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Creative dialogue with the city. Arts and artists in the regeneration of public space

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Spis treści

Introduction

The new XVII volume of "Annales Universitatis Pedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia de Arte et Educatione," has been dedicated to the relationship between contemporary art and urban space.

Aware of the dynamics of revitalization processes, which we understand according to Polish legislation as the process of bringing degraded areas out of crisis through integrated actions and for the benefit of the local community, space, and economy, we would like to focus on the architectural, social and economic aspects of these processes. However, due to the nature of the discipline we represent, we want to emphasize the presence of artists and curators in these activities.

We still remember the empty streets and squares during the period of government-ordered lockdowns. These situations were extremely oppressive, but they revealed that in recent years certain places within cities have become deserted or, on the contrary, have become a vibrant stage for artistic and design creations. We are referring to the districts where factories have gradually been demolished, markets that have slowly been regaining their original functions, or abandoned courtyards. An observer- an architect could create in these spaces if only inside his imagination, a set of lofts or modern buildings; a landscape architect – could dream of the design of urban green enclaves; an artist – of monumental scale actions for unprejudiced witnesses; an animator – of the urgent need to reach out to those who remained isolated.

Many examples show that such plans and dreams can be realized, that the empty spaces and the situation of crisis (loneliness) inspire various forms of design and creative activity. Therefore, artists and designers have also intensified the discussion about the possibilities of using public space for exhibition purposes, especially during such oppressive situations. There is, without doubt, a need for ongoing reflection on this topic. It has already appeared during the debate within the international exhibition of the 17th Architecture Biennale in Venice, which closed last November, and was conducted under the motto: "How shall we live together?" It was a question about the quality of our lives and our (artists and scientists) creativity and causality in the new socio-economic situation.

We addressed our invitation to art historians, cultural studies scholars, philosophers, architects, artists, all those for whom the city is a space of action and scientific reflection, and those who are convinced that art can be an impulse, a tool and a stimulator of concrete changes in its complex fabric.

As we expected, the authors addressed the following issues in their texts:

- art as a tool for revitalization and social change

- the artist in relation to the urban fabric in a crisis situation
- creative placemaking
- artistic interventions in central and local public spaces
- participatory actions in social revitalization
- ephemerality and permanence of artistic interventions versus their effectiveness

Although most of the collaborating authors are from abroad, we hope that this volume will also serve to increase awareness of the need to protect and revitalize the architectural fabric and social relations in Polish cities among students and staff of our university and other friendly artistic and scientific communities.

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On public participation in efforts to beautify the towns and cities of Galicia in times of its autonomy. Prolegomenon[1]

> Urban Beautification Societies remain one of the most original forms of associations in autonomous Galicia, in terms of their focus on cities in particular. Without additional and tedious research, one would be hard-pressed to determine who and when had started them.
>
> (Aleksander, 1995: 149–150)

Introduction

Extraordinarily popular over recent decades, revitalisation, public space revitalisation included – interest therein having risen especially once Poland had joined the European Union and gained access to considerable funding (not only EU-related) as a result – is by no means a new phenomenon. It is unquestionably deeply rooted in the culture of democratic societies, a symptom of collective human effort to improve the condition of surroundings one finds oneself in. Similarly to other post-socialist countries, Poland had to become re-accustomed to the phenomenon, as it were, after nearly half a century of hegemony in so-called command and control economy, wherein even public activity, also in the field of culture, was minutely inspected and funnelled in line with party interest and official guidelines.

Yet improving the condition of public space on Polish territory is by no means a 21st-century development. On the contrary: it has been entrenched in assorted activities engaged in by public administration (consider the Good Order Committees formed in the second half of the 18th century – Kostecka, 2017: 7–8), and in multiple public initiatives, arising in particular in the wake of local government reactivation in the Austrian Partition – so-called Galicia (one of Austria-Hungary's crown regions,

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comprising former Polish south-eastern territories seized by Austria), during a period referred to as *"autonomous"* (i.e. over the years 1867–1914). In the context of improving the aesthetic of Galician municipalities, activities of multiple Urban Beautification Societies (hereinafter referred to as *"UBS"* or *"UBSs"* in the plural) merit special attention, particularly intense over two decades immediately preceding the outbreak of World War I. The presence of artists and the artistic value of the final outcome of UBS work were a significant component. One might well risk claiming that the high number of such organisations in Galician cities and towns was a grassroot attempt at responding to shortages in urban planning, regulation and development, especially in terms of introducing green areas. Local press tended to report, somewhat maliciously, that the UBSs were an observable symptom of the weakness of Galician autonomous governance (of urban authorities) – failing to handle day-to-day issues, authorities consenting to such organisations being formed in the hope that they would stand in and take care of at least some of the local government's responsibilities (see "Mieszczanin," 1904).

It is notable that similar organisations had been in operation across multiple European countries in the 19th century, including those who had contributed to the annihilation of Poland as a state. For example, the UBS Bydgoszcz (*Verschönerungs-Verein zu Bromberg*) was among the first and most efficient in Prussia, not to mention the oldest one throughout Polish territory. Active over the years 1832–1898, its close collaborators and honorary members included eminent Prussian gardener and landscape architect Peter Joseph Lenné (Grysińska-Jarmuła, 2018).[2] Furthermore, the powerful City Beautiful Movement began developing in the United States of America (Wilson 1980) well-nigh in parallel to the intensified undertakings of Galician UBSs. Coinciding with UBS postulates, in terms of the importance of green urban areas in particular, the Movement was distinctive in the importance attached in the US to the quality and look of urban development itself.[3] In hindsight, it is notable with regard to the activity of Galician UBSs that apart from the *"Sokół"* (Falcon) Gymnastic Society (with a focus on pro-health, cultural and patriotic activity), and a variety of educational organisations (People's School Society in particular), UBSs were the best-represented – and, in some cases, also most efficient – *"field work"* associations active in autonomous Galicia. In such context, the relatively modest condition of their activity's research and the lack of any attempts to synthesise the phenomenon in any way, however cursory, must be seen as astonishing at the very least.

[2] Formed in 1923 – after Poland had regained independence – the Society of City of Bydgoszcz Supporters (*Towarzystwo Miłośników Miasta Bydgoszczy*) referenced its heritage. See https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Towarzystwo_Upi%C4%99kszania_Miasta (last accessed on September 26th 2022). For more on the forming and activities of UBSs in Prussia, see http://encyklopedia.warmia.mazury.pl/index.php/Towarzystwo_Upi%C4%99kszania_Miasta_w_Olsztynie (last accessed on September 26th 2022), where the date of establishing the UBS Bydgoszcz was misquoted as 1833.

[3] A similar postulate in the Galician UBS circle was submitted only on initiative by the Przemyśl organisation, during the Societies' convention in July 1912 r. (Felczyński, 1968: 388).

Pursuant to previous studies, the activity of these organisations was recorded perfunctorily, and mainly to reflect local context. Tadeusz Aleksander was the only scholar to truly accentuate the significance of UBS activities in Galicia during its *"autonomous"* times (Aleksander, 1995: 149–150). Monographs, such as articles in regional or local periodicals, were drafted in case of several UBSs (consider Przemyśl – Felczyński, 1967 and Wadowice – Meus, 2008, respectively); other solutions involved brochures (Wieliczka – Duda, 2008) or dictionary entries/chapters in scholarly research collections (Sanok – Zając, 1990; Zając, 2000). In all likelihood, the oldest of Galicia's UBSs (formed in Cracow) was described in a brief unpublished specification coinciding with an archival inventory (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978). It was mentioned but a few times in printed form, on the occasion of ponderings concerning another of Cracow's late-19th century community organisations (Bieńkowski, 1997). Others have been alluded to but marginally.

It may thus be concluded that researched resources available are extraordinarily modest – whereas successive UBSs were literally booming in Galician towns, having evidently become fashionable. Non-inventoried searches the author has been engaging in for years as a sideline to other research of Galician urban planning, architecture and art have pointed to the existence of UBSs in multiple nooks and crannies of Polish territory incorporated into the Austrian state, and to the unquestioned and amazing richness of their activity. Intended to shed light on selected issues associated with the emergence and activities of Galician UBSs formed to improve urban space, this paper is a first-time attempt at referencing these findings, if only in part.

Time of Forming

Without detailed archival research, one would be hard-pressed to unambiguously declare the actual location of the first UBS. While conjecture regarding the establishing of such organisation in Tarnów goes back as far as 1881 ("Tarnowianin," 1882: unnumbered), it remains undisputed that by 1912 it had not yet been formed ("Pogoń," 1912a). It may well be assumed that the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood was the first UBS to have been formed in Galicia. While there are sources suggesting that it was established in 1868 (Bieńkowski, 1997: 15) – i.e. after Galicia had been granted autonomy – available records prove that this had actually happened over a dozen years later – the Governorate in Lviv approved the statutes on December 16th 1886 in the wake of several months of preparation, the board elected only in May 1888. Two years later, when recapitulating the first period of their activity, the Cracovian UBS appealed to the intellectuals of Galician cities with a critical postulate of forming similar organisations locally (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 7–8). The original intent was for these bodies to be elite in nature.

The appeal did not go unnoticed. Prior to 1900, Societies were formed i.a. in Przemyśl (1890), Podgórze (1894), Brody (1895), Nowy Sącz and Tarnopol (1896), and Jasło (pre-1899) (see Aleksander, 1995: 150; Blicharski, 1995: 207; Felczyński, 1997; Laskowski, 2007: 64). Another UBS was to be established (1897) in Limanowa ("Głos Narodu," 1897), informal activities (1900, formalised in 1907) were also initiated

by UBS Wieliczka (Pająk, 1968: 110; Duda, 2008). Over the next decade, Societies were formed i.a. in Sanok (1904) and Wadowice (1907, formally: 1912) (see Meus, 2008; Zając, 2000). Records for 1910 mention UBS Rzeszów (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 11), another was formed in Jarosław in 1914 (Potoczny, 1997: 73). The date of establishing the UBS in Czarny Dunajec would require more precise data (Czajecka, 1997: 200).

Initiators and Members

Members of local Societies identified thus far include representatives of multiple professions and specialities, university graduates the distinct majority. Consequently, UBS activists (functionaries in particular, information regarding this particular stratum being most abundant) comprised local government and municipal officials, lawyers, representatives of technical professions, teachers, and even the clergy. The governing bodies of individual Societies would most frequently reflect the specificity of the place, the professions represented locally typical.

Cracow's UBS was headed by attorney Ferdynand Wilkosz, Ph.D., pre-World War I membership including many eminent persons, well-known artists (e.g. Władysław Ekielski and Józef Mehoffer) and researchers of the city's past and its monuments (Karol Estreicher, Leonard Lepszy, Stanisław Tomkowicz) (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 8–9).

In Przemyśl, the UBS was formed by attorney Julian Łużecki Ph.D., Wilhelm Fritscher and Salomon Ehrlich Ph.D., the organisation joined by a large number of officers of troops stationed at the Fortress of Przemyśl, ostensibly including foreign nationals (Felczyński, 1967, p. 380). In Jarosław, UBS members hailed chiefly from military and teaching communities (Potoczny, 1997: 75).

Nikodem Garbaczyński – town councillor, mayor in the years 1897–1900, honorary citizen of Podgórze from 1900 onwards – was chairman of the Podgórze UBS over the years 1905–1907 at least. Wojciech Bednarski – teacher, activist, eminent creator of the unique town park (named after him in time) founded in an old local quarry – was appointed director (JCKK, 1905: 228; JCKK, 1906: 173; JCKK, 1907: 179). Later, in the years 1913–1914 at least, Karol Górski, Ph.D., retired councillor of the Imperial and Royal judiciary and Wieliczka County Council member, became chairman, Bednarski continuing as director (JCKK, 1913: 203; JCKK, 1914: 233). Stanisław Kuzia, attorney and court councillor, was chairman of the UBS for Wadowice and the Neighbourhood, having also been the organisation's founder. Antoni Drozdowski was elected Secretary, with justice Stanisław Machalski as treasurer, justice Stanisław Kuźniarowicz as administrator, and engineer of forestry Władysław Kuzia as board member (Jurczak, 1987: 31–32 i 54). UBS Wieliczka was formed by Teodor Popiołek, director of the local mill (Pająk, 1968: 110); in 1913, the Society in Wieliczka was headed by Antoni Muller, Imperial and Royal councillor supreme of mining and Wieliczka County Council member, with town mayor Franciszek Aywas as his deputy, magistrate secretary Józef Martynowicz as secretary, and Józef Fryl (probably "Fryt"), head of the Imperial and Royal Saline Board, as treasurer (JCKK, 1913: 203–205).

Antoni Pogłodowski, Imperial and Royal starost of Sanok, was elected first chairman of the local UBS, having been joined by other active members, representatives

of assorted professions: town mayor of many years, professor of the local gymnasium, construction engineer, real estate owner and town physician (Zając, 2000: 223). At the time of pondering options of establishing a UBS in Limanowa, the contemporaneous town mayor supported by a "group of eminent citizens of Limanowa" ("Głos Narodu," 1897) was seen as the organisation's initiator. The circumstances in Dobczyce were slightly different: local parish priest Father Andrzej Brańka was the initiator of founding the Urban Beautifying and Regulating [sic!] Committee [sic!], as well as its generous sponsor ("Mieszczanin," 1904).

Given the artistic facet of problems analysed herein, Cracow's Society membership towards the end of the period of autonomy is particularly noteworthy, the entity itself then operating as the Society for Protecting the Beauty of Cracow and its Neighbourhood.[4] According to 1912 records, the governing body of the organisation teemed with outstanding artists (painters, sculptors, architects): Teodor Axentowicz was deputy chairman, department members including i.a. Jan Bukowski, Stanisław Dębicki, Władysław Ekielski, Zygmunt Hendel, Konstanty Laszczka, Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, Ludwik Wojtyczko and Kazimierz Wyczyński. Prominent connoisseurs of art were leading members as well, i.a. Feliks Kopera, Leonard Lepszy, Józef Muczkowski and Jerzy Warchałowski (JCKK, 1913: 167–168). It is notable that a remarkable part of the Society's governing body were also on the board of The Society of Friends of Kraków History and Heritage (JCKK, 1913: 168).[5]

Scope of Activities

In terms of UBS undertakings, particular attention was paid to urban greenery, especially issues of urban park and green square establishing and maintenance. In anticipation of a UBS in Tarnów, great hopes were expressed in 1881 of the Society extending proper care over a neglected town park near the railway station ("Tarnowianin," 1882). Having undergone transformation from 1890 onwards, the park on Castle Hill in Przemyśl would soon become one of the largest ones to ever be expanded under UBS auspices: newly routed parkways and multiple plantings were accompanied by attractive water reservoirs and intakes (Felczyński, 1967: 378). Towards the end of the period of autonomy, such activities were also engaged in by the UBS of Wadowice and the Neighbourhood – as an outcome of their efforts over the years 1912–1914, the Adam Mickiewicz Town Park was established in the local "Górnica" on land purchased and donated by the municipality (Meus, 2013: 304–305). UBS Jasło had also embarked upon a number of projects in an already existing town park, from the late 1890s at least (Laskowski, 2007: 64). UBS Wieliczka was equally adamant about focusing on urban greenery, local park and squares included (Pająk, 1968: 110). Over the years

[4] The matter would have to be researched in greater detail. Significantly, however, JCKK-published censuses list the Society as having replaced – and, in time, co-formed – the former UBS, sharing its premises. Yet it cannot be precluded at this stage of study that this was a separate organisation altogether.

[5] This applied to intellectuals in particular, including i.a. the aforementioned Feliks Kopera, Leonard Lepszy and Józef Muczkowski.

1909–1910, the UBS in Sanok expanded the existing town park considerably, fitting it with assorted infrastructural components (Zając, 2000: 226).

When it came to urban green areas, UBSs dealt with more than establishing, expanding or tending to parks. The first UBS Cracow-related press mentions I am aware of report on the Cracow Planting Committee having examined two petitions filed by the Society: for a free-of-charge donation of young trees from urban nurseries for purposes of planting them in the Market Square, along what was then Wolska Street, and on Wawel Hill; and for a permit for a meteorological implements kiosk to be set up within the flowerbed area in front of the *Collegium Novum* edifice ("Czas," 1888).[6] *Ad hoc* interventions, while organised frequently, were occasionally overdue. Consider the 1912 case of Lviv, where – after old trees had been felled on Halicki Square – the local UBS undertook to "care for ancient trees in the city, and disallow their felling" ("Pogoń," 1912b).

Introducing new landscape dominants by building commemorative mounds was a notable example of public space intervention. In Sanok, a mound was built over the years 1898–1908, students of the local gymnasium assisting, as a tribute to Adam Mickiewicz (Zając, 2000: 225). Considerably later, in the year 1934 (on the 100th anniversary of Mickiewicz's epic poem *Sir Thaddeus'* publication), a mound was built to commemorate the poet in the town park of Wadowice (cf. the plaque on the mound). Attempts were also made to popularise tourism through developing basic infrastructure at locations potentially attractive to visitors. This is e.g. what happened on *Biała Góra* (Mount White) towering over Sanok (Zając, 2000: 227), and in the Three Crosses' Hill area in Przemyśl (Felczyński, 1967: 382).

Matters of improving urban aesthetics were deliberated in statutes of the local organisation in Jarosław (established in 1914), the following listed under goals: "to beautify the town and its neighbourhood by establishing and tending to parks and gardens; planting trees; and erecting genre statues and sculptures with intent to improve the town's aesthetic image" (Potoczny, 1997: 76). The aforementioned objective of embellishing cities and towns with sculptures (monumental statues included) was a yet another typical trait of Galician UBS activities, caring for urban greenery apart. As a result, monuments dedicated to persons significant to Polish history, national heroes and poets in particular, were erected in numerous cities and towns, sculptors frequently including eminent artists. For example: a monument to Tadeusz Rejtan was erected in Cracow (1890; Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 8), a monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko – in Jasło (1899, sculpted by Tadeusz Błotnicki – Laskowski, 2007: 165), a monument to Adam Mickiewicz – in Wieliczka (1903, by Błotnicki – Pająk, 1968: 110); works on a cast of a bust of Gregory of Sanok had been in progress locally from 1906 onwards (Zając, 2000: 226). In Przemyśl, the stone statue of the *Shepherd Boy* would become a landmark in the local park (Felczyński, 1968: 381 and 386). Commemorative plaques would be funded in urban space, which is how centenaries were honoured in Sanok: the hundredth anniversaries of the last

[6] In time, a similar kiosk would be erected in the Market Square of Przemyśl, also on UBS initiative (Felczyński, 1968: 387–388, 394).

defence of the Sanok Royal Castle (1909), and of Frederic Chopin's birthday (1910), respectively (Zając, 2000: 226).

Urban space interventions were most certainly not limited to greenery or sculptures. In the year of its founding, USB Jarosław managed to develop a bowling alley and tennis court at their own expense (Potoczny, 1997: 76). Regularly modernised in later times, a tennis court was also developed (1905) in the town park of Jasło (Laskowski, 2007: 166). A tourist shelter was developed in the town park of Sanok (Zając, 2000: 227), a similar investment realised in Wadowice (Meus 2008: 27). Multiple facilities (gazebos and gloriettes) were erected at scenic turnouts of the Przemyśl park, in time expanded to include a miniature zoological garden (dismantled in 1914), its attractions such as deer and stags, a monkey, a badger, squirrels, and numerous birds, including parrots (Felczyński, 1967: 382–384).

Space thus developed became a backdrop for assorted UBS-hosted events: festivals (such as the one in the town park of Jasło – Laskowski, 2007: 64), jubilees, concerts and fairs (in Przemyśl, for example – Felczyński, 1967: 378–380).

Other UBS activities – in case of some organisations at least – included propaganda and educational publications in line with respective statutory objectives, such as the locally published book on Gregory of Sanok (Zając, 2000: 225). Some of the more ambitious plans involved publishing periodicals, the best example being the "Krakowski Miesięcznik Artystyczny" (*Cracovian Art Monthly*) published over the years 1912–1914 (cf. Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 10), of which Leonard Lepszy himself, was the "editor responsible" for a time. As proclaimed by the periodical's subtitle, it was "a publication with a focus on issues associated with the National Museum, Society of Friends of Fine Arts, and Urban Beautification Society of the City of Cracow." Postcards and writing paper featuring images of the given town or city or images of prominent local personas would occasionally be published as well, e.g. in Sanok (Zając, 2000: 222 i 224–225). Some UBSs (e.g. in Jarosław, Przemyśl, Wadowice, Wieliczka) would publish their statutes, others (e.g. Cracow or Sanok) – operational reports.

Other UBS activities involved naming streets and/or squares by submitting suggestions, or making the occasional attempt to change traditional names. Some initiatives of the kind were volubly criticised, such as the attempts of UBS Lviv to modify street names commemorating specific persons in favour of restoring adjective-based monikers ("Pogoń," 1912b).

Talks and lectures were popular as well, e.g. in Sanok (on Gregory of Sanok as well as UBS goals or the aesthetic and culture of co-existence) (Zając, 2000: 225, 227) and Przemyśl (on activities engaged in by the local Society) (Felczyński, 1968: 392–394). Hindered by the outbreak of World War I, the latter did not succeed in organising its large-scale exhibition "City of Przemyśl" designed to portray the town's past and present (Felczyński, 1968: 392). Last but not least: some UBSs engaged in collecting, preserving and conservating mobile artefacts and historical records containing local references, Sanok a case in point (Zając, 2000: 227).

Collaboration

While individual Societies operated locally – regardless of how effectively or efficiently – activists were usually aware that multiple urban space-related problems tend to prevail across multiple locations. In order to take preventive action, they established the Union of Societies to Beautify the Country [i.e. Galicia] in 1910 (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 10–11). Pursuant to the Union's statutes, its mission was to involve in "shared campaigns to beautify the country, and prevent its deforming" (*Statutes*, 1910: 3). It was decided that Cracow would be the seat of the Union, membership open to all UBSs. Every UBS would be obliged to "apply to the Department of the Union in any essential case of a given neighbourhood facing the risk of deformation and undergo examination by and adhere to the resulting opinion of the respective Art or Legal Committee" (*Statutes*, 1910: 4). Aforementioned Art Committee membership of the Union was to include two representatives per the following profession or occupation: experts on aesthetics, painters, sculptors, architects and conservators and/or their deputies, their names to be submitted by the board and approved by the annual General Assembly of the Union. The Committee was charged with the duty of "resolving matters of artistic necessity" (*Statutes*, 1910: 7–8).

Aforementioned conventions took place as planned. The 1912 Convention was organised in Cracow on July 14th, the agenda including such matters as "protecting the country against deformation and loss features typical for Polish landscapes," and "appointing local Societies across the country, in towns and cities alike" (JCKK, 1913: 74). Once official deliberations were over, delegates visited the illustrious Architecture and Interiors Exhibition in Garden Surroundings, for purposes of which Franciszek Klein delivered an intervention titled *O zachowaniu śródmieścia Krakowa* (*On Preserving the City Centre of Cracow*, JCKK, 1913: 74).

According to 1912 records, the Union shared premises with the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood, at No. 5, Biskupia Street. Count Leon Piniński was the Union's honorary president, with Stanisław Goliński, Ph.D., as chairman – also the contemporaneous chairman of the aforesaid Cracow Society. Societies from both parts of Galicia (including Lviv, Podgórze, Rzeszów, Sanok and Wieliczka) were represented on the governing bodies of the Union (JCKK, 1913: 167).

Collaboration between individual Societies and other local community organisations was an essential issue as well. UBS Cracow organised a number of joint initiatives in a group comprising 11 different organisations, including the most active one of them all: The Society of Friends of Kraków History and Heritage (Bieńkowski 1997: 66–73). UBS Przemyśl began co-operating with the local chapter of the Society of Friends of Science (Felczyński, 1968: 388).

UBS Heritage in the Second Polish Republic and Contemporarily

If finding themselves within the boundaries of the Polish state resurrected, some of the aforementioned Urban Beautification Societies of autonomous Galicia continued their activity (e.g. in Tarnopol – Blicharski, 1995: 361). Some would terminate activity

as defined in the olden days during World War I or later, for a variety of reasons. Examples include Podgórze: in the wake of its incorporation into Cracow in 1915, separation of assorted community organisations formerly operating in Podgórze was mandated, the decision affecting the local UBS as well.[7] UBS Sanok suspended its operations for the wartime period, never to instigate it again (Zając, 2000: 227). A similar fate befell Cracow (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 10), albeit in this particular case it may well be assumed that UBS activities had been gradually weakening and yielding to an extremely operative competitor with a similar profile: the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood.[8]

Other UBSs were formed only during the Great War or after it had ended – in times of the Second Polish Republic. The first group includes UBS Gorlice, formed in 1917 (Kuśnierz, 1990: 27 and 46), in all likelihood in the face of the horrific destruction to urban development during the Battle of Gorlice in May 1915. Examples of organisations established during the interwar period include committees [sic!] established in 1929 of the UBSs in Chrzanów (Świątek, 1998: 199) and Limanowa (Świątek, 1999: 451). The coincidence of dates merits a question whether it had not been the outcome of official state orders.[9]

The researched area saw other developments as well: new organisations were formed in towns and cities of former Galicia during the interwar period, their programme records – and intended scopes of undertakings – directly referencing UBSs operating in Galicia in the olden days which had ceased all activity in the wake of World War I outbreak or downfall or monarchy. This is exactly what happened in Jarosław, for example: the Old Jarosław Society alluded to the tradition by changing its name to the "Society of Jarosław Supporters" (Potoczny, 1997).

Interestingly enough, aforesaid traditions were also referenced in socialist Poland – even Stalinist times – as exemplified by the 1950 case of an Urban Beautification Committee formed in Sędziszów Małopolski with intent to introduce green areas to town (Bieda, Żurek, 1983: 212). Somewhat later (1957), UBS Przemyśl was reactivated as well (Felczyński, 1967: 375–376). In Wieliczka, the body was renamed, and began operating as the "Society for the Development and Beautification of the Town of Wieliczka" in 1958 (Pająk, 1968: 6).

May the immortality of ideas represented by the multiple UBSs of Galicia over one hundred years ago be proven by the fact that a number of community organisations continue operating dynamically across Poland using the moniker in question. They can be found throughout the country – consider the example of UBSs active in the Kashubian region (Puck, formed/reactivated in 1998),[10] Lower Silesia (Wrocław,

[7] See the significant lack of formerly traditional mention in the JCKK, 1917.

[8] Cf. footnote 4.

[9] The action could have been associated with the contemporaneous reform of the historical monument protection system in Poland.

[10] UBS in Puck, formed as early as 1884, suspended in 1939 pursuant to Adolf Hitler's executive order, reactivated in the summer of 1998 r. See http://tump.org.pl/o-nas/ (last accessed on September 25th 2022).

formed in 2004),[11] Łużyce (Żary, formed in 2006)[12] or the Warmia and Masuria region (Olsztyn, formed in 2009).[13]

Research Postulates and Perspectives

A review of available resources and the rather cursory assemblage of aforesaid facts merit reflection and identification of essential study-requiring issues, including, but not limited to:

- Ascertaining the actual source(s) of inspiration, encouragement and/or persuasion behind the forming of the respective UBSs,
- Analysing mutual relations and dependencies (in all likelihood changing over time) between commissions (committees?) forming part of erstwhile municipal council structures and UBSs established at a later time,
- Determining the number and locations of UBSs actually formed,
- Expanding the study of the UBS initiator and member community, their social, occupational, nationality-related and religious structures and affiliation, as well as their potential connection to the forms and types of organisational activity,
- Researching the involvement of art and technical circles in UBS works in detail,
- Estimating membership numbers for the respective UBSs with a view to ascertain their elite or mass nature,
- Analysing ways and formats of UBS funding,
- Introducing more detailed systematisation to UBS activity specification,
- Analysing forms of UBS collaboration with other bodies, local governments and other community organisations in particular,
- Identifying and describing key works with a focus on UBS publishing achievements, Ewa Łuskina's illustrious study already recognisable as one such work (Łuskina, 1910),
- Analysing the impact of UBS activity on public space in and aesthetic awareness among the residents of the cities and towns of Galicia,
- Setting UBS activities to a broader backdrop (national, European, global),
- Considering the importance of UBS heritage in the context of post-1918 organisations' work.

As proven by the review of resources collected to date, contemporaneous press remains a crucial source of UBS-related knowledge, in-house organisational publications (including reports and statues) notwithstanding. This applies to the familiar

[11] According to a statement by Wrocław activists, their work alludes to Der Breslauer Verschönerungsverein, an association formed in 1893. See https://tumw.pl/o-nas/ (last accessed on September 25th 2022).

[12] See https://spis.ngo.pl/161431-towarzystwo-upiekszania-miasta (last accessed on September 26th 2022).

[13] The UBS operating in Olsztyn in the years 1843–1912 had been the inspiration behind the local organisation See http://encyklopedia.warmia.mazury.pl/index.php/Towarzystwo_Upi%C4%99kszania_Miasta_w_Olsztynie (last accessed on September 26th 2022).

titles (such as "Czas" or "Gazeta Lwowska"), as well as – or, indeed, primarily – to local newspapers (such as Nowy Sącz's "Mieszczanin" or Tarnów's "Pogoń").

Yet expanding knowledge of Galicia's UBSs is less about continued library queries than broadly designed archival queries. Given the current state of knowledge, the existence of separate archival assemblages merit a distinct mention, including bespoke UBS collections (e.g. with regard to Cracow, see Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978); while differently profiled, these collections comprise an abundance of information concerning aforesaid organisations (e.g. as concerning the UBS Committee in Nowy Targ, the so-called *T. Klima File* comprising 1884–1930 records – Czajecka, 1991: 279, 282) as well as indirect and/or incidental mentions of these organisations in historical records, e.g. in meeting reports for assorted collegiate bodies (municipal councils in particular). In all probability, the latter are the largest in volume; given their fragmentation, sheer bulk and elusive usefulness, this particular resources will be particularly difficult to analyse comprehensively.

It seems that commencing afore-suggested studies is unquestionably recommended, with a view to showcase – as accurately as possible – the determination and role of residents of Galician towns and cities in the process of changing their own environment, and to present in full the face of that early, 19th-century revitalisation movement, tailored and designed on considerable scale.

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Cracow. Source: *Statutes* (1910), unnumbered.

Abstract

This paper is an introduction to studies of Urban Beautification Societies (*"UBSs"* in the plural) active in times of Galicia's autonomy (1867–1914). The Societies were community organisations set up in many cities and towns across Galicia from the 1880s onwards with a view to improve the aesthetic in public urban space. To Galicia, years of its autonomy yielded years of considerable expansion of civic freedoms, including the re-enacted right to association. Formed by individuals with university education, UBSs were popular throughout Galicia, their structure frequently reflecting the local cross-section and specificity of social strata. Established in large, medium-sized, and small cities and towns (such as Cracow and Lviv; Przemyśl; Wadowice and Wieliczka), they attempted to reach their goals chiefly through establishing urban parks and green squares (often as not with accompanying infrastructure, such as tennis courts or bowling alleys); planting trees in market and other public squares and along communication routes; developing aesthetically pleasing small architecture; and taking initiative to erect monuments and install commemorative plaques, usually commissioned with eminent artists. The latter – in large cities in particular, where art communities were large and powerful – were occasionally UBS co-organisers and members, and thus capable of considerable influence over any Society activities, potentially including publishing, graphic artists and painters especially prominent therein.

Keywords: Urban Beautification Society, Galicia, Galician authonomy, city, spatial development, urban green areas

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Fig. 1. Monument to Tadeusz Rejtan in Cracow, erected in 1890 with contribution and backing by the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood. Current condition (restored). Photo by: A. Laskowski, 2022.

Fig. 2. Monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko (surroundings included) in the town park of Jasło, sculpted by Tadeusz Błotnicki on initiative of the local UBS, unveiled in 1899. Current condition. Photo by: A. Laskowski, 2009.

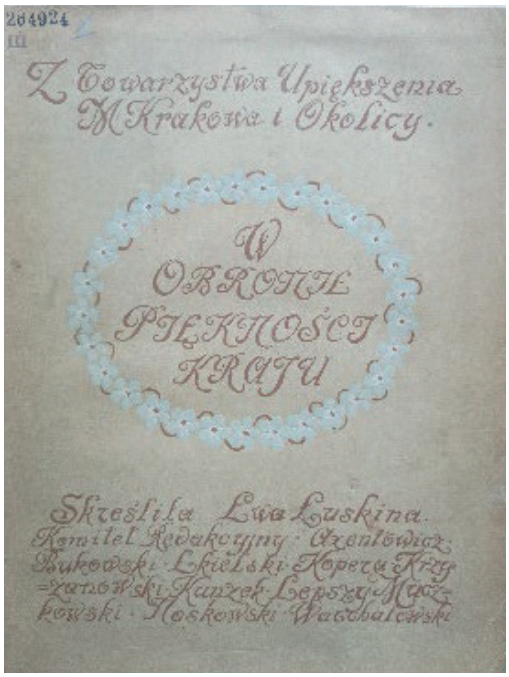

Fig. 3. Title page designed by painter and sculptor Henryk Kunzek, Ph.D., originally from the publishing house of the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood. Source: Łuskina (1910).

Fig. 4. Official emblem of the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood. Source: Łuskina (1910).

Fig. 5. Official emblem of the Union of Societies to Beautify the Country with its registered seat in.

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The re-construction of urban space in the place between art and architecture: Selected paradigms of in situ art of the period 1950–2000[1]

Introduction: the subtle balance between art and architecture in the field of in situ art

In her book *Art and Architecture*, Jane Rendell describes as a critical spatial practice the artistic practice which, as it is placed outside the exhibition space, critically intervenes in the existing public condition (Rendell, 2006: 4). In that case, as she argues, art becomes functional, not so much in the traditional sense, which is attributed to architecture, but mainly in the sense of providing tools for reflection, critical thinking and social reconstruction. This situation seems as an advantage of art, since in addition to its purely critical role – which architecture cannot play – it also takes on 'functions' in a way that architecture does by definition, such as settling and alleviating social issues: in that case of course art has to suffer limitations.

The idea of *in situ* art practice itself starts from the idea of abolishing the autonomy of the work of art. It is about a rift that takes place between the main artistic ideology of modernity that preceded and the art practice that followed and has as its starting point the idea of dependence, in the sense of dialogue and exchange, between the work of art and the space in which it is placed. In that case the idea of dependence is translated into a dialogue between the work and the elements and characteristics of its location. The project becomes an integral part of the site and this feature makes it more sensitive to external conditions. It is about the acceptance of the sensitivity and the fragility of the work in contrast with the autonomous work which dominated in previous years and was directly linked to the art market serving to a large extent its demands. *In situ* artistic practice, starting from this idea of interdependence of the

[1] This paper is based on my in-progress Phd Theses under the title "Different versions of in situ spatial practice as a field of conjunction of art and architecture in public space during the second half of 20th century."

work of art, when it moves in the field of conjunction of art and architecture, shows up in different forms of enactment. The various forms of implementation of in situ art are always connected with different perspectives of public space and the social relations that develop in it and concern the categories of private, public, and collective. These relations, in the context of their implementation, translate into relations between closed and open space, between inside and outside, between suspension and movement. For the material and aesthetic expression as well as for the critical representation of these relationships, in each case, different forms and tools of composition as well as different procedures of materialization are employed.

This study examines urban projects that offer different versions of reconstruction and reinterpretation of the urban environment, as well as different manifestations of *in situ* artistic practice that have as a common feature the conjugation of art and architecture. Specific paradigms are selected from different decades, starting from the 50's with Aldo Van Eyck's playgrounds. What this paper maintains is that the specific projects, while oscillating between art and architecture, activate in varied modes specific components of the urban sphere such as the modes of coexistence between the visible and the invisible, the inside and the outside, the private and the collective. Thus they arrest the everyday flow of the undifferentiated space and time by offering an alternative discursive reality that stimulates the subtle interaction between objects and subjects.

The selected paradigms contain two levels of reading: firstly the subtle balance between art and architecture where, in the field of in situ practice, complex exchanges reveal and shape the modes of their materialization. Secondly, the delicate balance between modes of expression of the symbolic and the metaphoric. Each case constitutes a different version of this fusion in terms of meaning and modes of its expression. In the case of Van Eyck the above process takes the form of a counterpoint inspired by geometry and social ritual, while in the case of Daniel Buren it is more about a visual reconstruction of the urban environment that constitutes of a polyphony of sculptural, painterly and architectural elements. As far as the case of Rachel Whiteread is concerned, the architectural is fused with the sculptural in the form of an ephemeral monument that acquires metaphorical reading. In the selected projects different aspects of the category of architecture and its foundation are traced namely the threefold reality -materiality-construction. According to Benjamin Buchloh, long before the 1950s, sculpture had abandoned its role as a means of refining the material world, but also as a means of representing individual, anthropomorphic, holistic bodies in space, made of inert but permanent, if not eternal, matter and impregnated with illusory moments of a fake life (Buchloch, 1983: 278). Also from the 1960's begins a reaction to the idiom of modern art: art generally focuses on interaction with the viewer. The dividing line between the two individual components of modernist sculpture, the solid material reality and the viewer's perception of the work is broken. Buchloh refers to the sculptural installation as an identity and gesture outside and contrary to previous descriptions of modernist sculptural discourse (Buchloch, 1983: 291). He also refers to the two extremes of an axis on which sculpture has been resting ever since – knowingly or not: the dialectics of sculpture between

functioning as a model for the aesthetic production of reality (e.g. architecture and design) or serving as a model investigating and contemplating the reality of aesthetic production, (e.g. the ready-made, the allegory). Or, as he observes, "More precisely: architecture on the one hand and epistemological model on the other are the two poles toward which relevant sculpture since then has tended to develop, each implying the eventual dissolution of its own discourse as sculpture" (Buchloch,1983: 279). This research focuses on the first category, that of the function of the sculptural installation as a model for the aesthetic production of reality and more specifically on such cases of in situ art that provide social sites rather than autonomous art objects. It is about urban projects that construct experientially complex situations that profoundly affect those who encounter them by transforming the urban conditio. More particularly, specific cases of critical spatial practices are examined that either clearly go to the architectural composition and design, demonstrating an ambiguous alternation between utility, functionality and the aesthetic object (e.g. A.V. Eyck, D. Buren), or metaphorically extract architectural functions and properties and thus move to the intermediate area between symbolic and real space (e.g. R. Whiteread). Buchloch, points out the element of analytical approach as a dominant one in the case of the visual arts. According to him, the latter, has three main features: First of all it is an aesthetic and spatial sign in itself, secondly it is related to a wider architectural phenomenon, which may or may not support its own and different order of points and thirdly it is integrated, constructed and activated only through the individual act of perception that is introduced through the viewer in the interdependence of these two systems (Buchloch, 1983:286). According to Buchloch, since the 1960s, the formalistic notion of self-referentiality has been replaced by an increasingly complex system of analysis that would make the work operative rather than self-reflective and self-referential. The idea of situational aesthetics implied that a work would function analytically within all the parameters of its historical definition, social, political, economic, and not only in its linguistic or formal framework.[2] As he maintains, three concepts were of crucial importance for this transgression, namely the notions of specificity, place, and presence. These three notions constitute the three main axes of investigation of the selected examples of the present research which examines the concept of idiosyncrasy and the different ways of in situ art's materialization and enactment in the context of concurrence of art and architecture.

Aldo Van Eyck's variations on the theme of social interaction

It seems that Aldo Van Eyck, long before, has provoked the formalistic notion of "self-referentiality" in architecture as well as in art by adopting the analytical approach of the plastic phenomenon for his playgrounds created for the city of Amsterdam between

[2] According to Buchloch, this transformation had already taken place together with the development of the original formalist methodology towards materialist semiology and production theory, that is, since the work of art – and especially the sculptural work – was released from the artist's raw material by incorporating materials from the mass production.

1947–1978.[3] The ambivalence that lies in Van Eyck's composition in terms of use and function serves as a means of activation of the common experience in the social environment. The architectural object that at the same time serves as a sculptural unit in a polycentric composition identifies with the notion of place waiting to be occupied.

By both employing centrality and numerical sequence in his compositions, Van Eyck manages to set his semi-sculptural elements free, allowing them to become varied segments of place and at the same time imparts rhythm and variety to their configurations in the urban space [fig. 1,2].

Fig.1 Playground, Zeedijk, Amsterdam, 1956.

[3] After the war, a huge number of derelict and left-over spaces emerged in the city of Amsterdam. Numerous diverse playgrounds were designed by Van Eyck for central median strips set between lanes of divided roadways. The playground on Saffierstraat, built in 1950, was sited on a 120-meter-long but only 6-meter-wide median strip, which was paved in white concrete tiles set on a diagonal pattern, with five triangular sections of brown brick paving inserted on alternating sides (Mc Carter, 2005).

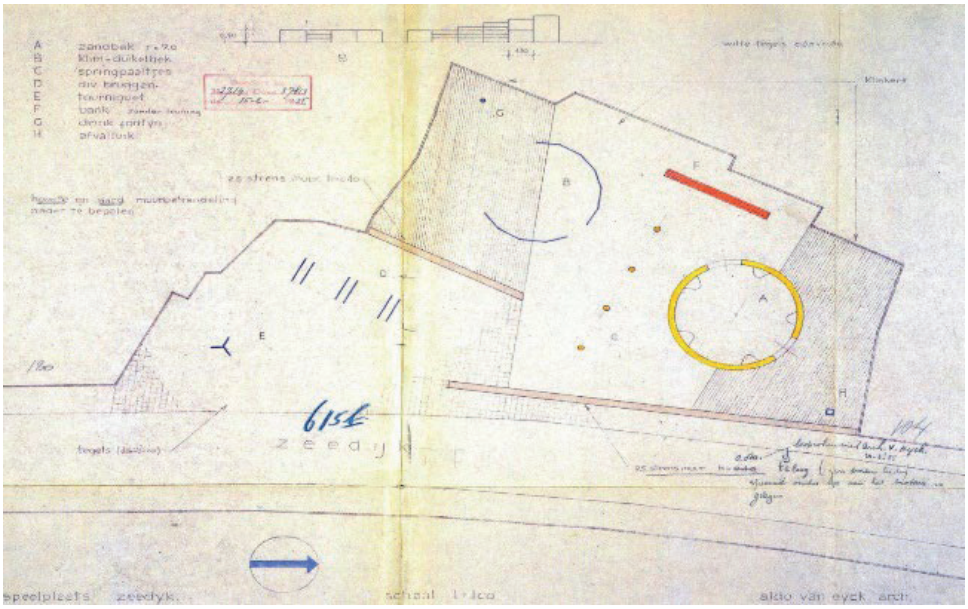

Fig.2 Playground, Zeedijk, Amsterdam, 1956.

Van Eyck's playgrounds in Amsterdam constitute architectural compositions and at the same time visual ones acquiring aesthetic perception. They are supposed to be the first site-specific installations in the city aspiring to restore social interaction in a devastated postwar urban environment. In terms of specificity and more particularly in terms of composition, materialization and function they are completely subordinated to the existing architectural site. While combining painterly elements, as well as sculptural and architectural ones, they are organized in patterns in varying scales aspiring to create a field of encounter where the public and the private coincide. Although they constituted playgrounds they can be seen and function as site-specific sculptural installations that are experienced through movement: The fundamental function of movement as an aesthetic practice and more specifically as a space evolving element is of fundamental importance in Van Eyck's compositions.

The work of Van Eyck is so expanded that becomes quite inseparable from its surroundings. His performance sites -playgrounds become everyone's land. The elementary character of these compositions draws from the idea of a spatial ambivalence that reflects mental realities. According to Van Eyck the structural relation between different orders of the city and relative rather than absolute sets of qualities constitutes the ambivalent and dynamic nature of urban space (Di Palma, Periton, Lathouri, 2008: 184). The element of performativity that stems from this specific kind of synthesis of two co-existing systems, the polycentric and the numerical, constitutes the dominant revitalizing feature of Van Eyck's project.

Walter Benjamin, in his famous essay an essay *'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'* distinguishes between concentration before a work of art as the viewer is being absorbed by it and the state of distraction in which architecture is being

recepted by a collectivity that is having a tangible experience (Benjamin, 2007: 239). In Van Eyck's compositions, where there is a coexistence of painting and sculpture, the visual activated horizontal level constitute the canvas where the compositional elements of the work unfold. The three-dimensional semi-sculptural elements that compose Van Eyck's urban installations are developed in space starting from the ground: the horizontal plane constitutes the main level of reference of the composition. The relationship between void and mass, space and matter, object and subject are built on a canvas that has its roots in painting. In Van Eyck's designs, color constitutes a structural element: in his composition for Saffierstraat playground ,the sculptural units form an inseparable whole with the painted surfaces at street level [fig. 3]. This kind of visual composition creates a zone of rhythmic alternation of color and sculptural motifs, an interweaving of an abstract flat painting composition and a sculptural installation. The viewer is introduced to an alternative perceptual field of the horizontal dimension of the city and moreover is invited to be more active in terms of its appropriation. Van Eyck creates a stage of performance, an active surface on which the user can move and interact: this new urban condition offers a new dynamic of alternative interplay between objects and subjects. The hitherto empty space among the built parts of the city is no longer just a space of transition; it now becomes a space with an internal structure that requires a different, more effective and participatory reading. This new place that is created stems from the succession of semi- sculptural architectural elements, which require to be read and relate to the rest of the environment while they built a new discursive reality.

The alternative reality that Van Eyck offers is the one of a shared experience that is mediated through the ritual quality that resides in the modes in which the semi-sculptural elements are developed in the urban site. This quality lies on two different aspects; on a first level on the abstract geometric formations of these elements in terms of their expansion in space and on a second level on their function as a metaphor of movement as an aesthetic element spatialization.

Fig. 3. Playground, Saffierstraat, Amsterdam 1951.

Van Eyck creates a counterpoint where the material formal elements constitute the harmonic centers of the composition while their performative appropriation through movement on the geometric canvas constitutes the vital element of melody. It is about a composition where the plastic form provides the 'counter form' of the 'existential' reality of the collective individual (Di Palma, 2008:186).[4] As Rudi Fuchs argues, it is about 'objects that are not anything in themselves but which have an open function' and therefore stimulate the imagination (De Roode, Lefaivre, 2002:7). Van Eyck pushes forms into their simplicity and then makes them function as movement generators.

Daniel Buren and the visual restructuring of the urban sphere

> So what are we talking about, if not about painting, sculpture, architecture, or theatre, since none of the territories proper to these domains can be seriously claimed? Each territory is lightly grazed, but just touched at its borders; at the same time, each territory keeps its distance from its neighbor, because the central concern is the site itself, the 'skin.' What the work DOES have to do with is what it does. It makes a place in a site and site in place. It is from site, in site, through site that the work takes place, places itself, poses itself, exposes itself.
>
> Daniel Buren (2005: 67)

Daniel Buren's *Les Deux Plateaux* constitutes a sculptural installation that comprises sculptural and architectural features and at the same time a work that is inseparable from its non art surroundings. *Les Deux Plateaux* was completed in 1986 in the courtyard of Palais Royal, a famous historic landmark of seventeenth century in the center of Paris designed by the architect Jacques Lemercier (Fig. 4,5). The work occupies a space of 3000 m^2 with 260 marble columns decorated with his black and white vertical stripes. The title of the artwork refers to the two levels, ground and underground, that are connected physically and conceptually.

Buren borrows from the architectural features of the site, i.e. materials, forms, scale, in order to offer a rearrangement of its visual structure. Through an analytical process he adopts the formal characteristics of the site and manipulates them in an abstract geometric way: He creates a geometric grid of columns of the same diameter but of different heights from the existing ones – the ones of the court – that are aligned with the facades of the Palais and with the garden's peristyle of the architectural site. The columns that constitute the main theme of the artwork are arranged in such a way that they create a harmonic whole of superimposing geometries, namely *plateaus* of different heights in counterpoint with the site. The materials used are the typical materials that dominate in the urban environment of the city of Paris: marble, stone, iron, water, asphalt. Additionally, as Buren argues, another element he is very interested is the Parisian underground which is pulsating with life while water circulates in the

[4] Van Eyck's view of the city draws from the structured social patterns of tribal society and concerns its spatial dynamic as a dialectic between the man-made environment and material culture on the one hand and the social reality of the individual and the group on the other.

underground rivers and sewers (Buren, 2012: 1327).[5] In terms of materialization Buren inserts an additional layer of sculptural units that in an inverse way than Van Eyck's playgrounds – while having sculptural as an origin – oscillate between aesthetic and architectural, semi functional objects.

The abstract composition of the installation does not refer, at least at first sight, to a place that can be appropriated by the viewer. Nevertheless, the repetitive and sometimes monotonal sculptural units that are expanded in the existing site of the court create the effect of eternal multiplication in space and time and thus demand the viewers' participation in order to acquire their existence. Moreover while consisting minimal sculptural elements deprived of any detail, they offer the experience of duration and infinite motion while being appropriated by its spectators. Buren, while attempts a rearrangement of a section of the visual field of the urban sphere – in other words of a fraction of the city's architectural environment – offers a restructuring of its experience by its user. Thus he reminds us that the city consists of superimposed layers and what is more, he invites as to perform this urban condition. This metaphorical function is realized by bringing together art and architecture in the whole composition. As he interrogates, 'Who knew that the court of Palais Royal is in fact the result of a patchwork that extends from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century without interruption? (Buren, 2012: 1435).[6]

Fig.4. Daniel Buren, Les Deux Plateaux 1985 – 1986. Work *in situ* permanent, Cour d'honneur du Palais-Royal Paris France. www.danielburen.com.

[5] Translation by author.

[6] Translation by author.

Fig. 5. Daniel Buren, *Les Deux Plateaux* 1985 – 1986. Work *in situ* permanent, Cour d'honneur du Palais-Royal Paris France. www.danielburen.com.

Buren questions art's conventional aesthetic rules, namely the *sculptural* and the *painterly*, while at the same time investigates the mechanism that makes these rules function in society; he is asking what art should be and at the same time what the relationship of art and society should be and this is realized by his gesture of incorporating the art-object in the existing site while at the same time keeping its aesthetic autonomy. As the artist declares he pays as much attention as he can to 'the viewer's understanding of the existing qualities of the place where the work will be sited as well as to the social relations that exist at the time something is shown' and he continues arguing that the connection is not only with the space but also with some idea that he wants to reinforce or show (Buren, 2005: 214). Buren declares the absence of any formal problem by claiming that it is reality that has to be created through art's intervention in the existing site.

Les Deux Plateaux, as in most of his installations, he establishes a permanent shift between an aesthetic object and a semi-functional one. He incorporates his art in everyday perceptual reality while at the same time he sets his specific aesthetic terms for the way elements of empirical reality appear in his work. The installation's grid is given material form by continuous lines composed of alternating black and white 8.7 cm squares; the grid extends in a decorative mode the repetitive composition of the Galerie d' Orleans ascribing also to the artwork a painterly character. This virtuality is intensified by the material chosen for these square patterns that constitute the filling of the grid, namely asphalt that as a molten material without contours amplifies the abstract character of the artwork. Buren's polygons, devoid of any structural function, produce an interplay between the painterly, the sculptural and the architectural. This is accomplished in two levels; in terms of their function as plastic elements as well as according to their relation to the ground. Therefore they acquire their painterly character from their alternating black and white stripes, their sculptural quality from their three-dimensionality and their architectural disposition from their morphological kinship with the monument's columns fluting, diameter, and height. On a second level there is a number of columns-polygons that are reduced to the ground level that are actually two dimensional and function as decorative cyclical patterns on the installation's canvas. A second set of columns belongs to the category of the sculptural elements of the artwork also because of their height that does not exceed the 60 cm height. And

finally there are the columns of differentiated heights that in some cases reach the three meters. Thus different virtual plateaus are created that alter the perpetual effect of the courtyard. The installation's painterly decorative sculptural elements are dispersed in space and juxtaposed with the site's historical and social attributes: space is transformed into a discursive field while the artist seeks to dismantle the illusion at the same time that he builds it. While the installation's abstract geometry suggests a pre-existed mental activity for spatial organization, at the same time, through its repetitive mode by which sculptural elements are dispersed in space, multiple rhythmical motives are created implying different readings of the built environment as well as alternative modes of appropriation. Space is transformed in a temporal field where rhythm and repetition constitute substantial elements for the installation's social function as they serve its organization as well as the processes of interaction that take place in it.

Rachel Whiteread's *House* and the hybrid monument

Rachel Whiteread's *House* can be characterized as a hybrid architectural monument that disrupts the conception of space and time. In terms of physicality it introduces a contrast between the prefabricated industrialized construction of house making and the process of casting of a visual artwork.[7] Thus in terms of its materialization it does not inspire compositional sense such as an architectural object does, since it constitutes a monolithic cast and monochromatic sculptural object. At the same time it functions as a monument, bringing into the surface the question of the artwork as a process of signaling and memorizing to a *place* giving meaning through the attributes of memory. This function lends to the artwork architectural attributes. In terms of *presence* and present time, the viewer is carried away through the vehicle of duration and of personal memory. The power of the artwork lies on its hybridity as a plastic phenomenon and at the same time as a physical object inextricably linked with an existing architectural construction, a real house: here, the notion of *specificity* is completely dependent on this condition and on the physical process of materialization of the artwork.

In Whiteread's artwork, the relationship between the material reality and its everyday objects is a complementary and at the same time an interdependent one: the materiality of the work interacts with the material objects of everyday reality. The work constitutes an autonomous sculptural object and at the same time the imprint of a real object in space that bears and reveals the traces of everyday activity. It is about a material import in space and at the same time a process of detachment and revelation of the non-perceptible components of the material environment in aesthetic terms. Through the process of casting and moulding Whiteread re-disposes and re-arranges the material boundaries of urban space by extracting fractions from the everyday flow of time. In Whiteread's artwork we can experience the coexistence of the ephemeral and

[7] Rachel Whiteread's *House* in 1993 in the East End neighborhood of London opened a great public debate. Many issues resurfaced, including allegations of housing and far-right conservative racism, issues of local community history and a lost "lifestyle." The project was created from the only surviving building built in the 1960s and demolished in 1993. It took place between August and October 1993 and was demolished in January 1994.

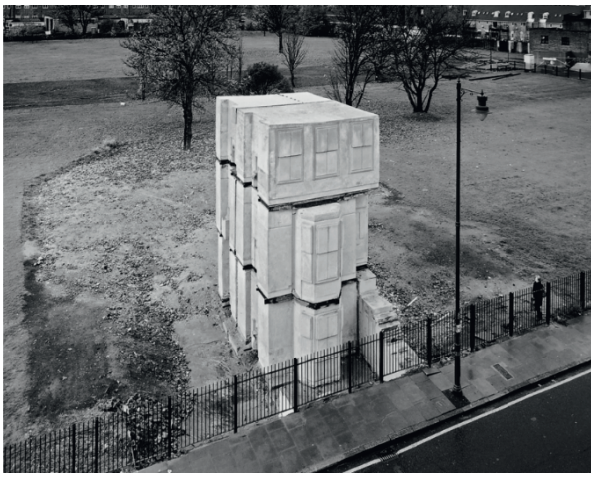

Fig. 6. Rachel Whiteread, *House*, Grove Road, East London. 1993 – 1994.

Fig. 7. Rachel Whiteread, *House*, Grove Road, East London. 1993– 1994.

the everyday with the monumental in the context of the relationship between art and architecture that characterizes the work of the artist in general. It is about a special condition in terms of everyday's appearances: in the aesthetic field of Whiteread's artistic practice everyday space and time are expressed through the element of inversion and stem from the dialectical relationship between the inside and the outside, the individual and the collective, the visible and the non-visible. It is a about a literal inversion –the materialization of the inverted inner space through moulding- and at the same time a metaphorical one in terms of symbolic meaning. The inner and spontaneous everyday is being exposed in common view and at the same time, while facing the outside and the institutional, becomes vulnerable and transforms to a symbol of the ephemeral, of the accidental and the precarious. Whiteread's work illuminates the

dimension of the faintest lived time of the spontaneous and vulnerable everyday life and brings it face to face, in scale 1:1, with the undifferentiated institutional time. And above all, the symbolization of this controversy is created in a very subtle and expressive way; the inner domestic everyday appears denuded bearing the subtle nuances of the spontaneously lived space and time and stands fragile adrift to the ruthless and undifferentiated outside.

Through the relationship between the ephemeral, the monumental and the everyday, art and architecture, Whiteread offers another field of perception; that of the coexistence of art and architecture, everyday life and aesthetic reality. While re-feeding everyday life with new appearances of the invisible, Whiteread captures the immeasurable space and time that lies in the intermediate 'voids' of measurable reality, namely the intermediate field where art resides.

Conclusions

The selected paradigms share in common the fact that they do not follow a significant narrative in terms of art historicism. They represent different versions of specificity and at the same time they acquire different modes of subjectivity in the urban sphere. While they all constitute critical spatial practices in the field of construction of art and architecture and at the same time different modes of ambivalence in the social sphere, they articulate different questions for the viewer to reflect upon as well as various possible ways of being in the city. It seems that the answers to the questions posed and materialized by the artwork's structural features lie on the nature of the ambivalence and ambiguity rooted in each case.

In the case of Whiteread the element of ambiguity is found in the merge of the ephemeral, the everyday and the monumental. Whiteread offers an aesthetic condition for the viewer experiences different sections of time. In her work the process of construction is completely artistic in terms of material handling and formation. A monolithic cast, the outcome of the process of moulding, stands as a monument in the shape of a house and from that moment it claims its position in the sphere of architecture as an ephemeral monument that traces the moments of the private everyday life of its inhabitants.

In the case of the Buren the element of ambivalence is expressed by a hybrid work that derives from the visual reconstruction of the urban architectural environment by its own materials that are transformed into sculptural elements. The viewer is invited to perform the different layers of the urban structure visual and architectural and at the same time historical. In the case of Van Eyck the notion of ambivalence that is expressed by the ambiguity of being private and collective at the same time in terms of materialization is found in the semi- sculptural forms that oscillate between art and architecture. Van Eyck in order to materialize coexistence of the subjective and the collective he inserts an abstract geometric composition in the urban tissue. The process is by definition architectural as it involves the classical stages of synthesis, design and construction. In Van Eyck's work the artistic features on a first level are found in the concept and function of the composition as a visual expression of the relation mentioned

above, namely the conjunction of the subjective and the collective. On a second level, there is the sculptural character of the forms that function as metaphors of place in terms of appropriation and presence by the user.

Fig. 8. Aldo Van Eyck, Playground, Zaanhof.

Fig. 9. Daniel Buren, *Les Deux Plateaux;* Image taken by the author.

As have been seen through the examination of the above works different ways of materialization lead to various modes and idioms of specificity and reception.

The selected three cases range from the architectural process of synthesis and visual composition (Van Eyck) through the semi-sculptural-semi-architectural installation (Buren) to the artistic process of construction and materialization through casting (Whiteread): from semi-abstract geometrical space, through abstract geometry and repetition to a phasmatic version of space and time. All these versions of space claim the presence of the viewer in different modes in order to become experienced place: through real appropriation and use but also through memory.

One way or another, it seems that along the course of evolution of in situ practice, the special condition of the conjunction of art and architecture offer a significant fertile discursive field in terms of restructuring and reconsidering the urban condition especially when it is intended to unravel it's hidden internal processes.

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Abstract

This study investigates in situ art of recent art history and its potential regarding the reconstruction of public space and its meanings. Paradigms of art and architecture conjugation in site specific interventions are examined with a view to answer questions such as the transformative role art can play when it constitutes a plastic phenomenon functioning in a complementary or reactive way as a part of the urban and social space. In situ's art sculptural objects, due to their transitional form, serve as metaphors for space and time and their condition of constant change in the everyday life of the city. They constitute a physical input in the urban space that seeks to redefine its material boundaries and highlight the interaction between the individual and the city seen as an incomplete entity in a constant re-casting. Through the practice of repetition and movement, sculptural objects are put in dialogue with the objects we come into contact daily, taking part into a new aesthetic reality. It is about a process of re-configurating of the everyday aesthetics of the city, challenging the relationship between art and architecture and thus offering new modes of spatialisation. By examining specific paradigms from the in situ art of the second half of the twentieth century (e.g. Aldo Van Eyck, Daniel Buren, Rachel Whiteread), this paper, seeks to unveil the process of activating the coexistence of the visible and the invisible, the inside and the outside, the private and the collective that this specific artistic process offers in material terms. The main question that this paper seeks to answer is how in situ art-especially when oscillating between art and architecture- affect the everyday flow of the undifferentiated space and time? How does it shape the coexistence and interaction between city's objects and subjects? Which alternative – discursive – reality does it offer?

Keywords: in situ art, art and architecture, place, specificity

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Sensing spaces, playing places. The sensuous geography of urban creativity

Aesthetic roots of urban creativity

Creativity has always played a key role in urban development, being a benchmark of innovation and competitiveness of cities. (Gospodini, 2002). However, its recent incarnation, which found expression in the original concept of the Creative City, carries a slightly different meaning as it is also extended by sphere of experiencing of the urbanity (Maitland, 2010). Thus, the driving intuition of urban change envisioned by one of the Creative City pioneers, Robert McNulty, president of Partners for Livable Communities, was to improve quality of urban live through widening urban experience by artistic participation of its citizens (McNulty, 1986). This idea was later developed by exploration of the unused potential of urban spaces by fostering imagination and appealing directly to sphere of citizens sensations, especially through art promotion and cultural tourism (Landry, 2000; Miles, 2013). In this regard it is important to note, that the postulated change in life quality was rather designed to be obtained through perceptual breakthrough regarding the very experience of yet existing cities, not designing new ones or building back better spaces for experiences. This way of thinking reveals not only aesthetic roots of the Creative City concept, but also aesthetic roots of creativity itself, because it is the perception that becomes the original factor in the Creative City development process. Not surprisingly, this point of view is supported by philosophical and psychological sources, where creativity is usually connected with sphere of sensual experience, as "a work's creativity is not an objective fact like length or weight, which can be measured accurately with appropriate instruments and mean the same even when applied to different objects, but is a subjective fact. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) made this plain when he argued that something is creative when experts in a domain apply the term to express their approval, that is, creativity is in the eye of the beholder" (Cropley & Cropley 2008: 155). In this regard, perceptions of the city among public (its citizens or visitors) are not subjective, in such sense, that each subject perceives radically

different the same urban environment (e.g creative versus not inspiring), however, those perceptions tend to vary in an experiential spectrum, which is proper for certain urban space and are a probe of the urban life quality. German aesthetician, Gernot Bohme uses the term of "atmosphere" which can be very helpful in grasping this idea of aesthetically defined common space for citizens. Bohme defines atmosphere as a "bodily felt space" (Bohme, 2017: 92), what indicates the fact that our experiences of certain spaces are grounded in sensations coming from human five senses, but also mediated through interpersonal "*sensus communis*," the common sense, including and managing the sum of personal citizens experiences (Bohme, 2017). This means that, the process of creative designing of spaces involves interpersonal sphere of aesthetic experience, which is grounded in the sum of bodily perceptions of its inhabitants and visitors.

Focus on change

The atmospheres, sticking to reading of Bohme, are prone to change as the human sense of space is changeable. Therefore, the German aesthetician calls for their active creation through means of aesthetic education, and what seems extremely important in light of urban creativity, through means of aesthetic economy (Bohme, 2016: 116). Creative urban planning follows this principle, focusing on cultivation of the art of space sensing in process of development of so called, modern "sensual urbanism" (Kitson & Bratt, 2016). The need for acting in such direction was well recognized by Bohme, who identifies the sensual deprivation as one of main features of XXI century capitalism:

> For some time now, we meet people who are not socialized by enjoyment but rather tuned for turnover and consumption; who are at bottom incapable of passion; live at a distance from their bodies; represent themselves as cool and unreceptive in their social relationships; and become increasingly relationship-poor, if not unable to commit. (Bohme, 2017: 117)

The problem is also defined in categories of fading of traditional urban authenticity, which is recognized nowadays as a value, which is manifesting more as a quality of experiences or objects, than quality of people (Zukin, 2008, 2011). In this respect, the call from advocates of urban creativity seems very reasonable. The careful reading of Charles Landry gives evidences that the original promise of improvement made on that field, relies on an idea of change of an aesthetic nature, which will encompass also personal, authentic level of experience: "It requires thousands of changes in mindset, creating the conditions for people to become agents of change rather than victims of change, seeing transformation as a lived experience not a one off event" (Landry, 2005: 3). Siobhan Gregory states that to succeed on that field, the "authentic place" branding should include the "sense of place", "that is inherent to the "singularities of the habitus" of the community. Habitus, as defined by Bourdieu (1989), is the production, **perception**, and appreciation of practices by those "who possess the code, the classificatory schemes necessary to understand their social meaning" (Aitken and Campelo, 2011: 918) (Gregory, 2019: 190).

The vicious circle. Creative arms race and creative subversion

However, theoretically recognized, the "authentic place branding" remains utopia. Gregory quotes Peck (2005) with the idea of so called "creativity script" as a big problem itself, as following its procedure: "urban cultural artifacts are "repackaged" and "assets" – especially arts and cultural resources like museums, galleries and arts programs but also social tolerance – to appeal to liberal gentrifiers" (Gregory, 2019: 191). Urban creativity appears then not as an universal, autonomous concept of an aesthetic nature, which is focused on transformation of experience, but presents itself as underpinned and dependent to machinery of creative economy, with its focus on so called "creative class," running and fueling the whole model of the Creative City (Lindner & Sandoval, 2021). This produces the situation of the vicious circle, where fostering creative places means fueling the creative economy, which directs back its *modus operandi* on creative place making, thus right to the city can be obtained only through "performing acts of consumption" (Kern, 2010: 151). Such a turn of events raises objections not only of groups of excluded but causes discomfort and causes anxiety also among potentially privileged, however very often conservative "middle class" members, as processes of participation in creative places are constructed as a challenge, which somehow burdens participants with coercion of performing "creative lifestyles." It appears obvious, as if they do not follow patterns of "the creativity script" they also will be isolated in their needs and daily life routines. The quality of "sensible spaces" and "authentic places" produced in this pattern is yet matter of concern of urban critiques such as Sharon Zukin (2008). Not surprisingly, we are nowadays observing vast processes of creative subversion, which can be understood as strong critique of those creative places of seductive nature, directed on sucking people's emotions and money under umbrella of trendy politics of "creative branding." This resistance usually concentrates on the already aforementioned matter of who possess the code, and is often presented as a kind of aesthetic war of social and economic consequences. In this regard, Oli Mould proposes the significant division on The Creative City (written with capital letters) which is latter associated with the machinery of creative industry and the creative city (small letters) of subversion, which produces a sphere of an aesthetic autonomy for urban actants. (Mould, 2016). This split, implicates however the situation of never ending arms race of who possess the code to the "creativity scrip." This happens as the Creative City have developed ability to intercept and take advantage of most of actions of subversion, which are directed on it (Petri, 2020). Moreover, the situation of constant clash, produces itself the sphere of exclusion and enforces following the non-compliant requirements on the creative city followers. This happens as living the way of urban subversion as an imperative is in fact reserved to narrow group of dwellers who can afford to perform the avant-garde lifestyles in the reality of late capitalism. In this respect, yet in the seventies of the XXth century, Daniel Bell presented the hiatus between life expectations concerning the sphere of aesthetic autonomy and economic conditions as one of the main contradictions of late capitalism (Bell 1976). We can however mention experimental attempts of overworking the sphere, such as the concept and implementation of so called TAZ's , Temporary

Autonomous Zones (Bey, 1991). TAZ is intended to work as a cultural, economic and social uprising, a zone detached from processes of capitalistic performance of urbanity, although once again, live has proven, that most of citizens will never follow its logic as they will recognize it as a challenge of too high level in relation to their threshold of live comfort (Sellars, 2010). Is then the autonomous, aesthetic, urban creativity the domain reserved for the narrow group of the "enlightened," eternal rebels and only the delusive dream for the rest of us?

Affect, creativity and the "play" factor. Embodied urban games and boundary conditions for qualitative aesthetic experience

The already quoted researches accurately present problematic character of urban creativity, although it seems its full aesthetic potential remains still unrecognized. One of main paradigmatic switches in modern urban studies, which are conducted from position of aesthetics, concerns the aspect they seem to overlook, but which can give us keys to understanding of creativity in wider scope: the affect. The concept of affective bodies has been developed in a philosophical work of Jane Bennett concerning the agency of materiality (2010). Bennet reinterprets Brian Massumi's modern notion of affect as intensity (2013) and radically widens its scope on all materiality, also the so called "inanimate matter." Bennett introduces then the new category of "vibrant materiality," which blurs the division on biological and physical (inanimate) matter (2010). In this notion, affect becomes actant which overcomes human cognitive conditions and becomes universal agency, covering also non-human aspects of cognition (the impersonal affect): "Organic and inorganic bodies, natural and cultural objects (these distinctions are not particularly salient here) *all* are affective. I am here drawing on a Spinozist notion of affect, which refers broadly to the capacity of any body for activity and responsiveness." (Bennet, 2010: 12). Similar approach concerning the affect is applied in cultural and urban studies by Nigel Thrift in his project of the Non-Representational Theory, where the movement of bodies (or their locomotion) becomes the starting point for further investigations of embodied practices with the use of interdisciplinary methodological apparatus (Thrift, 2008).

The affective approach has been proposed also in regard of the urban creativity issue. Jan Jagodziński follows Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari theory of affect as "intrinsic body" (1987) and combines it with Giorgio Agamben's notion of affective as the impersonal force of life, the spirit of life (Agamben, 1998) to point on practical possibilities of liberation from as he calls it, the "aesthetics of designer capitalism":

> We can begin by saying that affects are sensations that have their own particular logic, a 'logic of sensation' as Deleuze calls it, and this logic of sensation—as aisthetics—sets it apart from aesthetics of designer capitalism, which has been the usual playing field for representational art at the level of body image. Here we have a different understanding of the image facilitated by the inhuman apparati of digitalization as well as the nonhuman 'biological' body that has no image. (Jagodziński, 2020: 174)

The presented approach affirms the affect, as the force to explore urbanity through artistic practice. The practice which is aimed on establishing the aesthetic autonomy of urban experience in independency of the logics of creative industry "in a global capitalist world where everything converges into a single act of destructive creation or creative destruction to keep the system going" (Jagodziński, 2020: 179). In this regard, the artful life becomes the art of becoming, the art of free, creative live (zoë) (Jagodziński, 2020: 175–176). Therefore, Jagodziński puts hope in a modern digital art and education as a possible mode of, as he calls after Ranciere, "dissensus" – a conflict between sensory perception [realm of Zoë] and the way of making sense of it [cognition]." (Jagodziński, 2020: 180), which can help to redistribute senses on the map of the urban creativity. However inspiring, the proposed notion, becomes problematic for the very same reason as the TAZ concept as it demands from its apprentice to introduce some significant, drastic changes in the way of living to fulfill the imperative of the postulated nomadic lifestyle. In this regard, the concept of socially engaged art is well recognized, especially with its problems concerning the matter of social – artistic participation (Habermas, 1980; Kester, 2004, 2005; Bishop, 2006). It is striking that, Jagodziński himself presents his concept as an another way of the Deleuzian minoritatian art, which hardly "embraces creativity in its most open potentiality" (Jagodziński, 2020: 180).

However, not everyone is an artist or can pretend to be like, fortunately there are other ranges of more accessible activities, which can help to sensually transform the notion of urban creativity. In this respect, researchers point on variety of playful, somatic activities grouped under the umbrella of so called "lifestyle sports" (Borden, 2003; Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2011; Wheaton, 2004, 2013). Skateboarding, parkour, freeruning, urban freeriding and many others, are activities of which, each one have its own specificity, but all of them share the common denominator: cultivation of movement, through practice of locomotion of bodies (Petri op. cit). The performed form of movement is cultivated through habitual training of perception, aimed on obtaining better interaction with urban structures and textures, e.g. the practice of *traceur* (parkour) doesn't refer respectively to performing vaults and jumps as a form of completing tasks in urban space, but is experienced rather as a form of somatic, spatial integration, – sensing the urban space and reconfiguring the quality of interaction (Lamb, 2014; Castaner, 2014). This situates most of urban lifestyle sports as perceptual urban games, placing them, according to Roger Callois games theory, directly in *ilynx* category (Callois 1961). *Ilynx* are kind of somatic games connected with pursuit of vertigo and their function is simply to disrupt the perception of player in quest to obtain a state of an aesthetic pleasure of somehow difficult nature (Callois, 1961: 23–25). The moment of destroying the stability of perception brings together anxiety and joy and is directly connected with sensations of experiencing increased speed, force of gravitation and rebound, exceeding personal comfort zone. What appears as very important, Callois connects the appearance of the *ilynx* games category with gains of Industrial Revolutions and points on presence of powerful, as he calls them, "vertigo-inducing machines" producing "violence and shock" (Callois, 1961: 26). Among them, Callois counts sport cars, motorcycles but also skis, what makes us think with attention about the locomotive environment

of modern urban spaces, filled with bikes, skateboards, scooters and other, both analog and electric personal transport devices. In parallel, some of activities not demanding mediation through technological artifacts, such as downhill running, falling or sliding (Callois, 1961: 24) also fall into *ilynx* category, what opens up possibility of classifying parkour, freeruning and other sorts of urban movement performances as *ilynx* games.

In the aforementioned point of view, modern urban games can be considered as a form of somatic adaptation to changing reality of urban environment, filled with machinery, innovative technologies with their interfaces, artificial structures and rapid locomotion. The mechanism of such games relies on exploring the states of somatic disorder (e.g. vertigo) in working boundaries created by certain game scenario. The movement then is performed in an arranged situation, thus in some kind of isolation from the rest of urban reality. However, during the process of repetition it is incorporated back into the stream of common, daily – life experience. The mechanism can be perceived as an inverted version of Constant Nieuwenhuys vison of the New Babylon, where urban citizens from the future were suspected to invent machinery for their psycho-somatic development (Wigley, 1998). However, it appears such machinery yet outrun common experience, and the citizens have to catch up with all the new urban technology which has been already introduced. This can be performed through implementation of *ilynx* games, which appeal to the already described mechanism of urban creativity, as a form of an aesthetic transformation. What is very important, such games are common and easy to perform, regardless of the personal abilities of players. Such games are also scalable, as they follow "challenge – to – skill" formula, thus, they let the possibility to scale the risk factor in regard to personal level preferences.

Taking advantage of urban plays. Theory & practice for sensuous geography of the creative city

The aforementioned concept of creative, transformative urban plays and games should not be considered in isolation from wider theoretical frameset. This is important, as in spite of the fact, that the already described, creative potential of each practice is resting in the practice itself, the situation of those practices in wider theoretical context appears crucial for their agency. For instance, the management of such activities as freeruning and skateboarding, which was following the traditional logics of urban creativity, thus subjecting them to principles of creative economy, led to production of powerful effects in forms of social images (through social and traditional media) and numerous spaces for their practice (such as skateparks and urban workout gyms), but the transformative effect faded very quickly, as they became recognized, as washed out from their initial transgressive force, in process of becoming just another form of capitalization of the aesthetic performance of citizens (Mould op cit; Kern op cit; Petri op cit.). This happened precisely, as they had to be adapted to "place branding script" strategy and assigned to the concept of development of certain urban landscape.

In this context, it is significant to mention, that transgressive urban games and plays, were territorially and formally attached to processes of rapid transformation of urban space in XIXth, XXth and XXIst century. Finally, their place and meaning

in urban plans seems to be result, both of direct planning (Riesss, 1991, 2013) and processes of subversion (Mould, op cit.). This phenomenon was in detail described in respect to parkour and freeruning disciplines emergence in Paris suburbs in the end of XXth century (Angel, 2016). This was however valid, until the appearance of the paradigm of the gentrified landscape. As for the timeline, it is worth to note that classic topology of urban games in relation to types of urbanity, proposed by Steven Riess, starts in around 1820 – from the concept of 'the walking city," then transfers to long era of "industrial city" (with its formal affiliations for plays and games, such as stadiums, city halls and sport clubs) in around 1870, which in the 60ies of the XXth century is being replaced by "the suburbanized metropolis," the hotbed of modern lifestyle sports (Riess, 1991). More of those, became later the medium of urban subversion like skateboarding in 70ies of XXth century. And now, we can see very close time correlation, regarding the rise and the fall of urban subversive sports and the propagation of the "creative script" in modern urban planning. The 70ies and 80ies were the golden decades of urban subversion through urban sports, where the dusk of the millennium becomes the time of their rapid professionalization and removal from the sphere of spontaneous social interaction, in for promotion of values such as security and comfort (Wilcox et al. 2003). This process seems correspond precisely to emergence of new, "gentrified landscape [which] for the service economy develops in the forms of "comprehensive class-inflected" complexes that combine entertainment, work, and luxury retail all under one roof in the form of "live-work spaces" or clustered by geographically delineated "empowerment zones" (Gregory, op cit.: 189). In this milieu, urban games and plays cease to be subversive, as they are more and more underpinned to those new, clusters of "live-work spaces," and reinforce their function of simulated aesthetic experience (Petri, op cit: 211). The potential of transgression, which was fueling urban games is now being neutralized, because of the strategy of their spatial isolation and avoidance of the element of interaction, which appears as the driving ideology of building the new, creative places of their performances. They still involve the element of challenge-to-skill strategy, however they are designed to be performed as safe as possible and in the strict, spatial isolation from the rest of the "street life," thus they do not fall into modern urban notion of authenticity which is defined as a "relational, dynamic, practice-related condition that emerges when individuals engage with the world around them" (Piazzoni, 2018: 157).

In this situation, a possibility of rewriting the creative branding script to include elements of the "authentic," social-material interaction to balance the effects of gentrification, appears as a tempting idea. However, such voices, calling for empowerment and inclusion of citizens in wider context of urban performance are present in the debate, they tend to be marginalized (Makeham, 2005). It is not surprising, as those postulates of including "the performance in its entirety" (Makeham, op cit.: 152) are difficult to assimilate by key investors, as they mean directly: to pay more, wait longer for the profit, and accept bigger risk. This standpoint is expected only to grow stronger in the forthcoming era of the "stakeholders capitalism," where more and more spheres of public goods and services, which were so far managed by local, urban authorities, will be taken over by global corporations through different forms of business -social

partnerships (Schwab 2017). This trend indicates, that possibilities of reworking problems generated by the gentrified landscapes will not be realized on general level of urban governance and the quest of creative placemaking can be defined only in categories of personal, local experience. Thus, instead of feeding empty hopes for balanced, urban spatial policy responding to matter of somatic autonomy of citizens, we should rather pay more attention directly on processes of practical, somatic exploration and management of transitional and ephemeral urban spaces, where such autonomy can be realized individually or collectively. Such places were described precisely in urban geography in categories of "no-man's lands" (Woods, 2000), "terrain vague" (Sola-Morales, 1995) or "marginal spaces" (Gandy, 2013), where authors advocate for the possibilities of their further exploration of an aesthetic nature (Gandy, op. cit.; Edensor, 2005). In this regard, Edensor and De Silvey point on processes of aesthetic exploration of landscape through somatic activities, such as explorative walks (2012). The range of such practices can be widened by adding other locomotive activities of an exploration nature, such as parkour, freerunning, street skating, urban freeriding and many others, which can constitute the basis for development of critical, sensuous geography of landscape (Rodaway, 1996). However, such geography implicates also changes in notion of the landscape itself, as it is now considered as interactive and affective (Christensen, 2017). In this respect, Edensor points on the issue of landscape affordances, as crucial element of sensuous interaction of explorative walking through industrial ruins:

> I consider the sensual characteristics engendered by strolling through ruins, drawing attention to the encounter with the ruin's peculiar affordances and unusual materialities, productive of a range of sensory experience that coerce the walking body into unfamiliar states (Edensor, 2008: 123)

Such notion of ruins (as an example of terrain vague or a marginal space) leads us to wider understanding of those types of spaces, as preferred locations for creative, embodied processes of reconfiguring meanings of urban places. This can happen, as such spaces are in some sense emptied from previous meanings and contexts, the cultural layer of attached somatic habits and rituals, thus direct interaction through the presence of their materialities becomes dominant. According to Edensor, such practice helps to "enervate the walking body" (Edensor, op cit.: 123), what can be understood in categories of sensual enhancement of the sphere of urban experience. Therefore, future recommendations for sensuous urban planning should include and reconsider the presence and function of the no man's lands, as locations left over for play and exploration to retain balanced development of the creative city.

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Abstract

Urban creativity tends to be defined as a driving force of the ongoing changes in modern cities. While being a formally neutral term, the "creative," in practice usually identifies all "good" sides of processes of urban transformations, especially those concerning the rise of spaces for sensual experiencing. The Creative City makes then a certain promise of aesthetic inclusion, enhanced participation, and autonomy for its citizens and visitors. However, the Creative City itself is neither an autonomous concept, nor the self-sufficient urban entity, but is entangled in economic, organizational, and social aspects of urban performance. All this makes us ask, is its promise trustworthy or rather empty?

Keywords: creativity, urbanity, space, place, sensuous geography

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Poetry and urban space: The *Phalène* as a poetic collective practice of placemaking and commonality

> The "Phalène" is the poetic game or open round to the voice and figure of all, answering Lautréamont's "poetry must be made by all and not by one."[1]
>
> (Iommi et al. 1969: 1)

The *Phalène* (moth) or Poetic Act is a mode of poetry as collective action formulated by the poet Godofredo Iommi at the end of the 1950s in Valparaíso, Chile.[2] The poet organised the first Poetic Acts with a group of architects and artists from the PUCV School of Architecture and Design.[3] Iommi continued working on his poetic proposal of the *Phalène* with a group of European poets and artists in the early 1960s while he lived in Europe.[4] This article examines the *Phalène* by analysing unpublished documents that register the poetic experiences carried out in France during the 1960s and Ciudad Abierta (Open City) in the 1970s. Through analysing the *Phalène*, the article provides perspectives about the dialogue between art and the city around the notions of the ephemeral, commonality, and the resignification of the place.

[1] The authors have translated all the quotes in this article.

[2] Godofredo Iommi (1917–2001) was an argentinian poet, professor at the School of Architecture and Design at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, founding member of the Instituto de Arquitectura UCV and of the artistic community of Ciudad Abierta de Amereida, Chile.

[3] The founding members of the PUCV School of Architecture and Design were the architects Alberto Cruz, Miguel Eyquem, Fabio Cruz, José Vial, Arturo Baeza, Francisco Méndez, and Jaime Bellalta, together with the poet Godofredo Iommi and the sculptor Claudio Girola.

[4] Participating of the *Phalène* group in Europe were Godofredo Iommi, François Fédier, Jorge Perez-Roman, Francisco Méndez, Michel Deguy, Enrique Zañartu, Edison Simons, Sheila Hicks, Henri Tronquoy and Josée Laperyrere, amongs others.

The Phalène as a collective action in public space

This first section analyses a series of poetic experiences carried out in France by Godofredo Iommi in the 1960s. The participants of these experiences registered them in a travel log where they collected –"like a wound, which gave them origin"– various actions and reflections around the *Phalène* (Iommi et al. 1962: 25). Those who participated with Iommi in organising these first poetic experiences shared their perceptions and ideas after each poetic act. The group shared their perspectives, trying to discover the way and form of the *Phalène,* raising questions later explored in the following acts, always expectant and observing what happens in the city. Thus, shaping the *Phalène* was a process of discovery, where successive collective experiences revealed the very nature of this poetic practice.

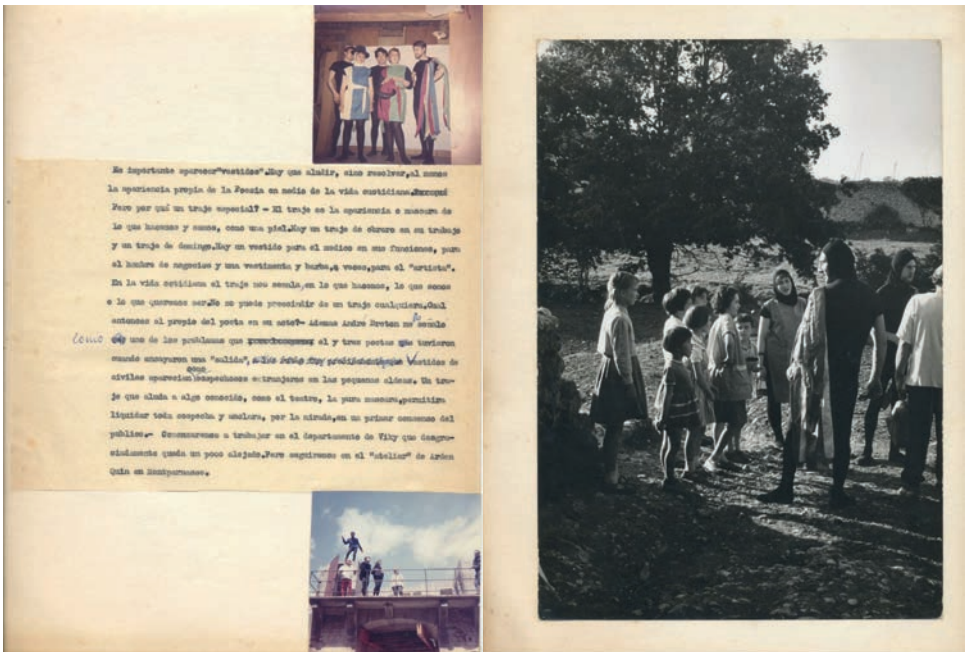

Fig. 1. Pages of the document with photografies and descriptions of the first poetic experiences in France, c.1962. Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

Based on these first poetic experiences, Godofredo Iommi published the Lettre de l'Errant (Letter of the Wanderer) in 1963. This publication is one of Iommi's main poetic manifestos, in which he poses the poetic foundations of the *Phalène* as a mode of poetry in action. Iommi's proposal arises from a central questioning of his poetic work: the question of the relationship between poetry and reality. In his Lettre de l'Errant, the poet affirmed that "poetry in action truly inserts into reality. She opens the possibility to fund all effective existence, and at the same time, it becomes an act in the world" (Iommi, 1963: 23). As a result of this pursuit, the poet seeks to detach from writing. In other words, Iommi proposed

a form of poetry that relinquishes the written word and relies only on the live voice and present body of the poet who submerges himself in reality to incite an act of creation.

For Iommi, the poetic word is capable of opening the known world to give birth to an unprecedented reality. The idea of the unknown relates to the emergence of the unexpected, a temporary irruption that brings new relationships. Accordingly, Iommi proposes the *Phalène* as an instrument to open reality to the unknown. The opening relies on the inaugural nature of the poetic word, which appears preceding all meanings, naming things again so that reality opens up to a field of multiple possibilities. The poetic act rearticulates the context, the people, the spaces, the atmospheres, and what happens in the place. Then, in the *Phalène*, the poet bursts into the city space and life with his present body and live voice to produce an extraordinary event of ludic and collective celebration capable of suspending the known world to reveal it as if for the first time.

The *Phalène* is an eminently collective act. In the first poetic experiences in France, the group determined that there had to be an order of actions according to each participant's background. Then, the *Phalène* is an action carried out by many: poets, architects, painters, sculptors and artists. The group that participates in a *Phalène* moves across the city from the public spaces of its urban centres to its obsolete outskirts, across open fields and rural areas between towns and even across continents. Furthermore, the collective nature of the *Phalène* not only relies on the group of poets and artists that are part of the caravan but also on everyone who wants to participate. While crossing the city, the participants of the *Phalène* invite passers-by to a poetic game and comply with Lautréamont's indication: "poetry must be made by all and not by one" (Lautréamont, 1988: 591). The *Phalène* is then an artistic action in the city, where artists from multiple disciplines and passers-by gather around a poetic game proposed by the poet. In this way, the understanding of the collective sense of the *Phalène* entails radically open participation, in which everything and everyone is part of the poetic act even when they do not know or consider themselves within it.

The radically open dimension of the *Phalène* manifests in Iommi's questioning of the possible dissolution of the relationship "interpreter-spectator." During their first poetic experiences in France, the group discussed an actor's aspirations when interpreting a theatre play and the spectators who, in turn, also expect something. The group questioned this relationship, proposing the *Phalène* as a practice that distances itself from a spectacle. On the interpreter's question, Iommi wonders, "what will happen to me when I am the interpreter or witness or 'act' of my own poetic words? A witness of poetry. It is a whole life and mode of existence" (Iommi et al., 1962: 31). Hence, in the *Phalène*, the interpreter activates the words and is not a character but has the nature of a witness, revealing the words in their apparition. For this reason, the *Phalène* distances itself from other contemporary practices such as performances or happenings.[5]

[5] Situating the *Phalène* vis-à-vis discourses on participatory art and participatory placemaking opens multiple proximities and distances around debates on authorship, site-specific approaches, and participatory process in their various ranges from community-based art to interaction. In this sense, an important distinction is that the *Phalène* is not activist or socially engaged; not even its action is considered an artwork. The *Phalène* is located prior to any manifestation of art because it is a pure poetic opening. Iommi differentiated the *Phalène* from the

Fig. 2. The poet Godofredo Iommi standing on a wall during a *Phalène* in France, c.1960. Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

Another critical question that appeared during the first poetic experiences in France was how the group could approach people in public places. In the first *Phalènes*, the group found that an atmosphere of shyness marked the encounter with the locals. In the narrations of these first poetic experiences, the group describes these contact with the locals as one characterised by mistrust and distance, but also curiosity. The children listened from afar and approached after the invitation to participate in the act of making poetry together. Iommi points out that in the poetic act, "real participation is in the disappearance of spectator and author. We are all simultaneously one, and the other, and poetry is key. The real poetry." (Iommi et al., 1962: 36). The *Phalène* is a poetic practice where poetry triggers a sense of togetherness.

Once the act was over, when they were already heading back to the car, the children followed them, running and singing. Iommi refers to this instance of celebration and gratuitousness as "the festive, that is, this chosen hour when there are no more spectators nor interpreters" (Iommi et al., 1962: 36). The presence of poetry provoked the game, that particular and strange moment where confrontation dissolves, where

"provocative act, invented by the futurists, exacerbated by Dada, carried out by the surrealists, and recovered by the young North American poets and artists in the happening" in that the poetic act is "an apparition of poetry, whose fundamental characteristic is that it has no contradictor, it has nothing to denounce, it has nothing to refer to [...] it has only one thing as its objective: to reveal any human being its human condition." (Iommi, Reyes 2011).

the interpreter and the spectator disappear to give way to the act and, with it, the festive. The festive manifests the absolute gratuitousness of the poetic act, fed by everyday life and reciprocity. Gratuitousness produces an unusual temporary break that makes room for the mutual, where everything transforms.

The poet's presence triggers the passage from the quotidian rhythm of everyday urban life to the extraordinary festive event of the *Phalène*. The poet's character is evident in the *Phalène*, as the one enabling and opening space and time to encourage the appearance of that in common. Iommi points out, "it is necessary to obey the poetic act with and despite the world to unleash the festive; and the festive is the game, utmost rigour of my freedom. Such is the poet's mission because the world must always be passionate again" (Iommi, 1963: 21). For this reason, Iommi proposes that the poet is the "bearer of the festive. He is the bearer of probabilities because, with his presence, he triggers unforeseen relationships and provokes active participation in games in order to fulfil what we were told: 'poetry should be made by all and not by one.'" (Iommi, 1963: 21–23) Thus, poetry in action unleashes a playful instant where the participants remain expectant towards what poetry may indicate; it is an instrument for the festive to occur.

To produce the atmosphere that leads to the extraordinary, the poets and artists who summon the poetic game dress with paper costumes and masks. These costumes are employed to place those who walk through the city in a different environment and disposition. By recognising the passage from the quotidian to the extraordinary, the costumes dispose the passers-by to leave everyday life and enter the playful spirit of the *Phalène*. Along with the costumes, before the eyes of passers-by, the *Phalène* begins with El Desdichado by Gerard de Nerval, which according to Iommi, "sets the fundamental tone of the *Phalène"* (Iommi et al., 1986: 204). After this opening poem, the poet proposes a game that can use drawn cards or other implements to evoke words in those who participate. The poet collects these words to shape a poem made by all. In this way, the city and its multitude form part of the poetic act.

Fig. 3. Students of the Valparaíso School of Architecture and Design during a *Phalène* in Reñaca, 1972. Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

The *Phalène* as a poetic act of placemaking

This second section examines the *Phalène* as a placemaking practice reviewing the poetic acts carried out in Ciudad Abierta in the early 1970s.[6] Ciudad Abierta is a field of experimentation for the arts, set to explore the relationship between poetry and trades. In Ciudad Abierta, the poet is present, and his presence sets the origin of any work with the celebration of a *Phalène.* Thus, Ciudad Abierta and its works take place in a poetic temporality, that of the intermission of *Phalènes.* Iommi called the poetry of Ha-Lugar, that mode of poetry that deals with the opening of places by indicating its origin.

The departure point that sets the work's origin occurs as soon as the poetic act provokes the crossing between the word and the place. This crossing reveals the places to an unprecedented destination by opening the field of its possibilities. The words that appear in the *Phalène* signal the place, and the action that befalls brings questions about the place. The painter Jorge Pérez-Román, who participated in several poetic experiences in Europe and South America, indicates that a fundamental characteristic of the *Phalène* is being able to "turn the landscape inside out like a glove" (Iommi et al., 1962: 29). That sense of surprise and astonishment, of showing things as if for the first time, is the inaugural potential of the *Phalène*. The poetic act reveals the place as for the first time; it is a beginning that provokes a turn in what is present there.

Fig. 4. Opening poetic acts of the land in Ciudad Abierta, c.1972. Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

The poetic acts for opening the Ciudad Abierta grounds took place in November 1968 and consisted of a series of games. Through these games, the group proposed exploring two words, abandonment and limit. The poetic act does not necessarily seek to provide a particular meaning to the word but to put them in uncertainty. Thus, the group did not carry out the opening poetic acts to reach a specific result but to initiate a path of elucubration that would allow the group to begin thinking and building Ciudad Abierta.

[6] Ciudad Abierta is located north of Valparaíso and was founded in 1970 by the School of Architecture and Design members.

During the opening acts of Ciudad Abierta, the group referred to the sense of place that emerges from the poetic act as "the unpunctual [...] a long stay that in all its parts is at the same time beginning and end." (Iommi, Cruz, 1971) This notion refers to the idea that the construction of Ciudad Abierta does not follow any planning; its realisation is marked only by that inaugural moment of the poetic act. The poetic act opens the way to a novel comprehension of the place indicated by the voice of poetry. The place resignifies the word, and the word finds a place. The word then not only makes the place appear but also shows the nature of the territory. The *Phalène* brings to light the directive of the place over the landscape. Hence, the poetic act provokes the appearance of that directive where the landscape opens up to be inhabited.

From the collective poetic action, the *Phalèn*e reveals the place from its singularity, which gives origin to a plastic intervention carried out by the artists and participants. These plastic interventions of the artists that mark the place from the poetic action were known as "signs":

> We have traced signs. The event becomes verbs and actions in multiple ways. [...] Then the event becomes chantier, and each of us becomes chantier. Some signs are now executions. That is why the gaze reaches the hands at a given moment to ignore the mind and the heart. [...] Construction hands of occasions: of the cities. Hands of love for the work that goes beyond servile jobs and keep the relationship between sign and work. (Iommi et al., 1986: 138–140).

The sign marks the new perspective of the place that emerged from its crossing with the poetic word that names its singularity. This sign can be ephemeral and quickly disappear. Its existence or realisation in no way determines the success of the *Phalène* since she is accomplished in the pure present moment of the poetic act. The plastic intervention of artists cyphers the newly revealed sense of place, not from the landscape, but the signification of the poetic word, the sign of the place. Then, the expressions of the poetic acts have their distinctions on each occasion, marking the unrepeatable present moment of the *Phalène*.

Fig. 5. A sign in Ciudad Abierta done during a *Phalène* in 1977. Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

The extension of the ephemeral, the construction of commonality and the signification of the place from the word

The analysis of the poetic practice of the *Phalène* reveals critical characteristics that can provide new perspectives on the dialogue between art and the city. The first aspect concerns the ephemeral nature of the word and its presence in the city. With the *Phalène*, poetry is inserted into reality, becoming part of it. The poet exposes himself to the city and its events, surpassing the written poem. In Iommi's words, the poetic act "does not leave a 'work'; but it inserts into a path deeper and more hidden than the book: the legend" (Iommi, 1963: 23). Then, the *Phalène* is a practice that reveals the place from the uttered word in the extension of the city. This sense of place appears in the present and is untimely and ephemeral.

Although the *Phalène* happens in the ephemeral moment of the uttered word, the poetic action echoes in the new meanings that the participants articulate from the collective experience of the place. Poetry appears in that reciprocity of presences: poet and citizens. The playful game frames interaction in public space as a motor of collective action that builds commonality. Hence, through word of mouth and encounters with others, the *Phalène* constructs meaning in common of the place. In this way, the possibility of housing artistic action in the public sphere opens up from the collective encounter and the uttered word.

The open condition of public spaces places art in a challenge, where the uncertainty of the unexpected in the city becomes a potentiality for the work. The *Phalène* opens the possibility of inhabiting public spaces and resignification everyday life. Iommi points out that "for us, all the unusual reality and all the wonderful everyday life […] are there in the poetic adventure." (Iommi, 1963: 24). Thus, the *Phalène* is a way of being together with others to produce an unexpected present in the city from the poetic word. The *Phalène* opens an extraordinary instance in the city, turning the unforeseen and unpredictable into a gift.

The *Phalène* is a practice that occurs in movement through the territory. In this movement, the *Phalène* reconnects and weaves urban space and life, making it possible to gather the dispersed. The movement in the *Phalène* is not a functional journey or mere displacement but rather an expectant dwelling on the urban, aiming to unfold the city from novel perspectives. Therefore, the *Phalène* is a new possibility of the city each time, intertwining the urban fabric and providing new meanings when the inhabitants gather around the poet's words. As a result, the urban extension unfolds as a field with multiple alternatives of appropriation and participation. Furthermore, the *Phalène* opens to an experience of the city as a multiplicity of places revealed as equivalent by the poetic word.

Fig. 6. *Phalène* in the park Quinta Vergara, Viña del Mar. 1971. Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

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Abstract

The article examines the Phalène or Poetic Act, a mode of poetry as collective action formulated by the poet Godofredo Iommi. The authors analyse how the Phalène opened a creative heritage from the early experiences carried out by Iommi in Europe during the 1960s to the current poetic endeavours of the School of Architecture and Design PUCV in Valparaíso, Chile. Through analysing the Phalène, the article provides new perspectives on the relationship between poetry and urban space. About this relationship, the authors propose the Phalène as a poetic act of placemaking in which the ephemeral presence of the uttered word unleashes ludic interactions in the participants provoking the construction of commonality and the resignification of the place.

Keywords: Poetic Act, Open participation, Collective placemaking, Sense of place, Ciudad Abierta.

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"Decolonising" museums through experimental practices: the case of MUBIG, a neighbourhood museum in Milan

The article reflects on the role, possibilities and agency of neighbourhood and community museums within the complex knot of themes and claims that runs through contemporary museology, which has come under severe scrutiny from many quarters, especially with regard to its ability to take into account the narrative of racialised and marginalised subjects, or more generally to "pass the microphone" in order to share curatorship and authorship.[1]

In a season of widespread social protest against vertical, colonial systems of knowledge and knowledge administration, unrepresentative of the variety of society in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, etc., museums are being asked to *unlearn* their cognitive structure, self-assumptions and automatisms, and design a new epistemological statute more attentive to social justice and plurality (Azoulay, 2019). The very concept of the universal museum, the one that encloses within its walls the history of knowledge and the highest achievements of humanity, taxonomising them, is the subject of severe criticism by those – activists, researchers, artists – who question what

[1] Chynoweth, Lynch, Petersen, and Smed (eds.). *Museums and Social Change. Challenging the Unhelpful Museum*. London-New York: Routledge, 2021; Cimoli. *Musei, territori, comunità interpretative: le nuove sfide della partecipazione*, "Il Capitale Culturale," n. 11, 2020, 249–266; Id. *From Representation to Participation: inclusive practices, co-curating and the voice of the protagonists in some Italian migration museums*, in: Watson, Barnes and Bunning, *A Museum Studies Approach to Heritage*, London-New York: Routledge 2019, 655–663; ICOM-OECD. *Culture and Local Development: Maximising the Impact. A Guide for Local Governments, Communities and Museums*, 2019, https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/OECD-ICOM-GUIDE-MUSEUMS.pdf, accessed 15 December 2022; Janes and Sandell (eds.). Museum Activism. London-New York: Routledge, 2019; *Museums and Local Development. An Introduction to Museums, Sustainability and Well-being*. "Museum International," vol. 71, n. 3–4 (2019); Scott. *Museums and Public Value. Creating Sustainable Futures*, Abingdon-Oxon: Routledge, 2013; Witcomb, Andrea. *Reimagining the Museum. Beyond the Mausoleum*. London-New York: Routledge, 2003.

forms of violence and despoliation have brought the cultural testimonies of so many peoples and cultures to so few places in the world (Raicovich, 2020).

It's time of crisis and deep, sometimes painful insights on the side of the museums: all cultural institutions have to face a deep self-reflective process that (sometimes) leads to apologies, reparative actions towards silenced subjects, transformation of displays or communication apparatuses, critical revision of the profile of their "founding fathers," and restitution of objects and human remains, Yet, the role of the museum in contemporary society remains more relevant than ever (Chynoweth et al., 2021; Heumann, 2022; Murawski, 2021). The years of the Covid-19 pandemic have amply demonstrated this: museums have been able to cultivate dialogue with their audiences, offer spaces for relief and reflection, link past, present and future, generate creative projects whose duration has gone beyond the emergency (shared gardens, community radio programs, training courses, focus groups on relevant topics, etc.).[2] The same can be said for the activation with respect to the so-called "refugee crisis" of 2015–16 and the arrivals of these months from Ukraine:[3] museums can put themselves at the service of cultural diplomacy, they can represent "safe places" in which to learn a language or a skill, environments for socialisation in difficult moments.

In the light of this premise, in this article I argue that community museums can be an important complement to the narrative of national or city museums, by virtue of their rootedness in a circumscribed territory whose stories, desires and drives they wish to tell. I understand "decolonisation" here as a complex process affecting power relations in any political arena, in any space of the "public," from universities to museums, from libraries to schools, from the management of public space to that of gender relations, and so forth (Borghi, 2020). I also quote James Bradburne, director of the Pinacoteca di Brera, when he said that the collaboration between his museum and the Greco neighbourhood was not to be intended as a "colonial" one, but rather one based on equality and mutual exchange.[4]

The points of strength of community museums are the knowledge of the community of reference, the explicit dimension of service and listening, and the continuity of dialogue in both directions (in contrast to the episodic nature of many of the large

[2] *Museums in the Pandemic. A Survey of Responses on the Current Crisis*, "Museum Worlds," vol. 8, n. 1 (July 2020), 111–134; NEMO, *Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 situation on museums in Europe. Final Report*, 2020, https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_documents/NEMO_COVID19_Report_12.05.2020.pdf, accessed 15 December 2022; ICOM. Museums and COVID-19: 8 steps to support community resilience, April-August 2020, https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CommunityResilience_UpdatedArticle_EN_final_20200930.pdf, accessed 15 December 2020. Mayer and Hendler. *Growing with Covid: Curatorial Innovation in Times of Incertainty*, "Museum Management and Curatorship," vol. 37, n. 4 (January 2022), 368–382; Iervolino and Sergi. *Museums, Class and the Pandemic: An investigation into the lived experiences of working-class Londoners*, 2022, https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections/about-our-collections/enhancing-our-collections/collecting-covid/museums-class-and-pandemic?fbclid=IwAR0v6q-qX0hMV2y83gmuaEeoQls-J4U_L2-S21JyusImNrRJ4jhl-MSEM00, accessed 15 December 2022.

[3] https://www.ne-mo.org/advocacy/our-advocacy-work/museums-support-ukraine.html

[4] Public talk at MUBIG, Milan, 7 May 2022.

museum projects, which from time to time, often depending on the funding available, question this or that group, cutting off the conversation at the end of the project due to the need to devote themselves to something else). Nevertheless – it is important to emphasise – these museums are not social services, 'Samaritans' moved by good feelings (Lynch 2020, Bodo 2022), but cultural agents, moving within the specific boundaries of museum work with the skills, curatorship methodologies, and evaluation tools characteristic of that field. This is the condition for the museum's work to really have an impact on the territory and be complementary to that of other actors (social, health, educational, etc.), following the intuition of the ecomuseums, which since the 1970s have valorised local traditions and knowledge (Davis, 1999, De Varine, 2017).

The relationship with the territory, even for large museums that attract thousands of tourists, is a major challenge. Leaving aside the "giants," such as the Louvre and the Guggenheim, with their international and problematic gems, some large institutions have in recent years opened 'satellites' in the territory – sometimes spaces designed to last, other short-lived, *pop-up* experiences – to express a local rootedness, beyond the international vocation: this is the case, for example, of the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (opened in 1872, recently renamed 'Young V&A' as part of the current redevelopment project),[5] or cases such as Baltimore's Museum of Art, which in 2019 opened a branch in the popular Lexington Market.[6] The vulnus of this type of project, however, lies in the risk of delivering a counter-message with a "colonial" flavour: if it is the great museum of the centre that goes towards the periphery, be it geographical or cultural – and not vice versa – an asymmetry of power is re-proposed that risks being sterile, and indeed even harmful in terms of local spin-off. It is therefore a matter of working over long periods of time and with a focus on the nature of the context, which must be known deeply from within, outside the rhetoric of participation per se. There are many examples of this approach. Starting from the most historicised case study, that of the Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum founded in Washington DC in 1969 as an antenna of the Smithsonian Institution,[7] a number of international cases constitute useful traces of this methodological rigour: the Kreuzberg Museum in Berlin,[8] Imagine IC in Amsterdam's Zuidoost district,[9] Shadi Khampur's Neighbourhood Museum in Delhi,[10] or the more recent Trešnjevka Neighbourhood Museum in Zagreb[11] are just a few examples.

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[5] Charman. *Reinventing the V&A Museum of Childwood*, "Muzealnictwo," vol. 61 (June 2020), 117–126.

[6] https://artbma.org/about/press/release/bma-to-open-a-branch-location-at-lexington-market-on-thursday-june-27

[7] Autry. *'The Rats Are Still With Us.' Costructing Everyday Life at the Anacostia Museum in Washington*, DC, "Museum and Society," vol. 14, n. 1 (June 2017), 160–177.

[8] Düspohl. *Partizipative Museumsarbeit im FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreutzberg Museum in Berlin*, "Muzealnictwo," Vol. 58, no. 1 (April 2017), 38–46.

[9] https://imagineic.nl/, accessed 15 December 2022.

[10] https://www.delhimemories.in/index.php/Detail/collections/12, accessed 15 December 2022.

[11] https://www.muzejsusjedstvatresnjevka.org/, accessed 15 December 2022.

In Italy, in the last decade there have been many interesting cases of neighbourhood museums, generally born through bottom-up perspectives: for example Mare Memoria Viva in Palermo,[12] MAAM-Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove di Metropoliz in Rome (De Finis and Di Noto, 2020),[13] or viadellafucina16 in Turin.[14]

MUBIG and Pinacoteca di Brera

MUBIG is a museum born in 2020 in Greco, a neighbourhood located in the North-Estern sector of Milan. Greco is squeezed between the railway tracks, the Martesana canal and the first peri-urban belt. Considered peripheral and quite "difficult" in terms of connection with the rest of the city, it has always felt like a "city within a city," expressing a strong historical and cultural identity. Greco, in fact, was an autonomous municipality up until 1923 and has kept a very clear trace of its original urbanistic structure, with a XVI century church at its core, a strong "water memory" (the community used to dive in the canal and sunbathe in the small beach) and a relevant artistic and historical heritage, testifying both Renaissance traces (the *Nativity* fresco painted by Bernardino Luini for a local chapel in the 16th century was bought by the Louvre in 1867 and is currently exposed in the Aile Denon [15]) and more recent historical chapters, such as bombings and resistance during War War II (Banfi, 1997).

The museum, which conceives of itself as a fluid, scattered, dynamic discourse – a process, more than a place – is born out of (and within) an urban regeneration project which has transformed a portion of the neighbourhood, for many decades abandoned and neglected, into an innovative housing project. This project, called BiG and launched in 2018,[16] was aimed at recovering the ancient Cascina Conti, dating back to the 16th century. The social project, developed by a collective of urban planners, architects and social designers named ABCittà, has at its heart the intergenerational collaboration; it is an experience of quality housing at low cost aimed at exerting a positive impact on the whole neighbourhood in terms of social cohesion, fight against exclusion and enhancement of tangible and intangible cultural assets.

In the hamlet, 25 mini-apartments have been created for three categories: young workers, self-sufficient elderly people and single parents with children. While the first two categories apply individually, the latter comes from the Municipality's social

[12] https://www.marememoriaviva.it/, accessed 15 December 2022.

[13] De Finis and Di Noto (eds.). *Senza Metropoliz non è la mia città*. Rome: Bordeaux 2020.

[14] https://viadellafucina16.kaninchenhaus.org/, accessed 15 December 2022

[15] https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/fotografie/schede/IMM-3a010-0002179/; https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010064961

[16] https://bigreco.it/, accessed 15 December 2022. The intervention is defined and regulated within the framework of the Integrated Intervention Programme Greco – Conti, which is the subject of an agreement between the Municipality of Milan and Borgo Cascina Conti S.r.l. with deed no. 15087 of 21 June 2011, subsequently amended and integrated with deed no. 10356/4760 of 24 October 2018 in which ABCittà is recognised as the managing body. The Convention between the Municipality of Milan and ABCittà to regulate the management of the "BiG – Borgo Intergenerazionale Greco" service is regulated by deed registered no. 3592 of 3 July 2020.

services: these are typically young single mothers with a migratory background, who are helped find a job, take care of their children and find their own autonomy, within a public-private agreement. A series of shared spaces and services – a laundry room, a condo library, a playroom for kids, a cyclo-lab – is also part of the project. All the inhabitants benefit of a low rent, and are asked to offer approximately ten hours per month for community work.

Beyond accompaniment on the more local and immediate scale (selection of tenants, periodic interviews, discussion groups with single parents, etc.), BiG operates in the neighbourhood through the co-management of sports fields and the urban gardens, as well as the re-use of the railway arches following the outputs of a participatory design process.

The first inhabitants moved in the BiG premises in 2019, just before the Covid-19 lockdown. the first, completely uncalculated stress test proved very promising: cooperation, the perception of not being alone, and mutual help were expressed fully and often in creative forms. The younger ones helped the older ones with medicines and vaccinations; the latter cooked. A social support network was never lacking, both in terms of the concrete management of daily life and in terms of mental health, at risk for everyone in such a delicate period.

Within this context, following the number of encounters between ABCittà and the former and new inhabitants of the neighbourhood, in 2020 MUBIG, the community museum, was born.[17] Funded by a private foundation (Fondazione di Comunità Milano) in the framework of a competition, it is realized in partnership with Pinacoteca di Brera, the important national museum located in the center of Milan, and Stazione Radio, a radio station. The museum defines itself as "diffuse, of the present, participated." Its actions are curated with the inhabitants and co-designed with them: nothing is decided outside of a consultation, in which a group of citizens already active in the neighbourhood (the "Greco positive" association) participate, together with others who have joined in along the way, for example the elderly active in the shared gardens, some university students, primary school teachers and professors, shopkeepers, etc.

The museum's actions take place within the programme "Brera a Greco-Greco a Brera," which promotes exchanges of works of art, as well as practices, from Greco to Brera and vice-versa, through a participatory dynamic and a strong emphasis on experimentation with respect to mediation tools.

Yet, what is the sense of a collaboration between a small peripheral reality and a national institution such as Brera? How to avoid the risk of "patronage," asymmetry, or even populism? How to counteract the rhetoric that might be embedded in concepts such as "inclusion," "co-curating," "participation" (Bodo, 2012; Cimoli, 2020)? What is the role of visual art in this context?

James Bradburne, director of the Pinacoteca di Brera from 2015 to 2023, specified right from the invitation to participate in the competition that the methodology based on absolute symmetry between the two contexts was central. Although the disproportion is evident between a national institution founded in 1809, which exhibits

[17] https://mubig.it/; https://pinacotecabrera.org/brera-a-greco-greco-a-brera/

masterpieces by Bellini, Raffello and Caravaggio, promotes scientific research and hosts around 420,000 visitors a year[18] and a small neighbourhood reality born two years ago and lacking a collection, the assumption of *parity* and *equality* is here methodologically crucial. In the absence of an a-priori roadmap, the assumption is articulated on a daily basis through practice, self-evaluation, open discussion: it is more of a process than a cold statement. Several mutual training sessions were held between the two realities along the design process, each stemming from one's expertise, and much reflection was shared to ensure that the results and proposals were truly the fruit of teamwork. It was also clear from the very beginning that the two museums consider heritage as a tool for *negotiating the future*: the accent is not on the preservation and protection of collections, but on the sense of identity, identification and growth that the inhabitants recognize in the visual traces surrounding them. Therefore, investment in the youth (adolescents and young adults in particular) is a characteristic feature of this project.

To date, the museum's activities are articulated in three axes.

Participatory walks

The four itineraries, which combine documentary information with the collection of first-hand oral histories, can be explored both individually, through podcasts accessed with qrcodes on a listening platform,[19] and in groups, thanks to the accompaniment of citizens of the neighbourhood, some of whom – the oldest – have made themselves available to the project. Promoted since the summer of 2021, when the restrictive measures on contagion were relaxed in Milan, the walks have been a great success with the public: designed for an audience of thirty people, they have always sold out. The walks have been offered on fixed dates for now. In the future, a regular program will be scheduled, which may also include route deviations, additions and and ways of collecting new voices and stories.

Discovery boxes

MUBIG provides two discovery boxes, designed together by ABCittà and Pinacoteca di Brera. The boxes contain a series of activities, proposals, conversation starters around two themes, respectively that of physical boundaries (from one's room to the city and beyond) and intangible ones (of class, gender, ability, age, etc.). Again, these themes emerged from the conversations with the inhabitants of Greco, who pointed out how the neighbourhood has always been marked by boundaries (the railway, the canal, the expressway leading to the industrial district, and so on), and how the incorporation in the city of Milan has been the object of resistance on the part of the historical inhabitants (until the 1950s, when they wanted to say "I'm going to the city center," they said "I'm going to Milan").

[18] *Annual Report 2019*, https://pinacotecabrera.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Pinacoteca-di-Brera-Annual-Report-2019.pdf

[19] https://izi.travel/it/fe1b-mubig-museo-di-comunita/it

The boxes contain a vademecum with proposals for activities, divided according to the age of the audience (from primary schools children to adults) and materials, including flash-cards, reproductions of old photographs made available by the inhabitants and mounted on 'vintage' albums, maps, writing and drawing supports, and other materials for the various activities such as balls of wool to measure distances, viewers to 'cut out' a portion of the landscape, and so on. The activities, which are adaptable to any context, were tested during an experiment in which two high school classes (not resident in the neighbourhood) and some citizens of BiG participated; the evaluations were very positive and are being reflected upon by the designers. Half of the boxes are stored at MUBIG; the other half at the Educational Services of the Brera Art Gallery. From autumn 2022, the boxes are lent to anyone who asks for them: libraries, schools, sports centres, parishes, leisure courses, civic centres, universities, etc. The boxes can be used either independently or with a professional facilitation.

Exhibitions+mediation

The first MUBIG exhibition, held in April 2022, compared the historical photos of the hamlet, lent by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood and digitised, with its current conformation. The exhibition was set up in the open air, in the courtyard and along the walkways, working on viewpoints and perspective telescopes in such a way as to encourage a comparison between the past and the present, and to raise questions about the future.

In May 2022 a selection of works from Brera's Zavattini collection (small self-portraits made by prominent Italian artists of the 20th century)[20] was lent to MUBIG: four self-portraits – by Fausto Melotti, Dino Buzzati, Mimmo Rotella and Bruno Munari – were understood here as a tool for reflecting upon the role and the agency of the individual within a community or group. The exhibition, entitled 'Inhabitants,' was accompanied by a series of mediation activities. In particular, a van provided by the transport company broadcast a series of video interviews with the inhabitants of BiG and the neighbourhood made by the Brera videomaker, while in the afternoon, students from an art school made live portraits of the public, thus suggesting an ideal link between the four self-portraits from the Zavattini collection and the "living" community gathered in the courtyard.

Another relevant action took place on this occasion: the placement of the captions created by Brera in the Greco church. Here, in fact, two large paintings from the Brera collection are kept next to the altar, respectively a *Mystical Vision of Saint Catherine of Siena* by Luigi Pellegrino Scaramuccia (ca. 1655) and a *Madonna of Mercy* from the workshop of Federico Barocci (late 16th-early 17th century). Both the Napoleonic spoliations and the complex vicissitudes of the works from the convents meant that many Brera works were on loan to local churches. It was only on the occasion of the "Inhabitants" exhibition that this further, unexpected link between Pinacoteca di Brera and the city area could be rediscovered.

[20] *Cesare Zavattini collezionista.*

The museum was founded on the initiative of a cooperative and, although it has been visited and appreciated by politicians and administrators, it doesn't express the awareness of the social impact of the museum on the part of public governance, which on the contrary has in some cases tried to appropriate its history to present it in international contexts, as if it were its own project. Even though awareness of the social impact of art is certainly growing in Italy,[21] I believe it is necessary to continue to design "bottom-up" activities, in some ways antagonistic, though always in an open way, with respect to those proposed by politics.

As regards the case of Milan, for example, the difference between MUBIG's method and the approach adopted by the City Council for the area known as City Life, a district in which skyscrapers have sprung up for high-end housing, which have led to an increase in the costs of the entire area, is exemplary. ArtLine, the public art programme, while being of high value from the point of view of the artists involved, ends up reinforcing the "prestige" of an already very rich area, expressing itself in terms of privilege and top-down decisions, instead of participation and distribution of resources and knowledge.

In the last fifteen years or so, with a strong impetus on the occasion of Expo 2015, Milan has been the protagonist of numerous urban regeneration processes involving individual neighbourhoods (Nolo, Isola, Affori, etc.) or disused spaces (some railway yards, the Slaughterhouse, the area where the new European Library-BEIC will be built, etc.). BIG and MUBIG's project is preoccupied by the negative impact of gentrification in terms of rising rents and the costs of everyday life: this is why it seeks not to be complicit in policies that are too top-down and do not stem from listening to the inhabitants. This is, of course, an approach fraught with contradictions and missteps, in which the daily practice of listening and networking is central.[22]

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[21] Da Milano and Gariboldi (eds). *Audience Development: mettere i pubblici al centro delle organizzazioni culturali*. Milan: Franco Angeli 2019; Paltrinieri. *Il valore sociale della cultura*, Milan: Franco Angeli, 2022; Terenzi. *La dimensione culturale della società*, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino 2018. See also the role played by magazines such as *Il Capitale Culturale* and *Economia della cultura*, as well as digital platforms such as cheFare (https://www.che-fare.com/, accessed 15 December 2022), Letture lente (https://www.agenziacult.it/letture-lente/) and the work developed by private foundations such as Fitzcarraldo (https://www.fitzcarraldo.it/, accessed 15 December 2022).

[22] On the role of BIG and MUBIG within the dynamics of urban regeneration in Milan, see Cimoli. *Un quartiere, una corte, un museo. Il modello BiG/MUBIG a Greco, Milano*, in: Bassanelli, Forino, Lanini, Lucchini (eds.) *Per una Nuova Casa Italiana. Prospettive di ricerca e di progetto per la post-pandemia*, proceedings of the national conference "Per una Nuova Casa Italiana 2," DESTEC-DAStU-Politecnico di Milano, 15 June 2022, Pisa: Pisa University Press, pp. 64–73. See also Bidussa and Polizzi (eds). *Agenda Milano. Ricerche e pratiche per una città inclusiva*. Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, https://fondazionefeltrinelli.it/schede/ebook-agenda-milano-9788868352738/#top, 2017, accessed 15 December 2022; Cognetti, Gambino and Lareno Faccini. *Periferie del cambiamento. Traiettorie di rigenerazione tra marginalità e innovazione a Milano*, Macerata: Quodlibet 2020; Fontanella (ed). *Rigenerare periferie fragili. Posizioni sul progetto per le periferie urbane*. Siracusa: Letteraventidue 2022.

In conclusion, the MUBIG project tries to provide an alternative to the narratives typical of huge museums by working *with* a huge museum itself: in the coming and going of open questions, self-critical reflections and confrontation with the public, a new sense of community is being forged on both sides. There is no David or Goliath, here: the national museum is of course not the enemy to be defeated: on the contrary, the collaboration between two such different cultural agents enchances the awareness that the unlearning process to which contemporary cultural institutions are called must pass through courageous experimental practices, the results of which may, perhaps, give rise to new ways of understanding the museums' agency in difficult times.

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Abstract

The article is focused on MUBIG, an experimental museum in a peripheral neigbourhood of Milan. The museum, a fluid, scattered, dynamic discourse – a process, more than a place – is born out of an urban regeneration project.

The reflection attempts to articulate a number of key questions: how are the individual histories embodied by the museum? What points of fragility are envisaged in this regard and how are they addressed, in order to prevent tokenism and the rhetoric of participation per se? What is the role of the visual dimention and of contemporary art? Throughout the article, I argue that neighbourhood museums might be one of the many actors needed on the scene of decolonisation, by this term meaning a process of space-making around the commons based on representation and radical listening.

The experience is analyses here through a double lens: while being a member of the collective who co-designed it, I also look at it from my academic position. This allows me to describe the process keeping different "points of distance," therefore layering methodologies and viewpoints.

Keywords: neighbourhood museum; MUBIG; urban regeneration; periphery; marginality; heritage studies; Pinacoteca di Brera; ABCittà; decolonising practices; co-curating; participation.

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Fig. 1. A drawing workshop during the “Abitanti” exhibition, 7th May 2022. Ph: ABCittà.

Fig. 2. The loan boxes’ test with high school students, May 2022. Ph: ABCittà.

Fig. 3. The court during the “Abitanti” exhibition, 7th May 2022. Ph. Cesare Maiocchi, Pinacoteca di Brera.

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Liminal museum. Artistic installations at the threshold of public realm

Introduction

The complex relationship between public art and iconic architecture, as is defined by Sklair (2006), unfolds both on the museum's façade, in terms of visual connection with the context, and on its threshold, in terms of physical transition to the public space. The former questions the flexibility of the elements of contemporary architecture (Koolhaas, 2014), the latter tackles the issue of analysing the interaction mechanism between owners, organisers, and users of a public space (Chiodelli and Moroni, 2014). The threshold that articulates the complex transition from the exterior to the interior of a museum (Parry et al., 2018) is here assumed as a liminal exhibition space in itself that can offer a complementary program to that of the interior, and a more direct relationship with the context in terms of social and visual connections. Building on Barrett's (2011) understanding of the museum as a visible institution that can sparkle critical debate, utilising its physical and immaterial publicness, we will investigate this duality between public art and architecture, assuming that the balance of the art-architecture complex is often conflictual but at the same time increasingly integrated in a whole (Foster, 2011). This creates a competition between the content and the container, the architectural quality of the building versus the impact that the public installation seeks. In such dialectics, we argue, the façade is a possible area of interaction between the two agencies involved.

First, we set the framework of the notion of threshold in application to our field of investigation. We look at the theoretical definition of liminal museum and define three fields of investigation. Secondly, we look at the relationship between artistic interventions and the neighbourhood, intending the museum as a landmark for creative activities. Then, we focus on the architectural aspects of liminality, being the outcome

of the art-architecture relation. The text continues with a digression on the instrument of living labs used for citizens' engagement in art production and education. Finally, we propose the case study developed in Altamura, Italy, against the background of other art projects involving the façade of a building.

Art at the threshold of public space

Through examples of designs in recent history, Tzortzi (2015) pointed out the importance for a museum not to be considered just an isolated building but as a part of the city. The design of public space surrounding the building or adjacent to it is the first step towards this concept: Bernard Tschumi's new Acropolis Museum in Athens, completed in 2009, is distant from the Greek acropolis but at the same time has constant visual connections with the Parthenon, complementing the visiting experience of the interior with the surrounding panorama; differently, the M – Museum Leuven designed by Stéphane Beel is in a compact urban setting but has a composition of volumes that conveys transparency, namely a gradient from the street to the museum, articulated with balconies, loggia, terraces, and a semi-public square covered by the museum. This condition is generally addressed as transitional space, but also intermediate area or third area, as that space where experience is triggered by transitions across interior and exterior. The term is borrowed from transitional phenomena studied by Winnicott (1953) on infant's notion of possession, in which the act of transition of an object that was previously not owned is ultimately a cultural experience. To a certain extent, this process can be associated with the different degrees of ownership of public space and the acceptance of physical transformations in the public realm (Resta, 2021). Here what is disputed in terms of ownership is not an object but a patch of land.

The public plays a significant role in the museum's growth and has become central to the museological reflection in recent years. A new approach is centred on the visitor as a critical agent rather than a passive spectator, with diverse needs and characteristics according to the varying backgrounds that each one has. The museum has to relate to a differentiated audience and form a relational structure in which curators, experts, and visitors are all part of the same community. And the objects shown in a museum transfer cultural values in personalised ways.

The concept of liminal museum proposed in this text is where we can challenge those boundaries that separate performer and spectator, or public and private, that Luger and Ren (2017) discussed in their book on the disruptive power of public art in the urban realm. The formation of the concept of a liminal museum would help to build a framework to understand the uncertain status of the threshold, starting from its theoretical formulation by Herman Hertzberger (1991), Georg Simmel (1994), and Robert Musil (2006), up to the concrete application on a case study that will be analysed in the last section.

As mentioned, a threshold marks the transition between different spatial conditions. In phenomenological terms, such transitional element can be as thick as a building or as thin as a line of separation between private properties. In this understanding, it is essential to identify the figure of the opening, namely the section of the enclosure

that can be stepped over in order to leave one space and enter the other. Openings also imply symbolic meanings, sometimes carrying references to the world about to be disclosed (Koolhaas, 2014). In Doors and Portals, Robert Musil (2006) explored the act of building in its social implications, understanding the rich repercussions that the act of crossing entails. He wrote that the threshold is not at the centre of the aesthetic research anymore.

"How then should there be doors if there is no 'house'? The only original door conceived by our time is the glass revolving door of the hotel and the department store. In former times, the door, as part of the whole, represented the entire house, just as the house one owned and the house which one was having built were intended to show the social standing of its owner. The door was an entrance into a society of privilege, which was opened or shut in the face of the new arrival." (Musil, 2006: 62)

Hence, the threshold still retains the function of control, but also activates a series of actions that form a ritual. When the passage from one public space to the other is loose, all the rituals connected to the materiality of the door disappear. In his work, Musil also explored the idea of threshold in a metaphorical sense. In *The Man without Qualities* (1930–42), Ulrich himself is a threshold for his sister Agathe who wants to commit suicide.

"She would have been willing to imagine a God who opens up His world like a hiding place. But Ulrich said that this was not necessary, it could only do harm to imagine more than one could experience. And it was for him to decide in these matters. But then, it was also for him to guide her without abandoning her. He was the threshold between two lives, and all her longing for the one and all her flight from the other led first to him. She loved him as shamelessly as one loves life." (Musil, 2017: 154)

In their complex relationship, the threshold materializes in a person as the last resource keeping Agathe from the realm of the dead. Also, Georg Simmel (1994) discussed the theme of connectedness and separation in Bridge and Door, emphasising the conceptual difference between the figure of the door and that of the bridge as main elements of mediation between two spaces. A door implies, at the same time, the act of separation and that of reconnection, as it is an interruption of a uniform continuum. Where "the bounded and the boundaryless adjoin one another, not in the dead geometric form of a mere separating wall, but rather as the possibility of a permanent interchange—in contrast to the bridge which connects the finite with the finite" (Simmel, 1994: 7). Taken to the urban scale, the concept of a spatial bridge connects two detached and different areas, while a door, being a physically defined threshold, separates what is uniform and continuous. For a museum, it is crucial to establish metaphorical doors in the public continuum rather than bridges between one institution and the rest of the city. Elements that can be opened and closed to modulate the interaction of the building with the community.

The locus where this exchange takes place is a third place, the in-between, which reconciles opposites as Aldo Van Eyck suggested. Here is where cultural institutions meet the neighbourhood and the community in general. Van Eyck saw the in-between as the perfect space to develop a dialectic of conflicting actors, if we consider the social level, or conflicting experiences, if we consider the physicality of architecture (Strauven, 2007). In his formulation, city patterns are scaled to the dimension of buildings and

vice versa. Likewise, Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger addressed the transitional space as an entity with its own status, where "the threshold provides the key to the transition and connection between areas with divergent territorial claims and, as a place in its own right, it constitutes, essentially, the special condition for the meeting and dialogue between areas of different orders" (Hertzberger, 1991: 32). He underlined the importance of laying out an architectural design that allows these worlds to dialogue, and provide spaces with potential for social contact.

The concept of a liminal museum that we propose, as the threshold across the public and the private realms, forms a theoretical framework that is drafted under the hypothesis that cultural institutions should establish a strong interaction with communities. We believe that three are the main aspects that should be taken into consideration when curatorial domains interact with the liminal museum: dialogue with the neighbourhood and co-design (a); dialogue with architecture (b); quality of the installation (c). The latter is primarily site-specific and out of the scope of this article; hence we will cover the first two aspects.

Engaging the neighbourhood in co-design activities

In 1971, ICOM organised the ninth general conference in Grenoble on the topic "The museum at human service, today and tomorrow." In this framework, John Kinard, director of Anacostia neighbourhood museum, presented the project Neighbourhood Museum as a prototype of an institution in contrast with the traditional way of functioning of the museum (Demma, 2018). As one of the museums emerging in the 1960s and 1970s in United States under the initiative of civic movements, the Anacostia museum quickly gained a worldwide influence (Alexander, 1997): embracing the daily needs of people, the museum directed by Kinard adopted new strategies and methodologies in order to trigger the interest of the community. In opposition to traditional museums, community museums have deep roots in the local context in which they operate, featuring elements of local history, folklore, and society. For this reason, Anacostia attracted especially local residents and school children, positioning the museum as a place for social commentary and critique (Autry, 2016).

In the same years of the Black museum movement, Duncan F. Cameron wrote an essay entitled "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum" (Cameron, 1971), focusing his attention on the role of society in the museum experience and calling for structural reform in that direction. Josè Jiménez also criticised, in his The Theory of Art, the paradox of underestimating the role of an education department in the organisation of a museum (Jiménez, 2008). On the contrary, museums provide an environment for informal education that encourages active learning (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 1999). Dierking underlined how a museum as social learning space could also embrace diversity, "groups bring many assets to their visits: shared background, history and knowledge; for the most part they understand how others in the group learn, their interests, strengths and weaknesses" (Dierking, 2013: 203).

Throughout the seventies, relevant experimentations of temporary performative art took place in Italy. Artistic practice was conceived as an essential component

of urban planning, essentially connected with architecture and the city. Art was part of an urban design strategy, at least in activating latent energies already present in the city. The most used methodologies were inspired by situationist dèrive (urban drifting), hinged on the interaction with city dwellers and the value of the sign as an activator of experiences. All artists involved in the movement tackled their work from an anthropological perspective and embedded socio-political and cultural issues in their aesthetics. This resulted in a reduction of the distance between the figure of the artist and the public, attaching democratic connotations to art. Relevant exhibitions and happenings in the urban space were conducted by artist Eliseo Mattiacci in Rome, Michelangelo Pistoletto in Turin and others that moved to small and remote centres. The work of art became a collective artwork, installed in scented landscapes or abandoned buildings, putting forward the idea that creative actions can revitalise marginal territories. It was the first urban expression conceived as a happening in order to open a new collective awareness in which the public is part of the artistic intervention. In this framework, the urban space acts as a relational space: the public is part of the exhibition and joins the "happening field." The work develops an open relationship with the spectator. Richard Long, Anne Marie Boetti, Jan Dibbets, Pistoletto, and Ugo La Pietra were some of the artists who worked in this direction (Pioselli, 2015). Events such as Campo Urbano by Gabriele Basilico involved passers-by and neighbourhoods as direct stakeholders, while the city was transformed into a large-scale art project.

We believe that some of the lessons learnt throughout this fertile period for art could be embedded in the ordinary activity of contemporary cultural institutions, though inevitably losing part of that situationist, spontaneous, drive that institutionalisation would mitigate. If this experience is integrated with current methodologies and theories on museum, the latter could widen its potential reach and overcome the comfort zone of having only a narrow target audience. The design of spatial boundaries plays a central role in making citizens and local actors more involved in their activities. They would build a recognisable unique identity altogether, generate new relationships in the area, and catalyse latent energy in a creative framework.

Dialogue with architecture: liminality as a resource

The importance of space in museums has been acknowledged by museum studies investigating the relationship between architecture and museology (Tzortzi, 2015), spatial and social context beyond economic values (MacLeod, 2020), museum thresholds (Parry et al., 2018) and the spatial factors that transform museums in learning spaces (Falk and Dierking, 2013), including conceptual coherence, visitors' movement and narrative strategy (Psarra et al., 2007), and finally gendered interaction (Crowley et al., 2001).

According to Tzortzi, architecture affects the museum experience not only through the physical form of the building, but also as a system of spatial relations with galleries, objects and visitors. Drawing on the conceptualisation of space and place through a relational mechanism (Massey, 2005), the in-between has the potential to generate meeting and conversational ground.

Aldo van Eyck and Hertzberger pursued this condition in their school designs, where the in-between realm establishes a spatial gradation from private to public with numerous transitional spaces (threshold, entrance, interior street, gallery, stairs, etc.). Their ideas can be seen as applications of the theoretical framework elaborated by geographer Doreen Massey, and especially her elaboration of throwntogetherness and meeting places as ongoing opportunities for engaging with the accidental neighbour (Massey, 2005). Transposing the same elements to the museum, these liminal spaces are still overlooked, if not neglected, in most museums' programs (Schall, 2015). Liminal spaces become meeting places for the community if managed correctly. The former head of the Museum of World Culture, Göteborg, Sweden, declared that "the huge staircase is as we know a meeting-place and it is a wonderful place for the informal learning where we have different groups coming here, discussions, debates, we have a lot of groups hiring space which we try to incorporate in the museum activities, but the staircase is central" (Fors, 2012: 134).

Let us now examine the condition of liminality concerning museum architecture. Viv Szekeres (1995) examined how a museum can be a 'place for all of us.' When museums started to rethink their image from representation of power to outposts where communities could express civic involvement (Witcomb, 2002), the issue of democratisation came to the fore (Russell-Ciardi, 2008; Watson, 2007). Among the many aspects of such interaction, the public space, in combination with the reception of the museum architecture design, are departing points for the success of a liminal museum (Barrett, 2011; Lindsay, 2020). Hence, it should be emphasised the importance to analyse how flagship architectures position the image of public institutions (Patterson, 2012), whose symbolic/aesthetic quality is also the manifestation of an unprecedented historical shift towards the capitalist system, as has been argued by Sklair (2006). Macgregor (2020) maintains that while the exterior of such contemporary buildings captures media attention in the first phase, implying a rapid consumption and expiration of the so-called 'Bilbao Effect' (Patterson, 2022; Plaza, 2008), the content of the artistic program is what grants a long-term horizon to the institution with prolonged audience engagement. The adoption of this trenchant dichotomy, interior versus exterior, private versus public, visitor versus citizen, is here challenged with the idea of museum threshold (Parry, Page and Moseley, 2018; Schall, 2015) with a specific focus on the façade and the semi-public space that is managed by the cultural institution. Bonnin (2000) systematised how the threshold also has a symbolic function, a phantasmagorical value linked to the idea of crossing, ritual and metamorphosis, which also brings the threshold closer to the notion of liminality and back to Musil's lines. Shall (2015) explained how this liminal space is overlooked, if not neglected, in most museums' programmes. In literature, only some of these cases, such as the Kunsthaus Graz, Denver Art Museum, and the Guggenheim Bilbao, have been analysed (Lindsay, 2020).

With the intention to embrace Suzanne Macleod's (2013) challenge to move beyond 'the obfuscating focus on surface and the genius of the architect,' the treatment of the body of the architecture should be devised with a multidisciplinary perspective.

Living Labs as a case study for public artistic interventions

Regarding the co-habitation of museum institutions with surrounding neighbourhoods, directors have increasingly implemented strategies to involve long-term citizens beyond the sole scope of the visit. One prominent example is the formation of Living Labs, where artists and curators establish a dialogue with multiple stakeholders.

The format of 'live' research and pedagogy has being especially adopted by architecture schools in the UK (Denicke-Polcher, 2020, Butterworth and Care, 2020), although live projects are not being experimented with the same consistency in other countries with more homogeneous teaching structures (Harriss and Widder, 2014). The participatory nature of co-design and co-creation defies the assumption of the author/professional as the only maker of change, and in relation to art installation this is especially important for the acceptance of the artwork as it is related to public space. Sharing the creative process with the community needs both a positive disposition from the public and a proper legal framework already established by the governing body (Resta, 2021). The increased emphasis on co-design at the institutional level is demonstrated by the recently kick-started New European Bauhaus (European Commission, 2021b), the transdisciplinary initiative funded by the European Commission in order to link the European Green Deal to living spaces. Its mission is specifically aimed at "innovative solutions to complex societal problems together through co-creation" (European Commission, 2021a). Theodore Zamenopoulos et al. (2021) discussed the notion of empowerment in co-design through three main interrelated aspects: the loci of empowerment, the conditions of empowerment, and the different manifestations of empowerment. When enacted, empowerment implies a gain of power by individuals, a community, or a certain institution (Speer, 2008, Resta, 2021).

Living labs frame an ecosystem for the participation of the stakeholders with iterative cycles of analysis and synthesis. Activities are split into three building blocks: exploration-current state vs. future state; experimentation-real life testing; Evaluation-impact of the experiment (Evans et al., 2017; Cerreta and Panaro, 2017; Guzmán et al., 2013). Based on the Quadruple Helix Innovation Model, living labs have been successfully tested in policy and research up to significant scale interventions (Lupp et al., 2021). When living labs are applied to museums, institutional activities take a participatory shift that fortifies their social role in society. Nina Simon (2010) analysed this dynamic, in which visitor and institution find common ground, by addressing three main strands in literature: the audience-centred institution that is as accessible as possible, the self-construction of the cultural experience by the visitor, the collection of users' feedback to improve projects and programs.

Programs such as Artcity at Stoke-on-Trent, UK (Stoke-on-Trent City Council, 2020) and Arte Pollino program in Basilicata, IT (Arte Pollino, 2008) demonstrate how to build a community-wide momentum led by artists' interventions and spread across urban space and landscape. The long-lasting art program Fuori Uso in Pescara, has shown the possibility of attracting international artists and curators, such as Nicolas Bourriaud and Achille Bonito Oliva, to minor centres and stimulate a debate on remoteness and abandonment (Scuderi, 2019). Manifattura Tabacchi in Florence is an example of how

large devitalised areas can be converted into a cultural hub (Franzoia, 2020), as well as the unused Halle Freyssinet in Paris provided new spaces for the creative industry (Calace and Resta, 2020). While none of the programs mentioned above were materially attached to museums, the curation of a temporary artistic event on abandoned or repurposed buildings shows that it is possible to generate what we have labelled as liminal museum, namely an exhibition venue with an ephemeral character at the threshold of the public realm.

The liminality of museums: the façade as exhibition space

After the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, several museums have planned exhibitions or installations in proximity to their building, in transition spaces, staircases, or the façade of the building itself. One well-known example is Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, Italy, where JR has installed Wound (2021), which is 28 metres tall and 33 metres wide monumental photographic collage installation that covers the main façade of the Palazzo creating the illusion of a laceration that would allow to see inside the building. On the same Palazzo, Ai Weiwei had previously installed rubber lifeboats, in replacement of the existing fenestration, for his solo show Libero (2016).

An alternative strategy is that adopted by the Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN), which has commissioned artwork to be installed in galleries, passages, and shop windows, with a series of exhibitions under the name Fuga dal Museo (2019–20). In this case, the cultural institution would spread such art pieces in other buildings, creating an alternative itinerary in the city that the visitor can experience in different spots. Similarly, the Museo Nacional del Prado has dispersed full-scale reproductions of their collection in all neighbourhoods of Madrid within the initiative A la vuelta de la esquina (2021), literally "around the corner."

The façade has always been treated as an interface between the interior of a building and the urban scene. One exemplary case is the so-called Tempio Malatestiano, namely the church of San Francesco in Rimini. Architect and Theorist Leon Battista Alberti laid out a new design that enclosed an existing building whose construction started in the 13th century. The articulation of the exterior resulted in a hybrid architecture adapted to an older construction. The exterior had very little to do with a church and instead borrowed features from Roman antiquity, such as the triumphal arch. Alberti planned the outer wall to have niches with sarcophagi of the patrons who commissioned the work, Sigismondo di Malatesta and his wife Isotta, and other uomini illustri on the side niches (Wittkower, 1940). San Francesco was then a pantheon outside, and a gothic church in its interior, making it a public monument and a private shrine at the same time (North, 1983). In an attempt to classify the different artistic approaches to the skin of architecture, we have identified three typologies: juxtaposed façade, ephemeral façade, and media-animated façade.

Juxtaposed façade

The architecture of the façade of a monument, whether historical or contemporary, can allow multiple artistic interventions in line with how the museum wants

to communicate with the visitor. How the institution communicates. The relationship between the bi-dimensional space of the façade and the message to show creates exceptional contributions in the form of open-air installations.

In 2016 French artist JR created a large trompe-l'oeil on the façade of the pyramid of the Louvre. The work, commissioned by the French Embassy in Italy, absorbed the pyramid in a stunning illusion of the historical building behind it. Similar to Ai Weiwei's rubber lifeboats on Palazzo Strozzi, the Chinese visual artist installed in the same year, on the Minneapolis Museum entrance portico, life Jackets to send a powerful message about refugees. In 2019, the MET museum started to use its façade and great hall to showcase contemporary Art. The first artist to work on it was Wangechi Mutu, who displayed his sculptures in the niches of the façade of the museum. This is analogous to what happened to the San Francesco church after Alberti's design. In 2020, at the Tate Britain of London, Chila Kumari Singh Burman created a striking technicolour installation for Tate Britain's iconic façade. Her work referenced mythology, family memories, Bollywood, radical feminism, and political activism, all interpreted with coloured neon lights. At the Jewish Museum, artist Lawrence Weiner presented a temporary installation, All the Stars in the Sky Have the Same Face (2011–20), in the form of a large banner in red, white and blue that covers the museum's façade. This installation transformed an institutional building into a public artwork, bearing a message of the fight against xenophobia written in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. In the wide spectrum of cultural institutions, contemporary art museums are naturally suitable for this kind of intervention thanks to the contribution of contemporary artists in temporary shows. In the case of the Maxxi Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome, different art installations have crossed the fluid and liminal space of the outside entrance of the museum and the different façades of the iconic building designed by Zaha Hadid. One of the most emblematic is the 2015 artwork More than meets the eye by Maurizio Nannucci, who encouraged visitors to immediately look at this museum as something more than just the contents shown inside.

Ephemeral façade

Interactivity is based on the recursiveness of messages that in turn trigger further communication exchanges, following the construct of communication-process-participant (Rafaeli, 1988). As Ergun and Aygenc (2018) pointed out, part of what is called digital art developed mechanisms of interaction between video projections and the objects that are exhibited, being those items artworks or a whole building. This intersection between what is projected and its support generates a physical illusion that, in the digital era, was first used in amusement parks such as Disneyland. Later, it started to be explored by artists. In 1980–84, Michael Naimark worked on his project Displacements, in which a pre-recorded video of a room full of objects was later projected on the same setting, after all contents were spray-painted white, so that visitors would participate in an immersive film installation. Physical objects, i.e., a bag, a computer, and a guitar, gave the illusion of interacting with filmed characters that lived that very domestic space (Naimark, 2005). The same principle has been widely used on facades of historical and contemporary buildings (Barchugova and Rochegova, 2016; Ergun and Aygenc, 2018).

Since the first years of the 21st century, projections have added an ephemeral touch to possible ways of re-interpreting the façade in collaboration with media artists. One of the most relevant cases is Jenny Holzer's temporary interventions on the façade of famous museums such as the Louvre Pyramid in Paris (2001), the Solomon R. Guggenheim (2008), the Portland Museum of Art (2011), and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2019). Starting from traditional projection and moving to more advanced tools, video mapping has been growing as one of the most transformative devices used by museum in order to bring art outside the museum. This is the case of Commemorate & Celebrate Freedom, a video-display projected on the façade of the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington in 2015. In the same year, the Royal Ontario Museum, also known as the ROM, announced the opening of the new Pompeii museum hosting dramatic digital projections on the sides of the building designed by Daniel Libeskind. During Vivid Sydney 2016, The Matter of Painting by Danny Rose was projected at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

For the Bucharest International Light Festival, various artists have transformed many façades of museums and historical buildings through video mapping. For instance, the artwork Star Tears created by Maxin10sity was shown on the façade of the National Museum of Art of Bucharest for Spotlight Festival 2017.

In 2018, the Prado Museum commissioned a 3D projection mapping video by Onionlab to celebrate its bicentenary. The façade was transformed into an organic surface, featuring an immersive visual journey made of lights, shadows, and optical illusions.

In the last years, projections on screens have been replaced by innovative devices and technologies that tend to involve the elements of architecture in the development of multiple scenarios.

Media-animated façade

A growing number of architectures tend to embed a multimedia façade in the design process already. What used to be applied or projected on façades after construction is instead part of the project ex-ante. Curators, artists, and architects are invited to transform the external image of the museum into a polyhedric device that mutates in real-time. The generative video for the LED media façade of Rockheim, Norway's national museum of pop and rock in Trondheim, Oslo, stresses the contrast between the static appearance of the existing building and the multifaceted addition. The latter is part of the extension designed by Pir II and Parallel World Labs on top of an old warehouse. Another extension, that of the Kunstmuseum in Basel, Switzerland, has received several awards and special mentions. The media façade comprises 40 horizontal grooves that generate a fine relief across the seven façade segments. White LEDs, mounted 22 millimetres apart, are mounted in the cavities in order to be seen from the street. Each horizontal groove contains over 1306 pixels, the resulting total resolution thus being 1306 x 40 pixels. The media façade communicates news to the broader public and is a crucial design feature of the new museum building, not only for installation but also for information to the public. Ars Electronica Centre in Linz, known as the museum of the future, defined its main mission in order to facilitate the encounter of the general public with new media and virtual reality using interactive forms of expression.

Since 2015, the façade of Museion in Bolzano has functioned as a transparent membrane that at the same time divides and creates a point of contact between the urban space and the interior. It features screenings of videos, photos and animations that artists select to establish a dialogue with Museion's design. In Seoul, South Korea, the SmTown Coex Artium contains a digital billboard of 80.8 m by 20.1 m. The building, also hosting a museum of Entertainment, became viral for its public media art project Wave, which rendered a realistic wave crashing inside a vast aquarium. The ambitious project closed in 2020 after displaying K-pop videos alternated with digital experimentation on the screen for only six years. Finally, in 2021, the new Museum of Visual Culture M+ in Hong Kong by Herzog & De Meuron announced its opening with an illuminated billboard-like façade of LEDs that can be seen from afar. The wide dimension of this façade also collects the message of the museum, it is the structure of the message, and eventually becomes part of the city skyline as the "decorated shed" that Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour theorised in Learning from Las Vegas (1972).

Conclusions

Exhibition venues base a consistent part of their funding on ticketing. The unprecedented case of a worldwide pandemic compelled museums to seek alternative ways of fostering their engagement with visitors. On the one hand, many initiatives targeted online content (Resta et al., 2021); on the other hand, exteriors and public spaces have been adapted for installations and exhibitions. In this text, we have explored the latter, suggesting that the liminal museum has its own status and can be implemented on a regular basis beyond COVID-19 restrictions. Among the many loci of liminal museum, we have finally focused on the façade, and proposed a classification of different typologies. Expressive façades featuring art installations can engage a broad audience, including passers-by who do not regularly visit exhibition spaces. Additionally, this perspective opens a whole artistic field of installations that cannot be exhibited within the museum and relate their aesthetics to that of the architecture of the venue. Finally, we suggest that the liminal museum is also the threshold space where a cultural institution can interact with the neighbourhood as a safe place of expression and learning.

The authors have been experimenting with this topic through an ongoing curatorial project that tackles the issues discussed above: the curation of an installation on the threshold of public space and its relation with the neighbourhood. PROSPETTISSIMO is a project of urban art focused on the interaction of artists and photographers with the façade of the new cultural space Crocevia Stand-by, at the former Santa Croce monastery, Altamura, Italy. For PROSPETTISSIMO, a series of international artists have been re-elaborating the idea of trompe-l'oeil with drawings and photographs in dialogue with the formal and material qualities of the building. The project is divided into several visual chapters, each assigned to a different artist, with the intention of reflecting and discussing the presence of neglected historic buildings within the Puglia region. The reopening of the former monastery in Altamura is an opportunity to explore the interaction of contemporary art with the revitalisation of historic town

centres. The first exhibition was opened with the work of French artist Laure Catugier, in April 2022 (Figg.1–5). As an artist with a background in architecture, Catugier's work conveys the geometric language of modernism. Through diverse media such as photography, video or performance, she questioned the perception and representation of spatiality. In Altamura, she examined the functionality of modernist architecture and urban spaces and researched the global standardisation of construction through architectural elements of the façade.

This research is inevitably open-ended and has some possible developments. In the near future, after a few visual chapters of PROSPETTISSIMO are completed, we intend to verify the assumptions presented in the text, see if the notion of liminal museum is gradually forming around the building of Santa Croce, and study the impact that these installations have on the neighbourhood. All artists, together with the exhibition of their work, will coordinate artistic living labs with the community aiming at co-producing their creative outcome. In this way, the social role of a recently-created institution can grow, approach new segments of the population, and use liminal spaces as an interface with the citizens.

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Abstract

The concept of liminal museum looks at the potential of public art in the liminal space of exhibition venues, in between urban realm and the interior of public buildings, as an innovative locus of social engagement. More specifically, we study the status of artistic interventions that take place on the façade through the definition of three fields of investigation: juxtaposition, ephemerality, media. We present the case study of a curatorial project developed in Altamura, Italy, within the dimension of living labs used for citizens' engagement in art production and education. This leads to the issue of co-habitation of museum institutions with surrounding neighbourhoods, interpreting the façade as a symbolic interface that mediates values and languages of art.

Keywords: Liminal museum; façade; living labs; public art; Italy

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Fig. 1. Prospettissimo #1, installation by Laure Catugier, curated by Fabiana Dicuonzo and Giuseppe Resta, Altamura, Italy.

Fig. 2. Prospettissimo #1, installation by Laure Catugier, curated by Fabiana Dicuonzo and Giuseppe Resta, Altamura, Italy.

Fig. 3. Prospettissimo #1, installation by Laure Catugier, curated by Fabiana Dicuonzo and Giuseppe Resta, Altamura, Italy.

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Creatively rethinking the augmented Society of the Spectacle. A discussion on art and the political

1. Introduction

The contemporary late capitalist mode of production has exacerbated the decline of the public sphere, universalized its earlier consumption-oriented refeudalization of society and radically restructured every layer of its economic, cultural and technological bases (Fuchs, 2016; Habermas, 1989; Jameson, 1991). A pervasive mediatization with sweeping disenfranchising networked translocalization incessantly augments the devastating effects of our uneven spatial development (Carpentier, 2007; Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013; Manfredini, 2022c), the violence of conflictual cultural transculturalism (Éigeartaigh & Berg, 2010) and the subjugation by policed sociospatial transduction (MacKenzie, 2006; Manfredini, 2022b). The cumulative effect of these phenomena unremittingly disrupts all relational processes, negatively deterritorialising their assemblages and destructively introducing abstraction in politically reactionary conflicts (Hardt & Negri, 2004), producing widespread molecular fragmentation of the socius, depoliticization and dissolution of the commons, while overpowering the powerful others (Hardt & Negri, 2017).

This process is supported by a brutal neoliberal political ideology that purposefully dismantles the welfare state by freeing the market and capital from the restrictions instituted with social democracies based on notions of equity, democracy and diversity. Neoliberalism is the main reference of the film Redux of The Society of the Spectacle directed by artist and critic Daniela Grubišić about her own creative work, which is central to this paper for its effort of developing, deploying and documenting advanced anti-hegemonic detournement strategies and tactics of subversion-by-sublation of the public spere in public space. The film documents and speculates on the emancipatory agency of selected creative work that reroute and hijack mundane surfaces and daily

moments to liberate spatial enclosures in which they are entangled, by opening them up to relational dynamics of the processes of montage that perforate, cut and fold them. It presents creative actions that re-abstract the disruptions of the contemporary society of the hyper-spectacle to create new possibilities for the driving forces of the consumer/prosumer society (Ritzer, 2019) by activating the residual forces of the consumed consumer society at the core of the urban consumption landscape, redirecting the spectacle to an augmented social production of space – material, social and mental.

Today's rampant growth of private sphere can be reversed by repoliticization processes both in material and mediated spaces (Terzi & Tonnelat, 2017), guaranteeing the exercise of an extended Right to the City into the planetary dimension of urban development (Brenner, 2014) as the right of the contemporary rooted cosmopolitan (Calhoun, 2003) to participate in the production of networked urban spatialities by conceiving, instituting and living politically through the continuous reaffirmation of equality (Harvey, 2019; Lefebvre, 1991; Rancière, 2010). Fifty years after the fierce appraisal of the unequal class relations and conditions that emerged in the postindustrial society by Guy Debord in the seminal The Real Split (Debord & Sanguinetti, 2003), the counterforces to the Society of the Spectacle (Debord, 1983), notwithstanding the dramatic augmentation of their capacities, struggle to create agonistic mixed, translocal and transcultural worlds that allow forms of individual reappropriation of the means of production that abolish condition imposed dependence, discipline and alienation.

This writing aims to introduce and present a reflective redoubled critique on the attempt to creatively contribute to these counterforces through art. It discusses a film on the creative work of Daniela Grubišić that documents her daily detournement creative practice of public space subversion-by-sublation. Firstly, it analyses the sculptural work component by deconstructing its counter-abstractive process aimed to reestablish instances of emancipatory relational resonance. Secondly, it explores the filmic work designed to reverse emplaced annihilating conditions. Finally, it critically evaluates the capacity of these artworks to construct a coherent discourse about the possibility of establishing rich relational intensities, foregrounding their efficacious agency in engaging multiple actants in a collaborative formulation of a counter-hegemonic culture. Through a discussion on a series of artworks that redress and operationalize Debord's (1983) detournement strategy by implementing it in a double – folded – way, this paper addresses a meta-oeuvre: a film that reassembles the series in a redux of the foremost Debord's film, The Society of the Spectacle (whose monologue is reinterpreted in the first part of the meta-oeuvre), through an approach aimed at disentangling the transgressive agency of public art from its colluding complicity of the carnivalesque regime (Langman & Ryan, 2009). The paper starts with a close reading of a series of oeuvres revolving around X Surfaces Developed in Space, a Grubišić's artwork produced to critically position the artistic contribution as a practice that conjuncturally upends the spectacle of our everyday practices by deploying tactics of radical rerouting.

The critique of Grubišić's meta-oeuvre – produced in close collaboration with Manfredo Manfredini, is used to articulate an affirmative discussion on the emancipatory potential of the total sublation of public space, foregrounding the power of its intrinsic relational counterforces (Harvey, 2018). The discussion draws upon the theory of the

spectacle as a critique of contemporary consumer culture and commodity fetishism, creatively dealing with issues such as class alienation, cultural homogenization, and mass media. Its initial critical reading of the artwork X Surfaces Developed in Space and its installations in public space, shows how its public appearance triggers radical actions of deconstruction of dominated situations by rerouting the emplaced rules that annihilated any possibility of subversive reordering life, politics, and art. This discussion, which continues by addressing a series videos, focuses on expounding how this composite artwork series produces forms of non-mediated relationality and conditions of resonance that, as defined by Hartmut Rosa (2018), suspend the abstractive socio-economic and institutional status quo. It collaboratively articulates longstanding independent projects of both authors of this writing aimed to subvert the growing desynchronizing alienation (Grubisic, 2017; Manfredini, 2019, 2022a, 2022b) by introducing in the everyday practice multidimensional vehicles of deterritorialization that foster agencies of politicization by disruption (Manfredini, 2019) and a critical doubling anchored in place through a folding strategy, allowing for the emerging of a countering spatial production conceived anew. This strategy brackets moments of everyday life in an experiential critique that engages a whole bodily perception of the passivity and loss of agency of the individual in the production of a collaborative space of hope. It reveals illusory tactics of hedonic subjection for exploitative ends of a condition of annihilating social acceleration determined by the imperative of perennial growth and compound rate increase led by hegemonic forces of abstractive capitalism (Harvey, 2018).

2. The production of the primary folding

2.1. X Surfaces Developed in Space

X Surfaces Developed in Space is an artwork with a provocatory agency: to disrupt the dominated distribution of the sensible (Rancière, 2004). It consists of an unconventionally folded, perilously dissected and progressively oxidating plate of industrial steel that interrupts the continuities designed for representative art in public spaces by deviating movement flows of people and vehicles, unsettling aesthetic order, staining the and relentlessly cleaned and sanitized materials that 'beautify' the city, hindering daily practices, and disturbing the policing practices by introducing a hazard that triggers defensive acts. This steel plate is designed for an installation in a central public space where it appears as a queer object. Yet, its alterity is not actual: its presence as basic semifinished objectile is that of an open assemblage with myriad applications that materially fold into it. Through folding, it resonates with the near-ubiquitous emplacements of itself in the surrounding environment as buildings component (e.g. plates of iron gates), appliance (e.g. cage of refrigerated units), and interior fittings and furnishings (e.g. bar chairs, tables and counters). Its fold, however, is patently subversive and provocatory: a large curvature defines this embodiment of a plate that encloses what is external to it and makes it internal. Multiple cuts on its body expand this agency by locally allowing for new internalizations through inflexion or deflection of the primary curvature liberated by dissection. This interruption of the continuity

of the curvature creates protruding sharp and pointy flaps that redouble the hazard of the installation. The threat to the public is enhanced by the accelerated natural oxidation of the plate that exudes a familiar coating: a signal of potential contamination and index of uncontrollable becoming.

The folds subvert the customary order of things by showing the eludibility and the possibility of breaking loose from the constructed dominating system within our world of commodities. The metal sheets as an unfinished product for transformative transformation, such as the deformation and the tin treatment to make it into, say, a Campbell's soup tin sent and consumed throughout the world, unsustainably, supported by a massive spectacle that includes the carnivalization of Warhol's work annihilating the understanding of the implications of alienation.

The multiple folds make this installation a meaningless structure (Jameson, 1992): non-representational operations of folding, dissecting and oxidating engage supersignifiers that manifest the unlimited finity (Deleuze 1988; O'Sullivan in Parr, 2005). Determined by a agrammatical logic, these folds supersede and reaffirm signifiers, concurrently, showing how a "finite number of components yields a practically unlimited diversity of combinations" (Deleuze, 1988: 131). The folding moderates the "absence of the centre" by creatively engaging the crisis of common logic and the loss of meaningful references. It reinstates complementary fictions produced and imposed by hegemonic actors, such as leading corporations and leading political parties. Its materiality detours the integrated spectacular landscape of the consumption apparatus made of several complementary yet competing fictions produced and imposed by the hegemonic actors of leading retail and entertainment corporations. The redoubling folding of the film introduces a reflection where transgression opens to resonance by territorializing the practices of each context, documenting the break of meaningless structure in everyday life, disengaging the accelerating abstraction and opening other spatialities to (e)motion.

X Surfaces Developed in Space explore the relationship between a sculpture and space to understand the transformational agency of the former over the latter in open and closed, private and public spaces of either concentrated or extended urban spaces. The work modulates relationships through size and material variations on the multiscalar dimensions, depending on the space in which it is emplaced: functionally, structurally and discursively. Its embodiments range from landscape or urban public art scale to domestic or personal ornament, establishing narratives of subversion that involve the city's architecture in contestation processes. As an individual sculpture or assemblage of serial repetitions, it dismembers and dislocates the distributive spatial regime, forming a whole installation with strict relations of dependence (Fig. 1).

Oxidations add a patina that relates it to the passage of time and the course of its existence and establishes its roots by marking with rust its territory. As post civil (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008) monument of the postmodern urbanity, it overcomes the pursuit of representational aims and celebratory or acculturing agendas. It is partly a concept of elaborating the idea of the surfaces in a space that opens or closes a given spatial condition. It also includes dissections that reveal the operability of the surfaces, dissolving their continuous geometry. It opens outwards, creating an imaginary space

and reflecting in it the process of its production through the steel plate's manual and automated machining processes.

Searching for and experimenting with surfaces in space through careful thought and deliberation, the surfaces unfold by resolving in space through continuous sketching until the work is exposed. The work is geometrically placed in equilibrium to form a whole and with secondary arrangements of the surfaces that introduce multiple transformations. The public engages with the installation as an active participant in the interaction with the sculpture, passing between individual parts of open and closed surfaces hiding and seeking both actually and digitally through the multiple platforms of the digital public sphere. Three geometric semicircles, with different arrangements, form the sculpture as a whole, giving it architectural significance and presenting it as part of a whole gallery, an interior and exterior natural or urban space. This sculptural installation has a future purpose of being placed in urban public space. The installation would be placed as part of a public area in the courtyard of the building complex, a public educational institution, thus forming an overall urban educated whole. Also, this sculptural installation is intended for installation in a public urban promenade or the like, where it would interfere with the hectic flow of actants, both humans and non-humans. Its performance would contribute to the inclusion of art in the urban sphere of life. Sculptural installation is in the existing dimensions and intended for placement in the gallery and museum space.

The Production of X Surfaces Developed in Space: The material folds are produced through a machine that bends the three steel plates 1.5 mm thick and measures 2m x1m in half circles of 1.25m radii. Subsequent manual cutting and bending involve splitting the sheets into two pieces horizontally and vertically by 15 cm and manually bending them in the opposite direction, creating a small leaf shape in the pure geometric semicircular shape of the sculpture. One of the three sheets is cut 15 cm vertically and bent so that the entire art installation gets its movement. When viewed from above, it forms a spiral maze of surfaces inserted into one another, forming a series of three geometrically arranged sculptures.

Different layouts of geometric surfaces give us different art installations with differently developed surfaces. Looking at the geometric surfaces separately, they create a single sculpture in the space on the front, opening the space and closing it on the opposite side. Cutting the surfaces opens the closed surface and changes the curvature's direction, opposing the pure semicircular surface and appropriating extra surrounding space. The plate was washed with Nitro to remove the oily protection. After that, it was treated with salt and water to prime oxidation and create a patina receptive to the natural forces of the environmental conditions. The sculpture developed an irregular coating interacting with weather conditions through a chemical reaction. Rust also represents the influence of time on the material in the transcendental meaning of the influence of time and incidental phenomena of the material, giving the sculpture time as a fourth dimension.

Surfaces are functional or non-self-contained, closing the volume and defining interior and exterior conditions. Geometric figures of semicircles construct such volumes with different arrangements. The relations between surface and space shift the

perception of space. Smaller cuts and bends on the surface in the opposite direction open additional links to the surrounding space. Geometric shapes and composition methods produced with mechanical methods give the surfaces an abstractive capacity. Pure surfaces reduce aesthetic to materiality as an aspiration for embodying gestures of intervention on the surfaces. The conceptual critique is directed at the postmodern fetishism of sculptures, architecture and decorations of our daily landscape.

Material and Material Processing: The thin plate of metal used to create the artwork was processed through simple processes, such as bending, cutting and splitting. These processes are possible due to the flexibility and durability properties of the material. These processes were also deployed to produce various objects, from coins to ships, starting from its range of primary forms: rectangular panels of various sizes or strips on wheels. The sheets were obtained by rolling structural steel with a black coating that is substituted by rust if exposed to the elements of time. The three rectangular sheets were processed in three phases. They were initially bent with a machine that compresses their inner part and extends the outer without removing the shavings. Three semicircles were made by bending sheet metal 1.5 mm thick and 2m x 1m. In the second phase of production, the sheets were manually cut. A hand saw and a manual frame saw were used. When cutting, the tool blade vertically enters the material, loosening the material by breaking or cutting it. Penetration of the hand saw into the material produces a rough vertical cut. The third phase used mechanical, manual processing. For bending the metal in the opposite direction, a template was used and the parts were manually separated. A plunger and an iron embossing template were used to form a 15 cm bent.

2.2. The films

2.1.2. X Surfaces Developed in Space

The first part of the film, it is representing the sculptural installation in context of the Debora critical theory that radical action in the form of the construction of situations… situations that bring reordering of life, politics and art (Fig. 1).

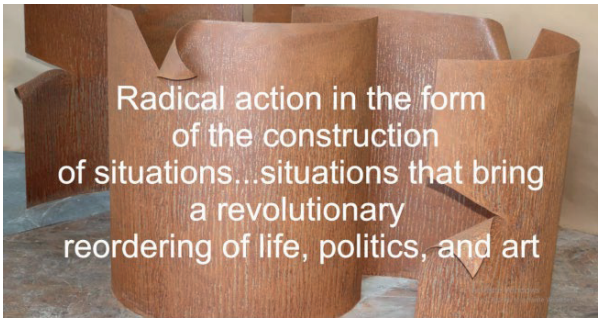

Fig. 1. Daniela Grubišić, *Surfaces developed in space*, 2019, Arts Academy of the University of Split.

2.1.2. Human body

The sequence of this film depicts, according to Debord theory, the social relationship between people that is mediated by images. The main idea of this sequence is to show the interpersonal relationship in this case, the relationship between a woman and a man changing through different shots by mutual interaction or individual performance (Fig. 2, 3, 4).

Fig. 2,3,4. Daniela Grubišić, *Human body*, 2018, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany.

2.1.3. Reality-vituality continuum

The name of this sequence is Diagonal, which in its performance, is an artistic intervention in the urban – natural environment. The idea behind this sequence is to show the real and virtual relationship and interrelationships. In the existing video showing the urban part of nature in a couple of frames, a drawing intervention is performed, merging individual prominent angles in nature in which the mapping is made, and finally the mapped drawing itself. This sequence is also as an example of theory of Guy Debord and Gil J. Wolman of détourned, existing art being placed in a new context (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. Daniela Grubišić, *Diagonal*, 2017, Arts Academy of the University of Split.

2.1.4. Urban space – urbanization

This film sequence shows today's rise of urbanization through different shots such as elevators in the mall, streets in different periods, shops with goods, etc. The urban environment is presented as a critique of contemporary consumer culture and commodity fetishism (Fig. 6, 7, 8).

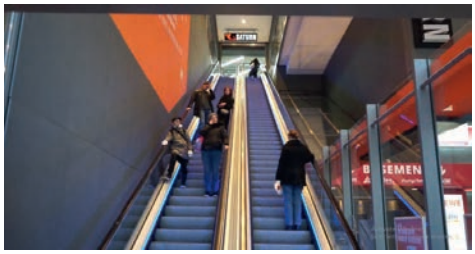

Fig. 6,7,8. Daniela Grubišić, *Urban city*, 2019, Kiel-Hamburg, Germany.

2.1.5. Hand

In this sequence of the film, the hand is moving to circle around a candle. Fire symbolizes danger and also a source of heat and is often used for religious purposes. The idea of the film sequence itself is to show notion, according to Debord theory that too involves real life begin replaced by representation of life (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9. Daniela Grubišić, *Candel and hand*, 2019, Arts Academy of the University of Split.

2.1.6. Talk – urban dialogue

In this sequence, there is a dialogue about changing the current place of residence. Dialogue consists of motivation through thinking that leads us to the decision to change the place of residence from a one urban space to other urban space. According to Debord

theory Spectacle involves using spectacular images and language to disrupt the flow of the spectacular which is refers to this sequence.

2.1.7. Escape

The last sequence of the film shows an escape from one situation to another. The action begins with an idea of a sunflower flower being held in the hands. The sunflower symbolizes the sun as a representation of daily life. Through the course of certain events or established norms we are trapped, limited to certain situations in life, escape can sometimes serve as a break with the current situation according to the Hartmunta Rosa theory of resonance (Fig. 10).

Fig. 10. Daniela Grubišić, *Escape*, 2019, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany.

3. Redoubling the folds: Redux of the Society of the Spectacle

The film *Redux the society of the Spectacle* progresses the critique of the contemporary spectacle by collating the work X Surfaces Developed in Space and the other films introduced above. Folding these pieces into a single project, this film intersects real and virtual spatialities, draws links between fragmentary actions and remaps their relations to produce a compound effect. The film affirms a space of negation – a sublation that has taken on a visible from multiple moments of resonance and reappropriation.

Incorporating diagonal lines into video projection creates the relationship between the virtual space of the projected video and the current space and time in which the drawing action takes place, balancing between the real and virtual space. This part of the film is also an artistic performance that emphasizes the importance of producing and reflecting on art. Today we often replace the real world with the virtual, online world, spectacularizing today's society.

The Redux of the Society of the Spectacle addresses the relationship between people as a form of socialization moderated by images in which spectacle actively alters human interactions and relationships. Relationships between people are conditioned by changes both emotionally and socially. Sometimes relationships are conditioned by changes in living locations, social situations and norms, and sometimes by our aspirations and desires. Today we opeate in a society where the spectacle conditions our relationships and interactions with other people, coproducing an alienating form of urbanization.

The film includes a section that documents the increasing speed of change in current urbanisation processes. Ultra-fast kaleidoscopic images distract and influence our lives and beliefs; advertising instantly remanufactures new desires and aspirations; contemporary consumer culture constantly reframes commodity fetishism practices; the spectacle of real life is replaced by fleeing representations of life. The film pivots on a sequence with a hand on fire challenging the scripted safety of everyday life. The end of the film gives us the point that no matter the situation, there is always a way out, either manifested in physical form such as escape or the thought process when we move from one thought thinking to another flow of thought. In the thought process, the new idea gives us space to discover new possibilities. The spectacle is interrupted by rerouting and hijacking its very same spectacular images and language. The apparatus of the spectacle is unveiled. The spectacular nature of our society, which is changing, renewing and supplementing again and again, exposed. The film offers escape opportunities from dominated conditions with the possibility of substituting them with new situations, images, and commune resonances.

4. Reflection on the project

The postmodern society of the spectacle has reset the criticism on the overcoming of meaning, value, sense and way of life of modern society formulated by the critical theory that informed the work of Debord, leading to *The Real Split* of the Situationist International of 1972. The postmodern man (Jameson, 1991) has elaborated on the decadence and nihilism of the modern and expressed it in the rise of postmodern art (Vattimo, 1991). Postmodernism witnesses the death of modernism and sees its arrogant demand for uniqueness and responsible for the evils of modern civilization as a futile yet heroic attempt. Modernism was hostile to humanism and dismissed it as a bourgeois issue where reason is abandoned to free people from the established order. Also, postmodernism dismantled the Eurocentric view that that democratic powers should spread Western conceptions and truth, dismissing this as undesirable and meaningless – the awareness of the necessity of understanding the continuous becoming as value. Postmodernism is a form of cultural activism motivated by philosophical theory and political ends and cannot in any way be accommodated in a linear conception of history, as this film documents. Postmodernism looks backwards and forward, taking motives like never before in history. Postmodernism embraces earlier ideas and radically reinterprets their meaning by placing them in context. It combines art forms, thus producing *maximal difference* (Lefebvre, 1991). In visual arts, the postmodern approach opens possibilities. Art can openly address the catastrophe of meaning, the disruption of rational, historical determinism and the progress of art. Postmodern sculpture transforms the modernist autonomy and non-narrative into an emancipatory *sculpture through text* that offers complex combinations of spatialities – social, physical and mental. Postmodern is the production of sense in postindustrial, and in political terms of the postblock (post cold war) era. Postmodern contemporary art urges the contemporary artist to reflect on the condition of today's metamodern man. The Redux the Society of the Spectacle is an affirmation of the Right to Dissensus,

which, as Rancière (Rancière, 2010) posits, exert the disruptive capacity of action to evade coding, orders and distributions and, as such, informs politics as "supplement to every collective body"

Link to the film https://youtu.be/Agx_44l_AwM

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All photos by Daniela Grububišić

Contributions of the mentors

Surfaces developed in space: Kažimir Hraste, Arts Academy of the University of Split, Croatia
Deployed forms: Matko Mijić, Arts Academy of the University of Split, Croatia
Human body: Stefanie Polek, Stephan Sachs, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany
Diagonal: Vlasta Žanić, Arts Academy of the University of Split, Croatia
Candle and hand: Viktor Popović, Arts Academy of the University of Split, Croatia
Talk: Stefanie Polek, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany
Escape: Nenad Čosić, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany

Contribution of the actors

Human body: Patryk Wilk, Anna Geffert, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany
Urban city: Julia Sederholm, Claudia Geaboc, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany
Talk: Claudia Geaboc, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany
Escape: Arturo Sayan, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany
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Diagonal: Dragoslav Dragičević, Arts Academy of the University of Split, Croatia
Candle and hand: Antea Biskupović, Arts Academy of the University of Split, Croatia
Escape: Arturo Sayan, Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany

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Abstract

Radical structural transformations of the public realm in our post-civic urban condition progressively reduce relationality and negate the Right to the city. Fifty years after Debord's *Real Split*, the ever-accelerating abstractive effects of the Society of the Spectacle impose a radical redress of the critical theory informing its interpretation. This paper discusses a film on the creative work of Daniela Grubisic, documenting daily detournement practices of public space subversion-by-sublation. An initial analysis of her sculptural work that deconstructs abstractive conditions of domination to reestablish instances of emancipatory relational resonance is followed by an exploration of her filmic work that reverses emplaced annihilating conditions. Finally, a critical evaluation of the combined capacity of these established rich relational intensities foregrounds its effectiveness in engaging multiple actants in formulating effective counter-hegemonic cultural practices.

Keywords: Public space, Emancipatory artistic practice, The Society of the Spectacle, Hegemonic culture, The Right to the City, Carnivalesque distribution of the sensible, Public art installation, Visual art film.

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'Downtown mosaics' in revitalisation district in Szczecin (Poland). Reflections on the project

Before starting the 'Śródmiejskie mozaiki' ('Downtown mosaics') art project by OSWAJANIE SZTUKI Association, there were many questions to be addressed: is it possible to change the perception of a place through art? How to engage people in the project? How to introduce change that will not be perceived as space appropriation? As Magdalena Piłat-Boruch writes in her book 'Design, Designer and metamorphosis of the city,' participation art perfectly fits the idea of civil society when an artist is working with the public to reflect on relation between the people and the space surrounding them. This article makes an attempt to present one of the elements of building new urban culture in revitalised area of Szczecin.

Szczecin is the capital city of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship, in northwestern part of Poland, located 20-minute drive from the German border. Szczecin is more than a thousand years old, however its modern city centre has mainly been shaped by the 19th century urban transformation – from a fortress to the vibrant city with growing industry, especially shipbuilding. At that time new urban plan was created along with the new street layout and dense urban development. Main residential area was located northwest of the Odra river – with mostly four-storey tenement houses for wealthier citizens at the front, and much smaller outbuildings in the backyards. This is still characteristic for today's Szczecin downtown area. Because of high density of the buildings, backyards are underexposed what makes them dark and filled with disturbing mood. In the 19th century this area had been designed as a residential district, while the function of the 'heart of the city' remained in the old town.[23]

Szczecin (up to 1945 – Stettin) became Polish city at the end of World War II. Because of that, after the war German inhabitants had been forced to move to Germany,

[23] Piotr Fiuk, *Miejska kamienica czynszowa z drugiej połowy XIX i przełomu XIX/XX wieku w przykładzie Szczecina; charakterystyka form i źródeł inspiracji z analizą możliwości adaptacyjnych*, https://repozytorium.biblos.pk.edu.pl/redo/resources/26978/file/suwFiles/FiukP_MiejskaKamienica.pdf (Accessed: 29 July 2022).

while the Polish people – from all around Poland – were arriving in Szczecin. For many of them this was just a short stop on a much longer journey to other European cities, the USA, or on the way back to their home towns in eastern Poland. Undoubtedly, Szczecin was an attractive place for the newcomers looking for a fresh start in life. The Old Town was destroyed by aerial bombing attacks, but most of the tenement houses in the downtown area were saved in good condition and ready to be inhabited. Every newcomer, man or woman, could get a place to stay and job immediately upon the arrival. Nevertheless, for many of the new szczeciners this home seemed temporary for many years.

In the next few decades, the city was growing – powered by the industry like shipbuilding, steelwork and clothing production. The Old Town was not rebuilt for a long time, so city life was forced to move to the 19th century residential area. Wojska Polskiego (Polish Army) Avenue became the new shopping and meeting point for the locals. In 1959 new biggest Cinema called Kosmos – 'The Cosmos' in Polish – opened, and it quickly became a popular place to visit. In the 1970s Wojska Polskiego Avenue was covered with bright and sparkly neon signs. This boulevard was the apple of the residents and city hall eye – a true showpiece. In the same decade, city officials agreed to the downtown part of the avenue renovation and liquidation of the streetcar line that ran there since the end of the 19th century.

After the change of the socio-political system in the last decade of the 20th century, Wojska Polskiego Avenue kept its good reputation. A well known fast food chain restaurant opened its location there, Kosmos Cinema was still showing movies and attracted many viewers who after the show often visited many pastry shops located nearby.

When the new millennium began, Wojska Polskiego Avenue has started to degrade, fast foods restaurant left for better locations in shopping malls, and Kosmos Cinema could not keep up with the new big multiplex cinemas. Slowly this once prestigious alley was turning into grey, dirty and unpleasant road that everybody tried to avoid. The general mood in the city worsened, the shipyard's competitiveness was significantly reduced, resulting in unemployment and decreasing number of inhabitants.[24]

Residents and city officials finally noticed that this beloved avenue lost its appeal. In August of 2017, the City Hall published a report titled 'Diagnoza stanu istniejącego Miasta Szczecin' (eng. Diagnosis of the current state the city of Szczecin). It stated that three downtown estates (in Polish: osiedla), namely: Centrum, Śródmieście-Zachód, Turzyn were those most degraded in the whole city. It means these areas encounter huge growth barriers, including a progressive pauperization, big deflation of the population. Many residents of those estates still remaining in need of social and financial aid, longtime unemployment, and high risk of crime. Lots of the shop premises were becoming deserted – the report also claimed that three shopping malls that emerged in the city center have contributed to the reduction of attractiveness of this part of Szczecin. These shopping malls were designed as closed public spaces, where many needs are easily satisfied, sucking the city life from the streets.

[24] Urząd Miasta Szczecin (2006) *Memorandum Finansowe Miasta Szczecin* http://bip.um.szczecin.pl/files/BF06C8843FFE42E48D32B274CFC0062F/02.pdf (Accessed: 29 July 2022).

City officials developed a downtown revitalization plan focused on the redevelopment of the downtown section of Wojska Polskiego Avenue. The eyes of the inhabitants of the other districts looked mainly at the design of the social functions of the new avenue.[25]

The revitalisation process involves not only change of the physical space by carrying out renovation works (as is often the case), but should also focus on the residents of degraded neighbourhoods. Szczecin has been in a great need for creation of the new urban culture. As Magdalena Piłat-Borcuch writes, the urban culture involves three main elements: middle class values (e.g. subjectivity, respect for the common good), life-style values (e.g. spending time in common spaces), and creation of an urban narration (through art and culture). Until 2019 many municipal initiatives addressed to specific social groups were created in the center of Szczecin: senior citizens' homes, apartments for the young, green backyards and green front gardens.

In 2018, Szczecin City Hall officials together with OSWAJANIE SZTUKI Association established ŚRODEK Śródmiejski Punkt Sąsiedzki (eng. MIDDLE The Downtown Spot for Neighbours) – a place that is supposed to support the commune self-government in the social aspects of revitalisation process in the downtown area. At that time, OSWAJANIE SZTUKI Association was rather small and new non-profit organisation associating artists, designers and culture managers from Szczecin. They took the responsibility to create the spot open to the residents and implement a programme for strengthening commitment and integration of Szczecin inhabitants.

One year later, in 2019, ŚRODEK was already recognizable by szczeciners from all over the city, but relations with people from the closest neighbourhood have not been developed. However, true revitalisation can only happen when every social group is included and no one is left out. Because of different needs and competences of the representatives of socially excluded groups that live in the area, it was not reasonable to expect them to participate in different events or projects on the same terms as more privileged inhabitants. The Association has decided then – instead of forcing their neighbours to visit a strange place for them that ŚRODEK was – rather to meet them in the safe space – their backyards. One of few ideas was to create an art project to be implemented along with the neighbours. Participation art gives voice to the public and everybody can get involved the preferred way.

As Agnieszka Wołodźko writes in her PhD thesis 'Sztuka partycypacji w krajach skandynawskich w latach 1990–2010', there are five different stages of the audience in the art of participation.[26] The first group coordinates and works on every mosaic project – this includes local designers, craftsmen and cultural managers. In the 'Downtown mosaics' project this group includes: Ada Krawczak, Patrycja Makarewicz, Tomasz Midzio, Paulina Stok-Stocka and Kinga Rabińska –team of the OSWAJANIE

[25] Konferencja podsumowująca projekt Rewitalizacja obszaru przestrzeni publicznej i zabudowy śródmiejskiego odcinka alei Wojska Polskiego w Szczecinie https://bip.um.szczecin.pl/UMSzczecinFiles/file/2_1_MRM_dzien_2_Jaroslaw_Bondar-skonwertowany_(1).pdf

[26] Wołodźko A. (2013), *Sztuka partycypacyjna w krajach skandynawskich w latach 1990–2010.* PhD thesis. Adam Mickiewicz University Available at: https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/bitstream/10593/9888/1/caly%202.pdf (Accessed: 29 July 2022) p. 255.

SZTUKI Association. 'Cosmos' and 'Love' was made with collaboration of Patrycja Żyżniewska. The second group consists of the building administration representatives and – depending on a particular project – at least ten to twenty people donates old tiles or contributes their time and effort to make a mosaic possible. The third group includes those living close to the location of a mosaic – they decide which project will be implemented (always three proposals are designed). This group often joins the process of a mosaic laying or expresses opinions, sometimes sharing drinks and telling stories about the neighbourhood. An audience from all around the city forms the fourth group and have the opportunity to see a work during process of creation or they join the public opening, often sharing their thoughts and reactions on social media. The final recipients are people seeing the final work online. This way it is possible to engage different individuals without having too big expectations on neither of the groups.

The technical aspects of mosaic creation are not the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about street art, but it seems the mosaic form is a progenitor of street art. As 'Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World' by Katherine M.D. Dunbabin states, the oldest mosaics were found by the river and seashore in Greece. When Poland was reconstituted as a communist state and named the Polish People's Republic (between 1952 and 1989), in Szczecin – similarly to other Polish cities – mosaic was popular technique of decorating public spaces. At that time mosaics were often commissioned by the state – it was well paid and wanted job by the artists.[27] Because of shortage of the materials, mosaics were usually made with leftovers, e.g. glassworks and old tiles. Kosmos Cinema – the one mentioned before – also was decorated with a huge mosaic on the front wall. This monumental work of art was made in late 1950s by the two artists: Sławomir Lewiński and Emanuel Messer. It shows people playing sports, reading books and playing with animals – the allegory of entertainment. Jakub Lewiński, son of Sławomir, recalls that part of the crushed tiles used in the mosaic on Cosmos came from the buildings demolished after war, nearby the city center.[28] The artists collected them and reused.

In recent years, interest in art created in the People's Republic of Poland has increased, and a wider audience has begun to rediscover it. There are many publications that archive the artistic and architectural achievements of that period, e.g. the previously mentioned publication 'Warsaw Mosaic' by Paweł Giergoń or 'Łódź Mosaics and Other Monumental Artistic Accents of the People's Republic of Poland' by Bartosz Stępień. Many objects from that period have been renovated, such as the Family monument by Jerzy Eugen Kwiatkowski – which regained its mosaic form during the Katowice Street Art Festival in 2016.[29] Some of the mosaics are saved from buildings that are to be demolished, such as the monumental mosaic by Franciszek Wyleżuch

[27] Paweł Giergoń, *Mozaika Warszawska Przewodnik po plastyce w architekturze stolicy 1945–1989,* p. 13.

[28] Interview with Jakub Lewiński, https://wszczecinie.pl/aktualnosci,pozostawil_po_sobie_wiele_ikonicznych_dla_naszego_miasta_rzezb_odwiedzamy_niezwykla_pracownie_lewinskiego,id-33538.html (Accessed: 29 July 2022).

[29] https://dziennikzachodni.pl/pomnik-rodzina-w-katowicach-odnowiony-w-calosci-zostal-pokryty-mozaika-zdjecia/ar/10082851

from 1969, once located in the building of the Mining Electronics Plant in Tychy and since 2018 it is standing in front of the entrance to the School Complex no. 4 in this very city. In 2007, the mosaic from the front of the Cosmos cinema was entered into the register of monuments of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship.[30]

When OSWAJANIE SZTUKI Association has started the first 'Downtown mosaics' project planning, this approach – reusing old and broken tiles – was adopted not only as far as financial aspects of the project were concerned, but mainly due to its environmental impact. By default, mosaics are much more lasting than murals – they do not pale, they are water resistant and much harder to destroy.

The process of a mosaic making always starts with finding the perfect wall. The search takes place two ways – by using social media platforms and by reaching out to people that live in the area of revitalisation. This is also a good opportunity to inform people that the new project will be carried out and it will be possible to contribute to a mosaic by making or donating materials. When a specific space is found, it is important to contact the formal owners in order to secure required permissions. When this is done, the local community is invited to decide on the final mosaic design. Three proposals are presented, each of them takes this particular place as an inspiration – its history, surroundings and what people living there would like to look at every day. The most important part is to create an opportunity for the residents to vote for their favourite mosaic design – this is when the creators interact with them for the first time and can explain the project framework and participation options. At the same time, this stage is the most difficult, because of the fact that usually the local community – due to its experiences in the neglected area – is rather distrustful, not willing to open up to strangers. Sometimes it is necessary to leave notes on the community boards. The vote takes few days and after finding out the results, it is time to start to prepare the materials for the chosen design. As mentioned before, all the tiles are recycled, often donated by the local home-improvement and construction stores. Individuals contribute by bringing old tiles left from home renovation or broken ceramics like plates and bowls.

Before COVID-19 pandemic the whole process took place at the mosaic location, but in 2020 it was necessary to make part of the work in ŚRODEK on vinyl mesh.

Process of laying a mosaic can take 2–3 weeks – depending on the number of people that work on it and size of the wall. Because big part of the process takes place outside, the best time to do it is during nice weather. Up to now, five mosaics have been completed in the revitalised downtown area, and three of them are located nearby Wojska Polskiego Avenue.

Mosaic: KOSMOS (COSMOS)
Place: B. Krzywoustego 6a (Śródmieście Centrum)
September 2018

The first mosaic was KOSMOS – named after the cinema nearby. Backyard of the apartment building on Bolesława Krzywoustego Street 6A is connected with the backyard

[30] https://wkz.bip.alfatv.pl/strony/11.dhtml

of the old cinema. Few years prior, the City Hall had sold the place in front of the Kosmos to a private investor who built an office building that veils the front wall of the cinema and its monumental mosaic. That investor also changed a small park behind into a parking lot and closed the shortcut path to Wojska Polskiego Avenue. Now, people are left with a small backyard that is full of cars. Children have no place to play and their closest surroundings are empty and left out, what creates a perfect spot for the homeless people to squat. The chosen mosaic design presents the universe with planets on dark blue sky. The locals emphasised that this project reminds them the good times when Kosmos Cinema was the centre for cultural life of the city. Many neighbours participated not just by bringing old ceramics, but also were not afraid to get their hands dirty.

Fig. 1. Kosmos, October 2018, private archive.

Mosaic: MIŁOŚĆ (LOVE)
Place: E. Bałuki 17 (backyard; Śródmieście Centrum)
Spring 2019

This backyard has been found thanks to the local youth community centre, run by a non-profit organisation. It needed some improvement, so kids (that mentioned youth community take care of) would eagerly go out and play there. It was their safe place,

however neglected, dirty and not interesting. One of the ideas for the mosaic was to create a floral motives with a big central sign: LOVE, so the neighbours could see what this space needs the most – a bit of love. This mosaic is the Association's most known work, also among the tourists. Its positive message attracts newlyweds to make wedding photoshoots there. It is necessary to add that a year after this work has been shown to the public, the building owners decided to close the gates to the backyard. Now it is not longer available without permission from the residents.

Fig. 2. Opening of Miłość, May 2019, fot. Grażyna Iłowiecka.

Fig. 3. Mosaic detail, the backyard, November 2019, fot. Grażyna Iłowiecka.

Mosaic: PODWÓRKO (BACKYARD)
Place: interior of the quarter between Krzywoustego St., Bohaterów Warszawy Ave., Pułaskiego St. and Śmiałego St. (Turzyn)
Fall 2019

The mosaic shows simplified forms of a tree, a dog and a cat – common elements of backyards landscapes. The biggest mosaic that is made yet. This location has been found by the OSWAJANIE SZTUKI's friend – he was the resident there and wanted to do something for his closest community. This quarter is one of the biggest in Turzyn Estate and relatively spacious, but is divided by fences and supervised by different administrators, and there is just a small corridor that all the residents have to go through when they want to get to Pułaskiego St. That is where PODWÓRKO is. When the project was starting it was easy to notice that this part of the backyard was no man's land.

Fig. 4. Residents on opening of Rejs, September 2020, fot. Grażyna Iłowiecka.

Mosaic: REJS (CRUISE)
Place: interior of the quarter Wojska Polskiego Ave., Jagiellońska St., Monte Cassino St., Piłsudskiego St. (Śródmieście Centrum)
Summer 2020

REJS came into being in a big quarter that is densely covered with outbuildings – dark, with no green spaces and with empty walls. One of these walls was perfect for the mosaic. The design of this work was heavily inspired by the sgraffito showing Koga (kind of sailing ship) that was once on the side of the marine technical college. The local residents chose this proposal perhaps due to sentimental reasons related to times, when Szczecin was known for its shipyard, or maybe because they recognised the sgraffito. This was the first mosaic created in the pandemic. The neighbours often came, cheered the creators team and said that they are really grateful for the mosaic. They also admitted that the backyard needs more greenery and they want to start a small renovation on their own.

Fig. 5. Czytelnia, December 2021, fot. Grażyna Iłowiecka.

Mosaic: CZYTELNIA (READING ROOM)
Place: wall of a garage on Mazowiecka St. (Śródmieście Centrum)
Fall 2021

CZYTELNIA is the only mosaic that is not inside the old tenement quarter, but on the wall of the garage between two apartment buildings from the 1960s. In this garage an unofficial antique bookshop is located. The design was chosen by the garage owner (because of the pandemic it was necessary to resign from the usual vote). ŚRODEK was used as a working space – only three to five people were working at the same time due to the pandemic restrictions.

These mosaics have been made without contribution of any cultural institution. In comparison to the traditional public art, they appear in rather unusual spaces that need to be discovered or take the city explorer by surprise. They hold simple messages, easy to encode, it is not necessary to have any kind of art knowledge. They make people smile, feel better when leaving home or heading back. They are supposed to help the local community remember that they can make their nearest space better by working together, and motivate them to introduce further changes.

Another completed mosaic project in the revitalization area can be seen in Wrocław's Nadodrze district, where hand-made ceramic tiles have been arranged in the heart in the backyard. In Kielce, a mosaic of waste plates with painted hands was created, to symbolize Kielce institutions, associations and residents of the city.

They attract people from other parts of Szczecin to visit the city centre. They have become popular not only in our city, but caught the attention of many nationwide online magazines as well. They are often documented on social media. The music group called Anieli and singer Katarzyna Nosowska used different mosaics in the music video to their song 'Jaśniejąca.' MIŁOŚĆ mosaic is a popular photo location for newlyweds.

Everytime the new mosaic is being created, local residents are afraid if the work is going to last. Four years after the first one, none of them got destroyed and they are in good technical condition. It can be assumed they were accepted by those living in the area.

OSWAJANIE SZTUKI Association is now well known in Szczecin, implementing many projects creating various opportunities for participation for the local communities – from a huge street festival called 'Rajski Dzień na Rayskiego' (Paradise day on Rayski Street) where thousands of people come to celebrate the city life, to intimate movie shows or concerts in the backyards of the quarters.

The process of revitalisation takes a lot of time and effort of different actors, but szczeciners (people of Szczecin) are starting to come forward. They demand changes and want to participate in the making activities. They want to be proud of the place they call home and want to build a strong bond with space they live in.

In 2023, the OSWAJANIE SZTUKI Association changed its name to OSWAJANIE MIASTA and continues its activity in Szczecin.

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Web Side of Oswajanie Sztuki association (http://oswajaniesztuki.pl/glowna/).

Abstract

One of the most degraded areas of Szczecin is the city center with its three housing estates: Centrum, Śródmieście Zachud and Turzyn. The City Hall has been running a revitalisation program for this area since 2017. OSWAJANIE SZTUKI Association, which has been running the ŚRODEK Śródmiejski Punkt Sąsiedzki since 2018, located in the area covered by revitalisation, is implementing the artistic and social project 'Downtown mosaics.' The aim of the project is to create art objects in a degenerated semi-public space and to improve the attractiveness of places that the inhabitants of the area consider unattractive and/or dangerous. Mosaics are created in cooperation with local artists, urban activists and city residents in the courtyards of tenement quarters, outside the main walking trails. Designers present proposals for three mosaics, but the final choice is made by the residents of the nearest residential buildings or the direct owner of the facility. So far, five mosaics have been created on various topics – from 'Cosmos' behind the former Kosmos cinema to 'Reading room' on the garage wall of the owner of an informal antique shop. In addition to actively joining the mosaic, the residents can provide the material for the mosaic – e.g. tiles left over from home renovation. The mosaics became an attraction not only for the closest residents, but also met with a very positive reception from all Szczecin residents who began to visit the dark corners of the city center. The article presents the process of creating neighbourly mosaics in the spirit of participatory art.

Keywords: Mosaic, Szczecin, participatory art, revitalization, street art

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Expanding the public space through art. A conversation with Pablo Helguera

Pablo Helguera (Mexico City, 1971) is a New York based artist working with installation, sculpture, photography, drawing, and performance. Helguera's work focuses on a variety of topics ranging from history, pedagogy, sociolinguistics, ethnography, memory and the absurd, in formats that are widely varied including the lecture, museum display strategies, musical performances and written fiction. His work as an educator is intersected with his interests as an artist, making his work reflect on issues of interpretation, dialogue, and the role of contemporary culture in a global reality.

For this issue of Studia de Arte et Educatione, the contribution, in the form of a conversation, will retrace Helguera's work to focus on questions of publicness, art and participation in a moment in which socially engaged practices are increasingly established in the contemporary art realm.

By articulating the artist's strategies and operating methodologies, the aim is to shed light on ways in which art can contribute to widen the public discourse on the social and political life and create accessible spaces of meeting, confrontation and dialogue, in which a counter-narrative to the dominant neoliberal framework can take place.

Hi Pablo, thank you for taking the time to have this conversation. Your work – which spanned over thirty years of career – is well-known for being a sort of pioneer for the new generation of artists regarded in the area of socially engaged art. You embody both the role of the artist and the educator. How has this overlapping informed your practice?

I came to social practice or socially engaged art by accident, due to my unusual background.

I came from Mexico City to Chicago to study painting at the Art Institute. When I did my BFA, there were classes in all media: performance, video, photography etc.

At first, I was not too fond of performance art. It didn't make sense to me at first, but eventually I would gravitate toward it. I come from a family of musicians and writers, and I wanted to insert music and text into my paintings somehow, and I was frustrated because I couldn't really fit them there. During that time, I got an internship at the Art Institute of Chicago, which is a major art institution and the museum attached to the art school. I worked for the chief curator of the department of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at the museum.

My first museum job included checking object labels and doing office work, which later led me to give tours. This performative aspect of being in the museum galleries and talking about art was very exciting to me.

Shortly after, I embraced performance art more directly when I realized that anything could be a performance and that I could incorporate all the things that I wanted. I knew that I would never be like a writer, singer, or actor, but I would make pieces that incorporate all those things.

After graduation, I continued working in museums. In 1995 I got a job at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, where I became involved in organizing public programs. It was a wonderful experience because it was a sort of second education for me since I was constantly exposed to incredibly interesting and influential artists talking about their work. I met and organized lectures by Pippilotti Rist, Cindy Sherman, Stan Douglas, and other prominent artists from that period. I also organized a lecture by writer Lawrence Weschler. He had just published what would become an essential book for me titled *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*. The book is an essay about the museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles and, more broadly, with the notion of the Wunderkammer and the question of how wonder can be reinserted in museums. Weschler's book introduced me to the world of institutional critique, and from there I got very interested in the work of artists like Andrea Fraser, Fred Wilson, Michael Asher and others.

At the same time, I started focusing more on another dominating practice that was also happening in art in the nineties: relational aesthetics. I went on to run the public programs at the Guggenheim in New York City, where following this interest I organized a symposium focusing primarily on institutional critique, titled The Museum as Medium. The symposium took place both in New York and Mexico City.

However, during that time, I was already noticing that this kind of interactive work produced by artists in the institutional critique and relational aesthetics arena did not go deeper to really interact with people. In other words, these kinds of artistic practices still looked at the viewer as a passive individual, a passive consumer of art.

As an artist I wanted to create a more profound connection with the public, and I felt that, given my training as an educator, I could do that because in education one is trained to listen, talk to people, and develop a relationship with a viewer. I felt more and more that my work needed to be responsive to the viewer and be something you enter into dialogue with.

I think this aspect, in particular, is essential as you developed a specific methodology aimed at creating spaces of encounter, dialogue, and exchange with the

members of your audience that became active participants in the staged settings you put into place. Would you describe how this path based on participation and collective learning experiences started?

It all started in 2001 when I was visiting Eastern Europe. I was in Croatia, and over the course of a train ride I had an incidental conversation with a Croatian teenager who spoke perfect Spanish. She shared that she had learned Spanish by watching Mexican soap operas, which were very popular in Croatia. That encounter led me to doing some research on the subject, and I learned that Mexican soap operas, also known as telenovelas, had a gigantic influence in post-communist Europe. They are Cinderella-like stories with powerful and hopeful stories about social ascendance and where gender, class and race-related obstacles are overcome by the main character. It seemed to me that in the post-communist era these issues of class and race had not been properly addressed, and these programs proved to be cathartic for the population.

I thus created what I think was one of my first social practice projects, at a time in which we still did not have the terminology for this kind of work. It was called The Soap Opera Institute, or Instituto de la Telenovela, and it opened at Galerija P74 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 2002. It was the first time that I did a project that was an exhibition but functioned as an educational project. The project aimed to trace the impact of Latin American soap operas on the rest of the world. As the project traveled, we activated the space with workshops, performances, and publications. I ran it like an educational institution. It later traveled to many different places, such as the 8th Havana Biennial, HDLU center in Zagreb, and a gallery in London, amongst many others.

This was my first attempt to create a series of engagement mechanisms, as well as inventing what I would call a 'methodological model,' which is also very rooted in pedagogy and allows the use of educational scores or lessons plans in a performative way, rather than in a pre-established way as in the school curriculum.

This model of the Soap Opera Institute was important because this nomadic form of pedagogical presentation would become a precursor for The School of Panamerican Unrest.

The School of Panamerican Unrest, initiated in 2003, is probably one of your most renowned works and one of the most extensive public art projects to date. It consisted of a nomadic think-tank that physically crossed the American continent by car from Anchorage, Alaska, to Ushuaia, Argentina, in Tierra del Fuego, and that activated connections between the different regions of the Americas through discussions, performances, screenings, and short-term and long-term collaborations between organizations and individuals. How did the idea come about?

The idea for this project came after the 9/11 attacks in New York, which led to the Iraq invasion by the US the following year. The attack by Osama Bin Laden was a traumatic experience for all of us, but the reaction of the US was not less shocking. As a Mexican immigrant in New York, I wanted to study the history of this hegemonic arrogance that the United States has shown over its history.

I came up with the idea of becoming a sort of anthropologist of the Americans and reverting the logic of the American anthropologist that goes to Mexico. This led me to explore what I felt were the roots of some of the best aspects of the American democratic spirit that formed this country.

Going back to the roots of the democratic thinking that animated the origins of the US, I paid attention to the notion of Pan-Americanism, an idea in vogue during the 18th and 19th that consisted in envisioning all the Americas as one whole country. Pan-Americanism was a thing not only in Northern America, where this concept was set forth primarily in the early 19th century by Henry Clay and Thomas Jefferson but also in the South, for example, by Simon Bolivar and Josè de San Martin in the 18th century.

At the same time, in the early 2000s we were still looking at the European Union as a successful project of cultural and economic integration and I wanted to know why such integration felt so difficult in the Americas. If we created a utopian country called Pan-America, what would that look like? Further, I wanted to know how national identity informed culture in the Americas at present.

Then I came up with the idea that I needed to ask this question directly to people by driving down the Pan-American highway, which is approximately 20,000 miles and is the longest in the world. It's an enormous length, and it's not even a real highway but a conceptual one because it is an interconnection of roads that receive that name in some parts, but it's not by any means a single road. However, it is largely possible to drive down from Alaska to Chile.

When did the project start? How did it practically work?

I was invited by a museum in Switzerland in 2003, where they asked me to do a show on the subject of peace. That's where I first kind of developed the idea of the schoolhouse as a space for learning, but that's also when I realized that the only way I could really conduct this project successfully was by actually driving down the entire length of the Pan-American highway and stop not only in big cities but also in small towns, and being physically there.

I received a grant from Creative Capital foundation to realize the project. It took like two years to organize the itinerary, and with the grant's financial resources, I could buy a van and build a schoolhouse in the form of a collapsible structure. Also, I set up a website, a sort of blog where I was annotating what happened at all the journey stops, and I got a camera and a bell.

I managed to get volunteers to ride with me from one spot to the next, allowing me to also shoot some videos. Driving itself was a lot of work: for starters, Alaska is an incredibly huge territory; it's bigger than Texas and California, and a bunch of other states put together. We would just be driving all day on roads that were, for most parts, completely deserted.

Another factor that also is important about this project is that it happened right before the social media era, at a time when very few people had Facebook, and Twitter and Instagram were not invented yet. My way to connect with the world had to be with a blog that I could update daily in internet cafes.

The journey functioned this way: I would get to a city, and we would have an event that was organized by the host venue (generally an art organization) of that place – which in most of the cases, I connected with and arranged in advance – on a topic that they had chosen related to the city. The next day, I would have a workshop with participants, and I would invite them to write a speech, a Pan-American speech with them as representatives of the city that then I would share on my blog.

How did the dynamic change according to the diverse places and geographies you crossed? Did you observe any differences or similarities between the cities you were visiting during your journey?

The dynamic changed according to place, but somehow there were also interesting similarities.

For example, Vancouver is where we first stopped after our departure in Anchorage. We were hosted by the Helen Pitt Gallery, an artist-run space. The conversation was about the process of gentrification that the city was undergoing – Vancouver was preparing for the Winter Olympics back then – which was also creating ruptures and erasures in the artistic scene.

In the US, in general, since it is a rich country, I could present the project in museums and art organizations that had resources, where we had more theoretical discussions around the arts field. Yet, when I arrived in Mexico, the dynamics started to change, and the discussions around geopolitics became more real.

The first step was Mexicali, a place north of the border of Mexico, very close to the United States. It is an important city of the State of Baja, California, but it is a quieter border town compared to Tijuana, which is nearby.

Local artists spoke not so much about the border but about basically making art in the deserts, like inhabiting a place in the middle of nowhere. Someone said, "we are the front teeth of Latin America," and I think it was a powerful observation because that's where Latin America begins.

It was interesting that those conversations, as they progressed over the months, started showing a lot of similarities between places that maybe had no physical connections.

For instance, I saw parallelism between Anchorage and Mexicali, even if they are very distant: some artists basically saw themselves in the middle of a place and nonplace, which was the inevitable context in which they made their art.

In that same way, one of the conversations I had in El Salvador resonated with some that I had in Colombia, which dealt with local civil wars and the difficulty of making art in the middle of a conflict.

Some cities struggled with "the second city complex," which means that they are not the capitals of their countries, so there is always a feeling of being on the periphery and not receiving enough attention.

Through the different discussions, I started to see very clearly that many of these places were not just defined by their own specific traditional history but also by the contemporary presence and the way that their particular art world functioned. Through

this specific lens, I felt I was visiting the "Republic of contemporary art," and I was coming into contact with embassies of people who were connected to artistic practice. So, basically, I connected with a particular kind of knowledge that was not always shared by the people surrounding them. For example, in Merida, which is in Yucatan, I observed a clash between the old school of traditional artists and the younger generation, which was interested in making very conceptual art, tied to the preferences of the Western art market. Through the presence of the school, we had an exciting dialogue about that, which otherwise would not have been possible.

In that sense, the school became a catalyst for needed discussions, but that did not happen before. I think this was one of the project's best parts: the idea that I could actually facilitate debates between individuals. So, it was not so much a project about educating me or the public attending the events on the challenges and specificities of making art in one place, but it was really about learning about one another and thinking about common topics from different perspectives.

The school became to me a crucial work to help me understand some of the complexities and challenges of doing socially engaged art at a time when we did not have a name for this practice, or at least it was not used widely amongst artists. It gave me a great deal of insight into how a method of interacting applies in different social and political contexts: the experiments were beneficial to getting inside of those things, and it gave me an understanding of the potential of doing works that have this traveling quality, which can be replicated or remade in different places.

Another important participatory artwork was the Ælia Media project you carried out in Bologna, Italy, in 2011. It was again an alter-institutional experiment since it worked as a nomadic cultural journalism institute and broadcast center, but also as an alternative arts multimedia channel online. What was the inspiration behind the realization of the project? And how did it connect with the specificity of the Italian socio-political climate of that time?

The project was significant for me because it allowed me to do what I love the most: going to a new place, trying to understand its history, and doing something responsive to that.

The project of Ælia Media was the recipient of the first International Participatory Art Award created by the Region of Emilia Romagna. I don't know if they had a very clear idea of what they meant by participatory art because back at the time, the vocabulary around these practices was not formed yet.

However, the organization hired an excellent team of curators, composed of Julia Draganovic and Claudia Löffelholz, and a serious and competent panel of experts in the jury.

The jury members were Julia Draganovic, Alfredo Jaar, Bert Theis, Luigi Benedetti, and Rudolf Frieling. I was lucky enough to be selected for the project.

During the selection process, I was brought to Bologna to make my proposal or do the research toward making the proposal, which was helpful. I had never been there before, and I fell in love with the city. Bologna is not only beautiful and culturally

vibrant, it is also the oldest university city in the world. The University of Bologna was founded in 1088.

I was also very interested in the student movement of 1977, and I tried to interview the former students who were part of that experience. Another aspect that sparked my attention was the impact of the global recession of 2008 on the arts scene, leading many art spaces and galleries to close down. There was a very important alternative space, Neon, which was initiated in 1981, and just around that time I was there, it was closing its doors for good. It was a difficult moment for the local artists who were seeing the art spaces disappearing, especially in a city like Bologna, which does not have the same artistic infrastructure that other cities in Europe have, like London, Paris, or Berlin.

It's not a place where the commercial galleries can take hold, and it's not a place where an alternative art world emerges. But, at the same time, what I was noticing – and I think it's still true today – is that Bologna produces a lot of artists, in terms of people who have graduated from the university or the art academy. Still, they can't stay in the city and have to move to other parts of Europe or Italy to pursue their careers.

So, the question for me was: what can we do to offer a space for artists to work there? And to me, the answer was somewhere in the history of alternative radio and television in Bologna linked to the student movement, for example, Radio Alice, an independent/guerrilla radio station initiated in 1976 and one of the first and most prominent platforms of communication for the young left.

Therefore, we created the *Ælia* Media project. The name refers to a very mysterious, large marble stone with cryptic epigraphs famous for being "the enigma of Bologna." Written in the stone is the name of Aelia Laelia Crispis, who appears to be a fictional character, and it's one of the most interesting enigmas in Western history. Many different writers and historians, including Bolognese naturalist Ulysse Aldrovandi and eminent foreign visitors such as Sir Walter Scott, Gèrard de Nerval, and Carl Jung, tried to decode it. This riddle felt compelling to me because I saw a connection to what I was trying to do in the project: having a dialogic process that helped us decipher the enigma for a specific moment.

At the time, I was reading The Emancipated Spectator by Jacques Ranciére, where he claims that the spectator that is emancipated is someone who becomes a translator, and an active reader, which was inspiring to me. I felt that I could try to offer a space where artists could actually play that role, so helping to decipher the city for us at that moment is how it became *Ælia* Media.

From the beginning, I recognized that I'm not from Bologna or even Italian. So, I could not claim to have any special knowledge about the city's history, which is why I turned to the artists I invited to become radio station producers to develop programming related to the city.

We created a summer course for younger emerging artists and developed a platform for people from multidisciplinary backgrounds, like theater, music and visual arts, to learn how to produce radio. After the course, we organized programming that each of these artists would lead on specific topics, such as the history of the student movement in Bologna, feminism, immigration, and stories about the city that are not known very well. We decided to launch the project as part of the live transmissions

of existing alternative radio stations of the city – Radio Cittá Fujiko, Radio Cittá del Capo and Raio Kairós – at times of the day where they had available slots.

The day of the project's launch was also very interesting, even if it wasn't intentional. It was in October 2011 when the 'Occupy Rome' movement also started. It was a very exciting moment for us because we developed an active lineup of conversations and discussions. We interviewed local politicians, Franco Bifo Berardi – Italian theorist, activist and former member of Radio Alice – and artist Marina Abramovich, who, in 1977, presented in Bologna one of her most famous works, Imponderabilia, with Ulay.

One interesting thing is that many of the producers of that period continue producing radio, in particular, two of them: Fedra Boscaro and Stefano Pasquini.. In this sense, Ælia Media created a legacy for some people who were able to discover the radio as a medium for their practice.

While you were working at the Ælia Media project, you also wrote the essay Education of Socially Engaged Art (2011), in which you propose a sort of dictionary, a toolkit, to navigate the realm of socially engaged practices (SEA). What triggered you to write this book? After eleven years from its publication – and considering the recent developments in SEA – do you think other factors or dynamics should be considered other than what you have already outlined?

I started writing this book in 2010 when I was invited to teach a semester-long class on social practice at Portland State University. It was one of the first social practice programs in the country. When I was researching for the course, I realized that there were basically no textbooks that really helped people understand social practice in a practical sense. Some theoretical writings were produced by scholars like Claire, Bishop, Grant Kester, and Tom Finkelpearl, but these were not texts directed to an art student population.

I wanted to create a manual for people like me who encountered the problems I encountered in my practice, like when I went to Bologna or drove the Pan-American highway.

At the same time, I was also observing that many artists were doing things that many people in the art world were calling 'social practice,' but to me, they were not social practice at all. They were sometimes very superficial projects that supposedly were participatory but did not really constitute a true collaboration or exchange. So, I had this urge to write against these practices, but I decided it was not really helpful. Instead, I decided to create something that tried to argue for best practices in social practice that can be considered socially engaged art, which is what led to this book.

During that time, I was invited by curator Josè Roca to become the pedagogical curator of the Mercosul Biennial. It was an unusual and exciting opportunity to try to think of education in a biennial context, which is often transitory, event-based and ephemeral. This very nature of biennials, of course, represents a problem for a work that is about developing relationships. I was flying between New York, Bologna and Porto Alegre for a year carrying out all these projects. It was a difficult time, but it was

very exciting because I was comparing notes constantly about the different contexts in which I was working to describe some of the issues that I think should be in the manual of any artist who does socially engaged art.

The book emerged partially from those experiences but also from my observations in general of what constitutes a socially engaged practice. There were so many issues in the book that, still to this day, I consider very important, starting with the very notion of socially engaged art and the difference between socially engaged art and social practice.

Some people would avoid the term art and just call it social practice, while I wanted to emphasize that we are still within the art realm and that the work we produce must establish a dialogue with the art world. Also, partially because of those experiences that proclaim themselves participatory, I tried to make those distinctions in the book regarding symbolic and actual practice. For example, pretending that you're doing a school project is very different from actually doing it. It is the actual doing that really makes social practice to me. It's not about depicting another reality; it's about creating another reality. It's like breaking the fourth wall in the visual arts. It's a fourth wall where there's no distance between the viewer and the artwork and where these elements are integrated. Museums still cannot properly understand that because they are predicated on the idea that they are the fourth wall, they are art history. That's why it's so hard for museums to do this kind of work.

In the publication, you discuss the concept of transpedagogy, a notion you have been developing since the 2000s, to indicate „a series of projects by artists and collectives around the world that blend the educational processes and art-making in ways that are clearly different to the more conventional functions of art academies or of formal art education." In recent years we are witnessing a proliferation of educational platforms led by artists, curators, and practitioners in the arts field. What do you think about this phenomenon? What are the limits and spaces for the possibilities of these projects?

While working on the book, I noticed how education had become an interesting subject matter for both artists, curators and art institutions.

A term emerged around 2008, the pedagogical turn in curating. As I understood it, it was a way to incorporate pedagogy into the curatorial practice to create more significant insights in exhibition-making. The issue is that mostly curators were involved in these practices, and they provided a very academic and elitarian understanding of what education is, more focused on exposition than on engagement with people. To me, that was very problematic.

But there was a fascination with pedagogy by artists who were doing pedagogical or educational projects. As I said, the problem was they were primarily rooted in representing education or depicting education rather than actually doing it. It was like representing an idealized version of what the activity is. And education is a perfect candidate to romanticize, since there is this idea that education is an act of freedom that allows people to liberate their minds and helps trigger change and revolutions.

As an educator, I felt very clearly that many simply fell into that romanticism of education instead of actually practicing education.

In 2009, I organized a symposium at MoMA titled *Transpedagogy*, in which we put forth the idea that if we want to analyze our works – which employ education – from a critical lens, we need to see them both as art and education. In other words, one thing does not replace the other, but it can and must function in both capacities.

I invited artists and scholars to write about how education enters their work, and the concept of Transpedagogy emerged from those reflections.

Many of your artistic projects took place in public settings and you also wrote about public art in your weekly column "Beautiful Eccentrics," launched two years ago. In the article "La Plaza and the Occupied Place" you reflect upon the idea of practicing socially engaged placemaking through various examples, such as the Mexican town plaza, a constructed and fictionalized space within a school in Reggio Emilia and the space created in Zuccotti Park during Occupy Wall Street. In the text, you also point to the role that the artist/architect can play in constructing the socially engaged commons. How can art contribute to the creation of public spaces? And how can it construct a counter-narrative to the dominant neoliberal framework?

It's interesting to think about the history of public art and how socially engaged art inserted itself within that tradition. Public art has always existed and its most prominent feature aside from being accessible is its permanence. The great difference between public art and social practices is that the latter has a very ephemeral quality. It's usually action-based, discussion-based, or experience-based. It's not like a public sculpture that gets installed in a square and lasts for decades. On the other hand, I believe socially-engaged art has started having a legacy, which is not a physical one, but it's something of another nature that continues in the memories and the practices of other generations.

For example, consider the 1970s scene of alternative art spaces in New York, where places like White Columns or Artists Space functioned as an alternative to the museum world. However, these spaces then became institutions on their own. I wrote this text in 2010 titled *Alternative Time and Instant Audience*. Departing from this specific history in New York, I asked: if White Columns was the solution in the 1970s, what is the alternative space we can create for ourselves today?

To answer, I tried to explore the idea of the public program as an alternative space. The dialogic, experiential space functions as a public art form since public programs are generally open to the public and freely accessible. But it's not public art because it's not something permanent; it has an expiration date. I tried to argue how we, as artists, can determine the expiration date of the artwork itself.

I have always admired projects that last only for a finite number of years, and then they die, like project spaces or public programs, because they are spontaneous and ephemeral. I think this ephemerality is very meaningful and should be considered more in the production of public art.

Abstract

Pablo Helguera (Mexico City, 1971) is a New York based artist working with installation, sculpture, photography, drawing, socially engaged art and performance. Helguera's work focuses in a variety of topics ranging from history, pedagogy, sociolinguistics, ethnography, memory and the absurd, in formats that are widely varied including the lecture, museum display strategies, musical performances and written fiction. His work as an educator has usually intersected his interest as an artist. This intersection is best exemplified in his project, The School of Panamerican Unrest (2003–2006), a nomadic think-tank that physically crossed the American continent by car from Anchorage, Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, making 40 stops in between. Covering almost 20,000 miles, it is considered one of the most extensive public art projects on record as well as a pioneering work for the new generation of artworks regarded under the area of socially engaged art. The contribution, in the form of a conversation, will retrace Helguera's work to focus on questions of publicness, art and participation in a moment in which socially engaged practices are increasingly established in the contemporary art realm. By articulating the artist's strategies and operating methodologies, the aim is to shed light on ways in which art can contribute to widen the public discourse on the social and political life and create accessible spaces of meeting, confrontation and dialogue, in which a counter-narrative to the dominant neoliberal frame work can take place.

Keywords: socially-engaged art; public; space; participation; education

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Setting the course for public space regeneration projects through video acupuncture adapted for architectonic structure façades

> Just as architects were demonized as the destroyers of the city, artists were unrealistically asked to salvage it.
>
> Tom Finkelpearl, *Dialogues in Public Art* (Finkelpearl, 2001:21)

Introduction

An image is much more than a product of perception. As Hans Belting famously pointed out, it extends beyond the seen or the visible, the gaze or the inner eye, since we coexist with images (Belting, 2000: 296). While infiltrating us, images remain an inherent part of our ever-changing everyday scenery. They carry transformative and communication power, affecting the user directly in consequence. Yet once they become part of a three-dimensional artwork, once the image blends into sculpture and architecture, its message becomes considerably more distinct, conducive to activating a selected part urban quarter as a result.

The use of art in revitalisation processes is nothing new. Nonetheless, given the contemporaneous advent of new technologies, forms of communication – and options of employing it – have undergone profound revision. Visually and sensorially attractive to the recipient, dialogue between a historical structure and state-of-the-art technology espouses integration therewith. By no means a static image projected onto a wall, the video morphs into an "animated sculpture," astonishing and attention-capturing in equal measure. Video acupuncture, on the other hand, a medium involving the use of a small-size moving image on a building's façade, is a targeted activity, with potential focus on a specific building in a particular urban area and/or specific issue.[1]

[1] In urban regeneration practices functions a term: "Urban acupuncture." It is usually described as a small urban interventions than can improve lives of city dwellers restructuring

The phrase *"acupuncture"*[2] is automatically associated with natural healing methods, the therapeutic value of art well-nigh identical. Combining the two fields and putting them to use in the context of broadly defined curative – or, in all actuality, remedial – activities offers a genuine option of improving i.a. problematic and deteriorating urban areas.

Imagery, luminous and textual projections have been part and parcel of the urban landscape for some time now, most frequently employed for advertising and promotional purposes. Festivals endorsing this form of expression have already been organised as well; consider the *Fête des Lumières* in Lyon, France. Given considerable interest in the formula, urban authorities and private companies have also begun using it, the *Medienfassade* of the *Uniqa Tower Wien* an excellent case in point. Other examples include i.a. video mapping organised to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the Prague Astronomical Clock in the Old Market Square (Czech Republic), and a video event held in the Lipińskiego Passage in Warsaw to showcase images of Poland's capital 250 years ago.

Whenever an event of the kind is held, façades become a canvas, as it were, for creative creation transforming into dynamic digital exhibits. A hybrid of cinematography, image, architecture and sculpture, this novel visual language, while ephemeral, has proven remarkably convincing. As accentuated by Andrzej Gwóźdź, "between celluloid film […] and projected film (chiaroscuro performance released from existential foundations of inscription stock through light cast by projector lamps), an area of cinematographic intoxication unfolds, making visibility a mere derivate and outcome of the velocity of luminous projection which organises the cinematographic order of things" (Gwóźdź, 1994: 141).

While open-air performances involving light, film and sound have already established their presence in promotional programmes for cultural and art venues, their potential is considerably greater, which is why artists are more than happy to make use of them as well. Architectonic mapping, laser animation, 3D projections, video art displayed on façades all change the nature of public space. While it might well seem that their impact is transient – vanished and gone once projector devices have been switched off – their actual influence is much more permanent and expansive. When employed in problematic urban environments, in so-called non-places or dead spaces, they bring visual improvement to the area, their popularity explained with entertainment value and dynamic form. The ephemerality of related projects – the surprise effect they produce – is nothing short of enchanting. Making such projects part of the particular framework provided by the city (in this case) is of importance as well, the frame constitutive to the image (even if electronic and moving), the image constitutive to the frame (Paech 1994: 154).

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their closest surrounding (Morales, 2004/ Morales D. 2004 The Strategy of Urban Acupuncture: Structure Fabric and Topography Conference, Nanjing University, China, p. 55–56). Therefore, as Lurner underlines it should be applied in places that need quick and cheap recovery (Lurner, 2015)/ Lerner J 2014 Urban Acupuncture, Washington, DC: Island Press/Center for Resource Economics, USA, p.160–163.

[2] Acupuncture: "a treatment for pain or illness in which thin needles are positioned just under the surface of the skin at special points around the body"; https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/acupuncture (27.12.2022).

Connecting Visual Arts to Architecture in the Revitalisation Context

Art becomes architecture. Architecture becomes Art.

Vito Acconci[3]

Revitalisation – an effort to reclaim urban quarters and bring them back to life – is multifaceted, the focus shifting in each case. Revitalisation implements potentially include art which supports as well as initiates space renovation processes. Popular solutions include introducing institutions of culture to revitalised areas. Permanent artistic interventions – monuments, sculptures, murals – are becoming widespread as well. Soft projects reaching out for existing social, public space, and/or historical architectonic resources are also relatively frequent. Once applied – to reference Jane Jacobs and her choice of words – to so-called dead urban areas, vacant premises or infrequently visited historical monuments, they help restore attraction and life (Jacobs, 2014: 275).

Over the years, artists have been using assorted visual techniques designed to capture the viewer's attention, prolonging his or her contact with art pieces. Total artworks, also referred to as "total works of art," were one of the many propositions. In 1690, for example, Andrea Pozzo turned St. Ignatius' church in Rome into a space of fantasy and optical illusion, fake architectonic components intertwining and mingling with architectural details and actual sculptures. The viewer is drawn into a game, as it were, surrounding scenery the ostensible main actor. Yet the work itself is immobile, all dynamic generated by spectator motion only. Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680) attempted to animate images by projecting them onto a wall in a pre-designed way. Having invented the so-called magic lantern, he fitted it with a rotating disc allowing rapidly changing images of figures and objects to be viewed on the wall (Jewsiewicki, 1953: 79). Towards the late 17th century, once the mobile magic lantern had been constructed, it became a popular source of entertainment throughout Europe. Robertson's phantasmagorias were the next step in image animation, viewers additionally surprised by sound or light effects, some leaning towards magic (Jewsiewicki, 1953: 100–101). Over successive centuries, visual art began steadily creeping out of the hermetic setting of museums, cinemas and art galleries. Modernism opted for the need of art permeating with reality, an attempt at devising the "total work of art" notion. Consequently, architects would be responsible for creating a building's structure as well as its interior, all furnishings included. Examples include the Tugendhat Villa in Brno (Czech Republic), a joint project by Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich. The development is considered a "total work" – each and every one of its components, external structure to interior *décor*, was designed by the van der Rohe-Reich duo. Defining buildings as abstract images, on the other hand, was a post-modernist proposition. Space created by postmodernists eluded unequivocal interpretation. Poised at the intersection of arts, it resembled a dynamic setting, at once alluring and astonishing. The surprise effect phenomenon has never ceased fascinating authors or recipients. Comprising lines, structures, planes, colours, textures, light and shadow, urban space

[3] "Art Becomes Architecture Becomes Art. A Conversation Between Vito Acconci and Kenny Schachter, Moderated by Lilian Pfaff," (Springer, 2006).

is in itself as deeply moving as it is intriguing. Once walls become space for manifestation, the spectator impact increases.

The union of video art and architecture breeds extraordinarily creative dialogue, offering new perspective and a unique view of existing buildings – and occasionally of entire districts. Once interaction with the recipient is added to the mix, a conglomerate of opportunity and chance is born. As pointed out by Magdalena Rembeza, artistic interventions in revitalisation projects influence the vitality of local space by enhancing social involvement (Rembeza, 2016: 327).

Especially when introduced to public space, moving images engage in a process of continual opening to and before the viewer while producing a new and engaging aesthetic experience in contrast to traditional artwork reception imprinted with static, objective specification and peculiar distancing. Multimediality, on the other hand, encourages interaction and polysensory reception, going as far as to allow "immersion" in a world wherein reality is freely infused with state-of-the-art technologies. Produced in an electronic setting, aforesaid immersiveness shortens the distance in artwork reception, engages awareness, and absorbs the electronic matter-immersed object (Sidey-Myoo, 170).

Such relationship between architecture and cinema affects recipients in categories of shock, resembling a missile "shattering the passiveness of perception, forcing one to fashion new entireties from crumbs of the world" (...) (Zeidler, 1994: 55–56). Both architecture and film generate an alluring sequence of episodes in the viewer-recipient's mind, ones Koolhaas believes combine to form a spatial montage (Toy, 1995: 170). Such fusion may be interpreted as a visual event (Mirzoeff, 2002: 6). This is how the viewer is lured into a performance wherein matter in the guise of architecture mingles with vanishing images. Viewers will prolong their experience of a thus devised entertainment form, closely resembling a commercial clip.

Video art reaches problematic and degraded urban areas directly and with enormous force of influence over the spectator, usually one rarely reaching out to institutions of culture and art or their offer. At the same time, temporary and ephemeral, it does not aspire to appropriating space, allowing recipients to get used to art peacefully and on their own terms. This makes video art a safe solution in public reception context. Such introduction of art while injecting it into urban space has been a success in multiple revitalisation projects, as proven by the case study of Gdańsk (*Culture for revitalisation*. 2010: 17) or the artistic courtyards of Łódź.

In such cases, art gives prominence to historical though potentially derelict structures or social issues. Bożek points to the aforementioned as well, by emphasising that artistic interventions in space do not necessarily have to be showcased as autonomous artworks, the actual point being that of introducing a specific problem to public discourse (Bożek, 2017: 23–24).

While encouraging conversation, reflection and assorted actions, video art primarily makes any given location considerably more attractive. The perception of the venue undergoes subtle change, producing interest in – and, at a later stage, care for – local surroundings. Outcomes may include the emergence of services, for example, ones modifying the local dynamic. Under such circumstances, the overall sense of safety

improves as well, a phenomenon characteristic of numerous art projects developed in the public space of degraded neighbourhoods, as it were (*Bringing the New to the Old*, 2016: 515).

In his book *Invisible Cities* (1972), Italo Calvino further suggests that digitised images and projections in urban space may serve to emphasise the neglected or the well-nigh invisible, allowing the city to be better comprehended and experienced with its wealth of history, variations, secrets. Once revitalised, specific properties of the given urban area are rediscovered or reformulated, the process affording a particular quality to the "non-place place," according to local residents. Discovering such distinctiveness may genuinely produce an entirely new approach to space, even one formerly perceived as undesirable. As Piotr Winskowski remarked, the very fact of artists, authors, architects, outsiders taking interest in and/or showing appreciation for a specific urban area may result in attitude changes in the local community (Winskowski, 2010: 66).

Examples include the annual *Kinomural* initiative in Wrocław,[4] a project bordering on cinematography and visual arts, and transforming one of Wrocław's dilapidated problem areas into a large-format art gallery. Various films – time-lapsed, animated, abstract, experimental, 3D-animated – are projected onto walls of several tenement houses, the moving murals unexpectedly bringing buildings to life. As one of the concept's co-authors Bartek Baros says, viewers "are transported into an audiovisual microcosmos wherein once darkness falls, tenement house walls turn into giant canvases covered in moving paintings, thousands of people travelling into magical dreams, immersed in blissful trance. The futurist expedition offers a giant endorphin shot, morphing with time into everlasting memories" (*Tuż po zmroku* [*Once Darkness Falls*]... 2021: 15). The event in question does more than draw Wrocław residents' attention to a particular area of town – it invites them to experience it under the pretext of using a new medium. The high number of publications promoting and reporting on the *Kinomural* project is in turn conducive to improved recognition of the Nadodrze district, and thus a greater number of visitors, for example. The significance of the phenomenon ties in with the fact that the district had been considered a dangerous neighbourhood for years because of disregard, degradation and vandalism. While efforts to revitalise Nadodrze have been made since the early 1990s, the area remains problematic and challenging, mainly for social segregation reasons.

Multiple art and multimedia groups – such as *Urban Screen*, *NuFormer*, *Macula*, *Apparati Effimeri*, *Visualia*, *AntiVJ*, *Obscuradigital* and *Konic Thtr* – are in the business of projecting moving images at uncharacteristic venues. *Konic Thtr* merits particular attention; making human beings pivotal to all activity, the group explores them in creative dialogue with rather than in separation from the space occupied. *Konic Thtr* developed one of their most interesting audiovisual compositions in Girona, Spain, combining symbolic elements of a specific edifice with historical motives associated with previous ways in which the building had been used and employed. Yet this was no small-size video intervention; this was a large-format project designed to point to the value of the structure, its identity in urban fabric, and the broader context of life and death.

[4] http://www.kinomural.com

Aforementioned groups and realisations are all large-format projects requiring considerable financial outlays. Yet there are other, smaller-scale options of making use of the moving image and contrasted light and shadow effect, video acupuncture the perfect solution. While allowing works from the video art family (laser animation, 3D etc.), venue selection is of key importance: video acupuncture has to be a targeted action pointing to a specific issue and/or reaching a specific recipient group, however small. Illuminating specific space in a revitalised area makes it visible, the spectators' attention a potential first step on the path towards creative, often as not successful communication, opportunity for change the next stage.

Luminous intervention may involve text projected into the wall of a building, for example, the move justified in that – as Italo Calvino famously said – literature communicates a variety of things, "not only avoiding any opacity of differences but accentuating them, as expected of the written word" (Calvino, 2009: 55). Illuminated quotations on buildings are used during literary festivals, or – as in case of Cracow – to promote UNESCO Cities of Literature. The *Multipoetry. Poems on Walls* project comprises bilingual (Polish and English) poetry projected onto the Potocki Family Townhouse at No. 20, Main Market Square,[5] the outcome having evolved into a tourist attraction popular with foreign visitors and the local community alike.

The "Making Cities Interactive" project by architects Anna Grajper and Sebastian Dobiesz of LAX laboratory (for architectural experiments) involves interactive artistic installations, users doubling as recipients and authors.[6] The work *URBANIMALS* explores passageways and pedestrian crossings, venues that usually do not encourage stopping. By introducing a notion of fun and without investing in reconstruction or other physical change, the architects embarked on a journey of making such spaces more pleasant. Their proposition included interactive images; projected on road surfaces and façades of buildings, they depicted moving animals responding to the touch and motion of pedestrians as well as to encountered structures, such as urban furniture, each animal responding in a different way. Ultimately, 26.000 individuals interacted with *URBANIMALS* as part of the Playable City project in Bristol, United Kingdom.

A similar user integration-centred approach was applied by ORTLOS Space Engineering, designers of an enormously interesting audiovisual project: the *Responsive Public Space* (RPS) in Graz, Austria.[7] An interdisciplinary community of authors (architects, artists, composers, IT engineers) created an environment users could enter, move around, and experience a variety of sounds and images in. An incandescent structure suspended overhead analysed every user move and behaviour, transforming it into sound and light in a simultaneous signal of encouragement for visitors to join shared fun and interaction. Users were invited into a magical world of the multimedia promoting relationships and closeness, both leading into the greater beauty of sounds and luminous images.

[5] http://miastoliteratury.pl/program/multipoezja-wiersze-na-murach [1.11.2022].

[6] https://futurearchitectureplatform.org/projects/750cfb4c-6993-4480-976e-9f97616fe467/

[7] https://ortlos.com/projects/responsive-public-space/

While in graffiti format, light was also part of a project by Antonin Fourneau: his "Waterlight Graffiti" was shown in Poitiers.[8] The interactive installation of thousands of LEDs are illuminated when in contact with water. LEDs can be touched, used as interactive canvas, sprinkled, or even doused with water. Inviting participation, fun and creativity, the project surprises and encourages interaction – yet not appropriating space in any way, it can be moved to a new location at any time.

Prismatica,[9] a project by the Canadian architectonic studio *RAW*, is somewhat similar. While devoid of a video component, the installation does use light and colour. It comprises mobile, rotating prisms made of dichroic film-laminated panels allowing transmission of every visible colour. At nighttime, they produce subtle coloured light which, when shed on passersby, gives them a gentle glow. Combined with a soft sound of bells, the play of light, colour and reflections on different surfaces encourages people to stop, take photos and play. While in this particular case, the installation has been designed to occupy a major section of the *Quartier des Spectacles* public space in Montreal, the introduction of one such component into a revitalised urban area could become a seedling of change by triggering interest, attracting the local community or prompting conversation. The annual *Luminothérapie* festival in Montreal involves many other multimedia solutions, including video installations on buildings, allowing local residents rediscover selected architectonic structures and city quarters. The projected works have also become a pretext for exploring themes related to revitalisation and presence of art in public space[10] while showcasing the extraordinary potential concealed in artistic interventions organised in urban areas.

In closing

Research and study conclusions allow a suggestion that mobile images projected onto architectonic structure walls can serve to foster revitalisation. Firstly, they affect the way public space is received – then they proceed to influence behaviour. It turns out even minor video acupuncture interventions to building façades in problematic areas can spark multiple positive changes. As a result, local residents can be proud of their neighbourhood which takes on new dimensions, gaining unique characteristics and becoming recognisable, triggering a domino effect. Local residents begin casting a more favourable eye on their surroundings – and tending it. A sense of safety grows as vandalism dwindles. While video acupuncture is a considerably smaller project that video mapping, it can match its effectiveness as a revitalisation implement. It carries remedial potential within, backed closely up by a form of social dialogue. Art thus ceases to be something akin to a privilege for a selected few, making its way into public space and engaging a broad local community.

[8] https://www.digitaltrends.com/web/water-light-graffiti-spock-vs-spock-and-more-in-this-weeks-staff-picks/

[9] https://theinspirationgrid.com/prismatica-public-art-installation-by-raw/

[10] https://www.quartierdesspectacles.com/en/event/290/luminotherapie-12th-edition/

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of video acupuncture transferred to architecture in the context of revitalization processes. It provides analyses of this phenomenon and several examples of video acupuncture in different cities. All serve one purpose: The attempt to paint a profound picture of the exceptional potential of this kind of public art in problematic urban areas to induce urban regeneration. Methods used in the research are based on multidisciplinary literature studies. Data is collected from various literature and site observations. This paper will help readers obtain an understanding of how such moving pictures can be beneficial to the revitalization process and how such strategies can revitalize the neighborhoods of the city. The findings of the research show that moving pictures transferred to architecture have a significant impact on the revitalization area thanks to its catalyst transformation potential on people.

Keywords: Urban acupuncture, revitalization, video mapping

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Experimental exhibitions and theatrical performances in Silesian post-industrial spaces

> Every large strip mine could support an artist in residence. Flattened mountain tops await the aesthetic touch. Dank and noxious acres of spoilt piles cry out for some redeeming sculptural shape. Bottomless industrial pits yawn for creative filling – or deepening. There must be crews out there, straining and tense in the seats of their D-8 caterpillars, waiting for that confident artist to stride over the ravaged ground and give the command, 'Gentlemen, start your engines, and let us definitely conclude the twentieth century.'
>
> Robert Morris (1980: 12)

The 1980 textual manifesto by American sculptor and minimalism theoretician Robert Morris is an excellent harbinger for the aura of action taken by contemporary Polish activists to protect industrial heritage: mines, steelworks and other, lesser industrial complexes, shut down for economic reasons. Silesia is a region particularly infused with such post-industrial facilities. This is where nearly a quarter of all asset accrual associated with the construction of new manufacturing plants had been clustered in socialist Poland, investments mainly involving heavy industry leaning on raw materials available in the voivodship (province). While the artist-assigned mission – as described by Morris – chiefly involved the demolition of the old world, it is common knowledge that when demolishing, the artist is already in a construction-planning process. In their profound uncommonness, shut-down facilities or post-strip mine areas are an excellent proposition in terms of piquing the curiosity of art project curators, artists or directors. I would like to use this roughly-sketched essay as an opportunity to present two cherry-picked Silesian post-industrial complexes which have turned their purpose around over the past decade: the *Wilson* shaft in Janów and Zinc Rolling Mill in Szopienice (both districts in the city of Katowice, capital of Upper Silesia). Both are now venues of institutions of culture, galleries and temporary museums, their buildings entered onto historical museum registers and gradually subjected to material, spiritual and

social revitalisation owing to artistic and academic activity (exhibitions, workshops for children and adults, theatrical performances and concerts on the one hand – conferences and publications on the other).

Specification of selected post-industrial facilities and activities they engage in

Poland has yet to legally regulate the concept of post-industrial areas. Such facilities – buildings and their surroundings alike – are most frequently excluded from use, losing their original purpose in consequence. Following in the footsteps of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Alina Maciejewska and Agnieszka Turek have proposed that such areas be classified as *superfunds* or *brownfields*, respectively (Maciejewska, Turek 2019: 11). The former are the most polluted and contaminated areas, a direct threat to human health. While precluding planned artistic activity, they may become a source of inspiration, as proven by ecological art ventures.[11] *Brownfields* are facilities and areas allowing expansion, development, reconstruction and/or reuse – yet such endeavours may be intricate in view of the local presence of hazardous substances and/or contamination. Soil contamination apart, local facilities are usually dilapidated, technological infrastructure incompleted. Nonetheless, they tend to be located rather attractively, often as not in urbanised neighbourhoods. "Furthermore, such areas – as authors of 'Rewitalizacja terenów poprzemysłowych' ('Revitalising Post-Industrial Areas') argue – are key to shaping the given location's identity and outlining its industrial era-related heritage, and as such require that new practical purposes be assigned to them, the areas themselves be made part of functional and spatial urban structures" (Maciejewska, Turek 2019: 12). In the context of particular revitalisation and reclamation case studies discussed by afore-quoted authors, the specificity of these areas as explained has been affirmed in themes explored by local artists and institutions of culture residents, curators and directors – aforementioned desirable new users of post-industrial spaces.

Formerly owned by the *"Wieczorek"* Hard Coal Mine in Katowice, the *Wilson* Shaft is my first reference facility.[12] The entire post-industrial complex includes several buildings, worksites and post-mining small architecture included. Since 1998, it has been leased by two industrial heritage aficionados: lawyer Monika Paca-Bros and businessman Johan Bros. The main Shaft building occupies just under 2,500 m^2 of space. Its exhibition area (*Wilson* Shaft Gallery[13]) consists of three halls: the so-called Small Gallery, Medium Gallery with mezzanine, and Large Gallery with adjacent premises, formerly a changing/common room and bathhouse designed by Emil and Georg Zillmann. Today, space occupied by corporate headquarters apart, premises are rented out

[11] Participative activities of the kind described i.a. in: (Doś 2009).

[12] Shafts on the Gallery's current location were originally called *"Richthofen"* and *"Hulda,"* renamed *"Wilson"* in 1935 to honour the President of the United States. After World War II, the site was owned by the *"Wieczorek"* Coal Mine.

[13] http://www.szybwilson.org/historia-galerii.html

short-term for exhibition and assorted event purposes,[14] smaller rooms mostly used to exhibit the Gallery's in-house contemporary art collection – paintings, sculptures and installations, i.a. by Karol Wieczorek, Andrzej Urbanowicz, Marek Kamieński, Lech Kołodziejczyk, Andrzej Tobis, the *Eco-Industri-Art* Group, Erwin Sówka, *Janowska* Group (*Grupa Janowska*) and foreign artists.

The latter most frequently include patrons of the notorious event regularly hosted by the Gallery on *Wilson* Shaft premises: the *Art Naif* Festival, a total of fourteen editions held until the year 2021.[15] While an exhibition of non-professional art continues to be at its core, individual editions have been expanded to include film screenings, concerts, and the *Art Jarmark* (Fair) in Nikiszowiec – Katowice's historical workers' quarter, adjacent to Janów. The *Eko-Art Silesia* Foundation established at the *Wilson* Shaft Gallery has been contributing in a major way to supporting the artistic activity of amateur art groups associated with the Silesian region. Conferring legal personality upon the Gallery, the move has made it possible for further activities to be held in order to espouse the local community, frequently affected by exclusion and impoverishment: summer camps, extra tuition and workshops have been organised. In addition, theatres could be provided with an option of staging performances on Gallery premises. Pro Invest, a company who are also the administrator of the referenced facility, has joined the post-industrial facility revitalisation programme.

After three years of Shaft renovation, a non-commercial gallery was established, its activity commencing on the opening night of the exhibition *Druga zmiana* (*New Shift*). The artworks refrained from referencing mining directly (the trope revisited over successive years), the *New Shift* title chosen with intent to showcase a generational change in the local art community: young professionals' works were shown alongside pieces by *Grupa Janowska*, amateur artists taken care of by the *"Wieczorek"* Coal Mine after World War II. The title could also be interpreted as alluding to space abandoning industrial purposes for art circle activity. Frequent mentions of the historically significant *Grupa Janowska*, a collective working in the building (coal mine common room), is thus a motif combining both eras, the industrial and post-industrial. Such dual interpretation of the exhibition itself is also endorsed by symbolic gestures observable at the opening night: "The visual works area was separated from the audience with heavy metal doors. When they banged opened just a crack, the previously played loud music fell silent, subtle tones of a flute audibly wafting from what used to be the common room and is now the gallery. And this is how we symbolically passed from the industrial to contemporary art space – from austere mining halls to rare gallery interiors" (Luksa, Nowak, 2015: 11).

Successive exhibitions at the Wilson Shaft served the purpose of exploring selected fields of local cultural heritage. Developed jointly with students of two Silesian

[14] E.g. *Polytonal Two-dimensional Harmonies*, an exhibition of paintings and graphic art by Marek Batorski, September 4th until October 1st 2015, accompanied by a performance by the jazz band *MOVE ON*, the artist on stage. http://szybwilson.org/zobacz?item=221

[15] Cf. *14th Art Naif Festival, Poland, Wilson Shaft Gallery* (catalogue), Katowice: Eko-Art Silesia Foundation, https://artnaiffestiwal.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/katalog-art-naif-XIV-online.pdf

universities and guided by the motto Ale to już było… Demokratyczna wystawa dizajnu (Those Days Are Over: a Democratic Exhibition of Design), professor Irma Kozina's project placed items from socialist Poland centre stage, the show expanded to include private stories of their users, alongside designs by Czesław Fiołek with his close ties to the mining community.[16]

Notably, aforementioned exhibition initiatives have been enjoying the growing interest of individuals not used to interacting with art on a daily basis. Reasons for the Wilson Shaft's popularity may well be sought in the diversity and ludic nature of its propositions, which includes painting and sculpture displays as well as concerts, light effect shows and regional cuisine tastings.

Other audiences – familiar with experimental theatre and hailing from larger cities – are attracted by the Wilson Shaft's theatrical repertoire developed in collaboration i.a. with the Śląski Theatre in Katowice. Not your typical guest performances, these pieces draw – from beginning to end – on the specificity and furnishings of the facility. Morphine premiered at the Shaft in 2014. Based on one of the most celebrated novels of the past decade – writer Szczepan Twardoch exploring lost Silesian identity – it formed part of the Śląsk święty/Śląsk przeklęty (Silesia Saint/Silesia Damned) cycle initiated in the season 2013/14. In 2016, the Shaft showed Leni Riefenstahl. Epizody niepamięci (Episodes of Amnesia), a piece with a focus on the falsification of history. Both performances were directed by Ewelina Marciniak, young and frequently referred to as "scandalous." Several years before, Przemysław Wojcieszek's Made in Poland enjoyed great popularity, having premiered at the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica in 2005. The play tells the story of a hatred-consumed young boy from the projects. The local community – Wilson Shaft neighbours – were actually part of the cast as extras on stage.

Referred to as "street art," some forms of art activity have trickled over from the interiors to the surroundings of the *Wilson* Shaft, some of the graffiti created illegally, albeit in all likelihood in tacit collusion with the facility's hosts who have candidly declared their openness to such practices. Since the vast majority of local murals were developed as part of local collective actions, some including children, not all are examples of high or professional art (Stano, 2017 II: 29–49).

Purchased from artists friendly with hosts of the Shaft, i.a. Paweł Orłowski, Witold Pichurski and Mona Tusz, vividly polychromed open-air sculptures have been installed among the facility's structures. Poetically titled *Z szafy madame: którą głowę dzisiaj włożę?* (*From Madame's Wardrobe: Which Head to Wear Today?*, 2010), Mona Tusz's piece is a good case in point for site-specific realisations, having been based on an oval-shaped shelter shaft. The surrealist, theatrical figure-and-object arrangement is a diversion from the form's original purpose. The Shaft's gate has been replaced as well, its form now openwork-based, its content *"military"* (design by Paweł Orłowski). A public bus-stop shelter was installed as part of the *Industriada* project.

[16] For purposes of his final diploma at the State Higher School of Visual Arts in Wrocław, Czesław Fiołek designed a visual signalling system for hard coal mines. Cf. *Wilson* Shaft Gallery, http://www.szybwilson.org/news/66/92/Ale-to-juz-bylo-Demokratyczna-wystawa-dizajnu.html

Forming part of the early 20th-century Bernhardi Zinc Works (Rygus, 2015: 89–91), the Zinc Rolling Mill is the other fascinating post-industrial building in Katowice. The Rolling Mill's main hall, engine room included, is nearly 200 metres long and 20 metres wide. Production stopped in 2002. While the sheet rolling machines were shut down, nobody removed them. Piotr Gerber, academic staff member at the Wrocław University of Technology, with experience in resurrecting historical complexes, purchased the building from the liquidator in 2013. Gerber opened a Museum of Industry and the Railroad in Jaworzyna Śląska in 2004, on a historical locomotive depot site. The Zinc Rolling Mill site was placed under official monument conservation protection in 2015. Owing to efforts by the Foundation for the Protection of Silesian Industrial Heritage, a new and permanent quality evolved: the *"Rolling Mill"* Museum of Zinc Metallurgy opened. The new institution's offer includes i.a. museum classes associated with regional education, and scientific activities: conferences referencing the location's industrial nature and its revitalisation,[17] and publications on industrial heritage.[18]

The collective exhibition-performance *Pamięć pracy. Pokaż Twoje Rany. Droga przemysłowa 13, Wejdź w głąb ziemi* (*Memory of Work. Show Your Wounds. Industrial Road No. 13, Enter the Depths of Earth*, Stano, 2015: 59–76) was the first spectacular event to attract large visitor groups from neighbouring districts and the region. Its realisation (2013) coincided with a period when the facility resembled something akin to a romantic ruin. Stephan Stroux, actor and German theatrical director, decided to draw on the potential of these circumstances by skilfully combining selected artwork cycles – site-specific installations, photographs and videos – with what he found on site: empty metal smelting furnaces, broken glass, walls shedding peeling paint. The outcome included a dramatized show for the opening night audience, and an exhibition open to visitors for several weeks.[19] The overall arrangement was a perfect fit for the industrial context, including artefacts originally not associated with Silesia as a region, basically exploring the history and contemporaneity of work – or, in all actuality, the loss thereof – in the post-1989 reality of social and economic transformation. Handpicked artists showcased aforementioned issues through destructive change to locations and natural landscapes, and deeply moving recollections of former local

[17] Scientific conferences: *Ochrona dziedzictwa przemysłowego* (*Protecting Industrial Heritage*, June 13th 2014); *Dobre praktyki w ochronie dziedzictwa przemysłowego* (*Good Practices in Protecting Industrial Heritage*, June 11th 2015); *Dziedzictwo przemysłowe – wizje przetrwania* (*Industrial Heritage – Visions of Survival*, June 10th 2016); *Co możemy ratować? Projekty i realizacje związane z zachowaniem dziedzictwa przemysłowego* (*What is Salvageable? Projects and Realisations Associated with Preserving Industrial Heritage*, June 9th 2017).

[18] Cf. *"Zeszyty Naukowe Fundacji Ochrony Dziedzictwa Przemysłowego Śląska"* (*Scientific Brochures of the Foundation for the Protection of Silesian Industrial Heritage*).

[19] The first version of the installation was titled *Erinnerung an Arbeit*. It was shown at the Zollverein mine in Essen in 2012, as part of the cultural programme *"Klopsztanga. Poland without Borders in North Rhine Westphalia 2012/2013."* In Germany, the installation included multiple works: videos, installations, objects, photograph sets, paintings, and graphic art by forty Polish and German artists, half of whom took part in the Katowice project, a number of new ones joining. Both events were designed by Stephan Stroux – German actor and theatrical director. He dedicated the Silesian installation to former workers of the Zinc Works in Katowice.

workers. The curator organised all components according to a pre-agreed key motif of the ethos of passage, allowing gradation of the narrative-related tension. His proposition for the audience involved a peregrination experience reminiscent of a symbolic Way of the Cross, involving figurative stations in nooks and crannies of the hall, and intimate contact with artwork sets and old records. While the Rolling Mill had lost its workplace purpose, the project served to restore it in ideological and actual sense alike – former workers gave tours of the exhibition and participated in the process of machinery activation.

From that moment onwards, once mass audiences had been given the opportunity to enter the facility, the *Ars Cameralis* Foundation has been organising new events on site as part of the *Industriada* Festival of Historical Technologies programme. Many of those combine attractive entertainment with industrial heritage-related education. The opening night of Stephan Stroux's exhibition had also included a ludic show of fire and drums. The following *Industriada* edition (2014) was given a symbolic title, an annunciation of salvaging the facility, its material revitalisation: *Serce zaczyna z wolna bić* (*Heartbeat Slowly Resuming*). While the Rolling Mill was privately owned by the time, it required urgent renovation. This particular set of events included children's workshops built around the motif of natural elements, a multimedia installation (*Miejsce na Oddech – Space to Breathe*) by artists of the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, and, most importantly, *"industrial"* concerts, i.a. experiments by the Department of Sound Katowice. In 2015, the Rolling Mill entrance was flanked by a Silesian town of cardboard boxes – para-architectonic workshops for young visitors; the hall's nooks and crannies revealed a show of art by Erwin Sówka, Silesian amateur painter. A guest of the *Industriada*, he gave an account of his life and inspiration with the region. Yet performances by music ensembles again proved to be the most powerful and loudest item on the three-day agenda. Historical engines – industrial engineering artefacts – apart, multiple visual artwork assemblages were shown, such as photographs and videos featuring industrial heritage motifs of the Ruhr from the archives of Stiftung Zollverein in Essen, and a series of large-format industrial work-themed reproductions of Adolph Menzel's paintings and Max Steckel's photographs, among others (exhibition titled *Homo Faber Homo Ludens*). The 2016 *Industriada* edition included a graphic arts exhibition (*Przemysłowe hasła propagandowe – Industrial Propaganda Slogans*) in the Rolling Mill; furthermore, the organisers (Museum of Zinc Metallurgy in the lead) invited visitors to view a display of historical records pertaining to the local *Balkan* narrow-gauge railway with something of a cult following, and spectacular steam engine activation shows.

Alternative space and non-theatrical venues – offer of post-industrial space for visual arts and the theatre

More or less since the 1960s, artists have been losing interest in neutral *"white cube"* exhibition space, a direct result of installation art development. Post-industrial locations began morphing into desirable alternative space, wherein curators could provide artists with relative freedom of creation, all necessary accessories included. Parallel

attempts at introducing art into the context of live industrial facilities had obviously been made across the socialist bloc, e.g. as part of open-air sculpture projects popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet in these cases, the creative process – driven by the mission of disseminating culture as ordered by communist authorities – had to follow a strict set of rules, (Stano, 2019). Notably, installation authors were not the only ones to have discovered such alternative space for themselves. Early happenings were also organised in definition-eluding spaces of warehouses and abandoned factories. Only in recent decades did theatre actually begin entering non-theatrical venues: urban streets, squares, churches, tram depots, railway stations and manufacturing plants (Tyszka, 1998), albeit spectacular episodes of the kind did go down in history, in the communist USSR state of the interwar period in particular (consider the *Storming of the Winter Palace*, directed by Nikolai Evreinov in 1920) (Chaberski, 2015: 120–140). Often as not, organisers of events in non-gallery and non-theatrical locations were counting on active audiences showing up in great numbers, in view of the ostensible culture-spreading and propaganda nature of such performances. Yet Morris' declaration "*There must be crews out there...*" has nothing to do with entertaining the masses, or indeed politicising them. It is distinctly catastrophic, a reference to a time when annihilation of civilisations is spoken of much more frequently than the mission of building. It may well be interpreted not only as a metaphor of perplexity in space devoid of function, but also as a hope-inspiring attempt at dialogue with those faced with the need to work and live in the rubble of industry. Given that particular artist's activity, his words become a harbinger of participative and educational projects mentioned herein in the context of aforesaid objects and institutions of culture (Stano, 2017 I: 285–301). Curators and animators of culture are responsible for provoking artists into using motifs and accessories from a specific industrial environment and addressing local communities with their message with a view to engage in dialogue regarding locally important issues, such as groups of neglected children from working neighbourhoods, or teenagers seeking powerful audio stimuli. It is further noteworthy that the *Wilson* Shaft site and its immediate surroundings are a place of work for many people representing other professions (including service-related ones) with no direct connection to art, such circumstances suggesting energy exchange between the two spheres we might refer to as *sacrum* – art and *profanum* – uniquity, respectively.

This pairing has also become an option for contemporary theatre, gradually abandoning the Italian convention of the picture frame stage predominant across Europe over the past centuries, and seeking performance venues outside traditional buildings. During performances staged at the *Wilson* Shaft, boundaries between the stage *"appropriating"* the spacious interior and the makeshift auditorium become a thing of convention actors transcend in a variety of ways, just like in Szajna or Kantor's theatre. Yet one would be hard-pressed to identify such actions with the phenomenon referred to as *"reality theatre"*: in the wake of revitalisation, coal mine buildings have lost multiple workplace features.[20] All that is left is cubature, letting set designers develop

[20] "Reality theatre has been developing with a particular dynamic ever since the performative breakthrough of the 1960s. (...) Its characteristics include aspirations to transcend the

diverse fictitious spaces and use distinctive *"industrial"* acoustics.[21] The broadly defined location context is significant as well – issues explored by all aforementioned performances referenced contemporaneous regional transformation (property destruction, unemployment), or, through allusion, engaged in dialogue with the highly intricate and multinational local history (borders and national identity of Silesia and Silesians). Consequently, not only was this a perfect match for the repertoire of Katowice's theatres (*Śląski*, *Korez*, *Gry i Ludzie*), Chorzów's *Entertainment Theatre* or Zabrze's *Nowy*, but also for the practice of younger institutions – such as the Dance and Movement Theatre in Bytom – or ephemeral, camera-captured realisations bordering on dance, performance and happenings. The latter include i.a. Zorka Wollny and Anna Szwajger's *Song at Work* performed by five Gdańsk Shipyard employees (2011); Rafał Urbacki's *I'm on Fire* with actors of the *Śląski* Theatre, the opening night organised in the former power plant hall of the Royal Steelworks in Chorzów (2016); and Jaśmina Wójcik's film *Symphony of the Ursus Factory* (2019). Authors of aforesaid realisations with palpable genetic ties to assorted industrial communities, as it were, are unified in their intent to recall and apprise the ethos of working in industry, the cult of work, even, bringing socialism to mind. In their choice of channels (festivals, cinemas, public space) and means of expression, they are also driven to reach audiences bereft of contact with institutions promoting elite culture. Furthermore, settings of aforesaid performances revisit the *topos* of devastation: post-industrial venues are very particular locations, heterogenous, palimpsests. Some time ago, in following Marc Augé's mindset and theories, one could have well simultaneously classified them as *"non-places"* serving a specific purpose (manufacturing, mining) and *"anthropological places"* of everyday life and relationship building (Augé, 2012: 34–35). Today, some are heavily imprinted with dilapidated existence, dispossessed of identity and primary functions and relations, robbed of any symptoms of any modicum of stability. Buildings fall into ruin, land morphs into wasteland, *"fourth nature"* ultimately making its way into and appropriating ruins as well (Edensor, 2006).[22] Performances in wreckage, lines delivered by actors in walls devoid of plasterwork or any furnishings take on additional meaning, as argued by Mateusz Chaberski in a selected case study analysis of environmental theatre and site-specific performance in his book *The (Syn)aesthetic Experience: Performative Aspects of Site-Specific Productions* (Chaberski, 2015).

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barrier separating elements of reality and illusion in theatrical performance, and – in terms of space – assorted attempts at deconstruction, destruction, and replacing the traditional picture frame stage with other spatial models." (Duda, 2009: 273).

[21] The phenomenon is observable in multiple post-industrial buildings undergoing thorough revitalisation. Many *"austere"* workplace benefits have been abandoned in favour of new functions, universal aesthetics, and user convenience. Examples include the Dance and Movement Theatre in Bytom, organised in revitalised space of the *"Rozbark"* Coal Mine changing/common room, cf. http://www.teatrrozbark.pl/industriada-w-teatrze-rozbark

[22] German scholar of Berlin's flora Ingo Kowarik identified four categories of nature in urban conditions, referring to wasteland-related nature as *fourth nature* (*Natur der vierten Art*). Cf. Kacper Jakubowski, *Czwarta przyroda w mieście* (*Fourth Nature in the City*), "Autoportret" 2019, No. 3, pp. 17–25.

Theatre academic Artur Duda aptly described the nature of such propositions as responding to the needs and expectations of experimental theatre: "A non-theatrical building has its own reality – materiality, instrumentality (convenience), it can occasionally be a work of art – which reality is then used for purposes of a theatrical performance staged within" (Duda, 2006:344). Following that train of thought, one may even presuppose that shortages identified on-site in facilities acquired for art purposes (in terms of architecture, infrastructure, function) may also become such *"instruments"*: in post-industrial complexes, the loss of previous functionalities – clearly defined, fostering survival – should be identified as the fundamental differentiating factor. Yet any feature of the industrial environment is potentially attractive: brick and plastered façades, a strip of greenery running wild, extinguished furnaces, *"dormant"* steam engines, artificial elevations: heaps or scrap metal repositories. The origin of any locally secured material is of consequence to the durability of installations or items it yields. Interestingly enough, artists have a capacity to make such imperfections valuable as well: poor substance may symbolise the transience of the individual – or the impoverishment of a specific social group.

It goes without saying that industrial facilities are exposed to negative phenomena: plunder, devastation, overgrowth all lead to ruin. Yet they undergo positive change as well: roofing replacement, windows refitted to replace original glass, human activity in infrastructure found and purchased – historical machinery being taken out, brought in, deposited and rearranged has modified the art exhibition capacity at the Zinc Rolling Mill considerably over the past two years. Today, artworks can no longer be introduced to Mill space well-nigh at random, as had been the case in 2013 when the whole facility was handed over to Stroux to accommodate his installation. Restriction has thus become something akin to value.

Comparable with open public space only, monumental scale is what attracts artists to post-industrial sites, first and foremost. Portuguese curator Inês Moriera also points to the particular colour quality of industrial exhibition interiors: "the proposed conceptual figuration – Brown rooms / Grey halls – enunciates imperfect and incomplete spaces that resonate with absences and presence, with an intense materiality (...)" (Moriera, 2015: 218). Visual properties of walls tie in with their hapticity and – more broadly speaking – polysensory impact. Rich sensual impressions experienced at such locations are occasionally yet distinctly more intense than in other exhibition spaces. "Undergoing demolition, the quayside hall reeks of lubricants, mould, dirt of the ages." (Drewniak, 2004:84) – was the theatre critic's description of the setting for a performance of *Hamlet* (directed by J. Klata, 2004) on a post-shipyard site in Gdańsk. Under such circumstances, any action taken by an artist or actor has to necessarily defend its own visibility. Often as not, measures employed by directors or curators in traditional galleries or on stage lose all meaning in industrial space. In theatrical performance, the actor's means of expression (facial or vocal in particular) may suffer. In case of art exhibitions, casualties may include nuances to painting texture, recognisability of motifs, audibility or purity of sound. At this juncture, Brian O'Doherty's prophetic statement merits a mention: "The city is the indispensable context of collage and of the gallery space. Modern art needs the sound of traffic outside to authenticate it." (O'Doherty,

2015: 52). While an abandoned rolling mill or power plant has lost the assemblage of its natural sounds, actors and performers are perfectly capable of resurrecting them, as proven by countless examples. They can hardly be identified as genuine components of industrial space, their form having been strongly modified – yet they prevail, synonyms of lost *"life."* Sound, fire or *"worker"* activity brought in by curators or artists are an excellent match for an encounter with any recipient who *"remembers."*[23] Even if not directly referencing industry, the performance will resonate differently on stage than in empty factory halls.

In summary of this review of curator, theatre and animation activities, one might well conclude protecting of industrial heritage in Silesia – and revitalising individual facilities in consequence – fit in with the notion of transforming the region's image from highly industrialised to a place of culture, an attractive tourist destination (idea: *Katowice, City of Gardens* or *Katowice, City of Music*). Structures handpicked from facilities and sites abandoned by the industry assume new functions while others are demolished, yielding space to new investment. The original industrial purpose of any building does carry within a certain intent to ultimately turn it into a yet another museum of technology, list it as historical in a register of monuments, and/or place it firmly on the Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian Voivodship[24] – yet all examples listed herein are ample proof that revitalisation may also take on a spiritual dimension (restoring meaning of life and a sense of personal value to the unemployed, stimulating the imagination of tourists, forming and shaping environment-friendly mentality), not to mention social aspects (building and restoring bonds between local community members and new arrivals, spurring people into action). Initiated in this part of Katowice, public and private revitalisation activities have begun spreading across ever-greater terrain, becoming comprehensive in nature, serving purposes of infrastructure and landscape protection, encouraging positive social relations, and developing a local sense of aesthetics. The *"aesthetic touch"* Robert Morris had been expecting towards the end of the 20th century is finally seeing daylight.

[23] Numerous events on revitalised post-industrial sites have been leaning towards aforementioned qualities – e.g. the Metallurgy Museum in Chorzów hosted *Ognisty fajer* on August 20th 2022: a festival promoting fire-related professions. Cf. https://muzeumhutnictwa.pl/aktualnosci/ognisty-fajer/

[24] Notable examples include a brand-new investment in the Silesian region – revitalisation of the historical power plant hall of the Royal (*"Królewska"*) Steelworks in Chorzów. The facility was fully secured, its roof renovated. The former power plant has been converted into a venue for multiple events, including a World Press Photo exhibition, *INDUSTRIADA* – Industrial Monuments Route Days, and the Metropolitan Night of Theatres. Appointed by the Mayor of the City of Chorzów, task forces for establishing a Metallurgy Museum in Chorzów operated in the years 2013–2017. In 2018, the Mayor appointed a Programme Council for the Museum-to-be. In 2017, the Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze (main beneficiary) and City of Chorzów (project partner) were awarded a grant from EU funds. The project *"Revitalisation and Sharing of Upper Silesian Post-Industrial Heritage"* received funding within the framework of the Operational Programme *Infrastructure and Environment* for the years 2014–2020. Opened in 2022, the Metallurgy Museum in Chorzów is a local government institution of culture of the City of Chorzów; cf. Metallurgy Museum in Chorzów https://muzeumhutnictwa.pl/historia/

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is an outline of the activity of art curators, modern art representatives and theatre directors in selected examples of post-industrial space in Southern Poland – and Upper Silesia in particular. Industrial facilities provide them with both inspiration and attractive exhibition spaces. Historical buildings and their surroundings are granted new aesthetic and conceptual meanings based on the study of their history and the remembrance of their former users. They also often contribute to the revitalisation of industrial heritage.
Keywords: revitalisation through art, post-industrial space, industrial landscape

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Fig. 1. Fragment of the installation *Memory of Work…* – at the Zinc Rolling Mill in Katowice-Szopienice, 2013, photo by: B. Stano.

Fig. 2. Piotr Wójcik, *Bytom Karb – Memory Flats*, photocollage between machinery units, installation *Memory of Work…*, photo by: B. Stano.

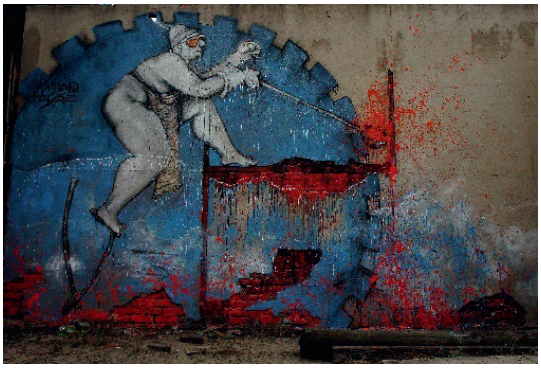

Fig. 3. Mona Tusz, *Flywheel Setting,* mural, Zinc Rolling Mill in Szopienice, 2011, photo by: M. Tusz.

Fig. 4. Witold Pichurski, *The Conjoined*, wood sculpture, 185 x 500 cm, *Wilson* Shaft, photo by: B. Stano.

Fig. 5. *Polytonal Two-dimensional Harmonies*, an exhibition of paintings and graphic art by Marek Batorski, September 4th until October 1st 2015, accompanied by a performance by the jazz band *MOVE ON*, the artist on stage, *Wilson* Shaft, photo by: B. Stano.

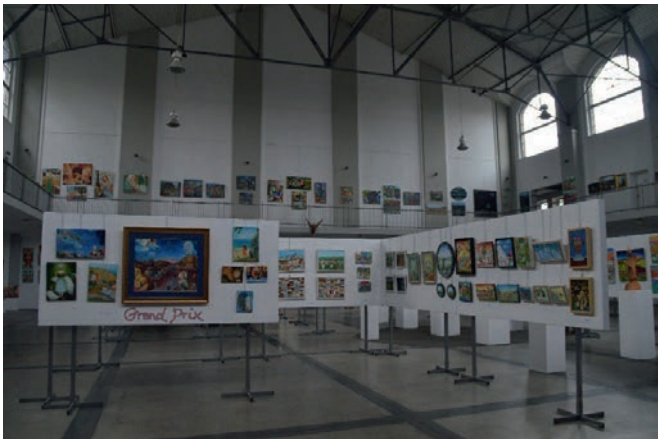

Fig. 6. *Art Naif* Festival, VI 2016, *Wilson* Shaft, photo by: B. Stano.