

The summary of the PhD thesis by Paulina Pankiewicz titled:

BEING PAUL CÉZANNE

The experience of space in the process of creating a work of art.

The thesis written under the supervision of dr hab. Hubert Czerepok

My PhD thesis explores the phenomenon of space in the process of creating a work of art. In it, I focus on the individual conditions which influence the way we perceive and experience our surroundings. In this case, it is a determined place, deeply embedded in the cultural context – Mt. Sainte-Victorie – the heroin of Paul Cézanne’s numerous works. In my project, I follow the late artist in real space. I wander across the mountainsides of the massif, whose image we know so well from tens of Cézanne’s paintings, and examine what impact this space has on me. I get to know it in different ways: as an artist, a runner, a person with a determined intellectual background, and with my own individual sensitivity. I experience it simultaneously on many inseparable levels, among which movement and physical activity are the most important. I construct my work on the basis of the experience provided by my body, which I treat as my main research tool. I am interested in the individual experience of space and the way it is conveyed to the viewer through the language of art.

In the theoretical part of the thesis, I intent to explain the motivation behind each of the elements of my work, exposing their background. I analyse my activity in the light of the works of other artists dealing with similar topics, as well as those of philosophers and scholars. I also write about my own ideas and connotations that come up spontaneously during research and the creative process. The text resembles a collection of notes or a journal. It is sometimes interrupted, just like my experience of this space was. At the same time, I try to engage in a free creative dialogue with a canonical work of art, continuously present as a backdrop of my work, namely the images of Mt. Sainte-Victorie painted by Paul Cézanne. I rediscover the space depicted in them, while also deconstructing it. I create a particular study of the terrain, based on the close relationship with its subject.

The practical part of my thesis comprises five pieces forming one installation – a collection of “documents” acquired or created during the research process. Their titles are: *Creating a Landscape*, *Running Landscapes*, *Music score C*, *Choreography*, *The Appropriation of Topography*. While developing this narration, I mix real data with fantasies, and combine the results of visual, physical and physiological research. I believe that this approach allows me to take my spectator on a journey to my world – my personal reality, created in the process of studying and examining such exceptional place as Mt. Sainte-Victorie. I understand my artistic activity, and art in general, as communication – conveying experience and building understanding.

The slightly tongue-in-cheek title of the project *Being Paul Cézanne* refers to the title of Spike Jonze’s 1999 film *Being John Malkovich*, in which an employee of a New York skyscraper discovers a tunnel leading to the mind of John Malkovich. While working on my art installation, I undertook a journey in time and space. I traced Cézanne’s footsteps, placing mine next to his. I studied the landscape, which had obviously changed since the late nineteenth century, when the painter wandered around Provence with his easels, working on his fantastic multiple portrait of Mt. Sainte-Victorie. He roamed the terrain leisurely, I ran. He applied the subsequent brush strokes slowly, which paradoxically was a way to “experience” rather than “portray” the landscape. I scanned it hurriedly, preparing for a strenuous competition. For me, the exceptionality of this journey lied in the feeling of co-being – “entering Cézanne’s head”, even though it may be virtually impossible.

In order to carry out my work I undertook two research journeys to the South of France. A month-long trip in April and May 2018, followed by a week-long trip in April 2019. During terrain research and later, while looking through and organising the collected material, I tried to understand the complex nature of Mt. Sainte-Victorie, asking questions and looking for answers in the process of uncovering my own perspective and perception. This work is the result of this process.

Paulina Pankiewicz