

Bożena Kowalska  
**Polish Proto-conceptualism**

By accepting one of the definitions applied to conceptualism in the research on this genre, as art that "takes the form of objects under the condition that they have a secondary function in parallel with an idea" I draw attention to an exceptional artistic case, that I call a Polish proto-conceptualism. This phenomenon occurred in the first half of the sixties, that is before Seth Siegelaub's exhibition in New York (1969), accepted as the beginning of conceptualism, or even before Sol LeWitt's article in *Artforum* entitled "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" when the term, preceding the trend itself, was introduced into the language of art. For this reason I describe the above mentioned artistic experiments of clear conceptual characteristics, which preceded the accepted beginning of conceptualism, as protoconceptualism.

I include four Polish artists in this category: Andrzej Pawłowski – an author of *Cineforms* (1957) that were famous in the sixties and "The concept of an energy field" (1966); Jerzy Rosołowicz – the author of the "Theory on the function of the form" (1963) and objects made of lenses and prisms that according to the artist were mere examples of his theory of neutral act; Roman Opałka with his 'counted paintings' (1965) that documented the idea of a fight with time; and Ryszard Winiarski inspired by the probability theory, who asked about determinism or indeterminism and treated his works not as paintings but as "Attempts of visual presentation by statistical charts". Contrary to a typical conceptualism, (which was expressed as a record of processes, place marks, announcements, photographic documentation or mail art that was popular in Poland after 1970 and was inspired by similar activities by artists from Western Europe and the USA – the art of the described Polish proto-conceptualists was purely original and autonomous. It was precursory towards the global understanding of conceptualism and, what is very important, in their activity these artists generated an important message with which a significant concept, philosophical idea or analytic reflection was included.

Grzegorz Dziamski  
**Documenting Art as New Artistic Practice**

The most tangible feature of Polish conceptual art at the beginning of the seventies was the rejection of the old language of art (painting, sculpture) in order to reach out for a new medium of the visualisation of ideas. Andrzej Lachowicz saw in this process a transition from manual art to mental art. It was a departure from autographic art, in which artists produced their own individual sign, to allographic art, in which they perform operations on signs. Mechanical registration media (photography, film) made this transition easier and lead to 'depicturalisation', or in other words, overthrowing painting as the main medium of visual art and, at the same time, introduced a new art language — the language of semiology. Photography made it possible to talk about art through the language of signs, not through the former language of emotions, experiences and aesthetic values. That new language, that was used more or less aptly by artists of the 70s as: Zbigniew Dłubak, Jan Świdziński, Jarosław Kozłowski, Andrzej Lachowicz, Józef Robakowski and Ryszard Waśko, turned out to be a significant feature highlighting Polish conceptual art. Photography and sign mutually supported each other in the battle with the old ideas of art.

A negative point of reference for the new art language became phenomenology. Phenomenologists take signs as reality, wrote Jan Świdziński. This mistake was avoided by structuralism, which operates through a neutral and arbitral (systematic) concept of a sign. A sign has an operational character, it is used to explore reality, it also allows for the reformulation of questions posed for art. Instead of wondering about the ways in which art reflects reality, we may ask a different question: how reality is understood by art, what actions are needed to be executed for the process of understanding to take place and, finally, what limits the process?

Conceptual art did not devise such a new art formula and one may doubt whether it was its aim. It changed, however, the language which we use to talk about art. It drew artists' attention to the processes of sign-posting, to how art functions in the world of signs. The artists may freely use all available signs, they may transform

old signs into new ones (secondary signs), they may give them new meanings through manipulation of the context and discover more or less overt mechanisms of encoding signs that are the discourses hidden behind them. Those discoveries became a permanent contribution of conceptual art to contemporary art practice: thanks to them contemporary art appears to be different than art from before a conceptual turn. Its most important consequence, however, is replacing artworks with art documentation.

Maria Hussakowska

### **What is the Gender of Polish Conceptual Art?**

The essay was inspired by Pawel Dybel's book *The secret of the "other gender". Disputes around the sexual differences in psychoanalysis and feminism*, in which he asked a question about the gender of logos. My – less ambitious – attempt was to try to describe the potential of gender in Polish conceptual art. The question is ahistorical, but there are a number of reasons to ask it. Many female artists that were very active during the time of conceptual incitation are invisible. Polish conceptualism which was formed by some artistic couples, historically has lost female faces. Some of these contributors – like Natalia LL or Ewa Partum – we can find out about in the discourse among first Polish feminist artists, but the question of women's input into conceptualism is still open and does not attract enough interest of scholars. Maybe this is because of the fragile and delicate matter of an artistic partnership in contrast with the heroic notion of artistic individuality that is still attractive for conceptual artists. Maybe this is because of dangerous stereotypes about masculinity and femininity and male and female roles in artistic couples. There are very few scholars who are interested in examining the notion of collaboration in its very complex form.

Much of the contemporary discourse on Polish conceptual art has been conveyed through exhibitions. This tactic may be seen as paying respect to the form of an exhibition – a specific, ideal medium to consider works of art not individually, but as they interact with each other. The specifics of conceptual works that were generally visually unattractive in the early seventies has changed, partly because of the most recent generation. The new face of Polish conceptualism is very conservative with regard to the lack of input by women. Unfortunately the belief popular among scholars and curators that women do not do 'serious' work still persists, but fortunately for those women artists who are active and visible – they found a useful label in the discourse. Placing them within the feminist movement, one should not forget their conceptual roots, and should delete the question as to whether their works were serious.

Agnieszka Gralińska-Toborek

### **An Idea and an Image. The Iconoclastic Aspect of Conceptualism**

Conceptualism, as the art of an idea, placed itself beyond aesthetic and sensual experience. As a rule, it did not produce art objects which could be pleasing or that would represent reality. This rejection of an image places conceptualism in a broadly understood iconoclastic movement. When we examine various historical iconoclastic movements (religious and political) we may reconstruct the most important features of iconoclastic awareness and compare them with the essential postulates of conceptualism. The result of this comparison is a striking similarity of both phenomena. To mention just a few linking features of conceptualism and iconoclasm, we may enumerate: a doubt in the adequacy of the relationship between an idea and image, a fear of an idolatrous belief in a material art object, a drive to demystify art and artists, a concentration on a word instead of an image. Iconoclastic mentality can also be characterised by analytic thinking, progressive attitude and irony. However, the question arises if iconoclasm can exist without idolatry; or if conceptualism could have developed without a material object? Even if it rejected it, then the art world (museum, critics, audiences) that shows a progressively stronger tendency to contextualise, flung conceptualism out of "art's orbit into the 'infinite space' of the human condition" (to use the words of J. Kosuth).

Wioletta Kazimierska-Jerzyk

### **Image and Idea. Aesthetic and Anthropological Paradoxes of Conceptual Art (Iconoclastic Implications)**

When taking into account the iconoclastic implications of conceptualism, we may observe its close but at the same time, warped relationship with aesthetics. I developed this thought after reflecting on Arnold Berleant. Such a view allows one to support the idea of a wider understanding of the notion of conceptual art, which accepts the presence of an art object not only in the form of art documentation, but also as an object included in an aesthetic awareness. One of its main aspects is the problem of the effect (power) of images. The problem of an aesthetic awareness was developed by Joseph Kosuth through a suggestive formula of 'art as anthropology'. I treat this as a consequence of previous ideas developed by the artist, not as a total turn away from them.

As a consequence one may consider as conceptual the attitudes and projects that keep the image in its physical sense and make the creating of images problematic in such a way that the most important seem to be reflections on the notion of art (image). In the article I consider two examples of Polish artists – Jan Berdyszak and Grzegorz Sztabiński. I underline how their activities are involved in certain iconoclastic practices (typical for conceptualism) and with which means they articulate the need to overcome them.

Leszek Brogowski

### **Zbigniew Dłubak. From a Constituted Sense to the Sense Constitution**

The article is based upon his translation of a French text published in 1994. The text was part of a catalogue featuring an individual exhibition by Zbigniew Dłubak in Maison des expositions de Genas. There were some minimal changes introduced by the author to the original work entitled "Du sens constitué à la constitution du sens." The text highlighted the originality of the artist's inspirations: on the one hand – similarly to other conceptualists in 1960-1970 – Dłubak was interested in semiotics and linguistics. However he was more captivated by Jakobson and Mukařowský than Ayer and Wittgenstein. On the other hand, in a similar way to some 20th century painters, he intuitively discovered the procedures of phenomenology. Dłubak's contribution to conceptual art is based on a 'structural-painterly' approach to art, which is reminiscent of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. According to this French philosopher, language signs are 'forms *in blanco*'. For Dłubak, a work of art is an 'empty sign', which will acquire meaning during a process which Dłubak equaled with the work of art itself. The artist suggested an original – phenomenological concept of aesthetic experience, which was based on the idea of stepping outside 'the world of meaning' in a search for the source where the sense of art is constituted. The discovery of the process in which the sense of art emerges and understanding its mechanisms, stand in opposition to aesthetic concepts, as these aesthetic concepts find the style as the main goal of art creation and assume that for an artist a specific style represents a specific way of thinking. Breaking away from the stylistic focus and from thinking in the categories of style, is one of the most significant elements of creation according to Dłubak; a style is an ossified and fossilised sense. One of his characteristic strategies, which is aimed at overcoming the category of style, is a parallel and concurrent use of painting and photography. He underlined the overlapping of artistic and cognitive processes and by doing so, Dłubak arrived at an original concept – not very new in the history of aesthetic thought – which sees art as 'principle to the liveliness of one's mind'.

Adam Sobota

## **A Medium or a Person? – Conceptual Art Dilemmas Shown by a Few Examples**

My intention is to describe essential artistic strategies associated with conceptualism mainly by highlighting examples of artists associated with the Wrocław milieu, one of whose strategies included using so called new media, that in the 1960s and 1970s were photography, film and video. This strategy opened the concept of art to the influences of mass culture, everyday life, to the issues of broadening perception and manipulating information. Confrontations and contradictions between the use of new media and classic art forms were expressed by within the milieux and by the various generations of artists causing acute polemics in Poland in the mid-seventies. First I want to focus on the arguments supporting the analysis of photomechanical media, as an essential artistic problem. In Polish art, pioneers of such an awareness were Zbigniew Dłubak and Zbigniew Staniewski. Since 1970 it was expressed in the program of the Permafo group (Dłubak, Natalia LL, A. Lachowicz) and then within other artistic groups, including Foto-Medium-Art and by Jerzy Olek. They were in touch with similar tendencies in Łódź, Kraków and Warsaw. Photomedialism preferred an objective criteria of activities and an openness towards the rules of visuality and the laws of nature typical for documentary movies. On the other hand, it could not exist without pointing at the subject of the creator and its subjective conditions. So the criteria of media and personality interweaved in artistic practice, but also appeared as antagonistic. It was best seen in the work of Natalia LL, who pointed at the instrumental blindness of the photomedialists, even though she paid a lot of attention to media issues herself.

The reduction of the role of art objects in conceptual art on behalf of a person and his/her life activities required a search of the personality which often reached the broadest cultural references, associated with philosophy, religion or mythology. It is well illustrated by the artistic activity of Natalia LL and Andrzej Dudek-Dürer, anchored in conceptual art and constantly developing through the confrontation of corporality and mental power combined with the language and communication possibilities offered by media.

Ryszard W. Kluszczyński

## **Conceptualism and Interactive Art. The Analysis of Polish Examples**

Contemporary interactive art, which is created through digital computer technologies, has its roots in the artistic trends of a new avant-garde that developed at the end of the 1950s. Conceptual art played a significant and specific role in this process along with kinetic art, action art, installation and electronic media art. It formed not only a deep logic and framework for neo avant-garde tendencies in art, but also a favourable context to develop participatory tendencies and to prepare the conceptual ground for interactive art. In this complex field of artistic genres of that time, many artworks created had features which allow us to consider them in relation to interactive art. Amongst them, we can find works of such artists as Wojciech Bruszewski and Józef Robakowski. Their numerous installations and objects from the seventies link conceptual and analytical attitudes with interactive characteristics.

Tomasz Załuski

## **KwieKulik and Conceptualism in the People's Republic of Poland (PRL). A Contribution to the Problem Analysis**

Until now, the artistic practices of a duo named KwieKulik, founded between 1971-1987 by Przemysław Kwiek and Zofia Kulik, were placed outside of conceptual art. I am not presenting here a simple thesis that KwieKulik were conceptual artists, but I attempt to formulate an introductory question about the complex relationship in which they **situated** themselves in response to conceptualism. In one of the interviews, the artists claimed that they could never be 'pure conceptual artists'. I wonder, however,

if the activity of the duo may be framed in a category of some 'impure conceptualism' whose important aspect is to be found in exposing the conditions of life and work in the People's Republic of Poland. To achieve this one needs to investigate thoroughly the artists stance towards the hegemonic term of 'conceptualism' whilst highlighting all of their actions that had any conceptual feature and to define a specific, individual form which appeared in the network of relationships with other elements of artistic practice. In my text I explain how one should understand 'conceptualism' as 'a hegemonic term' that organises and imposes itself onto an agonistic field of innovative art practices — not only in the West, but also in Poland. In this context, undertaking the question of "KwieKulik and conceptualism" opens a new perspective for a counter-hegemonic reinterpretation of conceptualism in the People's Republic of Poland. Without rejecting the term 'conceptualism', one needs to look at the questions related to it through the prism of an individual case of the KwieKulik duo. It should also allow the practices of both artists to make an imprint on 'conceptualism'. In the last part of my text, I limit myself to a series of 'contributive' notes which may be treated as orientation points in an appropriate analysis of the conceptual aspects of the art of KwieKulik.

Grzegorz Sztabiński  
**Conceptual Tautologies**

The text is an attempt to consider the character of tautological activities undertaken in conceptual art. There are two ways the issue can be approached. The first refers to the texts of Joseph Kosuth, who wrote that an artwork is a tautology because it refers to the term 'art'. The author develops the sense of Kosuth's statement "a work of art is a definition of art" and states, that a part of the tautological system that makes a proposed *definiens* of 'art' is available for direct perception, but the other part, which is the term 'art' must be recalled intellectually by the recipient. After taking into account the conceptual reference, the sense of a conceptual project with a meta-artistic character becomes noticeable. Polish examples of such works are projects by Roman Opałka, Jarosław Kozłowski, Jan Chwałczyk and Wanda Gołkowska. The second part of the article considers conceptual projects, in which both parts of equal tautology are directly given. Conceptual works of this structure may either state what is "unquestionable and universally important" (as Alicja Kępińska wrote) or make a kind of sense "at the same time suggested and reversed" (Umberto Eco). The possibilities are considered in reference to tautological works of Zdzisław Jurkiewicz, Jarosław Kozłowski, Zbigniew Dłubak and Jerzy Trelński.

Bogusław Jasiński  
**Art Instead of Philosophy**

The aim of this text is to show the cognitive function of the art later referred to as conceptual. Conceptualism was particularly predisposed to express abstract messages which included philosophical ones. The basic question I would like to pose in this text is: can a conceptual art toolbox express in its own way that which had been formerly expressed by philosophy? How, with the usage of means suggested by conceptual art, may one build a general image of the world – comparable to that which philosophy had previously given? Perhaps a full answer to the above question leads us into the areas of art which ceased to fill the boundaries of conceptualism, or post-conceptualism and heads straightforward to action, which Grotowski called an 'active culture' — that is a place where art is not sufficient anymore.

Kazimierz Piotrowski  
**Conceptualism as Conceptism**

We know, how valuable the role of the functor 'as' played in conceptualism. The functor was a basic linguistic tool of conceptual art infrastructure – the minimal part of speech that allowed for the production of concepts, engaging *ingenium* in its primary function as *ingenium comparans*. The criticism of conceptualism, mainly

comparison or identification of the artwork and analytic proposition revealed the fact that the tautological model of Kosuth is just one of many art concepts and remains a product of paralogical thinking. What is therefore decisive for conceptualism is an attempt to build a universal art theory: an idea, that for centuries has remained the basis for logical thinking, or the concept itself, in which paralogy cannot be eliminated. The tendency to narrow the meaning of a concept and limit art to its idea was marked in the text by Daniel Buren "Beware!" (1969-1970). How did it happen, that the formula of conceptism, used in the beginning of the decade by Henry Flynt in the text entitled "Concept Art" (1961) was replaced by conceptual art? For Flynt concept art was art whose materials were the language and concepts. According to him, a concept is a trace of an idea by Plato and means the intension of a name, but with today's state of knowledge demanding an objective relationship between a name and its intension this meaning is incorrect. Therefore, if the relationship is subjective, then the concept as a possible opposition towards the objective idea occupies a privileged space in a language and keeps its strength. Also in Sol LeWitt's "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967) and "Sentences on Conceptual Art" (1969), in which despite the fact that the expression 'conceptual art' appears explicitly, the term 'concept' remains an alternative to the idea, that may be simple and does not need to be complex. So according to Sol LeWitt, the concept implies a general direction, and ideas are its components. To radicalise this issue, let's ask, if conceptualism privileges the conceptual, as its literally understood name would indicate? Or on the other hand is what is called a concept, that being something ingenious and that even though it includes a moment of ideation (**abstracting** and transcending sensuality, that is crossing the borders of the material paradigm of art towards the idea), it is not reduced to a conceptual element, but rather expresses sensuality or its basic modus? The text is an attempt to show the tension in the art of Polish conceptists who referred in their paralogical discourse to conceptualism, especially with reference to the example of Andrzej Partum's work.

Janusz Zagrodzki

### **Art as an Expression of the Artist's Awareness**

Considerations upon the awareness that previously had been identified as the power of God's creation, a universal mind that binds all terrestrial matters together, are the source of an ancient thought. The term conceptualism – *conceptus*, defining a thought, a concept, an imagination – was inherited from the Latin, but as an idea it emerged in philosophical discussions long before Socrates. The idea of conceptual perception may be found in Plato's philosophy; the definition of creative awareness was not, however, precisely defined by him. It was only Aristotle who assumed that a condition for art to exist is "a permanent disposition capable of producing something with reason". This direction of research was undertaken by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, one of the first philosophers examining consciousness, the author of the treatise entitled "Philosophy of Art". The power of Schelling's thought was an emphasis on using symbols in art. Confronting hidden meanings with the literality of concepts based on tangible aspects of knowledge mean that his opinions are still of interest for researchers. The concept of a self-awareness we owe to the establishments of René Descartes. His principle "I think therefore I am" did not remove and in fact even highlighted the doubts that arise during creative activity.

What is contemporary art? – a discipline which attempts to understand the power of the human mind, which enables artists to use the knowledge they possess in action. It is an inborn predisposition, or perhaps it is a disposition to produce something material with a thought and therefore it is conceptual in nature. The values in art result from the essence of a message, and the methods of transmitting and receiving are, in a natural way, linked to the intellectual process and it does not matter, which form of the 'conceptualisation' of the world the artist chose. Art understood as a concept is often identified as utopian. Utopia, on the other hand, is most often understood as an intentional attitude that exists in one's consciousness, an idea which cannot be realised. The question arises: what is an artwork completed as an artistic fact. This apparent antinomy between the notions of reality, utopia and concept in art

results from an assumption that something is possible and other things are not and that all arguments depend on the assumed point of reference. It is often claimed in colloquial sentences that a project turned out to be utopian. But what does it mean? Can art be utopian? Has any art program ever been fully completed? Can ideas stemming from one's artistic statement, in their full complexity, demanding a lot of harmonious circumstances, ever be realised? So called utopian or conceptual thought is the basis of all meaningful art achievements, contrary to intentions thought to be realistic, which by their very down-to-earth nature, lack fantasy and therefore have little in common with art. The emergence of an art concept is parallel to the possibilities of its realisation. Not sooner does art exist for real, than as a result a conflict between creative ideas and changing reality appears. Sometimes artistic objectives do not develop further beyond the project stage, sometimes they turn into concrete objects, events or processes. The fact that their incarnations exist, does not determine the meanings. The essence of artistic work is to sustain the idea created. If it takes the form of a registered project then it automatically turns into a tangible object, an item, a phenomenon which can be a base for further actions. So, when the artist questions the rules of the surrounding reality, it is not a conceptual utopia that emerges, but new realities.

Łukasz Guzek

### **Gallery as an Artistic Project in Conceptual Art**

The text announces a research program on the galleries that emerged in relation to conceptual art and introduces the scope and method of research.

The general aim of the research is to set apart the issue of a conceptual gallery as an independent artistic phenomenon. A conceptual gallery is examined as a general artistic formula.

The methodological scheme presented in the text aims at establishing a basic chronology and creating a typology of the trend.

Historically, conceptual galleries emerged and were shaped in the frame of a broadly understood conceptual tendency (a leading tendency in the seventies) because at that time, there occurred a specific formal-artistic relationship between art and gallery.

Until now, the conceptual gallery trend has been examined mainly in the context of the social, political and cultural conditions in which they were functioning. The research on conceptual galleries as an artistic project and a form of conceptual art causes the vector of the research to reverse.

The artistic character of particular galleries could be graded into those which housed more or less radical projects. One may imagine a scale between limit points: a gallery as a work of art and a gallery as an art container and place all galleries from the seventies on it.

The beginning of the conceptual gallery movement in Poland is marked by a project by Andrzej Kostołowski and Jarosław Kozłowski entitled NET (1971), based on a mail-art formula. It assumed not only collecting and exhibiting the works sent (which was each institution's aim), but also creating their own specific points in the network of institutions. Thirty five galleries participated in an exhibition which summarised an activity of the BWA Gallery in Sopot in the summer of 1981. The galleries of this type functioned in the next decade, even during martial law. In the mid-nineties the gallery movement started to integrate again, however after 2000 the commercialisation of the art market caused their disappearance.

Katarzyna Urbańska

### **Remont Gallery. The Unknown Avant-garde of the Seventies**

The attempts to describe a history of Polish conceptualism in a systematic way, have been until now undertaken in a very similar way. The studies have concentrated mainly on outlining a few artistic centres with connections to the trend. These studies were discussed both in publications from the eighties and nineties and in more recent ones. Only Bożena Kowalska in her book *Artystyczno-społeczna problematyka zrzeszeń plastyków w Polsce w latach 1946-1976 (Artistic and social problems of*

*artistic groups in Poland in 1946-1976*) from 1981 presented a broader panorama of artistic trends that emerged in the seventies. The history of Polish conceptualism mostly covers a narrow circle of galleries: the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw, Pod Mona Lisą and Permafo in Wrocław, and Akumulatory<sup>2</sup> in Poznań; a separate place is taken by film and photographic activities. The Remont Gallery in Warsaw, which was active around the same time, was not historically analysed. Its activity has always been treated as marginal. Undoubtedly this was caused by the specific atmosphere of those times, personal relationships and (often wrong) opinions which influenced the works of critics later on. What I refer to is the stance taken by the Foksal Gallery towards more and more frequent activities of the neo avant-garde, which meant that the gallery was often accused of non-uniformity, ambiguity of motives, but also aggression and mockery of the avant-garde. The creator and founder of the Remont Gallery was Henryk Gajewski. The official date when the Gallery was opened was 1.04.1972, and the date it closed was 06.11.1979. For almost seven years it hosted prominent Polish and foreign artists; it published numerous but modest publications, organised international conferences, exhibitions and activities that crossed the official boundaries of art. The gallery, from the very beginning, had little in common with the traditional concept of an art gallery. Its programme was filled with meetings with known publicists, political, social and cultural discussions and exhibitions with modern photography. Thanks to its open formula, the projects were realised by artists coming from various milieux. In the programme it was underlined, that it was not a gallery of one group or trend. What is worth noting is the fact that it showed the works of artists recognised as the leading representatives of neo avant-garde and now often linked with different art centers. The activities of the Remont Gallery can be compared to the activities of such places as Pod Mona Lisą and Permafo, where the gallery space was used for 'new media' or actions from the border of audiovisual art. The Remont Gallery in the beginning, similarly to Permafo, showed experimental photography and photo-conceptualism (Lucjan Demindowski, Krzysztof Wojciechowski, Elżbieta Tejchman, Andrzej Jórczak, Andrzej Lachowicz, Antoni Mikołajczyk, Zygmunt Rytko and Henryk Gajewski). No other gallery in Warsaw was more dynamic and with such a diversified programme, which allows us to analyse its activity from the perspective of a variety of discourses situated on the border of conceptual, contextual art, performance, mail-art, photography, installation, body art, audio-art or happenings.

Maciej H. Zdanowicz

### **The Concept and Experience of Time in the Art of Polish Conceptualism.**

In my paper I analyse the art of selected Polish conceptual artists, whose art and creative strategies clearly attempt to analyse the essence of time. I consider exceptional in this context the work of Roman Opałka (*Opałka 1965 /1 – ∞*), Natalia LL's recordings (*Permanent recordings of time*), Zdzisław Jurkiewicz's *Saturn and Jupiter Ways*, and the projects by Stanisław Dróżdż (*FROM TO*) that touch upon various levels of time. In the presented analyses, I refer to the psychological and philosophical concept of perception and apercption, as well as an anthropological understanding of time. In my view, conceptual art is the genre whose characteristics lie in the conscious cognition and deep intellectual analysis of the reality surrounding the artist. With regard to the active role of the mind in the process of perception the apercption of time may be a more appropriate term.

Jerzy Olek

### **Foto Medium Art**

The Foto-Medium-Art Gallery has worked continuously since 1977. For twenty years it was based in Wrocław and since 2007 in Kraków. During that time, an emphasis was placed on various issues which were reflected by the programme and the way it acted. After the analytical and new media period (in the seventies) there was a time of 'elementary photography' (the eighties). However, photography was not



the only medium that was exhibited there. Often the expositions, installations and projections were presented according to a programme, such as a series entitled "presence among the stones". An important initiative was Photoconferences East-West "European exchange" that has taken place since 1989. The largest one happened in 1991. It consisted of an international exhibition "New spaces of photography" and a conference "The ethos of photography".

A dozen or so years ago "Foto-Medium-Art" lost its space and it became a mobile gallery, organising exhibitions and meetings in various friendly places. Finally F-M-A settled in Kraków and at this time important questions arouse: how to find a place for the programme developed over the years in the changing cultural climate especially in times when the most widely used media has changed (digital media replaced analogue)? Is any form of continuation possible, when the former economy of means of the art form of photography has been replaced by developed multimedia and multi-layered image structures? It seems that after the media and elementary periods, F.M.A. has entered an era that is in the process of shaping. In an era, that started after 'neos' and 'posts', when linear narrations are replaced with mosaic structures of databases, structures consisting of elements that are independent of one another, it is time to reformulate the programme.

Karolina Jabłońska

### **Conceptual Activities within the Artistic Environment of Łódź by the Konkret Group**

The Konkret Group emerged in the spring of 1970. The group exhibited three times in Łódź, and one of their exhibitions was also shown in Sieradz. The group consisted of Aleksander Hałat, Romana Hałat, Ryszard Hunger, Andrzej Jocz, Zbigniew Kosiński, Andrzej Nawrot, Henryk Strumiłło, later accompanied by Konrad Frejdllich and Antoni Szram. Among the group members there were artists who expressed themselves in painting, sculpture and graphics, and also ones who were associated with the creative use of text and language. The group did not have a formal program. The group members agreed, that at this specific time and place one needed to turn to concrete art, that is to concentrate on the form, not forgetting, however, about its social aspect. They perceived a way to develop art by new artistic means, using the achievements of technology and science. They did not support enclosing oneself within one discipline, they rather wanted to show the convergence of the ideas of visual art and other artistic disciplines, such as poetry.

The activity of the Konkret Group may be placed on the border of conceptualism and Dadaism, however, the resignation from creating a tangible artwork that happened not sooner than in the last exhibition of the group would favour the previous. Paradoxically, the lack of presence of a recognised artwork in the exhibition of 1972 was caused by the impossibility to realise a specific concrete form. On the other hand, the form that the artists wanted to show was a form of communication, therefore it dealt with a concept, not an object. The other argument to support the conceptual character of the group was the introduction of documentation to the exhibition and the elevating of this aspect to the importance of an artwork, equal to painting. On the other hand – the Dada character of the group's activities can be seen in the fact that in their ventures they were critical towards the artistic milieu and used ready mades. This group of young artists was open to the novelty factor in art and at the same time, the newest of artistic phenomena and tendencies became for them useful tools amongst others to deepen the essence of art.

Dorota Grubba

### **... a straight infinite line... Wanda Czelkowska, Krystian Jaruszkiewicz, Andrzej Wojciechowski**

In the paper, I recall three independent individuals, whose work oscillated around conceptual art. They shared a strong interest situated on the borderline of mathematics and art philosophy (including problems such as: *an open space, the concept of central – axial point, infinite line* etc.) and research on semantic and

lexical possibilities of geometry. The work of these three extremely different artists, Wanda Czełkowska, Krystian Jaruskiewicz, Andrzej Wojciechowski, seems to be tied together by a common element; building spatial utterances based on forms that existed on the border of contemporary and archetypical language. They evoke reflections (e.g. sociological and cultural) by the use of a strongly individualised and meta-artistic code.

I analysed the following artworks: Wanda Czełkowska's *Conceptual Information about a Table* presented in 1972 in Edinburgh at The International Art Festival and another work entitled *Absolute elimination of sculpture as a notion of shape* (66 concrete slabs and 66 light points) from 1972; the project of a room independent of gravity (1959/1960), *Capitel as the structure of space* from 1952; Krystian Jaruskiewicz's multi-material object entitled *Sacrifice to Xawery Dunikowski* (1975), that incorporated an old Polish definition of the 'obiata' (sacrifice) custom taken from Bogumił Linde's dictionary in its original graphic version into an ascetic form; Andrzej Wojciechowski's works from the period when he co-operated with Stanisław Dróżdż, among them a series of photographs *SALVE* from 1970 (a stone with a Latin greeting found in an empty field), a model and an idea of the *Self-sustaining Plinth* from the Symposium "Wrocław '70", an action entitled *The Tower of Joy 23 VII 1970* built with the residents of Wrocław, and a philosophical and formal dialogue with S. Dróżdż *A Sphere and a stone – two perfections* (1974)