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The mobility of Romuald Kutera's works

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Julia Sowińska-Heim reconstructs the ideas behind the course of a series of urban projects that were organized during the last dozen or so years by the Manhattan Gallery in Łódź. She is especially interested in the ones that touched upon the immediate context of the gallery and its functioning - namely, Śródmiejska Dzielnica Mieszaniowa, a residential district consisting of large blocks of flats, known as 'Manhattan'. The enterprises in question joined artistic, educational and social practices together with field research into the anthropology of the city. The journeys around the area of Manhattan in Łódź gave a chance to excavate and rework the collective memory of the inhabitants of the district, as well as reveal some local myths and problems of everyday life. Unfortunately, work on the identity of the place was interrupted when the gallery had to move out of the district. The city also forms the context for artistic journeys described by Blanka Brzozowska. She uses Marc Augé's anthropology of the metro to analyse examples of contemporary *flânerie* that is performed by means of city transportation: the tube and the tram. Pierre Nadillon's 'tubist mapjacking', the interception of the official tube maps and transformation of them into his own poetic, cultural and social representations of space, helps to call into question the functionalism of relocation and transforms a journey into a vehicle of memory. Similarly, in his works, Patrick Corillon uses tram stops as landmarks on his maps of alternative poetical and narrative journeys around the city. What is at stake here is the possibility of an experience of the city, enriched beyond functionalist reductionism.

The issue of following an incorrect route, going off course and crossing cartographic divides comes back again in the text by Anna Nacher. The author deals with the subversion of the straight continuous line in projects dealing with the effectiveness of communication and the problem of borders - especially state borders. This phenomenon is analysed in the context of the situationist art of 'drifting' or 'meandering' and certain urban projects that can be linked to this tradition, then also the classical land art works, and, last but not least, the contemporary locative media projects. The next step in this tactical game is provided by projects called 'dislocative media', which have become important symbolic instruments in order to fight with the immigration policies of many countries nowadays. Ewa Wójtowicz brings to the fore the mediating role that image technologies play, together with traditional cultural codes, in shaping the experience of the journey. She looks at a couple of artistic projects that play with the state of image overproduction and poses a question concerning the 'authenticity' of the experience of the journey at a time when its new, collective and a priori forms are generated, for example, by the interfaces Google Earth and Google Street View. Today, the role of journey interfaces is also played by contextual art exhibitions that aim at bringing closer and explaining the cultural specificity and the way of life for people from outside of the Western world. Such postcolonial enterprises often risk becoming the tools of a hidden symbolic neocolonialism. This necessitates questions about the very possibility of intercultural translation, about a certain ethics of travelling and its image testimony as experiences of translation.

The last two texts both refer to biographical methods of research as appropriate tools of confronting the problem of "art on the move". Tomasz Ferenc uses his own research carried out within the perspective of biographically oriented sociology of art in order to describe the experience of emigration by contemporary Polish artists from different art fields who live in Berlin, Paris, London and New York. He asks if their individual biographical trajectories share any common features that would prove a certain experience typical of this social group. He therefore examines the reasons for emigration and the strategies used to adapt to the conditions in a foreign country. He also asks how a new situation translates into their art and their artistic success abroad - its individual factors, measures and definitions. Finally, Łukasz Guzek shows the possibility and validity of interpreting performance art as well as writing its history with the use of biographies and autobiographies of performers treated as formative factors of the discipline. An example of such procedure is *Metamuseum*, a project by Artur Tajber that aims at documenting performance art by referring to elements of performers' biographical data. Guzek grounds such biographism in a variety of philosophical and theoretical contexts. The biography not only helps to put into place the historical context of performance art but it also shows the intersection of personal and geographical trajectories of singular performers' activities - it sketches a net of routes and a map of places they visited. In this way, the history of performance art turns out to be at the same time, a history of performers' journeys.

Sylwia Serafinowicz, "The mobility of Romuald Kutera's works"

Mobility is an indispensable part of conceptual practice. Its main mediums - photographs, slides, drawings and texts - allowed artists the possibility of circulating their works relatively easily, both in Poland and abroad. Smaller works, whose dimensions did not exceed the A4 format, were sent by post. The bigger ones were often transported in suitcases. In the late sixties and in the seventies, this strategy was often employed by radical conceptual artists to reach beyond the existing art scene and create an

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.