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## Remont Gallery : The Unknown Avant-garde of the Seventies

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results from an assumption that something is possible and other things are not and that all arguments depend on the assumed point of reference. It is often claimed in colloquial sentences that a project turned out to be utopian. But what does it mean? Can art be utopian? Has any art program ever been fully completed? Can ideas stemming from one's artistic statement, in their full complexity, demanding a lot of harmonious circumstances, ever be realised? So called utopian or conceptual thought is the basis of all meaningful art achievements, contrary to intentions thought to be realistic, which by their very down-to-earth nature, lack fantasy and therefore have little in common with art. The emergence of an art concept is parallel to the possibilities of its realisation. Not sooner does art exist for real, then as a result a conflict between creative ideas and changing reality appears. Sometimes artistic objectives do not develop further beyond the project stage, sometimes they turn into concrete objects, events or processes. The fact that their incarnations exist, does not determine the meanings. The essence of artistic work is to sustain the idea created. If it takes the form of a registered project then it automatically turns into a tangible object, an item, a phenomenon which can be a base for further actions. So, when the artist questions the rules of the surrounding reality, it is not a conceptual utopia that emerges, but new realities.

Łukasz Guzek

### **Gallery as an Artistic Project in Conceptual Art**

The text announces a research program on the galleries that emerged in relation to conceptual art and introduces the scope and method of research.

The general aim of the research is to set apart the issue of a conceptual gallery as an independent artistic phenomenon. A conceptual gallery is examined as a general artistic formula.

The methodological scheme presented in the text aims at establishing a basic chronology and creating a typology of the trend.

Historically, conceptual galleries emerged and were shaped in the frame of a broadly understood conceptual tendency (a leading tendency in the seventies) because at that time, there occurred a specific formal-artistic relationship between art and gallery.

Until now, the conceptual gallery trend has been examined mainly in the context of the social, political and cultural conditions in which they were functioning. The research on conceptual galleries as an artistic project and a form of conceptual art causes the vector of the research to reverse.

The artistic character of particular galleries could be graded into those which housed more or less radical projects. One may imagine a scale between limit points: a gallery as a work of art and a gallery as an art container and place all galleries from the seventies on it.

The beginning of the conceptual gallery movement in Poland is marked by a project by Andrzej Kostołowski and Jarosław Kozłowski entitled NET (1971), based on a mail-art formula. It assumed not only collecting and exhibiting the works sent (which was each institution's aim), but also creating their own specific points in the network of institutions. Thirty five galleries participated in an exhibition which summarised an activity of the BWA Gallery in Sopot in the summer of 1981. The galleries of this type functioned in the next decade, even during martial law. In the mid-nineties the gallery movement started to integrate again, however after 2000 the commercialisation of the art market caused their disappearance.

Katarzyna Urbańska

### **Remont Gallery. The Unknown Avant-garde of the Seventies**

The attempts to describe a history of Polish conceptualism in a systematic way, have been until now undertaken in a very similar way. The studies have concentrated mainly on outlining a few artistic centres with connections to the trend. These studies were discussed both in publications from the eighties and nineties and in more recent ones. Only Bożena Kowalska in her book *Artystyczno-społeczna problematyka zrzeszeń plastyków w Polsce w latach 1946-1976* (*Artistic and social problems of*

*artistic groups in Poland in 1946-1976*) from 1981 presented a broader panorama of artistic trends that emerged in the seventies. The history of Polish conceptualism mostly covers a narrow circle of galleries: the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw, Pod Mona Lisą and Permafo in Wrocław, and Akumulatory<sup>2</sup> in Poznań; a separate place is taken by film and photographic activities. The Remont Gallery in Warsaw, which was active around the same time, was not historically analysed. Its activity has always been treated as marginal. Undoubtedly this was caused by the specific atmosphere of those times, personal relationships and (often wrong) opinions which influenced the works of critics later on. What I refer to is the stance taken by the Foksal Gallery towards more and more frequent activities of the neo avant-garde, which meant that the gallery was often accused of non-uniformity, ambiguity of motives, but also aggression and mockery of the avant-garde. The creator and founder of the Remont Gallery was Henryk Gajewski. The official date when the Gallery was opened was 1.04.1972, and the date it closed was 06.11.1979. For almost seven years it hosted prominent Polish and foreign artists; it published numerous but modest publications, organised international conferences, exhibitions and activities that crossed the official boundaries of art. The gallery, from the very beginning, had little in common with the traditional concept of an art gallery. Its programme was filled with meetings with known publicists, political, social and cultural discussions and exhibitions with modern photography. Thanks to its open formula, the projects were realised by artists coming from various milieux. In the programme it was underlined, that it was not a gallery of one group or trend. What is worth noting is the fact that it showed the works of artists recognised as the leading representatives of neo avant-garde and now often linked with different art centers. The activities of the Remont Gallery can be compared to the activities of such places as Pod Mona Lisą and Permafo, where the gallery space was used for 'new media' or actions from the border of audiovisual art. The Remont Gallery in the beginning, similarly to Permafo, showed experimental photography and photo-conceptualism (Lucjan Demindowski, Krzysztof Wojciechowski, Elżbieta Tejchman, Andrzej Jórczak, Andrzej Lachowicz, Antoni Mikołajczyk, Zygmunt Rytko and Henryk Gajewski). No other gallery in Warsaw was more dynamic and with such a diversified programme, which allows us to analyse its activity from the perspective of a variety of discourses situated on the border of conceptual, contextual art, performance, mail-art, photography, installation, body art, audio-art or happenings.

Maciej H. Zdanowicz

### **The Concept and Experience of Time in the Art of Polish Conceptualism.**

In my paper I analyse the art of selected Polish conceptual artists, whose art and creative strategies clearly attempt to analyse the essence of time. I consider exceptional in this context the work of Roman Opałka (*Opałka 1965 /1 – ∞*), Natalia LL's recordings (*Permanent recordings of time*), Zdzisław Jurkiewicz's *Saturn and Jupiter Ways*, and the projects by Stanisław Dróżdż (*FROM TO*) that touch upon various levels of time. In the presented analyses, I refer to the psychological and philosophical concept of perception and apercption, as well as an anthropological understanding of time. In my view, conceptual art is the genre whose characteristics lie in the conscious cognition and deep intellectual analysis of the reality surrounding the artist. With regard to the active role of the mind in the process of perception the apercption of time may be a more appropriate term.

Jerzy Olek

### **Foto Medium Art**

The Foto-Medium-Art Gallery has worked continuously since 1977. For twenty years it was based in Wrocław and since 2007 in Kraków. During that time, an emphasis was placed on various issues which were reflected by the programme and the way it acted. After the analytical and new media period (in the seventies) there was a time of 'elementary photography' (the eighties). However, photography was not