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FESTIVAL OF NAKED FORMS 2021 – INTERSPECIES NUDITY / GDANSK EXPORT

ART AND RESEARCH PROJECT



INTRODUCTION

Edited by Łukasz GUZEK

FNAF - Festival of Naked Forms - was held this year for the seventh time in a row in Prague, Holešovice, on the Altenburg boat in September 10-12, 2021. The idea of the festival was conceived by Lenka Klodová, artist and teacher at Brno University of Technology at the Faculty of Fine Arts (FaVU), where she runs the Body Design Studio. Klodová's practice can be called body discourse. It is being developed comprehensively in many fields: research, artistic creation and education. Her pedagogy and artistic practice assume being open to various functional aspects of the body, with particular focus on the naked body. Studies on the visual form of a naked body aim to discover and test the ways of cognition and self-cognition through one's own body. It is therefore a phenomenologically-oriented activity. However, in the special case of the artist-performer, the entire body (somatic) and mental condition is also the source of the work. Hence, a performance art work is both a visual form and a discursive form (in dialogue with its context). It is therefore a training in critical thinking about the surrounding world as an object of cognition.

In 2021, the second part of the FNAF festival took place at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, as FNAF Export, as part of the Theoria

cum Praxi of Performance Art festival held since 2018, curated by Łukasz Guzek (October 4-7, 2021). Artists from the Czech Republic, selected by Klodová, were joined by artists from Gdańsk, selected by the curator of the Gdansk festival, and Klodová conducted workshops according to her own didactic method for students of the Intermedia faculty. A conference was part of this event. According to Klodová's concept, each festival has a leading topic, general enough to be an umbrella term for many forms of artistic activity (a short history of FNAF and the titles of each edition can be found in the documentation published below). In 2021, the leading topic was "Interspecies Nudity."

The conference consisted of only five papers. However, this theoretical part should be considered in connection with the entire festival project, i.e. the performance and workshop presentations. It belonged to the type of research and artistic practice, where scientific methods coexist with artistic ones and mutually enhance their results. In the presentations, as well as in artistic works, the term „interspecies” (or „multispecies”) has been interpreted in various cultural contexts. Together, the various subjects of the works and lectures compose a panorama

Theoria cum Praxi of Performance Art 2021

4-7 October 2021  FNAF Export Gdańsk

Performance Art Festival & Conference

Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk
Targ Węglowy 6, 80-836 Gdansk



AKADEMIA
Sztuki
Piękności
w Gdańsku



Curator: Lukasz Guzek

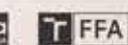
In collaboration with:
FWF 2021 | InterSpaces Nulity
Curator: Lenka Kodova
Prague, 11-12 September 2021



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of up-to-date cultural issues. The conference and festival took place at the Academy of Fine Arts, where nude studies are still the basis of formal artistic education. At the same time, contextually, the attitude to the issue of nudity marks the borderline of the political-social division. It points the way to the features of an open society, where acceptance of nudity is a measure of inclusiveness. Nudity is here a tool in the cultural discourse in favor of building social equality. What is social (interpersonal and group relations, political agendas and affiliations) is defined here by what is private. The un-dress code illustrates the whole set of social and political views, which was reflected in the presentations. Interspecies nudity is an aspect of this broad socio-cultural subject matter. At the same time, it is the most advanced way of political thinking and, in terms of art forms, a radical means of representation.

Jana Orlová's lecture „Interspecies in Czech visual performance” begins with the definition of the key term „visual performance,” which singles out performances by visual artists from the broader category of performance studies. In the field of visual arts, works that take the aspect of nudity in a radical way have been indicated. At the same time, these are the most radical actions in the history of Czech performance art. These inquiries support the thesis that naked form is the most radical in the development of art, especially in connection with live action. The second term defined in the paper is „interspeciesism.” Its scope of meaning includes a wide and multispectual network of relations between human and various non-human beings. Thus, in the paper opening the conference, the fields of discussion and interpretation were indicated for the subject of the festival. Also addressed is its relationship with contemporary discourses. Part of the exemplification includes the analysis of performance, both constituting the idiom of the history of contemporary Czech art, and contemporary examples. The author organized the analytical material according to three basic categories: „Human and Animal;” „Humans, plants, elements;” and „Interspecies Anthropology.” All three, as she emphasizes in the conclusion, constitute keys to the interpretation

of the present in the light of the inter or multi species, which she believes has explanatory power.

The next paper by katarzyna lewandowska (this is the author's idea to use lowercase letters in her name) entitled „Why do we need women's freedom? Feminist artistic activism against power: Anarcho-porn-resistance” took the form of a video presentation about the body and nudity used as a means of visual arts for the purposes of political struggle, here mainly for women's rights. The paper shows, however, that this subject may constitute a starting point for addressing a wide spectrum of key contemporary issues. In connection with the topic of the festival and conference, this issue is extended to include animal rights, as the same political forces do not respect the rights of women and animals. The reason for this, indicated by the author, is functioning according to the principles of the patriarchy, which is pointed out as the main source of evil in the world. Contemporary examples (from the author's own practice) and historical examples are cited as an exemplification, which proves that social change is a long process. But it also proves that this is a change in the foundations of culture. The article contains many examples of artistic actions for social change. These are inconvenient activities from the point of view of the authorities, and information about them is therefore not disseminated by them. The published descriptions and manifestos complemented the works presented at the festival very well.

The paper by Paweł Leszkowicz „Queering Interspecies in Critical Theory and Polish Performance Art” referred to the attitudes in politics towards queer minorities. Developing an effective position and program requires a deviation from traditional categories such as naturalness or humanism. The naturalistic position, which would appear to be closely related to the issue of nudity, is nevertheless used as an argument to dismiss queer minorities as unnatural. So it uses a very selective, narrow definition of nature. Humanism is also not a quite inclusive category today, as it assumes a dominant human position. Instead, the author proposes the categories of a specific ecology as „eco-erotics,”

and „interspecies intimacy” understood as emotions connecting over genre classifications. He also finds useful a postcolonial theory that talks about crossing the boundaries of exclusion. It is in this light that he interprets the queer male nudity in performance art of Krzysztof Jung and Krzysztof Malec, two Polish artists who died in the 1990s and were pioneers of the queer art of masculinity.

Marek Rogulski's presentation entitled „Protoanthropoid-Coagulation of Consciousness” had a performative character and concerned the idea developed by the artist both in his works and in theory. In his paper, after presenting the definitions of the concepts indicated in the title, taken from the discourse of science, the author moves to „transspecies politics.” He points out that body hair, i.e. the naked / clothed state in interspecies relationships, is within the 1 percent of the genetic difference between humans and chimpanzees. The naked body in this perspective is a more theoretical construct. The “proto” prefix (core) suggests the deep origin of our self, which is represented by our activity (art) to materialize (visualize) expressions. So any controversy about nudity and the body arises from the state of consciousness. The article deals with the thesis about the impact of the naked body on the efficiency of the relationship of people with the world.

At the end of the conference part of the festival, Lenka Klodová gave a lecture entitled „Who are the Czech Nudes?” In her paper, as the creator of the idea and the curator of the festival, she considers the cultural sources of nudity in Czech art. And she found origins in the discourse of nudity in the 15th-century Reformation-era religious movement, the Adamites, who briefly functioned in Southern Bohemia. Their religious premise was to function naked on a daily basis. The thesis of the article is that after the Adamites were massacred, every one of them was killed, nudity was excluded from public discourse in Czech (Bohemia) and the Czech Republic too. Until the establishment of the FNAF festival. The idea of nudity was continued on a daily basis in the Freikörperkultur (FKK) movement in Germany. Although the festival refers to many aspects of

nudity, it is precisely these broad approaches to nudity that make it a universal topic in the sense of a point of reference for numerous life practices (ethics). In the structure of the festival, as described in her article, there are sections such as FNAF Escort and FNAF Fashion referring to the commercial use of the naked body in liberal politics and the economy.

Through the festival, Klodová consciously reflects the culture of the Czech Republic. Since we share certain cultural aspects, resulting from the historical heritage of Soviet totalitarianism, but also from the previous experience of the cosmopolitan Habsburg Monarchy, we can project the festival's ideas across the entire region of Central Europe. One could say that this is a Central European nudity festival. And although such a regional focus is not the first assumption of the festival, it reflects a regional cultural discourse in which the naked body allows us to tackle many common issues.



Jana ORLOVÁ
Academy of Fine Arts in Prague

INTERSPECIESISM IN CZECH VISUAL PERFORMANCE

In this article I decided to follow Claire Bishop in opting for the term “visual performance” that, despite some reservations, seems most precise. In her definition, visual performance is created by artists who have not been trained as actors, musicians, dancers, etc. In research, the term “performance art” has been used for performances since roughly the 1990s, thus marking a period before their considerable expansion. Whenever “performance” is used without further attributes, what is meant is the art of performance in a fine arts context, i.e. visual performance.¹

Before addressing the area of the fine arts, I would like to consider interspeciesism itself. In a broad sense of the word, it concerns relations among individual species, but for understandable reasons (given by my self-determination, and thus my limitation) I shall focus on interspeciesism from the human perspective. The basic binary differentiation is human vs. non-human, i.e. the elements, stones, plants, animals, the world of technologies or extra-terrestrials. The non-human can also include the world of religion and spirituality, but whether it constitutes a “genre” (e.g. the genre of a spiritual or divine being) is up for debate. The differentiation adumbrated above

inherently presupposes that individual species (whether with or without quotation marks) blend together better, with two humans (of whatever race, nationality, or gender) achieving a better understanding than a human and an animal. However, Konrad Lorenz’s (1903–1989) research has shown this schematic reasoning to be ill-founded. In reality, a seagull achieves a better understanding with a raven living in the same area than with a seagull living elsewhere.² Applied to humans, this could mean that one gets along better with one’s cat than with the stranger one is hosting on Airbnb. On the other hand, one doesn’t talk to one’s cat about contemporary art or the latest political developments. Interspeciesism, it seems, requires a certain sensitivity and communication on a different level. But what does this mean in practice? This is what I will try to answer in the following text, which will depart from the viewpoint of the human-artist-performer, who in his work works with the animal or natural element not as an instrumental means, but as a partner in dialogue.

Human and Animal

Interspecies relations between man and animal are the most consciously reflected in our society. These are relationships with domestic animals (emotional), with animals as food (utilitarian), or with wild animals, possibly also protected animals (idealisation, fear, etc.). An extreme position within the relationship with animals is zoosexuality or zoophilia, where the sexualisation of the animal can be linked to romantic feelings for it, with the animal having the position of a life partner or one-night stand. Animalism is part of the human being evolved from the animal, however it is not value-neutral: it is seen as something “impure” and potentially dangerous,³ something to be repressed rather than developed by the “well-mannered” person.

The fact that humans are strongly connected to nature in the form of animality is ambiguously and – for the purposes of this text – ideally reflected in popular culture. Two main lines of relating to animality can be discerned, which is also very appealing due to its liminality. On the one hand, there is an ironic and mocking position,⁴ e.g. in the hit song *I Wanna Be Your Dog* by The Stooges (1969),⁵ which at first sight describes a heedless love and devotion. However, the song’s very eloquent lyrics can also be read as a description of a BDSM⁶ relationship in which the man is absolutely submissive, a humiliated “mistress’s dog.” Dogplay is indeed a very popular roleplaying⁷ pastime in this setting. What these two views have in common is utter surrender, extracting the human rational component in favour of passion and instincts. Something like this can be very refreshing for an over-thinking westerner. This is also the reason why the overall positive, almost exuberant (in a canine fashion) mood of the song is quite appropriate.

The other position is what I would call “dark animalism.” This time I have chosen as an example a less popular and more contemporary song by Chelsea Wolfe called *Feral Love* (2013).⁸ Feral means wild in the sense of uncivilised, undomesticated. The song evokes a dark, deep position of animality within humans, associated with blood, pain, crossing boundaries, and

with death (of the ego). Potentially, therefore, a transgressive,⁹ sacred and dangerous¹⁰ plane. What the latter position has in common with the first, exaggerated and playful position is the shutting down of reason, the release from social ideas and rules, but more accentuated here is the danger of too much release, namely the loss of control (or identity) and the inability to return; psychological disorders, madness.

Both deeply interconnected positions will serve me as guidelines for interpreting the work of two contemporary Czech performers, Kateřina Olivová and Darina Alster.

Kateřina Olivová

Kateřina Olivová (b. 1984) drew attention to herself as a finalist for the Jindřich Chalupecký Award in 2018. She is a personality whose look, lifestyle and opinions form an integral part of her artistic work. The boundaries between the non-artistic (personal) and the artistic are deliberately blurred in her case. She herself and her performances evoke strong emotions, which is an important strategy in her performance work. From a feminist position, she reflects on women’s collective traumas, dissatisfactions and inferiority complexes arising from their lack of a perfect body. Olivová draws on and benefits from her own bodily endowment, which evokes the Venus of Věstonice, a form of the maternal aspect of the female cult that, especially in the last century, has been considered something unhealthy and unaesthetic. Standing outside the contemporary ideal of beauty, her nudity is not primarily considered erotic, nor is the author degrading her into a sexual object. As a result, she has a wide range of agency and can indeed do with her body as she wishes; its very being, combined with Olivová’s casual attitude, becomes a work of art.

Olivová mixes the Venus of Věstonice figurine with pop culture, loving colour, glitter and cat ears, giving her message a touch of lightness and entertainment. Typical of her work is the use of animal masks, butterfly wings, unicorn attributes, etc. Her distinctive performance style was created as a counter-position to the stereotypical “boring, solemn, serious performance.”¹¹ In one of her early performances



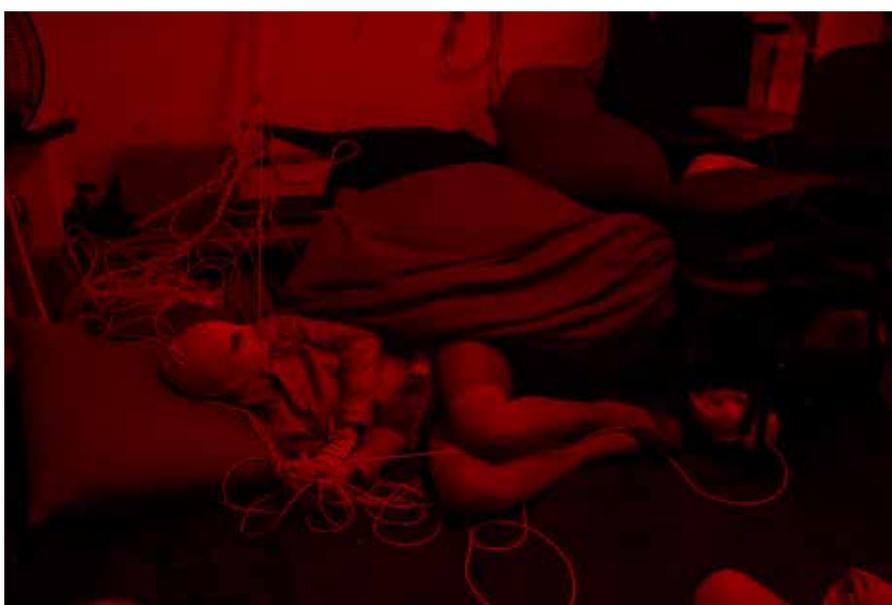
Kateřina Olivová, performance in Sokolowsko, 2012,
photo Zita Belfast



Kateřina Olivová, performance at Darina Alster's exhibition, 2015,
photo Petr Flíček



Darina Alster, *Green Woman*, 2021, screenshot,
Polina Revunenکو



Darina Alster, *Red Agent*, 2018, photo Airide Rekstiite



Miloš Šejn, *Yellow Man*, 2015



Hana Magdoňová, *Thirty-Nine Days*, 2021, photo Alena Hlaváčová

at the Festival in Sokolowsko (Poland, 2012), she stripped down, stuck a lit candle up her behind and crawled naked on all fours until she reached a lattice (which can be interpreted as imprisonment) and imitated the sounds of various animals (horse, cat, tiger, cow, etc.). She ended the performance ended by injecting herself in the abdomen with a blood thinner she was using at the time. Programmatically, she was trying to break away from the over-intellectualised form of performance and her actions were to be as “crazy” as possible. Later she tried a different position during a performance at Darina Alster’s exhibition (2015). She dressed up in a princess dress, let Alster lead her around with her breasts exposed and behaved like a dog, i.e., among other things, sniffed the audience and obeyed her mistress’ commands.

By her own account, Olivová is very fond of nature and animals (for a long time she wanted to be a veterinarian, but at the last minute she ended up attending the Faculty of Fine Arts in Brno). In her performances, she engages in a game with wildness, bearing the imprint of the desire “to be able to move like an animal at least sometimes, to have animal qualities, it’s also a bit of a child’s game... It’s also intertwined in my everyday life, I wear cat ears because I would like to have them.”¹² She is fascinated by the combination of a latex, kitsch animal head with nudity, she likes the tension that shifts the body into a fantastical, almost alien appearance. She also explores how the animal in question feels without becoming it, “I like the nothingness of it.”¹³ The wildness in her performance is eminently playful, not dark and dangerous as in Darina Alster’s work.

Darina Alster

In her work, Darina Alster (b. 1979) combines religion, magic, mysticism and political activism. She chooses the medium of performance because her own body is the fundamental means of expression for her. She is interested in ritualism across religious and spiritual movements, and her conception is characterized by a postmodern eclectic approach to spiritual traditions.

I think my mission is to bring spirituality into contemporary art. To inspire people towards spirituality. Today people can combine different elements from different traditions to create their own mythology. They can be Christian, gay and use tarot without feeling silly, or they can like other religions – Buddhism, Hinduism... I try to open up these themes in my work to bring them back into play within the contemporary world.¹⁴

During her performances, Alster often personifies a female deity and her actions take the form of a ritual.

In performance I work with certain aspects of inhumanity, where I detach myself from myself and my person and embody certain spiritual aspects. The animality in my work is not purely related to the animal kingdom as such, but when I perform I enter a trance. It is a state of mind where I perceive the presence and different aspects of the presence in relation to myself and through me it speaks, I become the primordial essence that is also beyond sexuality. In this trance I step out of not only my normative roles but also my personality, in this trance I connect with my animal side. By performatively being in the present, we become animals or children: the only thing that exists for them (for us) is the present moment.¹⁵

For example, in the performance *Red Agent* (2018) she tapped into female passion. All in red, she moved around a red room specially designed for this purpose, consciously working with the aesthetic qualities of her body and environment, reciting a poetic text about burning desire, how powerful it is, how dangerous it can be without the right direction, without ever being reducible or regulated. It was a very intimate, self-revealing performance with intense personal and psychological input from the artist. It was as if the audience had been invited into a private slice of reality, into another world, a realm of

intense emotions, but one with which they could easily identify as Alster had abstracted and disembodied it. Another work is the performance *Bodies of Water* (2021). This one was about embodying nature, the rainforest, the archetype of the green woman, the roots of life that are in water. In the part of the performance situated in a gallery space, the artist flailed with herself in waves on the ground, throwing up various objects (like the sea), which she gave to the audience, looking intensely into their eyes. Connecting to the personified wildness of nature was important to her, and she sought an authentic experience of an unrepeatable event for both herself and the onlookers.

Both performers work with inner wildness or animality in their own specific ways, sharing a desire to free themselves from social roles and assumptions; for Olivová, the leitmotif is lightness and play, for Alster, a trance-like connection with archetypes and spiritual elements.

Humans, plants, elements

Connections with plants and inanimate nature are more abstract than relationships with animals, and so from hit narratology the narrative moves on to deep ecology and the environmental movement in my search for framing. While humans have cultivated a relationship (however contradictory) with animals, they almost without exception think of plants, water or land in utilitarian terms, as a resource upon which one can draw (almost) endlessly. The growing environmental movement of recent years is a clear signal that an increasing number of people feel this approach to nature to be unsustainable and in need of changing. Environmentalism is also linked to criticism of consumerism, of the desire for ever new things, to criticism of tourism, etc.¹⁶ The turn to nature, together with its connection to the ritual dimension,¹⁷ was typical of the art of the 1970s¹⁸ and is currently enjoying a revival. In the 1970s, however, there was a lack of connection with the environmental movement, whereas today artists place great emphasis on environmental issues, even if they may not work directly with nature in

their work. Moreover, ritualism has moved from nature more into the city, as demonstrated by the work of Alster.

Petr Štembera (b. 1945) is a typical representative of Czech action art of the 1970s, which combines physical (body-art) action with the natural element. In his most famous work, *Grafting* (1975), he grafted a twig onto his arm in the same way that trees are grafted. Pavlína Morganová writes about the action as follows: “In a manner customary in orchard management, he grafted a twig into his arm, in an attempt to achieve the impossible – to merge completely with nature. ... All afternoon, he »let the two organisms interact« until he got blood poisoning.”¹⁹ The photo-documentation of the event is one of the most famous paeans to the first wave of performance art in the then Czechoslovakia, which influenced subsequent generations of artists. In the 1970s, Štembera himself carried out many other self-torturing actions, which his yoga practice helped him to manage physically and mentally. Noteworthy in that context is the performance, *Sleeping in a Tree* (also from 1975): “after three nights of sleeping, he spent the fourth night in a tree.”²⁰ At the end of the 1970s, he withdrew from the scene and refused to return at any cost.

Štembera’s generational contemporary is the poet, performer and artist Milan Kozelka (b. 1948), who in the 1970s moved from poetry to performance and installations in nature. He too sought to connect and merge with nature, as seen for example in his series of actions *Contacts* (1980) with the Vydra river in Šumava. In the first of the realised performances, for example, he lay downstream in a stream from midnight to dawn; another action was *Standing in Rapids, Suspension, Walking Upstream* (with a stone, a stick, etc.).²¹ On one of the surviving typescript entries of the *Resumé on Physical Actions*, the author writes:

The body as a specific means of expression
/ and as an artefact / the body as
a spontaneous dynamic element / itself
in relation to the material used / modes
of expression / the body as a de-fetishised



Milan Kozelka, *Suspension (Contact IV)*, 1980, Archive of Pavlína Morganová



Petr Štembera, *Grafting*, 1975, Archive of Pavlína Morganová



Petr Štembera, *Sleeping in a Tree*, 1975, Archive of Pavlína Morganová

object / the body as a spatiotemporal / embryonic / signal / of self-analysis / coming out of oneself / self-reduction / self-discovery / perceptual spaces / living / action sculpture /.²²

He was seeking integrating into the landscape, after blending in, after natural contact. His actions were neither violent nor penetrative, but rather minimalistically meditative, linked to his interest in Indian philosophy. In another entry he adds:

It was in no way a deliberate aestheticisation of the body vis-à-vis nature, nor was it a contradictory aestheticization of nature vis-à-vis the body. Landscape, body and modalities of action were not mutually exclusive but, on the contrary, formed a living metaphorical whole.²³

After 2000, Kozelka turned to radical political performance and – due to his disordered life (always living on a minimal income, on the margins of society) – he died in 2014.

The multimedia artist Miloš Šejn (b. 1947), whose work has a similar starting point, is still an active performer, and what is more, from its beginning to the present day his work has formed a continuum. Václav Hájek characterises his work as follows: “The key theme and environment of Šejn’s work is landscape (or nature, perceived in its fragments). The author also thematises subjective space and natural image. Šejn perceives landscape as the primary reality, source, root or base of his work. ... In the landscape, then, is found the subject around which a particular place gathers. ... The subject is not an abstract quantity, but a corporeal entity – it moves, looks around, perceives and reacts.”²⁴ Not only does it react, it also touches, merges, and communicates. What is significant for Šejn is a very close, often direct body-art contact with various natural substances such as mud, water, trees, leaves, etc. In many of his works, the artist merges with nature through his body, his senses; the actions are long-lasting, usually without an audience, and he records the performance with a camera or video camera.

What is important for him is coming out of himself and connecting... to nature, to the concrete, to the tree, to the atmosphere of the moment. Even if his work is not programmatically environmental, his inner starting points are identical. Šejn draws primarily on his rich inner world and spiritual development. His meditative work has influenced many younger artists.

Interspecies Anthropology

Interspecies anthropology or posthumanist philosophy has become an increasingly popular current of thought in recent years, even among artists. Posthumanist thought goes beyond the human-centred viewpoint and expands it to include components of animate and inanimate nature, as well as exploring the possibilities of a future without humans. Combining her experiences from the theatre and art environments in relation to the work of Šejn, Hana Magdoňová (b. 1989) can be included in this stream of thought. The unifying line of her work is the desire to discover new horizons of human consciousness and perception of reality, for knowledge and intuitive understanding, which is closely linked to the interest in personal development and the spiritual side of life. Her main medium of expression is performance, and in parallel she is active in the Agronauts’ Collective (which she co-founded), an interdisciplinary platform for applied posthumanist thought.

It was these two lines that were connected in the happening titled *Thirty-Nine Days*, which took place from 17 May to 24 June 2021 in the environment of the Hády Quarry in Brno. Magdoňová opted for her own version of “going to the desert,” aware of how the original meaning shifts. As an artist, a woman, a non-ascetic (during her stay she had regular baths, ate food, took care of herself and the environment), she chose a landscape mined by humans and subsequently re-cultivated, in a sense a “new wilderness.” She realised this long-lasting performance as her master thesis project, perhaps as an excuse to free herself from all obligations, including those work-related, for a long time. Such a long

separation has the nature of an initiation event, a liminal situation, or a rite of passage. To some extent, her gesture was also a reaction to the pandemic period, to the restriction of movement and possibilities of going out, and to the transfer of most interpersonal communication into the virtual environment.

Magdoňová opted for a path of isolation in nature, with the aim of reconnecting with various forms of life and expanding her perception. As in Šejn's case, her work is marked by an interest in meditative practices connected with the body, which help her to induce and deepen perception. Unlike him, however, she chose not to record any time-bound performances, but to perceive her entire stay as an artistic performance. And to maintain this awareness, if possible, even during crisis situations when she doubted herself and the possible continuation of her intention, for example when she got painful blisters on her hands or was robbed.

The *Thirty-Nine Days* project also included three workshops open to those interested in a deeper appreciation of nature through direct experience. These were carried out together with Lea Spahn, a colleague from the Agronauts' Collective who works on bodily movement in a social science context. The aim of these workshops was to convey – in a condensed form and reduced time – how during her stay, metaphorically speaking, Magdoňová performed the landscape and the landscape performed her. How can the human and the inhuman intermingle? Is it possible to communicate with the landscape? To let the landscape enter into oneself? What is it like to act from this position, what is it like to make art from this position? The key is co-existence with all forms of life in nature, conscious co-existence. The question is how to capture such co-existence, if achieved. The *Thirty-Nine Days* project was an attempt to transcend previous human and artistic experiences towards a strong unifying theme, whose communicability, in her conception, should be enhanced by experiential encounters that should make interspecies sensitivity accessible to more people.

Conclusion

This text has presented several positions of Czech visual performance that deals with interspecies themes: from purely artistic performances to artistic-anthropological intervention. The artistic performances share the moment of merging with nature or expressing inner animality, as well as the desire to free oneself from social roles and assumptions.

The performance *Thirty-Nine Days* highlights in an exceptional way a caring approach to nature and cohabitation with it (in the sense of a partnership or relationship). It can be said that it absorbs the approaches mentioned above in an enlightened way and takes from them whatever it needs at any given moment. It operates at the very edge of art, research, spiritual practice, and social interaction.

As the above cases show, an interspecies approach to art-making is not uncommon. Rather, what is unusual is the given point of view, or the set interpretive key, through which new contexts and perspectives on art can be found.

Notes

- ¹ Claire Bishop, "Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention," *TDR: The Drama Review* 62.2 (2018): 22–42.
- ² See: Konrad Lorenz, *On aggression* (London: Routledge, 2002). See also: accessed September 19, 2021, <https://sciencemag.cz/sojky-cizincum-duveruji-mene/>.
- ³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and danger: an analysis of concept of pollution and taboo* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003).
- ⁴ See: Sigmund Freud, *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious*, translated by Abraham Arden Brill (New York: Routledge, 1999).
- ⁵ See the lyrics, accessed September 17, 2021, <https://genius.com/The-stooges-i-wanna-be-your-dog-lyrics>.
- ⁶ BDSM combines the abbreviations of B/D (bondage and discipline/dominance), D/S (dominance and submission) and S/M (sadism and masochism). See, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://wikipedia.org/wiki/BDSM>.
- ⁷ Roleplaying, i.e. role-playing in sexual fantasies or activities.
- ⁸ See the lyrics: <https://genius.com/Chelsea-wolfe-feral-love-lyrics>.
- ⁹ Compare the conception of transgression in: Georges Bataille, *Erotism*, translated by Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1986).
- ¹⁰ More from the viewpoint of orgiastic mysteries than Christian sanctity.
- ¹¹ Interview with Kateřina Olivová, September 18, 2021
- ¹² Ibidem.
- ¹³ Ibidem.
- ¹⁴ Darina Alster, „Rozhovor s Darinou Alster“ [Interview with Darina Alster], interview conducted by Magdalena Šípková and Nikolai Ivaschiv, *Ateliér* no. 13-14 (2014): 5.
- ¹⁵ Interview with Darina Alster, September 20, 2021.
- ¹⁶ See e.g. Jan Keller, *Až na dno blahobytu* [To the Bottom of Prosperity] (Brno: Hnutí Duha, 1993).
- ¹⁷ The necessity of connecting/conjoining/identifying with nature in the spiritual or emotional sense has been pointed out by the founder of deep ecology Arne Naess. See John Seed, et al., *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2007).
- ¹⁸ See Lucy R. Lippard, *Overlay: contemporary art and the art of prehistory* (New York: New Press, 1983).
- ¹⁹ Pavlina Morganová, *Akční umění* [Action Art] (Olomouc: Votobia, 1999), 84.
- ²⁰ Ibidem.
- ²¹ Ibidem, 90.
- ²² Vladimír Meistr's archive. See also: Vladimír Havlík, Pavlina Morganová and Jana Písaříková, *Svázáno do Kozelky* [Bound in Kozelka] (Brno: Větrné mlýny, 2020).
- ²³ Ibidem.
- ²⁴ Václav Hájek, "Miloš Šejn," Artlist — Center for Contemporary Arts Prague, accessed September 19, 2021, <https://www.artlist.cz/milos-sejn-539/>.

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katarzyna lewandowska

Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk

WHY DO WE NEED WOMEN'S FREEDOM? FEMINIST ARTISTIC ACTIVISM AGAINST POWER: ANARCHOPORNOPÓR

(ANARCHO-PORN-RESISTANCE)

Scene1

The body against Power / APO

– Anarcho-porn-resistance

The “Anarchopornoopór group” was created two years ago. In composition it consists of: Anna Kalwajtys, Dorota Androsz, Jacek Staniszewski, Dorota Chilińska and katarzyna lewandowska. The name of the collective is a combination of our three favorite words (anarchy, porn, resistance), ideas (anarchy, porn, resistance), life attitudes (anarchy, porn, resistance), theory (anarchy, porn, resistance), and *praxis* (anarchy, porn, resistance). The base of them is freedom – without limits, intersectional and inclusive.

(...) The body art has an ability to strongly influence the viewer (...) Feminist art using the internet can be thoroughly political, challenging to build women's subordination.¹

The key of men enslaving women is having control of their bodies. Methods are diversified – from the shiny beauty industry, to barbaric activities like female genital mutilation or splashing acid on

them. The separation of body from woman is the basis of patriarchal exploitation. Total control over a woman body is the main element of its oppression, so women's sexual emancipation is the key to their liberation. Nudity treated like a gun is one of the new ways to make feminism, so we can change our society. We are naked, because we are feminists.²

She is not a feminist. No, you're not, you stupid cunt.³

Scene 2

The art

The body became the most important medium of the artistic expression. Biological, devoid of a burden of the centuries-old, religious-mythic symbolism, the body as a raw material is frequently used by contemporary arts.

Three discourses, three categories – constructed by me to bring an order to my speech, and to not to dilute the problems related to presenting a body (mine / yours / other) in the contemporary art. The configuration of these three narratives is horizontal, NONE of the

following categories is more important than the previous one. None takes the central position; dates are equivalent, they complement each other, overlapping and permeating each other.

First: the body closest to the ground, its skin, bones, blood, meat. These guidelines refer to the experience of the body itself, namely: body fluids, blood, identity, pain, nudity – body with a vagina and vulva, sexuality, illness, decay, death.

Second: feminism itself (in its many waves), and feminist theory and practice - both situated in historical and artistic context. In my opinion, the category is fully justified because feminism, especially politically involved and critical feminism in the past and now, focuses on the body. The artists use their body through various means of expression, experimenting. The body has become a battlefield against the oppressive misogynist order.

The total artist who is born.

Who is she? She is a woman whose actions penetrate deeply into and under the skin, her own and the ones who look. The total artist uses tools - body, speech and mind - to dismantle the oppressive structures that appear at every level of existence. The total artist does not make a deal with anyone or anything, she represents an attitude that is not in the least conformist and thus nothing embarrasses her. She cuts out pieces of the world and watches them carefully, explores them, and critically comments. Her art goes deep into life. She risks and provokes and forces you to act. The total artist's strength is honesty and authenticity. The total artist is interested in the art of resistance and opposition.

Third: the starting point is the figure of the Other / Alien, someone vague – a cyborg, a creature, an inhuman being. He / she / them is someone excluded from the normative boundaries of anthropocentric, phallic, monotheistic, heterosexual sensitivity. The other is the one that lives in the liminal space, in between,

unrecognized by the general public. Between plus and minus, schematic, binary division are extremely interesting identities, hybrid, other, human and inhuman, placed by Rosi Braidotti in the figure of a nomadic subject.⁴

Scene 3

Combat strategies. THEIR war dance

The world is at the edge of the abyss. My home Poland is close to the abyss as well. Freedom is systematically restricted in every corner of the world. Fascism and brown Nazism are being revived before our eyes. Religion has sold itself to politicians and politicians have sold themselves cheaply to the church, one or the other. The oppressive system created mostly by a white heteronormative male kills human and non-human animals alike in the name of the so-called progress and profit. In Kutno near Toruń - in one of the largest slaughterhouses in Europe, almost 16,000 pigs are slaughtered each day. They are gassed – their death is a very painful and long one. In three days, 50,000 pigs die there. It's like a quarter of the Toruń's population. Nature is raped, explored and killed by man. This is global destruction, the age of emotional imbecile, the time of the Anthropocene, destruction and death.

Human beings are a bipolar species in a state of permanent moral underdevelopment. We appeared on this planet as a prey animal, just look at our physical clumsiness. We fight natural disabilities with constant heat and megalomania, and because of the latter we have gods. God is the highest degree of anthropocentrism, while capitalism is the beloved child of the patriarchy.⁵

But many of us have not yet fallen into capitalist apathy. Women - warriors from all over the world have begun their war dance. The world will be reborn when the patriarchate, responsible for all evil, perishes. This order did not work, the time has come for a CHANGE at the base of which are: effortless, selfless empathy, compassion,

collective work, intersectional feminism incorporating all excluded and degraded identities, be it male, female, non-binary, multi-species. Everyone is welcome with us.

Scene 4

Actions. Art in activism

I would like to tell you about five projects important for me, in which I have been involved in the last few years. They all concern broadly understood feminism, but also artistic and social activism. These projects are:

1. *And why do we need women's freedom?*
2. *Black Venus Protest*
3. *Rebelle*
4. *Death of the Patriarchy*
5. *Female Fighters*

(The *BVP* and *REBELLE* posters were made by the Polish artist Jacek Staniszewski).

And why do we need women's freedom?

Extensive action, organized by activists from Toruń: Arek Pasożyt - artist, Liliana Zeic - artist, Magdalena Kos - artist, Tomasz Kolczyński - poet, Dorota Chilińska - artist, katarzyna lewandowska - art historian.

Three years ago in Poland there was the centennial of Poland regaining its independence after more than 100 years partition, and it was also the centennial of Polish women winning their elementary citizens rights – that is, the right to vote and decide for themselves and their country. The director of the Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń organized an exhibition entitled: *Why do we need freedom?* The exhibition chronologically covered a broad perspective of art history, from the writer and artist Witkacy - the time before World War II till today. Thirty six male artists and two male artistic groups were invited. At the exhibition dedicated to freedom and democracy, not a single female artist was presented.⁶ In his bizarre curatorial text, Waldemar Kuczma did not refer to this in any way, apparently not seeing the problem at all.

We decided to act. We created an organizational group. We wrote an open letter to the Director-Curator first, which he was kind enough to completely ignore. We made the matter known to the public in the media. On the day of the vernissage we made an action in which a lot of people from Toruń took part, many of them had nothing to do with art. On the eve of the vernissage we met in the studio in the attic and together we prepared 'dresses' from cardboard. I call them 'dresses,' because they were supposed to become our clothes, or armours. If we just had slogans on cardboard placards to hold in our hands, the municipal security and the police might have wanted to take them from us.

On white dresses we wrote front and back: "where are they? or "where is" or "where are the artists," or we wrote specific names of Polish artists that we think should be found at the exhibition about freedom. The inspiration was taken from the action associated with Ana Mendieta, an outstanding Cuban artist, who today is an icon of engaged feminism, one dedicated to the Mother, Sister Nature and ecofeminism. Like other artists, Mandieta fought for her subjectivity in art in the 1970s. Women were mostly invisible, constituting the backdrop for male art at the time. They were defined as muses, lovers or wives of great artists. There was neither feminist theory and feminist practice in the art space.

In 1985, Mendieta was most likely murdered by Andre Carl - a minimalist sculptor, her husband. He was never proven guilty, yet controversy about Mendieta's death remains. From her death to today there are protests with the main slogan: "where is Ana Mendieta?", which means not only a question about her, but also about all other artists, especially those identifying as women, whose voices prevail unheard.

We stood in a long line in front of the CoCA and when the vernissage began, we went inside. We talked with the audience, we listened to the speech of the director-curator. He compared us to terrorists in his gibberish. The online petition was signed by 510 people. We received huge support from all over Poland. The artists were touched that we claimed their status as autonomous artists.

Another very important activity was the debate at the CoCA - in front of the institution's glass entrance. The director did not agree that the discussion would take place along with his participation in the CoCA, so we organized it in front of the centre, on the pavement. We invited to the debate a few people: Ewelina Jarosz - art historian, Liliana Zeic - visual artist, Anka Leśniak - visual artist, and myself. The audience was quite large. The main theme of our discussion was the marginalization of the female language in the space of art, the invisibility and transparency of art created by women and other excluded identities. We also discussed the role of the curator in contemporary strategies and the disgusting hierarchic and institutional dependence.

During the discussion in front of the CoCA's glass door, the artist Aleka Polis together with Krystyna Kuta - the heroine of the 1980's Solidarity movement, who now has a one-person cleaning company, made a performances. They scrubbed a slogan stencilled on the sidewalk outside the institution: "where are the women artists?". They used vinegar for washing - this is a reference to the use of this acidic liquid during home abortions. They say, women used it before the war. This reference describes many women's hellish past and present. Poland has currently the most restrictive law among the European countries regarding the right to choose an abortion. The Polish government would like to change it anyway by introducing even more barbaric anti-abortion law, that would penalise not just the medical stuff, and a woman, but also anyone who would help a woman to get information, a pill, or drove her to the clinic abroad. So again, we organized the Black Protests to oppose patriarchal power. Black Protests have stopped the fanatics, at least for the moment. It was a joint success - the success of hundreds of thousands of girls and women who dressed in black and went out on the street to fight for their lives, health, safety and freedom. We won that battle. But there is always more - for an access to free contraception for access to doctors without the 'conscience clause' (that allows them to refuse the prescription of the contraceptive pill,

or to perform the abortion, if their conscience forbids them), for protection against domestic violence, for loosening the anti-choice law - we still have to fight.

Returning to the performance: the result was a beautifully-scrubbed pavement with a large inscription: "where are the artists?!" and above it three big glued rags that Aleka Polis and Krystyna Kuta had used to clean it. There was a single line written on each of the rags:

1. Today on the pavement.
2. Tomorrow in the underground.
3. The day after tomorrow on the Antipodes.

Questions to the Director

A public reading of "Questions to the Director" outside the door of the Centre of Contemporary Art took place at the end of the exhibition *Why do we need freedom?*, that had excluded the voices of the women artists. The "Questions to Director Kuczma" were read every half an hour during the eight-hour workday of the institution. There were sixteen questions, among them:

1. Why were only the voices of men taken into account while making the exhibition about one hundred years of Poland's independence?
2. Why, despite the centenary of winning the electoral and citizen rights by Polish women, were the achievements of women in the context of freedom omitted from this exhibition?
3. Why did the female image appear only as an artist's art object in the exhibition?
4. Why can a woman's body symbolize freedom, or the state itself, but her creativity is denied?
5. Why was a woman defined in this exhibition solely by her sexuality or symbolic sacredness?
6. Why did the exhibition not go beyond the patriarchal way of perceiving a woman, which encloses her in the dualism of the myth: 'whores' or 'saints'?
7. If, as the director of the CCA claims, "art has no sex," why is the male vision of art considered universal and neutral, and the only one that creates a canon of art?

Black Venus Protest

From the manifesto:

The Black Venus Protest movement was created in the summer of 2017 as a result of joint activities with the CALDODECULTIVO collective, which gave us a tool in the form of an artistic project about women and for women. We, women from the first group of Black Venus Protest, realised from the very first day of the project, that these activities should be transformed into a wider movement – thus giving ourselves and other women a new face of opportunities for action in the field. Black Venus is you and me. Since then, whenever the need arises, Black Venus goes out into the streets to mark their solidarity in opposition to the political and social status quo and supporting each other.⁷

I took part in group II. The action took place October 13-14, 2018 in Gdansk and Gdynia. “The Care Manifesto” was written in which we criticized patriarchal power focused on profit, exploitation, and inbred.

The women’s revolution continues! Care revolution! We are fighting!

In Gdansk, dressed as brides in wedding dresses, and with black flags, we stood in front of monuments that commemorated deceased heroes. They are always males who sacrificed their lives for their homeland. Women have been wiped out from so-called great history. We thanked women and gave them their remembrance back.

Later we married ourselves at the sea by taking the oath:

Aware of my rights and responsibilities arising from being a free human being, I solemnly declare that I am entering into a holy relationship with myself and pledge myself love, loyalty, honesty and trust in myself. I promise that I will do everything to follow my own path, enjoy life and fulfill it in my own way, for my own benefit and everything that lives.⁸

The next day girls went to Gdynia and dressed in black with black flags, they visited places dedicated to soldiers. They wrote important key words on our legs about oppression against the weaker in the modern world: rape / war / violence.

Rebelle

The curators were Dorota Chilińska and myself.

The starting point was the text of the “Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens” by Olimpia de Gouges (1748-1793) fully translated for the first time into Polish and published by the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk.⁹

In her Declaration, de Gouges pointed out the contradictions in the French constitution and the inadequacy of the attempts at that time to formulate universal laws. She uncompromisingly showed that the subject of the declared equality of rights are in fact white, adult men, and the apparent universalism of revolutionary ideas is based on the exclusion of large parts of society. The most important expression of freedom for her was freedom of speech and for a decade of her life she tried enforce this law. Referring to the idea of Henri Rousseau, de Gouges proposed a ‘social contract’ based on equal rights and obligations as a substitute for traditional marriage. Her writings both literary and political, clearly headed towards contemporary feminist philosophy. As the only woman, she was sentenced to death during the ‘great terror.’¹⁰

Four REBELLE installments took place so far:

The first *Rebelle* was held in Toruń. A group of 11 artists came from Łódź. They form FRACTION – the first Polish all-women artists collective. They showed their works and Anka Leśniak had a speech about their activity since the Polish Black Protest in 2016.

The second *Rebelle* also took place in Toruń. We showed a four-channel video installation of Wiola Ujazdowska - a young Polish artist who has lived in Iceland for several years. The title of her work is Medea, taken after one of the first mythological refugees. Ujazdowska referred to the cruel

modern law that allows absolute ignorance towards the OTHER. Anna Kalwajtys – a Polish performer, a total artist made a performance Olympia referring to the revolutionary attitude of Olympia de Gouges.

The third edition of Rebelle took place at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk - I work there. A symposium and a very strong performance by Anna Kalwajtys took place. It concerned the character of Olympia de Gouges and her revolutionary call: WOMAN, WAKE UP. The artist's nudity, her loud cry finally went out into the public space caused a lot of aggression in people. The doorman at the Academy did not want to let her go, saying that a woman does not behave in such a way, that she should be quiet. On the street, Kalwajtys was challenged by aggressive women, the police were called. It ended well for us.

Death of the Patriarchy

The exhibition and performative acts, which took place in on November 15, 2021 in the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk were an attempt of a summary of two views of the newspaper *Death of The Patriarchy*. In this publication, which is dedicated to all living beings, we wanted to collect the biggest amount of the manifestos – written ones, and those visual ones, which were a critical voice towards the patriarchy. We invited a lot of people. Jacek Staniszewski devised a newspaper where he added images of female fighters – women all around the world, who were murdered by the oppressed system. One year ago, the group Anarchopornoopór made a performance in the BWA Gallery in Bydgoszcz, using parts of manifestos that were put in vol.1. This year, in cooperation with the One Night Public Gallery,¹¹ edition 2 of the newspaper initiated an episodic, one-day action *Forecourt Action – The exit of patriarchy*. Within the whole happening, Dorota Androsz, who is an actress in Teatr Wybrzeże, recorded some parts of manifestos, which were heard in an action in Sopot. We think that topic that we have chosen is the basis for a reflection about humans and beyond humans.

During this event, in the art gallery where the manifestos were, we could see touching video work *Anatema* made by Dorota Chilińska. Kalwajtys, in her red dress, in a Warsaw and psychedelic scenerio, was presenting fragments of manifestos in the voice of Androsz. Both of them also performed in the piece *Agonia*; this was a moving visualisation of the situation in the autumn of 2021 on the Polish-Belarusian border. In a serious immigration crisis, people are being detained there. They are dying of hypothermia, because they do not have food, they are tired. The authorities used the situation to play a political game involving people, and taking their basic rights to be free and be treated as humans. Anna Chabowska realized a performance *Please, Stop*, which talked about rape.

I go to demonstrations, pickets, or court hearings with a banner „Death of the patriarchy.” This flag was made by Xavier Bayle. It is some kind of totem, which warns the enemy and protects a friend. Jacek Staniszewski and myself hand out in town reprinted manifestos from the first and second editions of *Death of the patriarchy*. They were posted up in Bydgoskie - one of the districts of Toruń. They stayed there for a long time, but were eventually removed by some person.

FEMELE FIGHTERS \ MURDERED BY THE PATRIARCHY

Koncept: katarzyna lewandowska
Graphics: Jacek Staniszewski

Hevrin Khalaf
murdered in 2019. Syria
Farkhunda Malikzada
murdered in 2016. Afghanistan
Marielle Franco
murdered in 2018, Brazil
Jill Phipps
murdered in 1995. England
Jolanta Brzeska
murdered in 2011. Poland
Anna Politkowska
murdered in 2006, Russia
Marie Catherine
murdered in 2012. Syria
Daniela Carrasco / El Mimo
murdered in w 2019. Chile

Almaas Elman
 murdered in w 2019. She was pregnant.
 Marsha P. Johnson
 murdered in 1992. USA
 Daphne Caruna Galizia
 murdered in 2017. Malta
 Tsepe Kyi, Tibetan
 self immolation in 2014, Tibet
 Hande Kader
 murdered in 2016. Turkey
 Angel / Kyal Sin
 murdered in 2021, Birma
 Regan Russel
 murdered in 2020, Canada
 Jelena Grigoriewa
 murdered in 2019. Russia
 Milo Mazurkiewicz
 suicide in 2019, Poland

Antonio Gramsci:

Indifference is apathy, parasitism, cowardice, it is not a life. That is why I hate indifference¹⁴

I dedicate my text to all female fighters who were murdered by the patriarchy.

Scene 5

Expectation

Orlan:

I'm interested in art that turns upside down whatever we assume beforehand, which is shocking, which is outside norms and outside the law. Art must be uncomfortable. My work is blasphemous.¹²

Regina Galindo:

I live in a country full of violence, hence my art also is violent. My body is not taken as an individual body, but as a social body, a common body, a global body. Being me or looking from my perspective, becomes her perspective, his experience, because we are all ourselves and others at the same time. The body, which is the body of many people, which is still being created, which is still opposing itself, because the world causes pain, restrains, suffocates, destroys; let us, who are also the others, do not just try to survive, but let us react, resist, create.¹³

Ikonography

AND WHY WE DO NEED WOMEN'S FREEDOM?



photo: Marek Krupecki

BLACK VENUS PROTEST



poster design by Jacek Staniszewski
photo: Alina Żemojdzin

DEATH OF PATRIARCHY



FEMALE FIGHTERS



EXPECTATION



photo: Adam Fisz

Notes

- ¹ Amalia Jones, *Body Art. Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
- ² Inna Szewczenko, "Rozbieranie się," w *Prawda jest konkretna. Artystyczne strategie w polityce. Podręcznik* (Warszawa: Fundacja Nowej Kultury Bęc Zmiana, 2019), 174-175.
- ³ Siksa, (nickname of Polish feminist artist), 2017.
- ⁴ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (Cambridge: Columbia University Press, 1994); *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).
- ⁵ Xavier Bayle, "Political species," *Splesz*, <http://www.splesz.pl/xavier-bayle-gatunki-polityczne/>.
- ⁶ In the exhibition, we could see a black-white picture that was made by Krystyna Gorazdowska. She took a photo of her teacher - Antoni Rząsa. This work she titled *Father*.
- ⁷ The Black Venus Protest initiators were Magdalena Mellin and Monika Wińczyk. Both of them are creators of the idea and texts that define BVP activities.
- ⁸ Joanna Krysiak, (author of the text of the oath), *The Wedding*, 2018.
- ⁹ Olympe de Gouges, *Deklaracja Praw Kobiety i Obywatelki*, 1st edition, introduction and edited by katarzyna lewandowska, Rafał Michalski (Gdańsk: Biblioteka ASP w Gdańsku, ASP w Gdańsku, 2018).
- ¹⁰ katarzyna lewandowska, Rafał Michalski, "Olimpia de Gouges – zapomniana HERoni Rewolucji Francuskiej," *Sztuka i Dokumentacja* nr 19 (2018): 97-124.
- ¹¹ The Gallery was founded on the initiative of Wery Morawiew and Robert Sochacki.
- ¹² Orlan, "Referat," *Magazyn Sztuki* nr 9 (1/96) (1996): 19-29.
- ¹³ *Nie patrz prosto w słońce*, 27.06-13.09.2009 (Toruń: CSW w Toruniu, 2009), 14-15. Exhib. cat.
- ¹⁴ Monika Weychert, "Nasz opór codzienny," *Akademia w Mieście* nr 7 (10/2020) (2021): 70-80.

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QUEERING INTERSPECIES IN CRITICAL THEORY AND POLISH PERFORMANCE ART

There are queer climate scientists and environmental advocates, biologists, performance artists, eco-sexuals, radical faeries and environmental educators, who describe feelings of cultural resistance or healing associated with reflecting on or experiencing queer intimacy and interspecies relations. In the queer ecological imagination, new options are emerging through reflection on interspecies kinship. They develop as an opposition against conservative biopolitical appeals to 'nature' and the 'natural' that cast queer bodies and subjectivities as deviant, morally wrong, unnatural and at the same time less human. From this transgressive position, subversively some queer theorists, activists and artists have created personal narratives connecting their human otherness with non-human otherness.¹ Many projects draw attention to queer relations with the more-than-human environment.

In my text I will present briefly two theoretical positions that respond to the framing of non-normative bodies as unnatural by exploring queer interpretations of nature, ecological relationships, and environmental politics from the perspective of the unnatural other. I am inspired by two feminist postcolonial

concepts of interspecies intimacy and eco-erotics by Molenda Le May and Melissa K. Nelson who articulate intimacy as a physical disruption of borders between human and more-than-human in sensory, material and performative terms.

Then I would pose a question whether these contemporary postcolonial feminist literary theories could be related to the Polish male queer performance art from the late 20th century, as a way of reinterpreting and seeing these historical works from a different cultural context, anew. I will discuss naked performances that by definition are closer to the natural state of being.

First I would start with the concept of interspecies intimacy that was developed by Molenda Le May in her analysis of human/nonhuman border crossings in contemporary fiction of queer writers of color.² She considers how the turn towards the non-human as a subject in post-humanist critical cultural studies introduces new frameworks for analyzing human/non-human relations in queer eco-narratives. Writing about interspecies intimacy as a social affective process of crossing, Le May claims, "what binds race, sexuality, and species together is a panic around the capacity of bodies to forge physical intimacies against the regulative taboos

that would keep them separate.” Thus she reads intimacy as a border-crossing phenomenon which reaches far beyond the human and emphasizes the significance of intimacy as a disruptive force. Interspecies intimacies questions racialized and sexualized hierarchy of humanness. She points out how queer writers of colour developed characters against the biopolitical use of animality which debases people of colour and queers as primitive. They do this by allowing their characters to creatively interact with animality and in doing so reimagine what constitutes humanness beyond a cis-hetero-patriarchal set of norms.

The second term that I will use is eco-erotics developed by Melissa K. Nelson in *Getting Dirty: The Eco-Eroticism of Women in Indigenous Oral Literatures*.³ She analyses eco-erotics in indigenous oral storytelling as a pathway to ecological ethics. Nelson records stories of women in eco-erotic, at times explicitly sexual, relationships with the more-than-human beings. These stories she argues, support a native ecological ethic characterized by interspecies vulnerability, kinship and empathy, which is necessary for living in balance with the more-than-human world. These stories were largely lost through forceful introduction of hetero-patriarchal sexuality via Christian missionaries and boarding schools in both Americas. Nelson defines eco-erotics as a type of intimate ecological encounter in which we are taken outside of ourselves by the beauty, or sometimes the horror, of the more than human world. She describes eco-erotic interspecies intimacy in sensory terms, such as when she recounts her pleasure at eating and wallowing in dirt as a child. Contrary to the western colonial perspective associating eroticism with deviance or primitivism, Nelson envisions a pansexual relationship between human and more-than-human that is embraced through these intimate stories. Pansexual means an attraction all forms of being as opposed to the attraction someone hetero-, bi-, or homo- sexual has with their preferred sex(es).

Developed by Le May and Nelson, these moments of intimacy at the border between queer humans and non-human others are the focus of my interpretation of queer male nudity in the

performance art of Krzysztof Jung and Krzysztof Malec, two Polish artists who died in the 1990s and were pioneers of the queer art of masculinity.⁴ This study is part of a bigger research project of tracing homoerotic expression, alternative queer embodiments and polymorphous eroticism in the art of Eastern Europe. Application of new terms of cultural theory such as interspecies intimacy and eco-erotics may offer a potential of new reading of performance art and queer art but also may expose the limits of such new modes of interpretation.

Krzysztof Jung (1951–1998)

Krzysztof Jung performed (with) the naked and eroticized body, both his own and that of others; his actions reveal a fascination with the male body as an aesthetic, sexual and rebellious subject. The visual conventions of the People's Republic of Poland distorted and veiled the male body: full male nudity, considered pornographic, was censored. The artist found in body art the means to explore male nudity but also plural sexuality. In the 1970s, Jung was affiliated with the Warsaw's countercultural Repassage Gallery (1971-1981) – the centre of body art in Poland but also many other countercultural ideas of this period, including ecology.⁵ In this alternative space, he performed a number of events, which raised issues such as the beauty of male body, the amorous relation between people, the deep interrogation of nudity, love and desire.

Since his first actions in 1967, Jung's performances featured naked men and women that tore apart threads, webs of threats, which the artist had woven around them, like a spider. Weaving was a typical feature of his performances. His naked friends and he himself got caught in his webs. In all these actions, weaving a web, staying within it, and tearing it was crucial, especially the experience of the sensual touch of the threads. Bound naked men and sometimes women who liberated themselves from webs in his performances acquire a variety of meanings.⁶ They might be a projection, an enactment of his own craving for the truth, for something which is bodily authentic in the false



1



2

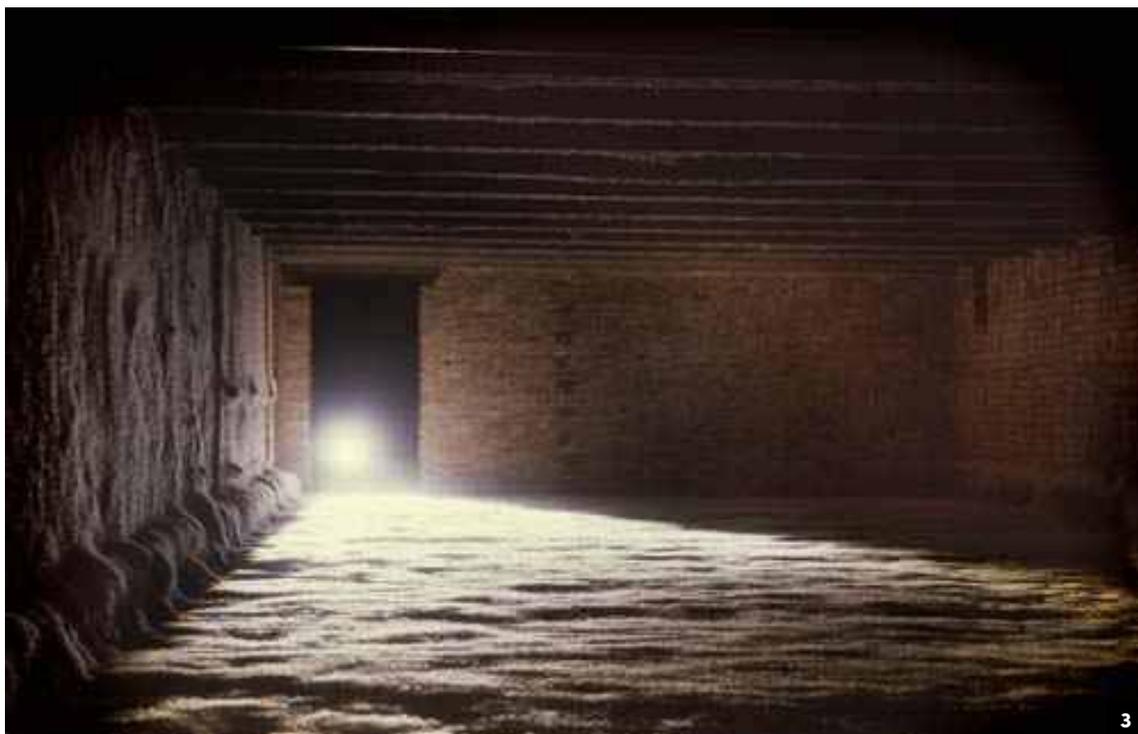
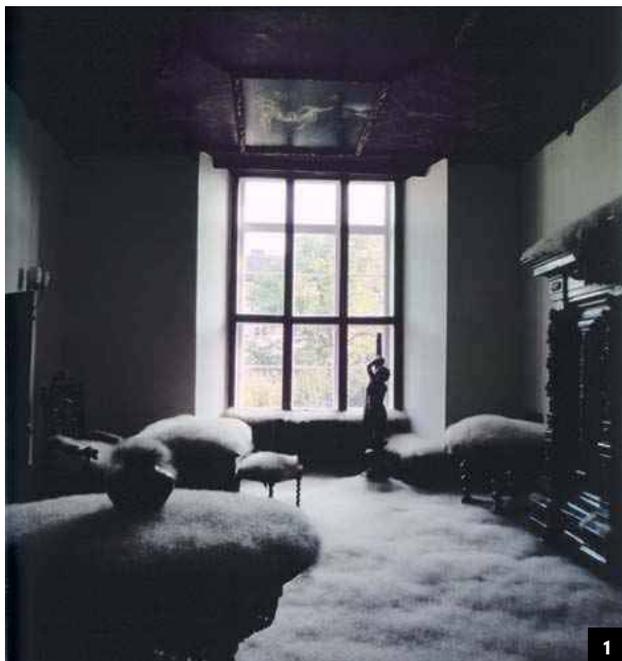


3

1. Krzysztof Jung, *Self-Portrait with a Fly*, 1979, pen on paper, 26,6 x 25,4, copyright Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw

2. Krzysztof Jung, *Love* (to Czesław Furmankiewicz), performance, 1978, copyright Grzegorz Kowalski

3. Krzysztof Jung, *Metamorphosis* (to Wojtek Karpiński), performance, 1978, copyright Grzegorz Kowalski



1. Krzysztof Malec, *Silence*, installation, 1992, copyrights the State Art Gallery in Sopot and Jacek Staniszewski

2. Krzysztof Malec, copyrights the State Art Gallery in Sopot

3. Krzysztof Malec, *Silence*, installation, 1993, copyrights the State Art Gallery in Sopot

official ideological system that stripped people of real human contacts. The actions were seen at the time as striving for deeper physical and spiritual connection and being. The performances were not perceived or conceptualised at the time from a queer point of view, even though his collaborators knew about his sexual identity and that he performed with men whom he loved or desired. But from a contemporary queer perspective his artistic theatre might relate to destroying the strict web of masculinity. His performance art can be interpreted in political (anti-Communist) as well as sexual (non-heteronormative) terms. In his actions, a polymorphous reflection on a relationship between two men and men and women, became a real experience in the Repassage circle of friends, as a part of countercultural experience.

But what interest me in this interpretation is the act of 'nitkowania' (threadings). In different settings – alone or with other performers, naked or undressing during the act – the performers were positioned in a web of thread set up in a gallery space or created as part of durational work. During these performances, various participants were forced to negotiate their movement within the restrictive tactile construction that the naked artists wove around them like a spider spinning its web. In Jung's threading, desire manifests itself through connections temporarily made visible by the web of string, rendering the desiring dynamics between the bodies explicit as they subtly manipulate the tensely stretched thread. There is a definite connection to an action of a spider, the queer artist as a spider (!). Spiders, because of all their weird biology are just so inhuman, that they're incredibly strange. There is an identification with a spider as a radically different and scary non-human biological phenomena. Moreover in many of Jung's early drawings we can see his erotic fascination with insects. He created very detailed, mimetic drawing, depicting insects. The artist had a passion for nature, for bizarre animals, reptiles and insects. He also eroticized these radically other, 'repulsive' species. Especially his drawings from the series *Eros* are dragonflies whose abdomen takes shape of an erect or floppy penis.

The incorporation of the phallic shape into the insect's body suggests an estrangement, as though Jung was pondering the penis as foreign to him and his body, outside of its penetrative function for reproductive purposes only – outside, then, of its placement in a biopolitical arrangement of sex. Such merging of a dragonfly with the phallic shape can be read as an investigation into alternative, beyond-Oedipal conceptualizations of the penis but also a form of interspecies erotic fusion, the sexual unity of the human and nonhuman body.⁷

Jung as Eros-spider, binding the performing naked bodies with the ephemeral ejaculatory material in an insect-like cocoon, proposes new forms of affective or desiring communities involving the human and the animal, including the human as a naked animal, who intersects in the search of deeply authentic and therapeutic sensual connection with the self and the other.

Is then the contemporary idea of interspecies intimacy relevant for such performances that still centered on humans but with rich natural / biological connotations? Le May considered intimacy as a border-crossing phenomenon, a disruptive force to the hierarchy of humanness. Jung's drawings of penis-insects certainly can be interpreted through such frames, but what about his actions of spidery threading of naked people, can we see here the collapse between the human and animal sensory behavior? There are many questions to pose, but Jung's art offers possibilities for posing such themes related to queer interspecies intimacies.

Krzysztof Malec (1965- 2002)

I would like to move from animals to plants: The second artist, Krzysztof Malec, used an unusual plant-based material - 'misty down' to create his atmospheric and soft installations/environments entitled *Silence*. The artist filled and transformed interiors with marsh plant seeds, dematerializing the contours of things. He used down consisting of billions of dandelion seeds or water tendrils, filling various interiors with an almost snow-

white mist. His worked with this natural sculptural material since 1991, the year of his diploma at the Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts Sculpture Faculty. Politically it was the beginning of the first decade of Polish post-Communist democracy, the time of major cultural and social transformations.

In 1992, Krzysztof Malec participated in a group show mysteriously titled *Mystical Perseveration and A Rose*, curated by Ryszard Ziarkiewicz at the State Art Gallery in Sopot. As a part of the exhibition, the office of the director of the Provincial Centre of Culture in the City Town Hall in Gdańsk was magically transformed for three days by the vegetal down covering the interior and the furniture. Filling the rooms with light down blurred material shapes and created an atmosphere of mystery. In Sopot during the same exhibition, the artist dematerialized the basement of the Gallery with misty marsh plant seeds.⁸

His plant-based installations are full of ambiguities, but the title *Silence* remains symptomatic. An unspoken presence in an official interior, silent yet omnipresent, transforming reality, yet beyond verbalization, beyond institutional language. It is metaphorical, but also possibly repulsive – swamp fluff, where meanings are infinitely open. I propose a look at this installation from a queer perspective, trying to read some of its potential. *The Silence* of the title reflects one side of the presence of the issue of queer rights and subjectivity in the official, political/public life of the early 1990s in Poland. Although this topic had a certain media appeal and was exploited in the popular press, it rarely appeared in the language of new emerging democracy in a meaningful way. The installation *Silence* can therefore be interpreted as slipping into a heteronormative public/institutional space closed to the issue of queer rights. Into a space where a full and clear pronouncement was still impossible. In a political sense, the down in Malec's installation can speak of such silence. In his art, however, a psychological experience was more important. Non-heteronormative subjectivity was still a taboo and shame, which forced LGBT+ people to hide, to be silent, to live in silence in the public sphere and often in

the private sphere as well. Thus metaphorically, the queer subjects were like mist on the verge of visibility, yet present. It was not a state of full presence, but its dispersed form, more of an emergence than a being. That is why Malec's misty down installations are so atmospheric, they change interiors as if without touching them. The artist was one of the forerunners of installations as spatial fantasies but he used them to pose a question about the self and otherness about the forms of existence/non-existence.

In his performances Malec was coming out naked from the plant down filled spaces. In the dark photographs from his performance, the artist emerges naked from the plant mist, moves around in it, gets lost, and from time to time materializes. His spoke about the softness of his environments and the sensual experience, the pleasure of being in them. His most-well known naked performance is called *The Birth* (1991) from the workshop for students of sculpture of the Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts in Dłużewo.⁹

This naked performance with plant's seeds can be read as coming out of silence, revealing oneself. It represents being pushed into silence and then gradually breaking it or discovering its meaning and even beauty, hence the sensual softness of plant-based material. And finally, one can read silence as a withdrawal, as a refusal to participate in a hostile public discourse, which one does not accept, but does not give up existing. We see the transition of vegetal mist into flesh, just as his body in the performance's photographs appears from the seminal darkness of the installation, being a part of it. On another note, in the materiality of the seeds of the swamp plants there is also a sexuality of the act and of the natural substance – the seeds of plants. After all, the artist filled the public interiors with seeds, the libidinal material of plant life but also of masculinity. Hence we can read this flora-based tactile works as a reflection on the softening and transforming of male sexuality, dispersing it into a new dimension of eco-erotics of tactile vegetal softness!

I would like to suggest that surprisingly there is a possibility of reading Jung and Malec's art through the interspecies metaphors and theories of the current cultural and ecological

moment. Their art dealt with issues of intimacy and crossed the border between the human and natural world. According to queer eco-feminists, through interspecies intimate practices, participants come to articulate a queer ecological narrative that is based more in interdependence, kinship and change than in categorical belonging. These narratives intertwine queer bodies with non-human bodies and spaces in a mutual process of recovery and change in terms of intimate sensory experiences such as participating, witnessing, listening, and touching. These acts are crucial for performance art. New forms of interdependence and kinship are at the center of Jung's spidery work with naked humans. Eco-materialism and plant based spaces form Malec's investigations of queer visibility/invisibility. At the same time both artists explored alternative embodiments of masculinity, associating it with nature, using biological metaphors or materials.

To finish with, I would like point out that the homophobic ideology and imagination still remind the main political point of reference for queer interspecies projects, especially in countries like Poland. The central issue here is the perception of non-heteronormativity in the homophobic discourse, as on the one hand unnatural (because only heterosexuality is taken as natural), on the other hand, as animalistic - inhuman. One of the absurd arguments against the legalization of same-sex unions is that if we allow them, polygamy and relationships with animals will be next. Paradoxically, homophobic ideology identifies non-heteronormativity as both unnatural and animal at the same time. Queer eco-feminism argue that there is power and transformation in it. In this perspective, queer interspecies art and theory are particularly fertile and creative in producing an alternative discourse from this position of marginalization. Hence interspecies art is thus fundamentally queer! One can only ask whether this discourse is useful for social and political emancipation, or whether it is merely culturally subversive - attractive for the world of art and ideas but without a political force, which we need the most. After all, is it not a coincidence that both Jung and Malec as gay men in late 20th century Central

Europe reached for natural entities particularly degraded - terrifying - spiders, insects and swamp and marshland vegetation, as if locating their art and subjectivity at the bottom of the traditional human hierarchy of values and aesthetics. Let us hope that in the 21st century the power of eco-consciousness and the recent intellectual histories of animal studies and posthumanism, arguing for interspecies as a way to navigate new directions, will transform the traditional, not only nonhuman but also human, hierarchies.

Notes

- ¹ In my approach I am indebted to Arielle Frances Marks thesis on “Queer Interspecies Intimacies,” accessed November 21, 2021, https://archives.evergreen.edu/masterstheses/Accession86-10MES/Thesis_MES_2019_MarksA.pdf.
- ² Megan Molenda Le May, “Bleeding over Species Lines: Writing against Cartographies of the Human in Queer of Color Fiction,” *Configurations* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 1-27.
- ³ Melissa K. Nelson, *Getting Dirty: The Eco-Eroticism of Women in Indigenous Oral Literatures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).
- ⁴ Paweł Leszkowicz, “The Queer Story of Polish Art and Subjectivity,” accessed November 21, 2021, <https://artmargins.com/the-queer-story-of-polish-art-and-subjectivity/>.
- ⁵ Maryla Sitkowska, ed., *Sigma, Galeria, Repassage, Repassage 2, Repassage* (Warszawa: Zachęta National Gallery, 1993), 4-15. Exhib. cat.
- ⁶ For the description of his performances see: Grzegorz Kowalski and Maryla Sitkowska, eds., *Krzysztof Jung (1951-1998)* (Warszawa: Xawery Dunikowski Museum, 2001). Exhib. cat.
- ⁷ Aleksandra Gajowy, “Insects, Threads, and Urinals: Polymorphous Desire Flows in Krzysztof Jung's Work,” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Fall 2020): 1-19.
- ⁸ Danuta Cwirko-Godycka, “Krzysztof Malec – In the Field of Nature,” in *Mystical Perseveration and a Rose* (Sopot: State Gallery of Art, 1992), 30. Exhib. cat.
- ⁹ Dorota Grubba, “Rzeczywista twórczość pustki. O twórczości Krzysztofa Malca (1965-2002),” *Kwartalnik Rzeźby Orońsko* 1-2 (2004): 19.

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PROTOANTHROPOID – COAGULATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Coagulation – the process of combining particles of the dispersed colloid phase into larger aggregates creating a continuous phase with an irregular structure. There is reversible and irreversible coagulation, as well as spontaneous and forced. As a result of coagulation, the phenomenon of gelling, formation of pastes and solids, sedimentation or covering the surface of the mixture with a layer of dispersed phase may occur;

Anthropoid – an English term for a representative of the ape's infrade;

Protology – a branch of dogmatic theology dealing with the issues of the beginning of the existence of the world and man. The name of this field is derived by analogy with eschatology dealing with the ultimate things.¹

In this article, I would like to refer to a few problems that arise in the context of the Festival of Naked Forms and the trans-species politics. Here we have the problem of understanding the phenomenon of nudity, the problem of the existence of form, the problem of the specificity of the human constitution in the context of transspecies politics.

I

The problem of nudity

The first association in the subject of nudity is not an act in representational painting, not body art, but publications in the field of anthropology. «»Something« arose because conditions allow it.»²

Humans, one of the primates, are distinguished by the absence of hair on most of their body surfaces.³ For 6 million years of separate evolution, humans and chimpanzees have accumulated about 20 million genetic mutations. This is a 1% difference in the structure of the DNA of the two species. We are the product of evolution that goes back to the origins of life on earth.⁴

Atoms of iron arose as a product of supernovae. And the Fe particle – the hemoglobin particle – a single iron atom, is the 'heart of the heart' of the human blood system, which enables oxygen exchange in the body. Three billion years ago, there was no oxygen on earth. It was only over time that cyanobacteria / appeared – and

photosynthesis took place. The carbon dioxide turned into oxygen created the atmosphere. 600 million years ago, the ozone layer was formed and multicellular organisms, to which we humans are also included, could develop. There was a Cambrian explosion, the plants ‘came out’ onto the land. These cyanobacteria are now chloroplasts in plants. They enable photosynthesis, which enables the storage of energy in plants, muscles, etc., and is a condition for metabolism and energy in the life processes of complex organisms.⁵

The naked body is still present in our lives (under clothes), but our thoughts can be somewhere else, penetrating the worlds of thoughts, abstractions and concepts. According to the cognitive scientist Joshua Bach:

The environment and the body can also be mental. Even when carrying out mathematical operations, you must see their results and thus come to the concept of your own agency and type of intelligence. We are distinguished by the ability to conceptualize (as an agent embedded in the Universe. (...)) Perception is that part of the mind that integrates information in a non-linguistic (conceptual) way – it runs in many areas in an irreducible way – in a way we don’t know yet.⁶

The problem of gaining feedback is related to the action but also the process of organizing a performative situation – especially in the reality of the post-art world. The interpretative horizon is located in the area of concepts related to the functioning of cognitive phenomena and the creation of a consensus towards artistic propositions.

It is a problem of creating practical tools through which this information can be obtained and at the same time embodied in a way. The sense and importance of aesthetics associated with artistic activity has also evolved in favour of an approach that, in the general current of the new humanities science, emphasizes the primacy

of performative experience.⁷ The approaches can be different; it does not necessarily mean biotechnological coupling, because the illusion of neutrality is brought about by the informational and descriptive research process itself and in fact can also be perceived as an element of the evaluation system, backed by *a priori* assumptions. This problem also applies to the exact sciences: mathematics, physics. Axioms, assumptions are something that will not be explained. Talking about axioms requires the creation of a metalanguage that enables operating with concepts. These concepts in turn justify and ‘explain’ a new level of reference.

In this context, it is worth to realize that objectively there is no such thing as a naked body. Like the concepts of subject, art and other concepts, it is a theoretical construct created for the model of the world that we use in social life.

The ‘naked body’ consists of two concepts that exist in the mental space: the concept of the body and the concept of nudity.

As Bach points out:

From the perspective of a awareness of ‘here and now’ – the physical universe does not exist ‘here and now’. And it can’t be, because we often construct conscious experience after fact or by anticipation. This means that the physical ‘here and now’ is blurred. (...) So basically the content of our consciousness depends on axioms which creates a model useful to control the environment but not depends on that, what is physically possible and what is physically happening.⁸

The use of the concepts of body and nudity is an example of how, by means of the concepts, ‘we cope’ with the enormity of information that is available in the process of experiencing life. This kind of simplifications becomes routine over time and tends to be self-evident. As social beings, we share certain common ideas. This also applies to how we perceive our own body or a body that belongs to someone else. According to Antonio Damasio:

(...) each person has a complicated neural surrogate of his own organism (the image of the body that exists in the mind) to which sensory information is directed. When we talk about ourselves, it is more than a mental organization which led our needs to regulating process of life (homeostasis). It also includes our past and anticipation, ideas about our future. It is a factor complex that culminates in the phenomenon of personality and identity.⁹

According to Damasio, it is a complex process based on the autobiographic self mode that integrates the proto-self and core-self into a more powerful narration – the life story from which we generate most of the things endearing to our humanity.

Proto-self is the taste of being, the awareness that the living body is your organism through which you experience pleasure and pain – and it is re-represented at the level of the cerebral cortex. (...) Every thing you hear and see, the process that gave rise to an idea, the emotional component that influenced your feelings, the relationship with the object – in this relationship you establish yourself as a representation in the *core-self*.¹⁰

The body may be covered or exposed. But exposed does not mean naked. The constitution of the state of nudity is already a cultural problem – it is a problem of cognitive phenomena, mental representations. This means that the problem of nudity is in fact part of a larger problem of self-awareness and the individual's relationship to the environment. Cultural effects change our genes; the immune system constantly recognizes what is one's 'own' and what is not; the mind struggles to organize the sensory stimuli and give them some meaning. The social level is generated from multiple autobiographical self (although it has been observed that groups of bacteria can also behave socially). How we perceive the body and nudity largely depends on the 'functional framework' for the manifestation of consciousness

(will) in the environment.¹¹ These are concepts that are autonomous as such themselves. Gender can be both bodily and psychological importance. Self-understanding and identifications has influence to the choice the social roles.¹²

Again Bach:

We discover our body through the motor aspect. We discover the architecture of control, and that there is a relationship between certain states of the environment and intentional states and the body, which is a tool for translating intentional states into changes in the environment. This means controlling the hierarchy of intentions, their formation: motivations and needs. (...) We would not discover our body apart from volitional states and the environment in the absence of the body.¹³

Form and exposure

The body can be alive and it can be dead. In both cases we can talk about some form. The animate body seems to be self-steering in accordance with the intentions of the subject – as long as the individual is not in a dream state, his body is the vehicle and instrument of conscious, volitional and intentional acts. The body and mind need sleep, regeneration – the state of nudity has to be realized in awareness. During sleep, we lose touch with our senses and withdraw from this world, as it were. A dead body is immobile, and unless it is preserved, the process of disintegration will take place.¹⁴ Animated bodies interact within the social system.¹⁵

What is the essence of the act of exposure?

We can assume that the concept of nudity and the state of feeling naked is an expression of the awareness that something (in this case the human body) is being observed and that this

observation is made in a specific context. It can have an emotional, sexual or intimate signature. Above all, it is realizing that we are participating in a cultural process by which we are perceived by others and ourselves as naked. We are aware that others look at the body which is not so much devoid of a covering, a protective barrier – but which takes on the dimension of nudity, because the cultural context forces (or allows – depending on the adopted interpretative perspective) the perception of something – in this case the body – as naked.¹⁶

The awareness that we are perceived in the bodily aspect as ‘naked’ is the recognition and identification of the difference – in other words, it is the capture of information saturated with a specific context.¹⁷ The tone may vary depending on the context – but its essence is a certain state of consciousness achieved in relation to a given cultural matrix.

Since it is the cultural matrix that influences our sense of nudity, it means that the problem of being exposed may not only concern material, bodily forms – having a physical structure, but also forms of social relations and relations as well as cultural necessities.

Therefore, the question arises whether we can treat a given problem (e.g. a social one) as a form? Can the problem be a form?

In Polish we say “to formulate a problem.” We are also talking about “exposing a problem.” And the problem may have an intellectual, abstract dimension and character. It may be, for example, the problem of the existence of artificial intelligence or the problem of understanding one’s own ignorance.

The current state of knowledge about the perception of reality indicates that we do not perceive the world directly. The picture of the world is constructed only in the brain. Mental representations that arise in the mind are part of the process of acquiring experience, the ability to predict, recognize and interpret sensual data that concern only a fragment of reality. Actually we have access to various theories of consciousness, of which my particular interest was aroused by the works of Donald Hoffman, Joshua Bach, and Dan Dennett.

It should be noted that the application of the concept of consciousness is ambiguous and functions differently in different theories of consciousness. Starting with the works of Gottfried W. Leibniz and Artur Schopenhauer.¹⁸ For example, Monism, understood as a theory, presupposes that consciousness comes first. Conception postulates the primacy of consciousness and not the primacy of matter (the role of the observer in physics); Panpsychism – the doctrine of space–time reality assumes that consciousness is inseparable from matter as the background of the universe, therefore it must be an intrinsic property of matter itself. For Donald Hoffman, consciousness is the first thing – time and space emerge emergently (space–time is not fundamental). The interface theory of perception is based on the so–called Bayesian’s decision theories and Andrey Markovian’s models of perception and dynamics of consciousness. It is a so–called dynamic system of conscious agents; For Douglas Hofstetter, consciousness creates self–referential systems that can operate with logical reference loops. For Bach, awareness is the expression of mindfulness, but the mind is the whole containing awareness.¹⁹

II

Trans–Species Politics

/ Consciousness Coagulation

Currently, there is a geopolitical, technological, social, behavioral, commercial, technological, media and space revolution taking place in the world; in general – a broadly understood change in the model of societies. Dematerialisation of information, new competences, shaping new habits based on previously unknown and now widely available technologies. Status, technological and structural conditions have an impact on the development of various civilization models (management and distribution of goods). The modernization effort and the pragmatism of competitiveness are related to the ability to create and implement cultural models.

From Bruno Latour's *Nature politics*²⁰ expressed in posthumanist thought up to transhumanism, we learn about a number of issues related to the trans-species problem. Obviously, this problem has been present since the dawn of time. Microscopic organisms and bacterial flora make up a sizeable set that forms the image of a complex multicellular entity – such as a human being. Many diseases are also caused by microorganisms, viruses and complex parasites that sometimes live with us throughout our lives.

In order to assimilate food in the form of, for example, meat, there must be basic DNA compatibility between the predator and the prey. Transplantation of replacement animal organs into the human body in the 20th century began a new era in understanding the relationship between genetics and organism functionality.

Aesthetics of accessibility

Differentiation takes place at the level of individual perception, therefore, interesting are the situations where individuals combine into larger teams during the undertaken action, when they are focusing on a specific goal which formats the manner and choice of means of such action. The aesthetics of accessibility²¹ is therefore a problem primarily of awareness of using conceptual models of social imagination, it is a problem of what the world around us really is, what features of the environment we bring out through the acts of perception and with whom and how we decide to communicate.

Currently, due to technological progress, we better understand the problem of hybridization, cyborgization, the relationship of the human body with various types of machines, artificial intelligence, and the environment of high technology. According to Damasio:

Machines can have a proto self and something like core-self – but they don't have bodies – so their primal feelings will be of a different kind. Each of the billions of cells that make up our body has its own

genome, its cycle of life, disease and death. This is not in the robot.²²

Technological progress does not solve problems related to the functioning of consciousness (the theory of consciousness) and issues such as the sense of intimacy, the concept of self-agency, free will, but also the problem of compulsions, for example physiological or psychological compulsions.

So when we consider the problem of trans-speciesism, one should ask whether it is only about improving the physical body or transhumanist cyborgization. It could be used for the efficiency and control of, for example, the work of the brain. (Memory prostheses such as smartphones are already part of our everyday life).

We are different from the computer by understanding. Man not only executes the program but understands its meaning. On the other hand, AI has a greater ability to process enormous amounts of data instantly. Digital psychography, persuasion management, and behavioral analysis are used extensively. Technologies such as the DLN network use photos of people to assess personality, intellectual capacity and sexual preferences. Can AI artificial intelligence be treated as a separate species?

Meanwhile, there is a 'structural' problem of how we humans perceive the world and how we relate to it – in a psychological sense – and with what models of reality we are able to operate?

Ethics is about negotiating between contexts, but all are dictated by the necessity to make choices (for example, the welfare of one's own children or the welfare of the planet Earth's ecology). Some of the 'choices' are the legacy of evolution, embedded in our interactions with society. A thesis could be put forward: that life is a choice between less evil and greater evil.

The answer to this problem may depend on the system, for example, the system of social values with which the individual identifies or the system of technological improvement with which the individual is connected, e.g. connected with the Internet machine, computer).

Various worldview points of reference are possible and available: ego-; ethno-; world-centric; finally cosmocentric.²³ They are therefore

the domains of the value world. Even the perception of the human body depends on what concept of time we use in a given culture. It depends on the adopted model of reality whether the set goals are long-term – and there is a postponement of gratification, refraining from immediate actions or short-term – then more instinctive. The cyclical time of hunting and harvesting communities and later coupled with the agrarian economy is being replaced by the next generation of the race of the era of post-industrial civilizations.

Each form of time allows for a specific transcendence of the limitations of the body, but on the other hand, with the increasing complexity, the problem of denial (in the psychoanalytical sense) and losing contact with the body, as well as compulsive accentuation of the sense of corporeality, grows.²⁴ Hiding certain aspects of corporeality and character of personality may be useful due to the need for complex social interactions understood as a higher-order good.

The costs of maintaining a complex social structure and a network of complex multi-dimensional relationships are very demanding. Stress, the psychological pressure of information violence, and the flood of information and knowledge make the body and psyche an object of sensory deprivation.

The trans-species body of the god – Protoanthropoid

The problem of the existence of hybrids is discussed in the new humanities mainly in the context of biotechnology.²⁵ However, the idea of transspecies life has been present in culture for a long time.

In our culture, for centuries, people believed in demonic or angelic beings with whom one could interact physically and beget offspring (succubus, incubes, nymphs, huldas, hybrids, giants, etc.). Such beliefs were an integral part of the worldview. Let's also mention vampires and the transformation into a werewolf, or the modern version of transformation into a bloodthirsty zombie.

Perhaps the most important idea was (is) the belief in the possibility of communing with divine beings. And again in our cultural circle it is enough to recall the sacrament of the Eucharist present in Christianity – eating the body and blood of the Savior, a divine being.

So here we have an existential problem as well as the problem of the desire for sanctification, improvement, transformation.

So, on the one hand, flesh, and on the other hand, the body of a god. Likewise: decay / sanctification.

Thus, we touch upon another important aspect of the problem of transspecies.

What can this transspecificity mean for us?

There are other intelligent life forms on earth. “Birds are able to plan future behavior by imagining invisible objects and making inferences about cause-and-effect relationships between observed events.”²⁶ However, the human ability to think abstractly is very specific. Therefore, it is worth considering what we expect from biotechnology.²⁷ We probably mean medical, health and fitness benefits, such as resistance to diseases, increased efficiency, perhaps better adaptation to the conditions of being in outer space, and maybe the exchange of genetic material with aliens from other solar systems?

It has been assumed that in art trans-genre is crossing the boundaries of genres, art and life. In everyday life, these are virtual game worlds, Avatars, sims, the problem of immersion. It is a phenomenon of self-organization of the internet, but also of securing structures against hacker attacks.²⁸

We may also not have the full area of today – perhaps we only provide data for processing in an artificial intelligence matrix.²⁹ Democracy becomes functionally redundant when algorithms are more efficient than the ‘supercomputer’ of the old days – ‘democracy and free market.’ Centralized information processing is already

more effective and rational (there are no other rationalities) and technological supremacy gives advantages.³⁰

Therefore, it is worth asking about the psychological and identity dimension of this problem and, at the same time, about the possible scope of transformation of the human cognitive system.

This again leads to questions about the nature of consciousness, about states of higher emergence, about experiences of a spiritual nature, models of reality, and ways of shaping the efficient will of an intelligent agent. We have, for example, the problem of free will, self-awareness, compulsion or compulsion that affect human behavior. "To feel any meaning, awareness is essential – to feel it. Feeling means you need something and you are aware of it, but most activities in the brain are unconscious. The conscious part is information only given when you need to know, because consciousness is costly to the brain and it is slower than unconscious decisions, it can only do one thing at a time. So consciousness exists for special purposes. You can talk about the existence of 'mood modules': about the positive or negative aspects of the feeling."³¹

In the context above, "turning back to the naked body" could be considered a vivid memory of a somewhat mundane reality, but one accessible to our senses. A return to reality or a 'approximation' that 'naturally' suits us as organisms that have been evolving for millions of years on planet earth. Focusing on the experiences of the body, understanding how it functions in the motor aspect, but also as the interface of homeostasis (states of spirit, mind, emotions and feelings) – and seems to be healing. Again, however, one has to ask about the state of knowledge. It is impossible to ignore the awareness that in some sense this bodily experience – it would seem real – can be an illusion. An illusion, useful in the process of survival and species reproduction, but not in the process of understanding and seeing the nature of reality.³²

The thought process allows us to become aware of these limitations and also to consider other variants of reality. Perhaps we will look

at the human body in a way that is currently unavailable to us. The concepts developed so far in the esoteric dimension are intriguing, as they allow us to view the human body as an emanation of bodies of a more subtle nature, closely coupled with it. This brings us to consider the energetic nature of reality / theory of consciousness. Perhaps, also through the human body, we will be able to reach layers of energy (consciousness) that are indescribable in a linguistic way. Maybe we will find a new level of interpretation and the efficiency of "being in the world."

Notes

- ¹ Source: „Coagulation,” Wikipedia entry, <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koagulacja>; „Anthropoid,” Wikipedia entry, <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropoid>; „Protology,” Wikipedia entry, <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protologia>. All translations by Marek Rogulski.
- ² Brian Greene, “Why is our universe fine-tuned for life?,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf7BXwVeyWw>.
- ³ Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape* (London: Jonathan Doyle, Ltd, 1974).
- ⁴ “The oldest organism that we can reproduce well by analyzing the genes of modern cells is the last universal common ancestor, that is, the last common ancestor of all terrestrial organisms, called LUCA. It is a very complex cell - it had genetic material in the form of RNA and DNA.” Quoted from: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_%C5%BCycia_na_Ziemi.
- ⁵ Tom Chi, *Everything is Connected - Here's How*, TEDxTaipei, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPh3c8Sa37M>.
- ⁶ Joscha Bach, “Can only a simulation be aware of ...?” quoted from: *Joscha Bach on Intelligence, Consciousness, the Nature of Time, and Existence*, <https://youtu.be/3MNBxfmfmI>.
- ⁷ Irena Chawrińska, *Hybrids and hybrids from the border of literature and visual arts*, <https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/19628/I.Chawrińska%20Hybrydy%20i%20hybrydyczności.pdf?sequence=1>.
- ⁸ Joscha Bach, *Can only a simulation be aware of ...?* quoted from: *Joscha Bach on Intelligence, Consciousness, the Nature of Time, and Existence*; <https://youtu.be/3MNBxfmfmI>
- ⁹ Antonio Damasio, *The brain is a servant of the body - Antonio Damasio about feelings as the origin of brain*, quoted from: <https://youtu.be/LS-mNJ5Zilg>.
- ¹⁰ Ibidem.
- ¹¹ Artur Schopenhauer, *Świat jako wola i przedstawienie*, quoted from: <https://docer.pl/doc/s10vosn>.
- ¹² Nature is very complex because information is encoded multiple times. We humans try to read its information as ‘something’ (find meaning) but it is only a ‘micro layer’ of reality. For example, amino acids and nucleotides existed in meteors billions of years ago, but on earth they found the conditions for complex life forms to arise from them. The given piece of information means ‘something’, but thousands of other possible readings and “metabolic reactions” are possible. Both in the literal sense and in the interpretative process.
- ¹³ Bach, *Joscha Bach on Intelligence, Consciousness, the Nature of Time, and Existence*; <https://youtu.be/3MNBxfmfmI>.
- ¹⁴ According to Wikipedia, definitions of “Life” can be classified according to the level: “highest - defining life as a global phenomenon, lower - defining a living individual; and the lowest - the distinction between a living and dead unit.” One can also speak of “a continuum of self-sustaining information for life as a phenomenon, as a continuum of self-sustaining information for a living organism, and a functional, separate element of a continuum of self-sustaining information to distinguish between life and death.” Source: entry “Life,” Wikipedia.
- ¹⁵ See: Jonathan Turner, *Struktura teorii socjologicznej = The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Warszawa: PWN, 2004).
- ¹⁶ In some cultures the naked body is visible every day, in others its discovery is a social taboo. Also in European culture (for example due to winter cold) we assume by default that it is obvious (or should be) a situation in which it is largely hidden.
- ¹⁷ As a digression, let us add that nudity does not have to be tantamount to a humanistic return to nature, as a revival of contact with one’s own sensuality, body language and sexuality; Nudity can also be asexual, and it can also be perceived as an element of objectification, stripping from human dignity, an example of which is the treatment of prisoners or prisoners of war. Nudity is then the exposure of a defenseless victim, whose intimate areas of the body are exposed to humiliate the individual. The meaning of this behavior is that in conditions of stress, discomfort and external violence, showing an individual as naked, without covering is a demonstration of depriving this individual of the right to decide about himself. In addition, nudity then exposes sensitive areas of the body and exposes the body to ill-treatment, torture, harsh living conditions, heat or cold, injury and finally death. The naked body has nothing to hide behind.
- ¹⁸ See: Schopenhauer, *Świat jako wola i przedstawienie*.
- ¹⁹ Most physicists are cautious about the concept of the ‘jump’ from space-time straight to consciousness as fundamental. They are more likely to use concepts such as quantum bits. In my 2015 diagrams for the *Beyond Postmodern* project, I used the concept of consciousness as the environmental background of the proposed map of interpretations of art phenomena.
- ²⁰ Bruno Latour, *Polityka natury = Politics of Nature. Science enters democracy* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2009).
- ²¹ The Aesthetics of accessibility is a concept proposed by me for the exhibition prepared together with Mateusz Pęk and Paulina Grosz at Galeria XXI, Warszawa.
- ²² Damasio, *The brain is a servant of the body - Antonio Damasio about feelings as the origin of brain*.
- ²³ Ken Wilber, *Eksploracja świadomości = Explosion of consciousness* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Abraxas, 1997); Marek Rogulski, projekt *Poza Postmodernizm*.
- ²⁴ The porn industry functions as an industrial structure based on the principle of specialized lust.
- ²⁵ Chawrińska, *Hybrids and hybrids from the border of literature and visual arts*.
- ²⁶ Omur Gunlurkinj, “The astonishing world of the birds brains,” *Scientific American*, no. 2 (February 2020): 51. Polish edition published by Prószyński Media Sp. z o o., Warszawa.

²⁷ "With the latest technological advances in which we can 'read' and 'write' DNA, scientists are trying to apply this ancient molecule to gathering new kinds of information." - use as a hard disk - although reading takes time – sequencing. DNA barcoding is currently used to radically accelerate the pace of research in areas such as chemical engineering, materials science, nanotechnology," Sang Yup Lee, "DNA as a data carrier," *Scientific American* no. 1 (January 2020): 32. Polish edition published by Prószyński Media Sp. z o o., Warszawa.

²⁸ Thomas A. Campbell, Skylar Tibbils and Banning Garreit, "Programmable world," *Scientific American* no. 12 (December 2014). Polish edition published by Prószyński Media Sp. z o o., Warszawa.

²⁹ Sophie Bushwick, "Artificial intelligence systems already allow drones to distinguish between the living and the dead," *Scientific American* no. 3 (March 2020): 10. Polish edition published by Prószyński Media Sp. z o o., Warszawa.

³⁰ Andrzej Zybortowicz, *Recursive self - improvement – AI – samozwrotne samodoskonalenie*, Salon Dyskusyjny NK: Cyfryzacja – główny obszar rywalizacji geopolitycznej? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoOyLr8ytao>.

³¹ Bjorn Grinde, *Why evolution invented consciousness (and how to make the most of it)*, TEDxLS, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUXsOgXjqUs>.

³² Donald Hoffman quoted from: Michael Shermer with Dr. Donald Hoffman, *The Case Against Reality*, SCIENCE SALON # 78, <https://youtu.be/vfMCn42RRfw>.

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WHO ARE THE CZECH NUDES?

The person who motivated me to write my conference contribution was Vladimír Havlík, a Czech artist often performing at the FNAF. He said that the Festival of Naked Forms is the one first bringing nakedness into the Czech visual art.

It would be very bizarre and misleading to say that the Czech scene found courage to work with nakedness in art only after 2015 when FNAF was founded. The Czech Republic, especially for its Polish neighbours, has a reputation as a very liberal and open society, whether this liberalism is explained by its atheism, its disinterest in public affairs or the absurd and stupid behaviour in the style of Švejk.

Thinking a little bit about these provocative questions, I considered our history from the view of creative or actual work with nakedness and I found a few historic examples which in fact – although anecdotally – curb our imagination of Czechia as a large-minded paradise.

Who were the first world famous Czech naked ones? We are not going to look for them at the nudist beaches but in the centre of the religious reformational movement at the beginning of the 15th century. These were Adamites, a sect that was part of the radical movement of the Hussites. Nakedness was one of the most visible outer

features of this chiliastic religious group, who was first banished from the revolutionary city of Tábor by the political and military leader of the Hussites' movement Jan Žižka, and later, in 1421, slaughtered to the last man in their refuge on an island in the river of Nežárka in Southern Bohemia.

The nudity of the Adamites originated in their conviction that the Descent of the Holy Spirit had already happened, and they lived in the Kingdom of God. Their island became a depiction of Paradise and their nudity related to the nudity of Adam before he succumbed to the Temptation. The Adamites believed that if man is as naked as Adam, he rules over the elements and animals just like Adam. This heretic haughtiness, which was symbolised in the nudity and followed by negative phenomena resulting from the belief in being the chosen ones (adultery, murders and thievery) was so provocative that it justified Žižka's cruel raid.

The Adamites' tradition has experienced varying explication in the course of time. What Catholic authors considered absolute heresy, the Protestants cleared, highlighting the innovative approach to the Eucharist. The Adamites are beloved by the Marxist historians who see them



František Ženíšek, *Záhada adamitů - Adamiti*, 1903, oil on canvas, 265 x 464,5 cm, photo © National Gallery Prague 2022

as avant-garde in their fight for a classless society. Some considered them as sinful fornicators, others for an example of sexual purity, as they wrongly interpreted their teachings of children being born without sin and pain.¹

Although the nudity itself was not the reason why the Hussites' slaughtered their fellow-believers, it became the most specific sign of their religious ecstatic extravagance and in its uncontrollability was a threat for any system.

We can say that the trauma of non-acceptance suffered by the Czech nudes through the slaughtering of the Adamites lasted in the Czech culture until the 1990s. There is not another mention of an organized group that exposed itself *en masse*, except for the end of 1960s with the onset of nudists and naturists. Just like the heretic influences from the 14th and 15th centuries, the spirit of nudism came here from the West, especially from Germany. Some parallels can be seen between the historical heretic movements and the ideology of the *Freikörperkultur* which is based on naturism. The men and women who wanted to put aside covering textile elements while bathing travelled to nudist beaches on the Baltic coast of the German Democratic Republic, to Hungary or Poland.

Czechoslovakia was the last country of the Eastern Block to allow legal nudist beaches in 1983, when it stopped hunting nudists for being naked. Nudists then didn't have to take complicated measures to find hidden places away from prying eyes. An example of such place is the deep quarry of Velká Amerika in the Bohemian Karst, where nudists had their private paradises just like the Adamites. Unlike the Adamites, in the end, the Czech nudists were accepted by the political regime and majority of the society.

The Adamites and nudists have in common, although to a very different degree, the explication of nudity as a specific spiritual element. A naked person in their point of view demonstrates a connection with a higher power, be it God or simply nature and spontaneity. The long tradition of suppressing of public nudity from the point of dominant or totalitarian institutions relates to the political nature of the gesture of nudity. In totalitarian regimes any public nudity, however tiny, was understood as a political gesture of freedom, as a ghost of the uncontrolled and uncontrollable body.²

Since I am convinced of the "political nature of nudity," this brings me to another stop in history. I want to investigate if the

Czech underground worked with nudity, if they ever tried to use its rebellious capacity. And to my – not so strong – surprise I found that the subversive authors didn't raise the flag of nudity. In the half-legal visual art, the nudity of the author appears only very rarely (Tomáš Ruller). Milan Knížák doesn't take his clothes off in his radical *Walks*, Soňa Švecová does this instead of him at the *Second Manifestation of Actual Art* (2. Manifestace aktuálního umění) and only into her leotard.³ In the Czech tradition of body action art, it is the male body that appears (Jan Mlčoch, Petr Štembera), but this is mainly as an existential gesture and in a situation that ignores nudity. Some rebellious capacity of the nakedness can be seen in spontaneous nakedness of some artists, e.g. Martin Magor Jirous or Václav Stratil, where this was present at parties, openings and social events.

What I wonder about is that Czech female artists didn't work with nudity. The visual language and essentialist aesthetics of the second wave of feminism called for this. The questions of woman and the body are met by Czech female artists only by detour and via historic connotations and aestheticizing land art, e.g. the sculptor and painter Zorka Ságlová. While looking for their own art territory, the female artists turned most often inside, into their emotional world. Their works then were fragile and autobiographic, as we can see mainly with Eva Kmentová or Adriena Šimotová.

I couldn't find any female representatives in the exhibition *Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s* (Feministická avantgarda 70. let), which was aimed at innovative approaches to work with female corporality including nudity.⁴

The Czech Republic in the 1990s, like other countries whose regime was freed from totalitarianism in the late 1980s, opened its public space widely to nudity. At first sight, it might seem that we had finally reached the relaxed liberal approach. The flood of (female) nudity was enormous, but oriented very narrowly. It almost entirely aimed at the fields of commercial image, popular entertainment, and pornography. The Czech streets looked like the 1970s in the West, mainly in the USA's era of porn chic, when the

mainstream entertainment was pervaded by the pornographic industry.⁵ This boom of nudity did not mean that the body was free, that we could now embrace tolerance and self-acceptance, this was merely a huge publicizing of power or erotic and sexist images. Public space was attacked by large-scale sexist billboards and a torrent of pornographic magazines in newsstands. Nudity was everywhere, one couldn't miss it, but this nudity was stereotypical and too much connected to the criminal economic milieu. The fact that not every picture of a naked breast is proof of liberality and modernity of our society, had yet to be slowly learned. Beth Lazroe, American photographer tried to open the eyes of the Czech public, when she only in 2005 had a photo exhibition *As a slap* (Jako facka) where she documented the nakedness of the sexist atmosphere of Czech streets and cities.⁶

From this point of view, we can also interpret the art production of Czech female and male artists at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the millennium that related to body, nudity, and sexuality (including my own work). In most cases, the starting point of the inspiration of these works was not intimate experiences, a need to express one's approach or an aesthetical interest in the body. Mostly, it was a work inspired by porn industry – whether the artist approached this in the sense of parody or critically. An example of how much the area of intimate and body art was and still is influenced by the pornographic surrounding is the installation of the exhibition *Sexism?* (Sexismus?) in the Václav Špála Gallery in 2008. The curator stylized the gallery as an erotic club including boxes - and it was similar in many other exhibition projects.⁷

The mentioned set of historical moments speaking of the Czech (non)relationship towards nudity says, that Vladimír Havlík and his statement from the introduction of my text is true. It is possible that FNAF is the first really focused act to work with the art of nudity. FNAF is a platform that doesn't want just to show the foreign and Czech performative work involving nakedness. This platform wants to show, on the ground of many examples, information and sharing, that work with nudity has myriads of

forms and contents. The latent political nature of the work with nudity can be delivered by female and male artists in various forms – appellative, kind, or very aesthetic ones. The festival is trying to make this profusion clearer with help of various tools. One of them is organizing other sections besides the art performance, as in the organization of the theoretical conference, the Eskort section, which is oriented at commercial performance or even a fashion section – FNAF fashion. The thematic orientation of each year shows nudity as an integral part of other social streams, such as gender issue, ageism or environmental problems.

I hope that the festival supports Czech female and male artists in a non-violent way to find a positive relation to work with nudity and to try to conduct this work in the safe surrounding of the festival.

Notes

- ¹ Jakub Jiří Jukl, *Adamité, historie a vyhubení českých naháčů* (Praha: Dokořán, 2014).
- ² Zdenka Badovinac, ed., *Body and the East. From the 1960s to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).
- ³ Pavlína Morganová, *Akční umění* (Praha: Nakladatelství J. Vacl, 2010).
- ⁴ Gabriele Schor, ed., *Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s* (Vienna: Prestel, 2016).
- ⁵ Brian McNair, *Striptease Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002).
- ⁶ Beth Lazroe, „Jako facka: vizuální útok v pražských ulicích, regionální dimenze a mezinárodní platnost pražského projektu.“ *Gender, rovné příležitosti a výzkum* 8, 1 (2007): 52-55.
- ⁷ Lenka Borovičková, „Nahota, sexualita a pornografie jako kurátorský projekt“ [Nudity, sexuality and pornography as a curator project], MA thesis, FF MU, Brno, 2012.

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DOCUMENTATION

FNAF EXPORT GDANSK 2021

Theoria cum Praxi of Performance Art 2021

FNAF Export Gdańsk

Performance art festival & conference

Łukasz Guzek: curatorial statement

The project Theoria cum Praxi of Performance Art 2021 has been taking place at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk every year since 2018. Its aim is to present and engage in theoretical reflection on vital issues in contemporary art, especially various forms of performance art and all activities belonging to the general category of performativity.

The project in 2021 is carried out in cooperation with FNAF in Prague and includes lectures on body art in Czech and Polish art, presentation of performance art works by artists from the Czech Republic and Gdansk, and a workshop conducted by Lenka Klodová according to her didactic method.

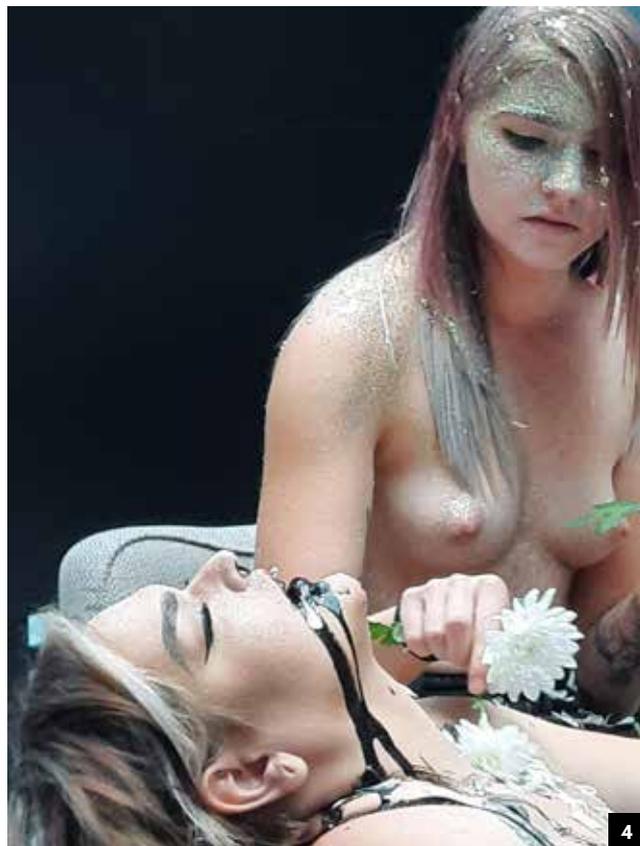
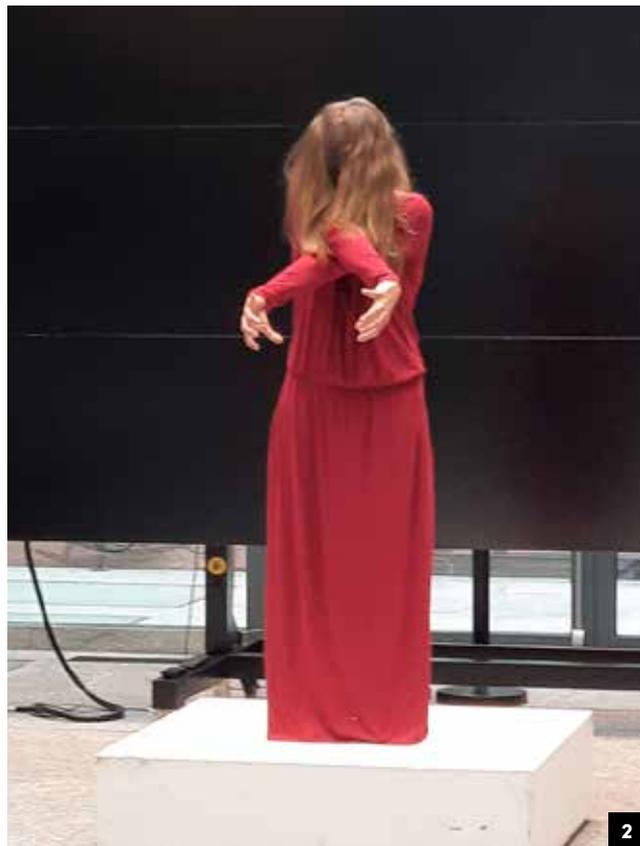
Lenka Klodová: *Multispecies nakedness* (curatorial statement)

For the edition of the festival for 2021, we were inspired by the situation that brought the philosopher Jacques Derrida towards writing the essay *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2006). The philosopher is standing naked in front of his cat and thinking about his feelings, about his shame he feels standing there and about the possible or impossible nakedness of his cat. He feels ashamed, but he is not clear whether he feels ashamed for his exposed nakedness or for his realization that he is naked and ashamed, that this nakedness exists for him. To be naked without the knowledge of nakedness means not to be naked. As the animal is naked without existing in nakedness, it doesn't feel or see itself as naked. The animal is non-naked, as it is naked; for the human nakedness exists because he is not naked. According to Derrida, the concept is that what differentiates the animals from man in the last point is the fact, that they are naked without knowing it. The awareness of being naked is the last shield of the anthropocentric perspective.

The multispecies anthropology that doesn't consider the borders between every species of animate and inanimate nature as impervious does not require man to renounce clothes but does not consider dressedness as a "basic" human quality. Oleg Kulik in his *Family of the Future* is as naked – or naturally non-naked – as his dog partner. The genre of performance is ideal for expressing the visionary and avant-garde relationship and social interspecific models, as we can see in the concept of zoophreny of Oleg Kulik and Mila Bredikhina. Zoophreny is the vision of a future with the minority share of Homo sapiens. The deconstruction of humankind starts with a specific subspecies – man-artist, a creature in which the inhuman component can be induced most easily.

The concept of multispecies anthropology tries to break free from the anthropocentric cultural allegorical and aesthetic use of non-human entities and wants to find a new visuality and new sensitivity. It tries to listen to the non-human without prejudices more than to impose its voice on them. It finds new and surprising sources of inspiration for the development of sensuality and knowing the human, but also for the hope for survival and change of living conditions.

There were always a few dogs and a few more plants taking part in the festival up to now. We apologize for not paying enough attention to these participants. Their names were not even mentioned in the programme. We will make more of an effort to correct this narrow-mindedness of ours.





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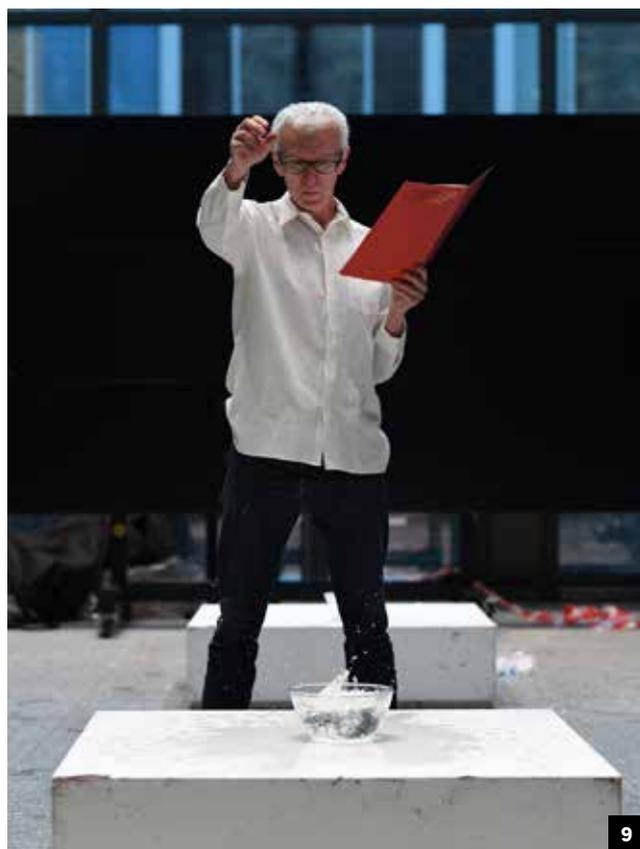
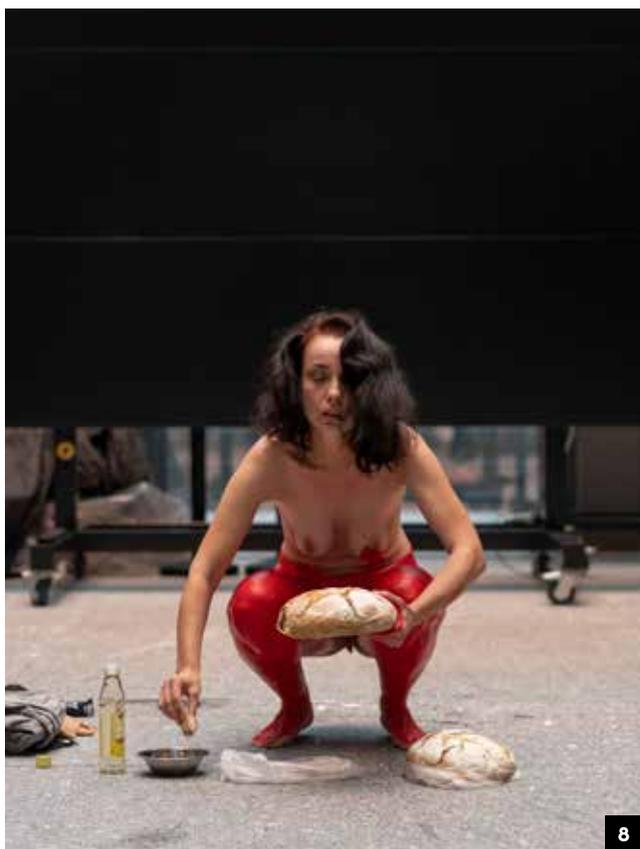


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1. Jana Orlová and Kača Olivová, photo Lenka Klodová
2. Anna Steller, photo Lenka Klodová
3. Lenka Klodova, photo Marek Zygmunt (film still)
4. NEWkus – Bára Smékalová and Sara Wollasch, photo Lenka Klodová
5. Leon Dziemaszkiewicz, photo Lenka Klodová
6. Marek Rogulski, photo Lenka Klodova
7. Jana Orlová, poetry reading together with Łukasz Guzek and Paweł Leszkowicz, photo Anna Kalwajtys





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8. Anna Kalwajtyś,
photo Karolína Kohoutková

9. Vladimír Havlík,
photo Karolína Kohoutková

10. Kača Olivová,
photo Lenka Klodová

11. Lenka Klodová, photo Anna
Kalwajtyś

12. Karolína Kohoutková,
photo Lenka Klodová

13. Martin Zet, photo Karolína
Kohoutková