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Artistic and scientifically documentative journeys around Manhattan in Łódź

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach
dozwolonego użytku.

Magdalena Radomska, Journeys by Central-Eastern European artists in the seventies”

The totalitarian communist regime, which fell in Europe in 1989 was totalitarian also in how it had appropriated the semantic field constituting meaning. Travels undertaken by artists outside of the geographical borders of communist countries had therefore the status of an attempt to construct works outside of this semantic system of gravitation, which seemed to control the meanings of notions in use behind the iron curtain. Simultaneously these travels could be called hazardous as they misled the traveller towards the utopia of a free and universal language or - towards misunderstanding – loss and imperfections which appeared when those notions were translated for the Western receiver. Travels were of various kinds - from emigration and from outside the system of references, to trips enabling the relative mobility of notional categories constitutive for the meaning of works. An interesting phenomenon was established with artistic travels to other countries of the Eastern Block, undertaken often within the official framework of international cooperation. They revealed inconsistencies in the language which although propagated as common and readable, appeared as a language appropriating notions.

Particularly significant were those works, which problematized the status of travel undertaken within the fame of the Soviet Block - such as art works created as a result of cooperation by Czech, Slovakian and Hungarian artists concerning artistic commentary on the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia, or performances created in Budapest by Yugoslavian artist Bálint Szombathy.

Another crucial form of travel was established with trips away from the Capital cities identified with the particular control of the censorship apparatus such as trips by Hungarian neo-avant-garde artists to outside Budapest or those leading out of Moscow practised by the Russian group Collective Actions. These have a particular status of reflection, a semantic distance from the notional structure.

The issue of the translation of codes relating to both the creation and reception of the art work created during artistic travels to the West as early as in the seventies are problematized by Hungarian artist Endre Tót and Yugoslavian Braco Dimitrijević. The art created by them was readable both in the Western and non-Western idiom (E. Tót) and it is rooted in various semantic systems enabling the critical attitude towards historical formation and their discursive practices (B. Dimitrijević).

The last and often ultimate way of travelling was designed by emigrations - both inner and outer. Crucial works on the subject were created by Hungarian neo-avant-garde artists - such as András Halász - equipped with particular sensitivity towards the political context, who, beside the importance of the destination of emigration, emphasized the importance of its context, which functioned as a peculiar baggage dragged by these artists during each and every journey.

Julia Sowińska-Heim, „Artistic and scientifically documentative journeys around Manhattan in Łódź”

In 1991, an innovative and original artistic space was created by Krystyna Potocka-Suwalska on the ground floor of a block of flats in Łódź's Manhattan district (which is a housing estate dating from the 1970s). Since the very beginning, a significant part of the program of the Manhattan Gallery, which presents trends important to modern art as well as artists linked with alternative culture (including music, literature and activities from the borders of various artistic disciplines), has been joining or in many cases initiating a discourse on the city. Importantly, projects run by The Manhattan Gallery have not been limited to activities closed within the gallery space, provoking artists to set off on a peculiar, real and conceptual journey around the city and around a specific area within its structure, namely a communist housing estate, whose name was borrowed from the very heart of capitalist New York, Manhattan, and transferred to worker's Łódź.

The question of a place's context and its artistic penetration has always been an important element of the Manhattan Gallery's functioning and artistic establishment. One of the first activities of that kind was an educational and social project *A guide to Manhattan (Przewodnik po Manhattanie)* carried out at the end of 1995/beginning of 1996. It provoked both audience and authors to make a unique journey promoting a new outlook - discovering, interpreting and understanding Łódź's city space, namely the Manhattan housing estate. After ten years, the same people made a journey around Manhattan once again. Another confrontation with the city provided a strong impetus to a new self-reflection and resulted in the project *A guide to Manhattan. 1995-2010. Continuation (Przewodnik po Manhattanie. 1995-2010. Ciąg dalszy)*.

As far as art and science are concerned, the journeys around Łódź's Manhattan fosters a divulging memory and identity of the place through creating multi-layered micro-narrations. Creative activity

provides an opportunity for diagnosing as well as undertaking a peculiar assessment of this anonymous urban space.

Blanka Brzozowska, „Travelling by public transport. Art projects by Pierre Nadilon and Patrick Corillon in the context of Marc Augé’s anthropology of the metro”

This article presents art projects that use urban transport and their schemes for the documentation of experience of urban space. The context for this discussion relates to the work of Marc Augé *In the Metro*. The metro in terms of the anthropology of the underground is shown as a ‘memory machine’ which allows the user to navigate the web of references to various aspects of an individual and collective life. Navigating the subway therefore leads one to confront with one’s own memories, which are associated with specific parts of urban space. This in turn creates opportunities for artistic practice, which aim to break with perceptual habits created by everyday routes.

The article presents artistic projects by two artists: Pierre Nadilon and Patrick Corillon. The first represents tubism, urban art using as material, subway maps. This particular practice allows us to create maps that do not help us orientate faster in space, but on the contrary, they make it possible to get lost, finding unexpected meanings. ‘Mapjacking’ is based on intercepting the map as the visual representation of urban space and using it in the form of an artistic game. As an art form tubism is close to graffiti and other forms of art in the public space, even though its actions are made on the basis of digital design tools. Using maps of public transport Nadilon creates ‘portraits’ and ‘landscapes’. He substitutes the actual stations’ names for new ones, related to a chosen topic. The practice changes completely the experience of using maps to plan an established order.

The *Fleurs du tramway* uses the tram to construct alternative narratives about the city. The artist uses the metaphor of a flower to describe and modify the experience of urban space. He offers passengers a ‘flower’ pattern, according to which they can traverse the space, breaking the perceptual habits devised in the course of daily trips. Such ‘walks’ are inscribed in the graphical form of a flower, accompanied in each case on the side of an anecdote. Visualizations of the ‘walks’ are printed on transparent film and placed at bus stops. Such formulas have an impact on the imagination of passengers, who are travelling daily the same route.

Anna Nacher, „Teletechnologies, maps and digital traces. From situationism and land art to locative media art”

The article is aimed at analysing the common theoretical thread running through several walking-based projects, classified as situationist, land art and / or locative media art. My main point of departure is the following question: how do the spatial characteristics of such projects relate to the concept of geometrical line? Drawing upon the proposition of Tim Ingold I look at how particular art projects problematize the regularity of line: either through the idea of situationist drift or through ambiguous forms of materializations embodied in the walking-based artworks by Hamish Fulton and Richard Long. What is quite evident in such instances is the fact that respective practices constituting the work of art in fact address the issue of spatial regimes based on geometrical, straight line which - according to the conclusions offered by Ingold in his book *Lines: A Brief History* - can be seen as a foundational feature for both the Lefebvrian notion of abstract space and the very old media technology of writing (which means production of meaning by the use of a set of signs inscribed on a surface). Lefebvre reminds us in his *Production of Space* that such models of abstract space, embodied in traditional cartography and bureaucratic regimes of urban management tend to favor the stable discursive items over the elusive facts of lived space, to the extent that any discourse based on clearly marked signs gets entwined with the very fact of intelligibility. Therefore, the situationist drifts and the idea of psychogeography can be seen as the subversion of the discourse of straight line, similarly to walks performed by Hamish Fulton (who prefers not to leave any trace on the surface while walking and for whom the artwork itself is constituted with the very act of movement) and Richard Long (who performs the lines on surfaces either with persistent walking or with natural materials like stones, albeit their ambivalent materializations raise doubts as to the nature of line: the very idea of a straight line seen as unitary phenomenon gets subverted). However, the case of locative media art is entirely different: the reality of digital tracking has to be considered which radically changes the meaning of the projects based on the idea of situationist drift. Getting lost is barely