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The divided world : The geopolitics of art according to KwieKulik

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alternative. The process was triggered by a new, and faster means of travel, which had not been available to the previous generations of artists.

Consequently, Romuald Kutera's *oeuvre* consists of numerous projects intended to be displayed abroad. Perhaps the most intriguing one is his work from 1985 *My History of Art*. It measures 111 cm by 206 cm and was prepared to be shown at the *Contemporary Art from Poland* which opened at the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff in 1985. It was later transported by Anna Kutera to Toronto and exhibited at the Artculture Resource Centre. Another work shown in Banff was created by Anna Kutera following Romuald's directives dictated by telephone and further tips sent by post. Another popular method of transmitting the message of a conceptual work from the sixties onwards was by telephone. This solution was pioneered by László Moholy-Nagy in 1923 when his avant-garde works *Konstruktion in Emaillé 2* and *3* were prepared by a local enamel manufacturing plant following the artist's telephone instructions.

Conceptual ideas travelled also in print. In 1973, Romuald Kutera together with Anna Kutera, Wiesława Siwicka, Mirosław Gliński, and Piotr Błażejowski, who were all members of the Recent Art Gallery collective set up the previous year, created *Publication*. Key figures of the American art scene, including Sol LeWitt in his *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* (1967), emphasised the lesser importance of the material and visual layer of an artwork compared to its idea. Publications played a key role in conveying information about actions undertaken in remote and rather insignificant places like Osieki, Turów, or Rozel Point, Utah. From the late sixties onwards, slides, photographs and texts enabled artists to communicate their ideas, find allies and a way to show their work in places that they could not reach in person. Due to the light and compact character of materials used by conceptual artists, their art could venture beyond their circle of friends, their cities and eventually continents. Artworks could even be made while travelling and in the open air. Therefore Romuald Kutera's objects are not only a registration of his artistic ideas from the seventies until today but they also document his journeys, meetings and conversations.

Tomasz Załuski, „The divided world. The geopolitics of art according to KwieKulik”

The aim of the article is to trace the impact of the geopolitical division between the West and the East - as symbolized by the iron curtain - on the biography, artistic theories and practices of Polish duo KwieKulik. I focus on the artists' attempts to spread abroad information about Polish ephemeral art. I am particularly interested in their journeys to the West, during which they presented their performances and showed art documentation.

KwieKulik were critically aware of the incommensurability of Western capitalist and Eastern socialist economic and political conditions of life and art production. What is more, they conceived their art as deeply embedded in those conditions and they used it as a means of exposing and commenting on them. In the divided world, there was no 'universal' realm, or the universal existed only in so far as it was also divided. According to KwieKulik, to expose the local conditions of life and art under socialism was the only chance to be universal. They were against the attempts on the part of some Polish neo-avant-garde artists to appropriate Western artistic idioms and try to symbolically enter the Western art world as, supposedly, its rightful participants. Such self-colonisation by subordinating oneself to the West as a substitute cultural hegemon seemed inauthentic to them and it led to art practices that were without any meaningful and critical relationship with the local socialist reality.

At the end of the seventies and throughout the eighties KwieKulik confronted the divided reality while traveling to western countries and presenting their art. There they often repeated performances - linking them in new configurations called 'multiperformances' - that were originally showed in Poland. They did so because each time they came to the West, they had to present themselves as a 'repeated debut', as artists with no artistic biography and no symbolic capital - except for one connected with coming from the East. Thus, repeating performances could play the role of 'performing the documentation'. Another thing was that KwieKulik were probably unable to prepare a premiere performance that would answer the specific nature of Western life and art. The Western conditions were simply not theirs and they had not shaped their existential and artistic experience.