

## **Art on the Move** **Tomasz Załuski, ed.**

### **Foreword by Tomasz Załuski**

From the sixties onwards there emerged many time-based and site-specific art practices and initiatives related to cultural, social, economical and geopolitical contexts. This resulted in the increased mobility of artists, who devised their performances and installations while travelling or touring around various countries. These trips have opened up spaces for inter-cultural exchange, shaped the circulation of ideas and drew new artistic geographical possibilities. They also manifested a politico-cultural hegemony of some countries and a self-colonization of others. Before the fall of the iron curtain, it was of particular importance to travel to countries on the other side of the geopolitical border, a border which defined the shape of the world during that time. However, the purposes of journeys by artists from socialist countries and capitalist ones differed, relating to the different conditions which existed on 'the other side' and this determined the selection of artistic performances and installations to be performed abroad. Some travelling artists strove to create a vision of a universal art idiom. Others, less numerous, showed critical awareness of the existence of the geopolitical division and drew from it consequences in their art.

After the fall of the iron curtain the newly globalising world was also re-configuring the divisions. Issues of travelling, mobility, transit, emigration and nomadism gathered new dimensions. For many artists these became essential elements of their artistic stance and leading motifs of their art. In contemporary art, travelling is an occasion to practice artistic anthropologies, histories, ethnographies and sociologies - urban, translocal, postcolonial and transcultural - but it also provides a basis for artistic tourism and symbolic neo-colonization, supported by the institutionalization of performance art and the phenomenon of the artists' residencies. In practices that challenge the current economic-political cartography and engage in tactical play with it, contemporary teletechnologies are increasingly important, especially mobile technologies. Artistic journeys have complex and differentiated relationships with the global flow of capital - economical, symbolic or social.

The authors of the texts gathered in the thematic issue "Art on the Move" analyse those issues in various thematic, historic and geopolitical contexts. Describing the projects by Romuald Kuterka, and *My History of Art* in particular, Sylwia Serafinowicz focuses on how conceptual media and ways of artistic communication fostered the mobility of artists. Small sized photos, slides, prints or drawings were easy to take in the artist's private luggage of artist as they used the new fast means of international transport. This provided them with an opportunity to present the documentation of their ideas, actions and installations. The conceptual media also made it easy to document the 'life' and reception of the travelling works abroad as well as to make new works during the journeys. Tomasz Załuski shows the traces that the geopolitical division left between the East and the West, delimited by the iron curtain, in the biography, artistic practices and theories of the duo KwieKulik. The artists were critically aware of the existence of the 'divided world'; consequently, they pointed out the incommensurability of political and economic-social realities in the two geopolitical blocks. Nevertheless, they tried to spread into the other side of the iron curtain, information about their process based ephemeral art that was inextricably linked to the conditions of life and art in the People's Republic of Poland in the seventies and eighties. What seems to be highly interesting in this context is the fact that they often repeated in the West their performances that stemmed from socialist conditions. Magdalena Radomska describes journeys by artists from Central and Eastern Europe in the seventies, with particular focus on those from Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Russia. These journeys featured not only trips to art centers outside of the capital cities and travel to establish cooperation with artist from other countries of the Eastern block, but also trips and journeys of emigration to the West. This mobility is mainly interpreted in terms of setting the obligatory system of concepts and meanings into motion and revealing their contradictions, or – in the case of journeys to the West – getting away from them. Artistic journeys led towards the utopia of a free and universal language or towards aporias of translation and experience of miscomprehension by the Western public.

Julia Sowińska-Heim reconstructs the ideas behind the course of a series of urban projects that were organized during the last dozen or so years by the Manhattan Gallery in Łódź. She is especially interested in the ones that touched upon the immediate context of the gallery and its functioning - namely, Śródmiejska Dzielnica Mieszaniowa, a residential district consisting of large blocks of flats, known as 'Manhattan'. The enterprises in question joined artistic, educational and social practices together with field research into the anthropology of the city. The journeys around the area of Manhattan in Łódź gave a chance to excavate and rework the collective memory of the inhabitants of the district, as well as reveal some local myths and problems of everyday life. Unfortunately, work on the identity of the place was interrupted when the gallery had to move out of the district. The city also forms the context for artistic journeys described by Blanka Brzozowska. She uses Marc Augé's anthropology of the metro to analyse examples of contemporary *flânerie* that is performed by means of city transportation: the tube and the tram. Pierre Nadillon's 'tubist mapjacking', the interception of the official tube maps and transformation of them into his own poetic, cultural and social representations of space, helps to call into question the functionalism of relocation and transforms a journey into a vehicle of memory. Similarly, in his works, Patrick Corillon uses tram stops as landmarks on his maps of alternative poetical and narrative journeys around the city. What is at stake here is the possibility of an experience of the city, enriched beyond functionalist reductionism.

The issue of following an incorrect route, going off course and crossing cartographic divides comes back again in the text by Anna Nacher. The author deals with the subversion of the straight continuous line in projects dealing with the effectiveness of communication and the problem of borders - especially state borders. This phenomenon is analysed in the context of the situationist art of 'drifting' or 'meandering' and certain urban projects that can be linked to this tradition, then also the classical land art works, and, last but not least, the contemporary locative media projects. The next step in this tactical game is provided by projects called 'dislocative media', which have become important symbolic instruments in order to fight with the immigration policies of many countries nowadays. Ewa Wójtowicz brings to the fore the mediating role that image technologies play, together with traditional cultural codes, in shaping the experience of the journey. She looks at a couple of artistic projects that play with the state of image overproduction and poses a question concerning the 'authenticity' of the experience of the journey at a time when its new, collective and a priori forms are generated, for example, by the interfaces Google Earth and Google Street View. Today, the role of journey interfaces is also played by contextual art exhibitions that aim at bringing closer and explaining the cultural specificity and the way of life for people from outside of the Western world. Such postcolonial enterprises often risk becoming the tools of a hidden symbolic neocolonialism. This necessitates questions about the very possibility of intercultural translation, about a certain ethics of travelling and its image testimony as experiences of translation.

The last two texts both refer to biographical methods of research as appropriate tools of confronting the problem of "art on the move". Tomasz Ferenc uses his own research carried out within the perspective of biographically oriented sociology of art in order to describe the experience of emigration by contemporary Polish artists from different art fields who live in Berlin, Paris, London and New York. He asks if their individual biographical trajectories share any common features that would prove a certain experience typical of this social group. He therefore examines the reasons for emigration and the strategies used to adapt to the conditions in a foreign country. He also asks how a new situation translates into their art and their artistic success abroad - its individual factors, measures and definitions. Finally, Łukasz Guzek shows the possibility and validity of interpreting performance art as well as writing its history with the use of biographies and autobiographies of performers treated as formative factors of the discipline. An example of such procedure is *Metamuseum*, a project by Artur Tajber that aims at documenting performance art by referring to elements of performers' biographical data. Guzek grounds such biographism in a variety of philosophical and theoretical contexts. The biography not only helps to put into place the historical context of performance art but it also shows the intersection of personal and geographical trajectories of singular performers' activities - it sketches a net of routes and a map of places they visited. In this way, the history of performance art turns out to be at the same time, a history of performers' journeys.

## Sylwia Serafinowicz, "The mobility of Romuald Kutera's works"

Mobility is an indispensable part of conceptual practice. Its main mediums - photographs, slides, drawings and texts - allowed artists the possibility of circulating their works relatively easily, both in Poland and abroad. Smaller works, whose dimensions did not exceed the A4 format, were sent by post. The bigger ones were often transported in suitcases. In the late sixties and in the seventies, this strategy was often employed by radical conceptual artists to reach beyond the existing art scene and create an

alternative. The process was triggered by a new, and faster means of travel, which had not been available to the previous generations of artists.

Consequently, Romuald Kutera's *oeuvre* consists of numerous projects intended to be displayed abroad. Perhaps the most intriguing one is his work from 1985 *My History of Art*. It measures 111 cm by 206 cm and was prepared to be shown at the *Contemporary Art from Poland* which opened at the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff in 1985. It was later transported by Anna Kutera to Toronto and exhibited at the Artculture Resource Centre. Another work shown in Banff was created by Anna Kutera following Romuald's directives dictated by telephone and further tips sent by post. Another popular method of transmitting the message of a conceptual work from the sixties onwards was by telephone. This solution was pioneered by László Moholy-Nagy in 1923 when his avant-garde works *Konstruktion in Emaillé 2* and *3* were prepared by a local enamel manufacturing plant following the artist's telephone instructions.

Conceptual ideas travelled also in print. In 1973, Romuald Kutera together with Anna Kutera, Wiesława Siwicka, Mirosław Gliński, and Piotr Błażejowski, who were all members of the Recent Art Gallery collective set up the previous year, created *Publication*. Key figures of the American art scene, including Sol LeWitt in his *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* (1967), emphasised the lesser importance of the material and visual layer of an artwork compared to its idea. Publications played a key role in conveying information about actions undertaken in remote and rather insignificant places like Osieki, Turów, or Rozel Point, Utah. From the late sixties onwards, slides, photographs and texts enabled artists to communicate their ideas, find allies and a way to show their work in places that they could not reach in person. Due to the light and compact character of materials used by conceptual artists, their art could venture beyond their circle of friends, their cities and eventually continents. Artworks could even be made while travelling and in the open air. Therefore Romuald Kutera's objects are not only a registration of his artistic ideas from the seventies until today but they also document his journeys, meetings and conversations.

## **Tomasz Załuski, „The divided world. The geopolitics of art according to KwieKulik”**

The aim of the article is to trace the impact of the geopolitical division between the West and the East - as symbolized by the iron curtain - on the biography, artistic theories and practices of Polish duo KwieKulik. I focus on the artists' attempts to spread abroad information about Polish ephemeral art. I am particularly interested in their journeys to the West, during which they presented their performances and showed art documentation.

KwieKulik were critically aware of the incommensurability of Western capitalist and Eastern socialist economic and political conditions of life and art production. What is more, they conceived their art as deeply embedded in those conditions and they used it as a means of exposing and commenting on them. In the divided world, there was no 'universal' realm, or the universal existed only in so far as it was also divided. According to KwieKulik, to expose the local conditions of life and art under socialism was the only chance to be universal. They were against the attempts on the part of some Polish neo-avant-garde artists to appropriate Western artistic idioms and try to symbolically enter the Western art world as, supposedly, its rightful participants. Such self-colonisation by subordinating oneself to the West as a substitute cultural hegemon seemed inauthentic to them and it led to art practices that were without any meaningful and critical relationship with the local socialist reality.

At the end of the seventies and throughout the eighties KwieKulik confronted the divided reality while traveling to western countries and presenting their art. There they often repeated performances - linking them in new configurations called 'multiperformances' - that were originally showed in Poland. They did so because each time they came to the West, they had to present themselves as a 'repeated debut', as artists with no artistic biography and no symbolic capital - except for one connected with coming from the East. Thus, repeating performances could play the role of 'performing the documentation'. Another thing was that KwieKulik were probably unable to prepare a premiere performance that would answer the specific nature of Western life and art. The Western conditions were simply not theirs and they had not shaped their existential and artistic experience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

possible; as a matter of fact, every performance gets its digital trace produced by the acts of logging in and joining the networks. Hence some of the artists tend to shift their attention to the very technical tools that enable localization of the subjects in space (mostly GPS), aiming at different strategies of dislocating such technology to the effect of its subversion. It means, however, that even if different spatial regimes are at stake, the analysis of the concept of line embodied in the walking-based artworks is theoretically fruitful and may shed more light on the spatially oriented media art.

### **Ewa Wójtowicz, „The gaze of a stranger. Artistic journey as image producing”**

The theme of the text is the production of images, understood as the result of an artistic journey, both in relation to the physical movement and the collecting or curating of mediated images. The analysis is based primarily on the opinions of Nicolas Bourriaud from *The Radicant* and anthropology-based perspective present in the book *Apetyt turysty* by Anna Wieczorkiewicz. The key issue is not only the mode of the artistic journey, but also the mutual relationship of the images which are produced in the process of traveling, both as documentation of the specific journey and the artwork produced. Traveling does not necessarily have to be a direct experience nowadays; it can be mediated; not even necessarily through reading travelers' diaries or virtual simulation. Tools, such as Google Street View create a common, shared realm of memories for all who view the same image. If the 'Innocent Eye' does not exist anymore, neither does the individual travel experience. Therefore, experience is often trivialized and searching for authenticity is inefficient. Sometimes the presence of the exotic means being the Other always disintegrating presumably authentic situation. In addition, not only an artist but any user can become a curator of content (images) from the ever-expanding networked repository. However, the question of *dispositif* of a journey, which emerges from an alternative space for the circulation of images, still reminds open. Being aware of the overproduction of images, is it still possible to find an alternative? A final metaphor is Rebbilib, a tool for navigation, requiring memory skills and ability of interpretation.

### **Tomasz Ferenc, „The ambivalence of the category of ‘success’ with regard to the example of biographical stories of Polish émigré artists”**

In this article I would like to present a research perspective based on the idea of a biographically oriented sociology of art. I will refer to the biographical research that I carried out in 2008 - 2012 among the Polish artists who settled in London, Berlin, New York and Paris. In the first part of the article I will try to describe the various reasons for leaving the home country and the different strategies undertaken by the artists in order to live abroad. Artistic mythologies dispose us to believe in the uniqueness of each of the authors, not only their works but also their lives. It seems to be interesting to reconsider the question, what is common and typical in their life and what is unique. I will try to point to some of those typical and repetitive elements within the biographies of the émigré artists. Also I want to show how settling outside the country of origin affects the artists work and how this impacts on what can be called success. This aspect became the main subject of the article. What factors determine artistic success? In the article both literature sources and empirical data are presented. Success in almost every narrative story is defined differently. Sometimes the artists in their narratives mention its objective dimensions, such as publications in prestigious journals, important exhibitions, sales of their work or placing the work in prestigious collections and positive reception from audience and critics. In other cases, success is defined by achieving a state of independence, a strong position in the art world, achieving social and financial security. What is important is that the objective evidence of success does not necessarily represent the subjective feeling or treating of it as important. By presenting biographical stories of the artists I am showing an ambivalence towards the category of 'success'. This concept is so variously interpreted, each time requiring a precise definition in relation to the biography and the circumstances in which every particular artist lives. The main idea of this approach is based on an attempt to break the dominance of institutional categories and ways of defining artistic success and associated with this, the hierarchy of artists constructed by participants and decision-makers in the art world.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Varia**

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

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

## Filip Lilipński, „Towards the ‘critical autonomy’ of art”

The text is a critical discussion of Agnieszka Rejniak-Majewska's book titled *Puste miejsce po krytyce? Modernizm i materialistyczna rewizja autonomii sztuki* (Łódź, 2014). With reference to this publication I point to and elaborate on its central issues: the re-evaluation and appreciation of aesthetic experience, the material substance of an artwork and the autonomy of art despite anti-aesthetic attitudes in the eighties and nineties. Rejniak-Majewska indicates certain changes by major critics (Foster, Buchloh) with regard to their positions on the material substance of art, as well as with regard to art and phenomena. She analyzes this in her chapters and she argues for the complexity of the often generalized aesthetic dimension of art and for its critical value. Another issue brought up in the title of the book, is the crisis of art-criticism, the clear-cut criteria of which disappeared along with the demise of the modernist criteria of aesthetic judgment. Whilst agreeing with the main thesis of the book, I also discuss recent publications by Rosalind Krauss who stresses the centrality of the issue of medium specificity and Keith Moxey who, also signaling the necessity of combining the sensual (aesthetic) medium specific aspects of art with their theoretical and critical potential, seem to be to some degree in line with Rejniak-Majewska's arguments but also complement them. While the Polish scholar in her chapters concentrates on diverse issues of art, aesthetics and art criticism in 20th Century, I argue that the applicability of medium specificity and the material substance of artworks should also be measured against the contemporary. Moreover, the material/aesthetic substance of a work of art can be thought of in terms of an expanded field negotiated by the work itself which provides a framework for the viewer's diverse responses. In such a perspective, the meaning of 'critical autonomy' expands as a paradox for the autonomy of a work of art in its internal material substance and within the framework of its aesthetic experience, which is at the same time external, that is critically and theoretically productive.