

Work =

Documentation of Imagination

Work = Documentation of Imagination

In response to the restrictions imposed on our movements during the coronavirus epidemic, Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź initiates the online-based collection, *Work = Documentation of imagination* consisting of work by an international group of artists. In the search for new solutions, we turn towards the past, drawing inspiration from neo-avant-garde artistic practices. The collection refers to the action of the Hungarian art historian László Beke, who in 1971 sent to a group of his artist friends a list with an invitation to respond to the slogan “WORK = the DOCUMENTATION OF THE IMAGINATION/IDEA.” The collection of received responses has become an important element in the development of Central European conceptual art, as well as a testimony to the informal network of relationships. In the face of the current crisis, we have begun a dialogue with this historic gesture, asking the group of artists working with the Muzeum to send their responses to the same call. The current COVID-related restrictions have forced us to update the artistic methods developed before globalization, and after almost three decades, László Beke’s activities and motto have gained a new meaning. Today, they can indicate not only the limits of creative work, but also the problems faced by many artists who cannot currently continue with their practice.

The collection of artworks—digital files, growing over time and sent to us from across the globe is an archive of imagination and a manifestation of solidarity across national borders, especially important today in the context of their closure and the threat of political isolationism. It is not accidental that Muzeum Sztuki – an institution based from its inception on the transnational solidarity and cooperation of artists – takes up this very idea today.

This publication is a summary of the *Work = Documentation of Imagination* project, initiated by Muzeum Sztuki during the pandemic lockdown in spring 2020. The following pages consist of all the received works, presented in pairs in order to reflect on and strengthen the themes and ideas present in the collection.

The works are accompanied by an essay by Joanna Sokołowska, which serves as a case-study of the work by Sanja Iveković.

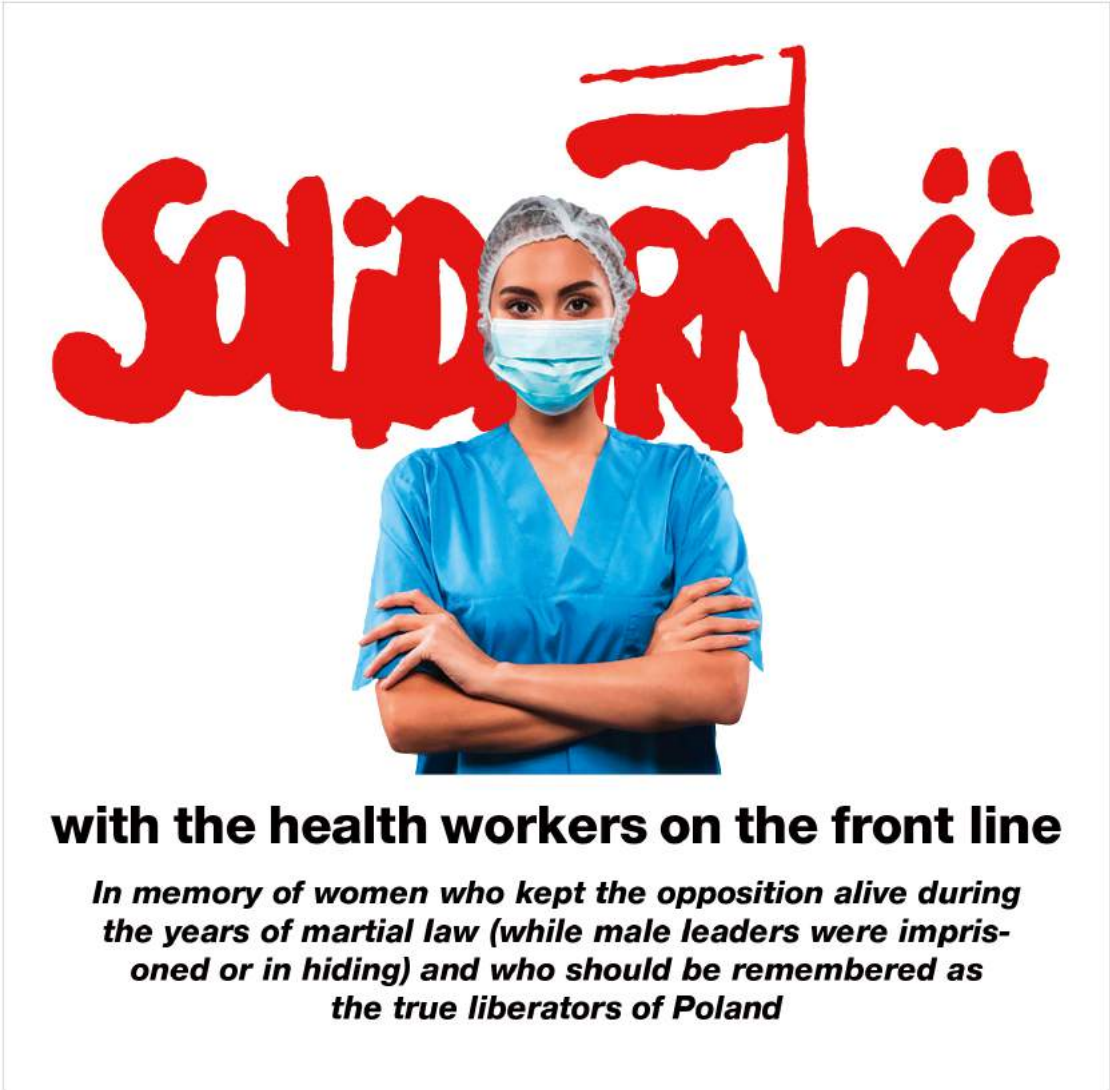


MONIKA ZAWADZKI

Shroud

2017/20
sculpture project

How do mirror neurons and empathy work in the conditions of increased digital communication? If, thanks to technology, we can watch on our screens somebody's suffering or death in any part of the world, how does it affect our psyche? In her *Shroud*, Monika Zawadzki, with the help of synthetic signs binding the eyes with a tear-shaped fabric, asks similar questions. Like in the artist's other works, emotions, energy, animate and inanimate matter are connected here in a supra-individual network of impact and exchange.



SANJA IVEKOVIĆ

Solidarity 1989-2020

2020
collage

Sanja Iveković work is a manifestation of solidarity with female health workers who help others through hard, poorly paid work in dangerous conditions while risking their own health. It raises a question about the low social value of labour related to life support – both professional and women's unpaid, invisible labour of providing care to others. The artist's manifesto is a continuation of her long-term research on the erasure of women's involvement in Solidarity movement within the dominant, patriarchal version of history (*Invisible Women of Solidarity*). In her work, Iveković consistently addresses the rights and visibility of women in public space. For example, at her solo exhibition at Muzeum Sztuki, (*Practice Makes the Master*) (2009) the artist presented a project dedicated to the exclusion of women who undergo illegal abortions in Poland, (*Sunglasses [Women`s House]*).



CAROLINA CAYCEDO

Common Goods

2020
digital file

Carolina Caycedo opposes the profit-driven principle of mainstream economics, by combining different types of common goods: material and intangible values relevant to the well-being of the entire earthly community. Caycedo is a Colombian artist whose community-based work often refers to grassroots resistance, environmental protection and human rights, and acts against appropriation, privatisation and exploitation. In 2019, as part of the *Prototypes* series at Muzeum Sztuki, the exhibition *Carolina Caycedo and Zofia Rydet. Care report* took place.



CECYLIA MALIK

Ryba Certa and Cecylia Malik with the flag of Koalicja Ratujmy Rzeki
Toruń 2018/2020
digital photo

Ryba Certa and Cecylia Malik with the flag of Koalicja Ratujmy Rzeki
Toruń 2018/2020
digital photo

Cecylia Malik combines art with environmental and social commitments, and is the (co)creator of initiatives such as the Modraszek collective Polish Mothers at the Clearing, Braids of the Białka River, The River's Sister, and collaborates with Save the Rivers Coalition. She is the co-organizer of Vistula River fashion shows, galar (single-use transport boat typical of Vistula River) rallies, performative protests such as sailing down the Vistula river in a DIY, fish-shaped vessel. Both her individual and collective, sisterly happenings highlight the risks associated with the regulation of riverbeds and invite viewers to celebrate their natural values.



JADWIGA SAWICKA

New Books

1. *Bright spaces*
2. *Plague of flies*
3. *Sees the demon*
4. *Starts drinking*

2020
digital photo

We don't know what stories are hidden inside the books that cover the artist's face. The titles on the hand-painted covers do not refer to their content. In her work, Jadwiga Sawicka breaks open the meaning of words and mixes the intimate and public registers. Uneasy emotions seep out of the most obvious phrases. In this series of photographs, we also see a different duality: is the physical activity - reading - inscribed in the context of its environment, is it simultaneously hiding, an escape into fiction or an attempt to tame the chaos of reality?



ELŻBIETA JABŁOŃSKA

Halo

2010/2020
film

The film *Halo* was made in the Lower Vistula Valley, at an altitude of 788 km of the river, near the dwelling of Elżbieta Jabłońska. It is a postcard from the state of immersion in the Vistula River environment and the space-time experiences, in which the events are constantly changing impressions of chiaroscuro, cloud shapes, cracks on the ice floes or a sudden appearance of snow. By waving at us, the artist tries to make contact with those of us whom such sensations escape. In her oeuvre, Elżbieta Jabłońska addresses the issues of feminized care work, social exclusion, and engages herself in community ecological activities, such as, e.g., *Nieużytki sztuki* (*Art Wastes*) promoting urban gardening, which she does in cooperation with art institutions. She is the initiator of the W88 Vistula artistic residencies.

film on
<https://documentation-of-imagination.msl.org.pl/>

ANNA NOWICKA

Wander # 21

2020
text

No need to linger in sadness for what is no more. Swim across to the shore.

I close my eyes.
Inside it is dark and warm: the velvet night of within.
When I keep on looking, I inevitably see the stars. They come out with my quiet attention, out of patient silence and vast, infinite space. They shine bright and call on me, leading the way deeper.
I simply follow.
The first drips of golden light release from my fingertips. They echo within. I can finally hear myself, here. I hear the song of my heart, loud and insistent. It is living within me, making me alive. It is calling all the parts of myself to unite. A polyphony of desires beautifully aligned into a universal community.
The surface of the skin drums. The surface of the lungs shimmers. The feathers unfold into two, wide spread wings. They are here for the heart to fly. An angel glides before my eyes, and lands in my chest. In this moment, in this fraction of a second, it all makes sense. An angel comes from the body, and the body is the only place it can live in. With every inhale and exhale the eternal ladder is built. The angel of my heart walks up and down, connecting me through the lungs with the divine. It is clear, undivided, erect on a single leg of the aorta. The lungs feel soft and spacious: big enough to carry me forward, light enough to embrace the heart. The single focus of exchange, the infinite universe outside mirrors the one within.
The horizon of the diaphragm fluctuates, responding to the tide of breathing.
How does the breath happen?
I have been living in this body for the past 38 years, and here I am, asking myself this question, unknowing the answer. I see myself immersed in the universe, pulsating with its infinite flow. The rhythm is slow, continuous, gentle and comforting, allowing me to recognize myself.
Under the earth of my diaphragm lives fire. All that falls here undergoes an alchemical metamorphosis. Some say: here used to be an ancient passage to the outside. Still some wanderers get lost in the labyrinths of the intestines, trying to find their way out. In vain. It is said that once the monster of the depth was brought into the light, and screamed upon its' inevitable transformation, the old ways of moving stopped being available. Cut and tied into a firm knot, the passage grew impassable. In the light, there was no return to the all-encompassing darkness. One can only find it again under the closed eyelids and every night when the dreaming makes one, one.
In a bathtub, when my fingertips casually drip light, and the skin reflects the water, it all makes sense. It is hot and smoky, yet my vision is clear.
I see creation unleashed in its most powerful, organic strive.
Caressed by repeatable explosions, muffled collisions, ebullient dissolutions, slow crushes and a few deep falls I am built anew. I travel the long sounding passage from above to below. I retain an alphabet of support, each letter fitting perfectly into a timeless blueprint. I am that I am. Myriads of cells opening up to welcome the newcomers.
Called out by their right names, they are received.
When you call me by my right name, I am present.

What is obsolete, must be expelled. A sharp decree cuts without looking back.

1. Retreat and make space
2. Receive
3. Take action

1. Let go, retreat and make space
2. Receive
3. Take action

1. Let go, retreat and make space
2. Receive
3. Take action

Again and again.
Listen.

It falls again.
It slides away.
It slips through the fingers.
It is dripping.
It tries to hold on, yet it fails.
It is long time gone, but you are still looking for it.
It may have never been here, but your mind got attached and it plays the same song on repeat. Again and again.
The bodiless karaoke of phantasy that never materialized. In the shades of red and black.
Your body lies abandoned somewhere in the empty corner, as your mind is playing the tune of what is no more.

Can you hear your heart calling so vividly to return?

It does take courage to see what is.
Clean the mess and bury the dead.
Recognize yourself in love.

ANNA NOWICKA

Wander # 21

2020
sound/voice

Anna Nowicka's voice guides us through the inner landscape of the body, imagination, and desires. We are also guided by our own breath which dictates the rhythm of subsequent images. The choreography of word and voice follows the trajectory of our attention drawing inner maps that may become points of reference in difficult moments. Anna Nowicka is a choreographer, an active practitioner at the School of Images founded by Dr Catherine Shainberg (exploring the 'dream opening' method), and she is unfolding her dreamwork studies in intensive exchanges with Bonnie Buckner (based on the Sapphire® practice) creating her choreographic practice based on working with dreams, imagination, and embodied attention.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-986452808/praca-anny-nowickiej-w-ramach-internetowej-kolekcji-muzeum-sztuki-praca-dokumentacja-wyobrazni>

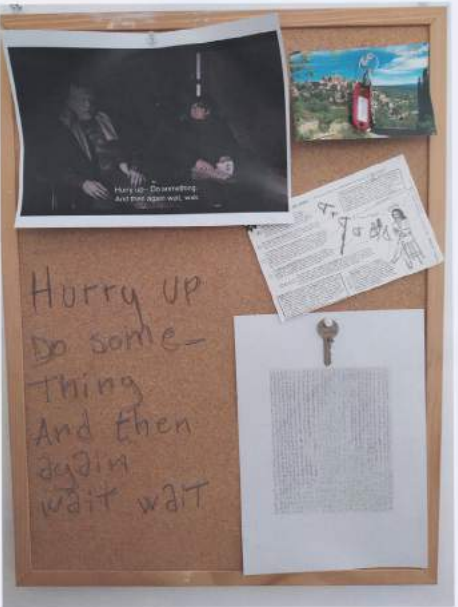
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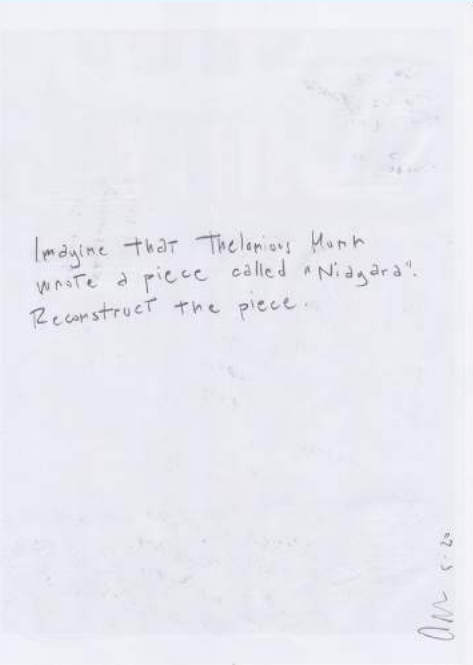
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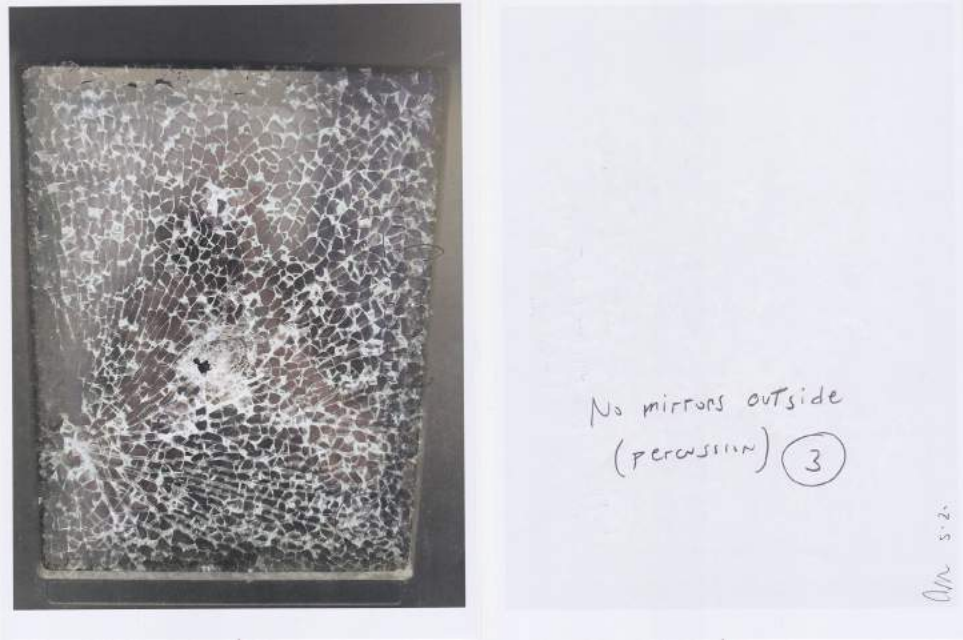
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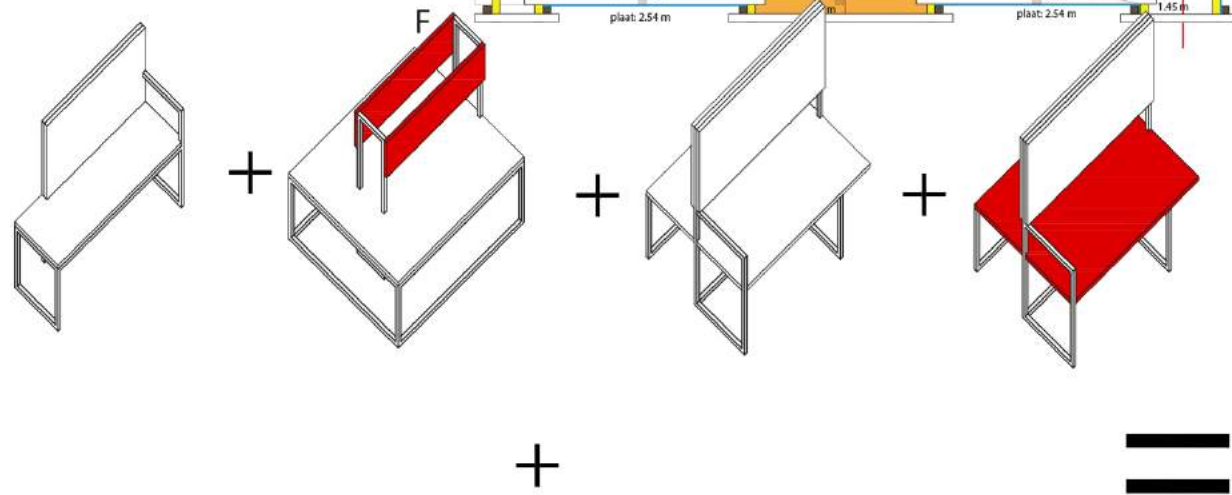
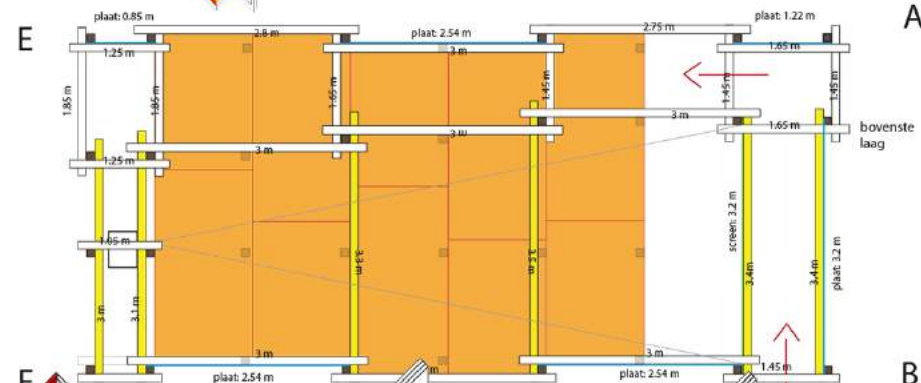
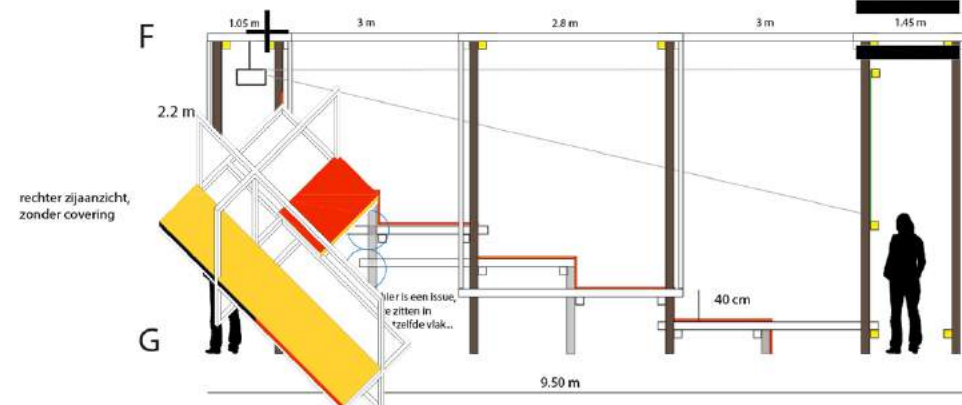
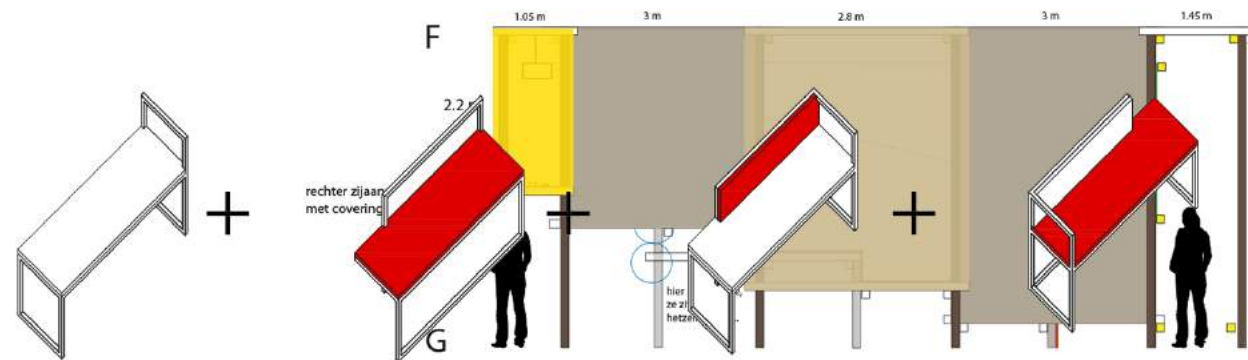
ALESSANDRO BOSETTI

Atelier Series

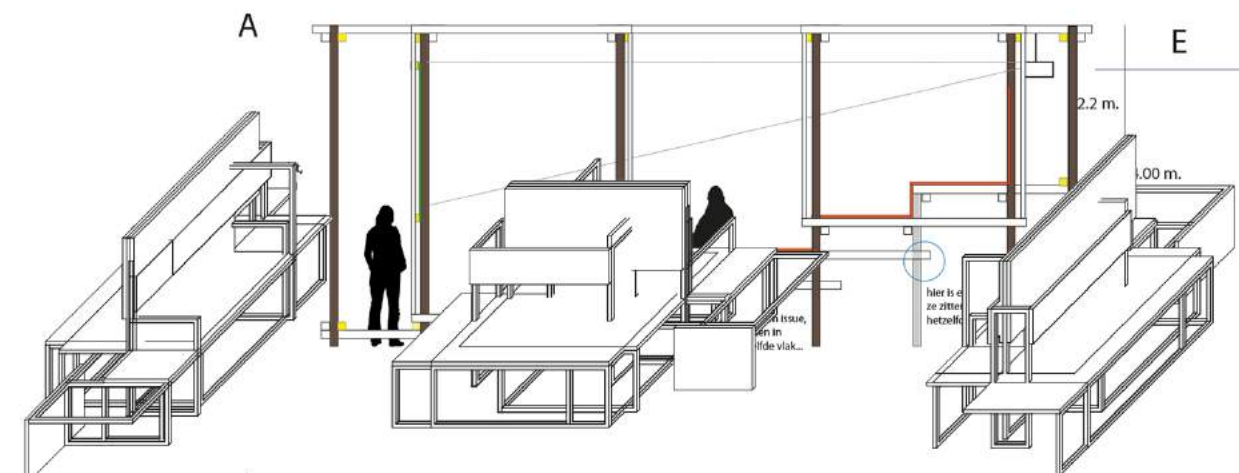
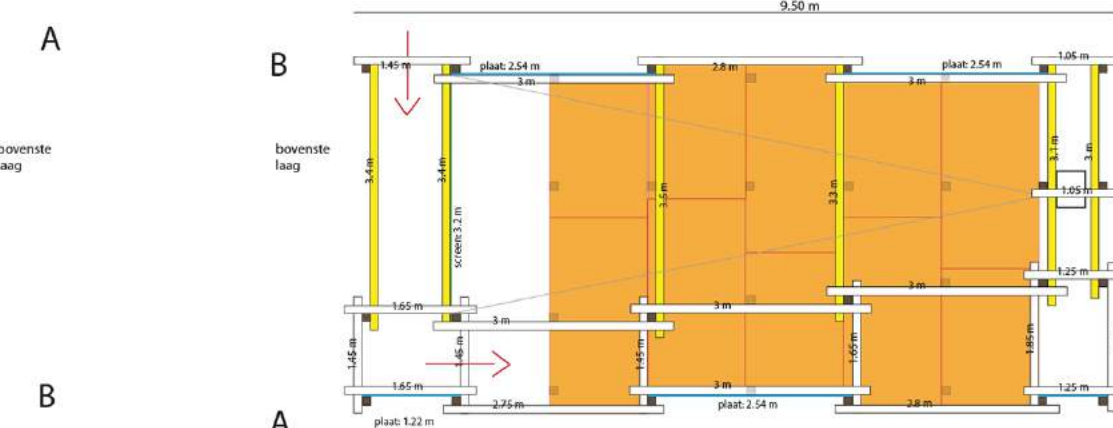
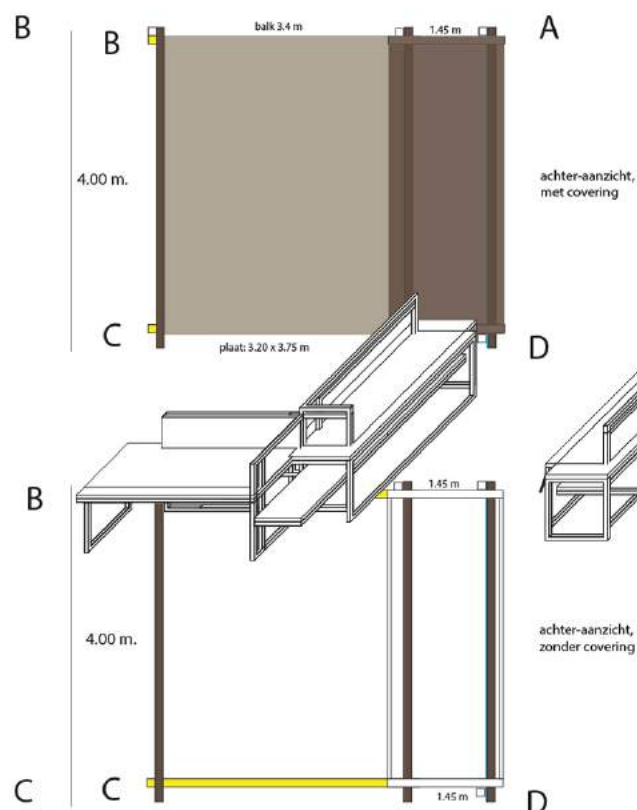
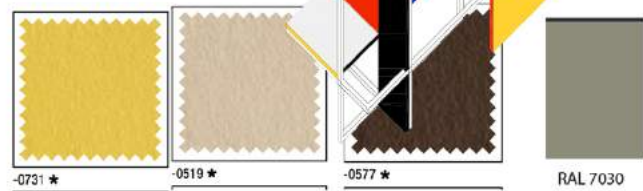
Marseille, May 2020
visual scores, digital files

1. Look inside.
2. Listen attentively to a piece of recorded music.
3. Hurry up, do something. And then, again, wait, wait.
4. Breath.
5. Imagine that Thelonious Monk wrote a piece called "Niagara". Reconstruct the piece.
- 6.7.8. No mirrors outside (percussion).
9. Let somebody else write your piece.

The health crisis resulted in the introduction of new safety instructions that were added to the regulations of everyday life. Bosetti treats them as another form of a score that is being performed by large ensembles of societies around the world. The studio of the artist becomes the center of discrete activities. A noisy street outside the door catalyzes new instructions that test the borders between the autonomous zone of creativity and the environment.

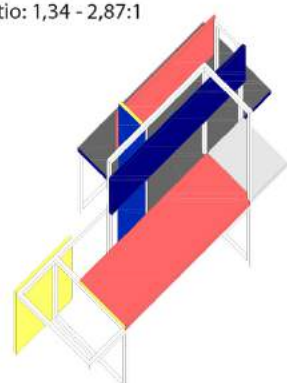
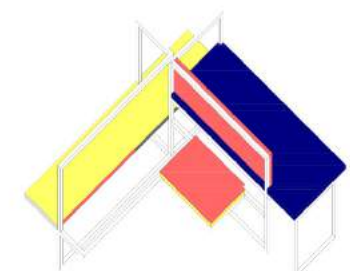


decomolton



cinema Bete & Deise voor Vleeshal 2013
wendelen van oldenborgh

scale 1:100



projector Epson EH TW5500:
groot: 45 x 36 x 13.6 cm
zwaar: 7.3 kg
projection ratio: 1,34 - 2,87:1

Ariella Azoulay: What happened is that Imperialism destroyed cultures and put them in museums. It is a process that recurs from one place to another, that recurs over time, over more than 500 years, and continues today. We have to understand that all these masses of objects in museums were actually looted, and the different scholars who organised them into narratives had to make sense out of objects that were disconnected from their cultures. Inside these visionary, fantasmatic, historical narratives there was a place created for ‘modern art’. We have to understand modern art was the product of this accumulation of objects that all of a sudden started to be organised along temporal, or geographical or cultural axis and through imperial taxonomies.¹

Celine: If we look at the museum within the history of colonisation, or as mostly reflecting mining and a form of expropriation, then I wonder if the old houses of culture, the workers clubs, the art centres, dom byta, and the nights of labour point us towards a different genealogy of culture in public that we could use to build an exhibition with.

Wendelien: How can we approach that in a space that still looks like that museum, the one which owes its very existence to legacies of expropriation and theft? How does one alter that experience?

Celine: We should also give credit to the many attempts that have been made through time to invent other typologies of museums, of cultural institutions; by artists for example, or through social movements like the houses of culture mentioned before. This includes Museum Sztuki, which was one of the first museums founded by artists.

Wendelien: And of course to modernims that were important within an emancipatory project, and of which many were marginalised on a world scale of power distribution. Not only exhibitions, but of course art practices like those of Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński.

Władysław Strzemiński: Until its social and ideological consequences will be drawn from modern art – the logic of form – it will be floating in the void and will not find its social extension. What I mean is not propaganda or a political position and its ‘expression’ with artistic means, but a logic of the vital attitude towards the facts of the surrounding life, the logic originating in the logic of artistic forms.²

Katarzyna Kobro: What is at stake with architecture is not a rhythm incorporated into the determined scheme of a superimposed form, but a rhythm derived from life in all its complexity.³

Wendelien: We can think further about this, as some spaces of modernity are part of a lineage of expropriation and others of emancipatory and collective practices. If I also want to think myself into it, I can only think we are implicated in both those histories by the daily activities of our practice. At the same time wanting to undo the conservative modus by working on it, in it, around it, re-working it.

Geeta Kapur: As a non-European critic, I would suggest that it is not for the west to withdraw the modern – from hubris or humility – as if it were a gift, franchise, or curse. I move from the modern to the contemporary and name sites of conjuncture: the Biennales that produce a breach in the economy of the modern museum and reset the ground for contemporary art; and globalization, that disingenuously claims the badge of transcultural goodwill. I argue that we need to historicize contradictions, gain traction and, rather than censor the modern, make the historical constitutes of contemporary culture more properly agonistic.⁴

Celine: New forms could be made out of existing forms, using them as material conceived within this emancipatory drive.

Wendelien: One can create forms and spaces as open spaces of reception and breathing. Of permeability and exposure.

Andrea Phillips: Just as arts centres have morphed into sites of the performance of neoliberalism so they can transform again into locations where we test and perform practices of equality on a daily basis – not just through the making of exhibitions and events but through equal staffing and pay structures, through fair pricing, through the maintenance of equality within our collegiate relationships, and through the recognition of the intelligences of our audiences. Demeritocratisation means making social structures not based on talent rising to the top in a culture built on aspiration but instead organizing sites where pleasure in culture is one form of building networks of commonality.⁵

¹ Ariella Azoulay in conversation with Hrag Vartanian, podcast March 2020: <https://hyperallergic.com/547296/connecting-museumsmodern-art-colonialism-and-violence/>

² Władysław Strzemiński, letters to the poet Julian Przybos, letter of 11 December 1931. Reprinted and translated in *Constructivism in Poland 1923 – 1936*, p. 114

³ Katarzyna Kobro in 1934, quoted in Yves Alain Bois *Painting as Model* MIT Press 1993, p. 135, note 44

⁴ Geeta Kapur “Demodern, why?” Abstract for keynote speech for *Collections in Transition. Decolonising, Demodernising and Decentralising?* symposium at van Abbemuseum organised by L’Internationale, Sept 2017

⁵ Andrea Phillips, ‘Reclaiming Participation: Arts centres and the reinvention of social condensation’ in *The social condenser: a century of revolution through architecture, 1917–2017*, The Journal of Architecture 2017

WENDELIE VAN OLDENBORGH AND CÉLINE CONDORELLI

A conversation interrupted by drawings

2020

The work of Wendelien van Oldenborgh and Céline Condorelli is a result of the ongoing conversation between both artists in connection with their preparations for the exhibition at the Neoplastic Room of the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź planned for 2021. The subjects of their talks are the ethics of exhibition, design of exhibition spaces as social places and the revision of modernist art policies. Their exchange includes design drawings that usually stay back from the visible part of their practice as well as the voices representing contemporary and historical trends and opinions of artists and writers that have inspired them. Wendelien van Oldenborgh has decided to present a design of an architectural structure for her video *Bete & Deise*. This project is an interpretation of the works of the modernist female architect Lina Bo Bardi. Céline Condorelli has submitted a variation on her *Spatial Compositions 3–10* projects, which were stimulated by Władysław Strzemiński’s displays.

Céline Condorelli works at the intersection of architecture and visual arts. Her work focuses on architecture understood as a support structure and interface. The first term concerns the area in which financial mechanisms and institutions, as well as exhibition architecture or design could be perceived as the very structures supporting art. The term “interface” relates to the role of spatial context in the mediation of works of art and the reconfiguration of their meaning. Thanks to this methodology, the artist develops critical models for designing exhibitions and public spaces.

The medium which Wendelien van Oldenborgh mainly works in is film understood as a social space. The scripts of her films are based on meetings arranged by the artist and taking place in places which reawaken the memories of conflicting political and historical events. The ultimate form of the film develops as a result of improvisation with the participation of her protagonists. The van Oldenborgh’s films have a clear material dimension and are often presented within the designed by her space-structures, which program and expose the act of watching.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kl5NWhZ74FIpLvu9b2tTJObWKoYpiLaK/view>



WOJTEK DADA / RAFAŁ JAKUBOWICZ

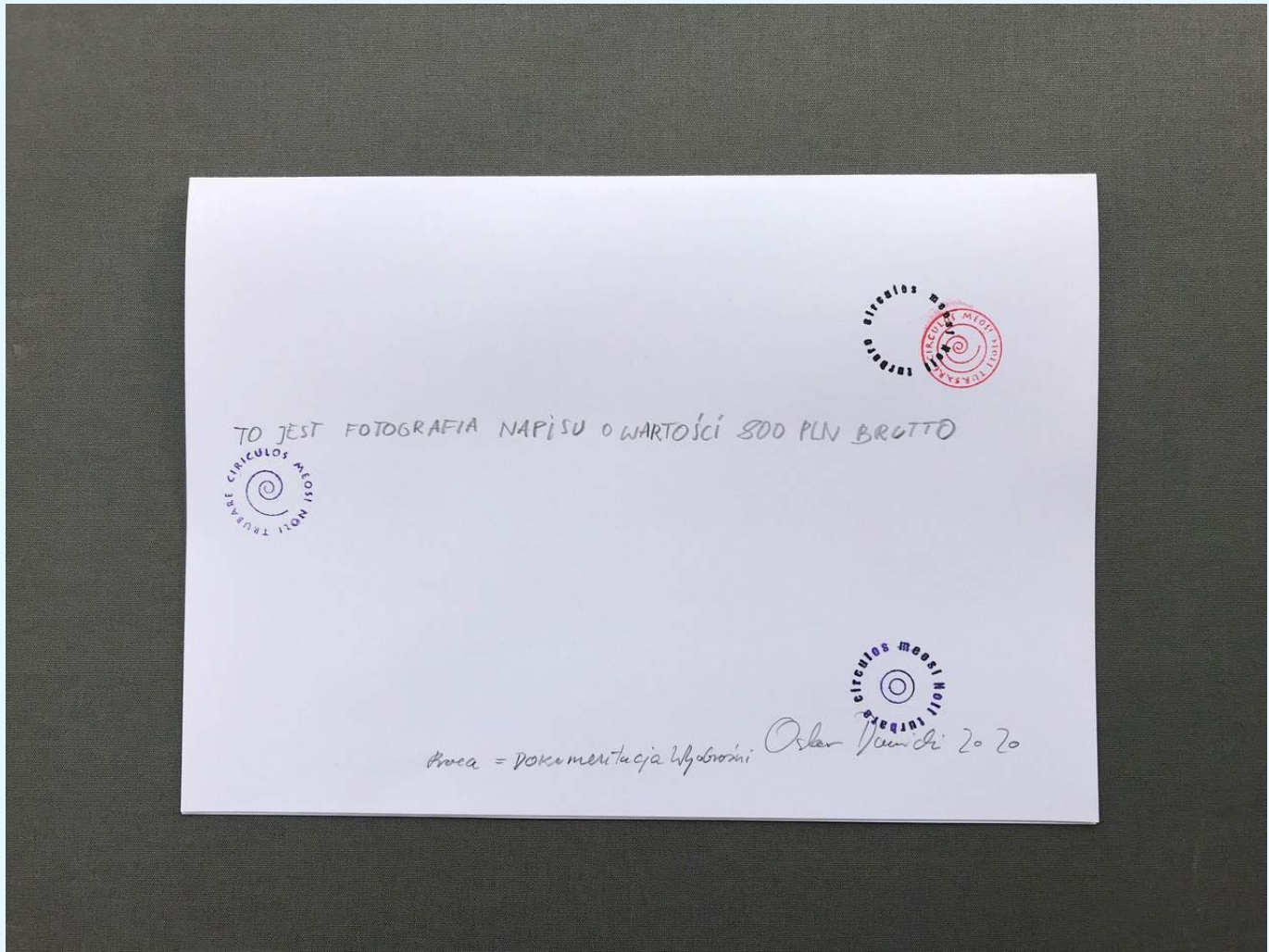
#StayHome

2020

pdf digital file

In *#StayHome*, Wojtek Dada and Rafał Jakubowicz refer to the work by the Hungarian neo-avant-garde artist, Gábor Tóth, entitled *Artists go home* (1975–1978). It is also a commentary on the current economic situation of many artists and “hell” they are going through, deprived of the possibility of earning money and excluded from government aid projects.

Manual: print the project and colour in the selected message on it, e.g. artists go home, artists stay home, artists stay in hell, artists go to hell.



OSKAR DAWICKI

Work = documentation of imagination

2020

digital photo

Oskar Dawicki, who has repeatedly commented on the economic mechanisms of the art world, draws our attention to the value of creative labour and the material status of artists - issues particularly relevant in the face of the pandemic crisis. This gesture also sheds light on the financing of online culture, raising the question of payment for authors whose works appear online daily.



ALAN BUTLER

The week. A let's work adventure. Episode 6'

2020
video, courtesy of the artist

Alan Butler's work *The week. A let's work adventure* makes up part of artist's monumental project, in which he takes *Capital* by Karl Marx into the world of video games, podcasts, digital work and cyber-communication. The whole series comprising 19 episodes which altogether last ca. 40 hours is intended to be made available as a life simulation video game. Each episode is devoted to a different type of work. Episode 6 focuses on work in an IT helpdesk (technical support centre) simulated in the game *Tech Support: Error Unknown*. The soundtrack of the series is based on the audio-book version of Marx's seminal work created by a world-wide group of volunteers who read and make recordings of texts in the public domain which can be downloaded for free (librivox). It is mixed with distorted, slowed down work songs. The video was recorded using the OBS software typical of video games and Karl Marx filter on Snapchat. In Butler's monumental work, Marx's text ceases to be the object of careful reading and scientific discussion. Monotonous images of games, lecturers' flat voices, and computer-distorted music transport the source text into the world of boring podcasts that lull you to sleep, entertainment for nerds or never-ending ASMR recordings to be listened to while doing something else. The artist perceives the 21st century Capital in the context of the production and reproduction of cognitive capitalism. It concerns ambivalence, fluid boundaries between work, creation, activism, simulation, consumption, and entertainment. Butler asks questions about contradictions in using digital Internet technologies to both accumulate capital and achieve horizontal cooperation of general intellect. Alan Butler graduated from the National College of Art and Design in Dublin and LaSalle College of the Arts in Singapore. His practice explores the environment and conditions of digital production technologies and tackles aspects, such as the transformation of sensual experiences in the technosphere or the impact of algorithms on social communication.

<https://vimeo.com/439951493/4fab3a8f26>



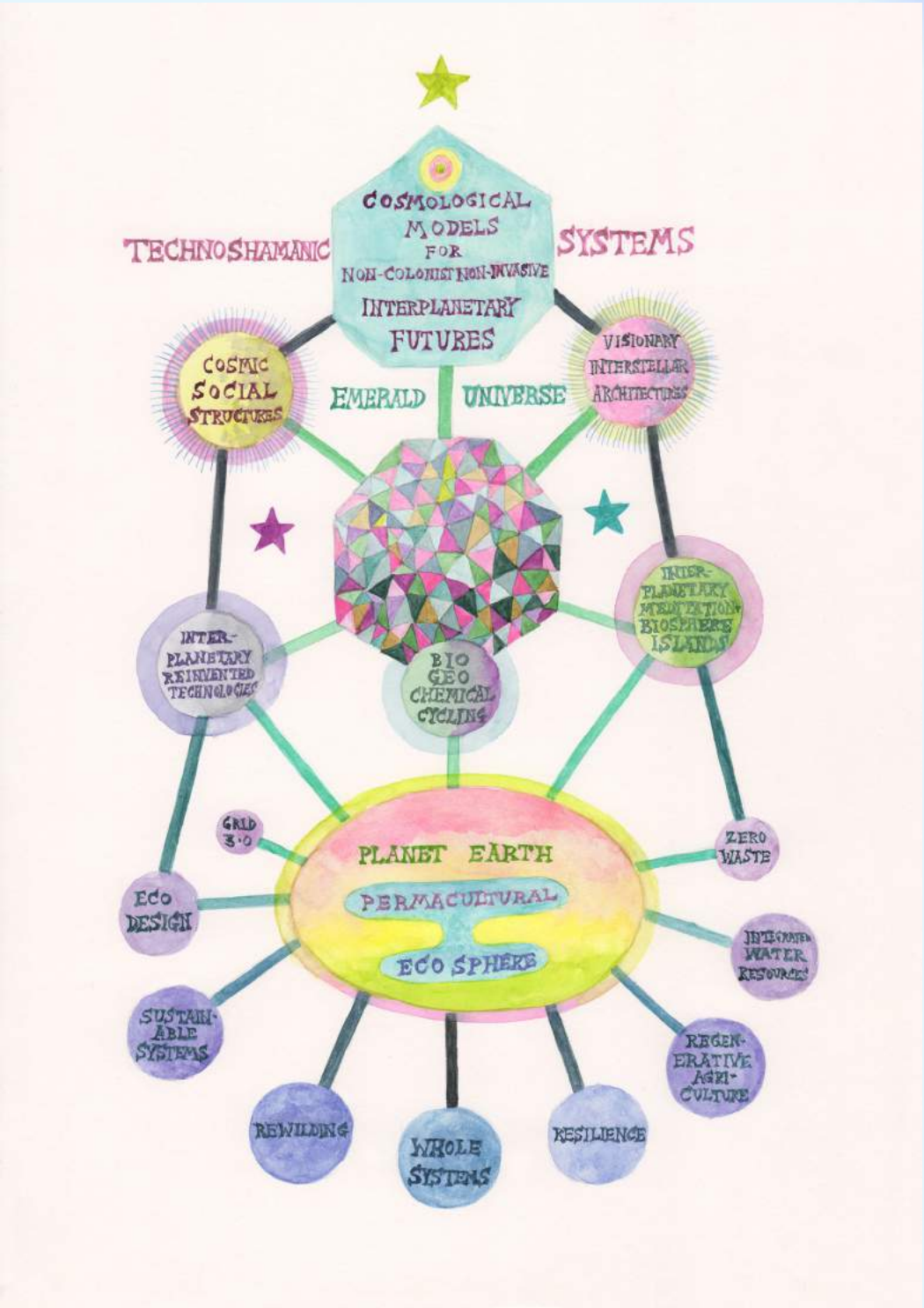
ALICJA ROGALSKA

The Promise

2020
2A worn-out protective glove from a migrant agricultural worker, mixed media, levitation module. Video - digital mov file, 35", looped.

The Promise, a micro-monument of a kind, reminds us that liberation from work through automation will not happen inadvertently, but will have to be fought for. The title of the video refers to the yet unfulfilled promises of automation in relation to hard physical labour - in this case in the agricultural sector - performed mostly by migrant workers, whose labour is often cheaper and more effective than using machines or robots. The detached hand also pertains to the invisibility of manual labour. This invisibility was temporarily lifted when during the Covid19 pandemic lockdown thousands of workers were flown from Eastern to Western Europe, despite the high risk to their health, in order to harvest fruits and vegetables that would otherwise rot in the fields.

film on
<https://documentation-of-imagination.msl.org.pl/>



ZBYNĚK BALADRÁN

Bone Taxonomy

2020
diagram, pdf digital file

In one quarantine interview, the philosopher Timothy Morton spoke about emotions. I paraphrase freely, but he said that emotions come from the future. As a state of understanding that tells us what we cannot yet describe and analyze, but their present intensity heralds future events. It explains my feelings when, at the beginning of the quarantine, in a kind of unconscious shock of a rapid events, I began to draw human and animal bones spontaneously. I have no idea why I started doing it. I researched hours and days in books with schematic sketches of Paleolithic archaeological sites. Mammoth hunters left behind piles of bones. Their cataloging and digitization took me a month, the next month I exposed them to various databases characterizing the world’s current power order. Interpretation of the world by counting bones, which is the original meaning of the word algebra. This diagram is created using military jargon. Recoding creates new arrangements and hierarchies with new inequalities. Even between the bones.

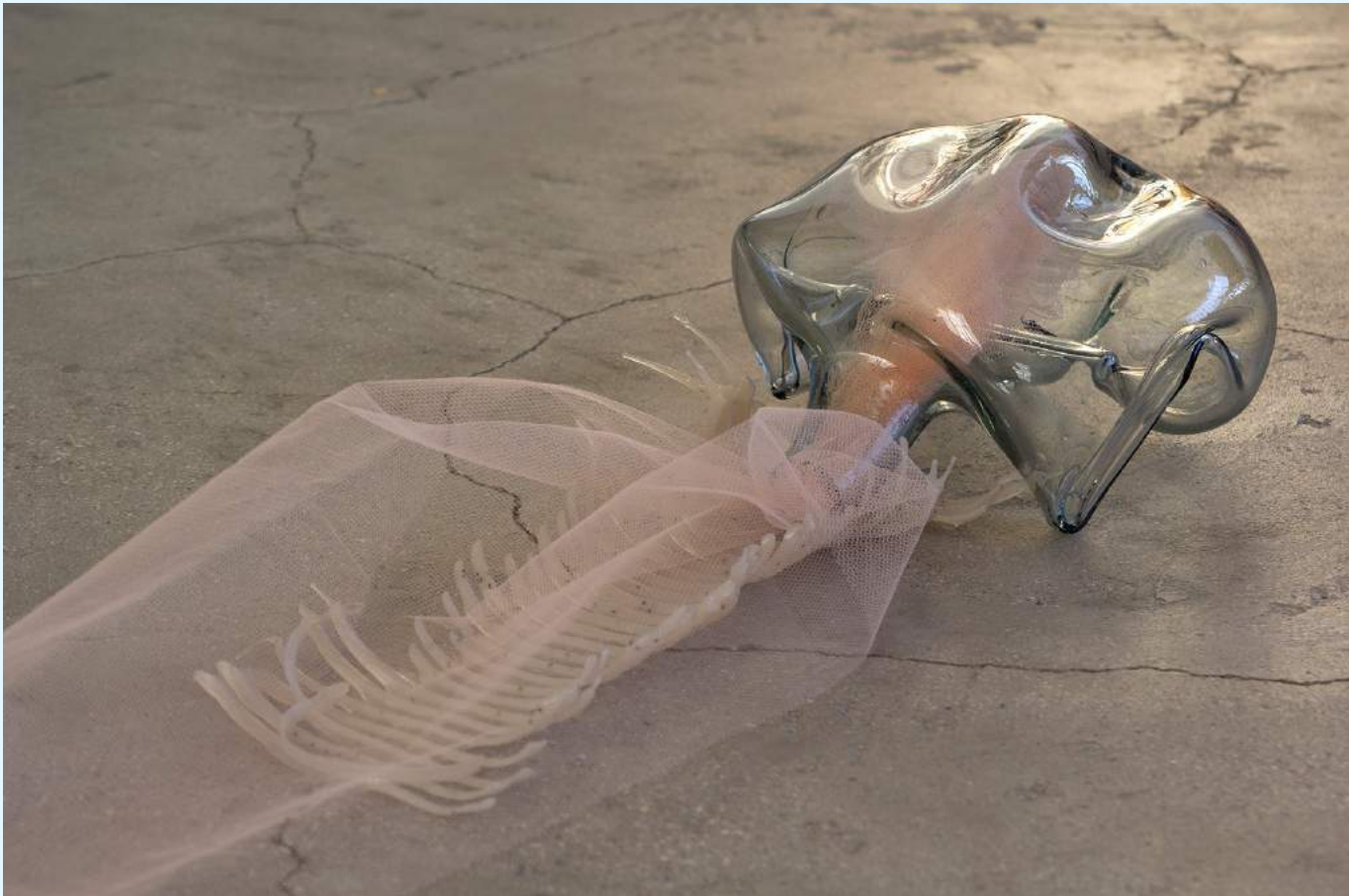
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SUZANNE TREISTER

TECHNOSHAMANIC SYSTEMS/Diagram/Emerald Universe

2020
digital jpg file
Courtesy of the artist, Annely Juda Fine Art London and PPOW Gallery New York

Suzanne Treister is a British pioneer of new media art. Since the 1990s, she creates eccentric narratives that utilise unconventional research methods that aim to visualize the network of connections, dependencies, identities of power and knowledge between the various elements that construct the world and its history. The diagram presented here touches upon the ideas of non-violent creation of inter-planetary communities.



PAKUI HARDWARE

In Sleep We Study Fossils

2020
digital jpg file

The Pakui Hardware duo (Neringa Cerniauskaite and Ugnius Gelguda) has been operating since 2014. They mainly carry out sculptural works based on the results of research located between materiality, technology, and economics. The artists see a relationship between changes unfolding in these fields and the human body. Hence the anthropomorphic elements often found in their work, are embedded within futuristic configurations.



TATIANA CZEKALSKA / LESZEK GOLEC

Mask

1997-2020
digital photo

Photography – a trace. A trace of an object we are forced to use on a daily basis during the pandemic. I focus mainly on myself and my own discomfort. And there are a few actors besides me and other people (from whom I want to separate now). The mask -- sewn from a meditation cushion cover, soaks my sweat (components: thiamine and riboflavin – potential source of food for the mole (*Tineola*) – a small, grayish butterfly whose caterpillars feed on fur, wool, mohair and occasionally, artificial fabrics). And the most important, potential actor: SARS-CoV-2 (components: peak protein, RNA, nucleocapsid protein, envelope protein, membrane protein, hemagglutinin esterase dimer protein).

JOANNA SOKOŁOWSKA

Reclaiming solidarity

In memory of my mother’s service as a nurse who provided care to patients, working underpaid for nearly 40 years and giving care to her family, too.

Sanja Iveković’s *Solidarity 1989–2020* was commissioned at the beginning of the (COVID-19) pandemic lockdown. Continuing her long-term engagement with the question of removing women from collective memory and politics, Sanja sent us a message that animated the historically charged notion of solidarity in the herstorical lineage of the gendered work of sustaining life.

When Covid-19 containment measures started affecting our lives, we felt, although privileged, like many people in the world - helpless facing the unknown. When borders were closed, our anxiety increased. We were facing lock-down in the oppressive, authoritarian state with a short-changed, privatized health care system and inefficient social welfare, a state, whose authorities have eagerly used the pandemic crisis to suppress social dissent and protests. As art workers and public servants we have been fearing an isolation from the international exchange and an increased exposure to the official nationalistic cultural policy. Also, we have been concerned with mental and material conditions of precarious art workers. Searching for dialogue and allies we turned to some artists who have inspired our work and the recent programme of the museum.

Restrictions of mobility and the intergenerational legacy of the museum collection prompted us to make recourse to the modes of cooperation and art production tested in the formerly socialist Eastern European countries before they were subject to neoliberal globalization, such as mail art and conceptual art. In 1971, László Beke, a Hungarian art historian, sent a letter to a group of his artist friends, inviting them to respond to the slogan “WORK = the DOCUMENTATION OF THE IMAGINATION/IDEA.” The collection of works based on the responses to Beke’s invitation has become testimony to the informal network of artists and the development of conceptual art in East-Central Europe.

Launched by Muzeum Sztuki in 2020, *Work=Documentation of imagination* revives the conceptualist slogan under the networking conditions inherent to the hegemony of digital communication, which has accelerated immensely during the lockdown and other COVID-related restrictions. We asked the invited artists to respond to Beke’s 1970s formula by means of digital files, pieces of contemporary “email art.” The museum was able to pay relatively modest fees; our claims were modest, too, and (hopefully) attuned to the hardships we suspected the invited artists might have faced. In subsequent emails and Skype conversations with the contributors, we suggested that they send us blueprints for ideas, testimonies to the state of mind, recycled excerpts of existing works, which would “document” the work of artistic imagination compressed to digital files, produced and circulating at homes and home offices. We also asked them not to dedicate too much labor to this task. At the same time, we invited artists who are very much aware of the economy of images, and we were curious to see whether, and how, they could reimagine the dominant use of standardized, computed means of communication and production, which have proved to have only assisted the intensification of productivity, consumption and surveillance of the workforce in the service of the accumulation of capital.

The image sent to us by Sanja via WeTransfer combines advertising and political propaganda aesthetics, circulating both online and as posters in public spaces. Like in many other works,

the artist uses the evocative power of hegemonic media images to dislocate their social functions. *Solidarity 1989–2020* draws on two seemingly disparate visual codes. It combines the iconic logotype of Solidarity [Solidarność] trade union, designed by Jerzy Janiszewski in 1980 during the workers strikes in Poland, with a contemporary image of an anonymous female health worker reminiscent of web-based, stock photography. The text calls for solidarity with contemporary, frontline health workers, while commemorating a generation of women whose dedication was essential for sustaining the underground Solidarity movement, but who were nonetheless erased from the post-socialist public memory and imaginary. *Solidarity 1989–2020* is thus a continuation of Sanja’s project *Invisible Women of Solidarity*, which the artists initiated in 2009 during her stay in Poland. Women played a major part in and for Solidarity, they were editing and distributing newspapers, striking, agitating, hiding underground leaders, supporting families of political prisoners, serving prison sentences themselves, doing the invisible care work for their families and households during economic crisis all on their own. Yet, the 1989 Round Table Talks – the decisive and final negotiations between the government and the opposition, which led to the transition to democracy – welcomed only a single woman among 60 opposition members. The event that was foundational for Polish democracy appears now to many feminists as foundational for the subsequent dispossession of women from power, heralding the perpetuation of old and the instigation of new, interrelated forms of oppression, such as the feminization of poverty, abortion ban, ongoing domestic violence and the devaluation of gendered care work.

The photo of the female health worker, which the artist appropriated from the online stock imaginary and placed under the logo of Solidarity, seems to connote capitalist working conditions. In contrast to the hand-made aesthetics of the Solidarity logo, it appears sharp, glossy and “professional.” At the same time, the anonymous nurse depicted on the photo demonstrates self-awareness and competence. Her image could thus be used both to support health-care protests and to advertise hospitals as professional, accountable business facilities, and not really as places for healing. With its ambivalent connotations, the image touches upon the exploitation of the health workforce affecting mostly nurses and cleaners, which are all female-dominated, low-wage jobs in Poland. When the science of accountancy became dominant in the country, the society got rid of solidarity and Solidarity became a fossil of patriarchal heroism. It should come as no surprise, then, that the pandemic intensified the abuse of women treated as a cheap, readily available resource both in health care as well as in their families. Nurses, hospital cleaners and doctors have been working during the COVID-19 pandemic in Poland, risking their lives in the face of dramatic shortages of protective gear, infection tests, and a chaotic, oppressive management of the health care system, including legal threats by the state once they have spoken up against their working conditions. At the same time, in different sectors of society, it is predominantly women who have been burdened with domestic, life-sustaining work.

The low-resolution, poor image produced by Sanja for the home-office collection is in fact a multilayered monument to the ongoing herstory of the invisible, essential service of giving care and sustaining life. It works against the ongoing pattern of forgetting, which leads to the devaluation of care, indifference to the vulnerability of living bodies, and the repetition of violence.

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Work = Documentation of Imagination

documentation-of-imagination.msl.org.pl

Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, 2020

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