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Gallery as an Artistic Project in Conceptual Art

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

results from an assumption that something is possible and other things are not and that all arguments depend on the assumed point of reference. It is often claimed in colloquial sentences that a project turned out to be utopian. But what does it mean? Can art be utopian? Has any art program ever been fully completed? Can ideas stemming from one's artistic statement, in their full complexity, demanding a lot of harmonious circumstances, ever be realised? So called utopian or conceptual thought is the basis of all meaningful art achievements, contrary to intentions thought to be realistic, which by their very down-to-earth nature, lack fantasy and therefore have little in common with art. The emergence of an art concept is parallel to the possibilities of its realisation. Not sooner does art exist for real, than as a result a conflict between creative ideas and changing reality appears. Sometimes artistic objectives do not develop further beyond the project stage, sometimes they turn into concrete objects, events or processes. The fact that their incarnations exist, does not determine the meanings. The essence of artistic work is to sustain the idea created. If it takes the form of a registered project then it automatically turns into a tangible object, an item, a phenomenon which can be a base for further actions. So, when the artist questions the rules of the surrounding reality, it is not a conceptual utopia that emerges, but new realities.

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The text announces a research program on the galleries that emerged in relation to conceptual art and introduces the scope and method of research.

The general aim of the research is to set apart the issue of a conceptual gallery as an independent artistic phenomenon. A conceptual gallery is examined as a general artistic formula.

The methodological scheme presented in the text aims at establishing a basic chronology and creating a typology of the trend.

Historically, conceptual galleries emerged and were shaped in the frame of a broadly understood conceptual tendency (a leading tendency in the seventies) because at that time, there occurred a specific formal-artistic relationship between art and gallery.

Until now, the conceptual gallery trend has been examined mainly in the context of the social, political and cultural conditions in which they were functioning. The research on conceptual galleries as an artistic project and a form of conceptual art causes the vector of the research to reverse.

The artistic character of particular galleries could be graded into those which housed more or less radical projects. One may imagine a scale between limit points: a gallery as a work of art and a gallery as an art container and place all galleries from the seventies on it.

The beginning of the conceptual gallery movement in Poland is marked by a project by Andrzej Kostołowski and Jarosław Kozłowski entitled NET (1971), based on a mail-art formula. It assumed not only collecting and exhibiting the works sent (which was each institution's aim), but also creating their own specific points in the network of institutions. Thirty five galleries participated in an exhibition which summarised an activity of the BWA Gallery in Sopot in the summer of 1981. The galleries of this type functioned in the next decade, even during martial law. In the mid-nineties the gallery movement started to integrate again, however after 2000 the commercialisation of the art market caused their disappearance.

Katarzyna Urbańska

Remont Gallery. The Unknown Avant-garde of the Seventies

The attempts to describe a history of Polish conceptualism in a systematic way, have been until now undertaken in a very similar way. The studies have concentrated mainly on outlining a few artistic centres with connections to the trend. These studies were discussed both in publications from the eighties and nineties and in more recent ones. Only Bożena Kowalska in her book *Artystyczno-społeczna problematyka zrzeszeń plastyków w Polsce w latach 1946-1976* (*Artistic and social problems of*