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Biography in research on performance art : the proposed thematic areas and methods

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach
dozwolonego użytku.

Łukasz Guzek, „Biography in research on performance art. The proposed thematic areas and methods”

This article presents a network of notions drawn mainly from *Theory of the Avant-garde* by Peter Burger, the pragmatic aesthetics of John Dewey and Richard Shusterman, in terms of Krystyna Wilkoszewska, and the relational aesthetics of Nicolas Bourriaud and it is supplemented by related concepts such as ‘incontology’. These notions form a proposal for the methodological categories around which strategies can be created for the study of performative phenomena with emphasis on the (auto) biography.

The concepts of the pragmatic aesthetics recalled above are defined so that they become useful in the study whilst taking into account the changeability of the object of study. Pragmatism, by virtue of its basic assumptions, as well as performance art forms by its nature, are guided towards the individual and the practical life of the individual, and respectively - towards individual artistic practice. This tends to include a biography in research and interpretation of single individual artworks, but most importantly here, biography is one way to study art history, history of action art and the performance art discipline. Action art history is the history of presentness. The history of performance art can be ‘told’ through the history of performers.

Exemplification is made up of examples gathered in the project *Metamuzeum* by Artur Tajber, who invited artists-performers to participate in it using a biographical key. They are artists born in 1953 as Tajber himself, who share experience of the same generation: Jaap Blonk (Netherlands), Seiji Shimoda (Japan), Roi Vaara (Finland). This set was completed by the artists invited by him to participate in a mini festival of performance art entitled *1923-2013 Performance Art* (MOCAK in Cracow). The starting point of the festival was also the biography of the performers, this time celebrating in 2013 ‘full’ anniversary of the birth: 1923 - this is the year of the birth of Jan Świdziński, who reached his 90th year, Stuart Brisley, born in 1933 who reached his 80th year, Alastair McLennan, born 1943 who reached his 70th year plus the previously mentioned ones born in 1953. It shows individual biographies building up performance art on a global scale. The artistic biographies of the performers are a record of their journeys, but also part of a record of the history of the discipline. In the examples (histories) collected by Tajber in the project, individual biographies nearly overlap with the history of the discipline.

This case analysis shows the process of the development of performance art world wide and at the same time its regional differences. We can see how the network - institution of performance art was constructed and how it changes; its dynamics, its “rhythm of life” and follow Wilkoszewska who published her book *Art as the Rhythm of Life* on Dewey’s aesthetics. The history of performance art is also, to a large extent, the history of performers’ journeys.

Varia

Wojciech Szymański, “»The difference between a metal file and a painting is that a painting is more versatile in its use«: re-reading Andrzej Wróblewski. Notes on the margin of *Avoiding Intermediary States*”

The paper has been inspired by the publication of *Avoiding Intermediary States*, i.e. the latest volume dedicated to the life and work of Andrzej Wróblewski and simultaneously, the first critical catalogue of his work. The first part of the paper considers the book vis-à-vis other attempts to interpret and re-evaluate Wróblewski’s art which have been undertaken by Polish art history and criticism over the last twenty years. The second part problematizes both Wróblewski’s oeuvre and its subsequent reception in the context of his three pieces (a short story, a diary and a theoretical treatise on painting) published for the first time in *Avoiding Intermediary States* and thus made available to researchers. The paper offers an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the pieces and consequently discusses them by referring to the concepts of “dissevered” and dis-continued subjectivity (identity) of a creator and autothanatographic phantasm, which are juxtaposed with the Romantic notions of despair and irony (S. Kierkegaard and W. von Kleist). A Romantic impulse identified in Wróblewski’s oeuvre is then confronted with an attempt to link it to the Polish Romantic tradition (i.e. national liberation and Messianism). The paper concludes with the following postulate: the ideas of identity and autothanatographic phantasm identified in Wróblewski’s pieces should be applied to a series of paintings entitled *Execution* (1949) which may lead to modification of previously formulated claims and hypotheses.