

ENGLISH SUMMARY

Marta WRÓBLEWSKA

WANNES GOETSCHALCKX - A TWENTY FIRST CENTURY SISYPHUS STUCK IN THE PANOPTICON OF REALITY

In response to the discussion concerning the role and meaning of art that has been intensified due to the two most relevant events in the art world organized in 2017, i.e. the Biennale of Art in Venice and Documenta in Athens and Kassel, a solution in between the tendencies represented by those two is proposed. This can be referred to as existential art, since its main area of concern is man within the surrounding world, as opposed to the world that surrounds the man. This man is very often the artist, presenting himself many times as an absurd protagonist. He does not get too involved in politics, neither does he create his art according to the rules of beauty, goodness and truth. He rather looks very closely at everyday objects, invents logical structures, builds constructions in which he endeavours to find his own place within the reality surrounding him. This place seems to be here and now, occupying a very small, personal territory that forms a microcosm for his activities and interventions, constituting a parable of the whole world. He is very much alike the mythical Sisyphus who is dedicated to performing a task doomed to eternal repetition.

The above creative attitude is analysed using the example of the artistic practice of the Belgian artist - Wannes Goetschalckx, who this year was visiting the Łaźnia Centre for Contemporary Art in Gdańsk in order to produce a month-long performance connected with his residency there. The artist is presented as a twenty first century Sisyphus stuck in the panopticon of reality, trying to construct artistic qualities out of the vestiges of culture, based on the symbols rooted in the natural and cultural heritage. His art is a persistent experiment, aiming at gaining knowledge concerning life, man, and the relation which binds them, constituting human existence. The artist applies an array of media to the reaching of his goal, on the one hand playing games with no rules, games-experiments with the viewers, and on the other hand delineating his own, highly ritualised territory, as an area of laboratorial practices, many a times involving himself as the main protagonist. This creative activity constitutes a long-term process whose mission is to incorporate various artistic practices, however with no views for their explicit ending, thus reminding us of the never-ending toil of Sisyphus.