

## Ćwiczenia z przestrzeni

**Małgorzata Jankowska:** Your works are conceived at the intersection of opposites: the architectural order of forms is softened within by the energy of gesture; the silence and calm marked by white and black are strengthened by aggressive cuts, fractures, angles. Geometric forms are created from the biological sign of the body, the immobile imprints are moved by the vitality of the multiplied forms. Is this continuous 'movement' of complementing elements an attempt at self-determination, a search for balance, in life and in art...?

**Agnieszka Roźnowska:** In the text *On Infinity* accompanying the exhibition under the same name I mentioned how difficult it is for us, Westerners, to imagine any shape that would be created from a component of a relatively empty space. Alan Watts mentioned the problem of emptiness, emphasizing how much we ignore space because it is as uniform as air or water. 'Emptiness appears barren yet is infinite fullness', as the known wisdom of Lao-Tzu reads.

Scientists are still trying to explain the incomprehensible phenomenon of electricity, where two poles, positive and negative, create an energy flow. This duality of phenomena is creative: day-night, silence and sound, space and light, life and death. Just as antagonisms call each other up, a number of my projects are built on the principle of opposites.

My thinking about the world is of a dualistic nature, which, as you mentioned, is visible in many of my works. There is an extraordinary power in these opposites, and constant balancing often causes a tendency to come closer to one side or the other of these opposites.

**M.J.:** In the text *On Infinity* you also wrote about a gesture, which is a spatial form of self-expression and that what is created is being re-constructed over and over again, still differently. Your works feature an element of this infinity, continuation, process. They evoke associations with the Buddhist pursuit of perfection in learning about oneself...

**A.R.:** The language of art is an insightful language of the world which, through exploration, inquiry, opens up areas often unexplored, intact. For me, art has a cognitive dimension, through which I not only define myself; if I change the nature of space, I call up its new existence not only to satisfy my own curiosity! It is worth remembering that both music and visual arts are not only an act of sublimation for the creator, they open up areas that are generally inaccessible, reveal undisclosed layers, are there to provoke.

**M.J.:** The sign, in the sense of a gesture sign, appeared in your work quite early, from the beginning it was also boldly defined, dynamic, determined by the search for balance between order and chaos. The gesture also appeared in your live actions...

**A.R.:** Sign?! Signs?! We are surrounded by a whole network of signs and meanings; for a modern human being navigating this codified world of signs it is difficult to find any sense in this. I started to use signs to define only forms shaped from my body, as for example in the book *'Pliage et depliage'*, although earlier projects were also characterised by some signs, meanings. Following this project a whole lot of signs were created with which I filled the space. In the text accompanying the exhibition *Between You and Me* I wrote about the body, which is no longer a body – it is a sign, and I am a free interpretation of the world. The "body idea" had to mature, I recall a student theatre workshop organised by Prof. J. Berdyszak, where in one of the editions J. Bałdyga took part. His workshops focused on defining

one's own energy and place were probably not without significance.

Then a project was conceived for the Biennale Istro-Art in Bratislava, where I filled the floor of one of the rooms of the Medium Gallery with photographs of the curled up figures of homeless people. Another spatial project concerned the place described by the signs of my body (Prof. A. Peptoński's art studio). Meanwhile the first performance entitled My chaos was created; I was finishing up my studies, doing a number of things at once: graphics, paintings and spatial projects in Prof. Peptoński's art studio. It was all important to combine and complement each of them through form, action. The series of graphics entitled Infinity (1998/99) combines this duality I've already mentioned: geometry and gesture. The second performance came into being a few years later under the FermentAkcje project at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Przemyśl; here, once again, I used my hair to do the drawing! I am not an performance-artist, in my opinion, it requires extraordinary courage, and I don't think I'm one of those people. But there are moments in my life when I feel the need to deliver a direct message and that is through performance.

**M.J.:** This gesture that you use in the performances is just as simple as it is intense, energetic. It is an accumulation of energy and message...

**A.R.:** I am impressed by the ancient artists of the East, I think especially the Chinese. The gesture, which defines everything, results from total focus and concentration. A skilfully executed movement in calligraphy tells the reader everything, it is an extraordinary feeling, a sense of the moment. To capture the moment in a picture with a minimum of means is equivalent to obtaining maximum content. And despite the fact that today I use other means and often accumulate them, all the time I have this irresistible urge to reach for the simplicity of language, which in two words or one gesture will capture the fullness of the world.

**M.J.:** Space – the architecture of the interiors quite early started to be an integral part of your works. From your project I am only figuratively (Poznan, Poland, 1999) to Exercises in space at the Wozownia Art Gallery, your works usually mean “marking out space” or defining the architecture of your own places. How important is space in your works?

**A.R.:** Space plays an important role not only in my work, but in my life as well as in anyone's life, I believe. Since I live like most of my contemporary colleagues, that is, like a nomad, it is difficult for me to free myself from the theme of place and inhabitation. In my explorations I deal with a particular way of reading place, and experiencing space is for me an attempt to understand it. Ordering the existing space, organizing it in our own way, resembles a house in which we subjugate the space to our liking. By constructing and reconstructing I bring a place to life, give it a new meaning, transfer the memory of significant places. Human beings strive to tame the space, domestication creates a place of rest, a point of reference. However, it is not for everyone a condition of being in the world. I mean here the homeless, the bums, to whom the work I am only figuratively and the mentioned exhibition at the Medium Gallery in Bratislava were devoted. The places these wanderers briefly stay in are protected by them only for a moment because they are immediately abandoned and left in disorder. What I do concerns both closed and open space, as shown in the project Exercises in space, and embracing open space, subjugating it is also an attempt to reach its essence – finding the balance.

**M.J.:** In your project at the Wozownia Gallery, for the first time there appeared an element of multiplication of the body motif and an “empty” shape left by the body. Do these elements mark a new phase of your creative work?

**A.R.:** In the project I did for the Wozownia Gallery I used for the first time body signs which form organic “sequences”, patterns; these signs have not been used so far in my work and have waited for the right moment. However, the motif of multiplication itself appeared several times in the spaces I built up (Equilibrium, Between you and me, Inclinations II). Speaking, however, of forms without a body, these are actually new elements that have already appeared in the previous exhibition Body, Sign, Space in Poznań. The exhibition consisted of a graphic object made using the intaglio technique and a complementary video showcase. The year 2006/2007 is a time of focus on workshop graphics – intaglio. The works created during this period have one common theme Transformations.

These “empty” shapes, as you nicely call them, are harbingers of “the new”. For now I call them signs, forms without a body, and they provide material for my next projects that I am currently working on.