

# Kazimierz Piotrowski

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## Conceptualism as Conceptism

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if the activity of the duo may be framed in a category of some 'impure conceptualism' whose important aspect is to be found in exposing the conditions of life and work in the People's Republic of Poland. To achieve this one needs to investigate thoroughly the artists' stance towards the hegemonic term of 'conceptualism' whilst highlighting all of their actions that had any conceptual feature and to define a specific, individual form which appeared in the network of relationships with other elements of artistic practice. In my text I explain how one should understand 'conceptualism' as 'a hegemonic term' that organises and imposes itself onto an agonistic field of innovative art practices — not only in the West, but also in Poland. In this context, undertaking the question of "KwieKulik and conceptualism" opens a new perspective for a counter-hegemonic reinterpretation of conceptualism in the People's Republic of Poland. Without rejecting the term 'conceptualism', one needs to look at the questions related to it through the prism of an individual case of the KwieKulik duo. It should also allow the practices of both artists to make an imprint on 'conceptualism'. In the last part of my text, I limit myself to a series of 'contributive' notes which may be treated as orientation points in an appropriate analysis of the conceptual aspects of the art of KwieKulik.

Grzegorz Sztabiński

### **Conceptual Tautologies**

The text is an attempt to consider the character of tautological activities undertaken in conceptual art. There are two ways the issue can be approached. The first refers to the texts of Joseph Kosuth, who wrote that an artwork is a tautology because it refers to the term 'art'. The author develops the sense of Kosuth's statement "a work of art is a definition of art" and states, that a part of the tautological system that makes a proposed *definiens* of 'art' is available for direct perception, but the other part, which is the term 'art' must be recalled intellectually by the recipient. After taking into account the conceptual reference, the sense of a conceptual project with a meta-artistic character becomes noticeable. Polish examples of such works are projects by Roman Opałka, Jarosław Kozłowski, Jan Chwałczyk and Wanda Gołkowska. The second part of the article considers conceptual projects, in which both parts of equal tautology are directly given. Conceptual works of this structure may either state what is "unquestionable and universally important" (as Alicja Kępińska wrote) or make a kind of sense "at the same time suggested and reversed" (Umberto Eco). The possibilities are considered in reference to tautological works of Zdzisław Jurkiewicz, Jarosław Kozłowski, Zbigniew Dłubak and Jerzy Trelński.

Bogusław Jasiński

### **Art Instead of Philosophy**

The aim of this text is to show the cognitive function of the art later referred to as conceptual. Conceptualism was particularly predisposed to express abstract messages which included philosophical ones. The basic question I would like to pose in this text is: can a conceptual art toolbox express in its own way that which had been formerly expressed by philosophy? How, with the usage of means suggested by conceptual art, may one build a general image of the world – comparable to that which philosophy had previously given? Perhaps a full answer to the above question leads us into the areas of art which ceased to fill the boundaries of conceptualism, or post-conceptualism and heads straightforward to action, which Grotowski called an 'active culture' — that is a place where art is not sufficient anymore.

Kazimierz Piotrowski

### **Conceptualism as Conceptism**

We know, how valuable the role of the functor 'as' played in conceptualism. The functor was a basic linguistic tool of conceptual art infrastructure – the minimal part of speech that allowed for the production of concepts, engaging *ingenium* in its primary function as *ingenium comparans*. The criticism of conceptualism, mainly

comparison or identification of the artwork and analytic proposition revealed the fact that the tautological model of Kosuth is just one of many art concepts and remains a product of paralogical thinking. What is therefore decisive for conceptualism is an attempt to build a universal art theory: an idea, that for centuries has remained the basis for logical thinking, or the concept itself, in which paralogy cannot be eliminated. The tendency to narrow the meaning of a concept and limit art to its idea was marked in the text by Daniel Buren "Beware!" (1969-1970). How did it happen, that the formula of conceptism, used in the beginning of the decade by Henry Flynt in the text entitled "Concept Art" (1961) was replaced by conceptual art? For Flynt concept art was art whose materials were the language and concepts. According to him, a concept is a trace of an idea by Plato and means the intension of a name, but with today's state of knowledge demanding an objective relationship between a name and its intension this meaning is incorrect. Therefore, if the relationship is subjective, then the concept as a possible opposition towards the objective idea occupies a privileged space in a language and keeps its strength. Also in Sol LeWitt's "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967) and "Sentences on Conceptual Art" (1969), in which despite the fact that the expression 'conceptual art' appears explicitly, the term 'concept' remains an alternative to the idea, that may be simple and does not need to be complex. So according to Sol LeWitt, the concept implies a general direction, and ideas are its components. To radicalise this issue, let's ask, if conceptualism privileges the conceptual, as its literally understood name would indicate? Or on the other hand is what is called a concept, that being something ingenious and that even though it includes a moment of ideation (**abstracting** and transcending sensuality, that is crossing the borders of the material paradigm of art towards the idea), it is not reduced to a conceptual element, but rather expresses sensuality or its basic modus? The text is an attempt to show the tension in the art of Polish conceptists who referred in their paralogical discourse to conceptualism, especially with reference to the example of Andrzej Partum's work.

Janusz Zagrodzki

### **Art as an Expression of the Artist's Awareness**

Considerations upon the awareness that previously had been identified as the power of God's creation, a universal mind that binds all terrestrial matters together, are the source of an ancient thought. The term conceptualism – *conceptus*, defining a thought, a concept, an imagination – was inherited from the Latin, but as an idea it emerged in philosophical discussions long before Socrates. The idea of conceptual perception may be found in Plato's philosophy; the definition of creative awareness was not, however, precisely defined by him. It was only Aristotle who assumed that a condition for art to exist is "a permanent disposition capable of producing something with reason". This direction of research was undertaken by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, one of the first philosophers examining consciousness, the author of the treatise entitled "Philosophy of Art". The power of Schelling's thought was an emphasis on using symbols in art. Confronting hidden meanings with the literality of concepts based on tangible aspects of knowledge mean that his opinions are still of interest for researchers. The concept of a self-awareness we owe to the establishments of René Descartes. His principle "I think therefore I am" did not remove and in fact even highlighted the doubts that arise during creative activity.

What is contemporary art? – a discipline which attempts to understand the power of the human mind, which enables artists to use the knowledge they possess in action. It is an inborn predisposition, or perhaps it is a disposition to produce something material with a thought and therefore it is conceptual in nature. The values in art result from the essence of a message, and the methods of transmitting and receiving are, in a natural way, linked to the intellectual process and it does not matter, which form of the 'conceptualisation' of the world the artist chose. Art understood as a concept is often identified as utopian. Utopia, on the other hand, is most often understood as an intentional attitude that exists in one's consciousness, an idea which cannot be realised. The question arises: what is an artwork completed as an artistic fact. This apparent antinomy between the notions of reality, utopia and concept in art