



Marek
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**WORK OF ART
AS AN EVENT
PERFORMANCE
RESTRUCTURED IN
IMAGINATION**

The term 'performance' is outstandingly wide; for decades there have been debates regarding its semantic scope, understanding and forms. As notices Lilianna Bieszczad, swift development of *performance studies* made the *idea of performance and the slogan of performative expression cover an extraordinary spectre of phenomena, starting with art, ending at processes, events and situations arranged in everyday life. At the same time the very Performatics is an example of multi-track open thinking and is inspiration to undertake issues at the borders of various fields*¹. Not engaging here in disputes regarding terminology, it is worth drawing attention to certain less obvious forms in which performance and performativeness revealed themselves in contemporary art, in works of artists who – at first sight – seem to be distant from treating themselves as performers, and for sure they do not think of their own artistic expressions as performance. In the case of those artists, and at least in the case of some works of art, we need to take one more issue into account, related with the status of these works. It is about a situation in which a work of art escapes typical schemes of perception, where *usual aesthetic logic – of works of art and their contemplation – is, by assumption, a slave of the subject-object scheme*². Wolfgang Iser thinks that overcoming this scheme may happen mainly through an event³. As it seems, such an event could be the very piece of art, or the event, included in the structure of the work of art and sometimes hidden in it very deeply, will be the key element for reading meanings of a given realization.

Looking from this perspective, such works of art where artists do not present the very performance but rather show its effects will be an amazingly interesting case of how performance functions in contemporary art. Performance is embedded in them as if the tissue of the work; it was necessary for the work of art to be created, however, it is hiding in it and the recipient has to make effort to get (reconstruct) this performative dimension of this art and understand (realize) the entailed consequences. We must, of course, remember here that the idea of performativeness, so often used nowadays with reference to various phenomena in the area of art and culture, is a very wide term, not homogeneous and of multiple meanings. In the most general sense, as correctly noticed by Jacek Wachowski, one may differentiate at least two meanings: *On the one hand it refers to activity, its attributes, pace, rhythm and sequences creating that activity (allowing in this way formulation of comments regarding meanings which result from the sequence and consequence of particular elements, therefore, the syntactic order). On the other hand, it refers to the effectiveness of actions, to the consequences that those actions bring along, to their effects*⁴. During the restructuring of those 'hidden' performances one has to take into account both of those meanings, one also has to be open to a series of additional contexts that are embedded in the tissue of these works of art.

An amazing example of works of art where one could find such a hidden performance, is a very elaborate series of works *Seeing* by a Japanese artist Akira Komoto. The series situates itself at the border between painting and photography. The artist does not juxtapose these two media here, he does not want to collide or confront them, but rather wants to create conditions where their symbiotic merger could take place. The beginning of the series was described by the artist himself: *In 1974 I found a red and green tomato in Asama hills. Toning the colours down on a sheet of paper I combined these two toma-*

toes and made a colourful photograph. And this is how it all started. I will now describe the whole process of creation until the work is finished. First, I place the canvas in the middle of the stage and, having taken a look from a distance of several metres, paint a gouache on the canvas, with the shade, vividness and colours identical with the background where it is located. As I paint the canvas with the same colours that are in the background, the painting seems to melt in it. Then I take a photo of it on a colour film 6x7. Painting nature and the object placed in it with the same colours, or – more precisely, merging them in the layer covering the film, I make them the same. It is an illusion at the colour level. It is extremely personal, an experience available to our eyes is a wonderful experience. I created three hundred such experiences⁵.

Komoto starts this statement as if he wanted to tell a tale, as if he wanted to report an amazing adventure that he experienced. That first work with the red and green tomatoes found in Asama hills becomes a kind of a slightly opened gate behind which the artist discovers unexpected fascinating space. And, indeed, after first very simple works that make the impression of ascetic still lives supplemented with painting insertions, Komoto more and more boldly starts to use the opportunities appearing in front of him. The main stages of the creative process in the whole series *Seeing* still remain the same, although the places of realizing the works change and the background for the painting actions is not always the canvas, as sometimes it is a sheet of paper, sometimes a board or a glass, but often very unconventional or even funny objects (e.g. a spade) – basically everything here may become the canvas (an apple, a nut, a stone, a wooden stick, a stick stuck in the seaside sand).

The method used by Akira Komoto is a painting performance that runs without spectators and is observed only by a photo camera. The camera reveals the essence of this performance; each gesture of the painter must be agreed on with the 'eye' of the camera. The painting

is created for it and with it. The artist sees a painting tool in it: *If camera obscura, used since the 16th century to record images in a general sense, is not an ascendant of the camera, but a painting tool, then a photograph is also a painting work of art. The evening sun painted on the screen of a manually realized camera obscura stands out with truly breath-taking beauty. With the occurrence of this camera, the topic transformed into a painting, becoming visible poetry*⁶.

Many paintings being a part of the series *Seeing* are landscapes or – in other words – records of painting performances that took place in the landscape. Those paintings (the whole series) are works of art which are truly contemporary. They may be treated as a specific meta-illusion, a mixture of the illusion of the photographic landscape and the illusion of the painting landscape. One must not, however, forget that the motive of a landscape played an important role in traditions of the art of the Far East and these traditions are, in a way, present in those works. The thing here is about e.g. a symbiotic attitude to nature and the world⁷. The painting performance by Akira Komoto, where he needs to be subject to rhythms of nature, seems every time to be some kind of meditation thanks to which the artist becomes a part of the reality surrounding him. What is striking here is the economy of means that he uses and, this restraint probably hints at the tradition of a tea pavilion and great masters of the tea ceremony who, in a sense, may be considered historical artistic performers⁸.

The photo camera does not register the very performance here, it is an instrument guiding the actions of the painter – we may imagine how the artist wanders around between the camera on a tripod and the canvas placed before it, often quite at a distance, as the precision (or incorrectness) of his painting decisions he must verify each time through the point of view of the camera. In the end, if the whole process runs correctly, the artist may save its final effect in

a photograph. Ikuo Saito, who analysed the series *Seeing* multiple times, emphasized that [...] *these works are not ordinary records of performance, but they are rather paintings for which this performance was mainly created*⁹. The spectator, being aware of the method used by the artist, may only reconstruct this performance in his imagination. These works of art include a certain special paradox – we appreciate the painting talent of the artist, his undoubtful extraordinary workshop competences through the non-painting medium, namely through photography.

The method of the for-the-camera performance, present in the series *Seeing* by Akira Komoto, is one of the most popular methods used in the so-called staging photography. It resulted in a series of prominent realizations in creations of such artists like Jürgen Klauke, Cindy Sherman, Bernhard and Anna Blume, Dieter Appelt or Katarzyna Kozyra. However, the realization by the Japanese artist is of unique nature – each of his works of art is literally a temporary image, in which for a short period of time the reality ‘perceived’ through the camera and all painted shapes, colours, their saturation and shade merge with one another. It is sufficient to have a slight change of weather or pressure, a blow of wind and the whole work of the artist may be jeopardized. Therefore, one needs to agree with Ikuo Saito, who thinks that the artist’s painting actions which symbiotically blend with the surrounding nature, *must be photographed as an absolute moment, so a moment which will not go beyond itself*¹⁰.

Painting performance which is embedded in the structure and matter of the work of art may be also found in the realization by Lech Twardowski *Generator bez maszyn*, presented by the artist in 2003 in the National Museum in Wrocław. From the first moment the spectator is extremely impressed by a solemn, as if festive, character of the work of the painter from Wrocław. What is striking, it is the symmetry and the way that piece of art, of almost altar-like structure,

closes the recipient in itself. Large (420 cm x 420 cm), square, almost monochromatic paintings were hung on three walls. Between them, in the middle of the room, there was a fourth painting (Object? Podium?) located, horizontally on the floor, twice as big as the pieces hanging on walls. It was made from boards whose surface was covered by the artist with a special mix of cement (modelled with hands), on which he later put darker duller colours. In the middle of this podium with a painterly texture Twardowski placed a square hole, of the same size as the other three paintings, filled with a layer of salt. Only after some time, after a longer experience with the piece of art, the spectator could see that all the paintings were built from identical, square modules (sized 70 x 70 cm).

What we can see in Twardowski's realization are references to Malewicz's square. In his ascetic, although at the same time extremely rich in form and meaning, work he takes a look at the 'zero form' by Malewicz from the artistic perspective of the beginning of the 21st century, from the perspective of the situation of painting, situation of art 'affected' by the twentieth-century modernism and post-modernism. However, here we do not deal with a simple quotation of a work of art or a gesture of another artist. It is rather a discussion with consequences of that decision. The realization of the artist does not come from modernist longings – he started his work without any ready rules that would order his actions. The activity of the author was directed rather at finding and establishing rules of what will happen, at finding the rules which would enable the occurrence of the work of art. In this sense, this realization perfectly fits into the post-modern practices diagnosed by Lyotard. The work of the Wrocław artist has, therefore, the nature and status of an event. However, one should remember that in that case both the traditionally perceived material effect of creative thinking and the whole process leading to its creation are a piece of art.

There is no doubt that *Generator...* by Lech Twardowski is a painting artwork, but what is usually the revealed content and matter of painting (paint is put on the surface), is hidden here. The purpose of the artist was not to demonstrate mastery of his painting workshop or revealing a remarkable nature of own sensitivity. Anyway, this is not the essence of this painting realization. Twardowski did not ask about conditions in which beauty could reveal itself, but he asked what art was, what painting was. Already a long time ago people realized, and this awareness is not unknown to the artist, that the essence of art is not that it is *expression of genius individuality supported by elite craftsman competences*¹¹.

For eight months the artist 'wrote' in a grey, 2.5 cm wide paper tape his painting gestures (he used a total of almost 200 km of the tape). The strips of this tape, squeezed and mounted perpendicularly to the surface of the squares hanging on the wall, create a remarkable texture of these paintings. Stains of black paint watch themselves, and the recipient is put in the middle of the painting and the canvas at the same time. In this way the artist invites the spectators to participate in a game whose rules may be recognized only when the spectator becomes the participant. It is a game between closing (the multiplied squares, one included in another, of precisely calculated dimensions and proportions) and opening (creating an empty space, a place for the recipient, for his imagination).

The rules of the game, the rules of the audience's participation (and the way the artist himself participates in it) are not revealed immediately – in the beginning one may just feel that they have a lot in common with physicality, that they are rules or rhythms of recurrent effort, rules of pain caused by cement penetrating the skin. A certain recurrence of actions, states and situations (always present in the game) shows that the artist's own identity is at stake here, that the purpose is not only a material trace finalizing the creative activity.

The artist creates a space where it is possible to test the rules of art.

In the realization of Lech Twardowski equal importance is given to what is not hidden, revealed, and what is hidden. The sense is created here in the mutual relation of these both spheres – the revealed structure of the artwork directs us to meanings that are included in itself but hidden and waiting. From this point of view *Generator bez maszyn* is a work of art of symbolic nature. H.-G. Gadamer in the book *The Relevance of the Beautiful* says: [...] *it is symbolic that [in the artwork] the act of referencing takes place, which embodies this meaning that it references, and even guarantees it. [...] Therefore, the essence of what is symbolic and has symbolic attributes is, indeed, the fact that it is not referred to an intellectually achievable meaning objective but has its own meaning inside*¹².

Generator was annexed by sheets of paper that he used as bases while painting kilometres of tape. He displayed them in a separate room and called *Traces*. This annex was another gesture of revealing that directs the recipient towards what is hidden from his perception. On the paper bases one may find traces of a brush, a chaos of black paint stains which are meaningful only because they are a proof of the many-months-long process of creation of the artwork, they are traces of performance lasting for eight months. Their sense, therefore, is in the fact that they allow us to realize that we will not see the 'proper' gesture of the painter who hid it from us in the vertical structures built from paper tape, which preserve, as we may think, records of the artist's efforts and emotions.

The first *Generatory* by Twardowski (the artist realized them since 1993) fitted into the display space, tried to start a dialogue with the gallery. By installing them the artist started a game with the existing conditions of the rooms where he happened to exhibit them. In the case of *Generator bez maszyn* of 2003 we deal with a much more radical action. Here the artwork created its own space, revoking at

the same time the existing space. As a consequence, the spectator stood here face to face with the artwork and could not refer to any spatial contexts beyond the work. Twardowski in his art has never yielded to the temptation to tell stories that so often turn into garrulousness. He has always been focused on the creative act, here, however, he made an attempt to give form to what was happening in the linear time, and to give form to this time, which in fact is the rhythm of life.

Generator... is a condensed painting act where the most important question seems to be how the painting is coming into being (happening). This is a question about mutual relations of the painting and time, about the presence of time in the painting and the painting in time. Time appears here as a peculiar space of the painting, as its rhythm, and the task of the artist would be unmasking the structure of the painting's own time, therefore, time that belongs to the painting which is the building block for it, but also a method, modus of its existence.

The creative act of Twardowski becomes here in fact an act of time compression. We are to do with a situation showing some analogies to the phenomenon of 'time compression' through photography, analysed by Roland Barthes in the essay *Światło obrazu*. In reference to photography Barthes talks about concomitance of the present and past time: [...] *I read simultaneously: that will be and that already was. I see with terror that past-future time whose stake is death*¹³. In *Generator bez maszyn* the recipient may experience concomitance of what is past and what is present. The artwork of Lech Twardowski suspends the counting, instrumental nature of time – the act of compression creates new quality; thanks to it the spectator enters the artwork in his/her own time, which is something more than a simple sum of certain past and presence. In this way the painting structure realized by the artist receives a remarkable character – the squares, the

increased symmetry, a recurrence embedded in the form but existing also on the stage of execution (although then it was more involuntary, I guess, resulting from rhythmic painting activities) – all those procedures of the artist become peculiar ‘conjuring’ of the form, a prayer of the agnostic.

Twardowski tries here to test the capacity of his artistic medium, to confront in one work the medium image (painting) and the mental image. It seems that this is the source of asceticism and richness of this realization at the same time. To be able to pose his questions, the artist had to free the image from any excess of media – both painting (colour reduction: greying brownish paper, black paint, white salt) and those from other media (not by accident he titled his work *Generator bez maszyn*). By the way, it is probably the most ‘interactive’ version of *Generator*. Because there are no technological gadgets distracting the attention from what is important and creating substitute topics. Twardowski did not concede to the naive conviction that work is interactive when the physical presence of the spectator and the form of his live activity trigger a reaction defined by the installed program.

For *Generator bez maszyn* by Lech Twardowski the recipient is necessary. The intellectual activity and imagination of the recipient are necessary to close the circuit, mental images are necessary (or images of what an image is) which the recipient brings in his imagination. The presence of such a recipient, the participant in the game proposed by the artist complements the painter’s gesture here. This realization poses a challenge towards the spectator, and the recipient of this work must make an effort, must undertake the risk of being co-responsible so that he/she can manage the challenge. Performativeness of that creative process and performativeness of the effect intertwine and their reciprocal relation gives birth to energy this extraordinary *Generator*.

A specific painting performance is embedded in three series of works by Urszula Wilk realized on paper, under a common title *Niewysłane listy* (2009–2012)¹⁴. It is worth here to bring closer this amazingly interesting realization whose parts are: *Archipelagi* [Archipelagos], *Niewysłane listy* [Unsent letters] and *Nieobecność* [Absence]. In the series of works on paper by Urszula Wilk the painting spacetime is often almost monochromatic. It seems, however, that the artist's reduction of the range of colours has nothing to do with minimalism, on the contrary, there is unexpected richness in it. This procedure allows discovering the richness hidden in one specific hue. Urszula Wilk touches colours as if they were instruments or strings of an instrument, acts as a composer who tells, e.g., the grey colour to sound in the darkness. We bring other colours along with us, other colours, forced to be temporarily silent, surround the colour which fills it with itself and at the same time creates space for the painting. It is a special painting as it has nothing to do with the illusion of space. I guess illusion has never been the objective of paintings by Urszula Wilk.

In the above-mentioned series of works paper stops to be only a neutral canvas but it transforms into a significant component, in an important active factor of the painting. In *Niewysłane listy* there appears space which reaches inside the material; space which spreads inside this apparently dimensionless matter. Paper absorbs the paint, colour comes out of the paper structure, paper opens up to colour, and is not only the surface that has colourful stains on it. The monochromatic nature of this series, its specific colourful asceticism may be looked at from another perspective. We all experience visual confusion and chaos which seems to be inseparably related with the contemporary civilization of the spectacle. In such circumstances reduction, self-limitation, quietness of the colour scheme becomes a form of introduction of a specific order. Monochromatic nature is one of many names of silence, in this case it is its painting name.

‘Paper gives more freedom’ says the artist. This freedom means here a specific space of freedom – for the painter’s gesture and for the paint which is not frozen on the canvas. During painting the paint is alive, finds itself new territories long after the brush stops touching the paper. In that space there is place for coincidence. In Wilk’s painting coincidence is in the beginning or rather precedes the commencement of the proper work. Coincidence is here a catalyst from which painting starts but the very painting process – although intuitive – is a fully-controlled process.

The series of works title *Archipelagi* was created as a result of applying a special procedure: painting and non-painting at the same time. This procedure is, in some regards, close to, e.g., graphic design. Sheets of paper were used in the same way as in the past people would use vellum paper, to wipe off an excess of ink. Initially the canvas or a kind of territory of the painting performance is on the workshop floor where ink drops falling down the brush create shapes of various configurations, these title archipelagos or constellations. Their shapes are a result of an action that may be called a controlled case, as the artist only to a certain extent may control the amount of the dripping ink and layouts of their drops. The next stage is a specific ‘cleaning’: the artist presses a sheet of paper to the archipelagos of drops and removes the ink from the floor. It is a stage during which the painting ‘makes’ itself, as it were.

In a sense such painting becomes a map of a part of the workshop territory. A map that is possibly the most precise, as if reflecting the territory in 1:1 scale. This painting is an imprint, is a trace. However, it is not a trace of the world, as it happens in the case of documentary photography, but a trace of something more elusive. It is a trace of a hand holding a brush circulating in the air, a trace of its wandering, hesitation, slow dripping of dense ink down long hairs of the brush. It is a trace of a certain *N o w*, extended in several minutes, a trace of time that transforms into space.

Such rules of the game make the painting intentionally accidental. The irreversibility of the recording on the painting is delayed here. The artist may celebrate the painting's right to non-existence, it is enough if she wipes off the drops of ink from the floor and the painting does not happen, although each subsequent falling drop seemed to build its composition structure. However, when a sheet of vellum paper is put on ink drops and pressed against the floor, the painting is recorded on it in a second. It is a snapshot painting, at the same time *veraikon*. On the basis of this recording one cannot, of course, recreate the whole process, but – and this is the most important here – the recipient reads from it the performative actions of the artist preceding that recording.

The next series of works is titled *Niewysłane listy*. These mysterious letters are close to *Archipelagi*. It seems that they come from that archipelago, that these are the letters that must have been written, that must have had the addressee(s), but which could or should not be sent. Their sense is their existence and not communicating something to someone. In the case of this series the key role is played by the method with which these works were created, too. Urszula Wilk writes those unsent letters without touching the surface of the paper. The brush circulates in the air over the sheet, ink drips down the dancing brush tip. These paintings seem to collect traces of exercises in calligraphy in a secret language. Words that cannot be read, cannot be pronounced, drop down the brush. Words, or their articulation, may be halted. What cannot be halted is the child's need to put down characters. This need makes the hand realize a strange dance over the paper. In this dance the hand becomes a seismograph for emotions, for swirling unspoken words, words that we do not want, or we cannot say.

These letters are not to be read, they talk with their existence only. They tell us, for example, that our communication is always

(or almost always) included in the frame of a certain language convention, that using a language we subject ourselves to the illusion of communicating something to someone. We reach for a language (ethnic, painting, drawing or, e.g., mathematical language) hoping that we will express in it a certain truth about ourselves or about the world, but that hope intermingles with anxiety that these languages mainly express themselves, not us. We are constantly facing the question how to force 'our' language to express something more, to reveal something more than just its structure.

Letters always have addressees, even if the addressees are strangers. Unsent letters also have an addressee or addressees. The paintings-letters by Urszula Wilk are a kind of self-portrait which is not about a reflection of the current looks of the artist, but about the expression of the inexpressible. These letters are entrusted to air, while the distance between the hand holding the brush and the surface of the paper filters and encodes the 'expressed' words. These letters – monologues which the artist writes to herself, although – probably – in relation with someone or something. She closes her thoughts and emotions in undecodable writing. Only such record may be entrusted with what has to exist, and what at the same time should stop at the edge of expressibility, even if only so that it does not touch, does not hurt someone too deeply. The method of realization of this series of works, although of substantial importance for reading their sense, is well-hidden from the spectator: the artist does not expose the very method itself, but only the effects achieved thanks to it. The distance between the brush and the sheet of paper may only be presumed, one may only in imagination recreate the rhythm and attributes of the painting performance of Urszula Wilk.

In the series of paintings titled *Nieobecność* ubiquitous grey spills (literally) all over the sheet of paper. It penetrates the paper and freezes in its layers like grey sludge. In this series of works the

title 'absence' is not emptiness, it is much more associated with surplus. These paintings do not talk about absence, do not change it in a metaphor or an anecdote, they cumulate its surplus. This absence lives in memory, it emerges from there, looking for a form for itself. The experienced absence of someone or something becomes a certain state of body and mind which we recognize thanks to desire. Desire gives it a form. Desire which spreads all over the territory of our body, discovers its nooks and corners, appropriates them, like paint appropriates paper, penetrates it deeply. Here the process of creating a work of art is a dialogue of the artist with the attributes of the material, a painter's gesture, manner of spilling paint must be constantly 'negotiated' with the paper, with the limits of its absorptivity.

A very special performance we can see in the series *Bonsai*, which since 2007 has been realized by a Chinese artist Shen Shaomin¹⁵. Cultivation of bonsai trees has had an amazingly long tradition, in China and in Japan there are many schools of plant shaping which – subject to various, often cruel and drastic procedures – were shaped in line with certain aesthetics cannons. The process of their shaping is at the same time a long-term process, lasting most often around ten years. These series of works were inspired by the Chinese practices of tying up (tight bandaging) of feet of small girls, as a result of which bones of the feet were not able to freely and naturally grow and became drastically deformed. These practices started to be performed in the 7th century in higher levels of the society, and in the 19th century they became very common. What was stated as justification for those tortures done to the girls' feet, was aesthetics – small female feet were thought to be beautiful. Shen Shaomin got the idea of the series *Bonsai*, when he watched x-rays of deformed feet of women who were subject to those practices when they were children. He decided to make use of numerous parallels between the two procedures.

In one of the interviews the artists said: *I think the process of producing bonsai is basically abusing plants. You cultivate a tree and then you twist it to become an artificial shape. Even though the whole process is outstandingly cruel, people think that bonsai trees are beautiful*¹⁶. Plants are subject to such cruel procedures also by the artist himself, revealing in this way that not all plants were able to survive these peculiar tortures. The series *Bonsai* is a story of the oppressive attributes of culture. Culture, in its various manifestations and various areas (social, political, religious, aesthetic) is shown here as a form of violence against the world, against nature, also against people. Violence which has – as we are used to think – many good justifications, it occurs in the name of good morals and decency, equity, justice or beauty.

The work of the Chinese sculptor is a process-oriented work. At no stage it is possible to claim that the process has been finished. A piece of art here is not a closed and finished structure, it is a continuous becoming, and what we see each time is a temporary, current status of this process. One needs to notice there that two processes overlap here, two actions. The first is the action of the sculptor-grower and his procedures, the other one – actions of the nature, namely growing of a plant and its adaptation, responding to peoples' procedures. Shen Shaomin in his works reveals the whole set of instruments with which trees were subject to sophisticated tortures. The artistic object here is not only the weirdly, grotesquely shaped plant, but also the metal clamps, turnbuckles, wires or metal grates, placed on or next to the plant. The spectator, therefore, is not only supposed to be happy about seeing the fantastically shaped tree but must – at least mentally – dive into those processes which have led to the effect he/she is looking at.

In the case of the works of art of the discussed authors we have to deal with various forms of performativeness, however, what they have in common is the fact that in each of them the recipient must

discover and reconstruct in his/her imagination the performance that is embedded in these works. It is a key issue because without taking into account that performative side of the works, we do not understand their message, the hidden sense will not show itself to us. Recognition of the rules of the game is indeed an indispensable condition to participate in it, even if such participation is to be only participation of a spectator. The performative nature of these works is also decisive for their status – thanks to it these images and objects become events, close in their spacetime both the creating artist and the spectator, who becomes a full participant of the artistic game.

- 1 *Zwrot performatywny w estetyce*, ed. L. Bieszczad, Cracow 2013, p. 10.
- 2 Wolfgang Welsch, *Estetyka poza estetyką*, transl. K. Guetzalska, Cracow 2005, p. 163.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Jacek Wachowski, *O performatywności sztuk performatywnych* [in:] *Zwrot performatywny w estetyce*, op.cit., pp. 26–27.
- 5 *Nowe przestrzenie fotografii*, ed. R. Kutera, J. Olek, Wrocław 1991, p. 88.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 W. Welsch, op.cit., pp. 158–165.
- 8 Compare with e.g. O. Kakuzo, *Księga herbaty*, transl. M. Kwiecińska, Warsaw 1987, pp. 53–68
- 9 I. Saito, no title [in:] *Nowe przestrzenie fotografii*, op.cit., p. 86.
- 10 I. Saito, *Fotografia jako obraz chwilowy* [in:] *Etos Fotografii. Sympozjum w ramach II Fotokonferencji Wschód – Zachód 'Europejska Wymiana'*, Wrocław 1991, p. 88.
- 11 J.F. Lyotard, *Postmodernizm dla dzieci*, transl. J. Migasiński, Warsaw 1998, p. 13.
- 12 H.-G. Gadamer, *Aktualność piękna*, transl. K. Krzemieniowa, Warsaw 1993, pp. 49–50.
- 13 Roland Barthes, *Światło obrazu*, transl. J. Trznadel, Warsaw 1996, p. 161.
- 14 I dealt with the artist's works in my text *Okna na utopię. Obrazy Urszuli Wilk* [in:] *Urszula Wilk*, [exhibition catalogue], the City Museum of Wrocław, Wrocław 2013.
- 15 Chinese artist, born in 1956, lives and works in Sydney and Beijing, famous for such sculpture series as *Unknown Creatures*, *I sleep on top of myself* or *Summit*.
- 16 As cited in: E. Plyler, <https://johnbalebooks.wordpress.com/2015/03/03/the-abuse-of-plants-shen-shaomins-grafting-operation-diagram/>

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Work of art as an event – performance restructured in imagination

An exceptionally interesting case of performance in contemporary art are artworks, in which artists do not present a performance itself but rather its effects. For these artists a performance is somehow included in the tissue of the artwork; it was indispensable for the artwork to be created, yet it is hidden so the viewer needs to make an effort to reconstruct this performative character of the artwork and understand (become aware of) the resulting consequences. The text analyses works by Akira Komoto (the *Seeing series*), the realization by Lech Twardowski (*Generator Bez Maszyn*), three series of works by Urszula Wilk (*Niewysłane listy*) as well as selected sculptures by Shen Shaomin (the *Bonsai series*). Although in these works we deal with various forms of performativeness, their joint feature is the fact that in each of them the viewer must discover and reconstruct the hidden performance in his/her memory.

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