

ENGLISH SUMMARY

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THE MOST EPHEMERAL OF THE ARTS. EARLY VIDEO WORKS AT LABIRYNT GALLERY AND BUREAU OF ARTISTIC EXHIBITIONS IN LUBLIN, 1976–1984

Previous studies on the emergence and development of video art in Poland have been generally focused on analysis of leading artists' creative concepts and poetics of their works. Such a perspective does not address a wider context of artistic culture – a configuration of material, institutional and social conditions of production, distribution and reception of these practices. This has resulted in a simplified, abstracted image of the beginnings of video art in Poland. A broader and more historical analysis entails, therefore, re-inscribing its subject into a set of local and translocal conditions: material and technical modes of creating and presenting video works, their various forms, a topography of their production and distribution places, their circulation channels, a network of video art contacts, cooperation and exchange, and finally, the location of Poland as one of socialist countries of East Central Europe on the map of artistic and economic centres and peripheries. The task of analysing the video in such an expanded field of artistic culture also needs a broadened concept of “the work made with the use of the video.” The term refers not only to practices usually deemed to be the video art ‘proper,’ such as videotapes, videoinstallations or videoperformances, but also comprises all conceptual and documental forms of existence, distribution and presentation of video works: textual descriptions, schematic diagrams (which sometimes remain the only material form of a work), exhibition boards with photodocumentation, brochures or catalogues etc.

The article offers an analysis of a series of exhibitions and projections of video works which took place at the Labirynt Gallery and Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions (BWA) in Lublin

between 1976 and 1984. My approach combines in-depth archival research with the methodology of exhibition history, infrastructure and conditions of artistic production studies, and critical reception history. While doing this research ‘groundwork,’ I attempt to establish who actually participated in the discussed artistic events, describe the works which were showcased there and reflect on how they were or could have been interpreted. I take into account translocal and transnational networks of contacts of both institutions, their contributory programme, co-created by numerous artists and curators, as well as the whole of an expanded field of artistic culture: changing conditions of production, distribution and presentation of works made with the use of the video.