

Tomasz Drewicz

---

**GIVE ME SOME SUBSTANCE**



**GIVE ME SOME SUBSTANCE**



Tomasz Drewicz

---

**GIVE ME SOME SUBSTANCE**



For Jan...

Reviewers:  
prof. Antoni Porczak  
prof. Marcin Berdyszak

Graphic design and typesetting layout:  
Tomasz Drewicz

Translation:  
Grzegorz Kołodziej

ISBN 978-83-65578-20-4

Publisher:  
Wydział Rzeźby i Działań Przestrzennych  
Uniwersytet Artystyczny w Poznaniu  
Poznań 2016

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>From the Author</b>	9
<b>Introduction</b>	13

### Section I

<b>Performances and other collisions</b>	19
--	----

#### Chapter I

<b>Event/collision - performance studies language and art.</b>	20
1.1 Event/Cultural Collision.	21
1.2 Event/Organizational Collision.	22
1.3 Event/Technological Collision.	23

#### Chapter II

<b>Fluidity and organization.</b>	25
2.1 The challenge of intelligence. What are intelligent materials?	26
2.2 Society - organism, system, intelligent substance.	27

#### Chapter III

<b>Feedback</b>	30
-----------------	----

### Section II

<i>Loop</i>	35
<i>Be right back</i>	53

<i>Critical distance</i>	73
<i>Dissemination of patriotic content</i>	81
<i>Tabula Rasa</i>	89
<i>For sale</i>	97
<i>(+48)</i>	101

<b>Instead of the end</b>	109
---------------------------	-----

Bibliography	113
--------------	-----

Biography	119
-----------	-----



## From the Author

As the Pole born in the era of baby boomers from the beginning of the eighties, already at the very start of my conscious life, did I feel placed BETWEEN broader tradition and the „new”. I have never got rid of this feeling, and probably like most people of my generation, it brought about a huge difficulty in reaching the self-awareness. Although I would not like to emphasize this too much, I do believe that the fact of growing in Poland, in the post-communist reality, is quite important, especially as far as my approach to art is concerned. Political changes, a free capital market, computerization, telecommunications revolution along with the globalization and gender studies, surrounded me with unstable ground; fluid mass, difficult to move around, not to mention building something on. My preference for exact science, with simultaneous attraction to humanities added further complexity to the issue. In short, I have always been put in the position BETWEEN — as if first days of my existence marked the beginning of permanent blurring of boundaries in all of the emerging aspects.

Until recently, this state of affairs made me very tired. I was internally exhausted, both in terms of my work and normal daily functioning. END is another term, which I often encountered on my path. Although I did not experience the „end of communism”, I definitely was a child of its fall. I experienced the end of the millennium, the end of the Third Republic, and thanks to Francis Fukuyama also the *The end of History* and the *The end of man*. I was born just two years before the declaration of *The End (Death) of art*, prophesied already in 1984 both by Arthur C. Danto and Hans Belting. Obviously, at that time I did not know about it.

Perhaps, these are the reasons why my artistic productions are often based on the principle of reflection. As early as during my studies at the Poznan Academy, my works operated on that particular approach, although at that time it was probably the result rather of intuition than a conscious decision. I was extremely fascinated by the theories of interactivity. I repeatedly invited people to co-create my work, both during the process of creation and reception. I was looking for answers to questions about the individual’s identity, communication, distance in relationships, the extent and sustainability of the various strategies — contacts with THE OTHER ONE. This was indirectly manifested by my interest in performance.

Today, when I look at this important period of my work, I perceive it as extremely chaotic. Though not without meaning and relevant content, that time was difficult for me to assimilate, because, while attempting to overcome my own shyness, I could not find further creative motivation there, feeling it more as a form of therapy. However, the collected experience was priceless for my current interests. I think that it gave me the opportunity to finally understand the mechanism of how everything that surrounds us PERFORMS.



---

Therefore, my works pay attention to the process — pointing out areas in which broad BEHAVIOUR has the chance to highlight its individual meaning, thus at the same time becoming very specific and universal. As a rule, I make use of quite simple means. Collected and organized against the specific context, they can operate on many levels. E.g., my intervention in the space of Poznan Palm House, entitled *Memorandum*. A pair of skis, painted in white and red stripes, referring to the pillars (obelisks) delimiting the country border, was thrust into the ground in one of the pavilions tightly filled with lush, tropical vegetation. Bindings for ski boots have been replaced by imitating them rat traps.

The direct inspiration for the creation of this work came from an agreement signed at the beginning of April 2013 between Gazprom and Polish EuRoPol Gas. The title *memorandum*, i.e. diplomatic letter having no legal effect, at that time served on the Polish scene as a tool for internal political games. This content, however, is just indicated, though, of course, remaining important for the whole, it does not exclude the possibility of a deep interpretation in other contexts, even in the area of current migration crisis. A similar principle is characteristic for most of my works, and these most important ones, in my opinion, are described in this publication. Therefore, I invite you to get acquainted with this material and search for other meanings — those most important to you, both in my and other artistic endeavors.



## Introduction

The title of this book was taken from *Out of control* music video of The Chemical Brothers<sup>1</sup>, in which the phrase „Give me some substance” appearing at the end of the clip, was sprayed on the wall by an anonymous, masked street riot, female participant. In the given context, it refers to the need of finding yourself, finding the truth, the meaning of life and other fundamental values which, if missed, lead to increased tensions and social unrest in modern, globalized world. In literal translation it means to analyze the substance itself, the mass, the broadly defined MATERIAL, and therefore, in my opinion, it perfectly captures the idea behind creation of this publication.

We live in a reality driven by new technology, digitization and omnipresent economy i.e., things, which disturb our sense of unity and continuity. „Here and Now” was multiplied, blurred, divided and remains shrouded in a fog of uncertainty. Our individual and social „substance” seems to resemble „shapeless mass” more and more. We must rediscover this matter; understand its new meaning and specificity. That is why, my purpose of my artistic exploration involves the analysis of very specific substances. By using them for artistic purposes, in a way respecting and using their specifics, I want to show how many similarities they share; I want to reveal the enormity of analogies and multitude of possible interpretations, which stem from these relations. Quoting Joseph Beuys, I am interested more in the: „MATERIAL and transformation of SUBSTANCE [...] than in the traditional understanding of the aesthetic beauty of things. If the work stays related to transformation, change and development of substance, it can affect everything in the world and is no longer limited to art only”<sup>2</sup>.

This book is a collection of texts which explain my approach to the process of creation, analysis of the problem, choice of components for the work and the use of substance in art. It shows not only my attitude towards art but also my view on ways of its interpretation. I will refer mostly to my own artistic realizations, occasionally evoking works of other artists.

The foundation of this text includes my doctoral dissertation, which examined possibilities of shaping sculptural forms by means of external environmental factors and attempted to analyze the essence of the so-called „smart materials” — substances which react to change of those factors and reshape their physical or chemical properties by adjusting their inner structure. The starting point for this

---

1 The Chemical Brothers - two-member English electronic music group formed by Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons. Initially, the group recorded under the name The Dust Brothers and it collaborated on the creation of electronic music, among others, with The Prodigy. The Chemical Brothers later also recorded with such artists of electronic music as Moby and Underworld. [after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia - [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

2 J. Beuys, Teksty, komentarze, wywiady, Warszawa 1990, p. 36.

study was a direct analogy to epigenetics<sup>3</sup> — a science investigating the possibility of genetic mutations initiated by strong external influences (including cultural ones), and examining the likelihood of humans gaining skill to self-modify their own genotype.

One of the substances of my focus in this book is a ferrofluid - which is actually a suspension „with properties similar to a liquid, which, in contrast to typical liquid, at ambient conditions is a good paramagnetic and is a subject to magnetic polarization in the presence of external magnetic fields”<sup>4</sup>. The specificity of this substance was a motivation to revise the idea of intelligence itself, both individual and collective one.

It is not difficult to note that, both Human and (broadly speaking) Society, are also the systems capable of a planned internal reorganization. They are constantly updated systems of connected vessels, which continuously react to events created by themselves. Our global economy, reflected through the financial markets and virtual world of stock exchanges, is the best example. Assuming this point of view, all of those systems can be treated same as other smart substances and be used as self-shaping sculpting material.

Another substance from group of smart materials, which is noteworthy in this study is the thermochromic paint. It has the ability to reversibly change color in response to temperature variations. In my work, the applied paint does not change the color itself but becomes transparent after exceeding a specific temperature point and, similarly when cooling, it returns to the original state of opacity upon reaching designed temperature value.

In addition to these two very specific substances, I also analyze other, previously used by me materials, such as glass, cream cheese, mobile telephony and even penal code. They were not as much as a starting point to create particular works but, in a similar, though not as much advanced way, they decided about some formal solutions and acted as fundament of works' meaning.

To begin the analysis of individual works, in the first chapter of part one, I will familiarize you first with the basic assumptions of the General Theory of Performance proposed by Jon McKenzie in his book „Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance”<sup>5</sup>. I believe that performative perspective, which gives us the opportunity, to analyze our liquid state, throughout language adequate to this state, is most suitable for discussed issue.

Then, in the second chapter, I will refer to that fluidity, both in the context of intelligent substances and society, and will refer to the possible ways in which those

---

3 Epigenetics is one of the modern branches of biological sciences, dealing with the question of out extragenetic heredity, which is determined by the sequence of nuclear DNA

4 After: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org).

5 J. McKenzie, *Performuj albo... Od dyscypliny do perfomansu*, Kraków 2011

matters can organize themselves. For this purpose, I will recall the basic definitions and content of General Systems Theory. In my opinion, this is crucial to present my approach, which treats society as the body, the system and ultimately an intelligent substance.

Very important for me is the fact that the specificity of smart materials gives the opportunity to show the principles of feedback<sup>6</sup>. This process, being the base of epigenetics and field of interest of many other areas of science (such as cybernetics, electronics, economics, sociology and political science) is the core of my approach to creative development, hence it deserves a presentation in chapter three.

After necessary theoretical introduction, in the second part of this work, I will begin in-depth analysis of selected art projects created by me, presenting (or often reconstructing) the search for formal solutions used in those creations and possible ways of their interpretation. Each of these works is a specific query about the current state of affairs, about possible CHANGE and the thing that is in BETWEEN.

---

<sup>6</sup> **Feedback** – the impact of end state signals (output) of the process (system, layout), on the reference signals (input). It allows the system to receive information of its own action (with output value).



# Section I



## Performances and other collisions

Roughly speaking, since the beginning of the sixties of the twentieth century, we have witnessed an extremely dynamic development in the fields of social sciences. This is when especially American sociologists introduced a series of theories, terms and definitions, that — along with a free manner of being spoken about - not making a breakthrough in the discipline as such, are getting into a wider circulation. Such personalities as, Erving Hoffman, Richard Schechner, or Jon McKenzie by skillful maneuvering between the research activities and free, even fictional way of expression, very effectively popularize one of the main concepts of the contemporary science, i.e. „performance”.

The notion includes so many potential discourses and practices; mutually excluding or contradictory approaches that the introduction of a uniform definition seems impossible for the time being<sup>7</sup>. This is undoubtedly proof of its incredible absorbency and usefulness in analyzing a wide range of phenomena, and the reason for this is that it draws attention to the PROCESS, to „behaviour”, „things happening”<sup>8</sup> (no matter, whether we are moving in the area of culture or technology), making it a very important research paradigm<sup>9</sup>.

Despite these difficulties, the temptation to create the most complete and specific theory of performance is unusually strong. Already mentioned Jon McKenzie is its ardent seeker. In his *Perform or...* he formulates a definite base of the General Theory of Performance, introducing the division into three main types, namely cultural, organizational and technological performance. For the purposes of this book, I will use a similar model, but it will include additional definitions: EVENT and COLLISION. I think it will be a great convenience as far as my objectives are concerned.

But the question remains, why I think that the General Theory of Performance is so remarkable in the context of contemporary art and my own artistic activity. The answer will be included in two quotes, in which we will find this „event”. The first of the fragments, which I would like to recall, was taken from the book *The aesthetics*

7 „The fate of trendy words is very similar: the more experience transparent explanation gets because of them, the more vague and unclear they become. With a growing number of dogmatic truths, repressed and excluded by fashionable words, they themselves faster and faster become principles, which are not discussed. Aspects of human conduct, original scopes of the concept, escape from the field of view - it becomes a „matter of fact” feature of „the world around us as recognized directly” to which we are referred, postulating our own immunity.” – Z. Bauman *Globalizacja*, Warszawa 2000 p. 5.

8 *to perform* means to act, to do - however this translation does not reflect the essence of the matter, because such a thing as a performance does not exist until we give it some context. Latin performer is closer to our needs, as it means: to fulfill something, carry, respectively, in due form, according to expectations.

9 „In the theater, the movement from entertainment to effectiveness was revealed by moving the focus of the drama on the actor's body; in dance, the attention shifted from the formal choreographed gestures to everyday life; both in dance and experimental theater there was the transition from theater spaces into existing spaces. In the field of visual arts, artists and critics turned from the works to the creative process.” – J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 48

of *performativity*, where the author, Erika Fischer-Lichte, writes: „If there is no longer a work of art, existing independently of the creator and the recipient, if instead we are dealing with HAPPENING/EVENT, where everyone - although in varying degrees and in different functions - is involved, and the production and reception take place in the same space and at the same time, it is highly problematic to use such categories, which are offered by the aesthetics separating from each other production, artifact and reception. Or at least, one should verify whether they can still serve as useful tools for analysis”<sup>10</sup>.

This popular view concerning the condition of contemporary art (as well as reflection on it), which was already generally accepted, leads to the natural conclusion that the performative approach to the area of art is more than adequate for its exploration and analysis. So, we are going back to McKenzie, who says: „Every paradigm in its own way is devoted to the constant question and repeating: »What is performance?«, refraining at the same time from any all-encompassing definition. This constant question comes in part from the fact that in each paradigm, the process is translated into a product and structuring is over structure. But in all paradigms, the performance is a moving target, as it is referred to as DYNAMIC EVENT, not a static entity. These events — performances — are also relatively distinct, i.e. they are generally considered as unattached to each other”<sup>11</sup>.

### 1. Event/Collision — performance studies language and art.

As we can see, the shift from the main area of interest from PRODUCT to PROCESS is a big problem for contemporary art theory and criticism, and the reason for the revision of the existing aesthetic categories<sup>12</sup>. The fluidity of definitions, attitudes and contexts emphasizing the peculiar uniqueness of them all, along with the equivalence of their importance are undoubtedly the characteristics of the contemporary world of art (and not only). In order to examine any ongoing process, we need to look at it from a distance and from a certain point of view, and therefore we should make an attempt of mental stopping it at that particular moment, looking at it as already made, a single EVENT and choose its defined, specific aspect. We simply have to make a choice to get in-depth analysis of any of them. The possibilities are endless, because, according to McKenzie, everything what is around us performs.

10 E. Fischer-Lichte, *Estetyka performatywności*, Kraków 2008, p. 22

11 J. McKenzie, *Performuj albo... Od dyscypliny do perfromansu*, Kraków 2011, p. 64

12 „The fact that we can imagine, and actually produce works of art that look exactly like ordinary objects and which do not claim the right to be called art, implies that we cannot define works of art by means of some specific visual features, they may have.”- A. C. Danto, *Po końcu sztuki. Sztuka współczesna i zatarcie się granic tradycji*, Kraków 2013, p. 44

MATTER or any SUBSTANCE also has its own performance (primarily of technological character, but we can also distinguish and consider their organizational and cultural performance, I will return to these issues later). Likewise, we could look at narrative CONTENT in the video. With such assumptions, we choose free and constantly open approach, which I think is essential in the process of asking questions about art. We are not interested in answer to the question: „is it art?“, „what is art?“ but „what art?“, in the context of additional question about „what EVENT?“ it caused, is what really matters<sup>13</sup>.

### 1.1. Event/*Cultural* Collision

Liminality, a transitional state between two other phases is one of the main terms focusing attention in the context of performance. It was derived from the research on the customs of different cultures in which members of these communities, the participants of the ritual, are in a state of „between“<sup>14</sup> — they no longer belong to the community, they used to be the part of, but they have not yet been included in another group. Reflection on this subject includes both tribal rites and political rallies; socially involved happenings and protests, as well as street festivals focused on providing entertainment or big music festivals.

As we can see, direct interest may include any EVENT from the life of people, regardless of its momentum, scale and scope. Nevertheless, „performers have identified a cultural performance as a certain operation on social standards: a set of actions capable to sustain social arrangements or, alternatively, changing people and society“<sup>15</sup> first of all assuming its effectiveness as the most important issue for this paradigm.

Therefore, developed within the framework of the chosen cultural EVENT definition of the situation is characterized by making a reflection on the society, on its condition. Participants of this event, more or less consciously, ask themselves questions about alternate versions of themselves; about the ability to make changes or to maintain the status quo, using realized for that purpose traditional or new symbolic forms, for confirmation or negation of important values, and ultimately — to increase the awareness of actors participating in the show.

---

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, similarly, therefore, we do not ask the question: „what is a performance?“ because first of all we are interested in: „which is a performance?“.

<sup>14</sup> „What is a performance? What are performance studies? Perhaps the most concise and precise answer to both these questions is: „liminality“. Paradoxically, the constant use of the term in our field made liminality a sort of standard. That is to say: we are used to defining the effectiveness of performance and our own research if not exclusively, so almost exclusively in terms of liminality - or a certain category of actions whose spatial, temporal and symbolic „between“ suspends social norms, throws challenge to them, plays with them and maybe even transforms them.“ – J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 64

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 39

Thus, an appropriate question is of key significance, as it determines (in the context of the challenges on the effectiveness of performance) construction of the possible answers. We can compare it to the dialogic philosophy proposed by Józef Tischner<sup>16</sup>. It is EVENT involving the COLLISION — it is suspended between CLAIM of questioner and the OBLIGATION of questionee. We should think about what kind of demands in such a system we should call for today? In the cultural context, the question of FREEDOM should be the most important one, but Tischner says: „Nowadays, freedom is not a problem. We have freedom. The question is: what to do with that freedom?”<sup>17</sup>.

## 1.2. Event/Organizational Collision

In 1959, Erving Goffman, by analyzing (then from the point of view of the drama theater) individual and social human life distinguishes, made by us all, individual and group ‚performances’. Writing about the theater of everyday life, he places great emphasis on conditioning governing group performance, especially because of the objectives of each member of the group in the context of imposed general aim and compromises, or — alliances that group forges to get better results. It is easy to notice that EFFICIENCY is the aspect usually characterizing an organizational performance or EVENT taking place between different groups of people oriented on production (usually material things).

It was when, i.e. after the Second World War, the expansion of thoughts concerning performance on other areas of social life began, including the models for the organization of work. An extremely rapid growth of the so-called performative management was observed<sup>18</sup>, which, as the opposition to the engineering approach to employee, was first implemented in the United States and quickly spread across the globe.

Of course, the global dimension of this model results mainly from the changing role of the employee in companies that were already at the next level of „industrialization” and this the only place it found its application in the context of efficiency. The transfer of production to the Third World countries only expelled objectification of people working on the production lines to another location.

16 „The question is not suspended voice or a flash of the eyes or face. The question is a claim. Whoever asks, claims the right to reply. The first answer to the question is the awareness that you need to answer...” – J. Tischner, Świadomość drugiego, w W stronę innego. Obserwacje i interwencje, Katowice 2006, p. 13

17 After: <http://www.aforyzmy.com.pl/wolnosc-i-niewola/w-dzisiejszym-swiecie-nie-wolnosc-jest-problemem-wolnosc-juz-jest-pozostalo-pytanie-co-zrobic-z-wolnoscia>

18 „In the 60s the tasks of employee assessment widened to include issues of development of the individual, organizational planning and improving the quality of life at work. The management used the ratings to raise the productivity of employees, their productivity, efficiency and satisfaction. Proper instructions and information exchange between the evaluation and assessment of the evaluated employee gave the basis for the development of professional skills of employees, planning both their careers and motivation systems.” – E. Eichel, H. Bender, *Performance Appraisal: A study of Current Techniques*, New York 1984, after J. McKenzie, op. cit. p. 71.

---

Today, the COLLISION of these two extreme worlds, seems to be one of the main factors creating tensions between high and low industrialized countries — both in terms of economics, the economy and social life.

### 1.3. Event/Technological Collision

Most of the researchers, even if they are accepting the performative attitudes and perceptions regarding the cultural and the organizational area, are at the beginning of a discussion on technological performance extremely reserved, and uncertain. They are uncertain primarily about the question whether technology and its product, apart from its own internal conditioning against any concept of reality, should be considered as simultaneously dependent on these first two research paradigms.

It seems obvious that the technological performance has to be „socialized” prior to its production, but it is difficult to determine whether this fact is important to it after production. That COLLISION — this inner paradox — is what undoubtedly questions the possibility of effective analysis of EVENTS generated by technological performance. Especially when this EFFECTIVENESS, according to most researchers, is its distinguishing challenge. However, we can surely say that „the use of »performance« to market anything, from carpets and computers, through the mops and power supply systems, points to one thing: both for the specialists and non-specialists, all technologies perform”<sup>19</sup>.

If we want to break down this cognitive wall, we must assume that agreement on the standpoint as for operation of any technology is not possible in this particular area. Just as a performance of PC is not always the same and depends not so much of computing power, but rather of the optimization of its parameters to the needs of a specific application. Therefore, all comes down to the need to identify the initial definition of a situation in which the technology was found and the context of its considerations, i.e. appropriately formulated question. We are not interested in what is the possibility of performance of a seal, used by us in the home, but requirements of what EVENT is its performance to meet.

---

<sup>19</sup> J. McKenzie, *op. cit.* p. 136.

### Fluidity and organization

The construction of all living organisms, or at least those we are already familiar with, is based on water<sup>20</sup>. The need to exchange information with the surroundings, as well as its storage and transformation, both at the molecular level, and on a larger scale (even to deliver the daily portion of food) has been the subject of analysis and research for a long time. Being humans we solve these problems by means of water. Both at the level of our biological and social structure — it serves as a neutral data carrier as well as the environment in which any organization of exchange processes begins. Its technological performance constitutes the broadest possible spectrum for the occurrence of EVENTS. Our existence has always been fluid, but it seems that it was not until postmodernism that we began to understand this fact.

The subject of fluidity was, in a very interesting way, problematized by Zbigniew Oksiuta, which in the exhibition catalog *Space farms* writes: „Fluids are synonymous to DYNAMICS. This is a formable state of matter. Only in this state, is it possible to get the processes of self-organization, and only in this state life as we know can exist. [...] Fluids have the shape which is in constant motion. [...] Only in a fluid medium, there is a potential for change, and only in this medium, these changes are possible. [...] This, what passes slowly and is relatively persistent, almost stationary, acts as a form of that which flows quickly, it works as a function of the maintenance of this form,”<sup>21</sup>.

From the biological point of view, all forms of life are dynamic, structured systems where the processes take place automatically, and where most common objective is to maintain a balance. However, we should be aware of the fact that homeostasis as a state of immutability of certain parameters does not mean the complete stillness. Quite the contrary, only organized DYNAMICS inside the system can lead to relative stability. Besides, its achievement is possible only in systems with complete FREEDOM and independence.

Therefore, MOVEMENT and DYNAMICS are a prerequisite for the achievement of both the relative stagnation and possible evolution. Progress and development, as well as regress, follow the change in internal or external conditions of the system and the need to adapt its components to the newly defined situation. COLLISION with any new factor introducing a disturbance in the system is the reason for the occurrence of EVENT in performance that existed in it, and, consequently, its change. This principle applies both to living and inanimate matter. What distinguishes living organisms is the ability of a planned, thought-over and

<sup>20</sup> „Water is a universal matrix containing all the possibilities and where all embryos develop”. M. Eliade, *Traktat o historii religii*, Warszawa 1966

<sup>21</sup> Z. Oksiuta, *Formy, procesy, konsekwencje*, Białystok 2007 p. 12

intuitive change in how to organize themselves, giving the ability to adapt and use the conditions to create own definition of the situation (as opposed to passive submission to the new rules). The question whether this circumstance gives us real freedom, or only its semblance, will at this point be left unanswered.

### 2.1. The challenge of intelligence. What are intelligent materials?

During one of TED conferences<sup>22</sup>, Catarina Mota, cooperating with the Sapling Foundation, co-founder of the portal openMaterials.org, began her presentation on intelligent materials from such a digression: „There was a time when we knew how to operate items and how they were produced, so we could build them and repair, or at least make aware purchases, supported by appropriate knowledge. [...] Of course, in most cases we still know what the conventional materials such as paper and cloth are made of and how they are produced. Today, however, we have these futuristic composites - plastics that change shape; paints that conduct electricity; dyes that change color and light up<sup>23</sup>.”

Indeed, the development of material technologies in the last few decades is really impressive. Conductive paint; glass, which changes from transparent to opaque at the touch of a button; jelly, which creates music are just some of the products created by the revolution. Smart materials invaded our lives, totally reevaluating them, although their title intelligence is sometimes merely a marketing ploy. (This allows us to purchase, for example, SMART TV). It is most often said that these are the substances capable of CHANGING their properties in a controlled manner, in response to environmental stimuli. If we compare this content with the definition of intelligence as such, we will find that it meets only part of the necessary conditions<sup>24</sup>. So it is rather a conventional issue; terminological simplification defining a set of preparations with properties specified in a particular way. Their most important property is the ability and readiness to CHANGE. Generally, seven main groups of smart materials are distinguished, i.e., those changing color, changing the shape / size, changing the temperature, emitting light, self-organizing and self-healing and liquids of varying viscosities. They can be independent or constitute a component of the structural or functional „structure”.

Their enormous impact on our modern world can hardly be overlooked, and we can easily imagine possible, future technological solutions or devices utilizing

22 TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) – scientific conference organized by the non-profit American foundation Sapling Foundation. Its purpose is to promote - as the motto says - „ideas worth disseminating.” The current curator, Briton Chris Anderson, is a former computer journalist and a publisher. [za: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

23 After: [https://www.ted.com/talks/catarina\\_mota\\_play\\_with\\_smart\\_materials](https://www.ted.com/talks/catarina_mota_play_with_smart_materials)

24 Intelligence (from Lat. *intelligentia* - ability to understand, the mind) – ability to perceive, analyze and adapt to the changing environment. The ability to understand, learn and use knowledge and skills in new situations. Feature of mind conditioning the efficiency of cognitive functions such as thinking, response, problem solving.

their potential. However, it is worth to stop here and control the unnecessary exaltation and widespread enthusiasm. I agree with above cited Caterina Mota's opinion, which draws our attention to the danger coming from our ignorance in this area. She also acknowledges that, fortunately, the balance of power is likely to be retained and in the next part of her short lecture she says: „Now, »productive« society and a model of open access to source again give us the knowledge of how things work and what they are made from. I believe that we need to move them to the next level and focus on the elements they are composed of”<sup>25</sup>.

## 2.2. Society - organism, system, intelligent substance

Almost 150 years ago, the English philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer introduced the concept of organicism in the area of social science<sup>26</sup>. Although very popular in the days of Spencer, the term and the accompanying concept of social evolution got gradually forgotten. According to the philosopher, evolution takes place at all levels of reality: inorganic, organic and superorganic (society), and he assumed that the phenomena of one level cannot be reduced to a lower level, even though the laws in each of these types of evolution are the same<sup>27</sup>.

That thought was continued by, inter alia, Niklas Luhmann, who developed the THEORY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS, formulating the notion of autopoiesis, i.e. self-shaping. In the autopoietic unit „to be” and „to create” are inseparable, and this determines a specific type of this organization<sup>28</sup>. Additionally, Luhmann introduced a number of theories regarding the intersystem communication in the social field<sup>29</sup>. According to his assumptions, the process must begin by defining what the system is and what it is not. What is very important, this decision is taken by the observer, which is the system itself. Therefore, it can be said that any possible development of society starts by defining the circumstances in which it occurred, taking into account EVENT generated by one of its performances.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem

<sup>26</sup> **Organicism** - philosophical view assuming that society functions and develops as a living organism, and social institutions are interrelated like the parts of the body ( their mutual cooperation determines the smooth functioning of society). It can be used as an analogy, that is, to explain reality, less known by the more well-known, but it can also be based on the actual homology or grasping isomorphism, the actual identity of the processes of the different elements. In this second approach, organicism is the first formulation of the theory of systems. [after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

<sup>27</sup> After: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)

<sup>28</sup> Z. Oksiuta, op. cit., p. 8

<sup>29</sup> According to it, the systems are not some substance beings, objects in reality, that can be explored from the perspective of an impartial subject, and which exist independently of it. They provide a structure made by the observer, not the object of his knowledge. Therefore, even though we do not need to speak about them ontologically, they may appear to the observer as objectively existing. But they are not artifacts. Luhmann understands ‚system’ as the processual and dynamic „effect of manufacturing differences”, which replaced in systems of theory the difference between the whole and the part. [after: [www.graniczne.amu.edu.pl](http://www.graniczne.amu.edu.pl)]

Thus, only increased awareness of these mechanisms, their constant redefining, depending on the particular system configuration, can free us from, already mentioned, appearance of freedom. We need to know how our social substance works, what is its DYNAMICS; what is its potential in specific, possibly as much extensive as possible, conditions. We need to recognize our own performance. This knowledge is a necessary criterion for being able to consciously, creatively shape our social space, and have a sense of freedom. It is therefore ultimately a sculptural activity, because spatial relations are the goal of the research (mainly social, but others are also included) and consists in forming the creative space.

No better example of the inclusion of these issues in artistic activities, than the theory of sculptures by Joseph Beuys can be found. He writes: „All the things are sculpture to me. This is the enhanced understanding and definition of sculpture. In a sense, this is an invisible sculpture. I name it social sculpture, because the nature of the sculpture refers to the existence of every human being and to all the problems in society. Therefore, it is anthropological understanding of art and this is the foundation for future, alternative society. [...] only the idea of creativity, which is in fact the only clearly established idea of the freedom of people, along with self-determination can lead to the different democratic structure and to a different economic structure, to a different determination the money and to a different economic flow. It is a broader understanding of my understanding of the sculpture, which is linked with the whole social organism”<sup>30</sup>.

Certainly, this new, enhanced approach, both to the essence of sculpture and function of art, which was presented by Beuys, I could identify as the foundation for my own creativity and exploration. He identified the process of carving with the movement — with DYNAMISM. His „theory of the sculpture is based on the transition, through the process of carving, from chaotic material into the orderly form”<sup>31</sup> and he understands this activity as capturing all experience, which leads to ‘understanding’, regardless of whether it is or it is not directly related to the world of art.

In the context of this dissertation, I consider it necessary to recall especially one of his works, i.e. Honey pump, where the honey is one of the media of content — the effect of work of bee community. The project was implemented at the Documenta 6 in Kassel in 1977, where it functioned as an installation made of plastic tubing, similarly to bloodstream, enveloping the place where 100 days of the exhibition were full of discussions, seminars and lectures (as a program of International University founded by Beuys). Thanks to the work of motors and pumps, the honey filling the tubes was in constant motion, flowing like blood in

30 J. Beuys, op.cit., p.74.

31 Ibidem, p. 32.

the veins of the body. However, for Beuys, „the whole thing is complete only with people in space, around which the arteries run and where you can find the head of the bee in the form of coiled tubing loops with two metal antennae”<sup>32</sup>. After closing the Documenta and the completion of the university activities, the pump was removed and now it is shown in the museum only in the static form. The circulation of heat in an environment overwhelmed by knowledge — this was its meaning. Then, only a memory remains.

Honey as the material was used by Beuys many times, and showing the specificity of bee colonies and analogy to organicism were just an example of the functioning of an ideal society, living in governance and harmony with substance present, both inside and outside the system. „The flow of substances derived from the environment, plants, minerals, and the sun, was the essence of worship of bees. Here is a reference to socialism [...] The whole creates a unity that must work perfectly, but in a human, warm manner, in accordance with the principles of cooperation and brotherhood.”<sup>33</sup>

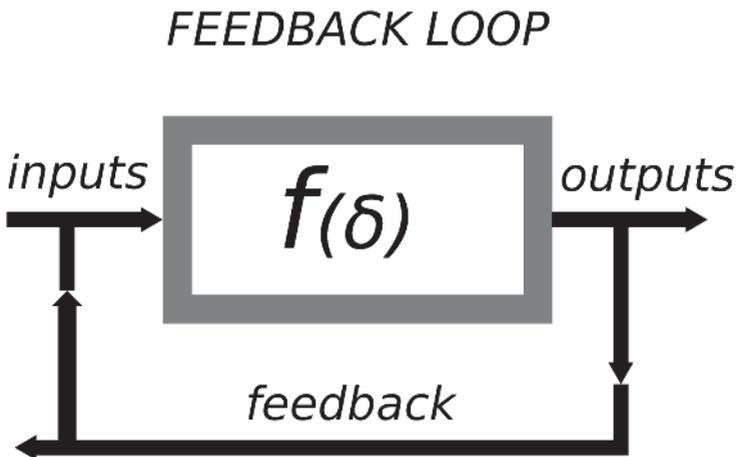
---

32 Ibidem, p. 70.

33 Ibidem, p. 30.

## Feedback

The most important advantage of a multidisciplinary approach to any activity, of both research and creative and design nature, is mainly the fact that it provides us with many opportunities to introduce analogies and comparisons, explaining theories from the area of one field, to the conclusions drawn from the analysis of phenomena belonging to another one. This case is no exception. Although both the Systems Theory and General Theory of Performance were originally constructed on the basis of biological and the social sciences, the most vivid and clear explanation of their main aspect, which is the feedback, was provided by electrical engineering. According to this, feedback is the impact of end state signals (output) of the process (system, layout), on the reference signals (input). It allows the system to receive the information of its own action (with output value)<sup>34</sup>.



For a longer time, this model has been in the main area of interest of many disciplines, and its investigation and use, just for the performative paradigm, is actually the most important goal. It is not yet our desire only to recognize the rules governing the individual phenomenon or EVENT, as the ultimate goal is to use this knowledge to improve efficiency and to improve the functioning of the system (although the feedback rule not necessarily will bring positive effects only). Collecting data and subjecting them to the feedback is the core of any successful activity. Improving the organization through participation processes implies the need to collect data about how the organization is currently working and providing

<sup>34</sup> after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org).

people with the data contained in some form, so that they can work on them and eventually use the information to solve problems<sup>35</sup>.

The method of RSVP cycles (Resources, Scale, Valuation, Performance) is a classic example of the application of this phenomenon in the practice of social behavior. The method, as a model for creative problem solving, has been developed and implemented in many tangents areas — from the methods of effective learning, through building marketing strategies and the design of computer systems. Here, the most important thing is the fact that it is based on the cyclical nature — has no beginning and no end. It focuses on how „to determine what is going to happen, program and objectives of the action, their importance and how to achieve them. The cycle allows for a change and re-evaluation of tasks during the process, and in the course of events, without compromising the process or without stopping it. In this way, the process and its goals come together and intertwine, and what happens in a group situation, is affected by how it happens”<sup>36</sup>.

Each OBSERVER wishing to join the GROUP may do it at any time of the cycle, which of course affects both observed SYSTEM, as well as the role of the observer, making him a PARTICIPANT/ACTOR. By taking an active part in the work of the group, he may also, at any time, escape back to the role of the viewer (again affecting the system). Therefore, we can see that the uniqueness of the feedback in performative terms is extremely interesting, because it is where EVENT with COLLISION approach each simulating their meeting or intersection.

However, we must remember that this is only an illusion and their meeting will never take place, as it is not a two-dimensional situation. As I have already mentioned, PARTICIPANT in a time of the change into OBSERVER (and vice versa), becomes, at the same time, an actor in another performance. Therefore, the graphic shifting of the principles of the feedback loop is mostly made with Möbius strip<sup>37</sup>.

---

35 D.A. Nadler, *Feedback and Organization Development: Using Data-Based Methods*, Reading 1977, s. 173, za: J. McKenzie, op. cit., s. 99.

36 L. Halprin, J. Burns, *Taking Part. A workshop approach to collective creativity*, Cambridge 1974, s. 27-29, za: R. Schechner, *Performatyka. Wstęp*, Wrocław 2006, s. 268.

37 „Feedback is a special performance, which can affect the overall direction of the performance. Loop feedback can therefore be considered as a *mise en abime*: a part representing the whole and thus setting the whole process of performance - individual or organization - in the infinite series of self-contained pictures. A performance about performance: feedback is self-referred metamodel.” – J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 114.





## Section II



## *Loop*

In 1979, British chemist James Lovelock published the book *Gaia. A New Look At Life on Earth*, which argues that the Earth is a unified, living organism. The components of that Life include nature, climate, and all beings, along with people and societies created by them. In his vision, all these elements co-create an organized system subjected to self-regulation, and each component of the system is a system for itself. Ten years later, referring to the contents of this book, Roy Ascott<sup>38</sup>, during the festival Ars Electronica presented its project entitled *Aspects of Gaia*. It was a multi-element installation filling in various aspects the gallery space with different interfaces. Participants/interactors, „connected” to this situation (also thanks to the Internet) could, being physically anywhere in the world, affect the real-time conversion of texts and images displayed in the gallery. It was the realization that perhaps in the best way and most fully, at least so far, presented the phenomenon of the so called telematic experience<sup>39</sup>.

Such a complex, telematic system was already created a long time ago, although we usually do not think of it that way. Securities market, having its regional affiliates in the form of national and local stock exchanges, although remaining mostly in the area of economics, is equally sensitive to any (more or less visible at first glance) movements, both in the area of climate change, large and small investment programs, as well as local consumer sentiments, while having a real impact on all the components.

There is a question, whether a stockbroker, standing in front of a screen on which, in real time, major stock indexes are displayed along with the graphs and tables with forecasts and analyzes of further EVENTS, actually goes through such an experience? After all, his decisions and actions are immediately reflected in that package, which accounts for the current performance of the planet. It can therefore be concluded that the stock market, combining in its structure the whole spectrum of human activities and activity of environment man lives in, presented in digital form, is a perfect example of proposed by Ascott virtual „moist space”, „deciding about the DYNAMIC development of artificial and human intelligence in non-linear process of merging, construction and transformation”.

Following this path, we may conclude that the securities market, as a reflection of our global social performance, is the „VIRTUAL FLUID” and as such, it is in a constant state of dynamic shaping, and like any other system, aims to achieve

---

<sup>38</sup> Ascott, who already in the 70s pioneered the field of interactive art, is now regarded as the greatest artist working in new media, virtual worlds and cybernetics. He also introduces the term moist media as the combined forces of biological sciences, quantum physics and advanced technology (referring mainly to communications).

<sup>39</sup> Telematicity as aesthetic category is applied to new media art. It is the ability to sensual „feeling” like in the material reality, the phenomena localized in the electronic environment. It is an example of a phenomenon that affects the human experience, but has no physical ground.

homeostasis. We must admit that the vision of the general formula that could govern performance of this intelligent fluid is extremely intriguing. An attempt to explore these issues was taken by director Darren Aronofsky in his movie *Pi*. According to the theory proposed in this production, the ability to reach a response results from an analysis of the irrational, mysterious number and learning the rule it is governed by is synonymous with reaching nirvana. In one of the scenes in the film, mega-computer used for this analysis breaks down. During the attempt of repair, the main character discovers smooth, sticky mass covering the processor, and... a living ant. We do not get a clear answer to the question whether the ant is the CAUSE or EFFECT of this „breakdown“.

How can we analyze the performance of stock exchange, if individual EVENTS, regardless of their scale and nature can have an equal impact on the entire system? Of course, we can try to use complicated calculations<sup>40</sup>, with the support of computers to solve this equation. However, this is an example of very complicated technological performance and (as mentioned earlier) creating the full image is unfortunately (or fortunately) impossible. „Putting it straight: too much information about the problem becomes a problem itself“, and „Even providing a control of data stream, precise instruments and modeling, computer analysis of performance can at its best facilitate the process with conflicting criteria, which cannot be completely removed“<sup>41</sup>.

So let us approach the reality of stock exchange in the same way as the computer cited by me earlier, focusing on individual applications running within that structure. I would like to describe several COLLISIONS possible to find in the system, also bringing those described by me in the first chapter. Stock exchange can equally be affected by the geopolitical situation and the cultural performance of any area of the world, as well as individual „performance“ of skillful, influential broker, which by using skills of social engineering, his worked-out image and confidence of investors, using the attributes of the „scene“ associated with, will build effective illusion of reality in order to be able to control the decisions and ultimately undermine the quotations of companies. This type of speculation is still quite common.

In the business world to perform means to work as productively and efficiently as possible. In the corporate world, this activity is required from people, machines, systems, organizational units and enterprises<sup>42</sup>. Organizational

40 „More and more powerful and more economical computer forecasting methods and computer simulations, as well as new technologies of measurement and monitoring of system conditions, made sophisticated methods of performance system evaluation widely available. Remotely monitored in real time sensors, network analysis and simulation models offer new possibilities for a wide measurement of conditions in the system and assessment of systemic change.“ – Measuring and Improving Infrastructure Performance, Washington 1995, p. 5 after: J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 142

41 J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 142.

42 R. Schechner, op. cit., p. 49.

performance, which is characteristic for corporate employees, is the result of the agreements, compromises and alliances, both at the level of the productive groups, trade unions, administrative staff at different levels, and the management boards of companies, realizing a wider global investment strategies. At this level, as I have already pointed out, there are very big, global differences, and generally prevailing principle to increase productivity mines many possible ways of agreement, and they cannot be moved along safely any longer<sup>43</sup>.

I am carrying out this analysis, because — despite my large fascination with the broad performative approach — I think it is very important to realize the danger lying in blind desire to meet the challenges of performance — especially on this scale. This can be illustrated by still present economic crisis associated with the speculative bubble in the US housing market and the collapse of Lehman Brothers. As a result of COLLISION of too many conflicting interests, even very well done RSVP cycles would not help in the creative, positive solution to this problem<sup>44</sup>.

In one word, although the essence of the performance involves a rite of passage, it does not mean that we should not respect boundaries encountered in COLLISION. In some cases, this ritual must go on and it cannot be bypassed or jumped over. There are limits to efficiency, effectiveness and efficiency of the system — especially in the case of very complex systems, which may include the conflicts between the cultural, organizational and technological performance.

\*\*\*

Referring to the issues I have described, I created a special collection of jewelry — a series of signet rings, or rather rings of organizations<sup>45</sup> — designed in such a way that their visual form, reflected the nature of the largest global stock exchanges. For this purpose, I also used a graphic of their logo, which is called signet.

43 „Focusing on the things means that we are interested in ready objects, and not in the conditions they were created in, materials used to produce them, where these materials came from, what technologies were used and how much energy was used in extraction of raw materials to make these materials. Determining the real performance of the technological process requires examination of a complex network of interdependence. The final product is just the tip of the iceberg.” – Z. Oksiuta, op. cit., p. 14.

44 „Evaluation of the performance is an art, not a science. And it refers to the measurement and modeling. When building a model, especially deciding which system features it should include and which should be skipped (usually it is impractical to include all the features), we have to rely heavily on intuition and not use rigorous methods. Unlike science, where we aim to get exact characteristics, here, we must recognize that the complexity of the system makes us include precision in practical limits of cost and time.” Charles H. Sauer, K. Mani Chandy, Computer Systems Performance Modeling, Englewood Cliffs 1981, s. 5, za: J. McKenzie, op. cit., s. 143.

45 The term „ring of organizations” should be understood as any non-heraldic rings, which symbolize membership of a particular group, organization, corporation, etc. An example of such rings may be, e.g. university rings, popular especially in the United States (e.g. the famous Brass Rat MIT), Scandinavian Examensringen (rings of gold with the appropriate engraving depending on the university and degree) or military rings worn by officers and soldiers of the armed forces. ([www.ekaton.salon24.pl/496591,bon-ton-krotkie-wyklady-o-dobrym-stylu-pierscienie-i-sygnety](http://www.ekaton.salon24.pl/496591,bon-ton-krotkie-wyklady-o-dobrym-stylu-pierscienie-i-sygnety)).



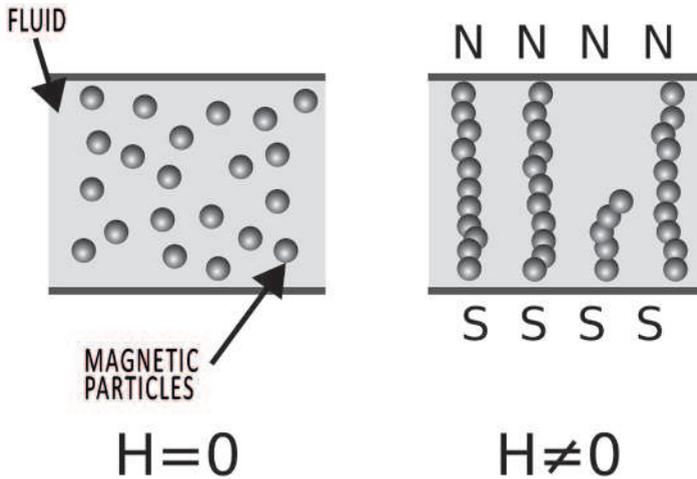
*Ring with the logo of the Shanghai Stock Exchange*

These rings are worn mainly by men, and they function as an attribute of power, social status and group belonging. Used both in the world of politics, military, economy, and culture and science, they illustrate a deep need for rituals existing in human behaviour.

Signet rings were placed in separate showcases where they are constantly exposed to a strong magnetic field. This field affects, introduced in the place of jewel, ferrofluid (magnetic liquid), which is one of the most widespread available intelligent substance. It is a liquid with magnetic properties belonging to the group of magnetorheological materials (MR) — changing density. It may change its viscosity under the influence of a magnetic field; it is a dispersion system consisting of the carrier in the form of a mineral or synthetic oil, where the ferromagnetic suspension is dispersed. Magnetic field may also change the temperature and pH of MR fluids<sup>46</sup>. In response to this stimulus, the ferrofluid gets organized in an orderly manner, forming a structure similar to the crystal. Hidden in the showcases, strong neodymium magnets are placed on a movable „platform”, whose micro-movements were coupled with the control device.

<sup>46</sup> Currently, there is no universal method of describing phenomena in MR fluids. However, there is a widespread view that the change in the mechanical properties is caused by directing of ferromagnetic particles and their formation of the slurry-like fibrils. This process is driven by the reduction of the local potential energy of the system. The orientation structure of the mixture in a magnetic field induces an increase in viscosity and shear strength. [after: [www.matint.pl](http://www.matint.pl)]

Adapting to the changes in this field, the smart material remains in a constant state of formation. DYNAMICS of these changes is determined (through programmed controller) by the value of the major indexes, of selected by me stock exchanges of the world, which in the form derived from the stock exchange, as a flowing sequence of numeric values is also presented in the gallery space (see photos). In this way, the form currently taken by one of the smart substances (ferrofluid), will be directly dependent on the activity of these other substances, i.e. the stock and society — that is, indirectly, all of us.



*The impact of magnetic field on the ferrofluid*

Interactivity of this situation is made present in many ways. The strength and specificity of „magnetic stimulus” of the installation can be controlled, both through daily shopping at the grocery store, our own work, holiday travel, and any investments, including those carried out directly on the stock exchange. If, however, this is an interactive installation, the question is: „If?”, „How?” Or „Where?” is INTERFACE placed? What is it like? What is its character? Is it just that strange, oily, vibrating liquid? Or simply a sequence of digits flowing on screens and monitors?

This question will get little vague answer, because I am of the opinion that the truly interactive work has a processual not objective nature, and although in many cases it is mainly based on the method and language of communication, the same development of the language and how to conduct interaction with the artifact is not ultimately the most important. Among the many concepts and definitions regarding interactivity, put forward by contemporary researchers, my views are closest to the theory of Richard Kluszczyński, who writes that „Only

then, [...] when the work is different both from the artifact and the interface, when it is not entirely a product of the artist, it can achieve interactive nature. Recipient interactor through the interaction with the artifact, taking place through the use of the interface, brings the work to existence"<sup>47</sup>.

However, can my Loop can be understood as responsive environment<sup>48</sup>? I think that it certainly can be — especially due to the fact that, ultimately, any financial income (from the presentation of work, the possible sale or other forms of income), which could this specific installation bring, will be used to purchase shares of one of investment funds. I'm very curious to know, what could, cited by me Joseph Beuys, say about it. After all, he postulated: „I would like the rule of art and the economic principle to overlap. But then the economic principle will be the concept of art, and the principle of art will become an economic concept"<sup>49</sup>.

*Loop* also involves the polemic with the wider value of art — whether it's purely aesthetic, whether it's sentimental, and ultimately historical or economic. I start lasting and cyclically repeated ritual, which, depending on the definition of the created situation, can be understood every time a little differently; which combines in its structure already recalled three types of performance<sup>50</sup>. I am initiating EVENT, where you can find many COLLISIONS occurring between conflicting or opposing attitudes or behaviors — many limit states, with desire to cross not suggested by me after all. I leave the decision to others and I would like them to take the responsibility for it.

---

47 R.W. Kluszczyński, *Spółeczeństwo informacyjne, cyberkultura, sztuka multimedialna*, Kraków 2001 p. 99.

48 „Responsive environment is - according to the American artist, Myron W. Krueger, considered the godfather of virtual reality - the one in which the computer receives user actions and responds to them in a thought - over way through complex visual and acoustic systems, and adapts to the new environmental conditions obtained in this way.” - M. Pisarski, Myron W. Krueger and Virtual Reality after: [www.techsty.art.pl/hipertekst/cyberprzeestrzen/krueger.html](http://www.techsty.art.pl/hipertekst/cyberprzeestrzen/krueger.html).

49 J. Beuys, op. cit., p. 92.

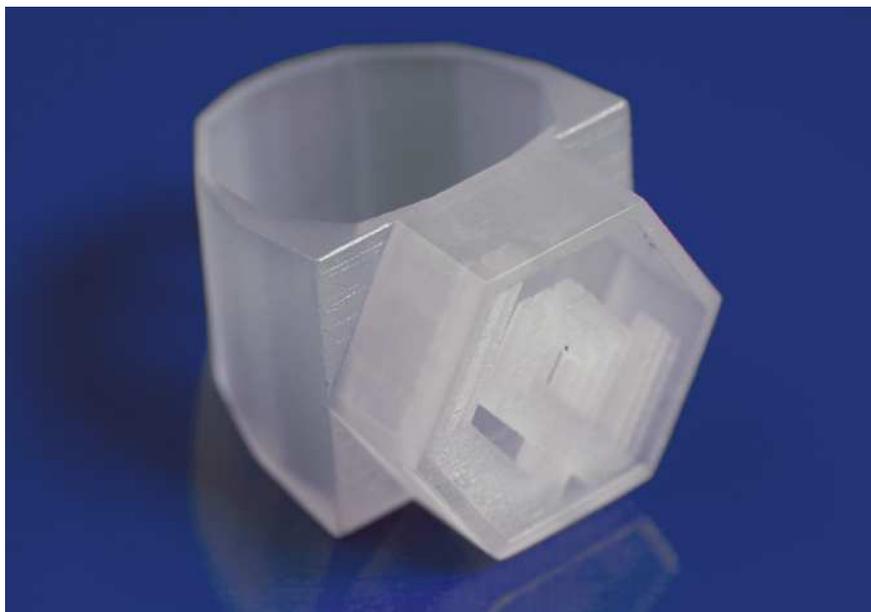
50 „The peculiar loop combines meta rites of passage, feedback and rockets (or the stock exchange in my case) - and connects through them the paradigms of performance studies, performative management and technoperformance - with corresponding challenges of efficiency, effectiveness and ability” - J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 173.

---

On the following pages:  
Tomasz Drewicz

*Loop*

documentation of the exhibition in the SIŁOWNIA Gallery, Poznan 2014  
interactive installation  
mixed media (wood, plexiglass, **ferrofluid**, stock exchange indices, mechanical parts)



---

at the top - ring with the logo of the Warsaw Stock Exchange  
at the bottom - logo of the Warsaw Stock Exchange

on the right - the ring with ferrofluid during the exhibition at the SIŁOWNIA Gallery - Poznan 2014

AMAZON





---

at the top - ring with the logo of the New York Stock Exchange

at the bottom - logo of the New York Stock Exchange

on the right - the ring with ferrofluid during the exhibition at the SŁOWNIA Gallery - Poznan 2014



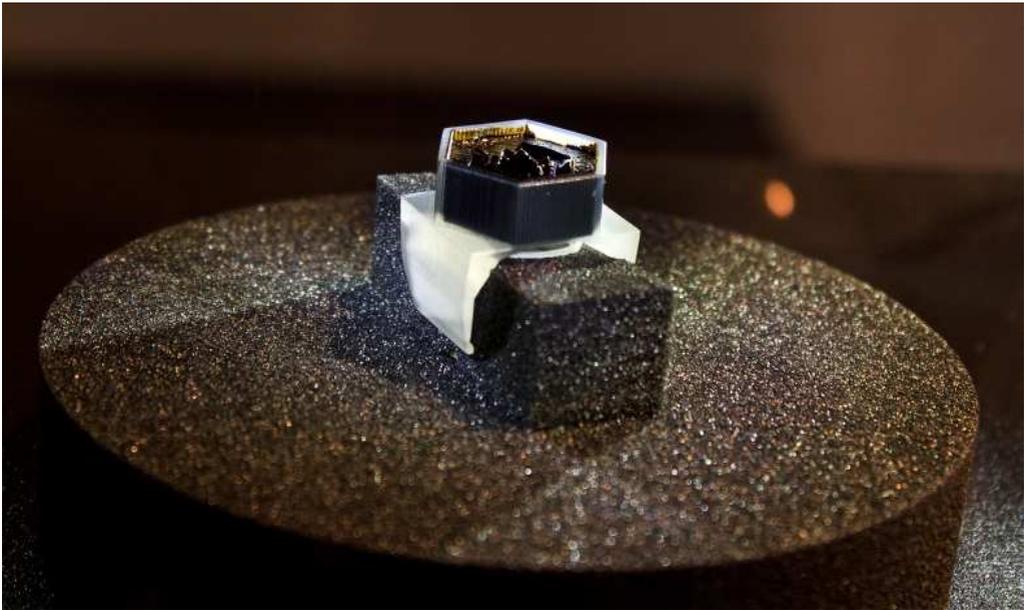


---

at the top - ring with the logo of the Shanghai Stock Exchange  
at the bottom - logo of the Shanghai Stock Exchange

on the right - the ring with ferrofluid during the exhibition at the SIŁOWNIA Gallery - Poznan 2014







SHANGHAI









## *Be right back*

When, after closing my doctorate, I was slowly preparing to work on another project, once again in my adult life I „encountered death”<sup>51</sup>. Within a few months, two very important and extremely close to me persons passed away. That rich in emotion experience has led me to reflections on topics related to the mundane world, faith, love and PRESENCE. Without falling into sentimentality, I decided to address these issues in my next work, obviously based on the experience from the *Loop*.

Prof. Antoni Porczak was one of the reviewers of my doctoral dissertation, whose large part was quoted in the previous chapters. Referring to the theoretical part of my dissertation, he aptly notes that: „Performativity is the leading notion [in it — TD] presented as a global mechanism of action of the world, which seems to have replaced the old *panta rei* of Heraclitus, as a principle of being in constant motion of transformation”. Therefore, if a fundamental PRINCIPLE of the functioning of the world, and thus of life lies in this DYNAMICS, i.e. remaining in constant motion, and consequently the exchange of energy, then the temperature CHANGE is the most obvious result of the operation. Similarly, if we imagine a system of bodies or particles remaining at rest (which is of course possible only as a theoretical model), its ABSENCE will be the most characteristic phenomenon for it.

At this point I would like to recall two short quotations from the popular dialogue which (supposedly) was conducted by Albert Einstein with his unbelieving professor of philosophy. He says: „Any substance or item are subjected to the study when they have the energy or are its source. [...] Cold is only a word that we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. The heat is measured in units of energy, because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, cold is the absence of it”<sup>52</sup>.

Later in the conversation he continues his reasoning in this way: „To say that death is the opposite of life is to ignore the fact that death does not exist as a measurable phenomenon. Death is not the opposite of life, but its absence”<sup>53</sup>.

Presented by young Einstein view; a reference to death, looking at it through the prism of CHANGE in temperature seemed to me wildly interesting. As we know, „the heat (as a physical quantity) determines the amount of internal energy exchanged between bodies, which are not in thermal equilibrium (i.e., have different temperatures). Such exchange of internal energy can cause temperature

---

51 Death (Lat.. *mors, exitus letalis*) - a condition characterized by the cessation of vital signs, caused by irreversible functional imbalance and the collapse of the internal organization of the system.

52 After: [www.fronda.pl/a/dialog-einsteina-z-niewierzacym-profesorem-przeczytaj-koniecnie,42977.html](http://www.fronda.pl/a/dialog-einsteina-z-niewierzacym-profesorem-przeczytaj-koniecnie,42977.html).)

53 Ibidem.

changes of bodies in thermal contact (heating, cooling). Body temperature may remain constant if the body undergoes phase of transition. E.g. heat absorption by the ice, causing its melting or heat emission by the water, causing its freezing. Both processes take place without changing the temperature. The heat flow causes a change in the environment of chaotic motion of molecules<sup>54</sup>.

Thermochromic paint, which was already mentioned in the introduction, is the substance, which obviously refers to the issues addressed by me. It belongs to a group of smart materials that are changing color. These are compounds having thermochromic property, namely the ability of reversible color change under the influence of temperature changes<sup>55</sup>. At this point, I will not explain in detail the principle of operation of thermochromism. It would be very difficult, especially due to the fact that this phenomenon has been observed in several types of substances and its mechanism of action is slightly different in each of them. Moreover, it is not necessary for the purposes of this publication.

However, I would like to pay attention to some very specific characteristics they possess. I mean, the ability of precise definition of temperature thresholds, above which this phenomenon occurs, and the fact that — except for the change of color - also the transparency of paint produced in this way can be affected. These qualities enabled me to create a situation in which PROCESS of multiple, cyclic transition from the state of transparency to the opaque state, was a major, formal and theoretical layer in the design of artistic realization.

To take the best advantage of these properties, I needed to find a base that would ensure the most EFFICIENT operation of this specific matter. It was also necessary to create conditions that allow to influence this PROCESS in a noticeable and controlled manner. Important factors that determined the choice of the other components of the work included already mentioned transparency and the so -called thermal conductivity<sup>56</sup>. Glass and water proved to be the best materials for the realization of my intentions. Their use also developed the theoretical background with contexts of other properties belonging to them.

According to already cited by me Zbigniew Oksiuta: „Water is the universal solvent of the planet. It enables communication, the flow of information, energy and matter at different scales and in a wide spectrum. Water is, at the molecular level, a major component of living cells, in the human scale it enables to cook

54 After: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org).

55 After: [www.matint.pl](http://www.matint.pl).

56 Thermal conductivity - the ability of the substance to conduct heat. Under the same conditions, more heat will flow through the material with high thermal conductivity. Thermal conductivity is a characteristic of the substance in the state of aggregation and its phase. For non-homogeneous material it is dependent on their structure, porosity, and the like properties. In the technique for small temperature ranges, it is assumed that the thermal conductivity does not depend on the temperature - however in reality such a relationship exists. Metals are the substances best conductive heat, gases are the lowest conductors.

[after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

daily meals, and in the scale of the planet — international communication and transport of goods around the globe<sup>57</sup>. In addition, it constitutes about 65 percent of the volume of human body, and almost 80 percent of the volume of the brain. Paraphrasing slightly the words of Albert Einstein: the absence of water means DEATH, i.e. ABSENCE OF LIFE.

\*\*\*

At the exhibition titled *Be right back*, realized in spaces of AT Gallery in Poznan, several separate realizations were presented, which, however, it should be clearly emphasized, formed a coherent whole. In addition to the object made of glass and presented video materials, it was also a performance activity made during the vernissage. The lighting and the interior of the gallery itself were very important aspects. Cold and sterile basement rooms were almost perfect for addressing issues interesting to me.

The main part of the exhibition included the installation of modules created from lacquered, black wooden modules and corresponding glass cases. They were arranged in the form resembling a tombstone. (See photos on the following pages). Professional headlights for museum objects were used to provide proper illumination for glass elements. They have the function of precise framing of luminous flux. With this, I achieved the illusion of light emitted by the object itself, and the effect of overlapping of shadows thrown through the glass panes.

The specialist paint manufacturer provided me with paint which gets changed from black to transparent, and the CHANGE occurs exactly when the material exceeds the predefined threshold temperature of 36.6 ° C. This value is recognized in Poland as the temperature of a healthy human body<sup>58</sup>. I used this particular paint to cover seven glass square plates with a side length of 40 cm. They were used in the two video works created for the project needs.

In the first one, we can observe how the glass plate coated with a layer of black paint is topped with a plenty of hot water. This results in the rapid transition to a state of transparency. Then the film shows the slow PROCESS in which — as a result of the cooling of the system of these three matters — paint again becomes black and opaque. The whole process is recorded on a white background from the top and framed to square form. However, this very simple in the visual form

---

57 Z. Oksiuta, op. cit., p. 10.

58 The temperature of the human body largely depends on the location of measurement, time of day and level of activity of the person. Contrary to popular belief, there is no single, constant temperature of the body for all individuals. Once it was thought that the average temperature (measured in the mouth) of a healthy adult is 37 ° C. The normal temperature ranges from 36.1 ° C to 37.8 ° C. In Poland and Russia, the temperature measured in the armpit. In these countries, the 'ideal' temperature was thought to amount to 36.6 ° C and a normal temperature ranging from 36 ° C to 36.9 ° C. [after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

material has a number of possible planes of interpretation. Except for those related to those substances, I would like to point one more, namely the reference to the work of Kazimierz Malewicz<sup>59</sup>, where *Suprematist Composition. White on white*<sup>60</sup> it is considered to be his greatest achievement.

The second video presents looped, lasting several seconds, scene in which an anonymous figure, standing barefoot on one of the plates steps out and then steps on it again, exactly in the same place. By doing this Sisyphean task, he, every time reveals or hides the traces of his feet, left by emission of the heat. This work was presented in the form of a projection directed at the ceiling, which in the case of AT Gallery, is a vaulted ceiling made of exposed brick.

The last element in the exhibition includes seven glass plates that are stacked on the floor in a circle. On one of them, a stylized, metal pot filled with water was placed and small candles used in heaters to the dishes were pushed underneath. It was a SCENE where the performance accompanying the exhibition was to take place.

The activity was entitled *Mandatum* (lat. order, commandment) and refers to the ritual of washing of the feet, which in the Roman Catholic Church is associated with the Last Supper, the liturgy of Maundy Thursday and Christ's commandment of love („*Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos*” — I give you a new commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you). But what is very important is the fact that this tradition is also present in many other cultures and religions of the world.

Standing barefoot on one of the glass plates, dressed in black and equipped with a white towel placed on my forearm, I was waiting for the opening of the exhibition. People entering the gallery space were greeted by me with the words: „I invite you... I invite barefoot.” After a while, when a large number of people has already gathered, reciting my mantra, I began to point with my hand to the other black squares. Shortly after my request, the first person stood on one of them, after taking off the shoes and socks. Kneeling in front of my „visitor”, I poured warm water from the bowl to his feet. Then I dried them gently with a towel and saying „Thank you.” I returned to my seat. This situation was repeated until all available hot water was used.

<sup>59</sup> Kazimir Malevich, (b. February 11? / 23, 1879 in Kiev, d. May 15, 1935 in Leningrad) - Russian painter, teacher, communist philosopher, art theorist, the Russian government official of Polish origin or nationality. A leading avant-garde artist, the founder of suprematism. [...] One of the most important representatives of the official culture of the Russian and Soviet years 1917-1935. His work had a significant impact on the development of the international avant-garde, including the Polish avant-garde of the 20th century. He was a presage of minimalists. [after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)].

<sup>60</sup> Malevich was one of the first artists to break with the presentation of the visible world. In the picture *White on white* you can see how he moves limits of abstraction. White form glides on the white space at the threshold of visibility, and the color is minimized, though still present. [after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

Each time when I stepped out from my square to make the ritual, traces of my feet were left behind. Similarly, each person who decided to take part in the proposed by me ritual, left a glass pane revealing their traces, which, however, were shown in the negative. Water that was washing their feet, was in fact warmer than the temperature of their body so it reacted with the surface of the glass much faster. After the activity was over, all the squares, at a different pace, returned to their original, black and opaque state.

Thus, using various media, I constructed situation which again, though in quite a different way, uses the principle of the loop. I think — although it is a very personal and one-time statement — it also creates an enormous scope for interpretation, regardless of whether the recipient takes into account the sense of applied to its construction material or not. It asks very fundamental questions. Those that I consider to be the most important concern areas related to the presence, temporality, transience and the need to adapt to change. According to brilliant astrophysicist Stephen Hawking<sup>61</sup> this is the ability that testifies about, evoked by me repeatedly, intelligence.

Paradoxically, despite the great adaptability of our species, death — that is the one and only, one hundred percent certain situation, which with no doubt we will encounter — is the most difficult for us to accept. Perhaps because each encounter or, in other words, COLLISION, generates MEDIATED EVENT, which never touches us directly. It is outside of us and the only thing we can do to this phenomenon, is to helplessly watch it. Developing these and previously raised contexts, at this point I will recall at this point the words of another thinker, i.e. G. Ch. Lichtenberg<sup>62</sup>, who in his papers included such thought:

„Death is of a constant value, only pain is of a variable value that can grow infinitely”<sup>63</sup>

---

61 **Stephen William Hawking** (b. January 8, 1942., Oxford) - British astrophysicist, cosmologist, theoretical physicist. Hawking is suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, which advanced paralysis affected most of his body.

62 **Georg Christoph Lichtenberg** (b. July 1, 1742 in Ober-Ramstadt near Darmstadt, d. February 24, 1799 in Göttingen) - German satirist, aphorist, art critic and well-known Anglophile. A representative of the Enlightenment. From 1770 he was a professor of mathematics and natural sciences at the University of Göttingen. German creator of experimental physics and one of the most outstanding representatives of the German aphorisms. There was published, among others, *Bemerkungen vermischten Inhalts* (1800-1806). In Poland, *Aphorisms* (1970) and *In Praise of doubt* (2005).- Source of definition: Wikipedia – Wolna encyklopedia.

63 After: [https://pl.wikiquote.org/wiki/Georg\\_Christoph\\_Lichtenberg](https://pl.wikiquote.org/wiki/Georg_Christoph_Lichtenberg)



  
UL.SOLNA 4 PL 61-735 POZNAŃ  
galeriaat@wp.pl www.galeria-at.siteor.pl  
UNIWERSYTET ARTYSTYCZNY W POZNANIU



**TOMASZ DREWICZ**  
**Zaraz wracam**  
***I'll be back soon***

otwarcie wystawy 16.03.2015 o godz. 18.00  
wystawa czynna do 27.03.2015 w godz. 15-18

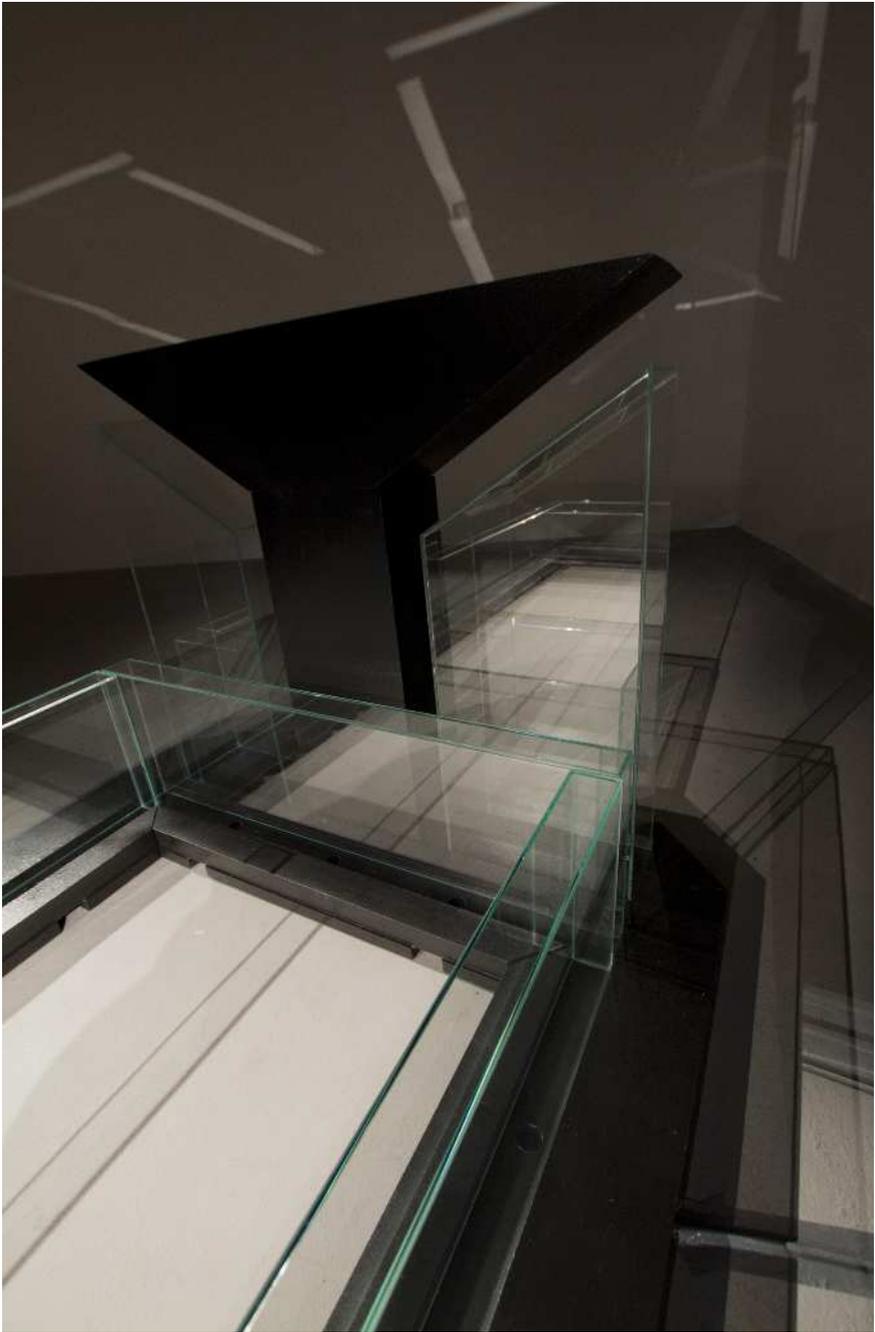
opening of the exhibition March 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 6.00 p.m.  
the exhibition will be open till March 27<sup>th</sup> 2015 3-5 p.m.

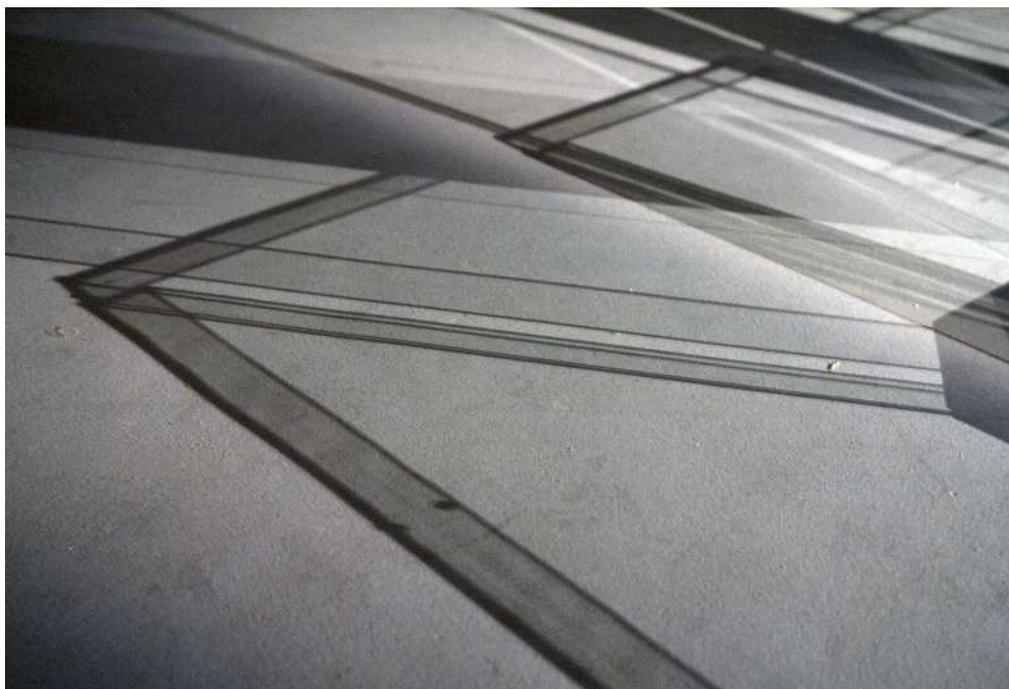
 

Above  
flyer from the exhibition *Be right back*  
AT Gallery, Poznan 2015

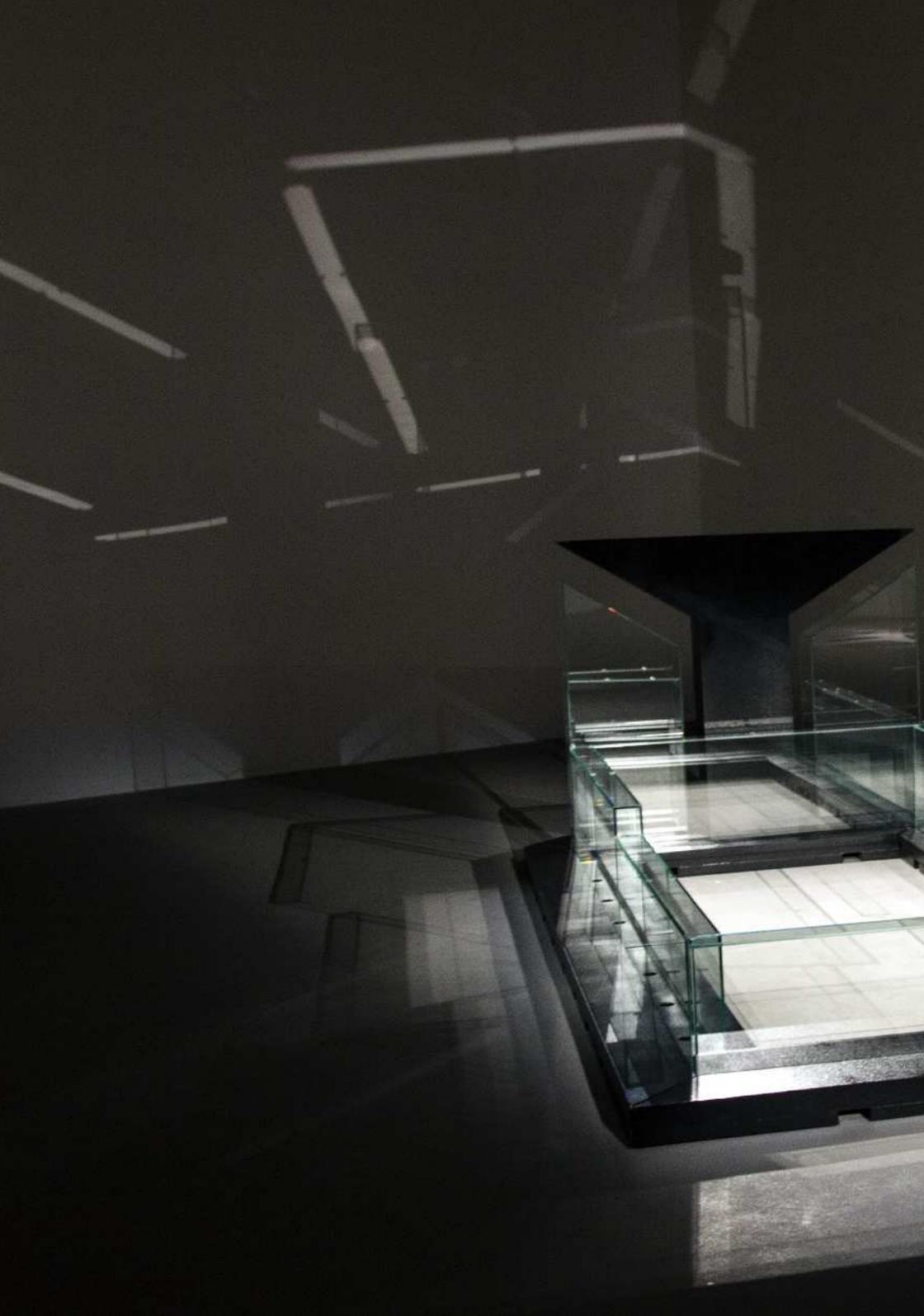
On the following pages:  
**Tomasz Drewicz**  
***Be right back***  
documentation of the exhibition in the AT Gallery, Poznan 2014  
installation and performance  
mixed media (wood, glass, termochromic paint, water, paint, video)

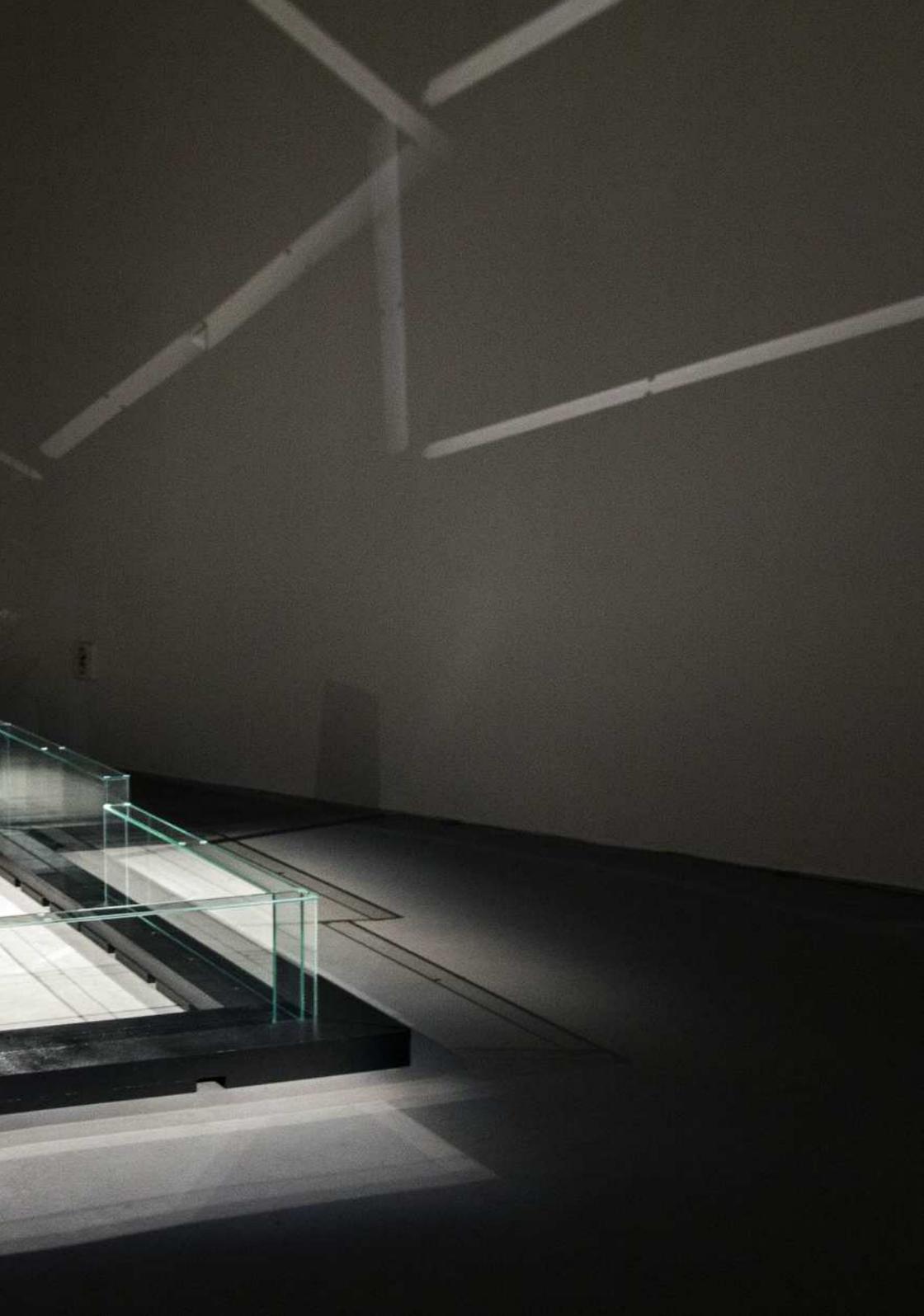




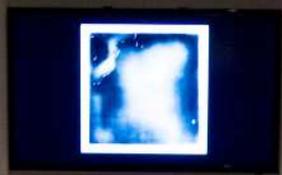




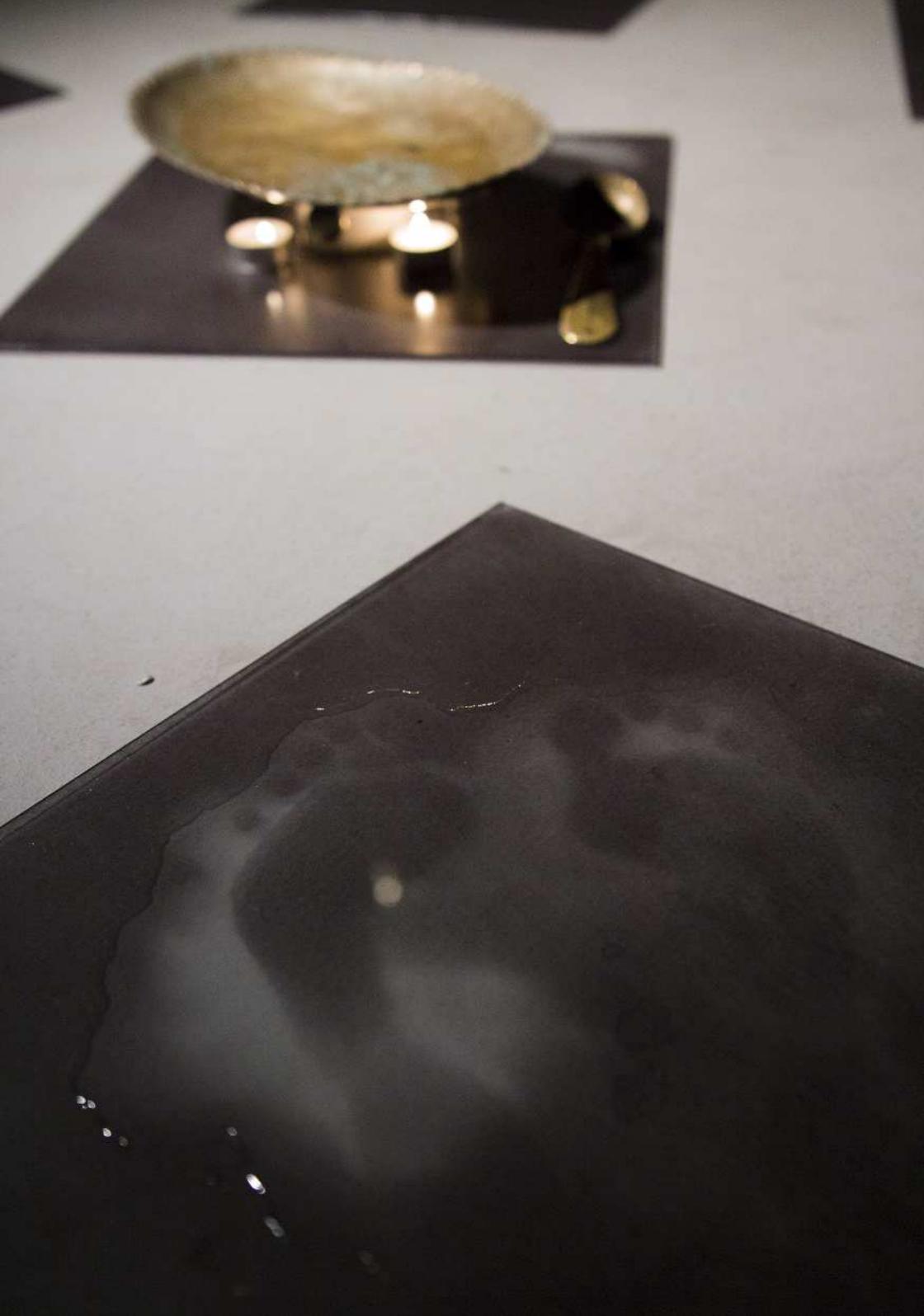














\*\*\*

Both projects that were described at the beginning of this part were the result of months of work — conscious and reliable analysis of the essence of selected substances. At that time, I made decisions regarding both applied formal solutions, and the choice of the dominant content of the work, subject to constant change. Therefore, I find it difficult to clearly answer the question of whether their inherent meanings have been found by me before, during or after their final completion. From my point of view, this is not so important. There is no doubt that they were there all the time and patiently waited for the discovery. Much more important to me is that getting aware of the role of PROCESS that must occur to reach them.

I believe that every issue or the concept should be EXCITED, MOVED and inspired with personal meanings (even though they are already stuck in them). Only then will we be able to draw conclusions from the considered issues and absorb the answers that are found so that they could generate more questions and desire for further exploration of the topic. Realizing this fact, I decided to look from this perspective also at my previous projects and then reconstruct my way of thinking. I noticed that — even though they were built on a completely different principle, and my approach to the act of creation was much more impulsive and intuitive — I can easily find some specific evidence in them, showing the approach shaped at that time, both towards my own creative activity and art in general.

Therefore, later in this book I will refer to these works, which in my opinion provide equally interesting field for analysis, and in addition they show that both the approach to the substance used, and performative look at the art already were very close to me.



## *Critical distance*

Homogenized cheese was one of the first substances which I treated in a similar manner. It was, however, many years before I hit upon the idea of using smart material in my work. When I focused on the widely understood globalization, the delicacy of my childhood was not only obvious but simply a natural choice. In a direct way it would refer to the areas of interpretation related to the issue of homogenization of culture<sup>64</sup>, I was very interested in. Then my attention was drawn by the attitude of Karl Mannheim, who recognized this PROCESS as a sign of „LOSS OF DISTANCE’, realized on the social ground”<sup>65</sup>. I did like such an approach to the problem, because it gave me the opportunity to respond to these issues in the field of spatial relationships using the substance that was this tasty dessert.

The title „critical distance” is a term used to describe the distance between individuals of different species, where crossing the distances results in aggressive behavior of one of them. It is a form of defense, which occurs as a result of a victim being trapped by a predator in a way preventing the escape, hence it is also called „distance of absolute defence”. This term was taken from the book *Hidden Dimension* by Edward T. Hall, in which he analyzes, among other things, spatial human behavior. I decided to mix these two ideas.

My action was based on creating an oppressive situation of pushy shortening the distance between people — in this case between the artist and the audience. The performance was started by an ostentatious pouring of a few packages of homogenized cheese on a wooden square board with a side length of about one meter. Then I picked it up and holding it in front of me (a clean side out), I started a brisk walk towards the audience gathered in the hall. After a while, I met the first person and our COLLISION caused that I was forced to hug the dirty cheese

---

64 Homogenization of culture (gr. omogenem - uniform) - the process of unification of culture in the area of a given society, by mixing two different cultures, characterized by the fact that the cultural elements begin to completely conform to each other, e.g. customs, fashion, way of writing of articles in the press, content, etc. Usually a big impact on the homogenization of culture comes from the dominant culture, which in a small part assimilates the cultural elements of the environment in which it dominates, and greatly influences the development of cultures within its range. Homogenization is opposed by movements that are countercultural. Homogenization covers patterns, awareness, behavior, values. Homogenization is largely a consequence of the development of mass production of goods and massification of symbolic culture and the commercialization of the world. [after: Wikipedia . Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

65 „Our modern culture is characterized by a radical negation of distance, both in social relations, and in the field of culture. The field of our experience tends to assume a homogeneous character without former hierarchical gradations distinguishing phenomena as „higher” and „lower”, „sacred” and „secular”. In all the previous centuries such divisions permeated all phenomena. Homogenization of field of experience is not just a matter of a scientific approach. We can also observe it in everyday life (...) A similar trend exists in art and philosophy (...) the world of presented objects is homogenized.” K. Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Culture*, London 1956, p. 227-228; (Sketches written in the early thirties) after: A. . Kłosowska, *Homogenizacja*, w: *Antropologia kultury*, Warszawa 2001, p. 417.

board. Pushing between the people, I was directed by them, not knowing where I was going. Eventually, I was „expelled” by the audience back to the center of the room, where standing back to the people, I dropped this increasingly weary board.

The spectators were convinced that this was the end of action. Then I turned around, showing my dirty face, and, opening my arms, again I headed in their direction, trying once again to shorten the distance separating us (this time without holding the obstacle in front of me). Fearing for their clothes the audience parted in front of me or outstretched their arms to keep the distance. However, after some time I managed to find a person who has taken the challenge. One of the girls, watching my struggle, decided to take me in her arms, taking on part of „my dirt”. In this way, two people (substances) got united in a warm embrace, which under normal conditions would probably never happen.

\*\*\*

Generated in this case EVENT presents in an interesting way the principle of the FEEDBACK, which occurs constantly on the plane of interpersonal contacts and, which is so natural that we hardly notice it. Each, present in the room person, could, at any moment, be dragged on the stage of action and quickly, from an OBSERVER, enter the role of the PARTICIPANT, and then quickly withdraw from that. The process of deciding how to act, occurred in some cases more, in others much less consciously. But what is extremely important is the fact that any such CHANGE led to updating the SYSTEM, again affecting its state (see p. 31).

The reactions of the audience during the action revealed a number of common and fundamental to our species types of BEHAVIOUR. We are inherently malicious, suspicious and intolerant, especially when something is strange and unknown. Despite the declared openness and hospitality, it is difficult to open our minds, hearts, and as it turned out, shoulders too. On the other hand, we are capable big sacrifices if only we do it in the name of our own beliefs and to accomplish our goals. In certain cases, we are able to persuade others to our point, even if we are overwhelmed by different opinions. However, to accomplish this we needed great determination and faith in the rightness of our actions. So we have to practice these skills all the time, without ceasing our work on overcoming our own weaknesses.

According to repeatedly cited by me Jon Mc Kenzie, a function of the performance culture is a particular set of actions aimed to CHANGE social norms. The situation created by me, although carried out for other reasons, on another ground and on a different scale, was also eventually to lead to highlighting some natural human behavior, and then touch a social taboo indicated in that way. My goal was to draw attention to the fact that the meeting with a DIFFERENT ONE is inevitable, and depending on what point of view we choose, this can be used both

---

for noble and nefarious purposes. I believe that especially today, in the face of the contemporary crisis of migration, any initiative that can help us deal with these issues in a peaceful, non-aggressive way, is desperately needed.

---

On the following pages:

**Tomasz Drewicz**

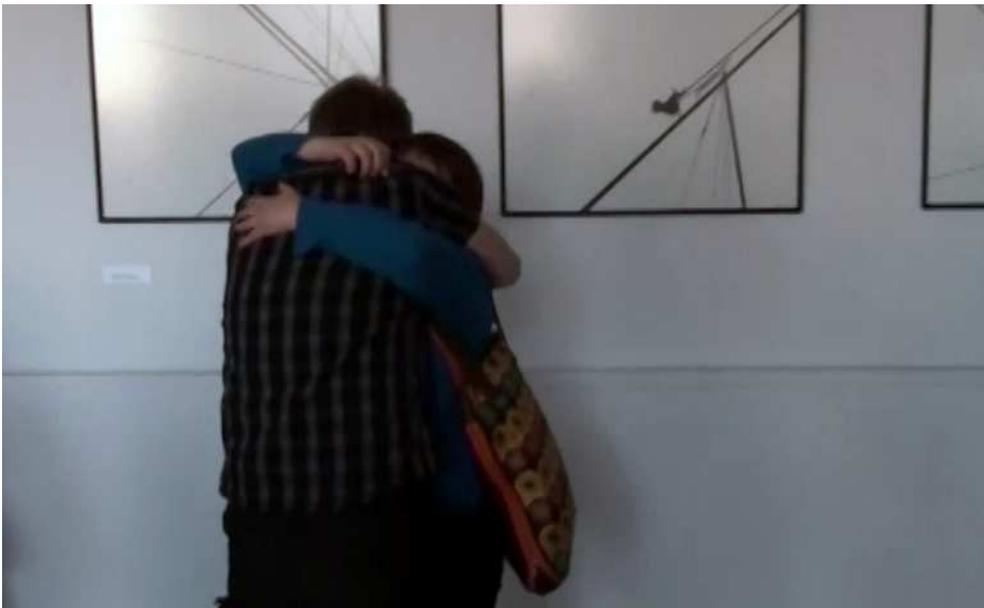
*Critical distance*

stills from the video documentation of a performance  
Aula of the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław, 2011











## *Dissemination of patriotic content*

In 2009, intensive preparations for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederic Chopin were under way all over Poland. A year earlier, Polish Parliament and Senate decreed that the year 2010 would be named the Year of Chopin. On the occasion of this jubilee, many Polish cities and institutions were obliged to organize cultural events to promote the work of the greatest Polish composer. I received the invitation to participate in the meeting „With art to art” organized in the Polish Sculpture Center, whose subject was the life and work of the master.

The host of the meeting, prof. Janusz Bałdyga was then one of the representatives of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute. It is a state institution established by the Polish Parliament, whose tasks include, among others: the organization of concerts, conferences and courses, popularization of knowledge about the composer, control over the use of his image and name and protection of his heritage. I became interested in whether and how it meets its statutory tasks. There were obvious questions about how the protection of this heritage will be carried out? Where, in this case, is the border between what is allowed and what is prohibited? Does the control refer to every performance of works by Chopin; any use of his image? Or the intervention is undertaken only when there are certain circumstances?

Of course, the answers to these questions can partly be found in the contents of the Act and regulations issued by the Institute. These vague provisions are not in any way comprehensive. Like other regulations, they are only very general arrangements, the social contract, which may be CHANGED any time. This conclusion made me realize that I can treat these and other provisions as a sculpture material. So in order to get to work, I had to ask another question, namely: what characterizes this substance? How does the law constituted by us function? How it PERFORMS?

If, during a street survey, we would ask respondents about what kind of law we should have, we would surely get a number of answers, but could be combined under one common denominator — it should be primarily EFFECTIVE. It is a statement which suggests that the most appropriate way to analyze this substance is to look at it through the prism of its technological performance. Referring to what I wrote in the first part (see p. 23), we come to the simple conclusion that it is not possible to learn some general principle of law, as first we are forced to define the situation in which the law would be applied. This creates a large area where it is possible to manipulate the data collected, and consequently it leads to the possibility of different interpretations of the same provisions. So we can say that the law is a FLUID, which continuously adjusts its SHAPE to the dish it is placed in.

On 3 February 2001, the Law on the Protection of the heritage of Fryderyk Chopin was enacted. It concludes in the first article that „the works of Frederic Chopin and objects associated with it constitute the national, specially protected wealth” and „name of Frederic Chopin and his image are protected, respectively, according to the rules on personal rights”. In this way his life’s work has been legally classified as Polish, and belonging to all Poles. Knowing the biography of the famous composer, I imagined how he might react to that information. I do not think he would be pleased with this fact, and his rage, would certainly be intensified by his powerlessness against this state of affairs.

In my work, I decided to refer to, among other things, this very idea. I used a finished object, which was an old, battered fridge of Russian production. The interference involved placing a device inside the machine, which at the start of cooling would produce the music — it was the Waltz a-moll by Frederic Chopin, which I found on YouTube<sup>66</sup> performed by music high school student. The recording was heard only when the compressor is running. At the same time the compressor deafened the music. Plaster casts of hands arranged in a gesture of frustration, anger or rebellion placed inside the fridge were to refer to impetuous character of the composer. The work was exhibited in the open air, in the Oronsko Park Centre of Polish Sculpture surrounded by snow-covered sculptural works. The simple shape of the refrigerator adjacent to the abstract, stone forms and depriving its core utility function emphasized the grotesque, surreal character.

The title of this realization is the result of the transformation of the article 256 of the Criminal Code, which says that: „Whoever publicly promotes a fascist or other totalitarian system of state or incites hatred based on national, ethnic, racial, religious or due to lack of religious beliefs, shall be subject to a fine , restriction of liberty or imprisonment up to 2 years [...] The same penalty shall apply to anyone, who in order to DISTRIBUTE produces, preserves or imports, acquires, stores, possesses, presents, transports or transfers a print, recording or other object containing content specified in § 1 or being a carrier of fascist, communist or OTHER TOTALITARIAN symbols [emphasis - TD]<sup>67</sup>. What is very interesting, in the next paragraph we can read that: „The offender is not committing offense specified in § 2, if the offense was committed under the artistic, educational, collectible or scientific activity<sup>68</sup>”.

<sup>66</sup> YouTube is an Internet service founded in February 2005, which allows free posting, streaming, reviewing and commenting on videos. The website uses HTML5 and FLV to display a wide selection of videos posted by users (i.e. User-generated content), such as movie trailers or TV shows, videos and amateur works: video blogs and original short movies. [after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

<sup>67</sup> Cf. JoL 2016 item. 1137 - Proclamation of the Marshal of the Polish Parliament on 5 July 2016. On the announcement of the uniform text of the Act - the Penal Code, art. 256 § 1-2.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, art. 256 § 3.

---

The question remains how the legislative body understands this artistic activity? Where are the limits of FREEDOM for such statements? If we agree about the fact that today the creation of its definition is no longer possible or that the artistic creation can involve any human activity (not necessarily even having the productive character) — does the formation of this type of regulation make any sense? Is the work of Frederic Chopin, emitted from the interior of an old, dirty and smelly refrigerator, subject to legal protection?

I feel a tremendous respect for any original acts of creation and at the same time I do hope that the context of the works of Chopin I am talking about is worthy enough and, without offending the patriotic feelings of his compatriots, does not bring reproach upon OUR heritage.

---

On the following pages

Tomasz Drewicz

*Dissemination of patriotic content*

Polish Sculpture Center, Orońsko 2009

audio installation

mixed technique (refrigerator, gypsum, mp3 player, a set of computer speakers,  
Waltz A minor of Frederic Chopin)











## *Tabula Rasa*

Mobile telephony appeared on the Polish telecommunications market only twenty years ago<sup>69</sup>. Today, no one seems to have any doubt that it was a real revolution. The pace of change in this field, and consequently also in the socio-economic area is really unbelievable. Few users are aware of the gap that separates us from the „pre-mobile” era. A theoretical reflection on these issues (as well as the reflection towards many other aspects of the rapidly changing world) also seems to be much delayed. As Ewa Wojtowicz writes, „Soon after the publication, the monographs seem to be a reminder of the rapid obsolescence of knowledge, they referred to”<sup>70</sup>.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this book, the fact that I had the opportunity to observe these extraordinary changes with my own eyes is extremely important to me. I think that especially in Poland, and probably in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well, this revolution took on a very symbolic character. Just recovered state sovereignty received another area to implement the sense of FREEDOM. This time, in a way directly concerning the citizen, and what needs to be very clearly emphasized, the consumer. After motorizing the country, thanks to the production on a mass scale of „Small Fiat” a cult vehicle today, and media market being entered by private, commercial television stations, it is the mobile phone to have been and still be a symbol of freedom and independence of the individual. Although nowadays, these goals are reached in completely different ways.

In 2009, shortly after I graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, no one could even suppose that what at that time was our peak of possibilities, actually was only the core of this great transformation. Then, it was the first time I had used this non-obvious matter in the project entitled *Tabula Rasa*, realized during the festival *Street Art* in Pszczyna. It consisted of the exhibition in the historic Park of Pszczyna, of painted in black and yellow stripes booth, with suspended packaging of SIM cards of one of the popular mobile phone networks. They were pre-charged with the starting amount of five PLN. In addition, a light alarm signal was installed under the roof, which got started by the motion sensor. Any attempt to pull the „gift” hanging inside the booth triggered a very specific interaction, signaled by a flashing light.

---

<sup>69</sup> The beginning of the telecommunications revolution in Poland was started exactly on 18 June 1992, when Centertel offered its services. It was, however, available only for the richest, and the telephones were heavy and bulky. Therefore, 1996 should be considered the real breakthrough in this area, when the race was joined by Era and Plus, and mobile phone service became available for almost every Pole.

<sup>70</sup> E. Wójtowicz, *Sztuka w kulturze postmedialnej*, Gdańsk 2016, p. 10.

The festival lasted about two weeks. At that time, both visitors and residents of Pszczyna could take the exhibited starters without any payment. The stock was completed by every few days. Finally, about thirty starters were collected. I put down their contact numbers prior to placing them inside the booth. A few days before the end of the festival — when all starters were already „in use” — I could begin the final phase of the project, which was an attempt to contact the new users. Every few hours I sent them brief, provocative text messages the so called SMS<sup>71</sup>. The whole procedure was intended to lead to our real meeting and a joint dinner in one of Pszczyna restaurants. For reasons unknown to me, my invitations, unfortunately, remained unanswered. I know, however, that they were delivered, because I received delivery reports from the operator



---

71 Short Message Service - a service to send short text messages in digital mobile networks.

Analyzing the project from today's perspective, I come to the conclusion that in this case I find a lot of analogies between the substances used. Then of course, I did not approach this challenge in such a particular way, but the manifestations of such treatment of material were probably already visible. The object as such, created for the project, its form and meaning, though not devoid of significance, played a secondary role here. Resembling a guard position booth was only a flashpoint — inviting to start the game and at the same time warning about the possible consequences of the game.

It was the realization intended to „break the ice” and create a network, level of communication between random people; create EVENT, so that the meeting with someone strange and unrecognized will cease to raise concerns and will be the source of joy and excitement — will be sought after and expected, like a class reunion or family celebration. The central point of that random network would take a form of a convivial table, gathering the guests invited by me and chosen by fate.

Cellphone operation is based on similar principle, as it consists of the entire infrastructure of linked regions (cells) that are controlled by each antenna of base station. They are the focal point of the cell. It is their range that is searched by a telephone, eager to get as close to the source as possible, since only then the connection quality is the best, and the energy consumption is the lowest.

Common eating a meal is our everyday ritual, but we do not always realize how deep and personal this experience is. However, the transfer of this rite from the secure area of hearth to an open social space was actually a big challenge, or it may be better to say a CLAIM. Perhaps, the fact that ultimately I failed to bring this project to the expected completion is the best proof of how important and pertinent questions it asked.

---

On the following pages:

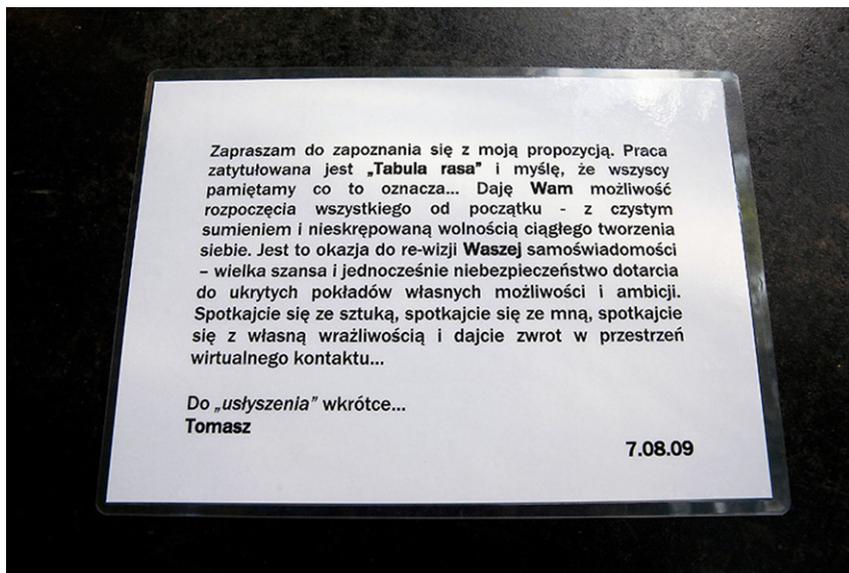
**Tomasz Drewicz**

*Tabula Rasa*

documentation of the Festival *Street Art*, Pszczyna, 2009

interactive installation

mixed media (wood, sim cards, warning light, motion sensor, **mobile phone networks**)











## *For sale*

Shortly after the festival in Pszczyna, as a young employee of Poznań Academy of Fine Arts, I received a proposal to participate in the exhibition organized by my Department of Sculpture and Spatial Action. This was a cross-sectional presentation of artistic attitudes of wider staff of the Department. It was to be exposed in the spaces of the building of Collegium Stomatologicum, that is the University Centre of Dentistry and Specialist Medicine held by the University of Medical Sciences in Poznań.

The building, which houses this institution is — due to its unusual body — undoubtedly one of the most distinctive architectural objects in Poznań. Its interior is interesting, but at the same time incredibly complex and unfriendly to organize an exhibition, as it is more like a hospital waiting room than the area suitable for the presentation of art. The very idea to leave, even for a while, clean and safe walls of the gallery, was then very appealing to me, but I had always thought that such a concept required the right attitude and understanding of explored space. So I decided to look into this problem and determine what was its best characteristic. Answer the questions: „How it WORKED?“, „How it PERFORMED?“. After reconnaissance, I knew that it would kill most of the presented works of sculpture. I was convinced that they would be absorbed by the surrounding space, and in the best case, the meanings generated by the space would be strongly suppressed.

I quickly came to the conclusion that in this particular case, COLLISION of exhibited works with the heavily saturated with meanings atmosphere of place and its ergonomics, should be embedded in some external context, and only from there a specific EVENT could be generated. Its absence will inevitably bring the impression of subservience of presented objects against the power and usability of the space. Basically, they will be treated strictly aesthetically.

Therefore, I decided to influence, in a somewhat humorous way, the process of reception of the entire exhibition by, paradoxically, further emphasizing accidental context of the decorative function of art. I took no interest in the problem of spatial or narrative relationships between particular works and between the works and the room in which they were exposed, but with reference to its nature, the transfer of the meaning of this presentation in simulated, commercial outer space.

The pole with plate hanging from it in the middle of the room alluded in its visual form to the signs that in the United States are stuck up in front of houses or plots, indicating that the property or land is offered for sale. The plate, apart from the big red sign „For sale“, contains also the information about the phone number. After selecting a designated number, the connection was made and it was diverted

to a voice mailbox<sup>72</sup> — free service offered by the mobile network operator. One of the features of this service is the possibility of leaving the user, pre-recorded by yourself, welcome information, encouraging the caller to leave a message. My intervention was to use precisely this mechanism. After dialing the number from the plate, you could hear information about the ongoing auction of works of art. The message spoken by a computerized voice generator was as follows:

A unique opportunity!  
Buy contemporary art!  
Say your offer after the beep.  
The auction will end in (sample number) days.

The messages from the mailbox were listened to by me every day, and the welcome information was updated. Therefore, random people, while visiting the exhibition could, by phone, take part in „organized” by me auction and show me how much they value the specific, selected „work”. In this manner, treating the work of my colleagues as a PRODUCT, I focused on PROCESS in my own implementation. Thanks to this operation, I could „go out” beyond difficult display reality of Collegium and replace it with another, external space, embedded somewhere between the real and the virtual world. As was rightly observed by already mentioned Ewa Wojtowicz: „The reality in which we move has a double connotation: it is material, but often depends on information technology. The division into the online and offline zone ceases to be radical, and social interactions are situated between these spaces”<sup>73</sup>.

---

72 Voice Mail - a service available in the networks of landline and mobile telephony. When subscribers do not answer the call, the callers can leave a message for them to listen to when they call to the specified number. [after: Wikipedia. Wolna encyklopedia – [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

73 E. Wójtowicz, op. cit., p. 21.



**FOR  
SALE**  
**BY OWNER**  
call now: +48 889 003 927

Tomasz Drewicz

*For sale*

documentation from the exhibition in Collegium Stomatologicum, Poznan 2011

interactive installation

mixed media (wood, digital printing, voicemail, mobile phone network)



## (+48)

Continuing the exploration of the substance, which is mobile telephony, in a project entitled (+48), I decided to refer to its predecessor, i.e. a network of wired phones. At that time, such phone was only present in the homes of our grandmothers, but even then, in many cases, the connections were not carried by cable, but by radio. What was most different about both these forms of providing telecommunications services, was the fact that in the case of a traditional network, the telephone was still assigned to the location, not the person, as it happens in the case of popular cellular phones. The most permanent, most definitely and most accurately defined in the area, were and still are open or cabin payphones called booths.

In 2010, in Poland there were as many as 45,000 telephone booths. As a result of the development of mobile services, or poor location of individual connection points, some of them were hardly ever used. A year later, the decision of the Office of Electronic Communications, according to which Polish Telecommunication was obliged to maintain unprofitable booths, was no longer valid. So the booths were gradually withdrawn. Since March 2013, the booths have been systematically disappearing. At the moment, we can find slightly more than 5,000 machines using the card (including phones in prisons, hospitals and other institutions).

Technological COLLISION triggered multi-track process, which will result or has already resulted in the total CHANGE of thinking about communication with other people and access to knowledge and information. However, in this particular project, I decided to address only the issues related to the place, time and presence.

As already indicated, the biggest difference between the two forms of communication is a change in terms of attachment to the place. What remains unchanged is the need to identify individual sets through their assigned number. In the case of fixed-line telephones, withdrawn numbers will probably disappear for good; they will be forgotten or blurred at least. This is quite different in the case of numbers of cellular network. Until recently, when a subscriber, due to the favorable conditions offered by other operators, wanted to change the network, he was forced to change the number of his telephone. It was one of the methods used by service providers to tie consumers to their offer, despite worse price conditions or poorer quality of service.

It was not before 2013, when thanks to the action of the Office of Electronic Communications, a legislation to facilitate the process of number transfer between operators was introduced in Poland. In accordance with the provisions of the Telecommunications Act, and then, thanks to the implementation of the relevant

regulation, number transfer became possible not only in one type of network, but also between these networks.

Although now, it is relatively easy to hold the number assigned to the user (even when changing service provider), its stability, due to the nature of the technology and the high popularity of the so-called prepaid cards<sup>74</sup> (often considered as temporary numbers), is still relatively short and its rotation among users is extremely high. This causes obvious complications, because, although released numbers are stored in the memory of our phones, they may already, from many months be outdated and assigned to a completely different person. On the other hand, such a situation is beneficial because it gives a chance to get out of the communication space, to disappear, to move to a new circle of acquaintances.

Currently, also the „prepaid mobiles” must be registered by the user, thus avoiding identification becomes difficult. In reality where the recognition is a fundamental issue, and the monitoring and tracking of all our actions, available through digital means, is extremely common, this bizarre situation poses an interesting question about FREEDOM gained through technology.

Title (+48) is an international telephone index<sup>75</sup> specifying the country in which the user number is active. In this case, it is of course the code assigned to Poland. This project is a long-term activity addressing the issues of quality and meaning of communication and the changes in the perception of these processes as a result of technological development. The photographs of telephone booths made during the travel are then printed as a postcard. Its reverse side indicates a contact number assigned to the booth, and these cards are sent on various occasions to friends, family or acquaintances, and to completely accidental people. In this way, these places are preserved in a form of memory transmitted via postcards. The series includes also one special postcard. The figure shown in would also really like to stay in one's memory.

---

<sup>74</sup> Prepaid - prepaid sale - the sale of certain goods or services on the basis of prepayment. [after: Wikipedia . Wolna encyklopedia - [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]

<sup>75</sup> Telephone country code. It is a one-, two- or three-digit code used for international phone calls to indicate the country of destination or the global telephone network (e.g. satellite), or global phone service. Country codes are allocated to individual countries, networks and services by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). [after: Wikipedia . Wolna encyklopedia - [www.pl.wikipedia.org](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org)]



*... 604 560 410*



*...(52) 805 00 70*



...(61) 804 50 60



...(52) 805 00 19



...(61) 804 51 14



## Instead of the end

Although the content of this publication recalls the examples of strictly performative activities, I deliberately omitted the analysis of unnecessary from my point of view, aspect of the activity of the CREATOR in shaping the content of the work. His physical presence for the duration of the action and the individual motivation. My goal is to focus primarily on the role of RECIPIENTS, which in contact with some EVENT, whose performance does not need to be considered in terms of artistic intention, they themselves construct their own definition of the situation and they are alone held responsible for the decisions or choices.

Therefore, at this point I would like to very clearly emphasize that my goal is not moralizing, just as the performative approach is not inherently evaluative. I do not want to give advice and guidance or express opinion on whether the choice is correct or incorrect. It is important for me that it was the most aware and the effects of the decisions taken — were not only absorbed, but understood. Only in this way, can we convince ourselves that there is such a thing as invoked by me several times freedom (or reality), though we can still say that it is of no interest to us from this point of view<sup>76</sup>. Our attention is drawn by RELATION and our OTHERNESS.

My another intention was to demonstrate the usefulness of the performative perspective as a research paradigm, which I think is the most appropriate to reflect on in-depth, so diverse, world of contemporary art (and not only). I think that living in a fluid reality, we need research methods with wider adaptation possibilities — especially if our interests are focused in the area of culture, suspended between the physical and the virtual world.

After all, we are not interested in the product, but in the PROCESS — the course of the interaction between what is material and what is agreed<sup>77</sup>, because „with the art achieving philosophical maturity, the visual aspect ceased to be equally unimportant to the essence of art as the beauty. The art to exist does not need any object suitable to watch, and if in the gallery there are some items that may look like anything in the world<sup>78</sup>. In my opinion it is not very important „whether art is still a significant and necessary way in which decisive truth occurs for our

---

76 „Our whole system makes liberation our duty, a moral order, which makes that it becomes difficult to distinguish coercion of liberation from” natural „desire „ natural „ need for freedom. It is obvious that everyone wants to be free from all forms of slavery, that everyone wants to be free from any form of coercion, whether it be physical, whether it's having its source in the law. It is a reflex so natural that now we now longer need the idea of freedom to exist ... - J. Baudrillard, Pakt jasności. O inteligencji Zła, Warszawa 2005, p. 40.

77 „Even if the” thing „is every time the same, each EVENT is different in which this thing participates. The uniqueness of each event depends not only on its materiality, but also on its interactivity - and interactivity is always something liquid ... - J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 113.

78 A.C. Danto, Po końcu sztuki. Sztuka współczesna i zatarcie się granic tradycji, Kraków 2013, p. 45.

historical existence, or it is not?"<sup>79</sup>. However, I believe it is extremely important it continued to exist, and the only condition that must now be met to accomplish this is to ACT - PERFORM.

\*\*\*

Jean Baudrillard in his *Lucidity Pact*, debating about the nature of Good and Evil, very quickly discredits the most important classical hypotheses about our existence. He undermines the legitimacy of our pursuit of FREEDOM, of learning TRUTH and defining REALITY. He describes the growing anxiety, whose source is perceived by him in, among other things, the upcoming final COLLISION with virtuality. He does not claim, however, that these aspirations are themselves useless. What he considers unnecessary, is looking for their deeper meaning.

The chapter entitled *Easiest Solutions* refers to Lichtenberg also referenced by me, who wrote: „We give shape to our actions a little like that of a magnet giving shape to iron filings”<sup>80</sup>, and he does this to confirm his own thesis, saying that: „All the great narratives of our individual consciousness, which relate to freedom, free will, identity and responsibility, join our ACTION — those which they HAPPEN TO BE — unnecessary, and even internally conflicting, additional conditioning, which is that we are the CAUSE, that they are the RESULT of our WANTING that our decisions are the result of our free will. ACTIONS DO NOT NEED THIS, there is no need to refer to the will and the ideas to be able to decide and act. There is no need to refer to the idea of free will, to make a self-determination in life. Above all, there is no need to refer to the idea of the subject and its identity in order to exist”<sup>81</sup>.

I must admit that it is difficult to reject this thesis, but it is even more difficult to accept the fact that completely nothing depends of us. The worst is the feeling of helplessness. Personally, I find solace in the act of creating — it is good that today it so widely understood.

---

79 A.C. Danto, op. cit., p. 65.

80 G.Ch. Lichtenberg, za: J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 47.

81 J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 46.





### Bibliography:

- Antropologia kultury*, Warszawa 2001.
- Art Moves 2009*, Toruń 2009.
- Bauman Zygmunt, *Globalizacja*, Warszawa 2000.
- Baudrillard Jean, *Pakt jasności. O inteligencji Zła*, Warszawa 2005.
- Beuys Joseph, *Teksty, komentarze, wywiady*, Warszawa 1990.
- Danto Arthur C., *Po końcu sztuki. Sztuka współczesna i zatarcie się granic tradycji*, Kraków 2013.
- Eliade Mircea, *Traktat o historii religii*, Warszawa 1966.
- Fischer-Lichte Erika, *Estetyka performatywności*, Kraków 2008.
- Fukuyama Francis, *Koniec człowieka*, Kraków 2004.
- Hall Edward T., *Ukryty wymiar*, Warszawa 2003.
- Jelewska Agnieszka, *Sensorium. Eseje o sztuce i technologii*, Poznań 2013.
- Kluszczyński Ryszard Waldemar, *Spółczesność informacyjna, cyberkultura, sztuka multimedialna*, Kraków 2001.
- Manovich Lev, *Język nowych mediów*, Warszawa 2006.
- McKenzie Jon, *Performuj albo... Od dyscypliny do performansu*, Kraków 2011.
- Obwieszczenie Marszałka Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 5 lipca 2016 r. w sprawie ogłoszenia jednolitego tekstu ustawy — Kodeks karny.
- Oksiuta Zbigniew, *Formy, procesy, konsekwencje*, Białystok 2007.
- Pisarski Mariusz, Myron W. Krueger i *Wirtualna Rzeczywistość* [
- Schechner Richard, *Performatyka. Wstęp*, Wrocław 2006.
- W stronę innego. Obserwacje i interwencje*, Katowice 2006.
- Wójtowicz Ewa, *Sztuka w kulturze postmedialnej*, Gdańsk 2016.



## Biography

Tomasz Drewicz — born 29/04/1982 in Oborniki Wielkopolskie. Artist, curator, critic and socio-cultural animator. In the years 2001 - 2005 student at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Architecture at the Poznan University of Technology. In the years 2004 - 2009 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań. Graduate of the Faculty of Artistic Education in two specializations: Art Promotion and Criticism and Art Pedagogy. Second range diploma in Sculpture in the studio of prof. Marcin Berdyszak. Since 2009, working at his alma mater as an assistant at VI Sculpture and Space Activity Studio. In 2014 obtained a Ph.D of Arts. The winner of scholarship „Młoda Polska” from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in 2010 and City of Poznan Art Scholarship in 2011. Participant in several group exhibitions at home and abroad. He publishes texts in Polish and foreign magazines. He lives and works in Poznań.

---

e-mail: [t.drewicz@gmail.com](mailto:t.drewicz@gmail.com)

web: [www.tomaszdrewicz.art.pl](http://www.tomaszdrewicz.art.pl)



This publication is the result of a research project titled: „Dynamic sculpture. (Virtual worlds, intelligent materials as an examples of contemporary sculptural matter.)” as a part of a research and development work contributing to the development of young scientists, funded by a grant awarded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, (edition 2015).

UAP | POZNAŃ



UAP | WRiDP



Uniwersytet Artystyczny w Poznaniu  
[www.uap.edu.pl](http://www.uap.edu.pl)  
Wydział Rzeźby i Działań Przestrzennych  
[www.wridp.pl](http://www.wridp.pl)  
ISBN 978-83-65578-20-4



Tomasz Drewicz is looking for forms where the liminal state is expressed in the field of art. That explains his interest in the process, evolution, performing, the dynamics of complex systems. It no longer has anything to do with the state of liquidity, blurry borders, but with the search for emerging structures, dependencies, processes of self-organization. He redefines/deconstructs the concepts of performance as the process generating a dynamic situation – EVENTS, where there is a constant COLLISION of different values, qualities and possible states. The changes introduced by them are a measure of the effectiveness of the event and the performance as a whole. Performing is a fundamental feature of our reality. This process, involves the concepts of 'BE' and 'CREATE' as inextricably linked. The author cites the theories of organicism of Herbert Spencer, democratic ideas of social sculpture by Joseph Beuys, and his understanding of sculpture as a process of transformation of amorphous material into the form. The work of Tomasz Drewicz undoubtedly refers to the conceptual and avant-garde attitudes of the twentieth century, but it takes place in completely different conditions designated by the information technology revolution.

dr hab. Joanna Hofmann-Dietrich

Prepared theoretical material is a broad background to explain own artistic intentions understood as 'EVENTS and COLLISIONS' and the circumstances of processing /performance/ instead of building a still object of sculpture. This kind of recognition, somewhat rare in artistic environment, can have a stimulating effect on the development of artistic discipline; concepts and terms freed from existing meanings let the reader enter the 'unstable ground' of intellectual considerations, which were described by the author, who had to deal with them himself.

prof. Antoni Porczak

