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Hommage a Jan Świdziński

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HOMMAGE À JAN ŚWIDZIŃSKI

(an attempted introduction to art as contextual art)*

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Jan Świdziński has been one of the main representatives of the post-conceptual movement since mid seventies. I am referring here to the form of the movement whose aim was to overcome the dominance of conceptualism. This tendency could be observed in the works of such artists as the second Joseph Kosuth (the period of Anthropologized Art), Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest and Jean-Paul Thénot from Collectif Art Sociologique, Jorge Glusberg representing Sistema Lationo America, Paul Woodrow (working in Canada), Brian Dyson, and the most distinguished of all, in terms of the reception of contextualism outside Poland, Amerigo Marras (a member of Polish-Canadian Contextual Art group, established in 1976) to mention just a few. The association of Świdziński with the movement will always remain unquestionable regardless of the reluctance to accept this fact by native critics, who, by and large, seem to be just straight forward ignoramuses.

Art as Contextual Art; a Linguistic Turn. Where Does the Ignoramuses' Mistake Lie?

The ignoramuses hold against Świdziński the act of pointing to the context, as its detrimental factor. They believe that by doing so, Świdziński merely states the obvious, as opposed to making an important discovery. However, that is not the point. If it was all about the context, then we would be dealing with the case of a truism. In Świdziński's instance, there should not be any mention of a true, perhaps native, form of social art. What we have here, is a critical adaptation of conceptual art with a linguistic turn. This adaptation initiated a doctrine – formulated in 1975 at the festival of counter-culture, or independent art: F-Art in Gdańsk, as well as at a symposium "Sytuacja w sztuce współczesnej" [Current situation in contemporary art] organised by the Remont Gallery in Warsaw. The publication of the doctrine's principles [eng.: *Art as Contextual Art*] coincided with the exhibition of Polish artists in the St. Petri Gallery, run by Jean Sellem in Lund Sweden, in February 1976.

It is said that the term "contextual art" was coined by Jean Sellem (or perhaps the director of Konsthall in Malmö) who was looking for an intriguing label for Świdziński's program. Although Świdziński, who was clearly aiming at a confrontation with Kosuth, used Reinhardt's tautological "Art is art-as-art" (1963), he nevertheless did not participate in the co-creation of conceptualism. Rather, he was interested in creating space for a debate about conceptualism: he initially, after giving up on painting, dealt with art semiotics for many years and he was one of the first propagators of conceptual art in Poland[1], later he carried on with the debate, but as an exegete and dissenter. In the mid 1960s, he said in one of the interviews: "there happened a significant breakthrough in world art . All important issues had been spoken about long before us, I mean, outside Poland. We were in a position of catching up with the others, shortening the distance while preparing to present our own program: at the time, when those matters (mainly conceptual ones and their derivatives) will show their boundaries... I prepared a program,

which took its final shape in 1974**.** I just knew that the program was not ready for general presentation, we needed to wait for some problems with conceptual art to be exhausted. The aim was to hit when the need appeared for new matters, for a step further... It was only at the moment of a weakening Art World that it was possible for us to break through with something new."[2]

This is how his art should be perceived: **art as contextual art**. It is also important to highlight the post conceptual character of his thought. Certainly, it should never be seen as banal and reduced to terms such as *a contex*t or *context discussing*, since that was done a long time ago by, for example, Hippolyte Taine (Świdziński teases the ignoramuses). The act of isolating the expression: 'contextual art', or 'empty signifier' has no sense, and it has got no destructive value. When the term 'art as contextual art' is dealt with, a confrontation in mind with the tautological model of Kosuth's art, we are enabled to appreciate Świdziński's contribution to overcoming conceptualism. The doctrine should be viewed as a linking matter with conceptual evolutionism, which was assumed then, and in which we doubt nowadays. The Kosuth idea – yet another example of a futile [-ism] genre – was seen then as an important voice in the discussion about the end of the art model presented in "Art after Philosophy" (1969) – a model in its extreme, devoid of mysticism, a neo-positivist conceptualism version.

It is worth noting here that the 1970s were a decade in which there was observed a growing popularity of neo-Marxism (Frankfurt school of thought) as well as the wave of counter-culture which enticed many artists. With that in view, it is easier to understand why Świdziński's voice from the East criticising neo-positivism and exposing fake ideology was so audible, mature, resonating and gaining appreciation to the extent that Sellem, who was visiting the Gdańsk counter-culture festival in 1975, picked up and understood Świdziński's stand-point; channelling the contemporary independent art potential in Poland. Not too long after Sellem, Amerigo Marras – the director of the Centre for Experimental Art and Communication – organised in November 1976 in Toronto a debate on the topic of Art as Contextual Art with the participation of some prominent people, such as Kosuth, Sarah Charlesworth, Carole Condé and Anthony McCall. It was also attended by Hervé Fischer and a group of Canadian artists or theoreticians interested in dividing the spoils after overthrowing Kosuth. The following conference organised in May 1977 in Paris by Collectif Art Sociologique with participation from, amongst others, Świdziński and Emil Cieślar from Poland, Dyson and Woodrow from Canada, as well as British artists Lorraine Leason and Peter Dunn, clearly demonstrated the process of dismantling Art World. The conference, which resulted in confirming a joint declaration called "Third front of art against New York", also confirmed the act of substituting the prior with an art entangled in local contexts: context remaining in a constant engagement with social and global processes worldwide. What were those processes?

The Crisis of Meaning In Art

Świdziński, in the 1970s, commented on the deepening process of failure in the representational language concept in civilization, as well as on rapid changes. The creative power of our language is weaker than the creativity of reality, which we attempt to describe. In turn, this leads to de-synchronization of the structure, as the developed standards normally applied to regulate the relationships fail to notice the disappearance of the relationships. Expressions lose their meanings and they become counting tokens. They cease to designate or denote anything: it is impossible to establish connotations of the expressions appearing in unlimited, changing heterogeneous contexts. This phenomenon only intensifies the conviction about the arbitrariness of language. The language practice, desperately trying to catch up with the fleeing reality, aims at capturing it, stabilizing it, as well as stimulating it. The practice is in fact similar to the reality in its stochastic never-ending-process quality. The deficiency of the process of semiosis, the augmenting disparity between the **signifier** and the **signified** mean that we live in a ivilization where insecurities and risks are rising. As we are forced to live in this process, we need to find ways to orientate ourselves in reality. While battling its randomness, we give expressions a meaning, we eliminate insecurity and risk by using myths, fuelling ideology. However, the question remains if our efforts reduce de-synchronization. Perhaps, we only cushion the process. We construct an image of the world, which allows us to define our own identity in contrast to other myths or ideologies. This does not

exclude the question – why we are the way we are, why not different? Why do we speak in different ways about reality? Why do we use different types of logic regulating reality?

In a similar way to language, art does not achieve a synchronization with reality. The de-synchronization phenomenon reveals itself at the moment of proceeding from one culture to another. It is then that the instability of the structure appears. The art standards cease to correspond with new relationships in reality. They are no longer absolute or certain, they become relative. The acceleration of the changes and a constant diminishing of the intervals with the phases of civilization amplifies the relativity of the standards. This process stimulates the development of new, competing standards. Since there is no time to synchronize the new standards with reality, the stability of the structure is not strengthened. The only possibility left is to build an open model, in which the predictable changeability is a normal status of reality (could that also be a prerequisite for the current ideology of an open society?). An expression **truth** becomes a rhetorical topos and as an empty signifier is described in relation to contexts in which it is considered.

The Initial Rationalization of The Crisis – through the Definition ofArt Models

A detailed observation of the de-synchronization process serves as the basis for establishing a thesis on the coexistence of three art models in contemporary practice. If we talk about the crisis, about the de-synchronization of a structure, we automatically assume an ideal state of that structure. The mentioned models are associated with some economic structures, with a various forms of goods exchange.

1.   The first model corresponds with the renaissance traditions – the art model which is based on eternal and universally important principles. It functioned well in pre-industrial civilization, when the changes in the tangible sphere were not violent and a belief in the stability of the standards was wide-spread. To use Foucault's words and Świdziński's explanation, which seems to be a regular practice, the first model may be referred to as a universal model of art. The model presupposes that signs used by a civilization are transparent – in art as well. The language of art, in a similar way to the language of science, expresses reality as something that exists in our cognition, and it is not merely a structure – a model of reality.

2.   The relativist model was born as result of a change in social relations, initiated by the French Revolution and the birth of the Industrial Revolution at the end of eighteenth century. The process of universal model yielding could be observed since the era of Romanticism. The situation changes in the nineteenth century. The signs became gradually relative, they were losing their transparency which manifested itself particularly in the period of French romanticism and was exemplified by Théophile Gautier's *l'art pour l'art* and its last expression is to be found in the autotelic declaration of Reinhardt. The peak of the relativist art model falls around the period of rapid industrialization in modernism. The model was particular for the twentieth century pursuit of the avant-garde, especially its constructive approach to reality. Conceptualism closes that period, while pinpointing the need to build a different model corresponding with contemporary situation in which a post-industrial civilisation found itself.

In the Search for the Third Model of Art – a Criticism of a Tautological Model of Art. Świdziński In Contrast to Kosuth, and Kosuth the Second

There is no doubt that the model of art suggested in "Art after Philosophy" was an extreme result of one of the leading modernism strategies – essentialism. Duchamp's ready-mades, which did not pose any questions about the 'whats', or 'hows' of art, allowed Kosuth to overcome the formalistic, Greenberg-like, take on essentialism. It appeared that the 1960s formalism was not based on empirical generalization, or accumulation of common physical features of art objects. It is merely a priori definition of art. Formalism is an idea. The idea which is not originally located in material art objects. This is governed by the fact that the intention of using a medium is primary to the medium used and hence deciding about its artistic status. Soon, it was assumed that the aggrandizement of the formal and genre related aspects led to decorative work and a question was posed: What is the function of art, or the nature of art? The question about the function fell outside **the material paradigm** of art (Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin). The answer,

as it was believed, was to be found in the non-denotational Wittgenstein's concept of meaning: 'The meaning is the use.'

According to this instrumental and functional theory of language, the language is a tool. The meaning of an expression is a semantic function of that expression fulfilled because of the user. The meaning of an expression is in the way it is used. Therefore the meaning does not position itself in any area of meta-language reality. It is determined by the sign-creating activity – through language behavior.

This concept of meaning – neither associative, nor connotative – was perfect for the attempt to clarify the existence of varied private codes and art languages. The art is a way, in which originators use 'art' expression, or a way in which they define it. The essence and art autonomy should not be searched for in traditional synthetic functions (miming, aesthetic and producing, formal etc.), they should be searched for in work conceptualized as a tautology – idea as idea. Kosuth wrote: "Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, if viewed within their context - as art - they provide no information what-so-ever about any matter of fact. A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the author's intention, that is, he is saying that a particular work of art **is** art, which means, is a **definition** of art. Thus, that it is art is true *a priori* (which is what Judd means when he states that "if someone calls it art, it's art").[3]

Świdziński poignantly noticed that the conceptualism of groups such as the Art and Language substituted the formalism of traditional art with a difficult to sustain formalism of neo-positivist language philosophy. Even though the group aimed at restoring to art its deep meaning (art is meaning, not decoration) through an act of introducing meta-artistic focus. The program of a fully formalized system of a priori doctrines (postulated by Hilbert) turned out to be non-executable (which was proven by Gödel), and the act of belief non-reducible in logical explorations. What is more, the theory of meaning as a theory of expression usage implied meaning entropy in art. It revealed the need for the theory of meaning verification. The tautological model, which assumed self-reflection in an autonomous art context, did not give any answers to why the expression 'art' is used in such, and not a different way. Why such and not different art forms used in the past are cited and adapted. The art forms which are the basis of conceptual art development.

To add to Świdziński's critical thought (already well-formed), Kosuth's fault also is to be found in the fact that in the process of shaping an artwork as analytical tasks, he was relying on I. A. Richards. According to Richards, thinking is metaphorically radical, whereas thinking through analogy with the use of a linking word is its constituting norm. Soon, however the view became popular that the theory of substitution is too narrow and it was not a sufficient explanation for the metaphor, since it may not be reduced to the deviation of the act of thinking through analogy. The metaphoric thinking – as it was claimed by Paul Ricoeur – is not only an operational act on concepts (names or ideas); it is a rhetorical and quasi-cognitive (heuristic) utterance which assumes a paradoxical intuition for similarity in dissimilarity. This is stated by, more general than the hermeneutical theory of substitution, the theory of tension. Perhaps, it is due to the fact that in the tautological model of art we experience a misleading, shaping attribution, with a tension between the identical and different. Kosuth began his search for a different model of art in the 1970s. Let me remind you here that in "Notes on an 'Anthropologised' Art" (1974) and "The Artist as Anthropologist" (1975),[4] Kosuth clearly rejected the general importance of a tautological model in favor of a model of anthropologized art, in an attempt to regain a deep profundity of art and to overcome the opacity of modernist practice. Conceptualism seemed to him as some *ethno-logic of western civilization*. The tautological model, similarly to any other model which assumes the autonomy of art, or considers every theory independently from action (or independently from ideology and social practice), was concluded, following Habermas, to perpetrate the act of turning the knowledge into the object of fetishism. The knowledge should be considered dialectically – as mediated in social practice. In the return to reality the model of anthropologized art refuses the non-critical idea of imitating human reality in a reflected act of semiosa (an artwork as a mirror). An artist, breaks away from the engaged anthropologist attitude. He does not contemplate (or theorize), he actively engages himself from within in the examined reality. The act of art is socio-culturally mediated, on the principle of implosion and general over-view (It is the implosion Mel Ramsden speaks of, an implosion of a reconstituted socio-culturally mediated over-view). The restoration of the opacity of

art language is not a return to a logical and semantic artwork interpretation. It is closer to seeing an artwork as a not an entirely comprehended symptom, as some event (the onthologizing of the art language). The act of referring to the artwork's context makes it all related to the hermeneutic approach to which Kosuth clearly made references (after his discussion with Świdziński in Toronto in November 1976).

The texts by Kosuth: "Within the Context: Modernism and Critical Practice" (1977), "Text/Context: Seven Remarks For You To Consider while Viewing/Reading This Exhibition" (1978-79) and "Notes on Cathexis" (1981) were all dedicated to examining the conditions of meaning creation in art. They completed a program which claimed that the artists' work should reflect hermeneutically over the process of re-establishing the meaning. In the process, all attempts of establishing an art model as an autonomous discipline should be exposed. In their place, there should be articulated an art model which aims to develop means to understand the mechanism of culture.

While observing the **conceptual evolution** of Kosuth what strikes us is the radical discontinuation between neo-positivist and neo-Marxist, or perhaps hermeneutic inspirations. It is worth noting here, however, that the change brings to mind the difference between the implosion of the first and second Wittgenstein. The change seems to be integrated by the theory of language games. In the model of **anthropologized art** Kosuth employs the concepts of culture as a game. Art is one of the language games led in culture. The feature of any game is its group character. A game is a picture of a collective awareness, which decides whether to accept some rules – it decides whether to accept its believability.

Świdziński's Criticism of the Tautological Model of Art – an Introduction to the General Art Theory of the Concept of Intentionality as an Indication of an Optimal Respect For So-called Conceptual Evolutionism

At the time of the presentation of *Art as Contextual Art* program, Świdziński criticized most of all the first Kosuth, the second one seemed more like a partner and an ally. He worked out, in my opinion, a subtle way of withdrawing his support for an extreme logically-semiotic interpretation of artifacts through introducing to the general theory of art a concept of intentionality, which was a manifestation of his respect for so called conceptual evolutionism. This is where the greatness of Świdziński's innovation lies. It is not found in the context, which has not been grasped by the ignoramuses . The introduction of a concept of intentionality to the general theory of art, can only be compared to the interpretation of artwork as tautology, or an analytical sentence of Kosuth.

In 1975, Świdziński did not compare artifacts to analytical utterances, as Kosuth the first did (sentences formed through extensional functors, where logical value depends on the veracity range of composing sentences), he compared them to sentences containing intentional functors (their veracity depends on content and variables inserted in place).

According to Świdziński, the concept of intentionality, troublesome for logicians, explained better the character of artistic creativity than tautological formula, which did not contribute to the knowledge of reality and what is more it asserts itself as true in all possible worlds. The intentionality of an art utterance with its functors (for example.: I know, discover, believe, suspect or should etc.) examined by epistemic or deontic logic, points to its being restricted by the pragmatic moment of experiencing. Świdziński searched for a verifying concept of meaning in art to fill the emptiness of the arbitrary language behavior of conceptualists. Kosuth's tautology – in Świdziński's opinion – was an extreme consequence of the modernist art model, which turned out to be relativistic in nature. Świdziński criticized that model for its utopian character, he claimed: "My language, or the media which I make use of, describe my world, but another world exists which describes my language. Art as a relativistic world of one's own time is Utopia. We are subject to dependencies and cannot break away from it."[5]

Consequently the relativism achieved is equal to the amount which we allow to happen at a particular moment: we are able to produce; or in other words, it is equal to the amount of tolerance we have for experiencing variety in others. On that account, Świdziński referred to the operational theory of meaning established in 1927 by Bridgman. In operational theory, the descriptive method of defining a term through

listing its qualities was mistrusted, as it could lead to empty verbalization. The theory demands to assign an operation relative to an activity which defines whether a property may be assigned to an object. Świdziński believed that this act is as useful in the theory of art as it is in Physics and Social Sciences. He also believed that it was possible to overcome concept art verbalism (a good example of which is found in the famous sentence by Judd and quoted by Kosuth) by employing Operational Theory. The act of naming is not enough. Art as an empty sign acquires and loses its meaning – the artistic veracity is relative to the act of approbation – through a specific social practice and through being a function produced by a given society's ways of expressing reality. The term I used: **an empty sign** does not signify **nothing** or **something**, it signifies **otherness**. The correlation for each subjective act is not achieved through the employment of some object or figment. It is achieved through some other subjective act which conditions its objective restriction. We cannot separate some subjective act from a result of an action which models objective interdependences to which the act succumbs. We cannot sustain a fixed opposition between a subject and an object in a clear, passive, contemplative cognitive relationship. The relationship which allows us to tell the difference between the subjective and the objective. We should rather accept a dialectic or hermeneutic (if not textual) interpretation of that opposition (these various contexts can be found in the variety of Świdziński's texts). The art practice ceases to be identified with creation using a particular medium, it becomes the pragmatics of art, which aims to define the operations to be executed to gain social acceptance.

We may even say that we notice the immediate, exclusively private values which we are prone to believe in. The universal values, socially accepted ones, we assume to be as pragmatic in nature. The above opposition provides a definition of intentionality structure in our utterances. The structure needs to become overt for us to function successfully in a society. It concerns to the greatest extend the art that operates in the broadest context.

This is precisely why Świdziński highlighted the fact that contextual art in practice acts around epistemic logic through analyzing specific beliefs and suppositions in a local context. The practice of art as contextual art relied on uncovering some social abnormalities in the context, or structure de-synchronization of a social group. Here, I am talking about the process in which a group realizes that the standards they were applying cannot be applied any more, and therefore there is a need to develop a new set of standards. The contextual art was then a social act of deconstruction [sic! – a term used by Świdziński in 1977 in the Polish version of manifesto] – a deconstruction of old meaning and construction of new ones. We should, however, keep in mind that **novelty** means here **otherness**.

Contextual art, unlike the tautological formula presenting the existence of polysemic art in relative time, operates in a specific social practice time excluding an unlimited accumulation and presence of various art meanings. Therefore, contextualism, paradoxically, became a critical voice as well as a voice of acceptance of cultural relativism as its alibi. Contextualism, therefore was a simulation (an anomaly) of a relativistic art model. By overthrowing Kosuth tautology (a relativistic model of utopian freedom which ignored all boundaries dictated by social context), Świdziński declared that "art as contextual art acts as an opposition towards meaning multiplication, it also opposes relativism"; at the same time Świdziński accepted the diversity and changeability of contexts, by claiming that: "what is true in one context, may not be in another", therefore he attempted at sanctioning relativism.

The practice of a contextualist brings to mind the practice of an ethnologist-therapist, who by visiting different places helps the natives (in Polish Kurpia region, or in New York) to become aware of their contexts. And through an aware practice of presenting their own context, they have the right to be different with all due respect for those differences. No one has got the right to regard their context as an absolute one, since according to the logic of incomplete realities in contextualism, there is always a different context describing our own.

The Context of Świdziński`s Contextualism

I believe that we may freely ask a question about Świdziński's context of contextualism, which would be in line with *a* **relativistic logic of contextualism**. Świdziński was motivated by his need to dissolve the hegemony of conceptualism

dominating in the Western meta-narration. Contextualism, being promoted as a Polish suggestion, aspired to win over and dominate the Art World. In reality, it damaged and loosened its own cultural relativism assumption which proclaimed respect for cultural differences. Contextualism reduced itself to an artistic ideology and revealed the failure of the cultural relativism myth by reducing it to the alibi of its own artistic practice. Against cultural relativism's own presuppositions, according to which contexts are and may remain separate from each other, the practice or rhetoric of contextualism suggests that the contexts do not remain neutral for each other. When confronted, they do not influence each other by becoming more aware of the alien or own context. What happens in actual fact is the act of damaging and loosening various alibis of social practices. Contextualism as a meta-artistic strategy presupposed that the contexts may be established and therefore it is possible to understand the strategy of the Art World in Kutno town, or New York. Whereas, what happened was that while celebrating the right to be different, it fell prey to its was assumption. It was only capable of loosening up and weakening for a moment the Art World.

What the fall of contextualism taught us is the fact that we are destined to incessant confrontation. It will never be stopped by any enlightened cultural relativism extended by some liberal ethics of diversity respect without any form of prejudice towards it. The assertion of freedom, relativism, diversity and differences is nothing but verbalization, since we have such relativism; such multiplication of meaning; such polysemy of art which we can afford at the time, which we are ready to accept. The veracity of art, according to Świdziński, is a function of a **multitude of expanse**, within which boundaries its function is verifiable. While at the same time, the final verification does not take place. Incomplete realities constructed by people – a concept introduced by Świdziński – must function in some finite universe, where time, however, is not a relativistic time.

While writing about the **multitude of expanse**, Świdziński felt the corporeality of our language. Corporeality which we cannot dispose of. We are unable to exclude from the figurative language (spatial and time-based) restrictions, mind restrictions imposed on by imagination which is responsible for anomalies in a language. Rationality of contextualism depended on incessant exploration of various contexts, discourses and types of rationality in the search for self-definition. This process however is time and energy consuming and hence no-one has got the resilience or strength to go through it. Each act of criticism (decision) is more an act of imagination or corporeal impulse (an act of creating a logic of incomplete realities) rather than a result of rational process in which the contextuality of our language, as well as its rhetorical blindness is overcome.

Intentionality Structure – Further Rationalization of the Crisis. *Art, Society and Self-Consciousness (1979)*

This is the perspective Świdziński employed in his book *Art, Society and Self-Consciousness* (1979). He attempted a definition of intentionality structure in the global context available for him. It is his main assertion – in some sense an introduction to a book entitled *Freedom and Limitation – The Anatomy of Postmodernism* (1987) which delineates the disruption of a representational concept of language. Świdziński, by analyzing different expressions, suggested the following four types of logic defining language use in order to rationalize further the phenomenon of the crisis of meaning in art.

1. Logic of norms. Some of us use more frequently and consistently such expressions as: **responsibility** or **prohibition** while disciplining oneself or others. They are more prone to the forming of some ideal about monastic life, or ideas for a fully formalized system of a priori sciences, which rules formation was fruitlessly attempted by Hilbert. Full synchronization of all elements is for them a fundamental value of a social system regulated by logic of norms. Norms constitute a society like a living organism. This homogeneous system does not espouse any internal dissonance, which could influence its functioning. Each element has its precise role appointed, and individuals know what to do and they know the outcome of their doings in advance. The result is unambiguously conformed to one aim, which is for the benefit of the entire society. The aim, however, cannot be verified since empirically it is inaccessible. It is outside this world, as well as the power which imposed this teleological order. Nothing can be added, or subtracted. Norms cannot be discussed, they must be obeyed. In our imagination there is nothing we could not apply these norms to. Norms are the natural laws, not because they come

from nature, but because they are endorsed with nature's authority. Any revolt against the norms is fictitious. A person who violates the norms is automatically excluded from the society – he goes into non-existence, where there is no chance for rehabilitation. Law is severe, since it does not grade evil. There is no such thing as value ranking to establish if something is more or less appropriate. The responsibility is always real and positive. Legal institutions are not for legislative work, they are to execute the already existing law. Norms are fixed and they are always legal, there is no need for creators – the norms are given a priori. The world regulated by logic of norms does not need history. The world is a safe place with no risk involved, we know everything – we know how to act and what may happen to us if we do not follow the rules and fulfill the responsibilities. What matters here is that essence is before existence.

2. Logic of freedom. Full synchronization of structure does not exist here, which is manifested by the usage of an expression such as **permission** apart from the other two mentioned before. Therefore the factor of time appears, which changes the status of an obligation or prohibition in some specific circumstances. Obligation and prohibition seem to lose their dogmatic nature – there possibility of choice appears. If permission is to have its real value, a human should have real power, in spite of the theory of predestination, to be in opposition to what is being commanded from him. The obligation changes its meaning to 1) engagement or duty, 2) order 3) expectation and 4) hope for something. The meaning of obligation is divided among the following: 1) ethics 2) law 3) psychology. This process leads to a dichotomy of morality and law, which sets other oppositions: human / nature, an individual / society, an individual / another individual. The oppositions soon turn into some mutual aggression, and society is supposed to be a synchronization of the egoism espoused by the individuals. Morality is the domain of an individual, law belongs to a social system. The antagonism amongst individual moral systems results in law more liberal than the systems, so that it was possible for them to co-exist in a society. Law needs to guarantee social consensus. For that reason it is possible for us to judge others according to our morality, but we cannot penalize them. The more diverse morality of individuals is, the more liberal the law becomes. The term *permission* changes the position of a human from passive and succumbed to destiny, to active. The logic of freedom pushes out the logic of norms.

3. Epistemic Logic. A person, who through the logic of freedom was given the possibility of taking decisions, has got the ability to construct the decision and to create the world according to his will. The conflict, which appeared as a result of replacing a homogeneous world of norms logic with a pluralistically sanctioned world of freedom logic, is reflected upon by those who use such expressions as: I think, that..., I believe, that..., I accept, because..., I refute, because...etc. These expressions are explored by epistemic logic. The world regulated by epistemic logic is described in the expressions using epistemological supposition, not the ontological one. The nature of its existence is not resolved. The multitude of worlds called to life by the subjective acts of will presupposes that their universe is actually an empty place, which can be filled or vacated according to any will, without changing its essence. The emptiness allows for the overcoming of the antagonism of the particular subjectivism. The subjectivism which may be assumed to be some real powers will never allow for mutual understanding in the freedom logic.

The concept of subjectivism in epistemic logic as some hypothetical, possible worlds provides a basis for substituting them with some agreed upon rules constituting social consensus. It is worth highlighting here that epistemic logic appears to make our life easier at a time of increasing uncertainty and risk. Epistemic utterances relate beliefs and convictions, drives or wants without judging them to be good or bad. They only provide information about our or other's actual status. The freedom logic, based on a dissonance between subjective morality and inter-subjective law, gave us a right to judge other's actions according to our moral sensitivity, but without the right to penalize since that action was reserved for the court of law. Epistemic logic takes away our right to judge, it only informs us about our and other's drives and depths, which we cannot evaluate. A society is obliged to become even more liberal, suspending not only subjective multiplicity and antagonistic moralities, but also the law, which represents their compromised agreement. It is not about the lawless state, but it is about the acceptance of a process under which the law loses its ethical legitimization due to epistemic logic foundations. The law then is turned into a form of socio-therapy in

which medicine becomes a reference system rather then ethics. It is accepted to describe someone's behavior, but it is impossible to morally evaluate it. Each form of behavior may be described through showing its conditions , or as a manifestation of pathology. Therefore dangerous criminals should be isolated, rather than punished. As a result of isolation, they do not become moral, but as result of re-socialization it is possible for them to co-exist in a society.

Epistemic logic, to make explicit Świdziński's thought in already well-known psychoanalysis or social psychology formulas (or perhaps the logic of beliefs), annihilates in us not only a moral sensitivity, but also the **I**, since it allows us to become aware of the cognitive dissonance – the fact that our knowledge differs often from what we believe in or how we act. We can also claim that epistemic logic brings a cease-fire to the ultimate battle between the mind and pleasure, it gives an opportunity to develop some distance towards the feeling of responsibility which moulds our *ego (super ego)* and the want of pleasure *(id)* which remains often in conflict with the first one. The realization of the want for pleasure, against some considered or questioned prohibitions, does not evoke in us a sense of deep cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance – described by Festinger – comes to existence when, for example, we smoke cigarettes, even though we know that they are harmful for us. The stronger craving for nicotine, the stronger conviction about its harmfulness, and in turn the stronger cognitive dissonance. A way to reduce the effects of cognitive dissonance is the act of making beliefs relative, when there is not enough strength in us to give up the pleasure. Epistemic logic expresses the expansion of the rule of pleasure in language. The mind attempts to reflect over the process through sanctioning the choices within the scope of relativism, rather than relating the problem of the polarization of our wants. This is how the concept of economical thinking comes into to being.

4. Game Logic. Epistemic logic is the last attempt to reserve some feeling of security in troubled times. It belongs to people who lost their contact with truth, they only refer to probability and affirmation. An analytical type of knowledge gives way for a statistical one. Statistics put facts together without any analysis of conditions, or motives which brought those facts to life. If the statistics are the only rule for us, we have to take decisions without any knowledge of conditions governing the situation we are in. This type of logic brings to mind a card game logic, when the decision has to be taken without the knowledge of what cards the opponent has got. We cannot be sure of his intentions or reactions either, we have no clue to what extend he can predict our actions. The sphere of game logic is not as fully developed as the one of logic of norms or freedom logic; however, it is not empty either as in the case of epistemic logic. We do not know, however, what it contains and if we can discover the content. We cannot assume that the decisions taken in one situation will be as good as in some other context. The concept of **truth** becomes of little use. Our beliefs and assumptions are being incessantly verified through the necessity of satisfying our needs. Therefore, if it is necessary, we opt out of beliefs and forget our doubts, when profit is in question, which in game logic replaces the truth seen as a regulating force of our behavior. What matters in the game is the optimal result, which depends on the evaluation of a given situation. It is important to point out here that the optimal evaluation does not depend on optimal information, since it often happens that the optimal information makes it difficult to work out a relevant opinion and to take an effective decision. Too much information, reduces paradoxically the effectiveness of our action, since it does not leave us with too many options to choose from (to add to it, it is important to mention here that this paradox has been written about by Nietzsche, who claimed that life requires illusion, not truth).

Therefore, a piece of information or knowledge has got only an operational character according to the game logic. The aim of the game is not to learn, but to acquire something. Profit and only profit is the rule of the game. Profit or usability is relative, or perhaps less and less clear. With the increase in the availability of goods, the basic needs are satisfied very easily, therefore the game is not motivated by some universal or typical needs and drives (explored by psychology of drives and personalities), but we seem to be driven by some sophisticated and perverse pleasures. Our discussion becomes rather complicated. It is difficult to talk about game logic, because a game, as a **collective awareness** manifestation to use Kosuth's term from "Anthropologized Art", falls into a kaleidoscope of persistently ever changing little games in which the only rule is the rule

of unclear and perverse pleasure for the pleasure's sake. What is more, while being players we cannot play the game and be disengaged theorists or game anthropologists exploring the game's rules or conditions in which the game takes place. This non-reflexivity makes the game even more pleasurable, since reflection makes the pleasure weaker through building a distance. A situation changes from minute to minute, we have no time to learn new rules for the game, and while being forced to play we cannot respect the rules of fair play.

In game logic mutual aggression is justified. People are divided into two groups: our opponents and those who are on our side. Świdziński agreed to an interpretation in which a player's identity is broken to form a binary opposition **helper – I – opponent**, one of actants highlighted by Greimas in his grammar of narration. On the other hand, the theory of game (to use Anatol Rapoport's term form the book *Game Theory as a Theory of Conflict Resolution*[6], appears in Świdziński's thinking as the last one. Its presence is built on the basis of conflict amongst other logics (especially the logic of norms and freedom) as well as insufficiency of the epistemic logic in the final resolution of a conflict-generating situation. Huizinga points out that the game (or play) is by itself is a natural state, typical of animals. It is a state – in his opinion – from which a culture is born. If it is true, the game logic would be the last emanation of logos in Świdziński's sense.

We seem to participate in logos in different ways, logos which in the last decades questioned itself. Throughout the centuries, everything that was rational was identified as human happiness (we should add here that any deviation from it was seen as irrational, what was confirmed by the hedonistic psychology and utilitarianism of positivist rationalism, which assumed as rational the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain). The union of mind and happiness, present in Christian eschatology, later in Reformed Churches where prosperity was seen as God's blessing, was quickly consumed along with the birth of industrial civilization, it became secular in modernism. In the pre-industrial era people were more likely to participate in norm logos. The stability of economic structure corresponded with a belief in everlasting and unchanging standards. The French Revolution and the change in the social structure (the leading role of a middle class, the need to negotiate the conflicts of interests) meant that it was easier to satisfy common human needs thanks to the process of developing industrialization. Rationalization of norms and prohibitions was reduced to a technological rationalization of specialists working for the common good of humanity. It was further modified into a rationality of puppet-idiots trained to cater for specific needs and addictions. Rationality and happiness became identified with rationality and the happiness of individuals – this is how the myth of individualism was started, which fuelled initially the view of restrictive liberalism present in Enlightenment, that is such liberalism which believed in the one and only good social solution. Later it transformed into a liberalism which accepted many other good solutions.

However, the myth of individualism turned out to be an unwanted holism, since it encouraged other ideologies which in the name of fulfilling the happiness of an individual had to simplify that individual. The individuality became an argument in some rhetoric persuasion aimed for the masses. "Don't talk about a man, talk to the man!" – postulated Świdziński in one of his works. Ideology against religion, from which it draws a lot. It does not have to search for a legitimization in some God's order, but humanity's. The myth of individualism turned out to be an unwanted holism, since by ascertaining the happiness of an individual, it had to generate a consumption driven society of mass culture. In comparison, an individual used to be succumbed to an overwhelming sense of obligation, whereas now it became a victim of ruthless rules of free market. Market production, through its mass quantity, questioned the arbitrarily accepted rule of equality and freedom of choice. Local culture had to face the pressures from international capital which uses the diversity of cultures as an alibi for its production. The best example is the travel industry which reduces locality to an 'outdoor museum', which gives an opportunity to earn good money.

It may be freely said that society made a blind circle: to start with the revolt against the absolute logic of norms and to end with an extreme game logic, where people are no longer supporting the truths of responsibility and prohibition, but they believe in profit. The culture is not regulated by either logic of norms or game logic. Culture has got different mediating logics such as the logic of freedom, or epistemic logic, which try to expose and soften the conflict between the mind and pleasure (it

is important to add here that a social order is not mechanically regulated through the principle of punishment/reward or pain/pleasure, it is regulated by intentions and choice or compromise, it is important to refer here to Parson's argumentation which criticized the instrumental model of rational action in order to maximize pleasure and avoid pain). Awareness of intentionality of context structure gained in this way requires from us in the post-industrial era to suggest some other than absolute or relative model of culture – a model, in which a repressive opposition of the absolutism and relativism in relation to mind and pleasure lost its meaning.

The question appears – how feasible is a society? Is it possible to form a social order? Should we accept the theory of conflict and therefore the conviction that a social order is a problematic issue. Should we accept the theory of consensus in which a social conflict is something abnormal? Irrespectively of the questions and their answers, there must be some economics of the questioning which will form some temporary structures and options between those extremes.

About the Co-existence of Absolutism and Cultural Relativism. The Loss of Context Clarity and Self-awareness (Postmodernism – Towards the Corporeal Order)

Świdziński's identification of context or intentionality structure, in which co-exist different logics/economies regulating the our view of the world, presupposes that the context cannot be ultimately clear in the same way, in which the rule of pleasure in language is not quite clear for the mind. Therefore his 'art as contextual art' should be viewed as an important step towards the situation when it is not only important to but partial to the idea of culture economy understood as overcoming (*Aufhebung*) the dialectics of the Enlightenment (the way it was programmed, according to Habermas, by Hegel for many decades to come), but also it is important to treat with reserve the absolutistic (metaphysical, totalitarian) economy of the cultural relativism mind which battles the simplifications. Świdziński's reflection, as I showed, focuses on the phenomenon of co-existence of those discourse economies – the absolutism and relativism, seeing both of them as the agents regulating the context in which we can and we have to function.

In actual fact, the terms: absolutism and relativism are referred to in different ways, however so far it has been believed that both of them represent two radically different views – on for example, a proposition 'p', which states some facts about some value or the lack of it. Absolutism claims that every proposition 'p' is characterized by laws of contradiction (NKpNp) and the excluded medium (ApNp), to use here Łukasiewicz's non-bracketed notation. Such logical characteristics of proposition 'p' is not accepted by relativism, which claims that contradicting propositions may only be jointly true or jointly false as well as the same sentence may be true at a particular situation, or false in a different one. The antagonism of the absolutistic and relativistic thesis is grounded in a unconditional and relative consideration of proposition 'p'. The supporters of absolutism accept the veracity or falseness of the proposition 'p' for any subject, without any consideration of who utters the proposition. The supporters of relativism claim the opposite. The logical value of proposition 'p' should be considered in its relation to the subject, in other words in relation to a person and condition in which it is uttered. According to a relativist, two people (or the same person at different times) who utter contradicting propositions may both be right: hence there is no point in arguing about the propositions. Relativistic thesis is based on the fact of existing discrepancies in the interpretations of the proposition, which often are seen as their contradiction. For that reason relativists talk about the relativity of truth, goodness and beauty etc. They perceive the search of their sense as leading to contradiction; They reject the concept of the **absolute truth** as pointless.

However, it seems that some kind of mediation between the two positions is inevitable. It aims at bounding the extreme relativism through an attempt at providing an explanation to discrepancies of propositions and a possibility of excluding one of the contradicting propositions as an incompetent one. In this way it is possible to achieve a perspective of a moderate relativism, or perhaps paradoxically a perspective of a concealed absolutism. It is done through searching for a reason to accept the discrepancies of propositions as an illusion of contradiction, not the contradiction itself. Contradicting propositions are not in fact contradicting, since they are uttered by different people and they refer to different objects. There is missing the classical unity condition of time, place and action to stage the drama of contradiction. Following this pattern,

the cultural anomalies, which show some discrepancies of propositions in arguments (in Lyotard's words), are attempted to be pacified through a clear, relativistic world of alternative realities devoid of the hierarchical order inciting conflicts. The problem lies in the fact that this horizontal perspective of moderate relativism, in a paradoxical way, cannot eliminate the prerequisite to establish the native reason for those anomalies, incompetence, taboo or evilness in culture; It seems that this inventory of alternative values wants to cross them all out, by mixing up – in the experience of the origin of those disputes and illusion, or in the assumption of the existence of just one source of them.

Świdziński says: "Alternatives are permitted. The views of an adversary may be such an alternative. If such a posture is taken to the theoretically possible borders (which intellectuals tend to do) it leads to a paradox. Approving of all the alternatives, we are prone to accept (as an alternative) a view that excludes all alternatives, which means the exclusion of ourselves along with our point of view."[7]

The bankruptcy of relativism may well be represented by the fact of repressing through punishment the dissonance between freedom of speech and, based on this public law, the theory of, for example, the non-existence of concentration camps during the last war. There are more anomalies like this in social life. To give, just one example; the fact of appearing a relativistic doctrine as a cultural therapy in a burdensome world of counter-options must have a negative justification of existence in gigantic mistake of absolutism. It is similar to a medicine, which cannot be accepted without impediments or a threat of a serious disease. All dichotomies lose their meaning. The order, which is pointed at by contextualism, does not seem to be neither related to absolutism, nor to the relativistic order of *logos*. It seems to be an order defined today by the body of sociology as a bodily order.

Why Hommage?

While writing this text in mid 1990s (the text has had some minor changes since then), I was in the process of strengthening Świdziński's position in our country.[8] I have repeatedly stated in my conversations with artists that my dream is to bridge the gap between neo-avant-garde formation in the 1970s and the art of the 1990s. I was often invited to Świdziński's home where I had a pleasure of enjoying Ms Renata's dinners, savoring teas or drinks which the host brought out of his peculiar hide. The conversations with Jan (a man who is young at heart in spite his honorable age) taught me a contextual method. My inclination towards theorizing brought me closer to Świdziński. It fed my friendship with him and respect. Whereas the liking towards revolt was strengthened in me by Partum. As early as in the text "The critical play with avant-garde – corporeal centre of a structure as a post-productive fiction !/?"[9], and later in "The Art of Somatic Society"[10], my starting point was set in Świdziński contextualism which was accompanied with positive nihilism of Partum's art.[11] Finally, there was a series of contextual exhibitions inspired by Świdziński's method, to give some examples: the Brussel's *Irreligia. Morphology non-sacrum in Polish twentieth century art (2001/2002)*[12], *Neuropa. Art, patronymicum and new tribal affiliation* (2003), *InteGration. Art towards acedia* after 7-8 June 2003(2003) and the last presentation *Inc. Art against the corporate take-over of the public expression places (in Poland)* (2004). In the last publication, thanks to the initiative and invention of Zbigniew Libera, it was possible to create the portrays of artists (in Partum's case his gravestone)[13]. I feel that I, who owns so much to Świdziński, should present a shrine out of words and sentences for him, while he is still alive. Long live Jan!
Polish art history, as it is shown in Świdziński's thought and art, does not suffer from a lack of theoretical utterances of artists. It suffers from the insufficient amount of studies and anthologies of the latest art doctrines. This area has been so neglected that it ultimately led to the state of being blind to the present problems of art. We seem to be put to shame by a French art historian — Paul Ardenne, who bases on Świdziński's contextualism his modern art interpretation. The interpretation of art intervening with and participating in a given context.[14] The majority of art critics and artists tend to be satisfied with sensitivity, intuition and tangible artwork which, however, lacks any deeper reflection. There seems to be a kind of race in mass-producing over-talked exhibitions. It almost feels as if the work is done not for the art's sake, but for reasons related to some production line in an art industry. It seems to be a mark of a common art practice in corporate capitalism. Świdziński teaches us something else. Within his flat, which has got an atmosphere of a peculiarities study, he preserves the aura of patient research, a meticulous study

of human thought and a variety of contexts. There is in the air a mood of intellectual adventure. Without his work, we would not know what there is available for us. The lack of works similar to Świdziński's hits hard at the understanding of art represented by Świdziński. He has proven with his work, that art is born out of thinking, not just manual skill, or visual education. The times have changed, now.

The range of his theoretical-artistic thought, although global in its impact, in Poland is known to a rather narrow group of specialists and a selected group of artists. Świdziński is a well-known person. He ran television programs ("Polish Alphabet of Performance" on TVP Kultura), but he is still not fully understood. The reason for that is simple. His thought has not been properly publicized and there are not enough Polish publications of his major works. Most of them were published in English; to mention a few: *Art as Contextual Art*, ed. Sellem Galerie S. Petri Archive of Experimental Art, 1976, Lund, Sweden; *Art, Society and Self-Consciousness*, ed. Alberta College of Art Gallery 1979, Calgary, Canada (it has been lately translated by Łukasz Guzek); *Quotations on Contextual Art*, ed. by Michael Gibbs, Eindhoven 1988, Het Apollohuis Gallery, Holland; *Freedom and Limitations – The Anatomy of Postmodernism*, ed. by Brian Dyson, Syntax Publishing Calgary, Canada. It is simply not possible to list all magazine articles and essays, as well as lectures given on him at various universities. Only part of them is available in Polish, and there are not enough copies in public libraries. I feel that there is a great need to publish his selected works with commentaries and photographs. I hope there would be someone out there who would be able to donate the money for the cause.

Today, Jan Świdziński is a well-respected artist and theoretician. He is also an honored chairman of the Association of Other Arts Artists [Stowarzyszenia Artystów Sztuk Innych (SASI)]. He travels around the world with his performances, he is a walking encyclopedia who has left his mark on both Polish and international art. However, is his influence perhaps greater on the global scene? This is quite paradoxical, when we look at the post-war art-history of Poland. For some reason the world respect for Świdziński's work, and little appreciation for him at home, is an anomaly quite common in Polish social and cultural life. The ignorance and ill-will of native art society is often paralyzing. The good thing is that its envy is less and less effective. I would like to mention here a conversation in a Warsaw restaurant – Salomon – with a manager of Foksal Gallery, who – a bit tipsy – laughed at Świdziński's project, calling it "provincial". He was referring to the fact that Świdziński's work drew on the local, national and contextual. What he said was a complete misunderstanding, or perhaps it was a mere jealousy. What has been left of the universal exclusivity of Foksal Gallery, what has been left of that reductionist virtue? Jaromir Jedliński, one of the last worshipers of the idea, left his position at Foksal relatively quickly. Artists, for example Libera, performed an official 'de-foksalization'. They see in Świdziński's art-contextualization a source of solemnity and sense. I believe in that too. Even when I read a spiteful text written by the Foksal Gallery manager in the socialist magazine entitled *Culture*. I turn around the hierarchy and I see in **pseudo-avantgarde** something more. Against the intentions of the author, I see value and pathos, and perhaps a reason in history. There is always a different context, which describes a given context. Pseudo losses in it its negative sense and it becomes a creative anomaly which generates a new sense of our history.

The battle with the dominance of form is still going on. It seems to be eternal, as from the sense of form a wrongly understood order is born – it is a corporeal order. Świdziński becomes an ally of those, who try to make relative that corporeal order, who try to weaken it and loosen it, in order to rationalize it, sublime it and to drive it to perfection. Świdziński could not stand the idea of leadership – not only in politics dominated by the left wing follower, but also in art. He could not accept that a gallery, or museum deeply rooted in Communist state structures usurped their right to represent Polish art in the West. Perhaps his beliefs were influenced by his noble origins, his family was related to many old aristocratic families of Poland. He found it impossible to bow at the red-tape ridden Socialist Poland's structures in order to profit. Of course it happened, that we had to brush it and he had to make pragmatic choices, perhaps some in-depth research will give some light on it. At this moment it is very difficult to say something specific in that matter – what game and what profits, or losses could have been involved. However, he is and always has been an artist often referred to as an artist of spirit, who could not have been tied up by the webs of contemporary cultural politics. He has always been a person intellectually independent, who likes to try a variety of intellectual 'cuisines'.

His contextualism was often attacked by the gallery centers because it weakened their dominant, modernist, avant-garde position. Świdziński widened intellectually what Zbigniew Warpechowski called in a visual way: a narrow throat of a contemporary art life dominated by an arrangement between Ryszard Stanisławski and the Foksal Gallery. This view was supported and expressed by Andrzej Partum in his provocative and poetic *Despise*. It turned out that there was a different context possible, a context which weakened the dominant one. "I exposed myself the most – Świdziński reminisces with irony about the 1970s in one of his latest texts – when I wrote about it in my books, which no-one (rightly) wanted to publish in Polish. I tried to camouflage myself, but with no success and that is how, speaking English badly, I became a writer – a theorist of the English speaking region."

Świdziński makes it really difficult to follow. He publishes a new book in Canada – this time in French entitled: *L'Art et son Contexte: au fait, qu'est-ce que l'art?* (Quebec: Éditions Intervention, 2005). He is a respected and valued person in Canada, who made a significant contribution to the Canadian history of art. It was a phenomenon of tremendous importance in the post-war history of Polish and Canadian art, since it came as a complete surprise for American Art World. There was someone from behind the Iron Curtain who was there to criticize and competently correct the vision of art.

Świdziński employed a rebellious feature of Polish cultural heritage to promote in the West our devotion to what is specific and local. He put it in opposition to the violence of some invented ad hoc universal doctrine. In this case, a conceptual doctrine which was viewed as a form of cultural hegemony (he never renounced his own tradition – he remains a catholic and highlights the fact that what he did, he always did with Poland in mind). He based his actions on a rivalry (or even resentment) between French Canadians and the dominance of New York. The resentment which became obvious while reading an introduction by Richard Martel to the above mentioned book, in which he compares with deprecation a sect-like Kosuth's conceptualism and his attempts to eliminate expressionism to the ascetic puritanism of the English. This is where Świdziński hit hard if we take it into account that both English and American conceptualists quoted linguistic works, neo-positivism and the English analytic philosophy. Świdziński had behind him the world achievements of Polish people in formal logic, mathematics and semiotics. "If conceptualists choose logic to describe art – Świdziński often repeated – they should do it competently!" His years spent studying logic and semiotics were used well here.

I am very glad that Łukasz Guzek invited me to co-operate on a separate page dedicated fully to the studies related to Świdziński on his website 'spam.art.pl'. I promised to give him a text about Świdziński. I kept my promise and in doing so, I refreshed my thoughts on the topic from the 1990s.[15] Now, I am giving a version of my text for print. One should always keep one's word. I rejoiced over the fact that such a distinguished artist as Zbigniew Libera included Świdziński in his project entitled *The Masters*. I greatly appreciate my co-operation with Libera on it.[16] I was asked to create a non-existent interview with Jan on the basis of a recorded conversation with Świdziński and my notes. The interview was later touched upon slightly by Libera. Libera later explained that such a form of action – the introduction of Świdziński's thoughts and the thoughts of other pseudo-avantgarde artists in the structure of an utterance would make it impossible for ignoramuses to omit the thoughts and ideas of those distinguished artists. By making them the Masters, they are elevated to a position which cannot be ignored. I am sure that very soon there will be a lot of people who will admit their gratitude towards those selected artists and others from outside that group too. That is how our art and social relations should look like.

The interest in Świdziński is growing. I would like to express my appreciation to Grzegorz Borkowski who suggested that I should continue in *Obieg* magazine a text previously published in *Exit* magazine. In the text I was asked to concentrate on a detailed analysis of Game Logic undertaken by Świdziński in the 1970s. The text would mark a return to the familiar problem area, after several years from the publication of my text "The Crisis of Meaning in Art." The tautological approach of Joseph Kosuth to the anthropologized model of art in which the question of game is mentioned.[17] The issue is not straight-forward however. The thought of that post-conceptual art group, in particular Świdziński's thought, evokes respect and requires much longer research, filling the gaps and explications. In other words, there should be exegesis before anyone dares

to publish anything on the topic. One of the reasons to explore the problem of game was my last exhibition *Dowcip i władza sądzenia. Asteism w Polsce [A joke and the power of prosecution. Asteism in Poland]* CSW and Galeria Program, Warsaw, 2007. I started off with Agon, that is a game between *ingenium* and *iudicium*. I traced that topics in Polish art after 1956. Świdziński, reviewing the exhibition in a television interview, recognized that exhibition as *one of the best* of my work's achievements. Recently, I have been working on an asteiology project (greek.: to by funny, jocular) as a reflection over *ingenium* which fundamental manifestation is found in *ingenium comparans*. A comparative joke is responsible for both meaningful and irrational simile, that also includes Kosuth's comparison of the artwork to an analytic sentence (tautology) and Świdziński's critical re-modeling of the artwork to become a sentence with an intentional functor. The project of aesthetics as asteiology, which I presented at VIII Polish Convention (Warsaw, September 2007),[18] opens a new and old (at the same time) perspective in the perception of the fundamental dispute in twentieth century art. A dispute, in which conceptualism and contextualism seem to be historical creations of concept related thought, a deeper thought strand in the culture and art of the West.

There are many aspects to review, develop, interpret and evaluate, to mention one – the famous discussion in Toronto.[19] At the moment the work on it is still in a quite apologetic phase (there are many ignoramuses in Poland). I am glad that the young generation of art historians takes up the challenge of research. For example, Łukasz Ronduda whose work has been facilitated by the work of Świdziński and Partum. *The Masters* by Libera contributed greatly to the work. I put my hopes in Piotr Weychert. I helped him with the interviews recorded at Świdziński's flat, the material is supposed to be turned into a film. There are many initiatives which cannot be accounted for in this text. I would like to mention here the initiative of Waldemar Tatarczuk, thanks to whom there was recorded a meeting with Świdziński at Performance Art Centre in the Culture Centre in Lublin Dec 5th 2007. The recording of the meeting, I use in my classes with students of Lodz Fine Art Academy. The educational and interpretive work should be counted in years, if we are to create a new context for art and compete with other art centers in the world. Świdziński's example inspires and the persistence pays off.

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Translated by Elżbieta Walters.

ENDNOTES

1 See Zbigniew Warpechowski, ed. *Autonomiczny ruch konceptualny w Polsce* (Lublin: BWA, 2002). The exhibition was a critical reaction and a correction of the exhibition in CCA Zamek Ujazdowski in 2000. See: Paweł Polit and Piotr Woźniakiewicz, eds., *Refleksja konceptualna w sztuce polskiej. Doświadczenia dyskursu: 1965-1975* (Warszawa: CSW Zamek Ujazdowski, 2001).

2 Zygmunt Korus, „Kontekst decyduje o wartościach (wywiad z Janem Świdzińskim)," *Integracje* (kwiecień 1979).

3 Joseph Kosuth, *Art after Philosophy and After. Collected Writings, 1966-1990*, ed. Gabrielle Guercio (Cambridge, MA - London: MIT Press, 2002). 20.

4 ———, *Bedeutung von Bedeutung: Texte und Dokumentation der Investigationen über Kunst seit 1965 in Auswahl* (Stuttgart: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, 1981), Kat. wyst.

5 Jan Świdziński, *Quotations on Contextual Art*, ed. Michael Gibbs (Eindhoven: Het Apollohuis Gallery, 1988). 18-19.

6 Anatol Rapoport, ed. *Game Theory as a Theory of Conflict Resolution* (Dordrecht, Holandia: D. Reidel, 1974).

7 Świdziński, *Quotations on Contextual Art*. 55-56.

8 Kazimierz Piotrowski, „Sztuka jako sztuka kontekstualna. Jan Świdziński o koegzystencji absolutyzmu i -relatywizmu kulturowego," *Exit*, no. 2 (26) (1996): 1220 - 31.

9 ———, „Kritisches Spiel mit der Avantgarde – körperliches Struktur zentrum als produktive Fiktion!/? [Krytyczna gra z awangardą – cielesne centrum struktury jako produkcyjna fikcja!/?]," in *Un/Vollkommen. Die aktuelle Kunstszene in Polen*, (Bochum: Museum Bochum, 1993).

10 ———, „Sztuka somatycznego społeczeństwa," *Magazyn Sztuki*, no. 6/2/ (1995): 17-30.

11 ———, „Pozytywny nihilizm Andrzeja Partuma," *Magazyn Sztuki*, no. 5 (1995): 112-24.

12 Świdziński was not enthusiastic towards this exhibition as he thought that undertaking the religious issues in such a offensive and provocative was should not take place anymore, because these are people's private matters. That these issues are simply not undertaken today, with which I don't agree as I observe a phenomenon of the return of religion in a place of an anomy established by Świdziński. One can observe on one hand the deepening of the anomy in certain circles, but the statistics show that in the young generation conservatism is stronger and stronger. That is why the context should be recognized again and subjected to another contextualization in order to weaken its absolutist tendencies. I think that Świdziński would probably agree with that as a moderate relativist by vocation?

13 Kazimierz Piotrowski, *Inc. Sztuka wobec korporacyjnego przejmowania miejsc publicznej ekspresji* (Warszawa, Zielona Góra, Bielsko-Biała: Galeria XX1, Galeria Program, BWA w Zielonej Górze, Galeria Bielska, 2004), Exh. cat.

14 Paul Ardenne, *Un art contextuel. Création artistique en milieu urbain, en situation d'intervention, de participation* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002).

15 Kazimierz Piotrowski, "Hommage à Jan Świdziński – próba wprowadzenia do sztuki jako sztuki kontekstualnej," (2005), http://www.swidzinski.art.pl/piotrowski.html.

16 ———, „Anomia pseudoawangardy," in *Zbigniew Libera - Mistrzowie i Pozytywy*, (Łódź: Atlas Sztuki, 2004).

17 ———, „Kryzys znaczenia w sztuce. Josepha Kosutha przejście od tautologicznego do zantropologizowanego modelu sztuki," *Obieg*, no. 9/10 (1991): 17-19.

18 ———, „Estetyka jako asteiologia," in *VIII Polski Zjazd Filozoficzny. Księga streszczeń*, ed. Anna Brożek and Jacek Jadacki, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2008).

19 Świdziński, *Quotations on Contextual Art*. (where one can find notes from the conference „In the Context of the Art World" which took place in the Center for Experimental Art and Communication C. E. A. C., Toronto in November 1976).

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