

“THINGS THAT WE DO NOT KNOW THAT WE KNOW”

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„Things That We Do Not Know That We Know”

“*Things That We Do Not Know That We Know*” is an environment made of a collection of works that address three aspects of memory: erosion, impregnation, and recollection. Possible scenarios: an aquarium with living organisms like pests and fungi, strong light illumination, a film documenting processes of forgetting (erosion); cultural objects impregnated with organic and non organic plastic materials, such as different kinds of tempera, resins, glues (impregnation); documentation of an experiment with neurofeedback that concerns memory processes; found footage film based on Edgar Reitz’s “*Heimat*” series, spoken narration of witnesses of events and catastrophes (recollection).

It is a collection of ideas brought together that emerged during my stay in Vienna between 2011 and 2014. From 2014 until now I was repeatedly traveling to Vienna for Round Table meetings held in our Art & Science studio and for research purposes. Most of the ideas that are included in my diploma project did not emerge during my studies. Rather, they had the nature of sketches. However, they share similar topics and motifs. The main motif might be generalized as a problem of time in an artwork. As explained above, all works deals with three notions of time: erosion, impregnation and recollection. Erosion is a geological term that designates destruction of the surface of terrain by liquids, wind, sun, gravitation, and biological organism. As far as human nature is concerned, erosion is perceived as memory erosion that is always directed towards what was lost. Impregnation and recollection are human reactions to this process.

I am also interested in the decision making in art production process. My ambition was to include not only conscious, analytical processes and research but also purely sensual, imaginative correlations made without any clear reason. What provided the context for my activity was my closest surroundings, namely, Vienna and Krakow: two cities that have been historically linked.

This text is composed of three blocks written according to different time rules: the first is an academic text with an overview of my theoretical and scientific inspirations, the second is a less formal reflection on art practices (my own and those of other artists) It is a transcript of a talk. Third one is a most informal part, which contains notes of a stream of thoughts generated through rapid memory associations. The further it proceeds the less controlled the text is. My work is grounded in human activity that is not fully controlled by him.

Things That We Do Not Know That We Know refers to memory functions operating in human brain. Memory works as a set of functions that makes some things “visible” for us, while others remain hidden or lost forever. What is remembered by our brain and what is recollected by it is out of human governance. Humans are incapable of controlling their psychological processes in a direct way. Neurobiology discovered a phenomenon called plasticity of the brain: the ability of the brain to change itself. This, of course, happens without the engagement of consciousness. This scientific discovery changes the way artistic methodology can work and how it can be viewed. In particular, it offers a completely new perspective on decision making process in art: if one cannot fully control himself, then any decision he makes cannot be considered a result of his will. There is a need for openness to accidents and the ways one can provoke the work of memory that complicates simple decision making. It is a realm of images held in memory that constitutes an experience of consciousness. Remembering oneself would be a process of constant linking of memories in the form of an image: “(...) the cognition of an image is sufficient in principle for us to determine the present, past and future movement of all the others – and this to such a point that the very difference between the three dimensions of time is erased, to the profit of an immutable web of transmissions of movements. One is faced with an immobility made of movements, analogous to that of a powerful jet of water, in which the continuous movement of matter gives rise to a continuous immobility of form”¹.

According to the science of neurobiology, memory processes or learning processes are held in amygdala and hippocampus. Amygdala is responsible for emotional states like fear and panic but it also regulates access to remembered memories and decides what should – and what should not – be remembered. Hippocampus “(...) is responsible for memory functions. It helps

¹ Q. Meillassoux, *Subtraction and Contraction: Deleuze, Immanence and Matter and Memory*, Collapse, vol. III, 2007, p. 88.

an individual record new memories and retrieve them later in response to specific and relevant environmental stimuli. The hippocampus also helps us distinguish between past and present memories². This is why people who experienced extreme mental states (for instance, soldiers on battlefield) or victims of accidents usually suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD consists in memory disturbances that are: “(...) predominant in the presentation of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and are part of the diagnostic criteria. The re-experiencing symptom criteria of PTSD include intrusive memories of the traumatic event, and the avoidance symptom criteria include the inability to recall important aspects of the trauma. In addition, patients with PTSD often complain of experiencing everyday memory problems with emotionally neutral material (...)”³.

Furthermore, as a diagnostic unit, PTSD explains the overall mechanics of the process of memory. Studies on PTSD provided illuminating data on the basic memory functions. What is significant for this paper is the fact that emotional states are powerfully related to the memory processes occurring in the brain. As Catherine Malabou points out: “Certainly, a traumatic accident can indeed reawaken or reactivate an ‘old event’ and thereby an internal conflict! But today psychiatrists and neuropsychiatrists insist upon the unexpected and irreducible character of the traumatic event, which, even if it recalls past trauma, cannot do so without *profoundly modifying the vision and content of the past itself*”⁴.

At present, the technological development of capitalism is a social condition that changes the way memory works.

² V. Wlassoff, “How Does Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Change the Brain?”, <http://brainblogger.com/2015/01/24/how-does-post-traumatic-stress-disorder-change-the-brain/> (accessed 21 December 2015).

³ K. W. Samuelson, “Post-traumatic stress disorder and declarative memory functioning: a review”, “Dialogues in clinical neuroscience”, vol. 13, no. 3, 2011, p. 346–351.

⁴ C. Malabou, *New Wounded*, 2012, p. 151.

The form of my diploma project emerged without any clear reason. It is a purely aesthetic and emotional caprice of the brain. Its starting point is materiality: the body (including the brain and all its complexity) that makes decisions in particular environment. When I use the word body I also mean all neuronal processes. In particular, memory processes. It is interesting for me how biological processes (materiality), while being completely impossible to grasp by humans (no one can feel or “see” brain processes), provide narrative, human structures in which they present themselves to the subject.

Scientific reductionists would answer that narrativity is just an evolutionary tool developed in our brain to protect us against the raw, senseless materiality. Relevant in this context are writings of an American neurobiologist, Joseph LeDoux, who summarizes the problem of subjectivity in the following manner: “(...) you are your synapses”⁵. Similarly, in his famous book “*Being No One*”, German cognitivist Thomas Metzinger claims that “self” (and its narrative structures) is just a window – a Self-Transparent Model – that cannot be seen by the one who is looking through it⁶. “Nobody ever was or had a self (...) No such things as selves exist in the world: All that ever existed were conscious self-models that could not be recognized as models. The phenomenological self is not a being, but a process and the subjective experience of being someone emerges if a conscious information processing system operates under a transparent self-model. You are such a system right now, as you read these sentences. Because you cannot recognise your self-model as a model, it is transparent: you look right through it. You don't see it. But you see with it... As you read these lines you constantly confuse yourself with the content of the self-model currently activated by your brain”⁷. The problem with LeDoux and Metzinger is precisely that they emphasize only one aspect of this relation (its objective materialistic nature)⁸. Even though Metzinger’s model requires a person

⁵ J. LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are*, Penguin Books, 2003, p. 23

⁶ Cf. T. Metzinger, *Being No One*, 2003

⁷ T. Metzinger, *Being No One*, 2003, p. 1.

⁸ Metzinger repeatedly uses the term ‘Mother Nature’, who gave us this great tool of the Self-Transparent Model. Such mixture of new age, esoteric language and neurobiological science is a significant thread in modern science and it is strongly criticised by the French

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– one who will look through the window. His statement: “(...) Nobody ever was or had a self”⁹ means that all subjectivity – which in his view is a biological process effected by the Self-Transparency Model – is included into the realm of objective, biological foundation. But also because of that it creates a subset in all materialistic reality, a gap. Subjectivity shares elements with objectivity, while being contradictory to it. Even if subjectivity is always in a distance towards the world (which is nothing new) it does not mean that it makes it less real than anything else. Actually, LeDaux’s and Metzinger’s conclusions allow us to make a counter-conclusion: since narrative structures result from brain functions they are not less real than anything else. As Žižek puts it: “(...) the true problem is not to think pre-subjective reality, but to think how something like a subject could have emerged within it”¹⁰.

The simple fact that one cannot feel, see, and control brain processes does not mean that he/she is less real than these processes. As Catherine Malabou puts it: “(...) brain is not substantial”¹¹. It is the materialistic, biological, and objective reasons that construct the self and its narrative structures. This dialectic of objective matter and subjective narrative structures ties them together and makes possible to think narrativity as materialistic object. Thus it allows us to see emancipatory possibilities for humans: “(...) the subject can resist hopeless determinism by virtue of a dialectic inscribed at the heart of her own origination”¹². Of course, there is no direct connection between effects of brain processes and the world. The brain is detached from the body proper. “Subject is both: a logical form without any sensual content (*a priori*) and an empirical form of the subject sensual intuition (*a posteriori*) by which it appears to itself”¹³.

philosopher, Jean-Pierre Dupuy. Cf. J-P. Dupuy, *On the Origins of Cognitive Science. Mechanization of the Mind*, MIT Press, 2009.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ S. Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 2015, p. 469

¹¹ C. Malabou, “New Wounded”, 2012, p.12

¹² Catherine Malabou in an interview with Noëlle Vahanian, “A Conversation with Catherine Malabou”, <http://www.jcrt.org/archives/09.1/Malabou.pdf> (accessed on 23.12.2015).

¹³ C. Malabou, *New Wounded*, 2012, p. 31.

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In the light of the above it is quite clear that Metzinger's separation of the subject from the object is made just to "kill" the subject. The problem of this separation is grounded in Kant's philosophy and can be described in the following way: phenomenal world of humans is separated from the noumenal world of things-in-themselves. In principle, it means that what we perceive is disconnected from the objective, material reality. This is also Metzinger's stance, which follows the old Kantian problems without solving them. Metzinger denies the existence of any subject by emphasizing biological objectivity... while arguing at the same time that subjectivity (Self-Transparency Model) is a product of that objectivity. He attempts to deny something and, simultaneously, provides proofs of its existence. Yet, to do so, he requires both of these elements. Throughout his argument, he refers to a kind of gap. However, this gap inevitably divides the space in two: even if the gap is inside one, it makes possible to think "one" as "two". When gap appears, it establishes a dividing line (between real and illusory, phenomena and noumena etc.). It seems that this separation line, or a gap in Metzinger's stance, is understood as a war or a conflict line and it inevitably falls into the trap of pseudo-dialectical thinking. By pseudo-dialectical thinking I understand simple confrontation of two sides where one is overcoming / destroying the other. Nowadays, we fully realise that the famous "thesis – antithesis – synthesis" way of describing the Hegelian dialectics is far from being right. Hegel – and any other of great interpreters of his thought: Feuerbach, Marx, Stirner, Kojève etc. – has never used these terms. (It was Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus who – shortly after Hegel's death – published one of the first monographs dedicated to Hegel's work¹⁴). "*Aufhebung*" is Hegel's term for dialectical movement. It could be translated as sublation but in general it means that one side of the "gap" overcomes and preserves the other at the same time. It is a movement of simultaneous overcoming and preserving. It is not a move of separation to "(...) overcome in a synthesis which brings us back to the wealth of reality (...) this tearing apart is displaced from being merely a power of our mind onto things themselves, as their inherent power of negativity. And the key dialectical insight is that the synthesis, the bringing-together of what was torn apart

¹⁴ Cf. Gustav E. Mueller, "The Legend of Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis", "Journal of the History of Ideas", vol. XIX (3), May 1958, p. 411.

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by Understanding, is the absolute, most radical, act of tearing apart – a violent imposition of unity”¹⁵.

In this sense, the act of synthesis is far from destruction of the other side and even from the dividing line; there is hardly any gap to identify within it. As Žižek puts it: “(...) we should never forget that what we know (as phenomena) is not separated from things-in-themselves by a dividing line, but is constitutive of them: phenomena do not form a special ontological domain, they are simply part of reality”¹⁶. Subjectivity and its narrative structures are neither noumenal or phenomenal. This is something that is missing in general in modern cognitive sciences and something that Kant already observed. Metzinger and LeDoux are not able think of the “self” as a non-substantial. “There is, however, something more in Kant, a key element which is missing in Metzinger: the thoroughly non-substantial ‘I’”, to be distinguished from its noumenal substratum, is also not what Kant calls a ‘person’, the positive phenomenal content of subjectivity, including all the psychological wealth of desires, dreams, knowledge, abilities, etc., which form my personality and which is what Metzinger calls the conscious ‘self-model’ of the brain. The ‘I’ is neither noumenal nor phenomenal, neither the I’s a subjective neuronal substratum nor my representation of myself”¹⁷.

Another theoretical problem that has an impact on my practice and relates to the problem of subjective / objective in current philosophical debate is the problem of contingency and necessity: is there any rule in the universe or is it based on pure contingency? Is there any logic in the way the brain and memory work? We could identify necessity with everything that is subjective or caused by human decisions (but not necessarily fully controlled by them) while contingency would be everything outside human governance. In the work of art this problem might be translated into the relation between accidents and systematic decisions. Is necessity contingent or is contingency necessary?

¹⁵ S. Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 2015, p. 143.

¹⁶ S. Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 2015, p. 283.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 724

As the author of “*After Finitude*”, the French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux, insists, philosophy since Kant has just provided different versions of correlationism, which he defines as a stance that consists in “(...) disqualifying the claim that it is possible to consider the realms of subjectivity and objectivity independently of one another”¹⁸. The ambition of Meillassoux’s project is to think of subjectivity and objectivity as disconnected. What he claims is that it does not matter if there is any human on earth left – the world will go its own way. Meillassoux argues that the only necessity is contingency itself. Anything that happened could have happened in a different way. In his view, if we agree that there is no causal necessity, then reality becomes more approachable. Everything is contingent and anything could go any way – everything is possible. Žižek – who criticized Meillassoux and who was criticised by him as well – represents a different perspective: reality is ontologically incomplete and thus subjectivity is a gap, a hole in objectivity. Ontological incompleteness “(...) is necessary, which means that, from time to time, a contingent encounter occurs which undermines the predominant necessity (...) so that in it, the impossible happens”¹⁹. Žižek’s proposition resembles significantly Badiou’s notion of an Event. My perspective is closer to those of Žižek and Badiou than to that of Meillassoux, yet I find the latter’s arguments about the discoveries in science that can traced back to times before human existence remain very illuminating. What Meillassoux refers to is archaeological excavations or techniques of estimating the age of findings used in geology. Meillassoux uses a term fossil-matter that is “(...) indicating the existence of an ancestral reality or event; one that is anterior to terrestrial life”²⁰. I am interested in reflecting on an artwork as a kind of fossil-matter. Erosion opens the space for speculation and its effect that is inevitably brought to us through narrativity. Not unlike criminologists, we try to speculate on the history of a decomposing object. Several figures discussed below were my big inspirations in applying this approach to my reflections on the artwork.

¹⁸ Q. Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 2009, p. 13.

¹⁹ S. Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 2015, p. 636.

²⁰ Q. Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 2009, p. 22.

Art without artist: practical approaches to necessity and contingency.

I would like to discuss several figures that in their practice engage the notions of contingency and necessity, memory, impregnation and recollection in the horizon of erosion, as well as their impact on some of my activities. Some of them are artists, some of them are not, but they have something in common and, in my opinion, it is a life strategy of dealing with time and memory. Most of the works – or their structure – function as a pauses or marks in time. Moments to which one can go back. They all share a potential for retroactive movement. They also produce some kind of genealogy of their own work by marking changes and by consistency. Conditions of production are, contingently, included in the systematic work. But what is most interesting is that all these figures started some process or established some rules for doing their work and suddenly this system became independent and overwhelmed its creators. It is a moment when contingency enters necessity or vice versa. There is also another very important point: all of the figures worked beyond the professional art or cultural circles. That was their decision. Even more so, they were hidden from anyone's scrutiny (or sometimes were not shown to anyone at all). The work was a marker on a timeline left waiting to be discovered in the future (I discuss this in detail below in the description of an exercise called "Markers"). In this sense, all these works and strategies were designed to fulfill the rules of self-exteriorisation or bootstrapping. To pull oneself out of oneself. On the level of decision making, it is a process of wandering. In case of Robert Walser, whose method was literary writing as an act of wandering, it was continued in the forms of live: changing locations, jobs and remaining socially invisible as much as he can. In case of Janina Turek, who established a system for noting every fact of her life in a notebook, she never knew what the next day would bring. Probably the best description of self-exteriorisation in the form of systematic work that cannot be stopped after it has been launched can be found in a quotation from one of Turek's postcards she used to write to herself: "If I stopped writing, I would have to go back to myself". Jan Sohle's practice reveals a similar tendency of incessant continuation and leaving marks in time: he is a constant wanderer who is consistently coming back to the same places, looking for his own footsteps left for himself by himself some time ago.

Robert Walser: writing in suspension

As my first example, I will refer to the Swiss writer, Robert Walser. I will not discuss his novels or his stories, but rather his method of work. He is a figure that was in some way present in literature circles, but he then refused to function as a writer: actually, he was in-between. The term 'Writer' stands here for the social role of being a writer, a person who publishes, takes part in talks, and acts as a writer. Walser's method was an opposite one. He only used pencil, writing on very tiny papers like tickets or postcards, cut into very small squares. He was collecting them as purely potential, but not yet actualized literature forms. Not yet published. Constantly in progress. He wrote in one of his letters to his friend that he switched from pen to pencil, because pen is something you cannot erase anymore.

In those times, it was the official form of submitting your manuscripts to the publisher, always written in pen, not in pencil. So he decided to take a step back, to make his writings non-professional, always waiting to be erased, or changed (or published).

This formal decision goes hand in hand with his idea of writing as a secret act, something to be visible after some time and not in a professional, writer-playing-his-role way. He wrote to one of his friends that those were potential things, which he would write with the pen, if they were going to be published. But he preferred to keep them 'half-way'.

For me, it was very important that his main activity, throughout his entire life, consisted in employment as an office assistant, or a waiter, or a servant, or other jobs of this kind, so that a part of his method was to refuse life in the sense of rising higher and higher in social ladder, to advance. He wanted to stay clear of the main ambitions of life that capitalist society puts upon an individual. That was his idea and that was a very important self-made condition for his writing. In one of his letters he wrote to his friends from the mental institution he eventually left he expressed doubt in the method he implemented, in its radicalism: "you know, I haven't even had a woman throughout my life, and maybe it was too much". But it was his very conscious decision to write his cards every day. Walking was another of his daily activities.

The photograph I would like to present you is very interesting, because it was taken by a police photographer, when he found Walser dead.



Police photograph of Robert Walser shortly after his death

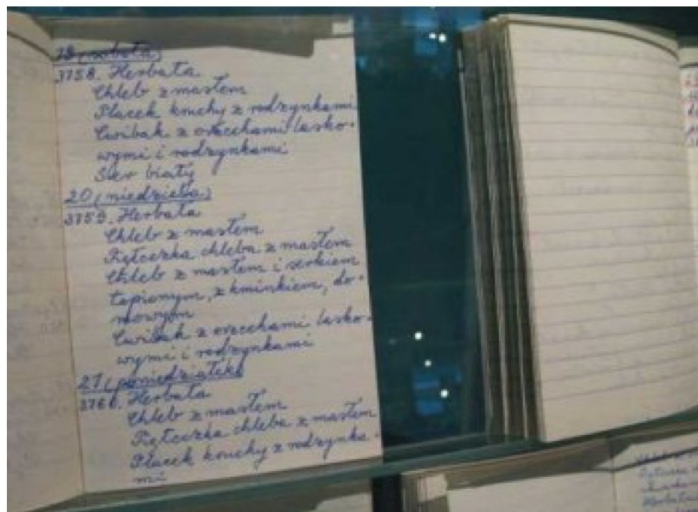
It is also a very symbolic photograph for other reasons. One of his novels was entitled *A Journey to the End of the World*. I clearly see the parallel between his unique writing methods and his wandering practice. The steps he took and the tiny cards which, in my opinion, functioned as traces of the everyday. Or: as purely potential things that might give him something, but he refused to take it and build it into a story that may be sent to a publisher. Or something that is suspended. What is important: many of his stories are just considerations of what kind of story

it might be. Again, it is purely potential – he is directing his thoughts to the reader and he is exposing the thinking process: should I go this way or that way. *I could, but I don't have to.*

Also, according to social standards, his life was suspended. He could not be recognised as a writer because it would ruin the entire project. He had to remain hidden. It was a secret thing and the main rule. But he was also silently saying that if somebody wanted to publish his work, he could rewrite it with pen at any time. So, again, it is just waiting for the moment to do so. I think it was more important to be in this state of *I can, but I don't have to.*

Janina Turek. *Poetical database.*

The next figure is completely unconnected with any art or literature circles. Janina Turek from Kraków, from Podgórze district. She was a housewife, not a professional writer, never made an attempt to join artistic circles. Throughout her entire life, after Gestapo arrested her husband in mid 40s, she did two very unique, parallel things. She wrote down each and every activity she undertook in her life in notebooks divided into categories. They were like a database of her life. She was noting every TV program she watched, every dinner she had, every meeting she should have had, but did not, and the meeting she should not have had, but she had. There are categories like: accidental meetings titled in the notebooks *Widziane mimochodem* [*Noticed in Passing*], planned meetings, received phones, eaten dinners, excursions, books. Parallel to that activity, she sent postcards to herself, in which she reflected on her notebooks, the ongoing activity... And the thing is that she was doing this in complete secrecy.



Janina Turek, Diaries, 1946–2008

Exactly as in Walser's case, nobody knew about it, it remained hidden until her death. Living in a very small flat, she tried to keep her notebooks hidden in her wardrobes, dressers, under the bed, under the carpet. After her death, her family discovered that she wrote 745 notebooks. So, on the one hand, she was doing something very systematic, namely: providing a database of her life. It was a whole system of documenting facts in her life, divided into categories, while the other thing, the postcards, was dedicated to emotional needs: she gave herself a bit of freedom for emotional reflection. **For instance, to quote her:**

"Do not demand too much, do not talk too much of myself." In this postcard, she is constantly trying to jump off herself, not to be too much within herself, but also she is writing it to tell herself not to externalize her needs or not to be too much of herself.

"Where does this longing in me come from, this lack of heart. I have to be very cultural, do not externalize needs." This theme is constantly repeated in the postcards, her talking about longing for something, or: **"I long for something that is hard for me to understand and to put into words. I would like to go away with someone the same as me, but have no illusions."** Another example: **"The statistics is meant to deceive me, if I stop writing, I would have to go back to myself."** And this is one of her last sentences, the last postcards she wrote. She was 78, I think: **"Yesterday the TV remote control fell onto the floor – despair."**

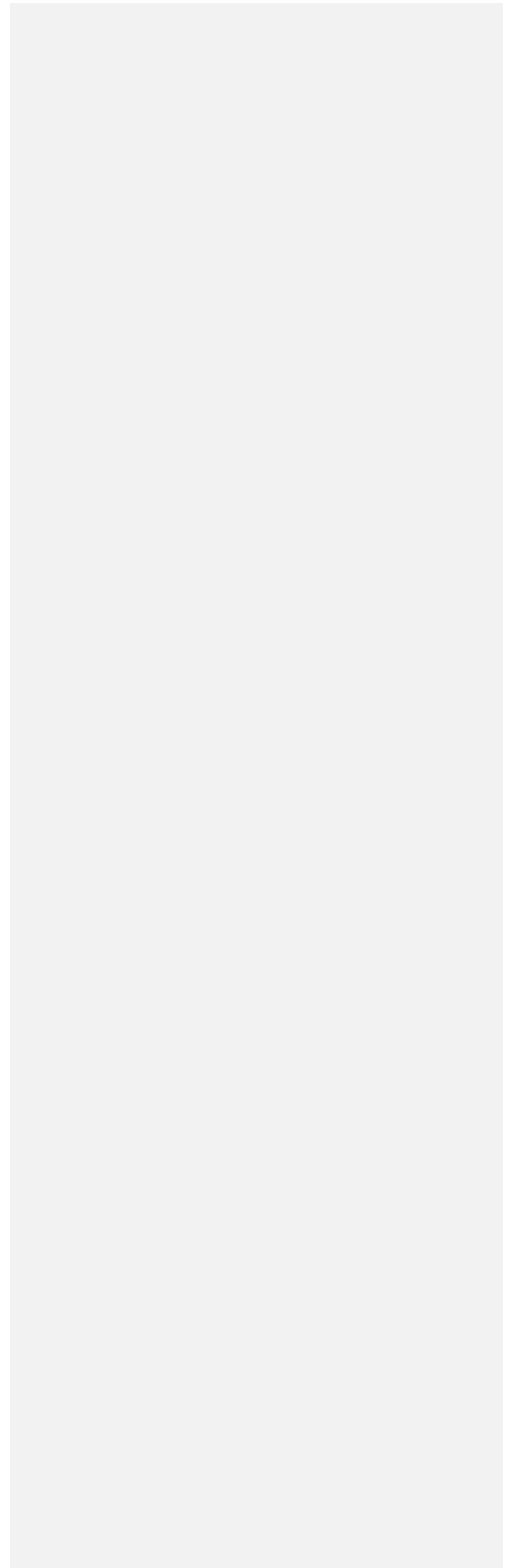
I discovered Janina Turek in 2005 or 2006, during my research for some project, and I had shared this story with my friend, Roman Dziadkiewicz, who was preparing an exhibition at the National Museum in Krakow, dedicated to private and hidden activities, directed towards the internal, not the external. This was expressed in the title of Roman's project: *Imhibition*. A selection of her notebooks was exhibited at the National Museum at that time. It is very important to stress that she was never connected with art circles, she never defined herself as an artist. But it does not mean she was not aware of the meaning of her writing, as it is quite clear in some excerpts that she was. It is a very interesting project, executed according to the rules of conceptual art or conceptual literature. To be frank, these life projects, or rather – *life decisions* – offer us a new perspective on conceptual art as a project. In Janina Turek's or Robert Walser's case, they gave up their respective subjectivities for an activity, which at the same

time was not regarded as an actual project in terms of its fulfilling potential or its productivity. They were more radical. I think groups like Art&Language should reflect on her work, not the other way around. Invisibility of what Janina Turek was doing – just as in case of Walser – was a necessary thing for the project to be complete; something that would be never possible in an art context. I think this is a very important context for how art functions in general: very often, it should not be happening in real time. There is a need for a buffer of time for certain projects and pieces, and it just cannot be done according to the present model of presenting and producing artworks. It is, of course, related to the way money functions in art circles, within the art market and something I would call the *self-esteem market*. Walser and Turek could not care less for their names being made public, which is a complete opposition of what most artists care about.

Jan Sohle

He works in the medium of photography and sculpture. He *collects* strange buildings in the process, and he is constantly taking walks. As an artist, he is not interested in distributing his work in any sense. His works could be regarded in an art context, but they were not made for that purpose. He also collects things that he calls ready-made sculptures. The house we see in a photograph can also be considered a sculpture, but actually it is there to stress that buildings like that one are everywhere to be found. He almost never intervenes in them, or if he does, the intervention is on the verge of a visible change. His method is just walking with the camera in some abandoned places or in the suburbs.

I think that the picture below is very significant and tells a lot about Jan Sohle himself.

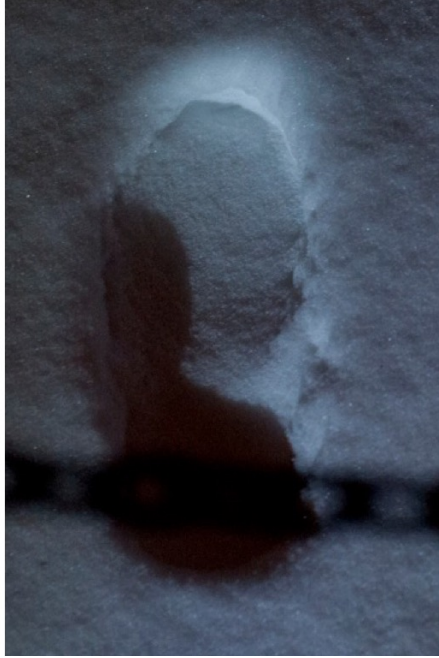




J. Sohle, "Self-portrait", date unknown

This is his self-portrait, you can see a person and his shadow. We did exactly the same pedagogical exercises, when we were collaborating. In a group of people, the first person would choose an object in the field and the others were to document it, and it was like a never-ending chain of people documenting people, documenting other people, documenting other people and so on. But he always needs this first move to choose something, like there is always a *moment of decision*. There is also something that I think is very interesting in this context, maybe not very straightforward: that in some way all those figures I am discussing started some *process* – they made a decision, but then it all began to go its own way. One may say their biggest problem

was the first thing they did to set the thing in motion. It is a kind of loop. Maybe they tried to escape it. Another very interesting thing that links Jan Sohle to Robert Walser and all these figures I have already presented is the fact that his main activity is walking. It is a part of his daily routine, a pretext for going out of bed. In this picture there are traces.



J. Sohle, "Untitled"

He was took a walk in wintertime, and he took a walk 5 days earlier, so these are traces from five days before the photo was taken and you can also see tracks of an animal inside his tracks. He returns to the same places and he looks at his own tracks, his own traces. He follows himself. And there was no other human – only some animals.

Exercises and my own activity

Markers

I grew up in the same city where I was born and never moved out, so it contains for me a very significant load of memories. I would say I *collect* different places in the city, different objects, pictures of the city that I have picked up without any reason or that connect with some areas, places or times. They all add up to a sort of private map of space, but they also work like a timeline in a video editing software, where you can make a mark, so you can always go back to it. They were initiated as a strange thing that took off at certain point when the photo was taken, but also as a thing in space, in the topography of the city. So whenever I step into the same place (sometimes I forget them), but also when I pass by it, it brings me back to the very particular moment and the whole story of this moment, when the photo was taken. I started choosing objects more consciously to create a kind of narrative: *compilation of people, time, and place*. Whenever I step into the same place that has been marked, it transports me into the time when the marker was placed. It is like a time machine or a freeze-frame in time. This is why *markers* are places, both in the spatial and the temporal. Their main function was to freeze time and let me use them as references/links in the future for going back in time. In a way, I was doing marks for myself from the future. I was trying to go ahead of the present time and put it, let's say, in 2010 with an aim to discover it in 2020 or so. All places were significant to me and worth remembering, for different reasons, but usually they represent some sets of motifs, some worlds that are in the moment of transformation or that are vanishing.

I am not trying to interpret the things I do, because I do them out of habit. Habit is something that you do without being fully aware of it. I am looking for *marks*. It could be, for example, a shape on the sidewalk or a scratch on the wall. Usually, they are quite ephemeral too, and after some years they disappear. So sometimes there is no possibility of going back to that place any more.

And sometimes there are people who are dedicated to certain places, the people you are sure you can meet in a specific place, so sometimes you're walking to that place and just wait. You make a decision – I'll go and I'll meet them sooner or later. It is very significant that sometimes you refuse to move somewhere, like there is no horizontal movement from place to place. There is another type of movement: *staying in a place*, so that many layers can appear. It is like stepping in the place where you are going down, down and down. Kraków would be always the place where I want to work, because I want to work with this kind of issues like the

characteristic movement. A place where **katabasis** starts after some years. **It is a very interesting motif for me, namely: *immobile movement*.**

Rent a room as close as possible to the place where you live



The final thing I would like to share with you is an experience I had with my girlfriend, Patrycja. It wasn't any form of performance, because it appeared entirely out of the need to go somewhere. We couldn't go anywhere far, but we had some money, so at that point I said: maybe we could go to the nearest hotel that is just around the corner. But there was just one condition that was important: that the view from the window should be the place where we live. So that you can look at yourself from the perspective of a tourist. So we entered this horrible room and, actually, it was not cheap, but it was the closest one and it offered the view. One night.

It was an exercise in *bootstrapping* or, to name it more philosophically, *self-exteriorization*; an attempt to pull yourself out of swamp by pulling yourself by your bootstrap or hair (like in the tale about Baron Münchhausen). I think that most of the figures I quoted share this *logic of bootstrapping*, or exteriorizing oneself in a form of work that after it was started it dominates the one who started it. The body of work becomes the main subject and it governs its author, yet remaining still a part of her/himself. In this sense, *self-exteriorization* is a battle against forms of – as Badiou named it – ‘me-ism’ in art. Against the egocentric exposition of ‘me’.

— NOTES:

1.0 Work is not only an object but also a set of rules of how it is supposed to be used. It has a form of an anniversary – an event in time and space that can be repeated in any moment in the future.

1.1 Everything starts with a body and its caprice. Caprice is a very interesting category because it encompasses the paradoxical movement of spontaneity (unconscious, flow of memories) while at the same time it establishes a system. (Kierkegaard)

1.2 Work is a container for its own history. It is built of parts of its own genesis. Order of temporality becomes spatial. Time becomes space.

1.3 It is thought as the self – exteriorization tool, auto-referential object: the process of becoming is being embodied in it. Traces of becoming are the only material from which the work is built.

1.4 It includes also a brain of a person who made it. T.T.D.K.T.W.K is working as a health monitoring system and includes operator body parameters.

1.5 Brain is included as any other object that is related to the process of building the work. Not because of narcissistic reasons but because of consistency of documenting traces of becoming of a piece.

1.6 Thomas Mann described the “consistency” as a main rule of *bourgeois* art. If we are struggling today with the tendencies of reinstating pre-modernist, traditionalist strategies of “re-enrooting in identities” and globalized standardization of art practice, life, and imagination, then there is a strong need for establishing an alternative. *Bourgeois* tradition might be of some help in this situation, providing that we remember about its complicated *genesis* and its ambivalent relation to eschatology and religion.

1.7 Consistency is based on repetition (and it is a problem, there is a need for immobile movement). “Who does not work does not get bread”. [Sloterdijk, “You have to change your life”]

1.8 It is not enough to criticize religion. It requires a secular form of practice. [Enlightenment]

1.9 Launching (showing a piece) is a moment of appearance and can be done by the person who was chosen by the previous operator. T.T.D.K.T.W.K is made to function as an anniversary. With every single public display it requires to follow a set of rules described in the Manual. One of the basic rules is appointment of a successor by the previous one. It is derived from the early religious practice, which constitutes a basis for scientific, artistic and social practices.

2.0 T.T.D.K.T.W.K operates in the realm of second nature. The reason why I prefer to use the term “second nature” instead of “culture” is precisely the matter of control and governance: while culture seems to be created and operated by humans, “second nature” is culture that had detached itself from the realm of human governance and established a structure driven by its internal, inhuman logic. In this sense, my work is related to the tradition of land-art. It takes as its land the field of human activity that is not governed by humans.

Some of possible objects included in T.T.D.K.T.W.K

1. Markers Atlas (book, A5 format, hardcover, 120 pages)
2. Aquarium with soil, trichoderma fungi, silverfish pests, humidity-meter, thermometer, sprinkler, Deutscherwald book, 50 x 50 x 30)
3. *Heimat*, found-footage, loop, DV PAL
4. Video “(...) old lady tried to recollect events from the past”, DV PAL

5. Objects impregnated with epoxy resin, honey, egg yolk, glues and gums
6. Neurofeedback documentation: person staring at objects in the state of erosion (arch-fossils).
7. Erosion that grows, DV PAL, loop
8. Contemporary oldened objects
9. Manual
10. Display / table made with old furniture wood and epoxy resin.