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Art for the sake of democracy

Sztuka i Dokumentacja nr 16, 5

2017

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

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Democracy is an institution. Therefore it can be considered as a thing and in addition considered to be the subject of phenomenological studies. It can also be the subject of a special kind 'artistic phenomenology', that is the use of artistic means in order to study everyday life experience. The more direct the experience, the better. Hence the role of performative and anthropologised art using the ephemeral, time based art forms that mimic the dynamics of life and less the art forms of representation, illustration and picturing.

Democracy tenets are based on three republican virtues – liberte, egalite, fraternite. They refer not only to the rules of law but also to human rights, especially the last one fraternite, which refers to the relationships between human beings. This is the way in which everyday life turns into art. Hence the interests of pro-democratic art in relational art practices which unite the individual with the social, projects which situate human beings within a context. Contextual art and the contextual methods of interpretation are the most open forms of art possible, providing a participatory formula for the functioning of art. Sociological art often reminds us of 'social engineering' projects that are alien to democracy.

Usually the relationship between art and democracy is seen as a utopian one. In this point of view, art has nothing to do with a democratic praxis. But if we see the democratic practice as an ongoing discussion, then art is a field for such an activity and in addition its active agent. In a situation when democracy on the participatory level doesn't work, it is art that then becomes the alternative medium of pressure on the authority for the sake of various individual and social matters. Then it plays an important role in the presentation and communication of demands and aspirations on a national and international level. In the case of the threats against democracy that we suffered in contemporary Poland, when antidemocratic forces reached power, we should discuss anew the power of art activity in the defense of democracy.

The editor of this section has two main objectives. The first is to collect a set of articles discussing the subject of the relationship between art and democracy on the meta level that is the level of discourse that concerns its subject in itself. These are the articles that situate the subject within a frame of aesthetics, sociology, anthropology, culture studies, and also methodological articles. The second objective is to collect articles about artworks. Thus we expect articles by art historians with descriptions and interpretations of works, art issues as well as research methods. In this section we are also going to collect descriptions of projects and curators' methods as well as artists' statements about their works and working methods.

The most general goal is to collect a database of examples of works for further discussion, models of interpretation and a set of working methods concerning the issue of the relationship between art and democracy.

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