functions during the performance process by performer's assumptions, his strategy and social context.

(Re) location, the strategy of a double gesture

I would like to refer here to a very interesting paper by Per Bjarne Boym *Relations and objects, machine art and a challenge for decentralised art*. It was delivered in October 2008 in Lillehammer during the seminar UT-21. The syllable 're' is present in many words for example 'Relocation' and thus re-positioning in this or that place.

I would like to focus on the insightful for a performer meaning of a word 'again'. An analysis of the effects of describing the fact with the use of this concept can help us in understanding the process of constant repetitions, or reconstructions, or even revaluing the performer's gesture. The original meaning of the relations would be approximately 'bringing back, re-bringing'. Performance regarded as a fact of re-fetching, or re-bringing seems to me an important factor in the elementary definition of its flow. Repetitions, as part of the strategy, allow the performer to reduce the excess of meanings and repeated sequences in favour of spatial rhythms opening spatial orders. An open order, in all directions, allows avoiding the narrative, which destroys the autonomy of performance. Multiple repetitions of sequences, which require precision, can lead to the creation of a depletion sign in performance.

We observe the inexorable passing of time, in a way, we experience the reduction of energy and losing the sharp contour. Performance flows in the direction of motor exhaustion. A gesture repeated, consequently, multiplied loses its informative function, even when the sense of repetition is persuasion. The plurality of sequences received as an identical creates an ornament, and we are talking at the moment about repetitions taking place in the area of one performance. Questions concerning general issues of performance seem to be reasonable. Is the repetition of a fact possible? Does strategy of repetition, which allows recreating a fact in other space, in front of other observers, in other time make sense? Can the act of launching the mechanism of repetition as a standard push the performance in the areas of theatrical conventions? The sense of repetitions must be built by the meaning of a particular performance. Repetition then becomes one of the elements of the guidelines constituting that fact; it does not have any application in analysing another performance act.

Between the interior and the exterior

Performance is a fact positioned 'between'. If we accept this statement, while assuming that the performer's presence is a necessary factor, we may ask a question about, amongst who and what the fact occurs. And this is the most basic question, and the answer is ambiguous.

Between the performer and the observer, there is space often fraudulently mechanically transferred from the reality of a theatre. Questioning its rigour is necessary and, in principle, evident in the times, in which the closure of a theatrical performance can be treated as a historical fact, trivialising secondary, persistent theatrical practice. The performer must control the character of space 'between', its vectors, the size and as a result the function. Space 'between' is an important factor shaping the spatial relations of the performer, observer, objects, and space limitations. We call it the interior, placing in it the point 'between' which constitutes an important reference in the process of constructing performance. We are talking about the support point or critical point, constituting essentially an internal point. In this context, George Gurawski's statement seems very interesting, it calls and describes the space of intuition. He divides the space of our presence into two parts, the perceived one with sight, and the one called intuition space, which is out of sight. While analysing the relationship between these spaces, we are aware of the dynamics of the border conditioned by the change of places. To go even further, we can treat the space within the sight as an internal area. It is constantly confronted with the outside beyond the sight. Gurawski calls it the space of intuition. We can describe it in terms of vague ideas conditioned by memory and the predicted logic of spatial orders. Hazy knowledge about the outer space realises our ideas about the mystery. They are enhanced by an ambiguous reading of the borders. The boundaries shape our knowledge about the interiority and externality formed somewhere on the outskirts near the borderline states. In the internal area, a particular performance defines itself as an unrepeatable fact, a unique statement, which when the performance is exhausted loses its meaning. Performance limits the performer by describing the internal space borders with the outreach of arms, the power of throw, etc.

Borders and transgressions

I am seeking the structure of the object - a house, a particular Oikos, while having a 'mistakenly read' potential plan. A foundation constructed on this plan is an unknown to me potential. My situation may change stepping across the threshold, I would like to focus on the potential of space between those two, at the moment key concepts - 'transgressing' and 'threshold'. Transgressing the threshold changes my status. I am inside or outside. Standing on the threshold is a collision, suspension, a passive element. The spaces behind and before the threshold line seem to be interesting. Crossing the border may lead to a radical transformation of values and meanings relevant for the participants of transgression. When people cross borders, when they move from one space of established laws and norms to another, where those norms may be useless, the system values based on unknown basis may

become the realm of the incomprehensible mystery. I place the concept of ritual in areas close to performance art. I'm thinking about a change of status before crossing, and after crossing the border; whether there is any reason in a schematic dualism of opposites such as rich - poor, enslaved - free, static - mobile, etc. I would like to defend the crossing against the scheme of common solutions. I focus on the point of my location. This is a point on the way of crossing, and I am separated from it by seconds, fractions of seconds, or undefined time describing the moment of my stillness.

These moments of stillness create a narrative of my path to the critical point or a crossing point. I am at the border, so I am trying to build a status of a human, an artist of a borderline state. I spoke about a threshold regarding a border point, treated as a binding element.

Borderlines as sources of projection

While considering the phenomenon of projection, I would like to concentrate on a historical projection referring us to the seemingly closed time dimensions.

An important concept is a memory reactivating facts and people, but also the limits, which are the leading element of my reflections. We are dealing with a vulnerable deformation, lack of precision, and sometimes the mechanism of human nonchalance, often intentional memory. The boundary lines, devoid of form, or constituting a hidden form, erased in the memory, they show their absolute power of discussion, which defines the intransgressible imperative. The prohibition 'no access' is loaded with the risk of unknown consequences. By undertaking this problem, we need to find a definition of the term 'projection'; medium and mechanics of action will come as a consequence.

Borderlands

It happens that the natural processes of hiding, blurring the contours are created in the space of trans-border culture. It creates a strong tendency of assimilation its forms on both sides of the border. We are talking about a particular area of activity, the field of a special marking, which we might call a frontier. You could accept the thesis that the borderlands are the areas of penetration and activity of artists, especially performers seen as direct and active users of the space. History of boundaries is the history of borderlands because they create a cultural political and geographical context. Integrated borderlands create a new, often autonomous quality. They are based on the domination of great systems in the neighbourhood. The search for borderlands, the acts of naming them, finding the lost sovereignty gives you a chance to find the space of artist described by these very concepts. I wrote about the space 'between', and now I invoke the concept of the border, in both cases, I refer to the dynamic multilevel sphere of influences, trends, and above all language activity.

It is the language that creates the space of observed and often challenged solutions, by creating an open, often poorly marked borderlands' space. It seems that this is a space that is waiting for the voice of a human, also an artist.

I treat borderlands as a space of ritual not only related to the celebration of crossing the border but for instance my individuality. I am aware of threats to the values found in the state of constant confrontation.

The functioning in the confrontation of values and opposition signs creates an aura of danger and probability of chance. The high standard of value crystallisation turns out to be most of all an answer to great danger.

In times of challenges, there occurs the rhythmicity of human impulses; we are dealing with the formation of the ritual, in this case in the form of an intensive borderland ritual. The chief motive in the ritualisation borderline actions is confrontation as well as a resulting from it fighting (often close contact one). This fight can be interpreted in terms of spatial, ordered performer's strategy.

Confusion and crisis in the analysis of performance art

There is a new, major concept - 'a tool'; in this case, we are talking about a tool possessed by a performer.

'At this point, we also need to look at simpler ideas abstracted from man and world, namely, body and space, remembering however that the one not only occupies the other but commands and orders it through intention. Body is 'lived body' and space is humanly constructed [...] Space opens out before him and is immediately differentiable into front-back and right-left axes in conformity with the structure of his body. Vertical-horizontal, top-bottom, from-back and right-left are positions and coordinates of the body that are extrapolated onto space¹⁸.

Performance treated as a source fact is not burdened with repeatability; it is particularly prone to an error, which may result in a crisis. Assuming a potential error as a feature of performance, we can assume that the value of performance art, opening the possibility of penetration of new space, is the crisis combined with a natural need to go beyond the marked area. We colloquially speak about the need, or desire to emerge from the crisis as an oppressive situation, difficult to bear, unacceptable. Realising the potential of the crisis, we set up a model of performance, in which causing crisis is a part of the envisaged strategy. The attempt to escape crisis as a fact public, the visible one, is a proper performance substance. The problem is the unknown and associated with it risk of failure, lack of fulfilment, or absence of any articulation disorganising and confusing the observer. The crisis as a consequence of error

seems to be an obvious figure, but an error devoid of potential, empty, I treat as an undesirable phenomenon, having no place in the strategy of my performance; I do everything to avoid it. The situation in which the tool is my flesh with its condition, and above all measure parameters, may lead to an extreme situation, which nature enforces mistake as a consequence of, for instance, quick decisions, or insufficient knowledge of the matter. If I consider using the weight perfectly synchronised with my body and its capabilities, I choose weight at the limit of abilities; it seems that another 100 grammes will exceed the barrier of my condition. I am for the observer a perpetrator of the confrontation in such categories as weight, distance, height or any minimum or maximum. Then the crisis can be associated with passing the time resulting in various conditions of my body, memory or losing precision of movement. This text talks about a notion of a safe standstill; I would like, while returning to the crisis space, use the concept of safety by posing a question about performance being a safe phenomenon. This seemingly absurd question has got sense since we connect the concept of safety with the concept of indemnification. Treating performance as a reductive fact, we free it from the excess of forms and expressions; we must also eliminate the instruments of indemnification.

The observer exists

Observers, situated outside the zone, control the scene as a field of action. Permanent visibility enforces respect for the rules of the zone. Showing respect may be motivated by a desire to make a good impression on the audience, or to avoid the consequences in the form of punishment. The observer situated outside the zone enhances and reinforces the meaning and value of the border. He assumes a socially acceptable role of a controller. A mistake of such a polarised performance plan involves throwing an observer outside the bracket of internal definitions describing performance facts. The observer is an element of co-creating a definition of performance. His relationship with a performer shapes a real, complete performance space. Such spatial relations as close - far away, low - high form a semantic structure of the performance, often based on a clear and energetic combination of opposites.

'In addition to the vertical-horizontal and high-low polarities, the shape and posture of the human body define its ambient space as front-back and right-left. Frontal space is primarily visual. It is vivid and much larger than the rear space that we can experience only through non-visual cues. Frontal space is "illuminated" because it can be seen; back space is "dark", even when the sun shines, simply because it cannot be seen. The belief that eyes project light rays goes back at least to Plato (Timaeus) and persists to the Middle Ages and beyond. Another common feeling is that one's shadow falls behind the body even though in actual fact it often stretches to the front. On a temporal plane, frontal space is perceived as future,

18. Tuan, Yi-Fu, 2001, p 35: *The Perspective of Experience* University of Minnesota Press

rear space as past. The front signifies dignity. The human face commands respect, even awe. Lesser beings approach the great with their eyes lowered, avoiding the awesome visage. The rear is profane¹⁹.

In proposing the topic 'The boundaries of space', I attempted making contact with the school's participants on a multilevel area of meanings, tendencies and personal experiences. I wondered about the contexts of 'border', proposed by the people whose emotions, experiences and desires I do not know. Contexts of a border between countries and political systems generating such concepts as 'restriction', 'violence' or 'division', so attractive for the artist's reflection, seem over explained and too firmly rooted in the social awareness. We talked about the need of discerning a detail in our human existence, which when selected, included in the communication process could speak about issues rather general from the view of a single person.

This dimension of an utterance has got currently fundamentally significant meaning for performance art. In 1989 in Koszalin, a symposium took place under the title of 'Art as a private gesture'. I recall this title because I find it as an interesting element of a performer's practice description. The symposium undertook a task of defining, or at least indicating the importance of a personal or even intimate artistic fact. Performance is the art of social communication in a multilevel dimension. A starting point is always a particular person turning towards another human being.

While talking about the title of Koszalin's event, I can say that it is an art of private gesture, which in the public space refers to the problems of the human condition, entanglements, desires and emotions.

The spaces of visual communication

'The spaces of visual communication' is the title of a workshop addressed initially to people involved in visual theatre practices. While conducting these classes, I tried to focus on the borderline space between theatre, performance and installation art. My task was to find a place for me 'in-between'. On the one hand, this place is described through performance art seen as an art of confrontation and immediate reevaluations, on the other - sculpture - static and absolute. I position all actions in space, in which I respect all existing order. It allows for an appropriate defining of own presence seen as an elementary fact of shaping the space. The fact of relocating changes of distance, approaching and departing co-create a dynamism of the perceived space. The analysis of gesture and its range leads to the delineation of our influence, the boundaries of our domination.

19. Tuan, Yi-Fu, 2001, p 40: *The Perspective of Experience* University of Minnesota Press

Another element of our work is the object, closest to a man, formed with a physical aspect of the body for example clothing, or furniture. This object may also be further away, on a border of our influence, beyond the view. Spatial conditions, a presence of a man and his relations with the subject build an environment for the functioning of the groups of two, four or five people. We build the spatial relationships amongst the participants of the workshop.

I usually offer to undertake the problems that could formulate a task for only one specific group. The workshop does not duplicate recognised educational processes. It creates a method strongly rooted in real space, in real time. By doing so, it elevates the importance of co-presence and responsibility. A workshop is a group's experience. It has got an important and basic value - the process and an individual result. Metaphorically speaking, it is a question, for which we need to take responsibility. A large group's project as a result of an educational process has got meaning only when we find a reason to build the subjectivity of the group, not only the benefits of an attractive size and efficiency. A group treated as a tool is always in opposition to an idea of a workshop.

In the initial workshop phase, the field of actions has got such concepts as space, place, time, critical point, mythical space, private space in opposition to public one, a gesture for one, etc. Other actions grow out of the group's activity. The group modifies, accepts or rejects it.

1.1. Recognise the field of action

(Space and its limitations)

The spaces in which we exist, tend to be limited by several physical conditions, such as walls, ceilings, fences, as well as by our condition associated with sight or arm strength in case of throwing things. There is a natural need to question the meaning and absolute relativity of restrictions. Their recognition allows answering the question, what a particular space is and what it offers. Examine it, given the nature and specificity of its limitations.

2. Find a place for yourself.

(A place as a point in space)

Recognising space allows you to define and determine the point associated with our presence - this is the place. A man noticed in unlimited, monotonous desert image draws our attention to a place - a unique point designated by his presence. The choice of place is associated with our aspirations, and the place's potential is linked with for example a particular exposure or effective cover. By leaving for a moment a place, we do not abandon a possibility of return; we write in the memory its primary qualities and characteristic elements of the way back. This is how sign functions of a place are born.

3. Mark your place

Another problem is the functioning of a sign. I am interested in its character, the limits of influence and participation in the ritual of marking. Performance signs are built around the performer's figure, and they are a structural element of performance. A sign, therefore, acts as a key, and its structural and semantic role, in this case, is undeniable. Icon, word and trace are elements formulating a message. An accumulation of sign elements, creating spatial and semantic may lead to a crisis, which in this case appears to be extremely effective. I see a place as an indicated sequence of space. If you want it to operate in the minds of others, it must be marked with a subjective, almost private sign. It refers to me; it builds a relationship with my person.

Mark your place with a sign, in a way to make your identification optimal, build a personal sign of your place, let it be an inalienable part of your existing resources. While seeking an organic relationship with your mark, analyse the trace, print it and on a slightly different level of perception analyse its temperature, smell, etc.

4. Performance space

(Performance of the centre - performance of the edge)

I separate the space of performance and presence with specific means for example with elementary features of the description of the time preceding the performance. I start in the middle of a limited field; I avoid contacts with the physicality of its boundaries.

The opposite situation is finding a place on edge, while having behind your back, for example, a hard wall, and the view of the space in front of you.

This is a performance of the centre and a performance of the edge. They are two concepts of presence in performance space. We must be aware of the well-established prestige of the centre as a place of particular value. In some situations, the concept of the centre can replace the idea of the 'highest'. On the other hand, the edge may define the boundaries of a margin. I am interested in a confrontation of concepts: the centre and periphery in the context of the performer's action.

5. Presence - absence

I confirm an elementary feature of performance - the presence of a performer in the space. Let us consider the characteristics of presence realised through the opposites for example absence. What is important is the signal of absence resulting with the feeling of lack, turning our attention to the absent, and in turn creating an ambiguous and sometimes mysterious image.

6. Discover the critical point

(a point on the axis of our activity, when it is transgressed it takes away the control and influence in the course of an event)

We begin the process, which inevitably leads to the critical point. Exceeding it may lead to a disaster, not necessarily understood regarding violent destruction. Let us consider the nature of the crossing, exhaustion, wear, and decay. You are approaching a critical situation, in full awareness or while having a vague feeling about the consequences of transgressing the critical point. Or perhaps crossing is the solution too obvious, perhaps the most important is the decision to stop just before...

7. Action - substitute objects (a substitute - an alternative)

It happens that we replace entire sections of the reality, without causing destruction, but rather by transforming and reevaluating what exists. We discover stable elements of reality. They can not be substituted for, and they do not subject themselves to interference. Introduce an intervention into the existing reality by replacing its specific fragment with another, surprising, paradoxical, or personal one.

8. A secret performance (secrecy - openness)

In the process of word/sign emissions, a part of a message intended by the sender undertakes the communication functions. There is an intriguing, usually small sphere that remains unrecognised, concealed even when the intention was an explicit message. It may be the case of a deliberate concealment, disguise or discovery, but only in a fragment of it. It happens that we have to deal with the message on the verge of visibility, on the border of audibility. We are dealing with a message belonging to the area 'between', for example, the visible and the invisible. Use in action an overt and hidden sphere, show the mechanism of exposure and disclosure.

9. 1/2, even-numbers performance

(a fragment - reconstruction - memory)

We have only a part of the message, let us assume that it is a half. That part represents a basis for our analysis, opinion and reflection. We are aware of the second part, which is identical, or maybe completely different... With a vague notion of the whole, we delineate the border in the middle; we stop in the middle, we fall silent in mid-sentence. Does a 1/2 performance stop in the middle?

10. Repetition as a performer's strategy

I would like to focus on the meaning of the word 'again', which is rather important for a performer. The analysis of the effects described by the fact of using the term 'again', we can understand the process repeats, reconstruction or restoration. Repetition as an element of a performer's strategy allows operating consciously with meanings, referring to the rhythms of ordering the space. A question concerning performance issues seems to be rather reasonable. Is the act of repeating a performance possible? Does the strategy of repetition in a different space, in front of other observers, in some other time, have any sense?

11. Gesture for one

We are looking for such a form of expression, in which we can only communicate with one person, even if he or she is in the midst of the crowd. Language reduces its resources to a whisper, a touch, a screen turns into a viewfinder available to one person. The form affects the character of utterance, its privacy, intimacy, etc.

12. Private space - public space

Private space is a safe place to take action that will lead to results outside the limits of privacy in public spaces, in confrontations with reaction difficult to predict. Crossing the border between private and public space changes substantially the scale and, above all, the psychology of behaviour.

13. Time - performance expectations

I propose an action, which leads to a confrontation with a schema of standard time standards. The film you are to make does not have to last 90 minutes, eight minutes may be enough, and perhaps the time needed to burn a cigarette or move from one side of the street to the other. It is about a specific time, strictly assigned to a particular event. I propose to adopt the optimum concept of time beyond modern conventions. Put me in a situation of waiting - I am waiting, or I am waited for. Consider the materials that are subject to wearing off, wiping off like for example ice, or graphite pencil.

14. A specific performance E - W (the performance of oppositions)

Let us consider different strategies of action against the seemingly homogeneous oppositions. EAST - WEST: the entire layer of meaning and strong political, cultural and geographical contexts. NORTH - EAST: the certainty of oppositions is shaken. We are looking for new

contexts in this place and time. Ready-made solutions are written in the memory, often weighted down with stereotypes become useless.

15. The observer exists

Performance as a visible fact puts an observer against an explicit creative process. The observer becomes a part co-creating a definition of performance. The relationship with a performer shapes a real, complete performance space. Spatial relations for example close - far away, low - high form the structure of the performance space, often based on a clear statement of opposites, also built on the opposition: a performer - an observer.

17. The last message

We observe the inexorable passing of time, we experience the reduction of energy, and we notice the blurring of a contour, which was sharp just a minute ago. Performance drives itself to physical exhaustion. Let us reflect on an action elevating the exhaustion's status and the consequences of the end. The gesture suggests an exhaustion of the message. Are we sure that the last gesture should represent the last phase of performance? Perhaps the first gesture should be identified with the last one. What is the end of an event?

Participation

In the following text, I shall discuss a series of workshops entitled 'Sunday in the Castle' for children and young adults, which took place at the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw in 2011.

Creative workshops have become an increasingly practised form of artistic education. I see them as an active response toward art and the problems posed by it. The workshops, in general, are based on a unique idea of the authors. They are led by artists, and they represent an important sequence in their work. Their diversity results from the programme assumptions, personality and experience of the workshop leader. They allow for posing new and significant questions. What happens during a workshop is a formation of a creative link and co-relation between a teacher and a student. To quote here Grotowski: between a performer and a performer's teacher. The personality of the workshop leader is extremely important. His focus on the creative presence of another person plays a crucial role.

The workshop is an attempt to realise the fact of real participation in the spatial processes of a child or a teenage person. And what are these processes? It is a change of place, moving

chairs or annexation of space by putting a piece of paper on the floor. These activities used to be regarded as insignificant, yet their cause and effect can be crucial.

I usually make the participants of the workshop aware of crossing the threshold and stopping in a particular place. It is a matter of choice, a result of their decision. They are like game players ready to play on their own.

I make them realise that there is an identified and tamed space by young people. It is a blank sheet of paper, preferably A4. It is a field of their creation. The expanse of that creation has been prepared by the school, and this is the scale of action they expect. And I say: no, leave your piece of paper in the locker room, the paper, which you will use, begins after you cross the threshold. You see the contact line between the floor and wall, look at it because they are the edges of your paper. You take one step, then another, then it is as if you started drawing a line, your every move means something.

But your piece of paper also includes colleagues, this is a social space, it belongs to many, and it is different from the paper you have only for yourself. Here, you have to cooperate with others. The scale of the event is an important way to unlock the receiver we are confronting with. It is not the size of a piece of paper or a period of 45 minutes given to work in. The scale of our actions should result from the parameters of our body, height, the width of arms, etc. Time should not be an imposed value. It ends when the activity is exhausted.

A human participating in such a process regardless of the role of a creator or an observer faces a credible fact. Participation becomes the natural consequence.

My intention is to put the participant in the project, never outside the work. It essentially changes standard reception and builds different terms of responsibility. I try to create such spatial forms so that people would become the cell structures. I want them to be essential and responsible for the entire work. The key word seems to be 'participation' and following that the creative reception, in other words, an open reception. Seeing creative workshops as separate, existing beyond the definitions of a phenomenon of education, I wonder about the responsibility of the workshop. Does the consent of the participants to the proposed conditions, therefore giving an initiative into the hand of the workshop leader, make the leader responsible for the satisfactory result to all?

Should the result - the workshop participant's work - be confronted with a criterion set by the leader? Or a specific work establishes the criteria of its reception by transferring the responsibility onto the participant of the workshop? There is also the kind of workshop, which gives the initiative to a creative presence. However, the rigours of the structure proposed by the initiator of the workshop provide a guarantee of the expected result. Participation in a complete, precise, well-programmed process is an unquestionable value. It does not

pose the expectation of taking decisions. In such a model we should certainly appreciate the social value associated with a contact with other interesting people, and above all, the leading person. Subtracting the risk of crisis or a turning point, in my opinion, impoverishes the meaning of the workshops. I see them as a unique phenomenon. I believe a juxtaposition of the above model with a workshop without an accepted structure that favours discovering the new reality creates a borderline between various spaces in workshop education.

'The workshops, which reject the safety net and the pressure in favour of a spectacular result situate the point of gravity in the original, open creative process. Evaluation of the potential of this process, the act of recognising own, current location and time of the problem, is the essence of the first part of the workshop. This is the time of the highest, joint activity of the participant and the leader. By defining our personal, individual problem, we are introduced into the starting phase of settlements. Creative workshops belong to the phenomena in which an attempt to universalise usually fails. When they are inspired by an individual art practice, they constitute independent and incomparable phenomenon.

Those workshops function by a particular artist's work, and in a similar way to the artist's work, they expand the already known scope of art²⁰. I would like to draw attention to the integrity of the artistic process creating own creative and educational attitude, which is both its effect and a cause.

Leaving behind an analysis of the past, I would like to direct our attention towards the projection into the future, as if announcing still unrecognised education performance, or perhaps more accurately - performance of cognition.

What is the task of the initiator of the learning process? First of all, it is the task of recognising the space of performance art and its educational strategies in the areas of visual communication based on the borderline of sculpture, theatre, drawing and dancing. Another task is to find performative elements in the workshop activities and learning processes in the studios of sculpture, drawing and photography.

What is more, there is a need to respect the history and, therefore, to develop methods for workshops based on the experience of the new theatre (the 1970s - the 1990s), performance art and photography.

The participants of this process are to continually reappraise the value of the performance art workshop as an open medium for borderline activities.

As a result, we set an intermedia education space based on the strategies of performance art as an unrecognised discipline (no evaluative research), located in social space, which is an important offer for a participant of new communication, searching direct contact with another person.

20. Bałdyga, Janusz, 2011, p 8-12: *Sunday in The Castle* Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Sztuka i Współczesność Foundation, Warsaw

The concept of the studio should be understood as an open educational space, and therefore workshop should be addressed to the academic studio, but also to art centres, theatrical environments, cultural centres, etc. The open formula is to introduce the practice of education activities into current artistic achievements.

The new process based on the experience of action art, performance art and performative actions defines students as creators of a dynamic educational process, situated in their centre. The choice of teachers, consultants, is one of the elements of creating that process. An effective tool is found in the practice of workshops opening the possibility of a comparative educational method because of the location and nature of the participants. As a result of recognising the potential of a workshop is common, open process of formulating the topic. Further on - the act of creating a model of workshop activities treated as intermedia opens for the effect of overlapping specific features of the various art disciplines.

Iconic sign in Performance Art

‘Sources and mediations’ – a seminar on ‘Movement, Dance, Camera.’

Zbigniew Raszewski’s Theater Institut
Warsaw 2015

At the seminar, where I gave a lecture entitled ‘Iconic sign in performance art’, my lecture focused on a film recording of ephemeral activities. Therefore, the status of film and photography regarding past actions. Faced with dozens of photographs, preserving the chronology of consecutive signs, documenting the course of performance, I ask to select one.

The reporting function of a series of photographs is undermined, a selection of one questions its sense in favour of the representative function, but on longer the course of action, and its icon.

We reflect the value of semantic event’s icon against a documenting function of film recording, photography, memory or verbal communication. We consider the following problems:

- a) an icon as a carrier of ideas - the analogy with the icon in sacral space. Documenting recording and a video performance as an autonomous recording. Transformation of performance as a result of mechanical recording.
- b) Internal recording - an influence of the structure of the event on the strategy of recording (position and place of the observer, camera position, ways of editing).
- c) Film simulation - a recording as an event outside recording.
- d) Autosave - the filming person and the filmed one - an identity function. Camera and camcorder in the event structure as an organic element of its order.

The basic problem is to develop a method of recording such ephemeral actions, as performance, action or an object in action, so that they would constitute autonomous entities.



2

Curatorial activities and their educational aspect

Asia - Europe / New situations

Malta Festival

Poznań 2012

on previous
page:
Aleksandra
Piotrowska,
For a Bowl
of Rice,
New Situations,
Poznan 2012,
photo by
Agnieszka
Bulacik

'Asian Shares' is a series of activities, which happened before Malta Festival. I was entrusted with the function of a curator of the project. My aim was to link it with the educational concepts of lecturers and students of the University of Arts in Poznan. I assumed the strategy of a closed competition. I invited more than twenty artists-lecturers and artists-students associated with the university. The focus was on the issues of a sign located between the concepts of Asia and Europe. I was also interested in the issues of time, budget and the logistics of an action.

'Asian Shares / Asian investments' was a provocative project defining the space between Europe and Asia. It dealt with the language created and conditioned by the concept of difference. The awareness of differences allowed to notice a dynamics of flow on the level of language, scale, culture, economics and politics.

The slogan 'Asia' was given to artists, co-creating the University of Arts in Poznan, and so from the start, we were dealing with art strongly determined by an important process of self-education, cognition and learning.

From a building or a lab, at the intersection of Marcinkowski Avenue and 23 Luty street, there was emitted energy, which would come back in the form of seven selected Asian projects. We were entitled to predict and expect concrete results, but we had to be aware of the risks and the unknown. The result was at that moment only a projection into the future, an unknown, as it was described in one of the projects, a journey to the centre of the Asian continent. Perhaps the process of implementation would modify assumptions and should put new requirements, with surprising results. We have a project described with different languages, assuming different strategies and methods of action.

Focus, exchange, irony, transfer were the concepts, which we used to determine the realm of knowledge and creation of new Asian spaces full of signs. It was a sphere, which was opened and expanded by the participants in the 'New situations'.

The projects were influenced by Intermedia, regardless of the scale and breadth of technological conditions. They were consequences and representation of an opening strategy and multi proximity created in the environment of the university. They represented an attempt to create a new laboratory. 'Asian Shares' were initiated by both teachers and young graduates as well as students; they decided on the media and ideological diversity.

While undertaking cultural, philosophical, economic, and even political context, the participants provoked concentration, precise analysis, but also mocking irony. They transferred the map of

the largest continent with its centre, borders, sound and stillness on the streets of Poznan. We were trying to create a new iconography of two overlapping, interesting but diversely different worlds.

The choice of projects designed to create a distinctive base of Eurasian signs conditioned by respecting the differences and searching for an effective language community.

'Import - export' was a project by Daniel Koniusz, Tomasz Koszewnik and Katarzyna Postaremczak. They superimposed the recording of sound tissue of Urumqi, which is considered to be a geometric centre of Asia, over the sounds of Poznan – a European city. This work spoke about the inevitable process of layering the cultural iconography and audio sphere. The result pointed towards the course of overlapping the cultures, which could be seen as a vehicle shaping the multicultural identity, and richer and richer identity of the 21st century's societies.

These issues were also touched, but in a different aesthetic and cultural way, by a project by Szymon Kabała and Mateusz Marchwicki. They created an interactive picture of our existence determined by a sign. It highlighted an active attitude based on a reaction and conscious decision as a requirement of our contemporary life conditioned by the instruments of the highest technology. The work entitled 'Made in China' by Maciej Kurak and Max Skowider revealed perfectly woven into the fabric of oppressive, urban traffic hybrid Eurasian vehicle. The project in an ironic way related to the scopes of global technology.

By putting into one body a European and Asian car, the artists achieved a sedan-chair. In this way, they recalled a hierarchical, forgotten in Europe, but very much alive tradition in Asia.

The project by Raczej Gallery involved a participation of a Polish artist - Lukasz Trusiewicz - and a Chinese artist Ting-Tong Chang. The project aimed at confronting an idea of a Polish and Chinese way of recording a nomadic journey.

An open sense of movement was imbued with external signs for Trusewicz. Chang focused on the internal signs. The basic element of that work was a bus moving around Poznań. The vehicle was an icon of the journey.

Projects by three young artists played an important part in the 'New situations'.

Maria Szydłowska touched the problem of fetish, our religious identity imposed on our everydayness. The project was studded with fixation of functional facilities branded as 'Made in...'. In work by Aleksandr Piotrowska 'For a bowl of rice', we found a bitter reflection on the topic of an equivalent of human labour, a slavery interdependence.

The series was closed with a spectacular production of a thousand paper cranes. They were produced in the course of several days, rhythmic work. Those paper signatures were to return to the sources. The author Adrianna Borucka sent them to an unknown, randomly acquired address somewhere in Asia.

'Asia-Europe's loop would make a circling climb to a higher level of dynamic, multi-cultural spiral'²¹.

21. Baldyga, Janusz, 2012, p 129-130: *Introduction* [in:] *Idiom: Asian Shares* Malta Festival, Poznan

16th International Art Festival 'Interactions'

Piotrków Trybunalski 2014

'Spaces of negotiations in performance art.'

I accepted a curating position of 'Interactions' in 2014 with a view of a possibility to introduce fundamental changes in the concept of the festival – I wanted to add the issues of education and theoretical reflection.

The object of the project was to develop the concept and implementation of the new format of an art festival. On the one hand, we were interested in the strategies of promotion and presentation of performance art developed within the last fifteen years of the festival. On the other hand, the festival was enriched with educational strategies stemming from the experience of performance art.

'We propose to create a festival of actions in process', the assumption was that in addition to the festival's function of art presentations, it would be a place that generated new projects as a result of workshops lasting for several days.

Apart from the actions, we assumed creating a platform for exchanging ideas and opening discussions about the theory-practice based series of 'Performance theory' and 'Performance Studies in the context of contemporary art'. They would expand the field of performance art through identifying natural settings, for example, a borderline sculpture, drawing, or a film.

We proposed creating an exhibition relating to the borderline areas of performance art entitled 'Performance object'.

Another element of the festival was a discussion panel featuring historical aspect of the overlapping areas in the arts and education.

The aim of the project was to create and present new works in the field of performance art and its educational strategies operating in the spaces of visual communication based on the borderline of sculpture, drawing, dance, photography, etc. The tool to achieve those objectives was a new formula of the festival treated as an open experience of art in the process.

Performance art, despite its rather short tradition, has built an authority, which is seen in flourishing performance art departments in American and European Art Museums. There are also developing studios and performance art teaching units in many different Art Academies in Poland and abroad. Another manifestation of the recognition of performance art as a discipline influencing other art disciplines is the appearance of performance art research units at many international and Polish universities. It is worth calling in as an example Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Theatre Academy in Warsaw. In the festival idea, we were of the opinion that it was worth to confront artistic experience with reflections on the theory and practice generated as part of research focusing on the issues of performance art and art action at PhD programmes of art universities.

Another aspect of the theoretical side of the festival was a reference to the most avant-garde educational concepts created in the late sixties and seventies seen as parallel to the first performance art's works. We wanted to look at mutual relations and influences of these integral art spheres from the past 40 years. We intended to base the festival program on the actions of the young artists. By doing so, we offered a new platform for ideas and experiences exchange and public presentations based on works created in the new format of the festival. The specific objective was to show the creative attitudes of a new generation of artists, confronted with educational tradition affecting the development of a strong, rich in substance performance art. It was important to see and realise the intermedia context. We wanted to enable a confrontation of artists from different parts of Europe and world, and it was important for us to make space to compare their activities regarding generation and programme focus. That attitude could result with a very much needed and necessary for the development of art discussion.

Performance as a discipline of art created its definitions outside the official institutions (museums, official centres or art schools).

The dynamic, global development of that discipline of art resulted with big festivals like New York Performa, Performance at the Documenta in Kassel. The participation of performance artists at the Venice Biennale and the creation of educational programs at art schools and universities.

The end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 20th century in Poland changed the nature and quality of reflection on performance art, by locating the focus on many different points on the cultural map of the world.

We assumed that our festival created a chance to recognise the new situation, its basic segments created spaces of creation and confrontation regarding theoretical and historical reflection.

I leant towards such diagnosis of the situation by my involvement in many projects. They all highlighted the fundamental importance of the explicit process involved in the artwork creation. This explicitness defines the educational program. My experiences had a significant influence on the creation of educational programs inspired by the workshop method at the Academy of Fine Arts. The workshop method, generally speaking, is integrally connected with the creative process.

My ambition was to expand the boundaries of 'Interactions' festival to encompass workshops and educational experiences treated as free spaces of contemporary art. I hoped that in the future the festival could be a major partner for art universities as a place shaping independent educational methods, often risky, but what is crucial, integrated with the creative experience of performance art entering into relationships on a borderline of other art disciplines. I wished the outcome of the festival to be an important and valuable reference point in the process of formulating new educational programs at the studio level, teaching units but also scientific and informal creative groups.



3

Workshops' issues
based on an individual art practice

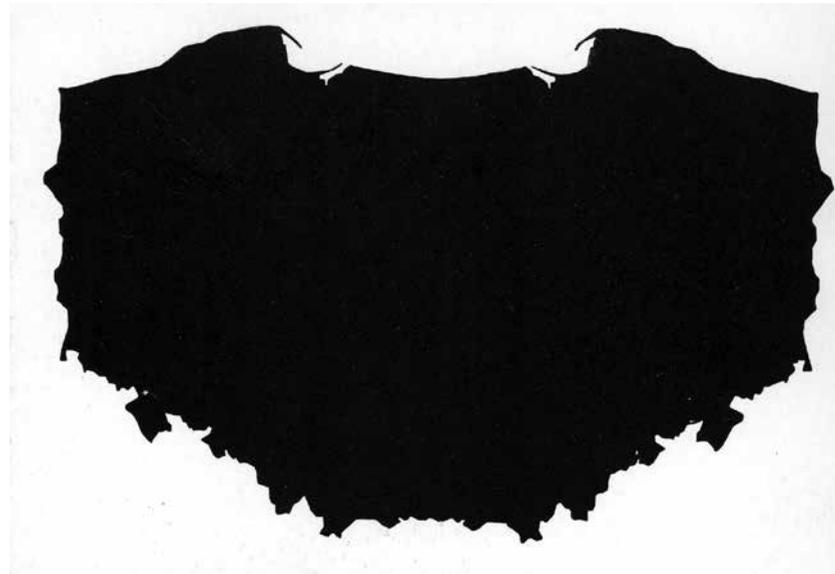
on previous page:
Janusz Bałdyga,
Zygmunt
Piotrowski,
XVI Interactions,
Focus, Piotrków
Trybunalski
2014,
photo by Marta
Bosowska

What lies at the basis of educational programmes is the analysis of an individual art practice, decision-making and discontinuity, results and reflections over their lack as well as theoretical assumptions. While describing events that are necessary for the contexts of the work or problem in question, I refer to the issues I have experienced. An important area analysed is my artistic work, the reasons, the results, and the mechanisms for establishing further issues. I shall present here selected works. Each signpost in the title is a significant code for my education and students' programme.

Even sequences

I usually base pairs on the relatively symmetrical order of my body. The images from 1979-1981 from a series 'Poland - Poland' depicted the contours of Poland mapped on the axis of symmetry. The next step was the use of a wooden 'V' chevron, an unstable form, condemned to an extra point of reference, or entanglement in a human relation. It tends to give a chance of dynamic stability. The space between right and left hand, symmetrically limited and modelled, was an excellent example of 'even performance' space.

Janusz
Bałdyga,
Poland - Poland,
1980



The theme of scroll

The scroll's theme was repeated in 'Right Hand Performance'. This particular action, still valid in my experience, which I have realised for several years, does not lose its strength. It challenges the performer with the same unconditional requirements. I am dressed in a white shirt, and I am in front of the observers with my arm tightly wrapped in a transparent plastic tube, invisible from a distance of several meters. It reveals its functional physicality



Janusz
Bałdyga,
Sides,
AR Gallery,
Warsaw 1994,
photo by
Jarosław
Żwirblis

when with the force of my breath I suck in red wine; the right hand is methodically coloured in sync with my breath. The second sequence of performance is the reverse; it is based on the left hand, unarmed with a plastic guide arm. The wine pushed with my breath discolours the right hand, and according to the laws of gravity, it flows down my left shoulder. It stains it according to the anatomical order; then it flows down on the floor. The performance takes place in limited space for the reach of the right and left hand.

Performances - objects

A performance entitled 'Steps' is yet another remarkable performance, which spun across several years. I use in it the theme of walking on turned up-side-down water filled jars. Moving on a borderline of stability refers to associations with mythical walking over the surface of the water. Talking about the myth, I would like to highlight the meaning of cultural myths, but also building personal mythologies created through rhythmical and repeated in time own gestures. Performance documentation is often substituted with not entirely accurate (often idealising it) myth, as in the case of Warpechowski's performance with fish.

Another performance is the performance entitled 'The Rescued Deceived', presented for the first time at the 'Interactions - Differences' festival at Centre for Contemporary Art Zamek Ujazdowski in Warsaw in 2008. This work was accompanied by a short text: 'I consider the silhouette of a predatory bird placed on the plane of fragile glass as an icon of threat. The warning of crashing into an invisible barrier was replaced with an icon of a false threat, the responsibility for the danger was placed in the world of fiction. The consequence of the mystification is the salvation. Reading the illusory sign and entering it into the reality of life gives a guarantee of salvation. (...) The deceived avoids a fatal collision - the price is a false consciousness. The derived bird does not crash into the hard window'²².

It is worth mentioning here the special performance of 'Steps' in Paris Danguy Gallery, where I walked along the broken board, its broken pieces were somehow wound up on my body.

22. Bałdyga, Janusz, 2009, p 8: *Ostrożnie szkło / Be careful glass* Ośrodek Działań Artystycznych, Piotrków Trybunalski

Janusz
Baldyga,
Saved - Deceived
Interactions/
Differences,
CSW,
Warsaw 2008,
photo by
Justyna
Staniszewska



Again, I bring in the motif of a scroll, in this case, I refer to the paradox of coiled board. The effect of this performance was a wound on a metal shaft broken board. An autonomous, performance-free work was given the title 'Open fractures'.

I focused my attention on present-time performances, but to describe the activities determining workshop issues, I need to go back to the end of the 1970s. I have in mind Labirynt Gallery ran at the time by Andrzej Mroczek. At that point, it was one of the most active galleries in Poland. It was an open place, which created a plane for a confrontation between young and older artists. I would like to recall the participation in projects such as 'Art as an unidentified activity' or 'An intellectual trend in Polish art between 1944-1984'. Labirynt

Janusz Baldyga,
Steps,
Generations
Polish Art of
the end/beginning
of the century,
Manege,
Saint Petersburg
1999,
photo by
Zygmunt Rytka



Janusz
Baldyga,
Open Fractures,
Hidden nature,
AR Gallery,
Warsaw 1999,
photo by
Anna Konik

Gallery was an important place also due to setting up the first important international contacts. Speaking about my performance, I would like to refer to 1981 and the first presentation of activity, which in retrospect I would call a lecture performance, it was called 'General Center'. It was a speech concerning political verification of people in power and their actions. Other works, for example, 'The use of force', were attempts to find the boundary between the use and abuse of power; their political context was clear.

In the series entitled 'Steps', 'Borderline transgressions' and 'Open fracture' I rejected political identifications. I focused on the language and studying the anatomy of space.

Actions, which bound a performance with an autonomous object, have had a particular



Janusz Baldyga,
General Centre,
Pracownia
Dziekanka,
Warsaw 1981,
photo by
Tomasz Sikorski

Janusz Bałdyga,
General Centre,
Pracownia
Dziekanka,
Warsaw 1981,
photo by
Tomasz Sikorski



meaning for me. In those projects, I find a definition of the performance-objects idea. It is closely related to the inclusion of problems of time and its passing. Sculpture, objects are perceived as matter subjected to the effects of the passing time. A significant experience from this perspective was my participation in the large international symposium and exhibition entitled 'Process und Konstruktion' in 1985 in Munich. The title assumed treating the object as an object in the process. My goal was then to put on an object, which retained its autonomy, consistency with action. Later, I followed that assumption in my individual Stillstand exhibition in E-Werk in Freiburg, in Sierre in Switzerland and the Center for Polish Sculpture in Orońsko at the exhibition entitled 'Outside in Inside Out'. I would like to stop here to discuss the work entitled 'Broken Designs', created in Orońsko in 2010. I shall bring here

Janusz Bałdyga,
Broken Designs,
Outside In
-Inside Out,
CRP Orońsko
2011,
photo by Krzysztof
M. Bednarski



excerpts from the exhibition text: 'The horizontal position of the house plan is only the phase of another sequence [...] The next broken or breaking sections of the plan, removing from the ground, taking the order, and thus the potential dynamics of the scroll. In this case, the scroll gains autonomy, and the collapsed plan is an irreversible mobile sequence in another dimension and on another plane. [...] The boundaries of the broken house outline penetrate space, they create another standard of the interior, exterior, threshold, mobility. These borders describe the nature of the crossing, understanding their meaning, may determine the point of crossing, a particular point of border transgression'²³.

Rotations

'180 degrees Reversion' was an important object realised within the framework of Open City in Lublin in 2010. In the centre of the city, there was a wooden spool with a diameter of 180 cm which enclosed two overlapping triangles. The dynamics of rotation was rooted in the mechanism of revealing a particular sign - it was the David's Shield, commonly referred to as the Star of David. The dynamic functioning of the sign was critical. It revealed itself in a particular sequence of movement. Another work, I would like to recall here is 'Significant Places'. The work comprised of a chair on a raised pedestal with a string ladder resting on it. The ladder brought to mind an illusion of a bench which could accommodate several people. In reality, only one person could use it. Only the seat stabilised by the chair gave the comfort of safety. Trying to use the other seats could cause a catastrophe. This work was presented in the series of exhibitions 'Demos Kratos - the power of people' in Warsaw and Bielsko-Biała. These types of projects that place the object and performance in one space,



Janusz
Bałdyga,
180 degrees
Reversion,
Open City,
Lublin 2010

23. Bałdyga, Janusz, 2010, p 71: *Broken Designs* [in:] *Outside In / Inside Out* Orońsko

I see as elements of the fundamental course of my experience. This group of works includes 'Wychylenia' series, performed at the National Museum in Warsaw, as part of the exhibition entitled 'Sketch to the Gallery of Contemporary Art'. There is also 'Swing E-W' set in front of the Królikarnia Palace in Warsaw, or the 'Attention Border' object presented at the exhibition 'Polish Sculpture of the 1970s' in CRP in Orońsko.

Sequences, cycles, passages as elements of performance/objects design

The analysis of performance/objects, which is almost parallel to the time of their realisation, is an indispensable part of recognising their role and importance in the conscious creative process. Time discipline forces the ephemeral nature of actions and the often short-lived existence of objects.

The works below are based on the orders of passages, sequences, sequences and series bringing them closer to performance.

Works, which were done in urban space, take on the dominance of events, so they treat the city as a performance. I accept the order of the city as the reality of open space, I recognise it, I experience the vision of an infinite number of successive sequences of shop windows, parked cars or rhythmically set lanterns. Windows labelled with the company logo, product advertising, and luxury level create a particular story, which meaning is based on the vector of my movement.

I go, and so the line according to which the immensity of signs was ordered becomes the dynamics of my transition. The transition is a kind of vehicle that releases a certain amount of information.

Parked in even rows in the assigned spaces, cars of different colours and brands reflect the luxurious surface of the distorted image of a passerby.

Reflection places the source of narration, I am going, so the story continues, I keep the clarity of my moving reflection. The process of moving reveals further parts of the discovered space.

The variety of cars, their brands, colours, sizes and luxury are the subject of aesthetic and sociological analysis, as is the street confronted with a factory parking lot filled with thousands of identical products. Every 15 or 20 minutes, a powerful car drives out with six or eight identical cars on a trailer. Despite the fact that their wheels did not touch the surface of the street. Another paradox and reflection contributor: does it make sense to lift a powerful wheel when it seems to be obvious concerning efficiency and logic, that it should be rotating. It is worth realising the importance of the anti-logic gesture of lifting the wheel. What is it? An omission or the necessary undermining the logic of obvious solution? Or is it about finding a new meaning?

By moving on, we launch an important point from the perspective of performance art – the mechanism of sequential communication. Leaving the zone of meanings, we are in the



Janusz Baldyga, Marked Places, Wschodnia Gallery, Lodz 2006, photo by Jerzy Grzegorski

intriguing area 'between'. It is a critical zone with a potential force of your un-marking. We bring back the meaning known from the unmarked object's literature, which gives rise to stimulated with unknowing the feeling of horror.

We are pondering over the sequence in nature regarding space, time, and beyond the norms of moral, technological and political transgressions.

It is justified to ask what is going on between meaningful gestures, what power holds the marginalised, pushed to the edge zone called 'between'.

I am building a model of sequential message system in which, apart from the symmetrical order, we find the triple form of the triptych, and then only multiplicity, concentration, dispersion and, somewhere at the end an intriguing uncountability. The triptych, three, the trio, podium for the Olympic winners set the precise strategy of triple signalling. The analysis of these orders and strategies leading to their construction enables the creation of three signals, gestures, objects and seemingly vulnerable 'between' spaces, which require special attention.

The real - the ritual - the functional?

The mythology of this work is related to an anonymous photograph showing a small, overlooked, one-storey building. There is a surrender white flag hanging from one of the windows. Between the run-down, devastated facade of the house and the unusual purity of the rectangular flag, we notice a marked disproportion on the level of meanings, aesthetics and the historical consequences of such elements of reality. Two worlds meet here - the world of marginalised everyday life and the extraordinary world with historic consequences of the day of surrender.

The first reaction to the photograph cited above was a project I entitled 'Open House'. It is a house divided with one flawless cut. The gap - the transition, when it is framed by a colourful portal, is just a strip of undefined, no man's land.

Janusz Bałdyga,
Standard
Concentrations,
Open City,
Lublin 2012



The shared ground is the backing for unstable walls that seek to describe the form of a classical house. The change of orders directs what is external to the interior. Flagpoles create a mechanism of consolidation and stable immobility. Their emblematic function steps down in favour of structural logic.

While creating the object in Lublin's Krakowskie Przedmieście, I adopted a variant of the negative for 'Open House': the gap between previously designed fragments of a house was filled with its substance. The symmetrical solids of the cut house lost their place; the object is a sculpture of a gap between two non-existent fragments.

A slot is created as a house, a slot as a wall, a slot as the abstract notion of 'between'. This part of the triptych is called 'The real'. It is an object related to perception and direct contact; it is a house treated as a real object, focusing on the existence of a human, limiting it with a protective wall. The structure of the house is a steel grille closing its space in the shape of a 50-centimetre-wide facade. We achieve a form that is the result of a physical retraction of two peaks held 50 centimetres apart.

A detention house, a prison, an asylum, a cage, and a cage of disgrace – these are the concepts I describe the object I build, paying special attention to the last concept, the object of restriction of liberty and total oppression. By combining the data, I wanted to do a cut through a house to achieve a section, a fragment, or a spatially restricted, unknown sequence to me. Can the top of the house be its symbol, given that it is based on the reality of the geometric projection rather than the designer's fantasy? Probably yes, but I would like to raise the importance of the three dimensions of the house and its carving matter. Duchamp, questioned about the difference between the sculpture and the building, replied that sculpture was not armed with a water-pipes installation. It sounds anecdotal, but it has a deep meaning when we consider the essence of a body not conditioned by its function.

Three-dimensional status implies the potential for crowding as a consequence of almost



Janusz Bałdyga,
Standard
Concentrations,
Open City,
Lublin 2012

symbolic, but physically real, slipping off the gable walls of a house. From the standpoint of the performer this is a starting point for a series of spatial operations.

In the 'ritual' part, I go back to the fascinating story of borderline ritual. In performance/installation 'The thrown flags' I find a particular expression in the object I describe. It is a wall built in the symmetrical order of the parallel passage. It is marked with an inscription 'INTERNAL'. We can refer to the theme of wall written in our minds by culture, for example, the Jerusalem West wall and the last, symbolic fragment of Warsaw Ghetto's wall. In each of these cases, we are dealing with a fragment of a wall subjected to ritual gestures of memory. The 200 x 300 cm wall, I erected, was a shaky, unstable wall, on the verge of a catastrophic disaster. The elements supported it symmetrically, they had rows of flags arranged on both sides. Their signs, honour meaning and ritual functions were pushed to the second plan. The wall was based on masts, they accepted the function of stabilising the whole system, and in the general sense they formed the material of the ritual order, and they did not have the emblematic functions of the matter of the flag.

You can also take a slightly different point of view. The vertical wall, an obstacle, a barrier retains stability thanks to the symmetrical attack on both sides. Targeted against each other vectors provided stability for the attacked structure.

The law of balancing forces expresses the fragile stability of the 'between' element. The axial view of a clinically stable situation reveals a harmonious, established symmetry of order. The adjacent fabric of opposing flags from this point of view revealed the unity of the coherent ogive. This object belongs to the structure of an urban passage; its perception is related to the moving along the axis of work observer. The element that closes the triptych, entitled the 'functional', was an arrangement of four embedded in the door frames doors open at right angle, set on the plan of the Greek cross.

Doors, in a similar way to stairs, form a significant element of transition. They create a path

Janusz
Bałdyga,
Standard
Concentrations,
Open City,
Lublin 2012



of the vehicle functioning; they are the moderator of the process initiated by me. Open doors are a new prospect of spreading, annexing, travelling, but not in this case.

'The surreal, symmetrical order of the door creates a paradox caused by the opening of something closed. Opening the door blocks the way, by closing the previously opened. A symmetrical order creates a new rule, opening doors close the previous ones. The regular order of the Greek cross creates a paradoxical arrangement of open - closed doors. The description of this situation can be found at two basic levels, the door is symbolically open but closed, so we are dealing with an open circuit at logical justification and closed to the attempt of real functioning²⁴.

The described above objects were done in Lublin within 'Open City' international project. In the introduction to the catalogue, Marta Ryczkowska noticed their linear character entering the structure of the city: 'Passing through a gate introduced the city residents - the viewers of art into the next dimension: to the busy city promenade. Usually, it is very dense and crowded in summer time - filled with cafe gardens and crowds of walking people. This effect was strengthened by Janusz Bałdyga's installation. It was positioned in the middle of the pedestrian area. The artist focused on the topic of doors and windows - communicative, expressive signs and signatures of passage were conjugated into installations defined by common title "Standard Concentrations". One of them consisted of symmetrically positioned doors and door frames; the other had white flags in a row. They were supporting a massive wall with an inscription >internal<, the third brought to mind a house skeleton. Each of them referred to a relationship between the external and the internal; between opening and closure. Wide open doors make it impossible to enter since right behind them there is a new set of them.

In Bałdyga's works, the traditional function of an object and coded in it movement were suspended. The objects became unrealistic and showed as certain structural solutions.

24. Bałdyga, Janusz, 2012, p 55-56: *Standard Concentrations* Otwarte Miasto / Open City, Lublin

This is another aspect of the city's linearity, an urban outline geometry, in which tensions between individual figures reveal themselves²⁵.

I would like to discuss now an action, in which the criterion is recognised by me. Or I am in the process of recognition. All of that determines the rules of both my behaviour and the meaning of the constructed figure. The order of action performed on May 12, 2012, in German Neuss was set by a coil of yellow, 4 cm wide upholstery tape measuring over 100 meters. When coiled, it was a circle with a diameter of 50 cm. I chose a place that fulfilled my basic postulate: I needed a hard barricade which would not yield to my body mass. This time, I leant against the wall, I placed a yellow circle at the height of my head. I held the yellow wheel in the designated position with my forehead at its centre. I slowly turned towards the audience while guarding the position of the circle. There was a strong connotation of a halo. Standing in front of the people, I dragged the end of the tape with my right hand; it was supported by the pressure of my head, the yellow circle began to rotate, leaving unwound part

Janusz
Bałdyga,
It goes round,
Klopfstange,
Neuss 2012,
photo by
Matthias Pick

on the floor. As a result of the great effort, a slow deconstruction of the sacred halo symbol was done, but the tape, released from the rigours of the circle, created an alternative order on the floor. It remembered the meaning of the previous sequence. I put together formal differences; I had a feeling of mechanical, entangled in the order of my body unity.

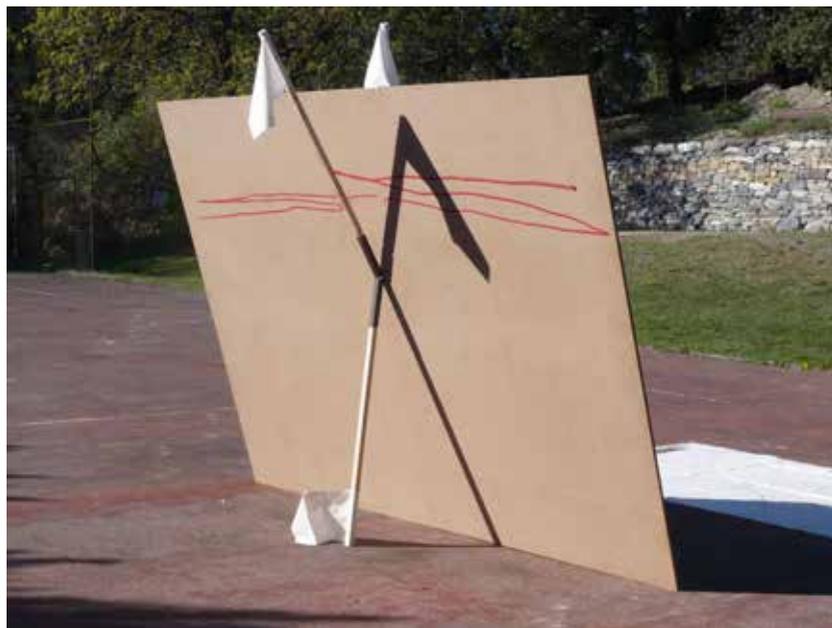
The performance object I would like to focus on is a work entitled 'The Performance of a Double Flag'. This performance was done for the first time in Swiss Sierre as part of 'Performing the Exhibition' symposium in April 2011 and later I continued working on it during the festival Konteksty [Contexts] in Sokółowsko. Performance - my partner is a heavy wooden board delineating standards of dynamics through its oppressive physicality. The result is an autonomous object functioning as an independent message.

The work is distinguished by a relationship towards the object and treating the body as a value defining the construction of performance figure. In such projects, what we witness is a formation of a definition of performance objects. A definition rather significant for me.



25. Ryczkowska, Marta, 2012, p 37-38: *City: Siege State* Otwarte Miasto / Open City, Lublin

Janusz
Baldyga,
Double Flag
Performance,
Performing the
Exhibition,
Sierre 2011



Wałbrzyski Passage, a project

The Silesia Biennale's project was planned to work within the plan of an equilateral triangle. There was assumed an inclusion of an apparently or just formally dynamic three-dimensional module of a children's swing. Popular swing horses gain dynamism thanks to the order supported by one point of the weight arm.

In my project, the points of support are fundamentally changed by locating them on the edges of moving swing elements. The installation on a triangle plan, mutually supportive, cement the state of stationary swing. The proposed triple module finds a perfect closure at the edge of an equilateral triangle. It is a work of seemingly constant dynamism, in fact, it demonstrates a closed self-defining system of stagnant immobility. Normally, level differences give you a chance to flow, they provide the potential for dynamic decisions, but not in this case. Based on the difference in levels and using a recognisable modular form, they disarmed the potential of the known mechanism.

Les Levine talked about atrocities and threats in children's games; This work avoids dramatic projections and categorical statements, based on questioning the viewpoint of continuous experience.

The problem is the choice of place; an open space equipped with an urban infrastructure can accommodate that abnormal modular playground. But I would like to place it outside of the convention space of children's behaviour. My job is to introduce the object into the open structure of an unrecognised city.

next page:
Janusz Baldyga,
Balance.pl,
Silesia Art
Biennale,
Wałbrzych
2012,
photo by
Miroslaw
Hnatiuk

The project

A reflection of the object realised in Wałbrzych within the Silesia Biennale preceded the attempt of memory and immediate associations. Wałbrzych - brings to mind a strange name of Thorez Mine and the football club, rather famous in the past, the castle of Książ, the dramatic theatre and the legend of Princess Daisy. There is also the general knowledge of Lower Silesia and difficult economic conditions of the region.

I was in Wałbrzych in 1978 as a participant of the Confrontation of Art School Students in Szczawno Zdrój (a spa town of Wałbrzych). After 36 years, I met in Wałbrzych, a participant of those past events - Artur Tajber, who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. These memories, which had personal contexts, could not, however, generate the impulse to create an important message.

A private context, always attractive and potential, had to give way to the main cause for which, as participants of the Silesian Biennial, we were in Wałbrzych - that city hardly discovered and defined by us was to create a new and indispensable context.

I was looking for some cracks, fractures that might draw attention, delight me, force me to return. The passage connecting the market square to the Magistracki Square did not leave any doubts. A miniature inner courtyard with two devastated courtyard arcades was my place. Symmetrically inserted pillars formed a kind of border, a portal for a closed void, absence, non-presence. The scale of the place, its character and its



seclusion, almost intimate knowledge, allows us to personalise the context into the real fabric of the city.

My intention was to implement a paradoxically immobilised swing, an object of child use in an urban social space. By immobilising, I wanted to show the false stability that covered the stagnation around us. I used the contrasting colours of the characteristic horses mounted on the ends of the mobile beam. The black horse contrasted with the white one. They bring in the context of a game, a duel, maybe even war, and certainly a confrontation. The discovery of the courtyard leads to a major transformation of my sketch because it was difficult to talk about the project at the time. The project was created in a confrontation with the site. The swing was to appear in the space between the pillars, in oppressive, dramatic situation. The pillars divided my object into three parts; they created symmetrical sectors or triptychs. Horses with their colour and function of utility were thrown out of the centre, and they became immobilised. They appeared pushed into the outer walls of the pillars. The swing worked in the centre, with no connection to the still, stagnant horses. The object was related to the idea of the objects I constructed in the 1990s. It referred to the mechanism of the child's swing. It associated it with the most characteristic chess figure - a jumper commonly called a horse. The opposing figures - black and white - were in total immobility, devoid of any manoeuvrability. It was a stalemate, a chess balance, a testimony of the unresolved battle, and yet inside the battlefield there was a classic swing; its dynamism was devoid of ordering marks - two horses in opposition to each other - the situation was sterile, without any influence on reality.

This work dealt with specific gestures that were enclosed in the described reality, in spite of their reality, they created only the world of appearances. Grzegorz Borkowski in 'Obieg' in October 2012 commented: 'The contrast between the mobile middle and the two static parts is puzzling. Does not this situation resemble something more general in nature? Bałdyga called this object "Balance.pl", thus signalling the possibility of seeing references to phenomena in Polish reality, not just a certain structural solution. Without falling into too loose interpretations, one can perceive in the logic of this object an analogy to relations between the elements of the social system, in which the extreme attitudes remain unchanged in their positions (as attached to the pillars of opposing colours), and the centre of this system is the domain of dynamics beam. Is this a situation specifically Polish? It seems to be rather more general. In Stephen R. Covey's "Third Solution," the Guru of Global Management writes about the clinch that appears on various levels of society: from workers' conflicts with bosses after the start of large cooperative collaborations and the traditional right-left-wing opposition. In his opinion, the essence of these problems lies in the inability to go beyond the horizons of two opposing positions. He does not propose a compromise as a remedy, however, but synergy, or the "third solution". In Covey's book and Bałdyga's realisation, it is important to mark the stability of extreme points as the opposite of the dynamic sphere of synergy

between them. Perhaps I go too far from the object created in Wałbrzych, but the pressure of social problems is so strong now that analogies to social phenomena begin to appear even in seemingly abstract constructions²⁶.

The assembly of the object and a few days-long presence in Wałbrzych define my knowledge about the site. The experience recalled some issues; I had not considered before. This threat of devastation was confirmed practically after a month of exposure.

I would like to recall here words of Lukasz Guzek, the curator of the project, from a biennial catalogue: 'Janusz Bałdyga is an artist with great performance experience. The live actions he performs are always linked with using objects, which often were previously sculpture-objects. In his art, what is solid and material, is closely connected with what is ephemeral, performative. His large-scale objects, in public spaces, gain a specific "actor" in the shape of local community living in these spaces everyday. Intervention in such space causes that the surrounding space itself and its users are integrated into the work of art and, on the other hand, the viewer has a chance to look in a different way at the otherwise well-known places and situations²⁷.

The workshop method, based on my artistic experience, contains both a strong self-educating aspect and an educational method, addressed to students and participants of the workshop projects. Defining goals, performance standards, and evaluation criteria based on experience and facts acquired from experience gain the credibility and effectiveness of the authority building process. Selecting a few key implementations and submitting them to a subjective description and subjective analysis appears in the above-signalled process a deliberate move. Hence the postulate of limiting medium, matter, and tools so that the analysis prepared after the initial selection gives a clear and legible image.

It seems to me that isolating the structure and mechanics of the operation from the causes and the anticipated effects may be a sufficient basis for the proposed project. Recognising and defining elementary data, beginning with the coordinates of the chosen place, directs thinking towards abstraction in which physics and geometry represent the power and sovereignty of self-realisation.

I ask myself the question of the meaning of the next steps and their consistency with the preceding accomplishment. Reducing gestures and used materials to those that are necessary, on the one hand, simplifies research procedures, but on the other hand, it provides a handful of gestures and single objects with great responsibility. Confronting an elaborate, multitasking action with a one-off, almost motionless, unitary gesture should provide important cognitive effects at the method level, strategy for constructing and promoting current artistic expression. The signposting method applied in this text aimed at ordering the elements of construction, mechanics and archiving the artwork with a particular reference to ephemeral works and phenomena.

26. Borkowski, Grzegorz, 2012 October, *Obieg*

27. Guzek, Łukasz, 2012, p 119: *Silesia Art Biennale balance.pl* OKiS, Wrocław

The thick line in space considerations upon performance / drawing

Stripped from the ground and thrown into space, artist's gesture is only written in the area of our memory. A drawing without a physical trace is performance - an event regarded as a discipline of memory and oblivion. The unsaved gesture can be recalled through memory if time has not eradicated its contours. Non-existent drawing, difficult or impossible to recall, I compare it to the act of wandering without norms (a starting point and a goal). An intentional wandering is devoid of valuing probability of appropriateness. It is the act of fulfilment no matter what, it assumes no criterion. The intentional transition allows for recall, even if it is based on the consciousness of the point of departure and the intended purpose on which the reminder process can be based. Wandering is the performance of the drawing beyond the intention of the left trace.

The memory effect can support the systematic multiple of gesture. So we have to deal with a kind of repetition, which rhythmic order supports memory, making it difficult to forget. Repetition is written in our consciousness; so is the daily dusk codified as an inevitable in everyday life. Something written on a sheet of paper becomes a real testimony to the multiple of the gesture. I put it in opposition to the two lines of a single line. The traces of repeated drawing or trace testify about specific expression and engagement of time, so we are very close to the issues of performance.

Why does an attempt to establish a common space of drawing and performance result in the creation of an autonomous, intermediary area? The answer is simple; it is a result of a release from technological and media commitments. The dominance of ideas creates a zone of freedom between these two seemingly distant disciplines, and it becomes an environment of a new autonomous language of communication.

I draw attention here to the lines in the space that constitute the distribution of energy. Their line is predicted by a performer, and they constitute a sketch of the strategy of specific performance. Based on the simplest everyday recording techniques, a drawing is a note in the context of performance, a reminder of the structure of future action, so drawing results with an unspecified, barely emerging event. Drawing on the sand or a trail left after it is very strongly anchored in the myths of our culture, its significance regarding momentary duration, oblivion and mystery should never be underestimated.

Let us remember that Pythagoras died from the hands of the perpetrators, drawing geometric figures in the sand. Robinson Crusoe discovered the presence of another, who altered the status of the island, by sand footprints. Christ, who wrote with a stick in the sand, raised his head to say the famous 'Who is guilty...' and returned to what he was doing at that time.

Signs drawn on an ephemeral matter are also forgotten figures, or temporary figures, which for the sake of this text I shall call the figures of oblivion.

I base treating a line as a record of strategy and performance mechanics on the daily patterns of gesture linked with outlining, confirming or invalidating the icons of passing the time like in prison calendar, or tasks similar to crossed out shot down planes drawn on the hull of a winning machine. I recall a drawing, an icon of our steps marking the path walked. We are dealing with a physical trace in the form of previously mentioned footprints in the sand and with the exceptionally ephemeral and impermanent trace, which follows our movement, the shadow.

I recall here a series of works where the title was composed mainly of the word 'Plans ...' as in the performance 'Plans and Shadows' performed at the QQ Gallery in Krakow.

A scroll, in the form of a spatial spiral drawing, appeared in this work. It found its full realisation in the performance entitled 'Kołem się toczy' [It goes round]. I recall the performance of the scroll, the action in which the unwinding, or drawing in the spiral space and changing its geometric order set out the mechanical discipline of my movement. Preceding my performance spiral drawing was a record of future action strategy.

The meaning of my gesture is based on such elementary figures as a spiral, circle, cross or diagonal line.

The series entitled 'Column Plan' used the ambiguity of the word 'plan' in Polish [translator's note: In Polish, the word 'plan' also has the meaning of a throw]. It recalled the expression of a gesture, but also the precision of the architectural drawing, conveying the idea of a spatial object into the space of three-dimensional imagination.

The key to getting to the idea of this work is to redefine the concept of a column, to take responsibility for its rhythm and the sense of the physicality of sculpture and to move it to the ephemeral inconsistency of space enclosed between the columns.



Paulina Pankiewicz, Skoki 2015, photo by Paulina Pankiewicz

Janusz
Bałdyga,
Reversion
180 degrees,
Klopfstange,
Neuss 2012,
photo by
Monika
Sobczak



In the novel *I and the kings*, Ernst Schnabel writes: 'The measure of the columns is the spacing between them. You can go even further and say: the true columns of a temple are the divisions, nothingness and light. Good columns are for supporting the roof'²⁸. If we describe a colonnade by a specific projection of a landscape bounded by a rhythmical shadow on a courtyard, we shall discover that a stone colonnade represents the subject of projection in contrast to the dynamics of light and our aimless movement. The passing under architrave is seen as an event, which essentially bypasses the physicality of a stone creation, by focusing on the specific result of existence, which is ephemeral, subjected to the laws of nature, double shadow projection and framed by the contours of the landscape.

The dynamics of the view determines the nature and intensity of our movement, the man constantly changing his position changes the perception point, and thus the physicality of the image stored in memory. The drawing becomes an element and a navigation tool. It is realised in the face of event or performance as a kind of indicator of our movement in the recognised space and at the same time activated by the performer. Each element of the event has its coordinates which are constantly analysed and modified without a specific scenario. By assuming the function of drawing as a navigator, I would like to refer here to Paulina Pankiewicz's work carried out in Skoki in 2015, whose aimless movement was a result of an interpretation of a page with a drawn black line. Drawing as a map has become a tool for directing a performer towards a task of wandering. The drawing action is transposed into the movement function; I am specifically talking about wandering as a result of a defined drawing as a map regardless of the intent of the drawing person.

'My visits to the nearby forest during the field study are day-to-day running trainings, follow-

28. Schnabel, Ernst, 1981, p 38-39: *Ja i królowie. Pomysły, zdarzenia, konkluzje z życia inżyniera PIW*, Warsaw



Janusz
Bałdyga,
Reversion
180 degrees,
Klopfstange,
Neuss 2012,
photo by
Monika
Sobczak

ing a well-defined plan. There is no room for deviations and weaknesses. I was training on a loop around one of the several nearby lakes. Knowing the place made me calm, and I could concentrate on training tasks.

One night, I decided to go to an unknown region of the forest to get lost in it. I got up in the middle of the night, took my backpack, warm things, and something to eat. I left without knowing how and when my walk would end. The plan was to get lost, but it turned out to be not that easy. Sharpened senses began to define and draw the previously unknown 'dark' space. In the morning, I was not lost, but I returned with an experience of being lost'²⁹.

One of Paulina Pankiewicz's works presented in Skoki had the following text: 'What does it mean to be lost? I follow a path into the forest, stray from the path, and all of a sudden feel completely disoriented. Space is still organized in conformity with the sides of my body. There are the regions to my front and back, to my right and left, but they are not geared to external reference points and hence are quite useless. Front and back regions suddenly feel arbitrary, since I have no better reason to go forward than to go back.'³⁰.

A drawing of states' borders is a significant part of maps. It is usually based on lines found in nature, for example, river lines, mountain chains, and the shores of the ocean. Watching the map, we are aware of the history and nature of harmony of nature with its graphical image recorded using the standards of the cartographical record.

But there is an exception or a precedent of a blank sheet of paper releasing human creativity and imagination. This unwritten page is, for example, desert's space devoid of stable features. The Sahara has become a field of boundary lines, a total drawing devoid of support in the logic of geographical divisions. Sahara's political map was dominated by geometry,

29. Pankiewicz, Paulina, 2015 *Wprowadzenie - 2 wydruki A4, książka, mapa + rysunek, notatka - rękopis [Introduction - 2 A4 print-outs, a book, a map + a drawing, a note - manuscript]* Skoki

30. Tuan, Yi-Fu, 2001, p 47: *Space and Place, The Perspective of Experience* University of Minnesota Press

dividing it with states' borders as if by simple lines often ordered with straight-line discipline. 'Thick line in space' is a kind of projection, a designation of no physical consonance, the total line as a path of light to the moon, or the perfect line embracing the globe – the equator.

Battle of pl

Battle diagrams that record movements of opposing armies with vectors become a fascinating picture while demonstrating the information effectiveness of a particular convention, which I would call simply a drawing. The drawing transfers the dynamics of the battlefield, the sequel of facts, the colour and the symbolism lifting the information status of a message. The attractiveness of the battle graphics was noticed and used in the artistic practice of many artists, for example, Włodzimierz Zakrzewski, or *Academia Ruchu* in action at New York Times Square in 2013. Battle diagrams drawn up by historians and cartographers with their graphical attractiveness and suggestion of the power to summon a distant moment are special types of drawings - the records with the power of presenting the chronology of successive actions. They are the medium of reconstruction or revaluing real-life memories. By treating these records as archival elements, we are getting closer and closer to the recording of performer's strategy before a performance, which is a sort of projection into the future. In the space between the past and the future, there is an unidentified archive of performance art. Starting from the records of the strategic movements of the future action through documents, remains, records, and finishing with prophetic activities, for example, the manifestation of Jerzy Bereś.

Described by Ryszard Kapuscinski in his 'Travels with Herodotus', the first phase of Platea battle is a description of immobility exposing the fascinating role of no man's land between two well-armed large armies.

My performance titled 'Battle under PL' operated with a line drawn under the surface of white sheet. Red wine in a glass underneath it left on the textile a strong red point. The glass moved in sync with the participants of the Battle PL left traces of red lines. The result of the performance was a 'Drawing of battle under PL'.

While considering drawing issues concerning performance, it is worth mentioning here a performance entitled 'Reversion 180 degrees'. One of its presentations took place at the main lecture room at the University of Arts in Poznań. The presentation belonged to Thick Line in Space series realised as part of Drawing Now project.

I divided the space into two parts with stretched blue tape. Observers were placed in front of a man who approached them, pushing the tape more and more. The tape covered his mouth and aggressively reduced any possibility of moving his lips. I was confined, gagged, and I moved to the left, I drew a line with my right hand with a red lipstick invisible to the observers. This was a continuous, progressive line, colourful and irregular in the public area, only available to me.

Constructing a coil based on rotation mechanics does not require a deconstruction of space or installation of additional elements. Dressed in a white shirt, I got up, the tape crossed my body at my breast height, I took a step forward, leaning on the strained tape, approaching the audience, I was ready to open a new sequence of performance. Relying on it with maximum force, I started a series of turns along the line that I set.

The striped red line was printed according to the discipline of the prints transferred to the white of my shirt, the rotation that I made to make it wrapped, written or scratched. My body was repeatedly wrapped in a red line despite leaving the structure and spatial order intact. While talking about this performance, I would like to quote excerpts of the text written in 2012 entitled 'Error in performance art': 'Performance regarded as a source fact in definition, without being repetitive, is particularly vulnerable to failure, its consequence may be a crisis. Assuming acceptance of potential error as a performance feature, we may assume that the value of performance art is an overt process of getting out of the crisis. By realising its potential, we could set up a performance model in which the pursuit of the crisis is part of the projected strategy. Then going out of the crisis as an overt thing is the proper matter of performance.'

I recall the concept of error because by performing the above-described performance I made a mistake by turning invisible to viewers tape in their direction; when I turned, I did not leave red traces on a white shirt. The entire process of marking, which represented the core of the action was a futile gesture. I was faced with a crisis, which gave me a possibility of two solutions. I decided to return along the correctly set tape. I went for a process of revitalisation of erred action because I was not ready to assume a new, unknown to me gesture rooted in such concepts as the arid, the reversed, inversion.

conclusions

The object that closes the discussion about the interplay of artistic creativity and educational activities is a city monument entitled 'The axis of return 360°', realised within the framework of the 'Open City' in Lublin in June 2014. It was set at the entrance of the Dominican Church in the Old Town, and it represented a surprising configuration of a sacred symbol and abstract rotating mechanism.

'The axis of return 360°' is an object based on a deliberate multiplication of a cube. I recalled suprematism figures seen by Kazimierz Malewicz as carriers of metaphysical content. I am building a cube, a block, a pedestal, plinth to arm it with meaning. Okudzhava's words state: 'the pedestals grow higher; no-one stands on them'. Apart from the political context, they speak about emptiness. I armed my pedestal with my abstract idea of revolving. The full rotation is a circle, and the circle written into a square creates a mandala - the image of the self. The form of the cross is the result of the most harmonious ordering of the modules of my work - the cube and the wheel. Rotation inevitably leads to an endless cycle of demolition and construction of the meanings summoned by the observer. The context of the Malewicz's cross is found in a spatial narrative in which the object being placed in the new order continually modifies its status in the progressing process of transformation.

The object is a steel cube measuring 150 x 150 x 150 cm. A three-dimensional, rotating, black cross inscribed in its negative form is attached to the top horizontal plane.

I propose to reflect and act on the following key words resulting from elemental analysis of my object: emptiness, rotation, axis, pedestal, cross, circle...

Or perhaps it is worth to choose for example three terms to start working on the clear plan of the equilateral triangle described with, for example, such points as emptiness, plinth, rotation.



Janusz Baldyga,
The axis of return 360°,
Open City, Lublin 2014



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review

'On the margin of this review, I want to draw attention to the directional and educational program values contained in the publication. The enormous personal experience and achievements of the author, combined with the students' tasks and their effects, confirm the hypothesis of the nature of the didactic process and the theoretical renaissance in the sphere of artistic creativity as a transfer of experience in which the donor (guide, supervisor, tutor) is only efficient if he is verified by his art practice. Experience and intuition guide the adept's artistic initiation into changing contexts of the environment, beyond the academic sphere, leaving the academic plane as a space of verification and analysis of acquired experience. At the same time, the publication is a document that extends the experience and subject reflection, distinguishing and emphasising the autonomy of the genre of performance art as well as the essential contribution to the reform of artistic education, understood as a continuous process (as opposed to administrative reforms). (...)'

Prof. Artur Tajber

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