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DISCOVERED BY DIVERSITY: ERROR IN ART AS A TOOL OF METAPHYSICAL COGNITION. CASE STUDIES

Beauty, order, sense, time, love, good and evil, cause of being, just 'being' and creation are the fundamental ideas of metaphysical cognition. It is usually understood as concerning such crucial and absolute terms as 'is,' 'the one,' and 'arché.'¹ In my text, I am not so much interested in exploring the philosophical nature of metaphysical cognition, but rather in discussing examples of the understanding of error as a tool of cognition that serves universal purposes in the broad field of art. This means that error will be scrutinized both in the field of aesthetic reflection as well as in specific artworks or artistic practices. Case studies are purposely varied. The text is meant to present and investigate the multiplicity and variety of approaches to the relationship of error, art and cognition, including metaphysical cognition.

Nature as a 'cognitive' error in the implementation of the idea of beauty

I would like to start my discussion with the idea of the Picturesque, which will be used here as an example of when something surprising and disturbing (i.e. a possible error) is considered

worthy of appreciation or is considered interesting and possibly also creative. The Picturesque was a new aesthetic category that was formulated to refer to the experience of nature (especially during so-called 'voyages pittoresques'), and was analyzed to explore human experience, the activity of our senses and our cognition. In the 18th century, in *Observations Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1772), William Gilpin described the Picturesque as deformity, abruptness, ruggedness, and roughness.² Uvedale Price, in *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1842), compared beauty (which is flourishing, smooth, symmetrical, gradually changing) with the picturesque (which is 'aging,' withering, rough, suddenly changing, complicated, intricate, and asymmetrical), and the sublime (vast, huge, causing horror, monotonous).³ In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), John Ruskin called the Picturesque a parasite that 'preys' on and consumes 'aging' beauty.⁴

In a sense, the Picturesque was discovered by mistake – a mistake in the idea of beauty that is typical of the way beauty is present in nature, or a parasite consuming the beauty therein. So nature contains an error in the idea (of beauty)

itself, or it is a mistake in the organic whole of the universe.⁵ However, as it soon transpired, we liked this surprising, different, modified, mistaken beauty. Perhaps this attitude to the Picturesque was to be understood only as a dialectical contradiction to beauty, and as the opposite of beauty (as, for example, dialectical with Sir Joshua Reynolds's rejection of the accidental blemishes of nature in art's aspiration towards the beauty of ideal forms)⁶.

Therefore, errors discovered in nature performed a cognitive function: to explore the aesthetic experience and the idea of beauty. This cognitive function was present in the art of the gardens of the time, which displayed an irregular, 'natural' English style, as in the designs of William Kent (e.g. Chiswick, 1724–36) and Capability Brown (with William Kent at Stowe in the 1740s and 1750s, or Blenheim, 1764). On the other hand, one can say that the form and order of a garden was necessary to discover the idea of being lost in nature. Therefore, the picturesque garden was the example of 'nature idealized.' This paradoxical contradiction (nature found as an error in the idea of beauty, and nature idealized to be an example of beauty), was perhaps also present in picturesque architecture, which was asymmetrical, intricate, and rough. This can be seen in Strawberry Hill Castle, created by the writer Horace Walpole in 1770, and in Neuschwanstein Castle, designed by the stage designer Christian Jank for King Ludwig II in Bavaria in 1892. In spite of the fact that the results were often considered kitschy or just ugly, these mistakes, errors and deformations may be understood as an exploration of beauty or the study of the idea of beauty.

An accident. Error as discovery

Another historical example of the artistic use of error is the Dadaist practice of Marcel Duchamp. When Duchamp presented a urinal as his artwork (*Fountain*, 1917) to the world, he stressed that art is artistic not because of beauty but because of a decision made by the artist who selects the object or action in spite of its 'ugly,' 'faulty,' 'incorrect' appearance or characteristics. Duchamp's

deliberately wrong, flawed, and inadequate understanding of art – as well as his inclusion in the artistic process of a specific accidental error that resulted in the breaking of a glass (*The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even [The Large Glass]* 1915–1923) – was intended to explore the role of order and alternative orders or rules. Duchamp's publication of *The Green Box* (1934) included 94 notes and documents concerning the creation of *The Large Glass* to show that documents can be ordered in a facultative, unrestricted sequence.⁷ The 'order' in *The Green Box* was aleatoric, characterized by chance or indeterminate elements. The time of the event and the creation of the associated note did not determine the order of the notes in the box. It was always a random case that would determine the location of the note. The chronological order principle was questioned. Breakage, accident, and error were intended to show various possible meanings and ways of thinking. They were also used to discover and explore the diversity of orders, meanings and senses.

Blurred revelation or the revealing error

In the late 1950s, Stan Brakhage filmed his wife during childbirth and presented it as a structural film titled *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959). Mrs. Brakhage was an attractive young woman and all the naturalistic details of childbirth were shown in the film. The content could be seen as shocking, violating decency, possibly prohibitive and improper, and therefore as an error. This was emphasized by the filming quality, which was relatively dark and sometimes blurred with scratches, dirt, noise, visible grain, and a shaky camera. These stylistic elements were intended errors – an example of a structural work examining elements of film as a medium, as craft and as art. Such intended imperfections made Mrs. Brakhage and the event of childbirth seem rough, dirty and ugly. The aesthetics of the medium seemed to be the opposite of the idea of feminine beauty and the sublimity of birth.

Was it so? Perhaps the blurs, noise and lack of stability were to force the viewer to observe the situation more deeply and to interpret its essential meaning. To ask what is under the dirt, under the naturalistic physiology and under the medium. Why was Mrs. Brakhage still beautiful and happy in spite of the deformation and pain? Why was the filming husband Stan Brakhage still joyful and happy? The simple answer is probably love. This old-fashioned, idealistic love was the essence of the film, discovered because of the distortions, blurs and apparent errors.

I can add digressively that in the latest art considering issues of birth or nativity, the shocking 'distortion' may result from knowing the results of human fertility experiments. Error is observed as a failure in genetic mechanisms, resulting in deformed 'quasi-human' bodies. The failures were often caused by human interventions in biology. In the installation *We are the family* (2003) Patricia Piccinini seemed to ask: "Will we love such creatures? In spite of all? Such Others produced by us? Such freaks? Such errors? Our errors?" This tough question about (difficult?) love is posed by art that presents failure. Since the question is about love in spite of all, it is, again, a moral, idealistic (and therefore metaphysical) question.

Illustrating the inefficiency of the senses

The weakness of the senses as tools of our cognition (not the cognition of ideas, but cognition in general, our sensual experience) is often the subject of video art (inspired by developing the form of structural film into a style that is often similar to 'glitch art'). In *Warp* (2000), Steina Vasulka is shown strangely bending, twisting and twitching in front of the camera, in a way impossible for a human body. The artist ironically showed how easily one can cause and experience an error in human observation and vision. One of the basic elements of the installation was the use of time delay, the software scanning one line of the figure at a time

while leaving the rest of the image motionless⁸. However, the paradoxical deformation of the image and the bending of the vision were not the only subject of this work. Another topic was the time warp that was presented in reference to Einstein's theory of relativity.⁹ In other words, the cognition of the space-time continuum was the main subject of this work. Perhaps the scientific truth, as recognized by Einstein, is that only the warp (error?) of the space-time continuum is available to our cognition. Such a scientific and philosophical truth was shown by Vasulka. The true existence of being, 'is', 'esse' is cognized by humans only as a 'warp' – an error in the space-time continuum.

A misleading experience was the metaphorical tool that Nikos Navridis applied in his staging of Samuel Beckett's play *Breath* (in 2005). In Beckett's super-short drama of less than one minute, a long breath and a flash of light illuminating a piece of garbage on the stage symbolized the human condition. In Navridis's installation, the littered floor was shifting under the viewer's feet, which caused viewers to lose their balance. They felt that the ground had been "removed from under their feet," thus causing them to feel literally clumsy and weak – as figuratively all human beings are when they are seen in the context of existential philosophy. A comparison of the loss of physical balance with the 'universal' lack of balance is characteristic of the human condition and worked as a basis of this metaphorical construction. In fact, the moving floor image was displayed from projectors above the heads of viewers, but this could be understood only after a long time and initially the floor really seemed to be moving while, in fact, only the projected image was moving. The feeling of imbalance was real from the very beginning – from the moment the viewer found himself in the room and looked at his feet. It showed the cognitive fallibility of our senses. Thus, the broader inference might be that, because the senses mislead us, they cannot normally recognize a difficult problem as the existential meaning of life.

Intentional errors in looking, viewing and understanding created the illusion of space in *The*

Weather Project (Olafur Eliasson, Tate Modern, 2003). Flat walls became three-dimensional thanks to the appropriate use of light and shadow, mirrors, smoke and fog. The intimate atmosphere of the visual and sensual 'poem' (the atmosphere 'imposed' a poetic style of reception) suggested multi-sensory, synesthetic perception in 'communion' with the Other (another viewer who was also experiencing the poem) as an apt way of poetic cognition. Eliasson pointed out that exploring the beauty hidden in a poem intended for polysensory reception is only possible in a community. Only in 'communion' with the Other is cognition possible. On the other hand, also indicated here was the value of a simple conversation (during a walk through English atmosphere and tradition) that is superficial but is appreciated by viewers conversant with postmodern philosophy¹⁰. However, the value of the relationship built through such a superficial conversation is illusive, much like the hazy atmospheric illusions evoked in Eliasson's work, which is what, ultimately, the artist seemed to suggest as well.

Critical error

The 'bad drawing style' may be seen as another example of an intentional error. Paintings by Leon Golub were created on dirty canvases (or rags) and are rough, grey-brown, tattered and torn, with simple untrained drawing, violent treatment of color and often unclear subject matter. Therefore, the impact of these paintings is reinforced with slogans inscribed on the canvas to explain the meaning, which is usually associated with politics and social problems. Finally, these sloppy paintings with slogans contain a strong political critique of contemporary totalitarian injustice in America, emphasized by this ugly style full of mistakes. The style of the paintings symbolizes error in the sense of social life. These 'anyhow' windswept, dirty, canvases by Golub, which look like painting 'mistakes,' communicate, in fact, a critique of socio-political errors. The artist's work can be seen as an aesthetic reenactment of

a social error, intended to spark polemical and politically effective cognitive dissonance.

In the same spirit, 'appropriation art,' which was very popular in the postmodern era, contains what are often blurred quotations of fine art. The aim was to ask questions of and to criticize the art world¹¹ and dominant trends in art and art theory. The 'found' elements of art, religion, philosophy and mass-culture were deliberately treated falsely or misleadingly, and then finally mixed, for example in the paintings of David Salle, and in *Übermalungen* by Arnulf Rainer. In the works of the former, quotes from comics are sometimes juxtaposed with quotes from the works of Michelangelo. In Rainer's works, crosses, Christ's face and medieval paintings are hidden under ugly streaks and smudges of paint. New artworks resulting from 'repainting' on reproductions of old works are surprisingly paradoxical and purposely irritating. However, such intrusive and ostentatious errors in the *decorum* of art (new, 'repainted' works are ugly compared to the original material, although the 'high' theme seemed not to have changed) could turn out to be a violent challenge to the imagination and intellect. In this respect, the errors were also intended to question the fundamental values of art – values other than financial, commercial, or conventional. Thus these provocative artworks were intended to pose questions about the contemporary conditions of such traditional values as quality, hard work, beauty, and their relationship with history, old masters, and metaphysics.

Such problems could also be elaborated with the use of new media, exposing the ease of causing a disturbance and making intentional errors. Examples are provided by the contemporary graphic designer Jan Pamuła. In his new digital graphics, the artist decomposed into pixels an old self-portrait by Stanisław Wyspiański, a master of Art Nouveau pastel portraits, multi-talented painter, designer and poet, one of the most important Polish artists. However, the contemporary digital graphic designer is not considered an ironic critic of the old master, but rather an author respectful of Wyspiański's legacy. This is because Jan Pamuła,

now the master himself, always emphasizes his respect for artistic, academic and cultural heritage.

Nevertheless, in most works of contemporary 'appropriation art', apparent respect and admiration for the content raised in the work turns out to be a critique of this content. This happens by changing the context (e.g. by removing the existing 'background' and installing a new one, or by exaggerating a nuance to shift the emphasis to an invalid element) and often by a more or less obvious intentional error that causes a change in interpretation.¹² Such removes, shifts or misdirections are errors of crucial significance to the meaning of the work. In the work of Neue Slovenische Kunst, for instance, a resemblance to Nazi art came with a variety of errors which unveiled scathing criticism when discovered. A sublime and formidable Nazi was rendered kitschy and absurd in the juxtaposition of an idealistic (video) image and pompous music with a waterfall 'falling up' (Laibach, *Leben heißt Leben [Opus]*, 1987). Subversion was used for ironic and moralizing critique, made possible by creative error. The function of error is, therefore, cognitive, as it serves the task of emphasizing the difference between good and evil, which is deformed under the influence of feelings, fascinations, excitement.

Both appropriation art and social critique are present in Martin Arnold's *Pièce Touchée* (1989), which uses several seconds of the film *The Human Jungle* (1954, dir. Joseph Newman) as 'found footage' in the video installation. 'Glitch art' could again be a useful term here to describe such artworks. Suspending the movie, short pauses, jerky or marching rhythms of images and sounds are effects that serve to denounce and criticize the power of man in a patriarchal system. A failure in the composition or an error in the montage evokes the feeling of distortion and ugliness. Ugliness represents the oppression of a system but was also used to deconstruct it (according to the theory of Theodor Adorno).¹³ In this way, failure, as an instrument of ugliness becomes itself not only the element of a system (or the picture of a system). Failure, as an element of ugliness, manifests itself as destructive to ugliness,

destroying it as if from the inside. Arnold seems to be saying that the 'ugly' system is destroying itself and that the failure inscribed in the system serves that purpose. In a sense, failure serves Good. On the other hand, it can be said that this does not happen if the failure only reflects the evil of the failing system or if the system does not fail as much as its presentation does, though it may well reflect our desire for the system to fail.

To observe and to create. Cognition and creative error

Printed in the mid-20th century, the surreal graphics of M. C. Escher depict spaces whose peculiar order is surprising and incompatible with our experience of the world and its rules. These are the interiors of buildings constructed with a bent line that is at odds with the principles of linear perspective, leading the viewer's gaze in an incomprehensible direction. Unexpected changes in the rhythm of what is seen make the viewers – wandering-erring among the principles of vision and the physical laws of space, geometry, and gravity – become aware of those laws. Surprising, mistaken solutions could serve the study of these laws, their interpretation, and the discovery of the mathematical essence of the world, as well as consideration of their relativity. Visible errors help question our cognition of the rules organizing the world.

Actually, in graphic arts, the process that occurs between the idea, drawing, matrix-making and printing, is where error often occurs.¹⁴ In digital graphics, such mistakes can also occur during data recording (which is sometimes associated with glitch art). Sometimes the flaw of the matrix or the program may itself be the subject of art. It can also serve as a creative inspiration. At the start of the 21st century, Jared Tarbell, representing processual (generative) art in *Tree.garden.II* [2004, ActionScript, Flash], showed the situation in which each new copy of the tree is different from the original pattern because of an interrupting element. In *Substrate* (2004), the artist presented "crystalline lines

growing on a computational substrate. A simple perpendicular growth rule created intricate city-like structures.”¹⁵ However, the new lines started to create new forms in old, disappearing tracks. The disappearing tracks were called ‘cracks’ and the disappearing grid was called ‘cgrid’. A crack was somehow a problem of the surface, but the problem was creative as it was the beginning of a new form. On the other hand, Tarbell, in the *Henon.phase* (inspired by Michel Hénon’s theory of actuators), stresses that apparently free molecules forming a chaotic structure are in fact mutually determined and led by a mathematical formula ($x_{n+1} = y_n + 1 - ax_{2n}$; $y_{n+1} = bx_n$).

One of graphic arts students at the Pedagogical University in Kraków, Mateusz Rorat, was inspired by such works and examined the situation in which a sudden unexpected element appearing in a structure or system (i.e. an error of order, structure, or composition) may trigger the emergence of a new organism, a new world. This shows that something surprising and uncontrollable – a mistake – can stimulate the artistic, creative action of the program. This is an example of how art can utilize error, which ultimately turns out to be neither a mistake nor a coincidence.

Perhaps an error, as something new and unexpected, can become a challenge, a need to change, or at least a shortcut to the planned evolution. This can be seen in Karl Sims’s *Evolved Virtual Creatures [Evolution Simulation, 1994]*, where digitally designed blocks grow, combining and mutating, especially when in contact with something new and different.¹⁶ The apparent problem – seemingly a mistake, an interruption in the system, a complication, an obstacle – turns out to have a creative sense. Art can help us observe the process of creation and to recognize those elements of the essence of creation that connect the existence of ‘being’ with relational contact and selection.

The extraordinary popularity of the *Error 404* page on the internet as a creative stimulus can be, in a sense, a digital symbol of the specific situation in the creative process, occurring not only in spite of an error but also because of it.¹⁷ We use this error sign to be creative, i.e. in

the domain of simple illustration. In such an illustration, one can use the number 404 as a symbol of communication problems.

Non-places. Sense in spite of an error

In one influential postmodern theory, Marc Augé pointed out that the super-modern world contains many ‘non-places.’¹⁸ Non-places are places without foundation; they are spaces of change and movement; they are dynamic and easy to abandon. The use of the ‘non’ prefix makes a place a negation of a place. The error as an ‘abnormal’ situation is already visible in the word entry with a surprising prefix. The error is visible, as it is in spaces devoid of roots, stability, durability, filled with movement, changeability, superficiality, which means that the word ‘place’ is not appropriate for such ‘abnormal’ ‘non-places.’

In Edward Rusha’s *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations* (1962), the titular stations were deprived of their usual movement, changes and dynamics. Poorly composed views, incorrectly selected lighting, and accidental ‘staffage’ made the photographed places artificial, lifeless, insignificant. Deliberate mistakes, typical for the ‘bad photography’ style, indicate the ease with which such places, for which movement and change are necessary, lose any meaning. Obvious functions of ‘non-places’ are easy to grasp. It is also easy for them to become wastelands when these functions are no longer needed. The ‘bad photography’ style does not emphasize the ‘liquid identity’ of ‘non-places,’ but rather their ‘abnormal’ propensity to become wastelands. The deliberate error in aesthetics makes visible the possible ‘error’ inherent in the existence of ‘non-places’ depending on the immediate, superficial function.

In his *Scripture of Nature* (1993–2016) cycle of installations, the artist Grzegorz Sztabiński filled galleries, these ‘non-places’ where both exhibitions and their viewers change constantly, with natural wooden marks which are the scripture of nature (as simple twigs), together with geometrical abstract forms, to saturate the places with meaning and sense. The artist’s aim was perhaps to show how nature,

using its ordering method (the idea of order being inherent in nature), takes possession of ‘non places.’ As the subtitle of one of the installations was *Transcendence*, it is worth noting that transcendence is understood as the metaphysics and defined as a dimension ‘above and beyond’ reality – as an infinite realm of ideas and as the Absolute, the ultimate cause of being.¹⁹ In Sztabiński’s work, the *scripture of nature* and pure ideas in abstract shapes could therefore be read as signs with which the gallery, as a ‘non-place’, was transcendently penetrated and taken over by metaphysical sense through art exhibited therein. A ‘non-place’ of error, when filled with metaphysics, could turn into a place of revelation.

Error and metaphysical cognition

All the examples discussed in this essay have been described and interpreted to reveal, uncover and stress how – through deformity, parasitism, mistake, failure, error, and blur – universal questions are posed.

The variety of examples and contexts shows a multitude of ways of using intentional or accidental error for cognitive purposes. Selected works of art and other artistic practices indicate that error intensifies our experience, provokes rational reflection, verifies scientific claims, including the concepts of philosophers and sociologists, undermines the political and economic systems and, finally, makes us aware of orders other than those considered rational. Therefore, art that employs error as subject matter or method is particularly close to metaphysical cognition, since challenging certainties means asking universal questions.

These are questions regarding the experience of beauty seen from various perspectives, questions about order, space and time, and thus about basic cognitive categories that for human beings are either necessary but difficult to define, or oppressive, and finally relative.

These are questions about the sense of life and the order of the world and the universe, about love exceeding naturalistic ugliness, about

morals, Good and Evil disturbing the world, about universal beginnings and creative power. Thus, these are questions about the issues which are challenges for metaphysical cognition with possible applications in the real world.

For not every error is confined in its implications to metaphysical cognition. Sometimes errors are just mistakes, results of a bad decision. Sometimes errors, mistakes, or failures resulting in ugliness or even evil are used in art to provoke reflection on a dominating and oppressive system – maybe political or philosophical – as well as to help disturb and destroy such a system (as in Viennese Actionism or in post-Adornian thinking in critical and engaged art or socially engaged practice).²⁰ Sometimes, it is an intentional error just to create something special, original, or fancy. Sometimes, it is something that happens accidentally, and it is used inadvertently. In such cases, sophisticated interpretations seem unjustified.

Nevertheless, acknowledging error in art and observing its inspiring strength and its creativity – with both its innovative and functional values (which in art means primarily aesthetic values) – we can and always should consider the possible metaphysical aim of the error.

Notes

- ¹ See: Mieczysław Albert Krapiec, "Metafizyczne poznanie," in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii* (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2000-2009).
- ² See: William Gilpin, *Observations, relative chiefly to picturesque beauty, made in the year 1772, on several parts of England; particularly the mountains, and lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland* (London: Wordsworth Collection, 1788). See also: Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927).
- ³ Uvedale Price, *An essay on the picturesque, as compared with the sublime and the beautiful: and, on the use of studying pictures, for the purpose of improving real landscape* (London: J. Robson, 1796).
- ⁴ See: John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1849).
- ⁵ On the organic unity of the universe and an artwork expressing the Absolute see: Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. and trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).
- ⁶ See: Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (London, 1778).
- ⁷ See: "The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (The Green Box)," *Tate.org.uk*, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-the-bride-stripped-bare-by-her-bachelors-even-the-green-box-t07744>, accessed 12.05.2020.
- ⁸ "The other feature 'slit scan' is an effect first seen in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where a point or line in a continuously moving image is captured and streamed forward. The capturing line can be at the sides, middle, top or bottom as seen in the tape." "Media Forum (June 23-27, 2001) in the frame of XXIII Moscow International Film Festival," <http://2010.mediaforum.mediaartlab.ru/2001/presentation-vasulkas.html>, accessed 12.05.2020.
- ⁹ "Einstein realized that massive objects caused a distortion in space-time." See: Nola Taylor Redd, "Einstein's Theory of General Relativity," *Space.com*, published electronically 7.11.2017, <http://www.space.com/17661-theory-general-relativity.html>, accessed 12.05.2020.
- ¹⁰ See: Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).
- ¹¹ Appropriation art is "the use of pre-existing objects or images with little or no transformation applied to them." See: Ian Chilvers and John Graves-Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 27-28. About the 'artworld' and the institutional theory of art see: Arthur C. Danto, "The Artworld," *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964): 571-584.
- ¹² Subversion can be defined as an operation in which the artist clearly shows not only ideas, meanings, opinions and feelings, but also a more or less subtle element of irony; a "gentle shift of meaning" within the presented ideas, meanings and opinions that shows a real disapproval for them (see: Grzegorz Działowski et al., interview by Wojciech Makowiecki, *Gazeta Malarzy i Poetów*, no. 2-3, (2001), http://witryna.czasopism.pl/gazeta/drukuj_artykul.php?id_artykulu=56; Łukasz Ronduda, *Strategie subwersyjne w sztukach medialnych* (Kraków: Rabid, 2006), 49-98).
- ¹³ See: Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Christian Lenhardt (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).
- ¹⁴ See: Rafał Solewski, "Printmaking and art in the era of digital revolution. An introduction to the discussion," in *From traditional printmaking to digital prints. Generational experience of artists at the turn of the 20th and the 21st century. Practice – reflection – presentation* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UP, 2013), 101-110.
- ¹⁵ *Substrate: From the XScreenSaver Collection*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCCVgBOVD0E>, accessed 12.05.2020.
- ¹⁶ About Karl Sims: "Evolved Virtual Creatures," 1994, <https://www.karlsims.com/evolved-virtual-creatures.html>, accessed 12.05.2020.
- ¹⁷ See: "50 Creative and Inspiring 404 Pages," updated 14.07.2009, <https://www.webdesignerdepot.com/2009/07/50-creative-and-inspiring-404-pages/>, accessed 12.05.2020.
- ¹⁸ On undomesticated spaces with no relationality, existing paradoxically 'despite presence' (typical of postmodernity or supermodernity) see: Marc Augé, *Non-Places. Introduction to the Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London-New York: Verso, 1995), 75-114.
- ¹⁹ Transcendence is commonly defined as "going beyond ordinary limits, being beyond the limits of all possible experience and knowledge, or the universe or material existence." (*The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* published electronically <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transcendent>, accessed 12.05.2020). In this article, metaphysics is understood as "rationally valid and intellectually verifiable cognition of the world existing in reality (including the affirmation of the Absolute Being), aimed at discovering the ultimate cause of its being, whose traces human reason finds in empirically available objects."
- ²⁰ See e.g. "Socially engaged practice," *Tate.org.uk*, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/socially-engaged-practice>, accessed 12.05.2020.

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