

Paweł Kaszczyński

A SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PROXIMITY

and

DISTANCE

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SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Introduction and outline of the earlier creative period

Transformations in art and in the world took place in one of two possible forms. These were usually revolutions, the course of which involved destroying or introducing aggressive, total changes in that which was external. This is the way in which the so-called progress of humanity took place, and in which avant-garde movements and new trends were born. At the same time, however, as soon as we calm down enough, we can hear the gentle heartbeat of the world – in the sphere invisible to the eye. From time to time, contrary to the revolutionary, aggressive explosions, there were specific implosions, illuminations, which directed the entire glow towards the inner illumination of the world, transformation and awakening, indescribably gentle and at the same time incomparably stronger, as far as the final effect of the phenomenon is concerned.

The great Light is coming. A glow in the blue of infinity, infinite amounts of luminous particles in the blue, falling gently and slowly. The soft light that changes everything.¹

Jerzy Ludwiński

In view of the borderline character of many contemporary cultural and natural phenomena and related narratives, many of us feel anxiety and ask about the meaning in the areas of values, changeability of identified and established meanings and the identity of contemporary man. This increasing anxiety evoked by this kind of doubts also raises the urgent need for quick answers. In response to this anxiety and this trembling need to get rid of the discomfort of doubts, immediate, yet apparent solutions are often developed based on a series of omissions and concealments. While answers to many of these questions are seemingly close to us, in fact they are in a distance that we cannot overcome even with imagination. Even if we wanted this, but ... we do not usually want this. Nevertheless, the significance and multitude of these doubts are potential subjects of expression in the field of art.

¹ The last text of Jerzy Ludwiński that he dictated to his wife a few days before his death – 14 December 2000, Jerzy Ludwiński, *Sztuka w epoce postartystycznej i inne teksty*, The University of the Arts in Poznań, BWA in Wrocław 2003, 1st ed., p. 213.

In my considerations, I often use the terms 'image field' and 'area' derived from the concept of 'plane', which is for me a *sine qua non* condition for creative artistic expression in the area of painting. Even if I face or play with this concept to extract meanings, I do it as much as the concept allows me to do it.

I began my work – within the area of activities enabling the identification of specific thematic expressions and articulations, i.e. after the propaedeutic period and with some basic degree of creative consciousness – during my master's studies, which I completed with a diploma project. Relationality was the main thematic area that I focused on at that time and it is also important to me today, although from a slightly different perspective. At that time, my considerations were based on reflection on a picture as a phenomenon including its way (or ways) of being, physical properties and simultaneously expressed metaphysical qualities. Of course, this brings to mind the picture theory formulated by Roman Ingarden, which I analysed intensively at that time. However, I did not treat it as a model or a prescriptive indication of behaviour in my search for a form of expression in the field of painting. When dealing with a painting as a special object, I did not emphasise the aspect of its autotelicity, which is closely related to the aforementioned notion of relationality. Although it seems that the phenomenological modality that I dealt with at that time could create an opportunity for that. Moreover, the very nature of my projects could indicate that I focused on self-sufficient pictures.

At that time, I created a cycle of paintings entitled *Mutual Adaptations*. They were images consisting of several vertical elements which formed, after folding, figures of horizontal rectangles of various sizes, mostly about two meters wide.

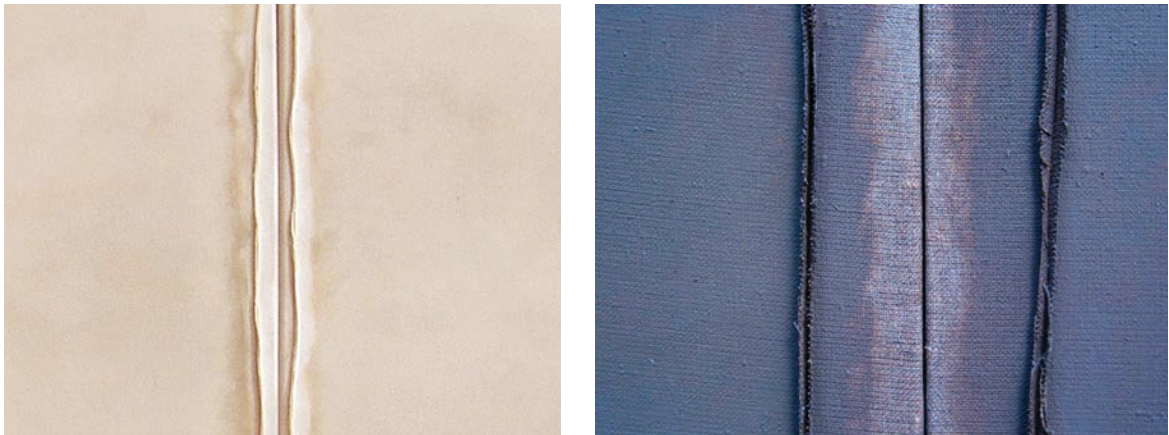


From the cycle *Mutual Adaptations*, IV (200 x 135 cm / 50 x 135 cm x 4), 2000

The seams of the canvas, previously cut up and sewn together again, were revealed in the picture field near the crevices/lines created as a result of the contact of individual vertical stretcher elements. Their 'trembling' and their character, which was distinctive from the geometry of the stretcher edge, were, among others, a peculiar record of the act of stretching the canvas on the painting frame. Deflections of the resulting lines were not – although they could have been – specially animated, because they resulted from the properties and behaviour of the material during the standard preparation of the stretcher and with the usual strength applied and direction in which the canvas were stretched. They were then covered with bone glue and primer layers. The colour (in the above example) was derived from the natural colour of the cotton canvas (in my projects I used different types of canvas – linen, cotton and mixed, never with an admixture of synthetic fibres).

This description of the proceedings can indicate the construction of a 'painting-like' object. In reality, however, by revealing successive elements – the physical layers of the material – I wanted to emphasise and explore the concept of a picture as an intentional object that has its foundation in a thing, a canvas or a painting. This pure form of Ingarden's statement, contained in his phenomenological reflection on the ontology of a painting, of course, applies to any painting in the field of art and not only the cases where this material foundation is radically accented, with greater or lesser premeditation. The title given to the series of paintings described – *Mutual Adaptations* – contains

a certain perversity. This adaptability (understood as adaptation and processing) is not limited, as one might think, to physicality, selected, well-matched features of the material, their technological development and quantum. Processing alone cannot sufficiently exhaust the act of creation here; it can only be one of many different elements or phases, constituting a complex process of creation. It usually remains subordinate to the act of creation – utilitarian, and/or secondary, adaptive. Where is then the proper place of the creative moment in the action described?



From the cycle *Mutual Adaptations*, fragments

As mentioned above, the colour of the work was derived from the natural colour of the canvas used (also in relation to the shades caused by the irregular seams of the canvas, which were from 4 mm to less than a centimetre high). It was thus derived from the reality of the area, before any meaning was given to it, from the material quality of the ‘founding’ substance – the fabric of the canvas, whose original appearance is partly present in the image field. Partly, because it meets the colour, which, being its close derivative (just enough to cross the threshold of distinction), fills most of the plane and is thus the proper space of the picture. It is this colour – the last of the physical layers (this is not about the potential multi-layer character of the painting in phenomenological terms) – and the character of its location determined by the act of painting – that gave a meaning and the rank of articulation to all preceding activities and intentions. The colour took them from the non-intentional area into a meaningful reality that can be perceived as such during a meeting. This meeting, of course, is conditioned by the presence of the recipient/subject and their simultaneous: possibility, necessity and ability to experience the world ... Because consciousness is constituted in moments of experience, both individual

experiences and a sequence of these experiences – a stream of consciousness and all that is effectively immanent within the reach of consciousness. Consciousness involves individual experiences: states and acts of consciousness that are characterised by clear intentionality (as Ingarden would say). If there is a slit in this space – the consciousness, the experience of the world and intuitiveness – through which a special type of longing trickles, there may be experiences that have a clear moment (moment of intent) of reference to something structurally or radically transcendent,² or even transcendental (in Kantian sense – being a foundation for getting to know something, along with everything that precedes and determines all experience).

At no stage of my artistic work, both in the field of painting and other kinds of projects, rational/analytical solutions of problems and issues raised, were not sufficient – though intense – and they were not the source of the need to create. Intuitiveness was equally important. Observations of individual processes of reaching solutions allow me to state that intuition always comes in handy in the most appropriate stages of decision-making, not only at the beginning. My duty is to be ready for its hints, to listen and observe. This is in line with the etymology of the Latin term: *intueri* – to watch, to observe.

In *Mutual Adaptations*, it was a kind of a buckle. In view of the area being watched, at the initiatory stage before I started the conceptual search for form, I had this intuitive conviction that I should use few means of expression – there should only be as many of them as necessary (and not more) – *quantum satis* – so that the tension between the tangible and the material, the ‘spectral’ and the pictorial can be adequately captured in the perceptual layer. Correspondingly, the pulsating rhythm: PICTURE – material – PICTURE – material – PICTURE ... is expected to evoke the ‘flickering’ of layers (Ingarden’s founding and founded layers). At the same time, however, their symbiotic coexistence, mutual incorporation and the title adaptation are meant to create a fairly strong doubt that they have ever existed separately.

*A painter's work entails the need to modify Ingarden's description of the image layers. I enter this potentially stratified space using a painting technique that binds the image with the canvas and, at the same time, indicates the place of its original rooting, which, according to tradition, can be called the plane of the image.*³

² Cf. Jan Krokos, *Odślanianie intencjonalności*, (Chapter 7, Intencjonalność-próba całościowego ujęcia), Liber Libri, Warszawa 2013.

³ P. Taranczewski, P. Tendera, *Rozmowy o malarstwie*, The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture - Monografie, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Akademia Ignatianum, Kraków 2016, p. 63.

Imagine ... trace 'compositions' of huge paintings in which you can see only one colour, possibly somewhat modified here and there. In the latter case – although the composition as understood by Kandinsky, Mondrian or Witkacy has disappeared – the colour seems to be between the surface colour resulting from painting a thing and the colour already existing in the intentional space of the image plane. The latter case is extreme. The colourful stain is neither an element of the painting's composition nor does it support any appearance, but it presents itself almost identifying itself with the painting. It balances between the act of covering with paint and the art of painting, and it is not reduced to the pure act of painting things only thanks to the artist's subtle efforts.⁴

Working on the cycle in question did not involve presenting a set of predicates, such as: painting/image, imagery/abstractness, traditional/unique, or syntactic features, such as: chromatic/monochromatic or (in a very narrowed range) static/dynamic ... At this stage, the colour, the way of organising the plane in relation to the image and the activity itself constituted a clamp that closed the intuitive decisions concerning individual expressions. They stemmed from a specific feeling of thus created painting. Intuition, which was already the viewer's property, was for me a guarantee of a proper encounter with the image, the recognition, identification and the already non-pictorial capture of a fragment of the world. At that time I did not expect the viewer to know the history of painting, make a phenomenological analysis or conduct a formal analysis with a conclusion regarding reification and its counter-inflection vector (from abstraction to reification and vice versa). It was (and still is) far more important for me to be able to reflect that the picture created in this way can be like the first breath or ... the last breath between which all known and unknown possibilities are contained. These possibilities concern not so much and not only the painting itself, but the viewing subject for whom – in line with Lacan's idea – this kind of picture exists not to 'deceive their eyes' but to 'subdue their gaze'. In essence, Lacan enters a broad debate with the phenomenological definition of the viewing subject, questioning their privilege to control the visual representation. Whether my works created in the period mentioned are an example of suspension of some representation or an example of a significant 'here and now' (towards the Real), happening in perception, remains an open question – the kind of question whose openness leads to reflection. However, being rooted in a world that has not removed the Other from its space, I cannot remain silent about the Other. Lacan's ideas about the Real and the view located beyond the picture may refer to the later period of my creative activity. I conclude this part by

⁴ Ibid., p. 64.

quoting Professor Janusz Krupiński, who enters an interesting dialogue with the phenomenological theory of the image. After analysing many of its important points, he redefines some of Ingarden's statements:

I think that certain stability of an image (for example a painting), despite the multitude of experiences of people facing the same painting, has another source: it is the third foundation of the image, omitted by Ingarden particularly in his concept of 'aesthetic situation'. This third foundation, in addition to the 'physical foundation' (e.g. a painting) and the viewer, who fulfils specific acts, is the world of ideas, regardless of whether it is understood according to Plato, Hegel ('the spirit of time'), N. Hartmann ('objective spirit'), Popper ('three worlds'), Malraux ('museum of imagination') or Jung ('collective unconscious') Referring a given work to a certain constellation of ideas and its place in a certain network of ideas defines this work. It 'talks' with the other works that are open to the same reality (art is not about works, but about what they are open to, about this opening). This is why it is possible to distinguish interpretation from pseudo-interpretation.⁵

THE BEING OF LIGHT

In 2005, I started to look at the phenomenon and concept of light. In this way, the basic area of my works and considerations, also presented as part of my doctoral project, was formed. At that time, my painting articulation was also changed.

It has long been obvious for the modern man that light has its own specific matter, which has its specific (corpuscular-wave) structure and serves fundamental functions in complex life processes: chemical, physical, physiological, as well as pragmatic, aesthetic and symbolic ...

However, some are still alarmed by its absolute mode of existence, or rather its power to extract existence – to create and 'illuminate meanings', which is at the same time the superior quality of light.

At that time, I attempted to make a cross-sectional approach to light as a value and as a concept with its specific consequences. I thus approached light as a physical property, a cultural, philosophical and metaphysical figure and, finally, a separate absolute being. This word – light – appears in such a variety of meanings, contexts and uses that the concept itself seems to be a victim of this excess. The technological orientation of the

⁵ J. Krupiński, 'Obraz a malowidło. Rembrandt contra Ingarden', *Estetyka i Krytyka*, No 11 (2/2006), Kraków: Jagiellonian University.

modern man has perpetuated the unpleasant but unavoidable presumption that this conditioning of creation or generation of creation is not a feature of light, but one of its functions understood as a duty. It seems that light, which has always been placed in all positivisms, has now become an instrument of the technique of good, which effectively replaces ethics in the Western world. It has become a figure of fetishized positivity in a world in which all negativity is pushed outside a collective system of symbols and values. Thus it ceased to be important as LIGHT. The extent of the metaphor and associations with light have always entailed a number of implications and discourses, probably because of its unshakable obviousness and entanglement in a peculiar dialectical contradiction. Namely, what a physicist perceives as a molecular value that is successfully captured and constantly technologically cultivated is also a contribution and even a reason to think about the very mystery of existence and its meaning. The entire history (and not only history) of the (not only contemporary) man's melancholy seems to be located in this particular context. Because this area reaches up to the *horizon of events*, this dialectical discourse embraces all beings illuminated by light and – perhaps even more – those who are 'beyond its reach'. Mutual roles and the essence of light and a painter ... Can we say that given the graciousness of light, a painter is at the same time its shepherd, i.e. he or she somehow protects it, just like Heidegger's man is the shepherd of Being? It would thus be a mutual agreement on the mutual definition of beings: a painter and light, but arranged in the following order: light-painter-light.

This seems all the more important when the goal is to reveal the light itself and not only to use it as a necessary causative factor.

If light is not only treated as a factor allowing subtractive or additive mixing of colours, what is light or what can light be in all painting actions and for a painter? What is light if it is not only a physical phenomenon? Is it an idea? Is it the essence of *episteme*?

Light is neither the world nor is it me; light is something that happens between me and the world. It can be said that the entire philosophy of light is the philosophy of peeping at light – said Father Józef Tischner.

One of the methodic tricks in teaching painterly imaging is to ask painters to look at the emerging work through narrowed eyes. This kind of observation gains some important features: due to a drop in optical sharpness, the picture becomes blurred and indistinct; of course, its brightness and thus colour saturation are also changed because of the smaller amount of light reaching the optical system of the eye. These distinctions allow for a different view of the hitherto observed work in the process of its creation thanks to the

introduction of certain descriptive gaps and – it can be said – an artificial activation of the visual buffer and farther memory centres on the path of perception. By emphasising the optical segment of perception, this procedure highlights the phenomenal character of imaging and helps ‘de-objectify’ coded visual signs. This applies not only to paintings – artefacts of art, but to every such act of looking at any object in the field of view. The boundaries of the perceived object will always be blurred and somehow ‘illegible’, thus allowing the analogy of ‘de-objectifying look’.

This reference to the extra-objective reality, in which meanings constitutive for imagination and thoughts are located, was important to me in my projects, one of which was entitled *The Exhibition of Paintings*. It was displayed in the gallery of the Polish Theatre in Poznan in 2005, before my doctoral studies.



From the project *The Exhibition of Paintings*, gallery of the Polish Theatre in Poznań, 2005

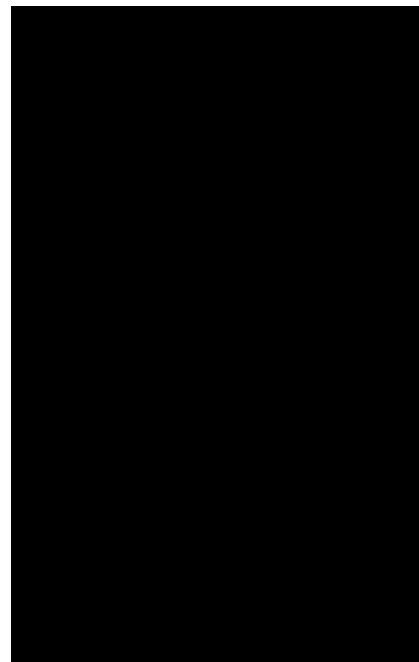
The starting point for these formal arrangements was the question contained in the subject-object structure of human cognition and the so-established cultural reality of man, the entire spectrum of their reactions and relations, and finally the fundamental role of image and perception.

I tried to construct this event in a similar way. Those who watched the pictures hung on semi-transparent matte glass panes could see them only at close distance due to their small formats and the twilight red light. At the same time, they themselves could be seen along with the picture hung on the other side of the matte glass panes. The red light was applied in order to thicken the interior. The glass wall, on both sides of which the pictures hung, seemed to be a figure with a mutually interchangeable location of the

obverse and reverse or with two obverses and two reverses (which assumed the abolition of the division – the wall). The subject matter of both images presented in this way could be decisive here. However, in order to maintain this doubt and to make it a leading, thematic question, this situation was illustrated – ‘here and now’, i.e. the ‘object’ of the imaging was figuratively depicted figures, which were coherent in terms of colour, saturation and intensity of light with the conditions prevailing at the exhibition and separately illuminated with a frame of light compliant with the format. By emphasising the action-related moments of the exhibition, I intended to capture and thematise something that could be defined by the place and moment of self-construal* or mutual concurrence on the subject-object plane; or to show the imaginary presence and the appearing image; to disclose and stress the meeting, which directly conditioned this entire undertaking, and not vice versa – it can be said that the vernissage meeting became the reason, the theme and at the same time the element of the paintings, and not the result of the exhibition. Based on this pictorial interactivity, several works were made. *The Exhibition of Paintings* was a kind of introduction to a large series of works under the same title: *TESTS WITH LIGHT*, which included separate projects, being part of the doctoral programme.

Although there were presentation features bearing the hallmarks of figurative attributes, I tried to arrange them so as to capture their *beginnings* or *remnants* in the perceptive layer and to recognise the subject of a particular painting before imagery itself. Hence, I paid a lot of attention to the perceptual mechanism of description, which fulfilled itself in the ‘second’ or ‘third’ view.

*Considering the concept of light in many possible aspects, I have found out that particles are processes, not objects (though persistent attempts are continuously made to search for completely elementary components, probably in line with old habits). These conclusions have resulted in the conviction that nature cannot be reduced to fundamental units, such as elementary particles or quantum fields. An idea emerged about the internal coherence of reality, the components of which mutually determine their arrangement. This idea is known as the bootstrap hypothesis (self-construal). It was created by Geoffrey Chew. The hypothesis states that the world cannot be understood as a system of units that cannot be further analysed. In the new approach, the universe **is** seen as a dynamic network of related events. None of the properties of any part of this network is preliminary; all come from the properties of other elements, and the full arrangement of their interconnections determines the structure of the entire network (the hypothesis was formed long ago in the 1960s and very soon proved to be inspirational for many film directors. We probably know more than one film plot, whose scenario is based on this surprising mutual interweaving of events). The bootstrap philosophy, which does not accept any elementary units, laws, equations or principles, rejects the idea that has been an important part of the natural sciences for hundreds of years. Physicists have realised that all theories of natural phenomena together with the ‘laws’ describing them are properties of a conceptual map of reality, not reality itself, whereas phenomena occurring in nature are ultimately linked to each other. In order to understand one of them, we have to understand the others, which is, of course, impossible. Thus, approximate results are obtained by describing specific groups of phenomena and omitting and disregarding other, less important ones. We can get closer to but never reach the ideal situation with no unclear ‘universal constants’ in theory and with ‘laws’ resulting from the requirement of total self-construal.



From the series *TESTS WITH LIGHT* 9 (150 cm x 125 cm, oil on canvas) and 18 (38 cm x 60 cm, oil on canvas), projects implemented as part of the doctoral programme

It was only then that it became possible to correctly grasp the meanings in this space – the meanings of *looking at a painting*. The thematic thread, the plane, the manner of articulation, the colour, the format of the work and the environment in which it was displayed were the components of a specific game. Consequently, after a while, ‘a man holding a canvas in front of him’ or ‘a woman staring up at the sky’ emerged from the staffage of indeterminate density. The trace stain of the woman’s face was such a far-reaching nuance that in order to see it, the viewers had to stare at the painting just like the woman stared at the sky. These forms were not determined by any didactic reasons related to the ‘pragmatically functional’ and culturally sanctioned ‘sliding’ on the surface of the perceptible world. The works were not only a simple counteroffer in response to the endless sequences of visual messages filling city streets and all kinds of social media. This would be at least a naive errantry. The paintings – in their own way – were intended to give the opportunity to experience a dynamic moment of awareness of *that moment*, to appear in the image of the mirror of being and the being of the viewer. Their presentation was met with a different type of pictorial notation which directly referred to them.

Moreover, arranged with no special order, optical lamps illuminated rectangles whose formats corresponded to the paintings. Mounted on opposite walls, the sources of framed light, falling at the right angle, made it possible to capture one’s own single shadow

or the shadows of people staying in the exhibition space.



The set of meanings outlined in this pictorial way allowed the viewers to experience a dual way of being. Realising the physical presence of the viewer at the exhibition by noticing one's own (and not only) shadow inscribed in the light – not resulting, however, from the necessity to confirm this fact in this way – refers to the Platonic metaphor. The paintings hanging next to the viewer seem to deepen the metaphor. However, they do not represent the less-seeming, real *world of ideas* but, by dissolving ideas, they can indicate their continuing distancing, elusiveness and ... difficulty in experiencing other people. At that time, what is defined as illuminating the meaning of the world by experiencing other people became extremely important to me. It is the basic assumption of the personalist trend in phenomenology, developed by Edith Stein. Her 'empathy' method allows one to experience the light of another human being. In this light, the world is revealed to those who show empathy. According to her, light has several sources: the one who shows empathy and the one who is the subject of empathy. They shine together because they live in a common light. This multiple source of light indicates a transition from an individualistic and egotistical to altruistic and merciful attitude and to the philosophy of dialogue and meeting,⁶ later developed by Levinas in his face-to-face philosophy.

Stein derives the notion of 'sensed' truth from this reflection. 'Truth is the meaning' – she said – hence 'the meaning is visible'. For the cognising subject, the discovered

⁶ A. Grzegorzcyk, *Filozofia Światła Edyty Stein*, Księgarnia Św. Wojciecha, Poznań 2004, p. 139.

reality implies the revealing activity of the subject. Thus, natural reality meets supernatural reality, which is a reality *par excellence*: a reality that makes itself present and reveals itself. The culmination of the philosophical phenomenological path of Edith Stein is: God – Symbol – Truth – Light. The intermediate link on this path is reaching the essential truth and the transcendental truth. The former is understood as the conformity of something real with the corresponding pure form and it is assumed by the latter, which indicates the condition of this conformity, i.e. the meaning of being: ‘every existent has a meaning ... every existent is *intelligible*, i.e., something which can “enter into” a knowing intellect and can be “embraced” or “comprehended” ... by a knowing intellect.’⁷ This search for truth contains a specific phenomenological logic, which is an extension of the ‘laws of reason’ defined by strict logic. This ‘treading in the light’ prompts Stein to show consciousness as a ‘spiritual fortress’ that is a defence against the ‘temporality of existence’. This and other approaches to the significance of light are discussed later in this paper.

There were several important projects in the articulation area outlined and in the series of works entitled *Tests with Light III – ‘Permanently Changing’*, displayed in the Post Office gallery in Poznań in June 2010. The innovation here was the introduction of a permanently present person, who was sitting behind a semi-translucent plane. It was one of the first works I have defined as image-actions.

⁷ Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*, Washington: ICS Publications, 2002, p. 297.



From the exhibition *TATAMI, Permanently Changing*, from the series *Tests with Light III*, Poznań 2010

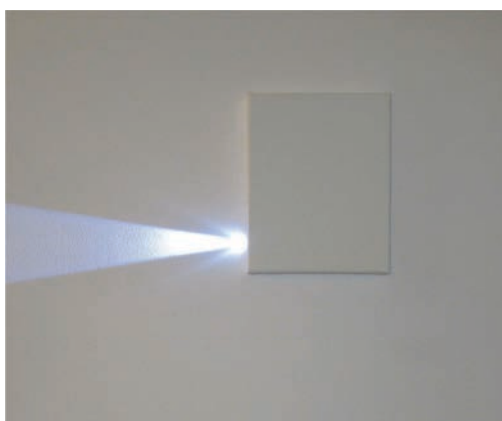
DESCRIPTION OF AN ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT

In accordance with the formal requirement, I indicate two works: *Purview* and *The Call* as aspiring to fulfil the conditions specified in Article 16 (2) of the Act of 14 March 2003 on Academic Degrees and an Academic Title as well as on Degrees and a Title in Art (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1789).

In a multi-faceted approach that puts an emphasis on the constitutive participation of light in a painter's expression and on what determines light and what requirements light sets, light continues to be the leading issue in my actions and paintings. The conclusions drawn from my reflections on light and the effects of my recent attempts of expression have significantly expanded my area of experience and allowed me to formulate new questions regarding the possibilities and creatively understood 'non-possibilities' in the processes of emerging artistic expression.

PURVIEW – Poznań: AT Gallery, February 2018

It seems that the discovery of painting was preceded by noticing a wall. First, man noticed an empty, flat wall limiting the field of view. Flat, even, large walls do not often occur in nature. There are many regions and countries where people have never had the opportunity to see a large, smooth wall. Probably the first 'wall' was a cave. People annexed it as a shelter. Separation from the world gave them a sense of security. But once they sat secure in their hiding, they noticed that they lost the view of the world. ... Hiding behind the wall that separated them from the important world, they wanted to leave a trace on it; by painting an external partner, they made the wall transparent. It was possible to see and participate in the world through the walls.⁸



Purview, a fragment

⁸ M. A. Potocka, *Malarstwo*, Fundacja Wyzwolenia Kultury, Kraków 1995, p. 6.

The exhibition refers to a series of works in which the author uses light in a special way, treating it both as material and the medium of meanings. In the area of painting and image-actions, he often 'takes' this element out of the screen area, which is usually the basic image field. In this way, he embeds the articulations thematically in contexts or leaves the interpretive fields open, using numerical titles. The title of this project comes from a reflection referring to the known dichotomy: form and content. The author seems to pose a question about the properties located in a certain simplification of this classic duality. Given the English-language sound of the title, Purview is understood here as 'a scope' or 'a field of view'.⁹

The above quotes are a sketchy, but quite a clear approach to the area of expression that interests me and is considered here. It was a result of intuitive reconnaissance followed by Derridian considerations, and the order is important to me.

As for the components of the formal construction of the project entitled *Purview*, it consisted of twelve acrylic paintings of various sizes and formats (from 30 cm x 24 cm to 100 cm x 80 cm). Most of them were equipped with light (LED), which were arranged on the walls of the gallery and also established relationships with neighbouring images. An endoscopic camera, which was connected to a video projector, was placed in a hole drilled in one of the walls. In this way, the interior of the wall was shown on the wall of the gallery. Description of individual elements may, however, be insufficient because the relations that they created formed the proper imaging, and thus the structure of expression created the 'purview' according to the thematic assumption.

I referred to the wall as a significant element of expression earlier, e.g. in the aforementioned project entitled *The Exhibition of Paintings* (by referring to it through its absence – replacement with glass) or in the series *Tests with Light*. For the first time*, however, the glass was set up in a 'single row' with the light and the painting. It became important to me because of its physicality and, at the same time, as a concept. On the one hand, it was understood as: a plane, a support, a derivative of the wall, defining the area, being an area and a two-sided background ...; on the other hand, it was perceived as a mental figure: a boundary, resistance, an end or insurmountable difficulty (or surmountable difficulty – a challenge), potential and again ... a plane.

⁹ Tomasz Wilmański, *A fragment of the introduction to Paweł Kaszczyński's exhibition 'Purview'*, Poznań: AT Gallery, 2018.

* not including two smaller projects in the list.

However, it was not only the figure of the wall and its special treatment in the project entitled *Purview* that testified to the construction of a statement based on paradox (aporia?) and peculiar articulatory inversions, actually starting with the title. Thus: a) I attempted to synthesise the values that I learned through intuition to grasp individual or pairs of concepts or those included in semantic groups; b) the game taken in the area of the *form* of expression was entitled *Purview*. In the formal area: c) light – identical with the cognitive possibility and always constitutive to the image, was ‘taken out’ of it so that: d) it revealed the external area as significant – always existing, yet, according to the classical definition of a painting, constituting visual non-existence or a supra-image reality opposing a work of art. The frame of a painting served the function of separating the work from its marginalia for centuries. Due to its function and ambivalent derivative, it should always remain semantically neutral – it belonged neither to the centre of the image (*ergon*) nor to what was outside it (*para*), and it could only be included in the set of added ornaments (*addenta*). In contemporary painting, the ties between the frame and the image, nurtured by aesthetic traditions, have been broken and the status of the frame has undergone a thorough revision. The frame has assumed the function of the medium of meanings and moved into a meaningful area. As never before, the importance of separating and bordering is now emphasised and its strong associations with Western culture are clearly indicated.

In this project, I did not introduce a formal element of the frame. What was important, however, was the figure of the rectangle/plane of the format/image field – extracted from a centuries-old contract, which seems to apply first to caves walls and then to Alberti’s topos of an image as a window, etc. The edge-lines of individual formats relive or accept the streaks of light and thus appear to define the borders. At the same time, emphasising their extremes is thus a component of sources used for a more complete grasp of meanings located in the accumulated relativity of individual elements of expression and evokes the Derridaian ‘end’ – expectations.

Viktor Stoichita indicates many subtle differences contained in the prefix *para* that are difficult to translate, and presents the summary of the issue as proposed by J. Hills Miller: ‘*Para* is an opposing prefix, defining proximity and distance, similarity and difference, the inside and the outside ... , a thing that is placed simultaneously before and beyond a border, a threshold or a margin, that has an equal status, yet is subordinate, secondary, assigned like a guest to a host, like a slave to a master. A thing as *para* is not only located on both sides of the border dividing the outside from the inside: it is also the border itself, a screen made of a waterproof membrane between the inside and the

outside. It mixes them, allowing the outside to go inside and the inside to go outside, it separates them and connects them.¹⁰

Since the early 20th century, in the face of new problems and the avoidance of illusion, the role of a frame has been gradually disavowed in painting. It has ultimately been deprived of its meanings and completely dethroned as a separator guarding the distance, a separate enclave of being. Agreeing with Bernhard Kerber, Marta Smolińska points out that this transformation is accompanied by the self-eradication of the fundamental trait, which has so far defined a painting as enclosed in frames forming an impassable aesthetic boundary. The exploration the rudiments of a painting inevitably involved the issue of the condition of its boundaries to finally 'extract' and thematise them as the main element. The most radical works in this area are frames or *passe-partouts* without images, which frame the emptiness – the place left after the painting has been removed.¹¹ It is necessary to mention here the creative achievements of Professor Jan Berdyszak and his series of works entitled *Passe-par-tout*, *Après Passe-par-tout* and *The Rest of the Rest*, also the art of Robert Mangold or Kamil Kuskowski with works like "Battle of Grunwald according to Jan Matejko" (2008) and "Karkonosze Landscape" (from the cycle *Situational Dictionary*, 2009).

As far as the exhibition at AT Gallery is concerned, one of the main tasks that I set myself – not for the first time – was to withdraw and withdraw the viewers from the convention of the exhibition. The impossibility of isolating an image from the spatial context in which it was placed also concerned the viewer. However, I must point out that it was not my attempt to make a 'counter-dogmatic' argumentation against the claims of, for example, Georg Simmel¹² or Ernest Gombrich, who emphatically states that 'without the "framing" forms, conscious perception is impossible, and man needs this sort of order because it opens the way for them to understand the world.'¹³ The applied inversion of *the painting's light* does not indicate the relocation of its truthfulness. In no way does this deny the artistic expression by 'striping' it from the established necessities that allegedly

¹⁰ V. Stoichita, *Ustanowienie Obrazu, słowo/obraz terytoria*, Gdańsk 1999, p. 37; [see J. Hillis Miller, *Deconstruction and Criticism*, New York, 1979. The French translation of the fragment comes from G. Genette, *Seuils*, Paris, 1987, p. 7. Genette's book suggests a very significant analysis of the literary 'paratext'] (my translation).

¹¹ M. Smolińska, a session entitled "Prawda w malarstwie", The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, October 2010; [Cf. B. Kerber, *Bild und Raum – Zur Auflösung der Gattung*, "Städel-Jahrbuch", Neue Folge, Band 8, hrsg. von Klaus Gallwitz und Herbert Beck, 1981, pp. 324-245].

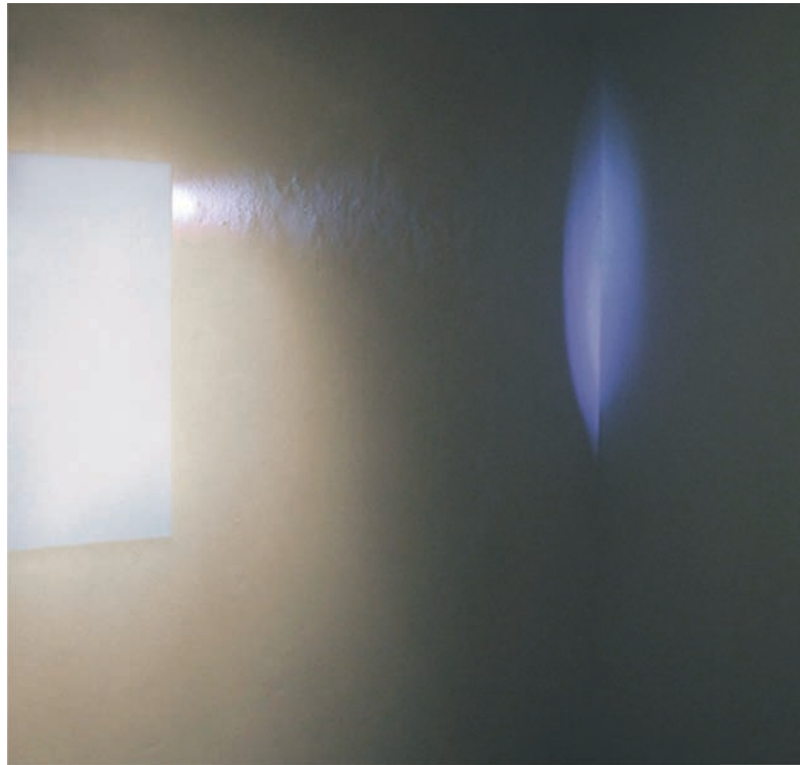
¹² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹³ E. Gombrich, as quoted in: Ch. Burchard, *Bilderrahmen im Barock. Beispiele aus der Sammlung Pfefferle*, München, Salzburg 1999 (my translation).

'camouflage the truth'. It is not its purpose to negate any category of painting articulation – e.g. representationalism, figurativeness, or one or another expression... Containing a certain extreme outline, however, it does not proclaim another 'drama of painting', which 'has come to the wall' – for we know that it has been familiar with the wall from the very beginning (e.g. frescoes were a kind of 'annex to the contract'). It is not a voice with a defeatist tone; it rather has a dialectic character. Derived from the image field, the light on the gallery walls revises the perception of the painting, marks and activates the parergonal area, re-naming the figure of the wall. However, it does not do this for didactic reasons, not does it teach about a more or less correct approach to the painting. Through its derivative, as well as the circumscribing and, at the same time, opening way of being and special character, the light wants to put the viewers inside the painting. With the highest respect for them, it tries to present them to themselves, as well as reveal and emphasise the importance of their presence. The light wants to do this personally. To make the viewers' presence as complete as possible and to move their imagination, it once again concludes a kind of contract with the image field so that all 'that is already imagined' would be left before the gallery's threshold; so that this special encounter would take place without any of the viewers' former anthropologies. By doing so, it wants to enable them to simultaneously experience proximity and distance and make them... see. The perceptible illuminated frames, which are also some 'orients', allow the viewers to identify the 'cut off from the goal', which in turn can be seen as both the 'finality' and 'interruption'.¹⁴

Therefore, the orient and the cut occur at the same time.

¹⁴ Cf. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 88.



From the exhibition *Purview*, Poznań: AT Gallery, 2018

This function of the 'framing' is the same as the function of parergon. It does not involve framing, closing and separating an object from the environment – instead it introduces a radical division, difference or cut, resulting in the effect of beauty. The framing/parergon introduces a difference, the two elements of which: finality and the lack of end are disproportionate (heterogeneous).

That is why they are constitutive of the feeling of beauty:¹⁵

It is finality-without-end which is said to be beautiful. ... So it is the without that counts for beauty; neither the finality nor the end, neither the lacking goal nor the lack of a goal but the edging in sans of the pure cut ..., the sans of the finality-sans-end.¹⁶

Parergon has a triple role here. As a framing, it is:

1. the place where the cut occurs because of its shape;
2. the cut itself;
3. the effect of this cut (cutting off the 'finality' of the image field from its 'end', finality-without-end) which produces the feeling of beauty.¹⁷

¹⁵ Paweł Dybel, *Piękny tulipan, trup i bez czystego cięcia. Bez-duszna estetyka Derridy*, Zeszyt Wydawniczy No 17, Gdańsk: The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Zbrojownia Sztuki, 2018, p. 8.

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 88-89.

¹⁷ *rursus: Piękny tulipan, op. cit.*, p. 8.

The colours used in the project were taken from the illuminated exhibition room. They included several different tones of colours ranging from 'white' to 'black', with varying degrees of light saturation. I also have to pay attention to the standard lighting system at AT Gallery. I decided to leave it and use its colour temperature for the proper reception of the work. The colour temperature of 3000 K and less gives a warm light (referred to as 'warm white' or 'yellow') and the gallery lighting is within this range. However, the light used in the project was much more intense and white, ranging from 4000 K to 6000 K (referred to as 'neutral white'). These temperature differences gave the impression that blue beams of light spread on the walls of the interior or were stopped in the corners. The blue and its 'aerial' reverberation emphasised the contrast between the 'insubstantial' character of light and the solid matter of the wall, which met there like: *pneuma* and *phasma*. The endoscopic camera was used to strengthen this contrast and direct transmission was applied to extract the image of the interior of the drilled wall onto its face. I usually place a painting where such predicates as object/subject and material/non-material meet.

Acquiring the impression of blue through the use of the gallery properties during this particular creative moment, or – let me finally use this term – given the deconstruction of the conventionally understood painting and its perception is a significant nuance for me. This was far more legitimate in this project than the use of, for example, coloured lighting filters mounted in front of the light source. It is, moreover, a point at which I must stop for a moment. When applying light in my projects: either its 'artificial sources' alone or in combination with natural daylight, I must be extremely cautious not to fall into the trap of an easy visual effect, which is associated with the risk of abandoning the area of meaning and leaving the viewers with the experience of only aesthetic expression. Hence, being sensitive to this, I try to observe the aforementioned *quantum satis* principle – just as much as necessary, the amount which is enough.

Most formats (30 cm x 24 cm) and the height at which they hung were adapted to the average size of the human head/face (this was also significant in my next project entitled *The Call*). The meeting of the internal luminous window clearances at AT Gallery with the white pictorial light introduced by me may refer to Maria Anna Potocka's statement: '... Hiding behind the wall that separated them from the important world, they wanted to leave a trace on it; by painting an external partner, they made the wall transparent. ...' In the light (*nomen omen*) of this reflection, which seems to refer to the art of painting *in extenso*, I can conclude that this 'external partner' is not only MAN who is waiting THERE or THE OTHER who is waiting THERE and the painting that is waiting

THERE, but it is also the LIGHT which is the perfect representation of this waiting. The HERE and NOW is perceptible and the distance to it may lie in our longing and desire ... for salvation.



From the exhibition *Purview*, Poznań: AT Gallery, 2018

I also based my previous project entitled *Greeting* on the encounter of natural light with led light. The project consisted of two light-emitting oil paintings (80 x 80 cm), a gallery window, covered with a white, half-transparent roller blind and variable light penetrating through it depending on the time of day. The roller blind belongs to the permanent gallery equipment. *Greeting* was one of the first projects in which the wall was activated and the convention of painting exhibition was violated. Through the use of artificial light and the appropriate location of paintings – in relation to each other and the window – a part of the image content was formally ‘extracted’ from the field of the painting screen. At that time, I referred to the question of whether the wall is the limit of our vision.



Greeting, Kalisz: T. Kulisiewicz Centre, 2016

Continuing Derridian considerations, it can be concluded that the streams of light emerging from the edge of the image field accentuated the place where the frame of the painting or *passe par tout* started, i.e. Derrida's (par)ergonal area. However, here it took the form of an illuminated edge-line – this simultaneous 'cut' and 'orient'. This project was not about incorporating a fragment of the wall as one of the elements of the picture, as was the case in Robert Mangold's cycle entitled *Frame Paintings* in the early 1980s and the aforementioned Janusz Berszyna's questions about space, the nature of being and the boundaries of the picture. Mangold's *Frame Paintings* are works constructed of four rectangles of different colours and various, mathematically calculated and gradually increasing proportions. They were suspended so that their edge-lines formed a central, regular rectangle. The edge-lines of entire individual systems also referred to the surroundings – the wall. The flatness of individual rectangles emphasised integration with its surface.

Can light emitted in this way bring out the imaging meanings from the area of the imaging non-existence, i.e. the wall, and point to 'peri-imaging' meanings in a sufficient manner? It seems to be particularly predestined to do so due to its nature. However, what about the nature of painting imagery? The attempt to redirect attention in the perceptual layer does not constitute any categorical confirmation or denial. The revision of perceptual conventions and established painterly expression gives rise to reflection. After all –

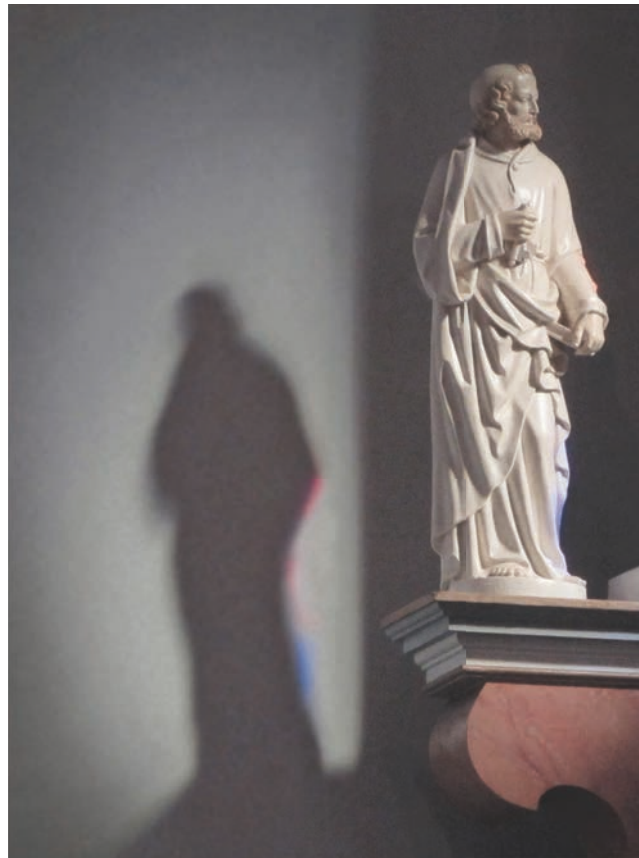
I repeat – it is not about the work itself but about what it opens to, although its construction is decisive in the process. Does the visual accent of the wall indicate its status as the original place of the image, or does it indicate the wall as an area of imaging (and not only imaging) decisions? Is the ‘off-image’ stream of light a symbolic cry: ‘the truth is outside’? Does the light, which defines the plane of the wall all the way to its borders and strikes at its angular breakdown, tell something about openness and limitations at the same time? Does it reveal itself anew and much more strongly, somehow outsmarting these limitations – making them a condition for self-disclosure? Does the light treat the edge of the neighbouring image it encountered as an obstacle, recalling its massive, material objectivity of the necessary medium of the plane, or does it enter a figurative dialogue with it, turning into words and their meanings?

The questions formulated in this way are part of considerations related to the thematised triad: the light, the wall and the picture, and do not require unambiguous answers, which are impossible anyway. The created event, in which the light belongs neither exclusively to the inside nor exclusively to the outside of the picture or, at the same time, belongs to both of them and at times seems to dissolve its edge-lines by irradiation, brings out the ambivalence of ‘parergonal’ nature.

However, are such manifestations of dependence an attempt to radically deconstruct the well-known metaphysical opposition: *inside-outside*, or do they only reveal themselves in the light of this possibility? Again, this is a Derridian reflection, which does not limit the scope of issues contained in the above questions despite its modality. In no way was it my intention to turn the projects – in which Derrida’s idea resounds (not to say ‘shines’) – into figurative interpretation or a kind of illustration of this idea. This would be at odds with my understanding of the creative meaning, which excludes this kind of procedure as thoroughly didactic and also impossible in a general sense.

The projects described are not at the same time the voice of some kind of contemporary iconoclast. However, the following photo, which I made some time ago in a church, also influenced the outline of the concept of this formal approach to expression. A fragment of the light falling through the stained glass window and subtly describing the shadow of the figural image seemed to be meaningful in its whispering being, submissively revealing its truth. It phenomenally co-existed with the material and symbolic equivalent of its meaning and importance, and it can even be said that it appeared through it. The photographed scene lasted less than three minutes, after which it disappeared as the angle of the sunlight changed. After a while, the whole event was

shaded, apparently covered by a cloud. Again, I refer to the Latin root of the term intuition (*intueri* – to watch, observe) in order to experience, even for a moment, the shortening of the distance that separates us from the event which is absolutely independent of man. This, in turn, seems to leak through the ever-existing slots and fractures present in all conditions and ‘world orders’ arduously constituted by us.



In view of the phenomenon photographed, I must quote V. Stoichita, who – in his thorough analysis of various levels of the system of ideas – refers to the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries:

The silent wall of the Protestant church is not only a wall. It is an ... absent painting. It is from this ‘zero degree of painting’ that one can begin to analyse the specific self-awareness acquired by seventeenth-century art. ... By presenting the problem of art with terms such as function, reception and context, Protestant criticism creates in a dialectical way a modern concept of art.¹⁸

¹⁸ Victor Stoichita, *Ustanowienie Obrazu; słowo/obraz terytoria*, Gdańsk 1999, p.119.

THE CALL – Wielichowo: MAGIEL* Gallery, may 2018

In 2015, Dawid Szafrński, PhD (University of the Arts Poznań), the founder and the owner of MAGIEL Gallery, found glass negatives under the attic floor of the house purchased in Wielichowo. Their origin dates back to the second half of the 19th century, when this photographic technique became popular. It turned out that the negatives showed scenes from the life of city residents. One could thus see: a woman walking a road, a portrait of a married couple, wedding photos, children, two men on a bike ride in a forest or park, a group photo taken during a break in field work and others.

The negatives became the basis for the construction of the project and exhibition entitled *The Call*, which took place in May and June 2018.**



One of the negative glass plates found

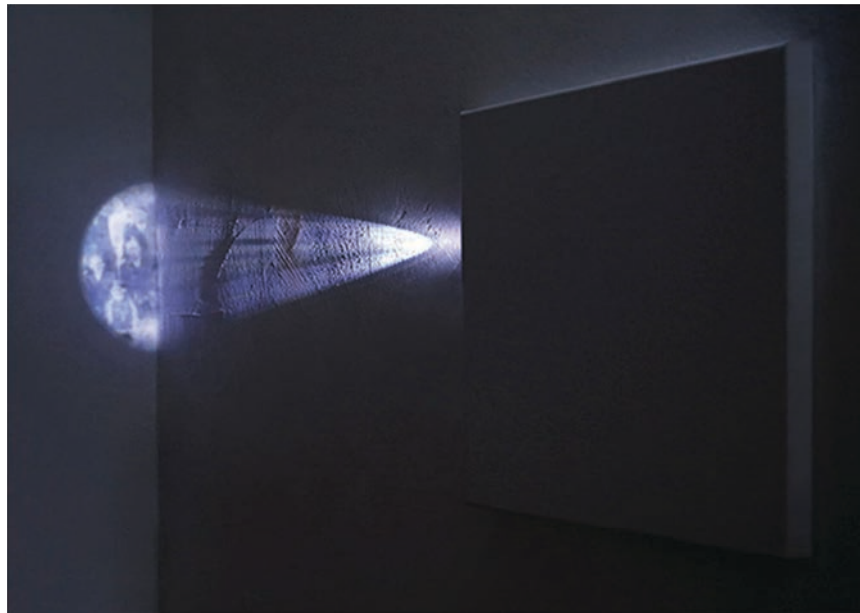
While the aforementioned project entitled *Purview* was based on the thematisation of the predicates of imaging expression: light, plane, image field and 'parergonal' area, these rudimentary properties in the other project were embedded in the context of present/absent: the former presence of people recorded on negative glass plates, their

* Contemporary Art Gallery MAGIEL is quite a unique place on the map of the Wielkopolska region. Being located in a small town Wielichowo in the Grodzisk county, it offers an exhibition programme to promote a wide range of visual arts disciplines including sculpture, drawing, painting and multimedia, and to show the output of artists associated with the University of the Arts in Poznań. Its activity fulfils culture-creating and educational tasks in a responsible and mature way.

** The exhibition entitled *The Call* was part of the annual series of exhibitions held during POZNAŃ ART WEEK, which took place in a number of significant exhibition spaces in Poznań and the surrounding area. It also participated in the 2018 Night of Museums.

physical absence today and our presence in relation to the records found. The formulation of making present was also important.

The negatives were transposed into positives, appropriately reduced and arranged in the optical system of lamps, which – like in the previous project – were mounted as light emitters in the image field format. In this way, individual photographic images, through the stream of light, were somehow elevated beyond the image area, which usually has a format of a vertical or horizontal rectangle. The record of the light path could be seen on the surface of the wall; it carried a pictorial spectrum and settled in the form of a circle on a perpendicular plane, i.e. the adjacent wall or the ceiling of the room: wall/ceiling. Red light and a pulsating light/spectrum (in two places) were a kind of ‘exclamation marks’ in the event. Moreover, static white light and static spectrum emission were used.



The Call, a fragment

This plane perpendicular to the plane of the wall and the image field placed on it is a ‘different’ plane which determines the disclosure of the pictorial spectrum and is necessary for it. It is obvious, at the same time, that both contemporary paintings and those known from the history of art can perfectly make an imaginary character, person or face present and this is the essence of a well-painted portrait or self-portrait. Another type of making present is what we know from Byzantine icons. However, directing the view to the *light-record*, located somewhat outside the area usually designated for this end, is not simply transferring the expression to a better or more appropriate place. It is itself a component of the expression that fulfils itself in the perception of the whole: from the

abandoned field of the image plane – through the uneven (ambiguous) wall surface – up to disclosure. The significance of this distance also lies in the title call but it is not explicitly specified in which direction it goes. Can this interpretation of meanings bear the hallmarks of ‘calling’ *those who are absent*, fulfilled in perception, or are we the addressees for those who call towards us and whose presence or attempt to be made present we see? Or perhaps it is about ‘calling’ each other? ...

The arrangement of the images and the white wall surfaces, devoid of any imaginative, colourful or compositional elements, is an intended indication of the absence. Suspended like a family collection of memories, they offer a place for ‘absentees’, who can only be met outside this proximity – THERE.

Finally, I want to refer to one more aspect related to the project discussed. Because of the subject matter and the specific context of memory and the 2018 exhibition, the theme of *The Call* alluded to the celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of Poland regaining independence and the outbreak of the Greater Poland Uprising, during which Wielichowo made a significant contribution to creating an insurgent garrison. The exhibition also initiated activities aimed at the personal identification of the people photographed and their descendants. The search for the first inhabitants mentioned in the description of the building began and the application to the Polish Red Cross Information and Search Bureau is currently being formulated.

CONCLUSION

The aforementioned idea of Jerzy Ludwiński is important for me not so much because he indicates ‘aggressive, total changes of the external’ as one of the model changes, but because he stresses the need to ‘calm down’ to experience the glow directed towards ‘the inner illumination of the world, transformation and awakening, indescribably gentle...’. Any painting has discursive power that allows it to express itself. Non-verbally, it is often included in a broad cultural discourse about all the dependencies of traditional approaches to and current ideas on artistic expression. There is, of course, no obligation to actively engage in these theoretical debates. There is also no obligation to discuss more or less directly the modality of one or another, currently resounding narrative. All the more so because various theoretical findings often appear to be founded on creative and

artistic practices, practices of seeing and expressing, located in areas defined by the creators themselves, even if we take account of the wide spaces of interpolation, subsets and intersections in the meeting of art, philosophy and science. I mention this because I have emphasised the importance of intuition several times before. Based on self-observation and this kind of reflection, I cannot say that intuitiveness is only a kind of screen, behind which artists hide with their sensitivity, thus avoiding responsibility for the ideological dimension of their works. In addition to being fulfilled in a creative act and theoretical analysis, I find intuition to be the first movement, or the very beginning/initiation of the movement of the circle of meanings, born in the initiation and development of its promptings.

In the project entitled *Purview*, which is somewhat in line with the aesthetics of absence, I left the way to formal solutions of expression reachable. The analysing approach of dichotomous opposition and differentiation with the simultaneous suspension of all categorical statements and interpretations remains somewhat uncovered. Care for such openness and the ultimate culmination in synthesis resulted in the viewers' own ideas, including interpretation of the delineated areas of meaning and a conclusion on the contemporary resonance of expressions, which was not a priority for me. On the part of the viewer, it was often not a direct conclusion based on in-depth knowledge of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory and the related figures referred to as 'the absence of nothing', 'the trace of a trace' or 'negation of negation' ..., but it followed that direction. I therefore believe in intuition and its constitutive function in the field of art. Hence the previously mentioned role of experience as the one that, along with the acquired knowledge, is part of genealogy and the maturation of intuition.

Regarding the very concept of Derrida, '...everything that is "original and new" in this idea is located within the horizon of tradition, joining it retroactively like a missing part. However, it also changes our previous view of the "things" that have been mentioned in this tradition'.¹⁹

¹⁹ From Professor Paweł Dybel's lecture: *Prawda sztuki, prawda w malarstwie. Uwagi na temat myśli o sztuce Jacques'a Derridy w jego książce 'Prawda w malarstwie'*, the lecture was given at the scientific session entitled 'Prawda w malarstwie' at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, October 2010.

... The great Light is coming. A glow in the blue of infinity, infinite amounts of luminous particles in the blue, falling gently and slowly. The soft light that changes everything...

Poznań, 2018/2019

Paweł Kaszczyński, Ph. D.

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