

**BECOMING-SARMATIAN, BECOMING-STEPPE.  
DELEUZOGUATTARIAN MULTIPLICITIES | THRESHOLDS | POTENTIALITIES  
AND THE ART-WORK OF MAREK KONIECZNY**

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## **DECLARATION**

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## SUMMARY

The present dissertation maps out the artistic practices of the Polish neo-avant-garde artist Marek Konieczny between 1962 and 1986. Marek Konieczny is a Warsaw-based artist who since the late 1960s has embarked on a singular artistic trajectory across a wide range of different media and genres—including geometric abstractions, Conceptual, body, video and performance art as well as textured metal reliefs. Konieczny is best known as the creator of the unique strategy called ‘Think Crazy’ in 1974. The present dissertation probes the turbulent process of experimentation that has produced Think Crazy but at the same time explores the implications of Think Crazy that were still being unravelled in Konieczny’s practices in the 1980s.

In particular, the thesis investigates qualitative change in Konieczny’s practices as operating on two interconnected levels: (1) a logic of sensation and (2) a diagnosis of cultures. Such coexistence finds its expression in the division of the thesis into three parts—corresponding to an exposition of onto-aesthetic concepts, an examination of Polish art and culture, and, finally, a case study of Konieczny that binds the two previous threads together.

The dissertation seeks to address the larger problem of qualitative metamorphosis in art and its relation to specific cultural formations. Framed within the Deleuzo-Guattarian theory of intensive multiplicities on one hand and their aesthetics on the other, the dissertation attends to a process of diverse experimentation that taps both into a continuum of actual materials and their virtual forces as well as the social field. The question of the socio-cultural field is not adequately addressed in contemporary aesthetics where it is frequently dismissed as the problem of identity, ideology and representation. The present dissertation attempts to bridge this gap by probing the mutual interrelation of avant-garde pursuits and an investigation of the seventeenth-century Polish (and also Dutch) art and culture in Konieczny’s practices. In particular, the dissertation investigates Konieczny’s interest in the seventeenth-century Polish hybrid cultural formation of Sarmatism grounded upon the fabulation of nomadic steppe lineage and its attendant Sarmato-Baroque vision of art.

The case study identifies the problem of time and in particular the avant-garde promise of radical novelty as the proper vector of artistic metamorphosis in Konieczny. Seen from this point of view, the thesis identifies three temporal syntheses that produce Konieczny’s unique strategy of Think Crazy. Paradoxically, the dissertation reveals that Konieczny attains the radical future of the avant-garde through a creative involution that proceeds through the Sarmato-Baroque. Sarmatism reappears in Konieczny as a becoming-steppe of Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s, i.e. as the purely non-representative zone of potentialities characterised by a specifically metallic, curvilinear and embryonic movements and the principle of open-ended, immanent and ephemeral nomadic distribution. The thesis finds an apt conceptualisation of this singular metamorphosis in the Deleuzoguattarian notion of world-historical delirium that conjoins pure intensities traced on the body with historical and geographical designations.

Konieczny’s practices corroborate the Deleuzoguattarian formulation of delirium as productive desire that necessarily invests the social. Drawing on those insights, the dissertation concludes by suggesting the notion of *onto-aesthetics* as a new field that regards aesthetics as flush with the world but also draws attention to Konieczny’s art as a modification and modulation of Eastern European circumstances.

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I would like to dedicate my dissertation to the loving memory of my grandmother Maria Wiesława Lubieniecka born in Buchach (now Ukraine) who passed away on 7 January 2017 as a homage to her indomitable nomadic spirit and a message of compassion, respect and love for all. I would also like to dedicate the dissertation to my grandfather, Edmund Lubieniecki (pictured below), born in Grodno (now Belarus) whose experimental civil engineering research into steel constructions inspired by interest in art and music.



## **NOTE ON TRANSLATION**

All translations to English are mine unless otherwise noted in the Works Cited section or indicated by the **RP** initials placed in brackets immediately following the quoted passage.

## **NOTES ON APPENDICES**

Appendices have been designed to accompany reading of the text. **Appendix A** is a numbered chronological list of Konieczny's works containing reproductions of the relevant art-works. In this visual catalogue, each of Konieczny's art-works is identifiable by their respective figure number, name and date. **Appendix B** furnishes additional contexts to be identified using figure numbers included in the square brackets within the text of the dissertation – the list of figures is provided in the appendix. **Appendix C** provides additional information on the disciplines and fields addressed by the present dissertation: Art History, Cultural Studies and Performance Studies.

## **NOTES ON THE CROSS-REFERENCING SYSTEM**

The square bracketed bold numbers in the body of the dissertation appearing after the name of an art-work—i.e. **[Fig. A.1]**, **[Fig. B.32]**—refer to its respective image reference in the numbered lists located in **Appendix A** or **Appendix B**.

Additional information about the relevant art-work, providing insights into its material character and context, can be found in the **Misc. information** rubric of **List of Illustration** located on pp. 3-7 for **Appendix A** and pp. 104-5 for **Appendix B**, respectively.

# Preface

[T]here are moments when the walls of the mind grow thin; when nothing is unabsorbed, and I could fancy that we might blow so vast a bubble that the sun might set and rise in it and we might take the blue of midday and the black of midnight and be cast off and escape from here and now.

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*, 1931 (Woolf 1992: 467)

I raised my hand slowly, and the wave, or rather an outcrop of the wave, rose at the same time, enfolding my hand in a translucent cyst with greenish reflections. I stood up, so as to raise my hand still higher, and the gelatinous substance stretched like a rope, but did not break. The main body of the wave remained motionless on the shore, surrounding my feet without touching them, like some strange beast patiently waiting for the experiment to finish. A flower had grown out of the ocean, and its calyx was moulded to my fingers. I stepped back. The stem trembled, stirred uncertainly and fell back into the wave, which gathered it and receded.

Stanislaw Lem, *Solaris*, 1961 (Lem 1987: 400)

But art operates at a pre-moral depth, at a point where value is yet *in statu nascendi*. Art as a spontaneous expression of life makes demands on ethics—not the other way round. If art were to only acknowledge what has been already otherwise established—it would be unnecessary. Its role is to be a probe descended into the nameless. The artist is merely an apparatus registering processes at the depths where value is in the process of generating itself (**RP** my own translation from Polish).

Bruno Schulz, [A letter to Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, no. 63], c. 1934 (Schulz 1934: 102-3)

Art is the opposite case when compared to geology. In the latter case, that which is older is lodged more deeply; with art, it is—at least on the surface—the same case; however, one difference here is that the most creative phenomena, those most visionary and penetrating, tend to descend underground. Indeed, one no longer speaks of the ‘avant-garde’, but the ‘underground’. (...) The mountain of art accretes into its depth and towards its middle (**RP** my own translation from Polish).

Jerzy Ludwiński, ‘The Mountain’, 1982 (Ludwiński 1982: 158)

### *Encountering Konieczny*

Back in 2009, two curious articles by the Polish art critics Łukasz Ronduda (2007) and Michał Woliński (2007) caught my eye. The articles were about Marek Konieczny—an artist associated with neo-avant-garde currents in Polish art of the 1970s and the creator of a unique artistic strategy he called ‘Think Crazy’. The article appeared in a 2007 issue of the *Piktogram* art quarterly. In fact, the 2000s in Poland witnessed an unprecedented eruption of interest in Polish art of the 1970s, especially those of its currents, the neo-avant-garde, that went beyond the established paradigms of Conceptualism (ideas make art), Modernism (art as a self-contained essence optically coded in abstract expressionism or geometric abstraction), Critical Art (based on the ideological critique or deconstruction of everyday practices of meaning-making), or the traditional representational or figurative art, while retaining a problematic, obscure and inchoate relation to all of them. *Piktogram* was instrumental in bringing the neo-avant-garde to attention of art experts and art buffs alike. At the time, I was studying digital media at Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). As my specialisation at DIT was sound art and sound design, I spent my second year there working on my final project—a *musique concrète* album composed of thick texture of interwoven found sounds, designed to resonate with the Modernist prose of the Polish-Jewish interwar writer and graphic artist Bruno Schulz (1892-1942). What struck me in the *Piktogram* articles was a curious clash between the academic or critical accounts of Konieczny’s works that remained markedly at odds with a seemingly random set of photographs pertaining to the artist’s work. The photographs were a strange bunch, including at times graphic or near-pornographic depictions of bodies trotting an invisible mannered line, coexisting with the meandering surfaces of metal reliefs, akin to a hot plate burning in a scorching sun, or elsewhere the nodular perforations in a single wooden plank, akin to surgical incisions, clinical yet excessive. Something was amiss.

A kind of nebula of unknowing hovered over the articles whose photographs—of uncertain ontological status (an art-work?, a documentation of one?), of an unattributable genre, of an unidentified context and nondescript lineage—were bustling with a hidden, yet very tangible life, radiating with some sort of energetic vitality akin to a shining crystal, a crystalline entity that had no ethereal transcendent currency but was circulating as something very earthy and at once engineered. Working on my Bruno Schulz *musique concrète* project, with a condenser microphone I was tuning in to the world whose intensities I extracted on a digital disk as a waveform like, contemplating the mystery of this transduction or phase shift; I was sculpting in sound; I was manipulating and creating time. Konieczny’s work appealed to me. Think Crazy as I imagined it was a singular avatar of *musique concrète*, a sonic functioning as at once an artistic and philosophical practice. Thinking about Think Crazy, I also remembered a term coined by the Polish literary scholar Jerzy Jarzębski (de Bruyn and van Heuckelom 2009) to describe Schulz’s oeuvre—‘atypical avant-garde’. At the same time, in his *Piktogram* article Ronduda was discussing how Konieczny’s art-works reinstated beauty in a disenchanted world, how his photographs were erotic and how they performed a symbolic subversion of the communist system. But to me Konieczny’s art-works embodied none of these aspects or qualities. Konieczny’s pieces, as far I could see, were precisely atypical and avant-gardist, defying such categories as beauty, eroticism or subversion. Human figures or humanoid features—fragmented, proliferated, magnified or shrunk—were not erotic, if anything they seemed to exude a glacial life. The figures signalled a possible, future shape of desire, a sensing of contact with some inhuman species, perhaps the famed plasmatic, morphogenetic ocean from Stanisław Lem’s 1961 science fiction novel *Solaris*. What is more, the human figures were remarkably ungendered and unsexed despite the graphic nudity. Konieczny’s bodies were remarkably unbodied, shooting up into some meandering nonhuman line,



emptied of discrete organs as we know it, void of fixed meanings but at the same time quivering with strange rhythms like a sound event, like the amplitude of a sound wave. There was some inhuman urgency or the compelling necessity of a vision that came to surface in Konieczny's creations. Funnily enough, Konieczny's surname means 'necessary' in English.

Back in 2009, in parallel with my *musique concrète* project, I also took an interest in the phenomenon of Eurasian nomadism and its spatial correlate, the Great Steppe. In particular, I was eager to read about Turkic (and other) nomads and their impact on the Polish territories at the beginning of the common era as part of the great migrations, then during the Middle Ages as part of the Mongol invasions and finally as diverse nomadic (Tatar, Crimean Tatar, Ottoman) artistic and cultural influences on the seventeenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which gave rise to the hybrid cultural phenomenon called Sarmatism. I started to deepen my knowledge about the Tatar heritage that goes back in Poland to the fourteenth century. I also began to learn Turkish, discovering its interwoven, agglutinative magic. There was something nomadic in Konieczny, but I could not yet identify what it was.

If Konieczny's works affirmed art's power to call forth and contact the future, at the same time this future contact seemed already anachronistic, atavistic, belated, akin to a shard of time splitting chaos, an anomalous, stunted future, maybe? Strangely enough, the artist's work seemed to me a future variation of the Polish seventeenth-century Baroque. It was not enough to sense the inhuman forces in Konieczny's work. There was also its nagging problem of an anomalous, divergent future. In the future millennia, I imagined, at some point Konieczny's work is going to be discovered by scientists amidst the remnants of our civilisation. Konieczny's work will then shine like an irradiated mammoth unearthed from a glacier in Siberia, as the vast ice-covered Yamal Crater in Siberia, as the Tunguska meteor crash site or Derveze's continually burning gas crater amidst the Gobi desert—as, in other words, at once an artistic, natural and cultural occurrence. Who is this artist that eludes time? Back in 2009, the work of Konieczny piqued my curiosity. I wanted to *know* more.

On the sunny day of 9 September 2015, I was sitting at the balcony of Konieczny's apartment in the Muranów neighbourhood of Warsaw, the neighbourhood that as Konieczny had told me was built upon mounds of debris that could not be removed after Warsaw was destroyed by the Nazis during the Second World War. Looking at blinking multi-coloured LED lights embedded in the plastic rings of clear, transparent plastic on the fingers of Konieczny's partner, Monika Sz wajewska; looking at the fiery lustre of the artist Alison Gingeras' hair; looking at the exuberant, psychedelic floral pattern on the shirt of Konieczny's student and now an established New-York based artist Piotr Uklański, I was asking myself if after all those years spent researching Konieczny I am really closer to *knowing* his work. If anything, it seemed that Konieczny made a fine job of manipulating all the bearings that anchor knowledge—dates, places and material forms. His was a work that sculpted in the unknowing without becoming unreal or surreal. Konieczny's work was a like rubber string I used for my *musique concrète*, so many years before. The string was wrapped around an open tin box. Once set into vibration the string produced a haze of movement and a deep resonant sound but always at some point it hit the irregularities on the surface of the box, immediately breaking into overdrive, bursting into a unique, jagged timbre. I now realised that Konieczny's work was for me not so much a visual phenomenon, but a sound event—of vibration, of resonance, of deformation and overdrive. What is more, it was also a phenomenon of engineering, something I absorbed as a child, as my grandfather, Edmund Lubieniecki (born in Grodno in the

present territory of Belarus) specialised in civil engineering, conducting a lifelong academic inquiry into the construction of prestressed steel girders through experiments on their small-sized models.

### ***Reporting on the research undertaken***

When I started studying at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) in 2011, my initial interest was in the phenomenon of Central Asian and Eurasian nomadism and their link to the old-Polish art and culture. I subsequently sought to investigate a parallel logic of nomadic distribution in practices of four different Polish artists across the decades. My doctoral project at TCD started as an inquiry into the afterlife of Sarmatism in artistic practices of four different Polish artists: Jerzy Truszkowski, Marek Konieczny, Tomek Kozak as well as Slavs and Tatars. However, I have subsequently refined the scope to Konieczny, because of his uncompromising innovation and lack of in-depth scholarly elaboration of his strategies.

When I started conducting my doctoral research on Konieczny in 2012, I first sought out contact details of Łukasz Ronduda in the hope that he would arrange a meeting with Konieczny or at least put me in contact with him. When Ronduda gave me Konieczny's telephone number he cautioned me that 'making contact with Konieczny is fairly difficult, very difficult'. Little did I know then that my subsequent three years would be spent experiencing the persistent difficulty in approaching Konieczny. But the torturous predicament I found myself in was not the lack of contact. It was more a question of problematic contact, of an elusive and ineffable contact thematised by Lem in his 1961 *Solaris* novel. Contact referred here not to confrontation but as a flickering field of resonance as an artistic situation created by Konieczny that at no point was resolved into the actual conflict and gaining knowledge but instead was poised at the threshold of discovery. Let me illustrate what I mean here. In the first phase of my doctoral research, I would call Konieczny on his home number many times and each time my voice was met with silence. The receiver on Konieczny's side of the line was clearly picked up but there was no response to my words. At the same time, somebody seemed to be listening to my voice and I could here flickering noise in the background, akin to the sounds of a switched TV set. The situation repeated itself numerous times, wearing me down. To make things worse, I missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the videographic documentation of Konieczny's work presented at a single screening organised as part of Konieczny's retrospective at Warsaw's Zachęta gallery in 2012. It seemed I was getting nowhere with my research and had to change my strategy.

In April 2013, I conducted many archival visits to Polish art institutions who hold Konieczny's works in their collections, including the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, the Zachęta gallery and Ronduda's Museum of Modern Art. I also reached out to Lublin's Labyrinth gallery, whence I obtained many scanned materials. This sustained art-historical fieldwork allowed me to establish a basic chronology of Konieczny's art-works. At the same time, I could not yet identify dates, titles and the subject matter of a large number of reproductions or materials found in the archives. Ronduda's 2007 article did not help in this respect, but for the most part turned out to merely re-use fragmentary information gleaned from secondary sources.

In the next phase, I therefore decided to enrich my research methods by conducting online interviews with persons whom I knew to be Konieczny's friends and fellow artists. At this stage, it became painfully and abundantly clear to me that in order to conduct art philosophical speculations as to what animates Konieczny's art-works, I needed to conduct fieldwork, i.e. gather more data through archival visits and interviews.

Accordingly, in 2014 much of my time was spent writing and responding to email and arranging Skype calls. I got in touch with many artists who shared with me their unique encounters with Konieczny. The turning point of my research turned out to be my contact, since February 2014, with Konieczny's close friend and a fellow artist, Klaus Groh. Not only did Groh generously share with me his comments on Konieczny's art, he also forwarded me many new materials relating to Konieczny. What is more, he also suggested that I visit the Forschungsstelle Osteuropa (FSO) [The Research Centre for East European Studies] affiliated with the Bremen University where he had deposited a large collection of his correspondence with artists from Eastern Europe as well as many mail art artefacts. Following Groh's suggestion I visited the centre where I discovered an astounding collection of Konieczny's letters to Groh as well as an impressive selection of Konieczny's exhibition catalogues, concept books and mail art. Additionally, my visit to the centre on 14 January 2015 coincided with a visit by a group of students from London's Courtauld Institute together with their tutor, Dr. Klara Kemp-Welch, and—most fortunately—Klaus Groh. The visit proved immensely productive in terms of my research and I was given a unique opportunity to give a 20-minute presentation on Konieczny in front of Klaus Groh and Dr. Welch. Not only did I obtain what became my core material for the case study of Konieczny, but also I had a chance to develop a personal rapport with Klaus Groh who approved of my research perspective on Konieczny. It was thanks to Groh—who contacted Konieczny and argued my case before him—that the artist finally agreed to meet me. A new phase in my research began.

In 2015, I paid Konieczny four visits to conduct informal interviews with him: two in April, one in June and yet another in September. I also used my stay in Poland to conduct archival queries at Warsaw's National Museum and Lublin's Labyrinth gallery. Each of my visits to meet Konieczny and Szwajewska turned out to be an intensive encounter, whose effects I am still unravelling to this very day. Konieczny made it clear to me that he does not subscribe to the art-historical approach to art where it is a question of identifying linear, sequential stages that make up the account of the postulated evolution of the artist. Neither does he subscribe to the hermeneutic method seeking to interpret an art-work, to explain it away by recourse to an outside category such as historical context or artist's biography. Therefore, the artist was reluctant to provide straight answers to my questions and clarify lacunae in my knowledge regarding the dates and context of his art-works. Clearly, there was no talking art with Konieczny without talking itself becoming an artistic project, an art situation. Konieczny's delivery was Beckettian—full of ellipses, fragments, variations and repetitions of a single theme, exaggerations and miscommunications. Furthermore, Konieczny's answers merged with those by Szwajewska creating a rhythm of call-response, an impersonal system of echoes and reverberations. It was clear to me that Szwajewska actively co-created Konieczny's art and my series of meetings with both of them constituted an invitation to participate in the ongoing Think Crazy experiment. In this sense, my doctoral dissertation can be considered a 'Think Crazy for Academia' performance, whereby research becomes an ongoing philosophical and artistic composition.

My meeting with Konieczny, as well as Uklański and his partner Alison Gingeras, in September 2015 was my final one. At this stage, I felt I needed time to process the insights that the artist had performatively and perhaps unwittingly shared with me. I learnt no hard facts but something that could only be sensed. I decided to take a one-year extension of my doctoral studies so that I could devote more time to refining my observations on Konieczny's art and polish my line of argumentation. My conversations with Konieczny were neither informative, at least in the traditional sense, nor easy. Despite my numerous requests, I have never been admitted to Moonarium, Konieczny's famed studio located in the attic of the bloc of flats where he lived. It was

unfortunate because it was in Moonarium that many of Konieczny's performances took place and where many of his metal relief installations were displayed.

Concurrently with my interest in Konieczny's work, I began a detailed study of the Polish seventeenth-century art and culture together with its hybrid formation of Sarmatism. My attention was also drawn towards a curious history of periodic revisions of Sarmatism throughout the subsequent centuries. I discerned a variety of approaches to the Sarmatian phenomenon in the contemporary academia: deconstructive ideological critique (Jan Sowa), geography of art (Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Piotr Piotrowski), discursive analysis (Tadeusz Ulewicz). But what I came to be fascinated with was the work of the Lwów-based interwar art historian Tadeusz Mańkowski whose approach echoes the (art) philosophical investigations of Bergson and Riegl.

In turn, my journey with Deleuze and Guattari started already, albeit in a more implicit manner, with the post-Lacanian psychoanalysis of Julia Kristeva. Kristeva's (cf. 1982, 1984) insights into the workings of art, bodies and language already gesture towards the process philosophy of Deleuze (the abject, *chora* as the semiotic pre-individual space, incorporation of elements of Hjelmslev's semiology) without never fully abandoning the psychoanalytic Oedipal framework and the notion of the subject. Deleuze Studies is an enormous field of knowledge, extremely difficult to navigate. During my studies at TCD, I launched my Deleuzoguattarian adventure with an examination of secondary sources on Deleuze's philosophy (Dan Smith, cf. Smith 2012; James Williams, cf. Williams 2011a) and on Deleuze's particular vision of aesthetics (Simon O'Sullivan, cf. O'Sullivan 2006; Stephen Zepke, cf. Zepke 2005). It was not until the 2014 Deleuze Studies conference in Istanbul that I finally found my own answers to the nagging questions: what was it exactly that the Deleuzoguattarian thought could offer for research into art and in particular how it could enhance my encounter with Konieczny. Instrumental in this discovery was own reading of Deleuze and Guattari as well the writings of Anne Sauvagnargues (on the lineage of Bergson, Spinoza, Simondon and Nietzsche in Deleuze and Guattari; cf. Sauvagnargues 2015), Elizabeth Gross (on the lineage of Darwin and Nietzsche; cf. Gross 2008), Brian Massumi and Erin Manning (on choreographies of affect; cf. Manning and Massumi 2014), Patricia Pisters (on world-historical delirium and the neuro-image; cf. Pisters 2012) and Barbara Glowczewski (the question of topology and animism in indigenous societies; cf. Glowczewski 2016). All of those insights helped me formulate my own vision of Deleuze Guattari's art philosophy crystallising around the inhuman or ahuman affective mutations of the disorganised body and a line of inorganic, metallic metamorphosis that joins technology, music and the steppe.

### ***Formulating research questions***

What is the research question of this dissertation? The dissertation seeks to approach Konieczny's practices from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s from the point of view of qualitative change, or—in other words—an intensive passage, an intensive multiplicity, a difference in kind/nature, the crossing of an intensive threshold. But what does all this entail?

Change in the sense used in the dissertation does not operate on the level of the arithmetic addition or hybridisation of the already fully constituted units, *a priori* existing discrete entities such as individuated people or things. Instead, change in the Deleuzoguattarian formulation works at the level of relations between forces and their emergent capacities (also called 'powers', 'affects' or 'intensities'). Intensive multiplicities cannot divide, i.e. change, without changing in nature. They do not possess a fixed essence but unfold progressively

from virtual potentialities. This can be illustrated by recourse to the Bergsonian (Deleuze 2002a) example of a lump of sugar that can be characterised in two ways: (1) as an extensive or quantitative multiplicity, i.e. as a separate unit that has specific parameters—the quantifiable attributes such as weight and dimensions; such metric units can be added or divided without changing in kind and therefore it is a question of differences in degree, and (2) as an intensive or qualitative multiplicity, i.e. as a lump of sugar considered in terms of its capacity to change its nature (dissolve in warm water) over time and thus become something else under specific circumstances, at a certain threshold. In the second case, change happens not so much in time (and in space, for that matter), whereby time is understood as a fixed measure or transcendent anchor, but rather it is that change calls its own immanent temporality—its own duration—into being. The second characterisation, the one in terms of differences in kind, can also be illustrated by the account of the development of a crystalline seed in a metastable, supersaturated solution (cf. Deleuze 1994). Crystal formation is a question of a relation between a pre-individual field—filled with circulating zones or regions of potential—and a crystalline seed. The pre-individual field is an environment or milieu whose internal tensions make possible, give impulse for and incubate crystalline growth. For Deleuze and Guattari, such formulation of change can be extended to art. An art-work is conceptualised as a membrane capturing forces in resonant, affective materials (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1994). The change implied by an art-work operates at once as a logic of expressive—or, in other words, intensive—materials and forces and as a diagnosis of cultures. What this means is that an art-work is a material desire that invests the social field. If metamorphoses of Konieczny's materials invest the social field of Poland in the 1970s, perhaps they also extract the latter's curious revision of Sarmatism. Therefore, the research question of this dissertation is how Konieczny's work affirms change as a functioning of material metamorphoses and their relation to the traits of anomalous Sarmatism as a special, specific circumstance of Poland in the 1970s.

### ***Introducing Poland in the 1970s: culture, art, neo-avant-garde, Konieczny***

Following the Yalta treaty of 1945, Eastern European countries (except, perhaps, for Tito's Yugoslavia) found themselves under the Soviet sphere of influence, a situation that lasted until the fall of communism in 1989. All those so-called 'democratic people's republics' became *de facto* satellites of the USSR. However, the extent of Soviet dominance varied across the decades. The heroic, revolutionary Stalinist phase of socialism bolstered with mass executions of enemies of the regime gave way to the liberalisation of the post-Stalinist Thaw period from 1956 onwards. In the 1970s, Poland operated under the curious social, political and economic condition of the so-called 'Real Socialism'. What that meant was that Soviet ideologues and their Eastern European politburos gave up on the dream of worldwide communism and combatting inequalities in the distribution of capital via revolutionary strife in favour of their newfound preoccupation with the actually existing socialism in the countries of the bloc. Outward persecution of 'the enemies of the state' and other repressive methods now gave way to the invisible practices of surveillance and the insidious piecemeal disenfranchisement by the bureaucratic red tape. Poland of the 1970s under the leadership of the First Secretary Edward Gierek became a country of *banal socialism*, to borrow an apt characterisation by the art historian David Crowley (2007). While remaining a centrally planned economy with the capital accumulated and centrally managed by the state, Poland nonetheless incorporated elements of Western consumerism without a free-market economy. The socialist state whetted people's appetite for consumption by making Western luxury products available in specially designated stores. But, what is even more important, it also harnessed the simulacric allure of the product's branding without the actual thing by producing cheap knockoff ersatz goods.

The neo-avant-garde artistic currents within contemporary art of the 1970s-era Poland constituted a phenomenon that appeared under the conditions of real socialism and banal socialism as an artistic diagnosis of its specificity, its particular configuration of forces, but also at once as a capture those forces, producing contingent, relational and unscripted affective metamorphoses. The Polish neo-avant-garde was a name for artistic tendencies that neither purely Conceptual, nor deconstructive, nor Modernist, nor traditionally figurative. Instead, these were diverse practices that referred back to the historical avant-garde in the sense of its desire to open up art to life by destroying the autonomy of the art-work as the object and of the artist-sage as the subject. However, what the notion of life as the proper field of operation of art entailed was understood differently by different threads of the neo-avant-garde. Two poles or modalities could be distinguished here. In the first paradigm, life was perceived as a discursively structured set of meaning-making practices, as layers of information, an axiomatically structured prior reality affording however rare moments of rupture. Art was tasked with deconstructing informational practices, ridding signs of their associated meaning, revealing itself, to borrow an expression from the KwieKulik (Ronduda 2009b) artistic duo, as ‘a fact of society’. The second modality or lineage affirmed art itself as a vital entity at once expressing and constructing life, a new reality. Rather than attempting to conquer and nullify life as a prior, fixed reality, art-work in this formulation affirmed life as at once an aesthetic composition of material forces and a diagnosis of the social field. As I understand it, what was at stake in the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s was in fact an inner tension between two different concepts of the event: (1) the Badiouan (Badiou 2007) (extraontological event that comes from the place of lack and chips at the axiomatically structured reality, and (2) the Deleuzian vision of vital event as ontogenetic, affirming the ongoing generation of life, flush with life understood as its actual states of affairs and yet expressing a virtual potentiality. The Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s already intimated, at least in a germinal stage, the current debates (cf. Gratton and Ennis 2015) surrounding the mutual relation between the object-oriented ontologies and the process-oriented philosophies. It as a question of a celebration of radical contingency whereby being is uncorrelated with thought and resides in objects, on one hand, and the necessary co-implication of thought and being; a vital or material thought whereby being is at the same time the thought of being, on the other.

The 1970s in Poland, at least until the mid-1970s, was an extension of the 1960s, which catapulted countries of the socialist bloc into so-called Scientific-Technological Revolution. This official doctrine advocated the use of new materials, new technologies and new branches of knowledge (synthetic materials, engineering of prefabricated building elements, cybernetics, robotics, ergonomics, research into brain activity and sensory perception) in pursuit of a communism of the future. While the science-fiction novels of Stanisław Lem speculated about contact with non-human species, the realm of art philosophy saw an explosion of innovative visions of what it could mean for art to occupy the future. Accordingly, Mieczysław Porębski (1986) speculated about art as topology and information. Stefan Morawski (2007) affirmed the creativity of the neo-avant-garde emphasising the importance of process and event. In turn, Jerzy Ludwiński developed a unique vision of contemporary art that found resonances with Nietzsche, Bergson and Darwin. Ludwiński (and Kozłowski 2009) distinguished two aspects of reality, generating different visions of art. Those two axes or tendencies were diagrammed specially via an array of different graphic avatars, including two different types of a mountain. On one hand, Ludwiński distinguished the sequential, linear processes of accumulation of the strata of information diagrammed as processes of sedimentation and the resulting creation of geological layers. On the other hand, complementing this expressive image of information-mountain (*explosive art*) was Ludwiński’s astounding

vision of *implosive art* as virtual processes of radiation within a ceaselessly imploding mound. The latter was also conceptualised by Ludwiński as the immanent factory producing reality effects.

Konieczny (born in 1936)—as an engineer that became an artist—encapsulated the constructivist artist-engineer ethos that was reactivated in Polish contemporary art of the 1970s. Konieczny started off as a Warsaw-based engineer working with the internationally acclaimed major Polish architects such as Jerzy Sołtan and Oskar Hansen who intended to offer a more humanised, modified version of architectural modernism. Following his studies at Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts, since the mid-1960s Konieczny began working as an artist. Over the years, the artist passed through a series of artistic metamorphoses, embarking on a journey through geometric abstraction (c. 1963-8), art manifestos (1969-71), Fluxus actions (1968-70), generation of random art situations (c. 1970-1), performance art (1971—), mail art (1972—), body art (1974—), installations (1974—), video art (1975), metal reliefs and textured paintings (1976—) as well as woodworks (1981—). Around 1974, Konieczny formulated—or, better still, fabricated—a unique artistic idiom: the signature art strategy of Think Crazy that gave consistency to all the above, disparate experimentations. As I understand it—and it is indeed the substantiation of this argument that constitutes the fundamental movement of my doctoral dissertation—Think Crazy affirms a radical future of non-human materials and unforeseen metamorphoses of the human and at once an anomalous involution entailing a relation with the seventeenth-century Polish hybrid Orientalised art and culture—the so-called 'Sarmatism', which might be also called 'Sarmato-Baroque'.

### ***Introducing Sarmatism, introducing Sarmato-Baroque***

Sarmatism was an early modern (but also, as we will see, a markedly pre-modern) artistic and cultural phenomenon that took root in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the mid-sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century. As a consequence of the union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Great Duchy of Lithuania, the latter already—since the fourteenth century—home to Turco-Mongol ('Lipka Tatar') settlers, the old-Polish art and culture became open to Turkic cultures (and Persian and Armenian, for that matter) both in its nomadic (Lipka Tatars, Crimean Tatars) and the sedentary variation (the Ottomans). Sarmatism entailed an incorporation or acculturation of diverse Eastern influences that were cross-pollinated with vernacular and the western Mannerist and Baroque elements. In this way, a hybrid culture was born. 'Sarmatism' was in itself a deprecatory designation coined by the Polish intellectual elites in the second half of the seventeenth century as an expression of the Enlightenment-era critique of the cultural paradigms of the Polish state that was now seen in a new light as an epitome of backwardness and parochialism. Sarmatism, which I will reconfigure in my dissertation as Sarmato-Baroque, conjoined diverse non-Western influences (chiefly in lifestyle, textiles, armour, weaponry, jewellery and attire) with a belief in the nomadic lineage of the Polish nobles that were identified with the Herodotian/Ptolemaic Scytho-Sarmatian tribes inhabiting the vast expanses of the Pontic Steppe (i.e. the area north of the Black Sea). The hybrid art and culture of Sarmatism gained an expected afterlife between 1795 and 1918. During those 123 years, the Polish territories were partitioned and colonised by Prussia, the Russian Empire and the Austrian Empire. At the time, Sarmatism gained currency as cross-pollinated with High Romanticism. It can be argued that both constitute two fundamental cultural and artistic movements of Polish thought. Sarmatism as a complex of thought and material practice has a tendency to peristaltically resurface in variation. Most importantly, Sarmatism surfaced in the 1970s as a simulacra or fabrication flush with the decade's newfound socialist appetite for consumption and already as a cinematic spectacle made possible by the decade's advances in technology.

### *Understanding Deleuzian philosophy*

Deleuze's philosophy grew out of a desire to move beyond the reductive formalisations of desire offered by Marxism, where it plays itself out on the level of the economic base—cultural superstructure opposition, on one hand, and those offered by Freudianism, where the drama of desire plays itself out on the scene of the Oedipal theatre. Deleuze's early monographs written in the 1950s and the 1960s devoted to different philosophers (Hume, Nietzsche, Kant, Bergson) served to formulate the Deleuze's own philosophical path that can be understood as an attempt to reconcile monism (the concept of a single ontological plane) and pluralism (in the sense of a qualitative diversity). In response to this problem, Deleuze elaborated—both in his subsequent single-authored works and those co-written with the French psychotherapist Félix Guattari—the singular vision of ontology as a logic of multiplicities. Deleuze's (1994: 139) philosophical method of transcendental empiricism is preoccupied with '[s]omething in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter'. Philosophy becomes a probe that charts forces that can only be sensed. The task of (art) philosophy is to deduce the implicit virtual potentialities making possible the emergence of a given state of affairs. What this means for art analysis is attending to art as a question of at once expressing and creating really acting forces, always flush with the world in the infinity of its differential infolding, and not as a way of representing or reflecting some transcendent, prior agency and anterior narrative about art. The art philosopher Stephen Zepke (2005) calls this novel co-implication of aesthetics and ontology (or, rather, ontogenesis—in the sense of the creation of being) 'onto-aesthetics'. Deleuze and Guattari (cf. 1994, 2005) argue against interpretation understood as a tendency to explain art away that builds upon the paradigm of re-cognition and re-presentation. Interpretation proceeds via some transcendent, external point of reference (economic base, hidden symbolism, Oedipal structures, etc.). Deleuze and Guattari offer an immanent account of art that is flush with the ongoing differential unfolding of the world. Art in this sense is immediately real, ontogenetic, functioning as a sieve, membrane or a resonance box that captures chaotic forces in affective materials. Art performs a kind of phase shift, transmutation or transduction. It does not open itself up to the vital forces of the universe without changing in kind and thus co-constructing the world. Deleuze and Guattari thus go beyond the representational paradigm as a mode of interpreting art by recourse to a prior, fixed essence that reveals art as constituted in linear time and metric space as the relation between a determinate subject and an quantifiable object.

What can Deleuze and Guattari bring to enhance our understanding of change in Konieczny? The Deleuzoguattarian onto-aesthetic approach affords a unique opportunity to attend to the work of Konieczny as a reinvention of his earlier engineering projects that can be now considered as inhabiting the immanent plane of variation. Konieczny's *Think Crazy* co-creates—and, in this sense, engineers—being, affirming the ongoing becoming or ontogenesis of the world. It does so by tapping into a continuum of materials and forces cutting across the human, animal, mineral, vegetal and technological categorial designations. But at the same time those nonhuman metamorphoses invest the social field and are regions of intensity extracted from determinate circumstances, giving a new lease of life to the ongoing potential of Sarmato-Baroque.



### *Framing research design of the thesis*

The dissertation approaches the question of change in Konieczny as a logic of multiplicities. Namely, the problem of metamorphoses in Konieczny is considered from three co-implicated points of view that constitute different dimension of this multiplicity:

- (1) an onto-aesthetic art philosophical enquiry [**Chapter 1**],
- (2) a cultural studies investigation into the phenomenon of Sarmatism as well as Polish art and culture of the 1970s [**Chapters 2-3**], and
- (3) an art historical source analysis drawing on a variety of sources and methods (analysis of primary and secondary sources, oral and email interviews) [**Chapter 4**].

The three methodological tools jointly help to account for qualitative change in Konieczny. While their respective expositions and investigations are presented in the dissertation in no particular order [**Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4**] all of them converge on the proper case study of Konieczny [**Chapter 5**] that concludes the dissertation. Therefore, one might say that the three types of enquiry all tend towards Konieczny, i.e. were formulated from the point of view of the problem of change in Konieczny. Konieczny's art-work becomes a vector that metamorphoses all the three fields through its irreducible, singular specificity and radical novelty.

What is the relation between the three methods? The art historical source analysis prepares ground for the art philosophical speculation. Konieczny has been an artist marginalised in Polish art historical research. Seen in this light, the dissertation gains a monographic dimension. My onto-aesthetic enquiry into Konieczny was only made possible by my five-year fieldwork, which led to the discovery of novel materials that in turn enabled me to formulate an extended annotated catalogue of the artist's work. The art historical analysis extends also to the visual references listed of **Appendix A** and **B**, complemented by the inclusion therein of additional miscellaneous information, as well as the chronological list of primary and secondary sources. However, at the same time as the art historical analysis prepares ground for the art philosophical history, it is far from supplying a monolith of hard facts—but, rather, it ungrounds itself. What I mean here is that upon encountering the elusive, inchoate works of Konieczny, art history is faced to confront its own limits. Buckling under the pressure of Konieczny's crazy thought, art history forgoes its quest for knowledge and becomes a question of philosophy, of the ontological status of reality and time. In turn, the cultural studies inquiry works to extract specific processes implicit in Polish assemblages and thus enables the Deleuzoguattarian creation of philosophical concepts—such as aporia as a mode of nomadic distribution, Herodotian fabulation as the movement of history, fibula as an inorganic mode of liaison—that condense the conditions of emergence of Sarmatism. In keeping with the Deleuzoguattarian formulation of change as at once a logic of sensation and a becoming of cultures, the dissertation follows a tripartite structure. Both **Part A** as the logic of sensation and **Part B** as a diagnosis of cultures meet in—and co-create—the case study [**Part B**] which is their interface, membrane or a mode of liaison.

## *Introducing the structure of the dissertation*

### **PART A: Logic of multiplicities/sensation**

Comprising **Part A** of the dissertation, **Chapter 1** first sets the parameters of my investigation of Konieczny's work in terms of its goals, objectives, rationale, disciplines and fields, with the interdisciplinary reflection on disciplines mobilised by my research available as **Appendix C**. Let me summarise briefly those parameters of my research into Konieczny:

- (1) The **subject of my dissertation** is the practices of the Polish neo-avant-garde artist Marek Konieczny, in the period between 1962 and 1986. In particular, the dissertation probes the process of emergence of Konieczny's Think Crazy strategy as a complex synthesis. The Polish neo-avant-garde movement was marginalised in the Polish mainstream art-historical discourse for almost three decades. Well, it was derided as a pseudo-artistic phenomenon, not properly avant-garde and not properly conceptual either.
- (2) The **original contribution of this dissertation** lies in its detailed case study of Konieczny's practices, based on materials that have not been previously considered in scholarship. *As such*, it forms part of the recent sustained efforts of the scholars such as Łukasz Ronduda to attend to neo-avant-garde creativity in its own right. In fact, the dissertation uses Konieczny practice's to offer a novel remapping of the neo-avant-garde practices of the 1970s.
- (3) The **goal of the dissertation** is to attend to *qualitative change* in Konieczny's practices as at once (1) a logic of expressive materials and (2) a diagnosis of cultures. In particular, I have chosen to investigate *how* the Deleuzian logic of sensation invests the Polish seventeenth-century artistic and cultural phenomenon of Sarmato-Baroque that conjoined a variation in intensive materials—metallic, human and animal—with a fabulation of nomadic steppe lineage.
- (4) I have chosen the process ontology of Deleuze and Guattari and, in particular, their transcendental empiricism—understood as a logic of sensation and intensive multiplicities, i.e. differences in kind—as the **proper methodological framework of my dissertation**. Such methodological perspective significantly complements existing approaches in the field of art research by attending to change in itself, rather than extensive displacement—i.e. mere interaction of differences in degree.
- (5) The dissertation subscribes to the Deleuzoguattarian art philosophy as its **disciplinary field**. The Deleuzoguattarian art philosophy can be conveniently understood as *onto-aesthetics*—i.e. a vision of art as flush with the real, not as a representation or interpretation of the real, but an ontogenesis affirming difference in itself.
- (6) The **original contribution of my dissertation** is also to bring onto-aesthetics to bear on Polish and Eastern European art, thus complementing the Lacanian-Žižekian thrust of Polish critical theory and, at the same time, it is to open up Deleuzian Studies to new situations and contexts. In this way, the dissertation prepares ground a more thorough examination of the innovative Polish art philosophers and critics of the 1970s—such as Jerzy Ludwiński or Stefan Morawski—from the point of view of their pioneering formulations of art's temporality. *In fact*, the dissertation takes Morawski's (1975b) notion

of ‘proto-creational processes’ he saw at play, back in 1975 in Konieczny practices as one of my departure points.

Emphasis in **Chapter 1** is placed on the clarification of terms. Subsequently, the chapter furnishes an exposition of the fundamental movements of the Deleuzoguattarian thought while also situating the thinkers within a wider philosophical lineage. Much attention is accorded to tracing the development of the Deleuzoguattarian logic of multiplicities that animates their oeuvre. The chapter also accords special attention to the Deleuzoguattarian insights into aesthetics.

### **PART B: Ethology of cultures**

Belonging to **Part B, Chapter 2** offers a Deleuze-inflected cultural studies enquiry into the phenomenon of Sarmatism. Sarmatism is seen here as a transhistorical—rippling for example across the first millennium BC, the early common era, the seventeenth-century, the eighteenth-century and the 1970s—problem of nomadism and of tactical evasion of the state apparatus on the spatial and epistemological level (aporia). At the same time, the chapter catalogues a series of material compositions specific to the seventeenth-century old-Polish art and culture.

**Chapter 3**, also making up **Part B** of the dissertation, in turn charts art and culture in Poland in the 1970s. Special attention is accorded here to the fabulative aspect of the cinematic adaptations of Polish novels set in the seventeenth-century that can be accounted by banal socialism’s generation of simulacra. This fabulative aspect can be also detected in the works of artists belonging to the neo-avant-garde, called by the art critic Wiesław Borowski (1975a, b) ‘pseudo-avant-garde’. Furthermore, the chapter discusses modes of anti-institutional nomadic distribution of art via author’s galleries and the NET/SIEĆ international mail art network. Also discussed in the chapter are the inhuman inorganic powers—embodied in the chapter by the artists Sanja Iveković, Natalia LL and the artist Daniel Olbrychski—related unleashed by socialist consumerist culture.

### **PART C: The case study of Konieczny**

Belonging to **Part C, Chapter 4** sums up my five-year art historical source analysis of Konieczny’s works. Elements of this analysis are already prefigured in the second section of **Chapter 1**, where testimonies of encounter with Konieczny’s art-works are discussed. The chapter should be read as a companion to the chronological listing of primary and secondary sources pertaining to Konieczny found at the end of the dissertation and a complement to the visual references list found in **Appendix A**. The detailed analysis of sources allows me to provide an in-depth art historical account of Konieczny’s artistic activities.

Also belonging to **Part C, Chapter 5** in turn doubles the art historical account of the previous chapter or rather breaks down its stable spatiotemporal assemblages according to their virtual implicit conditions. It is at this stage—beyond and beneath the representational paradigm of art history—that the problem of nomadic intensive change in Konieczny can be finally addressed. The sedentary art historical givens presuppose—and are strained from within—art’s operation as intensive passages that conjoin a variation of expressive materials with geographical and historical designations, thus giving rise to a world-historical delirium. **Chapter 5** formulates and substantiates a number of important statements about Konieczny. Namely, it argues that Think Crazy functions as the caesura of the event of eternal return that destroys chronological, linear and empirical temporal

determinations and creates a series of intensive syntheses, which I have modelled upon the three temporal syntheses from Deleuze's *Difference Repetition*. In the first synthesis, of infection/contraction, the artist takes an interest in stochastic force. In turn, the second synthesis, of incubation/germination, he launches a search for a threshold of metamorphosis, a constraint or an involution, something that will be made possible by the Sarmato-Baroque. The third synthesis, of burst/egress, affirms the Nietzschean eternal return, creating a nomadic world of intensive multiplicities that it extracts from the Polish seventeenth-century art and culture. Finally, the chapter claims that Think Crazy affirms qualitative change as a world-historical delirium conjoining historical and geographical designations with intensive passages traced on a disorganised body, one that is radically open to chaosmic forces.

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# ***PART A: LOGIC OF MULTIPLICITIES/ SENSATION***

## **Chapter 1: Goals, methodology, field**

The following introductory chapter stakes out the parameters of the examination of strategies of the Polish neo-avant-garde artist Marek Konieczny, undertaken by the present dissertation entitled ‘Becoming-Sarmatian, Becoming-Steppe. Deleuzoguattarian Multiplicities | Thresholds | Potentialities and the Art-Work of Marek Konieczny’. Indeed, a case study of Konieczny’s practices from the 1960s onwards constitutes the subject matter of this doctoral dissertation.

The chapter sets out to discuss, in the following order:

- (1) the dissertation’s **goals, objectives** and **scope**,
- (2) the **rationale** behind the particular choice of methodology,
- (3) an outline of the Deleuzoguattarian philosophy as the **selected methodology**,
- (4) an outline of onto-aesthetics as the dissertation’s **field of study** and its **relevant discipline** (additional information on Deleuze and other disciplines has been included in Appendix C).

The particular formulation of the dissertation’s title may be considered as a vector that guides the present encounter with Konieczny’s art. In fact, the title of the dissertation as it is conceived may serve as a diagram that introduces many threads and formulates multiple claims. It is the aim of my dissertation to unfold them and the objective of the present chapter to explain them.

It should be furthermore noted that in keeping with my Deleuzoguattarian research methodology, the chapter, particularly in its sections on methodology and disciplines, does not simply provide an abstract set of terms as a general framework to be subsequently applied to Konieczny in the analytical chapters. Instead, the chapter’s invocation of theoretical themes has been already undertaken from the point of view of my case study, thus affirming research on art as an encounter. This perspective will be explained in-depth in the methodological section.

All translations of Polish texts are mine except for the cases where the texts were originally published in English. In this respect, the **Works Cited** section provides relevant information. Whenever further clarification is required, additional comments regarding translation are furnished in brackets accompanied by my initials.

# 1. Dissertation goals, objectives and scope

## 1.1. Dissertation background, statement of the problem and contribution to the field

Marek Konieczny is a Warsaw-based artist who since the late 1960s has embarked on a singular artistic trajectory across a wide range of different media and genres—including geometric abstractions, Conceptual, body, video and performance art, and textured metal reliefs. Konieczny is best known as the creator of the unique strategy called ‘Think Crazy’ in 1974. The present dissertation probes the turbulent process of experimentation that has produced Think Crazy but at the same time explores the implications of Think Crazy that were still being unravelled in Konieczny’s practices in the 1980s.

Konieczny and other artists of the so-called neo-avant-garde of the 1970s had been consistently marginalised in both Polish and international art research until the 2000s when a host of diverse publications appeared in a gesture of simultaneous discovery and untimely construction of the 1970s art in Poland. The art historian and curator Łukasz Ronduda (2010: 200) has appropriated Mieke Bal’s notion of *preposterous art history* to explain this nascent surge of interest in art of the 1970s (cf. Ronduda 2010: 198-21; Luiza Nader 2009: 31-36). According to Ronduda (2009: 8-15), the neo-avant-garde continues to occupy an uncertain territory between conceptual practices and pragmatically inclined early Critical Art.

The unique contribution of this dissertation can be considered on three levels. First of all, its detailed case study of Konieczny has not been attempted before in scholarship, even though the artist’s partner Monika Szwejewska has acted as an early curator and critic of Konieczny’s works. Secondly, the dissertation considers Konieczny’s practices from the perspective of the Deleuzian non-representative logic of sensation, irreducible to, yet bound up with, the actual socio-cultural assemblage of Poland in the 1970s. Such a formulation constitutes an alternative way of approaching the Polish neo-avant-garde and, indeed, Polish contemporary art. This novel orientation complements an array of existing approaches in the field, such as the more traditional art-historical accounts (Bryzgel 2013, Kemp-Welch 2014), perspectives inspired by Gender Studies (cf. Rayzacher and Jarecka 2013), Foucauldian discourse analysis (Luiza Nader 2009), or the specifically Badiouian-Žižekian formulation of the event (cf. Ronduda 2009b, 2010b). Last but not least, the present dissertation seeks to revitalise existing research in the field of Deleuzian aesthetics, and Deleuzian philosophy *sensu largo*, by opening them up to an encounter with the hitherto not considered aspects, fields and contexts.

## 1.2. Dissertation goal: attending to qualitative change in the real as a logic of sensation and an ethology of cultures

### 1.2.1. Preliminary considerations and clarification of terms

The goal of my dissertation is to attend to qualitative change in the art practice of the Polish neo-avant-garde artist Marek Konieczny. What is implied here by the notion of qualitative change is a research perspective that perceives art as a site of real, ontological metamorphosis effecting change. This qualitative change is produced within the social yet it cuts across social assemblages. The preoccupation with art’s power to bring about change on the level of the real can be inscribed within the Deleuzoguattarian, but not exclusively, quest for giving voice to the non-representational paradigm of art as adequate to art’s ongoing creation of the new. By aiming to attend to qualitative change in Konieczny’s art, my dissertation would like to offer resistance to those research perspectives which accord art a purely formal, symbolical, metaphorical, figurative, discursive or ideological—

in other words, transcendental and representational—field of operation. Throughout the dissertation, I will be using the terms ‘qualitative change’, ‘change in nature’, ‘change in kind’, ‘*real* transformation’, ‘transition’, ‘(intensive) passage’ and ‘metamorphosis’. At the same time, I will refrain from using the term ‘transformation’ since the latter implies, as Deleuze (2003: 59) explains, a purely formal displacement. Most importantly, Deleuze and Guattari (2003: 22) use the term ‘metamorphosis’ in their case study of works by Franz Kafka as distinct from the figurative notion of ‘metaphor’. Amongst another analogues in use that will be elaborated in the course of this dissertation are: the Deleuzo-Simondonian term ‘modulation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 409; Deleuze 2003: 116-121) as well as the Deleuzian (2003: 59) notion of ‘deformation’.

In order to fulfil the aim of the dissertation as delineated above I am seeking to investigate mutual resonances between the art practice of Konieczny (b. 1936) and the philosophical practice of Gilles Deleuze’s (1925-1995). The latter might be briefly summarised here as (1) an ontology of immanence—or, more precisely, an immanent ontogenesis, (2) univocity of being and (3) the corresponding philosophical method of transcendental empiricism. It is my contention that the Deleuzian perspective proves especially productive when it comes to approaching art because it is capable of thinking art as process and immanent relations, rather than adhering to discrete categories such as subjects and objects. Such a formulation, to be sure, merits further qualification. First of all, my approach treats Deleuze’s philosophy as collectively elaborated, at least from the early 1970s onwards, through his creative exchange with the psychoanalyst and political activist Félix Guattari (1930-1992). I have reserved the term ‘Deleuzoguattarian’ not only to refer to Deleuze and Guattari’s co-authored publications, but also to highlight the commonality of approach between those two important figures who advocated writing as a non-hierarchical impersonal process. Furthermore, the dissertation strives to draw attention to the Deleuzoguattarian philosophy functioning as a conduit for other process-oriented philosophies such as those of Henri Bergson, Baruch Spinoza, Gilbert Simondon and Alfred North Whitehead. What I want to underscore here is not so much the degree to which Deleuze’s thought is indebted to other philosophies, but the Deleuzian power of unlocking the hitherto unthought possibilities of each of those philosophies through encounter.

Out of many relevant conceptual trajectories within the Deleuzoguattarian thought, I have selected the Deleuzian logic of multiplicities—as well as their intensive thresholds and inchoate potentialities—as a particularly promising way of approaching qualitative change in Konieczny’s art. To my knowledge, not many Deleuzian scholars had previously employed the above framework to investigate art practices. The success of the recent ‘Deleuze + Art’ conference in Dublin (8-10 April 2016) whose brief I formulated around the notion of multiplicity has testified to the potential of this very concept among academics and artists alike. The later sections in the chapter will chart the trajectory of the concept of *multiplicity*, and, in particular, *intensive multiplicity*, in Deleuze and Guattari’s work, thus performing its new reading as necessitated by the specificity of the case study at hand.

In both its title and throughout the dissertation, I am referring to Konieczny’s art practice as ‘art-work’ to highlight my understanding of art as process; the ongoing, unfolding ontogenetic *labour* of art that *happens* to be sustained by, and yet irreducible to, particular art objects. The ontogenetic potential of Konieczny’s art-work also plays out on the level of the institutionalised art, which may be referred to as ‘the arts’. Since the mid-1960s, Konieczny, a Warsaw-based engineer-turned-artist, has embarked on a singular artistic trajectory, striking oblique tactical alliances with various artistic currents such as Conceptual Art, Mail Art, Fluxus and the Polish ‘Critical Art’ of the 1990s, on one hand; and diverse artistic genres, such as performance, video and installation



art, on the other. In a conversation on Konieczny's art strategies I had with Jolanta Męderowicz (2015), a curator at the Labyrinth Gallery in Lublin, she characterised the artist's mode of operation in the art world as always *à rebours*.

### 1.2.2. Qualitative change, duration and transversality

The goal of this dissertation—mapping out qualitative change in Konieczny through the logic of multiplicities, however, entails more than simply detecting or unproblematically applying selected Deleuzian concepts to Konieczny's particular version of the neo-avant-garde. In fact, the dissertation also aims to demonstrate that metamorphoses unleashed by Konieczny's art-work occupy a dimension which Bergson termed *duration* thus allowing multiple connections across *time* whereby 'time' ceases to be defined as a chronologically unfolding linear causal sequence. Deleuze establishes the connection between qualitative change and duration already in *Bergsonism* published in 1966. According to Deleuze (2002: 37), duration 'is a case of a 'transition', of a 'change', a *becoming*, but it is a becoming that endures, a change that is substance itself'. The dissertation thus follows the Deleuzian understanding of art as a bloc of sensation which has a capacity to develop infinite duration from even the most fleeting and volatile of materials so that 'even if the material lasts for only a few seconds it will give sensation the power to exist and be preserved in itself *in the eternity that coexists with this small duration*' (Deleuze 1994: 166, original emphasis).

If qualitative change entails and emits duration, it might also be said that to attend to real metamorphosis in Konieczny's art is to attend to art's transversal operation in the sense used by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The relationship between Konieczny and Deleuze/Guattari should therefore not designate 'a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 25). The passage conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari is also the one between duration and the Nietzschean eternal return/the untimely. The present dissertation will make frequent use of both the Bergsonian and the Nietzschean lineage in Deleuze and Guattari in order to grapple with the problem of metamorphosis in Konieczny.

My argument is that the singular fractal world inhabited by intensive multiplicities generated by Konieczny's art-work is able to escape capture by the state apparatus since it *happens* to pass through and pass into the untimely assemblage or a bloc of the Polish-Lithuanian seventeenth century hybrid cultural formation of 'Sarmatism' and its attendant Turco-Tatar Baroque. What the historian Adam Zamoyski (1987: 189-205) refers to as 'Oriental Baroque' enters into composition with Konieczny's art-work not as a collective memory but as a certain effect. The Sarmato-Baroque names a particular intensive trait which acts as a vanishing point or a borderline that derails Konieczny's Fluxus-inflected instruction-based actions in public space of the late 1960s and opens them to unforeseen, unscripted metamorphoses. Throughout my dissertation I will use different terms to name this curious seventeenth-century assemblage in order to counter a certain fossilised, and yet in my opinion unsubstantiated, interpretation that suggests a lasting opposition between Sarmatism as pertaining to culture and Baroque as its parallel expression in art (cf. Ulewicz 2006).

By asserting that Konieczny's art *happens*, I would like to put forward an understanding of art as event and encounter, irreducible to discrete art objects and beyond representation. The mutagenic power of the Baroque anachronism functions as what Deleuze identifies as *prosthesis-organs* in his case study of the paintings of Francis Bacon (2003: 15-19), expressed as an umbrella, a mirror or a sink. The prosthesis-organs [Fig. B.11]

constitute events that allow the aesthetic Figure to escape from itself and flee the confines of the lived place and time. Such productive thresholds can be encountered in diverse art practices across the communist bloc, suffice to mention here the teratologies of the Polish sculptress Alina Szapocznikow, the chromo-futism of alternative universes conjured up by the Slovak conceptual artist Stano Filko, or body mutation in the Romanian performance artist Ion Grigorescu (cf. [Fig. B. 35]). If art, after Deleuze and Guattari's (1994: 164) formula, can be considered 'a bloc of sensations', my argument is that the sensations that make up Konieczny's bloc might just be tinged with the untimely nomadic Sarmatian metals, weapons and assemblages. The assemblage of Sarmatism and Oriental Baroque is yet another multiplicity. It reveals art not as a repository of degraded forms, but a prosthesis—a technology that is flush with the world itself.

The consideration of the transversal *duration* in my account of qualitative change in Konieczny's art practice is an element that complicates the relation between Konieczny and Deleuze/Guattari. Such an approach builds on the selective recapitulation of art history that Deleuze performs in his case study of the art of Francis Bacon. Deleuze is not interested in the rhetoric of linear time and influence presupposed by the traditional art history, but he has mobilised Egyptian [Fig. B.13], Byzantine [Fig. B.24] and Gothic [Fig. B.25] art in his discussion of Bacon's paintings (2003: 122-35). What is at stake in the Egyptian, the Byzantine, etc., are not discrete forms but modes of responding to certain problems in the medium and at once in the world itself. A similar approach was employed to great effect by the Dutch cultural theorist and artist Mieke Bal in her investigation of diverse contemporary body-oriented art practices as well as sculptural, installation and video art pieces. Bal (1999: 7) postulates the need for a 'preposterous [art] history' whereby chronologically prior periods, genres and art-works such as Baroque and works by Caravaggio or the Dutch Old Masters serve to theorize—and thus become alive 'as an aftereffect' in—chronologically posterior works such as Ana Mendieta's body art, Mona Hatoum's cylindrical enclosures as well as Louise Bourgeois' sculptures and installations.

### 1.2.3. Qualitative change and a rhizomatic ethology of cultures

The emphasis on art's transversal temporality can also be deployed as a strategy of resistance to the hegemonic Western accounts of art and culture, taking on the implicitly political and post-colonial dimension. In this respect, the work of Laura U. Marks is exemplary. In her numerous publications, the scholar tackles strategies of resistance in the Arab countries, such as glitch aesthetics in the experimental cinema (Marks 2015: 251-64) and also strategies such as immigrant semiosis' (2007: 284-303) available to immigrants. At the same time, her major work *Enfoldment and Infinity* reads like a parallel work to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. It is a series of transversal encounters between Islamic art and Deleuze/Guattari, Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin that unleash the perverse temporality of art. Such encounters emit the Deleuzo-Bergsonian past-future which, for example, invents the pixel at the turn of the eleventh century in Baghdad (Marks 2010: 189-218). Marks' seminal work illuminates *duration* as an important aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's plateaus: formulating their anti-capitalist resistance not only on psychological, biological, and socio-political planes, but also co-opting and bending linear time itself. In fact, as I have pointed out before, Deleuze himself becomes a transversal conduit for other untimely philosophies, spawning Deleuzo-Guattari, Deleuzo-Bergson, Deleuzo-Spinoza, etc., in the process.

Marks' work begs the question of the politics of both art and writing on art. The scholar's important work gets to the heart of the relationship between the Deleuzian art ontology—as informed by the concept of continuum between One and Many—and an investigation into the particular unfolding of circumstance, culture-specificity.

It is a false assumption that the underlying problem here can be stated in terms of an insurmountable binary opposition between virtual potentialities, on one hand, and identity politics introducing essentialism under the guise of the theory of positionality (the latter as exemplified by the following compound determination: ‘white-male-heterosexual’), on the other. Such a view—held, for example, by Laura Cull (2009)—implies that the Deleuzian scholars should not engage with Cultural Studies or Gender Studies. However, as Brian Massumi (2002: 8) has already pointed out, oppositional ‘grids happen. (...) Social and cultural determinations feed back into the process from which they arose. Indeterminacy and determination (...) are inseparable and always actually coincide while remaining disjunctive in their modes of reality’. The Deleuzian scholar Anne Sauvagnargues (2013: 187) expresses this point succinctly when she points out that the Deleuzian art philosophy at the same time ‘bears on the becoming of materials and the variation of forms in culture (...) [and consequently] the nomadic line is inseparable from its social assemblage’. If what is at stake in art, according to Deleuze, is matter becoming expressive, Sauvagnargues (2013: 187) reminds us that in the Deleuzian formulation ‘the affects of materiality depend on social conditions and are not given independently of the variable circumstances where they can become expressive’.

My dissertation aims to attend to the aspect of culture-specificity as a dimension of the larger problem of qualitative change in Konieczny’s art practices. What I am interested in, however, is not a culture-specificity understood as a positional grid or an immutable essence, but ‘an ontogenesis and becoming of culture’ (Massumi 2002: 9) or ‘the ethology of cultures’ (Sauvagnargues 2013: 187), always coextensive with the expressive transformation of its materials.

The Sarmatian-Turco-Tatar-Baroque assemblage serves as a diagonal element whose functioning complicates the relation between Deleuze/Guattari and Konieczny. The relationship between the French thinkers and Konieczny may be also conceived in terms of a relation between philosophy and art. If after Deleuze, Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, we can consider philosophy as ‘a practice of concepts [that] must be judged as a function of other practices with which it interferes’ (Deleuze quoted in Manning and Massumi 2014: vii), then the third element of the dissertation generates productive interference by ‘composing across the breach’ (2014: vii) between the two fields, and opening art and philosophy to their outside. Interference produced by the nomadic Baroque assemblage is a formulation that strives to avoid the twin dangers of my research being inscribed either into the field of pure Aesthetics as a theory of art, or the field of pure Cultural Studies as a theory of localised identity and meaning. On one hand, there is a palpable danger of using Deleuze as a transcendent form that performs capture of the singular art reality generated by an art-work, in this case: Konieczny’s. In my experience, that is a peril looming over much of Deleuzian research and, as such, can be sometimes acutely witnessed during Deleuzian conferences. On the other end of the spectrum, there is a danger of turning Konieczny’s work into a mere representation of the perceived monolithic ‘Polish’, ‘Central European’ or ‘Eastern European’ culture. It is important to acknowledge that the two research perspectives as delineated above, however different they might seem to be, nonetheless both perform a similar hierarchical structuring of their subject matter.

In turn, rather than making ‘Oriental Baroque’ the transcendent container for Konieczny, the present dissertation aims to establish the dynamic relationship across its diverse fields—Deleuze/Guattari, Konieczny and the seventeenth-century art and culture—serving as thresholds for one another. The dissertation aims to make all the three areas pass and mutate into one another as intensive multiplicities which, as Deleuze and Guattari (2005:

249) usefully explain, can be ‘defined by a borderline functioning as Anomalous’. Therefore, the operative method of this dissertation is producing resonance, in no particular order, between (1) becoming-Sarmatian, becoming-Steppe; (2) the Deleuzoguattarian logic of multiplicities; and (3) the art practices of Konieczny. Deleuzian aesthetics and Sarmatian Baroque function here as dimensions that increase the affective resonance of Konieczny’s art-work. These relations are rhizomatic in the sense of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 7-23), and hence generate decentred and non-hierarchical connections between heterogeneous registers, both signifying and a-signifying, which might include ‘semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles’ (2005: 7). Such a formulation expresses the twin dimensions of ‘endless andness’ Bal (2013: 223) sees at play—as a thought emergent out of her encounter with the art practices of Ann Veronica Janssens—in both art and art writing. The first dimension is art’s ‘logic of endlessness’ (223). Bal’s endlessness puts forwards a conception of the infinite ontological continuum cutting across the subject–object divide and as such argues against the vision of stable materiality and concrete objecthood. In turn, Bal (223) defines art’s second interrelated dimension—andness—as an ‘endless additive logic (...), its abstract stuttering repetition of an ‘and’ that refuses to stop. (...) [, as] the logic of this refusal of limits’.

In the following dissertation, I am suggesting a way of engaging with art *not* as interpretation and passing judgments but proliferating a series of encounters. To borrow a phrase from Susan Sonntag’s (2001: 14) untimely 1964 manifesto, ‘in place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art’. If the goal of this dissertation is to attend to qualitative change in Konieczny’s art as simultaneously a variation in expressive materials and an ethology of cultures, and thus affirming art as ‘a monument that is inseparable from the complex of forces into which it is taken’ (Sauvagnargues 2013: 187), the research question of the dissertation concerns the relation between the two dimensions. In particular, this dissertation asks how even the most abstract art can also at the same time be considered political; how art can be also considered ethical so as to become Guattari’s (1995) eponymous ‘ethico-aesthetic paradigm’; how *art* as an ontological notion fares with the notion of the institutionalised *arts*. What will be proposed in the course of the dissertation as a response to this particular statement of the problem might only at this stage be hinted at. What might be hinted at here is the notion of onto-aesthetics as ‘weaponised multiplicities’.

### **1.3. Dissertation topic and scope**

As regards the subject and scope of my dissertation, I have chosen to investigate the art practices of Konieczny between 1962 and the present times. In particular, the present dissertation probes the turbulent process of experimentation that has produced *Think Crazy* in 1974 but at the same time explores the implications of *Think Crazy* that were still being unravelled in Konieczny’s practices in the 1980s.

The present dissertation pays thorough attention to the 1970s as the time when an important mutation in Konieczny’s art-work happened, as encapsulated in his novel strategy of *Think Crazy*. If Ronduda (2010) documented Konieczny’s collaborative practice in the late 1980s and the early 1990s undertaken together with his students at Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw, there has been little archival research into Konieczny’s early practices from the 1960s as well as into those throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. Therefore, by presenting novel materials from the 1962-1986 period I would like to extend the evidential basis for discussion of Konieczny’s work and thus to complicate the existing art-historical givens that congealed over time into a distinct timeline. What I consider art practice for the purposes of this dissertation includes Konieczny’s early

construction projects as an engineer such as his novel implementation of the design of a parabolic hyperboloid roof in reinforced concrete—affectionately called *Birds* [Figs. A.1-5] by the artist—in a housing estate in the city of Lublin in the southeast Poland, designed back in 1962 and subsequently implemented in the mid-1960s. Similarly, I consider Konieczny's interior design projects, such as the refurbishment of his apartment at the turn of the 1960s and the 1970s [Figs. A.20-21i], as an artistic practice.

The present dissertation seeks to unfold a vision of Konieczny's art practice as constant variation; a repetition with a difference that can be approached from many points of view functioning as thresholds. In particular, the case study identifies three syntheses that make up the functioning of Think Crazy. These should be understood as different zones of intensity, rather than stable periodisations.

How does this approach sit with the existing art-historical and art-critical narratives about Konieczny's practice? For example, some commentators of Konieczny's art (cf. Jaremowicz 1987; Kuźmicz 2009) have remarked that his art practice stages a withdrawal from the world and the interrelated return to the object following his earlier, more 'conceptual' pursuits. Such accounts presuppose a dialectical tension between discrete phases of Konieczny's art as well as a philosophy of mind-body dualism. However, as Konieczny's partner Szwajewska (Konieczny 2015) points out, even the heaviest of Konieczny's material objects engage and engender thought, bestowed as they are with a combinatorial aspect. Furthermore, Szwajewska also understands this combinatorial aspect in the extended—ontological—sense as 'creation (...) in ongoing motion' (*tworzenie (...) ciągłe w ruchu*). Szwajewska's understanding finds commonality with the perspective of Bal (2013: 12) who sees art after Ann Veronica Janssens not in terms of objects but 'concrete event-works'. Bal's formulation, in turn, resonates with Whitehead's process philosophy and, in particular, with his seminal analysis (1920: 165-173) of the ancient Egyptian obelisk called 'Cleopatra's Needle', standing on the banks of the Thames in London. Whitehead, as the Deleuzian scholar Steve Shaviro (2009: 16-22) explains in great detail, sees the granite monument, despite its bulk and sheer mass, as an ongoing event created anew at every instant, beyond the subject-object divide.

Therefore, in counter-distinction from the existing dialectical accounts as briefly summarised above, and regardless of permutational possibilities for formal recombination of discrete elements, my dissertation seeks to attend to Szwajewska's dimension of creation-in-movement. The dissertation's aim is to approach Konieczny's art as poised at a threshold that creates a zone of indiscernibility between what Deleuze and Guattari call *the virtual* and *the actual*. The two braided concepts certainly merit further explanation and this will be undertaken in the section on the Deleuzoguattarian philosophy. Suffice it to mention here that various contemporary scholars, such as Massumi (2002: 34-35), draw on complexity theory recasting the inherently doubled, two-fold actual-virtual relation in terms of *the field of emergence* remaining 'in a unique relation of noncoincidence with what emerges from it' (154). It is important to point out here that Massumi uses other expressions such as 'the field of potential' (2002: 34), 'the field of immanence' (2002: 76). All of these expressions open multiple perspectives on the field of emergence.

#### **1.4. Dissertation objectives**

The goal of the present dissertation is to attend to qualitative metamorphosis in Konieczny as at once a logic of sensation and an ethology of cultures. In seeking to fulfil this goal, the structure of the dissertation obeys a tripartite structure. The ensuing triptych is composed of:

- (1) the introductory **Chapter 1** that outlines the Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy and, in particular, its fundamental logic of multiplicities and sensation, followed by:
- (2) **Chapters 2 and 3** undertaking an ethology of Polish art and culture through an examination of the event of the seventeenth-century Sarmato-Baroque and Polish art and culture of the 1970s, respectively, and finally
- (3) **Chapters 4 and 5** that prepare and constitute a case study of Konieczny's practices, respectively.

The case study of Konieczny in **Chapter 5** brings together the logic of sensation elaborated in the first part of the dissertation and the ethology of Polish art and culture elaborated in the second part. In this way, the dissertation strives to highlight Sauvagnargues (2013: 187) acknowledgement of the inherently double dimension of art whereby 'nomadic line is inseparable from its social assemblage and ethology of cultures'. The dissertation's tripartite structure affirms Konieczny's practice as a multi-dimensional intensive multiplicity in the process of unfolding. At the same time, thus conceived structure of the dissertation does not seek to provide a list of formal correspondences between its discrete art forms. Nor does the present dissertation seek to suggest a definitive or exhaustive account of Konieczny's practice.

The case study chapter provides an immanent account of the artist's practices that are seen from the point of view of three syntheses that jointly make up the functioning of Konieczny's Think Crazy. If the syntheses are associated with particular periods in time, these temporal designations refer primarily to certain zones of intensity on art's virtual plane of composition. In this way, the syntheses of infection/contraction, incubation/germination and burst/egress are all dimensions of one multiplicity.

The Deleuzian logic of multiplicities is a promising tool for approaching, or, better still, activating, the non-representational paradigm of art. If Konieczny's art is a monument of sensation, it might be said to engage different modalities, emit diverse traits and aspects or vibrate at varied frequencies. It is the goal of this dissertation to provide a cartography of those zones, types of movement and thresholds. In their important analysis of works by Franz Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari put forward a type of reading that entails entering his work from many directions. Kafka's art-work is considered here a living entity, 'a rhizome, a burrow' (2003: 3) which undergoes change with each successive entry. As Sauvagnargues (2013: 80) points out, to engage with an art-work is for Deleuze and Guattari at the same time to effect a creative, material 'real intrusion'. For Deleuze, encountering art is not an act of interpretative judgment, but an experiment afforded by inchoate potentialities of the work itself. Workings of the art-work are not subject to the hermeneutic unearthing of its hidden sense, but provoke an encounter which modulates—i.e. qualitatively changes—the work itself (cf. Sauvagnargues 2013: 81). It is therefore particularly apt to invoke here the Deleuzoguattarian (2003: 3) manifesto for art writing—as expressed in a particularly dense passage from their case study of Kafka quoted below—as a guiding diagram of this dissertation:

We will enter, then, by any point whatsoever; none matters more than another, and no entrance is more privileged even if it seems an impasse, a tight passage, a siphon. We will be trying only to discover what other points our entrance connects to, what crossroads and galleries one passes through to link two points, what the map of the rhizome is and how the map is modified if one enters by another point. Only the principle of multiple entrances prevents the introduction of the enemy, the Signifier and those attempts to interpret a work that is actually only open to experimentation.

Therefore, the five chapters of the dissertation might be considered as multiple entry points into Konieczny's burrow-work. Those manifold entrances affirm art writing as, first and foremost, a *practice*—a practice parallel to the art-work itself, both occupying and modifying a single 'ecology of experience' as Manning and Massumi (2014: ix) illuminatingly explain.

## **1.5. Conclusions**

The present dissertation aims to attend to qualitative change in Konieczny's practices as at once a logic of sensation and an ethology of cultures. The dissertation does not to seek to provide a formalist account identifying relations between discrete, fully manifest structural elements of Konieczny's world. The dissertation instead aims to attend to *virtual* potentialities in the *actual* art-works, their inherent processes and immanent causes. The chapters will thus also interrogate the ethical dimension that inheres in Konieczny's vision of metamorphoses, making it possible to formulate an immanent 'ethics of becoming-imperceptible', to borrow a phrase from Rosi Braidotti (2006: 133). If the case study chapter affirms movements of isolation, deformation and dissipation in Konieczny's art, it does so in connection with a specific cultural assemblage. Konieczny's manifesto for metamorphosis produces its political effects as transversal becomings of the Polish Baroque, the 1970s avant-garde and contemporary art and culture.

## 2. Rationale for selecting the Deleuzoguattarian methodology. The Deleuzoguattarian philosophy of vital art as a toolbox for approaching Marek Konieczny

Why mobilise Deleuze, Guattari and their diverse interlocutors for a discussion of Konieczny? Let me answer this question on several interconnected levels.

### 2.1. Existing scholarship on Konieczny vs. accounts of individual art encounters

As will be demonstrated in the chapter on primary and secondary sources [Chapter 4], there has only been scant comprehensive engagement with the practices of Konieczny in the academia. The three available art-historical accounts that include Konieczny—namely the ones by Morawski (1975), Kępińska (1981) and Ronduda (2009)—are essentially concerned with (re-)plotting of a map of the Polish neo-avant-garde art by instituting typologies and divisions. Under these circumstances, Konieczny's work falls prey to various reductive categorisations. The art-historical accounts become sites of performance of expert knowledge. What is singular about Konieczny appears only on the margin of those accounts as an unwieldy surplus that disorganises the whole structure. On the other hand, Konieczny's art has sparked off many individual encounters—experienced by fellow artists and art commentators alike—whose selected accounts have been often incorporated into the artist's exhibition catalogues since 1981. It is Konieczny's partner Szwajewska, an art historian and the editor of the 1981 catalogue, who has first addressed this disconnect between scant and perfunctory art-historical accounts, on one hand, and considerable affective resonance produced by Konieczny's art in its audiences, on the other. Most tellingly, what Szwajewska decided to incorporate into the 1981 catalogue, alongside a sizeable and well-researched list of exhibitions and bibliography, were testimonies of encounters with Konieczny's art. The mutual relation between quantifiable art-historical data and qualitative encounters might be considered in terms of the mathematical notion of topological space. Möbius strip usefully encapsulates topological space as a single, continuous and enfolded surface with variable and relational inside and outside. Szwajewska (1986b) expressly suggests a topological understanding of Konieczny's art in his 1986 exhibition catalogue, symptomatically titled *Elements of Think Crazy Topology*. Szwajewska's intervention revealed that the sole reliance on the traditional Neo-Platonic aesthetics of form and the ensuing art history based on re-presentation fails to attend to process, event and qualitative change in Konieczny's art. Responding to Konieczny 1983 installation *Think Crazy on [RP or: for] the Sistine Chapel*, Szwajewska (Konieczny and Szwajewska 1983, original emphasis) formulates this new non-representational paradigm of art succinctly:

What is the new reality? Let me ask again. It is not a system, it is not images, it is not just raging texture, either, it is not an adventure of the artist and the spectator. It is a chapel, but at the same time also the ultimate place in which the ceremony of worship should take place. What is it? A new idea which cannot yet be put into words, which is a still unknown, INEXPLICABLE WHOLE.

Building on Szwajewska—as well as O'Sullivan's (2006) parallel notion of art as an encounter beyond representation—I have set out to redress the imbalance by conducting interviews with participant-observers to Konieczny's artistic activities. Since 2013 I have conducted more than twenty interviews via e-mail and around ten oral interviews. What I was seeking here was not primarily detecting the facts of history but becoming attuned to various accounts of sensation. I was specifically interested in what Bacon referred to as 'record[ing] the fact' as the very substance of his painting (Deleuze 2003: 35). What Bacon understood as recording the fact



was tapping into art's capacity for affording—albeit fleeting and quivering—endurance of vital forces that surpass the human. Bacon's project makes important resonance with the Bergsonian notion of intuition as a method investigated in Deleuze's 1966 *Bergsonism*, allowing to sense *de iure* virtual tendencies that underlie *de facto* assemblages, or composites, of actual states of affairs. I have come to discover that the 'what' of an account: the logical linguistic utterance, the linguistic regime of sign, is inseparable from its 'how': the timbral quality of voice in oral interviews and the field of typographic, diacritic and spelling variation in email interviews. The American land artist Robert Smithson expressed this co-implication illuminatingly when he considered language not as a formal operation, but as 'a heap' speaking of tectonic rifts in matter and thus a correlate of his grand material earthworks (cf. Flam 1996: 61 containing Smithson's 1966 pencil drawing *A Heap of Language* and his 1967 short text 'Language to Be Looked at and/or Things to Be Read'). As encountered in my work with oral and written interviews, the Smithsonian heaps of timbral and graphic modulation bring into relief art's ontological status as an event and its pure being as sensation.

The particular, encounter-oriented research approach delineated above strongly resonates with Konieczny's own views as expressed during an interview I conducted with him in September 2015. During the interview, the artist passionately cautioned against a certain mode of art analysis that seeks to find a backstory behind a given artwork, to uncover its secret motivation. According to Konieczny (9/09/2015), through this particular research optics, the researcher becomes akin to a member of *Slużba Bezpieczeństwa* (i.e. the Polish communist-era secret police) conducting an investigation with a view of trying to detect and establish hidden facts. This hermeneutic approach was exemplified by Konieczny's invocation of an art critic back in the 1960s who made enquiries with a janitor of the gallery where the artist had been exhibiting an installation piece as to 'how many kilos of sawdust were being used for the installation' (Konieczny et al. 9/09/2015). The critic's approach may be considered a perfect encapsulation of what Deleuzo-Bergson considers 'badly analyzed composites' (cf. Deleuze 2002: 18). What is at stake here is a practice of identifying false problems by ignoring incommensurate and irreducible differences in kind between heterogeneous states of affairs. The research question posed by Konieczny's critic launches an inquiry into the numerical, quantifiable aspects of a specific, discrete art object. According to Konieczny, this approach holds little relevance to art research. Furthermore, it is blatantly out of place because of its pedantic, undesirable nosiness. Konieczny is right to associate the latter with capture by the state apparatus as performed by the secret police. Konieczny's important insights into practices of researching art can serve as an inspiration for formulating a different modality of working with art. Instead of, or perhaps, in addition to, asking about quantity as attributed to a homogenous substance—*how many* kilos of *what*—we might be asking a more pertinent question about the *nuance* of a thing, i.e. thresholds of qualitative metamorphoses; productive variations made possible by a singular art-work: *at what stage, which one, how*. Konieczny's impassioned opposition to hermeneutics points towards a need for an alternative method in art research. What is sorely needed is an analysis that connects and extends, rather than an analysis that corners, reduces and offers a 'proper' interpretation.

Konieczny's take on art research—as implied by the 2015 interview as well as Sz wajewska's interventions in Konieczny's exhibition catalogues—resonates with O'Sullivan's (2006: 36) notion of 'a rhizomatics of art' whereby writing on art becomes parallel to the artist's practice itself. This new type of analysis also entails insights provided by Konieczny himself on his art-making process—his artist's statements. Rather than denouncing such accounts as derivative and pretentious (Jare mowicz 1987), pseudo-scientific (Borowski 1975a) or conceptually underdeveloped (Morawski 1975a, 1975b), one should engage with them as an ongoing co-

creative dimension of Konieczny's work. Konieczny's own accounts need to be affirmed as a productive fabulation that is no longer even 'misleading' as Ronduda (2007: 37) would have it as they are no longer grounded in any transcendent benchmarks or any proper narration which waits to be correctly deciphered. Konieczny's artist statements should be considered as art manifestations endowed with their own agency. They provide a unique perspective that further enriches and problematises Konieczny's practice. They do not operate on the level of linear chronological history, nor do they constitute a mere footnote supplementing what is perceived as the 'actual' or 'real' content of Konieczny's art practice. The expanded understanding of Konieczny's practice whereby art history is dislodged from its position of authority and reconfigured as art encounters allows for a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary engagement with the artist's art-work. It might be considered an expression of O'Sullivan's (2006: 36) art rhizomatics whereby 'art history ... [is] no longer, or not just, a critical project but an affirmative and creative one as well'.

## **2.2. Deleuzoguattarian themes in existing scholarship on Konieczny and accounts of individual art encounters**

At this stage, I would like to advance a claim that the many accounts of Konieczny's work, both academic and non-academic alike, as diverse as they are, converge—albeit in an oblique, implicit and indirect way—on traits of Konieczny's artistic expression that resonate with the Deleuzoguattarian understanding of art, even though no specific Deleuzian concepts are explicitly referenced. My analytical method consists of engaging those germinal moments in a process of drawing out their potential in order to rupture clichéd art-historical and art-critical representations of Konieczny's art that have congealed over time into a specific interpretative path. The present dissertation seeks instead to construct—with Deleuze, with Guattari, with Baroque-Sarmatism—a new, alternative account of Konieczny's art-work. In particular, I would like to extract from Konieczny what might be called after the art philosopher Stephen Zepke (2005: 222) a vision of 'a new constructivist Nature, a modern nature or 'Mechanosphere' in which the art-work is composed through the cosmic forces it embodies in an inhuman and animal sensation'. By mobilising Deleuzoguattarian thought for the case study of Konieczny, this dissertation seeks to offer strong resistance to accounts that attribute a certain Kantian-Romantic lineage—and its underlying paradigm of *pure expressionism* (as identified by Zepke 2005: 174)—to a strand of the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s which Ronduda (2010: 150) calls 'existential conceptualism'. This is especially visible in Ronduda's (2006) express invocation of the postulated Romanticism of the Conceptual artist Natalia LL (and both Natalia LL and Konieczny in Ronduda 2009: 12) as well as a parallel, Kantian interpretation of Konieczny in terms of operation of the faculty of imagination as well as the notions of the beautiful and the sublime (cf. Ronduda 2007).

In what ways do the existing accounts of Konieczny's art point towards the Deleuzoguattarian philosophy? The subsequent sub-sections will consider different ways in which the accounts are sympathetic to Deleuze and Guattari under a series of rubrics that can be found below,

### **2.2.1. Art and philosophy**

Let us start with accounts offering more general remarks. Some commentators of Konieczny's oeuvre have symptomatically situated his practice in terms of a preoccupation with philosophy. The art critic Andrzej Ekwiński, originally from Warsaw, now Stockholm-based, characterises Konieczny (2015) as 'an artist who combines Conceptual activities with philosophical reflection, particularly regarding the human condition and the human place in reality'. In turn, the Lublin-based curator Jolanta Męderowicz (2015) points out that his art

practices formulate 'a comprehensive philosophy of life and art'. Needless to say, such a formulation embodies the avant-gardist goal of uniting art and life. Męderowicz sketches a convincing philosophical lineage for Konieczny's art, situating the artist's practice in the tradition of the Cynic thought which at the same time deploys Aristotelian insights in order to counter Plato's dualist philosophy of ideal forms. Last but not least, Ronduda (cf. 2009: 9; 2010: 153; 2012: 527) locates Konieczny's chief preoccupation—as an exponent of Existential Conceptualism—in posing the coincident questions about the essence of existence and art. The above general remarks made by Ekwiński, Męderowicz and Ronduda all seem to imply conscious intentionality of the artistic act while according art a merely illustrative, demonstrative and representational function with respect to its philosophical framework. Nonetheless, all of those accounts already contain a germinal notion of the mutual co-implication of aesthetics and ontology, resulting in the novel paradigm of *onto-aesthetics* whereby art is flush with the movement of emergence in the world itself.

### **2.2.2. Affect, heterogeneity and continuity**

Another group of accounts converge on the theme of simultaneous heterogeneity and continuity in a way that is sympathetic to the Deleuzian (cf. 1994) project of multiplicities as combining ontological difference with divergent repetition, thus unfolding the vision of being as 'formally diverse and numerically one' (Zourabichvili 2012: 104). In particular, Konieczny art practices are frequently seen as notoriously hard to pin down (e.g. Sz wajewska in Konieczny et al. 10/04/2015). Konieczny's practices are furthermore encountered as a borderline phenomenon that has something to do with emotion, feeling or affect and yet exhibits a certain consistency and definition. His strategies are designated as 'abstract art with a high emotional charge and a clear message' (Rylke 21/05/2014). The artist himself is appreciated for his ability to 'perfectly sense the orientation (RP *ukierunkowanie*) of his work' (Kaźmierczak 1/06/2014). Last but not least, according to Sz wajewska (Konieczny and Sz wajewska 1983), in Konieczny's art-work, 'every time everything is different and unique, and although it seems formally different, things grow from one another and are set on a single Skeleton'.

### **2.2.3. Creative processes and thresholds**

Amongst Konieczny's friends and fellow artists, Jan Rylke's understanding of Konieczny's art takes precisely the onto-aesthetic direction as delineated above. Rylke (2014) notes that 'it is in the process of creation of a[n art-]work that Konieczny's performance [piece] resides' (*jego performance jest w trakcie stworzenia dzieła*). It is therefore unsurprising that—according to another friend and fellow art practitioner, Władysław Kaźmierczak (2014)—Konieczny's practice furnishes a unique singular definition of performance. Rylke's (2014) remark that for Konieczny the process of creation itself constitutes a performance reconfigures the notion of performance itself. Seen under this new light, performance can no longer be isolated as a 'piece', a discrete end-object, since it is always poised in the middle. Performance in Konieczny's formulation—we might speculate at this point—resides on the level of ontology, difference-in-itself. In turn, according to the German artist Klaus Groh (2015) what is at stake in his friend's art-work is 'what is between? and what is virtual, parallel to the existing reality'. Groh's remark situates Konieczny's art at a threshold between the immediate experience and its beyond—or, in other words—the actual experience and its virtual conditions.

### **2.2.4. Generation of the new**

According to Sz wajewska (Sz wajewska et al. 1982, original emphasis), as quoted in the artist's 1982 exhibition catalogue, Konieczny's art ushers in 'an entirely new type of thinking. A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS'. The legendary drug addiction psychologist Zbigniew Thielle quoted in the same catalogue

(Szwajewska et al. 1982, unpaginated) in turn describes Konieczny's practice as a catalyst allowing its audiences to 'expand consciousness, or even create consciousness'. Similarly, Ekwiński (Szwajewska et al. 1982, unpaginated) sees Konieczny's art-work as engaging 'an entirely different sphere of human consciousness' beyond 'the specific spatiotemporal conditions' of actual states of affairs. The specific readings of Konieczny's art-work as formulated by Szwajewska, Thielle and Ekwiński put forward a certain mode of understanding Konieczny's art, consonant with the Deleuzoguattarian (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 142) notion of the non-representational *abstract machine* as that which 'does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality'.

#### **2.2.5. Inhuman forces**

The notion of abstract machine—already convincingly mobilised for investigation of contemporary art practices by O'Sullivan (2006) and Zepke (2005)—resonates with Konieczny's (Szwajewska 1980: 110; Szwajewska quoted in Szwajewska et al. 1982) drawing forth of 'an intimation of a world-to-come, yet unknown to us' as encapsulated in a series of installation and video pieces. In a 1980 interview conducted by Szwajewska for the Odra magazine (Szwajewska 1980: 109), Konieczny sees this incipient new world as epitomising 'radical artifice'. Szwajewska (1980: 110) in turn highlights ways in which this new 'artificial world' affords 'a different, new experience'. One might say that such an experience goes beyond the lived body towards *an* inorganic life as diagrammed by Konieczny's still lifes. As the renowned Hungarian art historian and critic László Beke (as quoted in Szwajewska et al. 1982, unpaginated) pointed out back in 1979 during the Sydney Biennale, 'he gilds his head and it is him'. Konieczny's art might be said to address a world of inhuman force relations incorporated into volatile materials. Such new artificial world—composed by the nebulous, impersonal 'it'—dismantles the stratifications of subjectivity, personhood and the binary gender divisions. This inhuman or non-human aspect of Konieczny's art-work is reinforced by his artist friend Paweł Freisler's (2014, original emphasis) performative haiku-like invocation of art's transversal temporality: 'Konieczny's STRATEGIES should be treated as an above-time-located-art's-work....' (*STRATEGIE Marka Koniecznego należy traktować jak ponad czasem umieszczone sztuki dzieło....*). Such a formulation resonates with the Deleuzo-Bergsonian concept of *duration* as a correlate of becoming. The two threads—duration and becoming—coalesce in the Deleuzian (1990: 5) concept of Aion understood as a disjunctive temporal dimension *where* qualitative change happens and *when* difference differs. At the same time, as the inhuman forces mobilised by Konieczny's art-work are not a license for transcendence, but they are formulated in materialist terms. Indeed, as Morawski implies in his analysis of Konieczny's practices, the impersonal forces act in the social and directly invest the social field. According to Konieczny—whose artist statement was 'hypothetically reconstruct[ed]' by the scholar (Morawski 1975a: 35)—'something beyond my control happens in me and something analogous happens every day beyond me in the psychic and social matter. Physics invokes stochastic processes. A cosmic law? Maybe here lies a solution to this riddle'.

#### **2.2.6. Documents-diagrams and proto-generative processes**

Analysing Konieczny's strategies from the early 1970s, and specifically *Predecisional Process*, Morawski (1975b: 32) has pointed out that they are significantly different from the artist's earlier actions in public space designed to elicit active response from its audiences. Unlike the participatory actions, *Predecisional Processes* are 'grounded in some philosophical, metapsychological or mathematical conception of time'. What Morawski (1975b: 32) highlights in his investigation of *Predecisional Processes* is their dismantling—'neutralisation'—of actual, physical time-space coordinates and the level of the human audience in favour of unleashing 'pure

stochastic force' (Morawski 1975a: 34), expressed in a way that goes beyond visual representation, objecthood and the Peircean iconicity. Thus, Konieczny's art practices from the early 1970s in Morawski's formulation change the very notion of happening (Morawski 1975a: 34). The aesthetician (Morawski 1975a: 34; 1975b: 32) symptomatically designates Konieczny's strategies variously as emphatically *not* actions or happenings, thus resonating with a similar view voiced by Ekwiński (Ekwiński quoted in Sz wajewska et al. 1982) or, as Morawski (1975b: 32) sees it, a special type of happening that engages the dimension of 'proto-creational processes' (NB the Polish phrase *procesy protokreacyjne* could be also translated as 'proto-generative processes'). Perhaps, one might coin the term 'ontogenetic happening' or 'onto-performance' as relevant here. Morawski (1975b: 32) indicates that Konieczny's strategies mobilise 'some strict model of proto-creational processes alternative to the Freudian conception of the unconscious' (*jakiś konkurencyjny wobec freudowskiej koncepcji nieświadomości ścisły model procesów protokreacyjnych*). One might say that Morawski locates Konieczny's art-work at the level of emergence and inchoate potentials beyond, and yet inhering in, the realm of constituted forms. In this way, Morawski's seminal engagement with Konieczny's art highlights the processual formulation of the predecisional realm as a certain threshold—an interval between virtuality and its actualisation.

Morawski's understanding of Konieczny's art practices of the early 1970s highlights the importance of virtual processes that take ontological priority over actual states of affairs as their generative conditions. The two levels are, however, necessarily *de facto* intertwined and thus the virtual potential always inheres in discrete action, decision, and object. In his 1975 comparative outline of Polish and Western Conceptual practices, Morawski (1975b) employs insights from Peircean semiotics—and, in particular, C. S. Peirce's distinction between the indexical, the iconic and the symbolic—to identify broad artistic tendencies. Most interestingly, Morawski discusses Konieczny's predecisional art-works under the rubric of 'documents-diagrams' (1975b: 32) that essentially fall outside the Peircean tripartite division as its problematic excess (cf. Smith 2012: 232 for a discussion of Deleuze's parallel reconfiguration of Peirce's notion of the diagram). *Documents-diagrams* are not simply indexical in the way photographs may be considered indexical of the actual pre-existing 'thing'. At the same time, nor are they demonstrations, supplements, expressions or manifestations of some axiomatic, prior grounding theory. Instead, Morawski's *documents-diagrams* are problematic formulations related to their implicit virtual conditions, serving as catalysts or developing liquids for their unfolding. Morawski (1975b: 32) symptomatically emphasises that *documents-diagrams* engage some *implied* scientific or philosophical commentary while at the same time still not being properly analytical. In fact, in lacking rigorous, explicit theoretical grounding on a par with the one found in practices of Joseph Kosuth, *documents-diagrams* epitomise for Morawski a significant problem of—and hindrance to—Polish Conceptual art. However, it is my contention that, rather than constituting the debilitating signs of lack, weakness and conceptual underdevelopment vis-à-vis their Western counterparts, Konieczny's practices have Morawski embark on a journey of productive deduction of their implicit genetic conditions. This process, one that Morawski himself refers to as a 'hypothetical reconstruction' (1975a: 35) in counter-distinction from 'proper analysis' (1975b: 33), seems to ultimately affirm the potential of Konieczny's art to perform experimental discovery of the new as 'a mode of thought, already in the act', to borrow a succinct expression from Massumi and Manning (2014: vii). Morawski paradoxically affirms the unique, singular character of some strands of Polish Conceptualism. In this he prefigures the term 'autonomous Conceptual movement' coined by the artist Zbigniew Warpechowski in 2002. What sets apart Polish Conceptual practices and renders them 'autonomous' is in Warpechowski's (2002, unpaginated) formulation emphatically *not* their theoretical grounding, 'intellectualism' or analytical zeal, but a certain

germinal operative logic, ‘a logical inclination as well as creative intellectual effort’. Such autonomous Conceptualism, according to Warpechowski, helps foster individual and collective freedom through its essentially ‘Romantic attitude, the deployment of imagination, poetic sensibility and emotional stance’ (RP the latter was translated in the publication as ‘passion’).

As we will see in the extended outline of the Deleuzoguattarian onto-aesthetic thought that will be undertaken in the subsequent sections, Morawski’s deductions drawn from Konieczny’s art-work make strong resonance with the notion of art as a bloc of sensation, i.e. a composition of chaos requiring but a brief material support for its enfolded forces of sensation to develop (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 183). Similarly, Konieczny’s *document-diagrams* are consonant with the Deleuzoguattarian concept of abstract machine expressly defined as diagrammatic, i.e. functioning as ‘pure Matter-Function (...) independent of the forms and substances, expressions and contents it will distribute’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 141) and remaining beyond the Peircean indexes-icons-symbols triad (2005: 142).

### **2.3. The problematics of qualitative change as complementing existing approaches in aesthetics**

In summary, diverse encounters sparked off by both academic and non-academic engagements with Konieczny’s art-practices revolve around a number of broad themes. The themes include the mutual interrelation of art and philosophy; the relation between difference and continuity; the considerations of creative processes and their thresholds; generation of the new; dynamism of inhuman forces; and, last but not least, the diagrammatic function of art. All those accounts are sympathetic towards the Deleuzoguattarian understanding of art, offering a promising way of approaching Konieczny’s practices as a viable complement to other critical methods in use.

As prompted by the insights gleaned from the above art encounters, it is my contention that the particular choice of Deleuzoguattarian onto-aesthetics for the purposes of the present dissertation will go a long way towards illuminating the important aspects of Konieczny’s art such as event, process, affect, intensive multiplicities and their generative thresholds beyond the aesthetics of form and the linear art history. All these interrelated concepts express qualitative change, regarding art a site of *real* transformation, mutation and metamorphosis. Such critical perspective does not relegate art and its effects to the level of mental projection as psychology would do—a point made by Sauvagnargues (2013: 19-20) in her incisive tracing of Deleuze’s aesthetic thought—but it locates art on the level of the real, highlighting the ceaseless creativity of being which resonates in art’s production of the new. The mutual co-implication of art and ontology in Deleuze and Guattari was usefully termed by Zepke (2005: 5) *onto-aesthetics*. The emergent onto-aesthetics is a field not of interpretation of art as a code for something else—an approach exemplified by Erwin Panofsky’s art-historical pursuit of hidden symbolism—but a zone of engagement with art and mapping of its constituent forces, both for the artist and the researcher. According to O’Sullivan (2006: 36), (something in) the researcher unfolds ‘the frozen event that is art’. At the same time, as Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 329; 1994: 177; cf. Sauvagnargues 2013: 69) explain, (something in) the artist enfold, incorporates and captures cosmic forces in pliant materials, thus constructing *blocs (monuments) of sensations*.

## 2.4. Conclusions

To conclude: Why mobilise Deleuze, Guattari (and their diverse interlocutors) for a discussion of Konieczny?

First of all, my encounter with Konieczny's art might be understood as a generation of a new territory through extensive fieldwork, something succinctly encapsulated by the French expression for 'doing fieldwork', i.e. *faire un terrain*, which directly translates as 'to make a field' (cf. Glowczewski 2016: 65). This emergent singular field demands an adequate method. My preoccupation here is to render the granularity, the Bergsonian *nuance* of the artist's art-work, *this* artwork and therefore the relevant method needs to be capable of attending to qualitative change. Secondly, I have demonstrated that the Deleuzian approach can already be deduced from existing accounts recording multiple encounters with his works as experienced by academics and artists alike. Last but not least, it is my contention that the philosophical ideas of Deleuze and Guattari can viably complement existing academic approaches.

### 3. Dissertation methodology: an outline of Deleuzian philosophy

#### 3.1. Introduction

An important methodological implication that follows from onto-aesthetics is a simple realisation that whatever claims Deleuze and Guattari are making about the ontological, or ontogenetic, fabric of the world, these also directly bear on art. Deleuze's (and Guattari's) aesthetics cannot be conceived as a field separate from ontology since they both occupy a single co-creative, co-implicated realm. If so, it might be worthwhile to summon at this stage the fundamental themes of Deleuze's philosophy in order to situate his ideas within the larger philosophical tradition. In this respect, I would like to draw on Dan Smith's (2014) influential essays on Deleuze, which provide a particularly lucid insight into Deleuze's philosophical ideas, as well as illuminating commentaries by James Williams, Claire Colebrook, Gary Genosko, Constantin Boundas, Eugene B. Young and François Zourabichvili.

#### 3.2. Deleuzian ontology: fundamental tenets and philosophical lineage

##### 3.2.1. Immanence as pure ontology

Let us start by briefly situating Deleuzian thought vis-à-vis broad philosophical vectors. First of all, Deleuze's philosophy can be characterised in terms of a philosophy of immanence. What does that imply? One might begin by a simple remark that Deleuze's concepts do not point outside themselves to some abstract terms in order to explain things but, as Young (2013: 162) points out, 'express things that can be sensed, perceived, or imagined'. In this sense, philosophical ideas might be said to be immanent in the real. Williams (2005: 29; cf. Deleuze 2002: 26) has in turn emphasised that Deleuze's particular version of metaphysics does not operate in terms of relations *to* something but *in* something. As Smith (2014: 37, original emphasis) usefully explains, Deleuze subscribes to the Spinozian project of '*pure ontology*', in the sense of '*an ontology in which there is nothing beyond or outside or superior to Being*'. Influenced by Spinoza, Deleuze posits a single, univocal substance whose expression—as Young (2013: 162) elucidates—'cannot be separated from the finite modes in which it is expressed'. In his books on Spinoza, Deleuze relates immanence to the principle of univocity, specifying that (Deleuze 1988: 52, original emphasis) '*immanence* signifies first of all the *univocity of the attributes*: the same attributes are affirmed of the substance they compose and of the modes they contain'. Furthermore, Deleuzian philosophy can also be situated in terms of its proposed type of causality. In this respect, Deleuze clearly separates the philosophy of immanence from philosophies of emanation whereby what is produced—the effect—is separated from its cause. At the same time, the cause 'remains within itself in order to produce its effect', as Smith (2014: 33) usefully elucidates. The emanative cause can be exemplified by rays of the shining sun. The philosophy of immanence needs also to be distinguished from philosophies that posit the transcendent (transitive) cause—a type of cause that 'leaves itself in order to produce [its effect]' (Smith 2014: 32). An example of the transitive cause could be the Christian theology and its account of God creating the world and subsequently leaving it. In turn, for the purposes of his own philosophical project, Deleuze adopts Spinoza's conception of the immanent cause, i.e. a cause (or the Spinozian 'substance') that 'remains in itself in order to produce' while the product (or the Spinozian 'mode') 'remains in the cause' (Smith 2014: 34). In other words, according to the logic of immanent causality, the effect is immanent within the cause. This is expressed in the English language by the logical operative 'since' in opposition to the more straightforward transitive cause of the preposition 'because'.



### 3.2.2. Univocity as flat ontology

Deleuze's philosophical project can also be regarded as an affirmation of the principle of the *univocity of Being*, building on the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus, Spinoza and Nietzsche. Deleuze subscribes to the Scotist insight that there is only one Being, as opposed to the schema of equivocity whereby, as Colebrook (2010: 295) points out, 'only one being truly is, while other beings are dependent, secondary'. The univocity of Being is related to immanence as its precondition. Accordingly, Deleuze (2005: 173), in a particularly Scotist formulation, notes that 'pure immanence requires as a principle the equality of being, or the positing of equal Being: not only is being equal in itself, but it is seen to be equally present in all beings'. The notion of ontological univocity thus implies for Deleuze the absence of any gradation of Being and the idea of immediate presence without mediation (cf. Smith 2014: 34) which accords the same ontological status to material objects and dreams as both equally fully real. As Deleuze (2005: 173) explains,

beings are not defined by their rank in a hierarchy, (...) but each (...) participat[es] in the equality of being, receiving immediately all that it is by its essence fitted to receive, irrespective of any proximity or remoteness. (...) [P]ure immanence requires a Being that is univocal and constitutes a Nature, and that consists of positive forms, common to producer and product, to cause and effect. (...) [I]mmanence (...) involves no eminence, involves that is, no positing of any principle beyond the forms that are themselves present in the effect. Immanence is opposed to any eminence of the cause, any negative theology, any method of analogy, any hierarchical conception of the world.

Since in this formulation there is no place for any superior transcendent Being that determines or grounds other beings as substantially separate from it, Deleuze in his reading of Spinoza can be said to unfurl a horizontal, *flat ontology*, positing, as Smith (2014: 34) explains, 'an absolutely infinite substance that possesses all attributes and comprehends all things as its modes'. Most importantly, Deleuze himself posits the notion of the *plane of immanence* 'within which all things move in a process of continuous variation, with no finality, no purpose, no pre-established harmony' (Smith 2014: 34). According to the French thinker, all that exists is thus laid out on a single plane whereby 'one finds only the necessary concatenation of the various effects of an immanent cause' (Deleuze 2005: 233). Furthermore, Deleuze's formulation of immanence in his reading of Spinoza is related to what he perceives as the operative logic of expression (or, an expressionism) which affirms 'the immanence of its expression in what expresses itself, and of what is expressed in its expression' (Deleuze 2005: 322).

In summary, it might be said that Deleuze's philosophical project correlates the Spinozian logic of expression with the Scotist notion of univocity, arguing for what Simon Duffy calls 'an expressive immanence' (2006: 238; cf. Deleuze 2005: 333). However, thus conceived univocity stills begs the question of ontological difference. At this point, as Smith (2014: 37) points out, Deleuze goes beyond Spinoza whose concept of Substance might nonetheless be said to privilege identity over difference. The pressing concern for Deleuze here is to attend to the status of difference in univocal ontology. The French thinker fulfils this goal by putting forward the novel conception of a 'Spinozism minus substance, a purely modal or differential universe' (Smith 2014: 37) which engages the Spinozian idea of power (intensity). As Deleuze (14/01/1974) succinctly explains in one of his lectures on *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*,

if I say being is univocal, it's said in the same sense of everything of which it's said, then what could the differences between [beings] be? There can no longer be differences of category; there can no longer be differences of form; there can no longer be differences of genus and species (...). The only difference conceivable at this very moment, from the point of view of a univocal being, is obviously difference solely as degrees of power [puissance]. Beings are not distinguished by their form, their genus, their species, that's secondary; everything which is refers to a degree of power.

One might say that Deleuze reconfigures the notion univocity of substance as found in Spinoza. Univocity is now to be understood as a modality, thus creating the novel idea of modal univocity. Whereas in Spinoza substance could be still seen as transcending its modes, i.e. things and bodies, according to Deleuze (1994: 40, original emphasis), ‘substance must itself be said *of* the modes and only *of* the modes’. As Levi Bryant (2011: 6, original emphasis) points out, this is tantamount to asserting that ‘being consists only of *beings*, that each of these beings is a substance, and that there is no supplementary or transcendent substance in which these substances inhere’.

Furthermore, as Smith (2014: 38) explains, in the Deleuzian univocal ontology, difference does not operate via category (sense) and analogy as conceived in the Aristotelian-Kantian tradition. The latter logic can be encapsulated by Aristotle’s dictum that *different things differentiate themselves only through what they have in common* (quoted in Smith 2014: 38). Rather than falling back on outside terms, Deleuze strives to conceive difference in itself. His univocal ontology takes up the Spinozian notion of difference as a degree of power (cf. Deleuze 14/01/1974). Deleuze posits non-categorical difference as, in Smith’s (2014: 40-41) words, ‘a physics of intensive quantities’. The Deleuzian philosophy of difference is not concerned with asking *moral* questions about the (eternal) essence of a being, but the *ethical* mapping of degrees of its intensity—what it is capable of, how intense its capacity to affect and be affected is. Deleuze puts forward ‘an ontology of forces’ (Boundas 2006: 4), or, more precisely, an ontology of *forcefields* as relations between forces whose differential quality is called intensity.

### 3.2.3. Difference as process

Boundas (2006: 3) notes that *heterologies*, i.e. philosophies of difference, constitute a niche in the Western philosophical tradition. At the same time, there are only a handful of heterologies, such as those of Heraclitus or Bergson, that do not fall back on some formulation of identity. According to Boundas (2006: 3), if ‘only a process philosophy where process and product are the same can hope to prevent the subordination, (...) of difference to identity’, the Deleuzian heterology clearly succeeds in achieving this goal. In this respect, Deleuze (1990: 179) explains that ‘the univocity of Being does not mean that there is one and the same Being; on the contrary, beings are multiple and different’. Furthermore, as Boundas (2006: 4) reminds us, it is important to remember Deleuze’s difference should not be treated like a noun. Indeed, what Deleuze puts forward in *Difference and Repetition* is a modal conception of difference engaging the necessarily braided processes of differentiation and differenciation, as corresponding to the *virtual* and the *actual*—the twin, co-implicated processes in the real.

As Boundas (2006: 4-5) explains, the Deleuzian notion of the actual is made up of ‘states of affairs, that is, bodies, their mixtures and individuals existing in the present’, whereas the virtual is ‘something which, without being or resembling an actual x, has nonetheless the capacity to bring about x, without (in being actualised) ever coming to coincide or to identify itself with, or to be depleted and exhausted in the x’. The virtual subsists within the actual, and vice versa. The Deleuzian virtual is perfectly real because it brings about the genesis of extended (actual) things; it is, however, irreducible to them and yet at the same time can be experienced only in the effects it renders in the actual. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze puts forward the conception of the necessarily doubled event whereby present states of affairs are considered as actualisations of the virtual. The virtual dimension is here understood as an incorporeal event at the surface, belonging at once to past and future, one that can only be expressed linguistically via infinitives: to do, to break, etc. As Deleuze (1990: 151) explains,

with every event, there is indeed the present moment of its actualisation, the moment in which the event is embodied in a state of affairs, an individual, or a person, the moment we designate by saying *here*, the moment has come. (...) But on the other hand, there is the future and the past of the event considered in itself, sidestepping each present, being free of the limitations of a state of affairs, impersonal and pre-individual.

### 3.3. Transcendental empiricism as a method

#### 3.3.1. Transcendental empiricism as a philosophical method: fundamental tenets and philosophical lineage

According to Williams (2012: 37), Deleuze posits pure difference as ‘virtual potential for the transformation of identities (the differing between X and Y). (...) [; as] an ongoing variation of relations, rather than any given object, substance, or quality’. The Deleuzian ontology of immanence, univocity, difference in itself and (differential) process, as outlined above, necessitates a corresponding new philosophical method. In this respect, in his doctoral dissertation, *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (1994: 56) calls for a ‘transcendental empiricism’. As Boundas (2006: 8) points out, the Deleuzian methodological innovation of transcendental empiricism ‘attempts to go beyond experience to the conditions that account for things, states of things and their mixtures given to experience’. Deleuze builds here—amongst many other philosophical inspirations—on Bergson’s method of intuition (cf. Deleuze 2002: 13-36). Bergson advocates the analysis of composites, i.e. things as heterogeneous states of affairs, according to their immanent virtual tendencies so as to ‘open us up to the inhuman and the superhuman (*durations* which are inferior or superior to our own), to go beyond the human condition’ (Deleuze 2002: 28, original emphasis). Indeed, what Deleuze is interested in are processes of the virtual genesis of the constitution of the actual, a processual ontogenesis (cf. Boundas 2006: 9).

Smith (2014: 238, original emphasis) understands transcendental empiricism as ‘the search for *the genetic elements of real experience* and the positing of a *principle of difference* as the fulfilment of this condition’, which are also the fundamental themes explored by the seventeenth-century philosopher Maimonides in his important critique of Kantian critical philosophy. Transcendental empiricism itself might be considered a creative intervention into Kant’s transcendental philosophy and Hume’s empiricism. As Cliff Stagoll explains (2010: 288), Deleuze critiques the Kantian project of identifying the *a priori* conditions of the human experience *in general*. Deleuze importantly overturns the Kantian conception of experience as a *re-presentation*. According to Deleuze, Kant’s formulation merely raises a few empirical observations to the level of transcendent values, establishing them as fixed *doxa*, dogmatically holding true for all the cases, once and for all, and hence not a viable *episteme*. Deleuze (cf. Stagoll 2010: 288-9) is not interested in seeking abstract conditions of all possible experience, but remains faithful to Hume’s empiricism by starting his deductions with the immediate given, the real experience. At the same time, as Boundas (2006: 9) points out, ‘the targeted [virtual] conditions [Deleuze is seeking] do not exceed the conditioned, and, therefore, the concept they form ends up being identical with its object’. It is in this sense that Deleuze puts forward a *transcendental*, and not *transcendent*, empiricism.

### 3.3.2. Transcendental empiricism as a theory of the (in)human faculties

If, according to Deleuze, the world is made up of force relations, these do not constitute an object of re-cognition and re-presentation, but can only be sensed (cf. Boundas 2010: 133). In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze introduces transcendental empiricism as a fundamental encounter of intensity beyond representation; an encounter encapsulated in the parallel experience opened up by art. As Deleuze (1994: 56-7) explains,

the work of art leaves the domain of representation in order to become 'experience', transcendental empiricism or science of the sensible. (...) Empiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics an apodictic discipline, only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed [sentientum], the very being of the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity. (...) The intense world of differences, in which we find the reason behind qualities and the being of the sensible, is precisely the object of a superior empiricism.

In counter-distinction from the Kantian conception of the harmonious human faculties whereby the faculty of Reason is tasked with the legislation, i.e. active integration, of sensory or cognitive data, thus producing Common Sense, Deleuze sees thought as something brought about by the violent encounter of sensation, an encounter that affirms ontological difference (cf. Young 2013: 122-4). As Deleuze elucidates (1994: 141),

the violence of that which forces thought develops from the *sentientum* to the *cogitandum*. Each faculty is unhinged (...). Each one, in its own order and on its own account, has broken the form of common sense (...). Rather than all the faculties converging and contributing to a common project of recognising an object, we see divergent projects in which, with regard to what concerns it essentially, each faculty is in the presence of that which is its 'own'.

Deleuze's project of transcendental empiricism thus overturns the very notion of experience as tied to the subject and the mind existing *a priori*, as well as the pre-existing 'lived body' assumed by phenomenology (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 178 for their critique of phenomenology). In this respect, the Deleuzian philosophy might be seen as putting forward a distinctly Humean conception of the mind insofar as, in Deleuze's (1991: 29) understanding, 'empirical subjectivity is constituted in the mind under the influence of principles affecting it; the mind therefore does not have the characteristics of a pre-existing subject'. As Irina Semetsky (2010: 91; cf. Deleuze 2002: 25-6) clarifies, for Deleuze 'experience is not an individual property; rather subjects are constituted in relations within experience itself'. Subjects are not conceived as pre-existing entities, but only come into being as a contingent and precarious effect of relations in the apersonal experiential field. Experience as a field of bundled relations resonates with, as Deleuze (cf. 1988: 123) explains in his Spinoza books, the specifically Spinozian understanding of a body as a set of relations engaged in an ongoing process of experimentation sparked off by its affective thresholds, i.e. the capacities to affect other bodies and be affected by them.

In summary, Deleuze's differential theory of the faculties and its corresponding method of transcendental empiricism seeks to attend to '[ontological] difference (...) [as] that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse. Difference (...) not [as] phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon' (Deleuze 1994: 222). Deleuze's philosophy can be conceived (cf. Stagoll 2010: 289) as a sustained effort to deduce the unrepresentable (pre)conditions of conscious experience given in the immediate only as implicit tendencies.

### 3.3.3. Transcendental empiricism as a practice in philosophy and academic research

In the preceding sections I have outlined what I consider to be fundamental themes of the Deleuzian thought. There remain, however, a host of other pertinent questions to be posed. In particular, one might enquire about the implications of transcendental empiricism as a philosophical practice. In what ways Deleuze's particular way of doing philosophy performs a re-casting of the tradition of Western philosophical thought?

The groundbreaking character of Deleuze's philosophy does rely so much on replacing one set of categories with another, for example 'identity' with 'process', etc. Instead, Deleuze takes philosophy to its limit and opens it up—to borrow an expression from Massumi and Manning (2014: vii)—to its 'outside (...) as a generative environment'. It is the outside that functions as a conduit sparking off philosophy's multiple connections with other practices that engage the real, e.g. art, activism and science.

In the seminal third chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (cf. 1994: 129-134) remarks that any philosophy begins with a certain pre-philosophical presupposition that he terms 'the image of thought', i.e. a model or image of what it is to think, what it means to be thought, what counts as thinking. According to Deleuze (1994: 130, original emphasis), the image of thought is encapsulated in the presupposition '*Everybody knows, no one can deny*' relating to 'what it means to think and to be'. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 374-6) in fact propose *noology* as a study of various models of what it means to think. This noology, as the thinkers make clear, is intimately complicit in workings of the State apparatus. At the same time, Deleuze (1994: 158) critiques the Western philosophical tradition from Aristotle through Kant for perpetuating 'the dogmatic image of thought' via its endemic *a priori* positing of some generic category, such as Common Sense, as accounting for thinking (cf. Deleuze 2003: 87 for the parallel notion of the *cliché* with respect to art; and Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 142 for the notion of *Urdoxa*, i.e. the 'original opinion', with respect to the history of Western philosophy). The dogmatic image of thought, as Miguel de Beistegui (2010: 16) summarises, is grounded upon the model of recognition, which conceives thought as an object that is accessible to consciousness and can be apprehended via re-presentation. In stark contrast, Deleuze (1994: 276) advocates doing philosophy that thinks the unthinkable as 'a theory of thought without an image'. In this respect, he calls for the ongoing generation of virtual concepts that condense 'the circumstances of the emergence of a thing (...) [;] the conditions of the actualisation of an entity' (Boundas 2006: 11) and render them, in Deleuze's (1994: 169) formulation, 'in problematic form'. Philosophy is the labour of posing *problems* that provoke thought in 'a passive self produced by a groundlessness that it contemplates' (Deleuze 1994: 276) and thus affirm ontological difference 'around this point of ungrounding' (cf. Smith 2014: 84 for an extended discussion of philosophy as problematics in Deleuze).

Deleuze's own philosophy clearly epitomises 'thought without an image' through its notoriously difficult argument riddled with paradoxes and a singular language whose dense and diverse rhythms resonate with poetic cadence. The Deleuzian concepts might be considered as problematic beings peopling the *plane of immanence*. Deleuze's concepts are not *about* ontology but are composed in the real as but one of various modes that affirm the differential being. They are at once ontogenetic and heterogenetic. As de Beistegui (2010: 16) reminds us, Deleuze's philosophy effects paradoxical coupling of the principle of immanence and that of exteriority. This assertion is brought into relief by the Deleuzian (1994: 139) manifesto of sorts, as quoted below, at once artistic and philosophical:

Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself. Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.

One important implication of Deleuze's philosophical method is dethroning of the human mind as the transcendent principle operating in much of Western philosophy. Instead, the mind is characterised as an emergent quality not available uniquely to humans but bound up with a radical exteriority: 'something in the world' (Deleuze 1994: 139). This radical exteriority might be also considered in terms of the notion of *a life* Deleuze (2002: 27) develops in his final essay, 'Immanence. A life'. Deleuze and Guattari affirm the nonhuman turn in philosophy through their desire to attend to non-human perception (cf. Roffe and Stark 2015: 11 for a discussion of Deleuze and the nonhuman). A comment made by Rancière's (quoted in Boundas 2006: 10) succinctly summarises Deleuze's project in this respect:

We must give things the perceptual power that they have already, because they have lost it. And they have lost it, because their phosphorescence and movement have been interrupted by another image—the image of the human brain . . . that confiscated the interval between action and reaction . . . and made itself the center of the world. To put perception inside things is a restitution.

In conclusion, the Deleuzian transcendental empiricism might be productively considered in terms of an ongoing practice that engages the real, yielding thought as an emergent result of this encounter. As a practice concerned with production of virtual concepts that capture movements of actualisation of an entity, Deleuze's philosophy opens up to its outside and in this way affirms ontological difference. At the same time, thus conceived philosophy occupies as a single co-creative realm together with art, science, technology and activism.

### **3.4. Philosophy as a logic of multiplicities in Deleuze and Guattari**

#### **3.4.1. Introduction**

Deleuze's differential ontology can be encapsulated by one simple, yet problematic equation that Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 20, original emphasis) introduce in *A Thousand Plateaus*, namely: 'PLURALISM = MONISM'. As Smith (2014: 42) points out, the formula expresses the identity between 'equivocity of difference' and 'univocity of Being'. In other words, the formula embodies the co-articulation of being and difference. For Deleuze and Guattari, all beings are laid out on a single plane, hence there is no dialectical opposition between one separate entity grounding or founding an-other. Consequently, a representation, a phantasm or a theory of a thing is an event itself, contemplating and affirming a single ontological plane. Deleuze introduces the theme of the paradoxical equation of pluralism and monism already in *Difference and Repetition*, as encapsulated in what he (Deleuze 1994: 36) calls the 'nomadic distribution' of diverse entities in an open space, pointing out (1994: 37) that 'it is not a matter of being which is distributed according to the requirements of representation, but of all things being divided up within being in the univocity of simple presence (the One–All)'.

According to the scholar Éric Alliez (2004: 91), the 'pluralism = monism' formula—encapsulating the Deleuzian differential ontology—can only be understood in terms of the Deleuzian-Bergsonian concept of *multiplicity*. Similarly, Manuel DeLanda (2002: 9) calls attention to the fundamental importance of Deleuze's theory of multiplicities in his opus. In fact, as the philosopher Audronė Žukauskaitė (2014: 75) reminds us, Deleuze repeatedly framed his entire philosophical project precisely in terms of 'a logic of multiplicities'. Multiplicity, or

better still, multiplicities, is a multifaceted and highly complex concept developed by Deleuze over the whole span of his philosophical life, mobilising for its purposes many different philosophical and physico-mathematical resources. As DeLanda (2002: 9-10) summarises, Deleuze conceived the notion of multiplicities as a novel way of non-totalisable, immanent characterisation of things via the ‘morphogenetic process that gave rise to [them]’. Such a characterisation should be distinguished from the traditional metaphysical notion of *essence* understood as a set of defining characteristics that are transcendent, timeless and immutable and constitute the unified static identity of a thing (cf. Deleuze 1994: 182). As Bergson explains (2001: 222-3, original emphasis), multiplicities, unlike essence, dynamically ‘unfold in time and constitute *duration*’. Therefore their character, or ‘nature’, cannot be determined in advance. As Žukauskaitė (2014: 75) succinctly summarises, ‘the multiplicity is never given all at once and appears in a form of progressive differentiation’.

### 3.4.2. An outline of the problem of multiplicities in philosophy and science

Deleuze introduced the concept of multiplicity in his 1966 *Bergsonism* as the culmination of a series of articles on Bergson that had started already back in 1956. The publication significantly contributed towards a resurgence of interest in Bergson in the French academic circles. *Bergsonism* devotes much space to an examination of Bergson’s 1889 doctoral dissertation *Time and Free Will*. In a particularly dense passage in *Bergsonism*, Deleuze (2002: 39) maps out the lineage of the problem of multiplicities, acknowledging in this respect Bergson’s indebtedness to the German mathematician Bernhard Riemann. Inspired by Riemann’s non-Euclidean differential geometry of manifolds, Bergson (cf. 2001: 130-3), in the second chapter of *Time and Free Will*, distinguishes between *quantitative*—or *discrete*—and *qualitative multiplicities*. As Deleuze (2002: 39) points out, Riemann posited multiplicities as ‘those things that could be determined in terms of their dimensions or their independent variables’, subsequently distinguishing between *discrete multiplicities* and *continuous multiplicities* whereby

the former contain the principle of their own metrics (the measure of one of their parts being given by the number of elements they contain). The latter found a metrical principle in something else, even if only in phenomena unfolding in them or in the forces acting in them.

Riemann’s (cf. Smith 2014: 303) differential geometry builds on Gauss’ use of differential calculus to approach curved surfaces and extends this method to study the problem of space. If Deleuze (2002: 39) sees Riemann as a ‘physicist and a mathematician’, it is because, as Martin Calamari (2015: 69) explains, the mathematician puts forward a novel way of approaching geometry. Riemann in fact forgoes the notion of uniform space whose structure can be determined a priori as ‘the homogeneous (Euclidean), static (invariable) and matter-indifferent (absolute) arena in which material bodies would be placed’. This particular geometrical characterisation of space finds its correlate in what Deleuze (1994: 158) detects as ‘the dogmatic image of thought’ as encountered throughout the history of Western philosophy. If Deleuze (2002: 39) casts Riemann symptomatically as a physicist as well as a mathematician, it is because what the German mathematician proposes is, as Calamari (2015: 69, original emphasis) explains, a ‘geometry of space [that] can only be determined in relation to *physical forces*’. Therefore, thus conceived dynamic space (and time) becomes expressive of ‘the fundamental *physical interactions* themselves’ (2015: 69, original emphasis), rather than being grounded in axiomatic presuppositions. In conclusion, Riemann offers an immanent vision of geometry. His vision resonates strongly with the Deleuzian project of transcendental empiricism.

### 3.4.3. Multiplicities in *Bergsonism*

Deleuze's investigation of multiplicities in the second chapter of *Bergsonism* is most tellingly preceded by an examination of Bergson's method of intuition undertaken in the first chapter. In Deleuze's (2002: 26) formulation, intuition as a philosophical method allows us to see experience as a *de facto* mixture (composite) inviting us 'to go beyond experience toward the conditions of [real] experience, toward the articulations of the real, and rediscover what differs in kind in the composites that are given to us and on which we live'. The subsequent examination of multiplicities in the second chapter of *Bergsonism* is made possible precisely by following Bergson's method of intuition. Intuition reveals experience as an impure composite not of static essences but of two types of multiplicities. These two types are exemplified by the physical configuration of objects in space and the aspect of duration, respectively. As Deleuze explains (2002: 37-8),

experience always gives us a composite of space and duration (...) But (...) the decomposition of the composite reveals to us two types of multiplicity. One is represented by space (...): It is a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative differentiation, of *difference in degree*; it is a numerical multiplicity, *discontinuous and actual*. The other type of multiplicity appears in pure duration: It is an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination, or of *difference in kind*; it is a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers.

In Deleuze's (2002: 41) reading, Bergson recasts the Riemannian distinction between *discrete* and *continuous multiplicities* in terms of *quantitative multiplicities*, which Bergson characterises as objective and numerical, and *qualitative multiplicities*, which are in turn conceived as subjective and nonnumerical. As Deleuze (2002: 41) explains, the objective aspect of multiplicity is associated with Bergson's understanding of matter as having no hidden, virtual dimension, but operating solely at the level of the immediately perceivable, fully present *actual* where (at least in principle) there is nothing more than meets the eye. As Deleuze (2002: 41) explains, in Bergson, 'object and objective denote not only what is divided, but what, in dividing, does not change in kind. It is thus what divides by differences in degree'. Objective multiplicity is also related to perception *actually* identifying *possible* divisions in the image of the object. In this sense, Bergson puts forward the notion of the objective that also includes the possible. Consequently, as Deleuze (2002: 41, original emphasis) points out, 'the objective is *that which has no virtuality* — whether realized or not, whether possible or real, everything is actual in the objective'.

For Bergson (Deleuze 2002: 41), the objective character of a multiplicity is embodied in arithmetics as 'characterised by the perfect equivalence of the divided and the divisions, of number and unit'. Arithmetics is the domain of what Bergson calls 'numerical multiplicities' (Deleuze 2002: 41) in the sense that both the arithmetic unit and numbers it is used to form are perfectly equivalent to one another. Both can be divided *ad infinitum* without changing in kind and thus can be said to be 'extended' (Deleuze 2002: 41). As Deleuze (2002:41) explains, for Bergson, 'number has only differences in degree, (...) [which], whether realized or not, are always actual in it'.

In turn, according to Bergson (2002:42), duration embodies qualitative multiplicity as it is bound up with psychic states associated with 'the subject and the subjective'. Subjective multiplicities exhibit the virtual-actual dynamism whereby their 'actualisation comes about through differentiation, through divergent lines' (Deleuze 2002: 43). As Deleuze (2002: 42-3) explains, such a multiplicity does not operate solely on the level of the actual as *numerical multiplicities* do, but is 'virtual insofar as it is actualized, in the course of being actualized,



(...) inseparable from the movement of its actualization (...), creat[ing] (...) differences in kind by virtue of its own movement’.

The virtual multiplicity—as embodied, for example, in a complex feeling—is nonnumerical. It is nonnumerical since its elements, such as love or hatred, are not immediately present and equivalent, but are only progressively, temporally specified; they might be said to become in time. As Deleuze (2002:42) points out, in *qualitative multiplicity*, number is no longer actual but potential. Deleuze’s 1966 reading of Bergson’s qualitative multiplicity in terms of unfolding of potential and the complex dynamic movement of its virtual and actual dimensions is extremely important from the point of view of his subsequent understanding of art as a compound of percepts and affects. The latter formulation was elaborated by Deleuze together with Guattari in 1991 in their final co-authored work (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1994). According to *Bergsonism* (Deleuze 2002: 43), in counter-distinction from the purely actual quantitative multiplicities, ‘a nonnumerical multiplicity plunges into another dimension, which is no longer spatial and is purely temporal: It moves from the virtual to its actualization, it actualizes itself by creating lines of differentiation that correspond to its differences in kind’.

Furthermore, what is of crucial importance in the Deleuzo-Bergsonian formulation of qualitative multiplicity is not only that it progressively unfolds, but also that it unfolds via differences in kind. As Deleuze (2002: 42) points out, qualitative *manifold* ‘divides up and does so constantly: (...) But it does not divide up without changing in kind, it changes in kind in the process of dividing up’. The unfolding of potential is thus correlated with the movement of actualisation. Deleuze (2002: 81) explains that qualitative multiplicity ‘divides into elements that differ in kind; (...) [but at the same time], these elements or these parts only actually exist insofar as the division itself is effectively carried out’. Deleuze (2002: 40) also approaches the question of change in kind from the perspective of Riemannian geometry, defining qualitative multiplicity as ‘that which divide[s] only by changing in kind, that which [is] susceptible to measurement only by varying its metrical principle at each stage of the division’.

The concept of multiplicity as well as the distinction between qualitative and quantitative multiplicities as developed in *Bergsonism* together make up a threefold complex which is further elaborated in *Difference and Repetition* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Thus conceived logic of multiplicities has fundamental ontological implications for Deleuzoguattarian philosophy.

Deleuze has repeatedly (cf. 2002: 39, 43-47; 1994:182) pointed out that multiplicity escapes the dialectical opposition of the One and the Many—the One and the Multiple—embodying the logic of negation rampant in Western philosophy and, most notably, epitomised by Kantian and post-Kantian ideas (cf. Deleuze 2002: 46). In Deleuze’s (1994: 182) reading, multiplicity is conceived as a substantive noun, not an adjective functioning as an attribute predicated upon an already constituted prior thing. By conceiving multiplicity as always inseparable from the conditions of its emergence, and not abstractly, in general, Deleuze (1994: 182) might be said to give it ‘substance itself’. Multiplicity thus resides in the ‘nuance’ (2002: 45) of a thing, begging the question of ‘the how many, the how and each of the cases’ (1994: 182)—their variation. Similarly, as Deleuze (2002: 47) reminds us, the two types of multiplicities should not be conceived in terms of dialectical oppositions. Instead, these two notions should be treated as two coupled aspects that jointly make up—to borrow an expression from *A Thousand Plateaus*—‘a single field of interaction’ (2005: 367). The two notions thus affirm the movement of ontological difference, corresponding to the Bergsonian (Deleuze 2002: 94) notion of *élan vital*, i.e. vital

impulse, as ‘the movement of differentiation’. Multiplicity thus achieves a distinct processual formulation. It is not conceived as a static essence but ‘a virtuality in the process of being actualized, a simplicity in the process of differentiating, a [virtual] totality in the process of dividing up (...) [,] actualized according to divergent lines differing in kind’ (Deleuze 2002: 94-5).

In the final chapter of *Bergsonism*, Deleuze (2002: 92-4) importantly identifies four co-existing mo(ve)ments that jointly make up Bergson’s philosophical trajectory. This particular Deleuzian formulation implies that the fourfold process—by which Bergson arrives at the notion of vital impulse as a virtuality actualised according to divergent lines—might in itself be considered as generating a multiplicity. The division of actual composites, such as experience, into pure tendencies: the intensive and the extensive, and the discovery of differences in kind between the tendencies, affirm dualism as Bergson’s first movement. The subsequent discovery of the third term, the in-between, between the differences in kind and the differences in degree affirms balanced dualism. In turn, the notion of virtual coexistence of degrees of difference recovers monism, and ultimately the vital impulse reintroduces dualism by its insistence on vital bifurcation implied by movement of actualisation (differentiation) according to divergent lines.

In summary, for Deleuze, philosophy is an ongoing process—a generative rhythmic practice—that tends towards the edges of a state of affairs, effecting a discovery which in turn establishes a new territory that is already being pulled apart at the seams.

#### **3.4.4. Multiplicities in *Difference and Repetition***

The Bergsonian (Deleuze 2002: 94) formulation of multiplicity as ‘the movement of differentiation’—‘a movement of movements’, to borrow the expression from Deleuze’s (2003: 83, original emphasis) case study of Bacon—is taken up in his 1968 *Difference and Repetition* where virtual multiplicity, or simply: ‘a multiplicity’, is expressly proposed as a concept embodying the immanent unity of the one and the many (cf. Deleuze 1994: 182; Zourabichvili 2012: 107). As Deleuze makes it abundantly clear, multiplicities have to do with ontological difference, affirming ‘the same thing, (...) at different levels: here more or less relaxed, there more or less contracted (1994: 83)’, ultimately offering a way of non-essentialist characterisation of things in terms of ‘differences of level, temperature, pressure, tensions, potential, difference of intensity’ (1994: 222).

As Zourabichvili (2012: 103) points out, the notion of multiplicity as reposed in *Difference and Repetition* correlates difference with divergent repetition while drawing on the Nietzschean notion of eternal return. As Zourabichvili (2012: 103) explains, Deleuze conceives ontological difference not as a repetition of the same, but something that ‘ceaselessly returns in each of its differentiations’. What is at stake in this particular formulation of repetition is a process of ‘the differentiation of difference’ (2012: 103) as residing in time, or more precisely, making up the fundamental logic of time. It is in this sense that Zourabichvili (2012: 103) sees *Difference and Repetition* as ‘the logic of intensive multiplicity as a concept of time’. Furthermore, this non-identical repetition of difference might be seen as divergent as it necessarily entails change and bifurcation, a ‘displacement’ [*décalage*] as Zourabichvili (2012: 103) terms it. According to Zourabichvili (2012: 103), difference returns ‘each time, but (...) on another plane, in another dimension, (...) at a distance, in another mode, at another level than its own’. Such formulation of difference corresponds to the intensive dimension of multiplicities as posited in *Bergsonism*—their change in kind, i.e. in nature. Such paradoxical difference is not only intensive, but also relational in the sense that, as Zourabichvili (2012: 103-4) points out, it opens a point of view (distance) on other

dimensions that in turn also constitute points of view. Therefore, difference can be said to repeat in itself and, in this sense, it entails a complication. At the same time, difference can be said to repeat for other differences and, in this sense, it involves an explication. What is at issue here is thus a certain operative logic of simultaneous complication and explication. In fact, Zourabichvili (2012: 105) sees this implicative logic as the underlying logical movement of Deleuze's entire philosophical project. In this respect, it is most symptomatic that Deleuze (2006) devoted a whole publication back in 1993 to a case study of Baroque in terms of the Leibnizian fold. The resulting perspectivism whereby 'differences (...) are mutually enveloped according to their distances' (Zourabichvili 2012: 104), thus constituting 'a contagion of points of view in reciprocal implication' (2012: 132) corresponds to DeLanda's (2002: 22) understanding of multiplicities as 'meshed together into a continuum (...) creating zones of indiscernibility where they blend into each other'. DeLanda builds here on *Difference and Repetition* and, in particular, Deleuze's (1994: 186-7) discussion of the mutual relations between multiplicities. Already in *Bergsonism* (cf. 2002: 93-4), Deleuze posits the idea of virtual coexistence of multiplicities on a single plane. In turn, in *Difference and Repetition*, this is further elaborated by the Deleuzian assertion that multiplicities cannot be distinguished by recourse to the sharply delimiting dialectical logic of form. Instead, their borderline zones all tap into the virtual realm, each in a distinctive way, thus entering, as 'complexes of coexistence' (Deleuze 1994: 186), relations of mutual indiscernibility.

As Zourabichvili (2012: 104) summarises, the mode of ontological operation particular to multiplicities is not static *being*, but dynamic *becoming* (1994: 41). The latter concept is subsequently elaborated in *A Thousand Plateaus* as the process of passage through a threshold which gives rise to qualitative change.

At this stage, let me reiterate that multiplicity affirms ontological difference as divergent repetition and thus accomplishes the paradoxical unity of the one and the multiple. It must however be pointed out that it appears in *Difference and Repetition* also in a more specific sense. In particular, it receives a more rigorous Riemannian formulation, more directly engaging Riemann's differential geometry. Already in *Bergsonism*, Deleuze draws attention to Riemann's formulation of multiplicities as possessing a variable number of dimensions. As Deleuze points out (2002: 39), the mathematician defined multiplicities 'as those things that could be determined in terms of their dimensions or their independent variables'. Zourabichvili (2012: 102) summarises this succinctly when he describes a multiplicity as the 'relation between heterogeneous dimensions'. In fact, the problem of dimensions and their mutual relations might be considered the crucial aspect of multiplicities, as elaborated in *Difference and Repetition* and *A Thousand Plateaus*.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (1994: 182) explains that dimensions are 'the variables or coordinates upon which a phenomenon depends'. Furthermore, he also states that multiplicity is not only multi-dimensional, but also 'continuous' and 'defined'. Such characterisation of multiplicities echoes the parallel invocation of the properties of heterogeneity, continuity and simplicity in *Bergsonism* (cf. Deleuze 2002: 43). As Calamari points out (2015: 65), Deleuze thus presents a distinctly Riemannian formulation of multiplicity as utilising the differential calculus (cf. Deleuze 1994: 171). If dimensions are variables or coordinates, '*continuity* (...) mean[s] the set of [differential] relations between changes in these variables —for example, a quadratic form of the differentials of the co-ordinates' (Deleuze 1994: 182, original emphasis). In turn, '*definition* (...) mean[s] the elements reciprocally determined by these relations, elements which cannot change unless the multiplicity changes its order and its metric' (1994: 182-3, original emphasis). Multiplicity is thus for Deleuze (cf. 1994: 183) a complex structure that involves variables, their reciprocally determined differential relations, and singular

elements that emerge out of the relations. In short, multiplicity engages dimensions, their levels of variation and emergent values as corresponding to principles of determinability, reciprocal determination and complete determination, respectively (cf. 1994: 171). Multiplicity in this highly complex formulation is engaged in an ongoing process of unfolding of potential whereby indeterminate virtual elements necessarily enter 'non-localisable ideal connections' (Deleuze 1994: 183; cf. Calamari 2015: 65) and in turn those reciprocally determined relations are plotted onto singular points. Thus conceived multiplicity highlights the necessary mutual inherence of the virtual and the actual, a co-implication of 'genesis and structure' (1994: 183). In this respect, Deleuze (1994: 183) importantly defines multiplicity as 'a system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements which is incarnated in real relations and actual term'. In other words, multiplicity might be understood as a virtuality 'actualised in diverse spatio-temporal *relationships*, at the same time as its *elements* are actually incarnated in a variety of *terms* and forms' (1994: 183, original emphasis).

### 3.4.5. Multiplicities in *A Thousand Plateaus*

It is in *A Thousand Plateaus* that Deleuze and Guattari (cf. 2005: 8-9) put forward the seminal notion of *rhizomatic multiplicities*. They point out that *n*-dimensional multiplicities are however *flat multiplicities* in the sense that they lack an additional higher dimension that could ground them. Rhizomatic multiplicities are 'flat' because they do not have a pivot-point that could be used to establish an anchor for their subsequent unification and totalisation, akin to the arithmetic '1' as the founding unit of the metric principle. Continuing with the theme of arithmetics, Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 6) in fact suggest that the formula for creating a *rhizome* as multiplicity is to 'subtract the unique from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at *n-1* dimensions'.

*A Thousand Plateaus* marks an important movement in the development of the Deleuzian logic of multiplicities. This 1980 publication unfolds from Deleuze's encounter with the activist and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari. The encounter is described in the introduction (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 1-5) as the generation of an a-signifying, impersonal intensive multiplicity. Such multiplicity is not acting in vacuum, but it is deployed as a machine of resistance set in motion against the oppressive, stratifying axiomatic logic of the capitalist state it is enmeshed in. Whereas *Difference and Repetition* could still be said to be *about* multiplicities and the corresponding method of transcendental empiricism, *A Thousand Plateaus* actually composes a rhizomatic multiplicity. The book's chapters ('plateaus')—at once philosophical and immediately political in their content—make up its dimensions.

As Žukauskaitė (2014: 76) points out, in *A Thousand Plateaus* the Bergsonian-Riemannian (intensive) multiplicities are plotted onto psychic, biological and socio-political planes. Those weaponised multiplicities are important for Deleuze and Guattari, because they engender qualitative change, embodying difference-in-itself. According to Žukauskaitė (2014: 85-6), the publication explores 'the tension between the capitalist axiomatic and the potential for revolutionary change' while at the same time rethinking the Bergsonian distinction between intensive and extensive multiplicities through a series of paired concepts, such as rhizomatic flows/arborescent schema, strata/becoming, territorial assemblage/deterritorialisations, organism/ body without organs (BwO), apparatus of capture/war machine, molar/molecular, striated space/smooth space, etc.

At this point, it is worth noting that the many dualisms introduced in *A Thousand Plateaus* have only pragmatic value and as such are not conceived as dialectical, binary oppositions. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 20-21) explain, 'the dualisms (...) are the (...) necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging'. It is clear Deleuze and Guattari are following the Bergsonian movement of thought as delineated in *Bergsonism*. The

philosophical argument in *Bergsonism* starts off with the breaking down of composites according to their implicit tendencies. The distinct, yet coexistent movements of thought that Deleuze detects in Bergson can be summarised with Craig Lundy's (2012: 102) formula: 'In each case: from one and its other, to another, repeat—from two to three to one'. *A Thousand Plateaus* enters the logic of multiplicities from the point of view of concrete assemblages revealed as impure *de facto* mixtures of pure *de iure* tendencies (cf. Lundy 2012: 102). This can be evidenced from its twelfth chapter, '1227: Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine', which famously introduces the distinction between *smooth* and *striated space*. Needless to say, such an approach makes a strong resonance with the Bergsonian method of intuition as a mode of analysing states of affairs.

The variable, co-dependent and contingent character of various constitutive dimensions of states of affairs embodies the logic of multiplicity and thus affirms self-differentiating difference. *A Thousand Plateaus* approaches this problematic through the notion of *assemblage*, which constitutes a major methodological innovation. As Adkins (2015: 13-14) summarises,

an assemblage always possesses tendencies toward both stasis and change as the-abstract poles of a single continuum. (...) [It] is a ratio of its tendencies toward both stability and change. (...) [A]ny particular practice will display both of these tendencies in a certain ratio.

It is worth pointing out that in a given concrete assemblage, its tendency to change is embodied in the notion of 'abstract machine', whereas its tendency towards stasis is embodied in the notion of 'stratum'. Accordingly, for Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 510), operating within assemblages are abstract machines that function by drawing 'the cutting edges of decoding and deterritorialisation'. Adkins's understanding of the Deleuzoguattarian conception of assemblage, as presented above, is clearly consonant with the notion of multiplicity. In particular, the invocation of ratio resonates with the Deleuzian consideration of multiplicity in *Difference and Repetition* in terms of differential relations between heterogeneous dimensions residing on a single ontological plane. Assemblage-as-ratio also ties with the Bergsonian notion of vital impulse as the movement of differentiation, as suggested in *Bergsonism*.

#### **'Treatise on Nomadology' as an encapsulation of the logic of multiplicities in Deleuze and Guattari**

The multiplicity of the Bergsonian movements of thought is brought into stark relief in the twelfth chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, symptomatically formulated as a philosophical treatise.

Deleuze and Guattari start by explicating the dualism between two types of spatial distribution: *smooth space*—transcendently organised, metric, of punctual locations—epitomised by Turco-Mongol nomads of the Great Steppe, on one hand; and *striated space*—immanently generated, non-metric, of non-localised relations—epitomised by the sedentary organisation of the Chinese state, on the other.

Thus established dualism is subsequently complicated by the introduction of a third term—the hybrid *holey space* as emblematised by itinerant metallurgists. Let us call this moment 'the movement between'. Most importantly, holey space is a useful concept functioning as the common ground between smooth space and striated space. The third term creates a new vantage point that allows the reader to perceive the terms of the previously established binary opposition as performing 'two dissymmetrical roles as elements of a single becoming, a quanta of a single flow' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 512). At this level, the multiplicity of holey space is cast as an *assemblage*. This particular English term is somewhat misleading and merits further qualification.

What Deleuze and Guattari refer to as assemblage throughout *A Thousand Plateaus* is a process of arranging, relating, tying-together of heterogeneous elements that precariously endure in a certain consistency. In this respect, ‘assemblage’ might thus be considered as a particularly misleading translation of the original French term ‘agencement’ which as a deverbal noun combines the aspect of substance and with that of change. This nuance is lost in Massumi’s translation, which seems to imply a juxtaposition of stable entities or a combination of fully constituted discrete objects. Agencement in turn focuses on relation, the in-between, and not the dialectically constituted end product that Massumi’s translation suggests. As Deleuze (2006: 179) explains in an interview back in 1980,

an assemblage is (...) what keeps very heterogeneous elements together: e.g. a sound, a gesture, a position, etc., both natural and artificial elements. The problem is one of consistency or coherence, and it is prior to the problem of behavior. How do things take on consistency? How do they cohere? Even among very different things, an intensive continuity can be found. We have borrowed the word plateau from Bateson precisely to designate these zones of intensive continuity.

In the final movement of Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis conducted in ‘Treatise on Nomadology’—a movement that might be usefully designated here as ‘the movement across’—the metallurgical assemblage is shown as confluent with what is called *machinic phylum* (cf. 2005: 406-16), i.e. ‘matter-in-variation’ traversing and fuelling all the assemblages as their ‘subterranean thread’ and operative ‘*Vital impulse*’ (2005: 407, original emphasis). Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 407) understand machinic phylum in terms of ‘matter-flow’ and ‘matter-movement’. For them, the notion designates a germinal matter pregnant with potential. In other words, what is at issue here is matter-energy that taps into the plane of continuous variation as its plateau. As Craig Lundy (2012: 82) summarises, the notion of machinic phylum in Deleuze and Guattari designates ‘the productive flows upon which the assemblage arose. (...) the subterranean flow of pure becoming (Nietzsche) or the universal aggregate of action/reaction (Bergson) from which assemblages derive their particular constellation of singularities’. Machinic phylum resonates with the Bergsonian notion of vital impulse. According to DeLanda (1997), Deleuze expands Bergson’s formulation of *élan vital* predicated as it was upon the rigid distinction between creative vitality associated with ‘organic life and human consciousness’ and matter as the realm of purely automatic repetition. Machinic phylum reverses what DeLanda sees as Bergson’s ‘organic chauvinism. This reversal is attained by taking metallurgy as a model for ontological creativity, a creative ontogenesis. In other words, Deleuze and Guattari (cf. 2005: 404-7) posit the non-organic ‘technological lineage’ as the model of an ontology of what Zourabichvili (2012) calls ‘universal self-modification (Nature), where each being implicates all the others by responding in its manner to difference as pure question’. Machinic phylum as the technological line of continuous variation affirms the logic of multiplicities. It responds to the *monism = pluralism* formula by offering a way of reconciling immanence and exteriority, continuity and heterogeneity.

In conclusion, the dualism between the two types of space as identified by Deleuze and Guattari at the beginning of ‘Treatise on Nomadology’ is discovered over the course of the chapter as implicated in the process of ‘a continuous variation (...) determining the two mobile and relative poles of that which has become indiscernible’ (2005: 512). In turn, the figure of the itinerant metallurgist is an assemblage that expresses the differential relation between the two tendencies—smooth and striated—corresponding to the two types of space. According to Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 415, original emphasis), the ambulant smith operating in holey space ‘is always *connected* to nomad space, (...) [but at the same time] *conjugates* with sedentary space’, and thus, for the purposes of this dissertation, might be said to encapsulate the two coexisting aspects of a multiplicity. The

metallurgist ‘has two different modes of liaison’ (2005: 415), highlighting Deleuze’s transcendental-empiricist view that pure difference can only be encountered, or better still: sensed, immanently from within a concrete, lived assemblage. In this respect, the Deleuzian notion of *Body without Organs* (BwO) might be understood as pure potential, germinal intensity, as encountered from the point of view of the body, the body’s becoming as a body-in-variation. Machinic phylum is matter-in-variation approached from the point of view of particular technological solutions, such as the introduction of the stirrup. In turn, the whole array of *becomings* as put forward in Chapter 10—becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-molecular, becoming-imperceptible—designates a typology of various passages between heterogeneous states engendering qualitative change as a line of variation specifically available to humans (cf. 2005: 249, 272). Those intensive passages are encounters engaging exteriority as multiple becomings-other of the human. Interestingly, for Deleuze and Guattari this particular spectrum of intensive states making up a distinct technological lineage is exemplified by art, and in particular Anglo-American modernist literature.

### ***Multiplicity as a point of view***

By mobilising the diverse vectors of different points of view, *A Thousand Plateaus* affirms the reciprocal determination of relations that make up multiplicities, their necessary mutual envelopment. Multiplicities might thus be understood as a logic of what Zourabichvili (2012: 103) refers to as ‘being a point of view’. What is also important in *A Thousand Plateaus* is that Deleuze and Guattari now engage different academic disciplines and fields as well as different philosophical interlocutors for the purposes of their ongoing project of explication of the logic of multiplicities. I have already indicated this gesture as a certain ‘weaponisation’ of multiplicities.

Beside the familiar Riemannian formulation of multiplicities in Chapter 12 and 14, multiplicities in *A Thousand Plateaus* also receive—most notably in Chapter 10 and 11—a distinctive ethological and biosemiotic treatment that mobilises insights from the biologist Jakob von Uexküll through the notion of *milieu* (cf. Brett Buchanan 2008 for his incisive tracing of von Uexküll’s lineage in Deleuze and Guattari). As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 21, original emphasis) point out, a rhizomatic multiplicity has no start- or end-point, but only ‘a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overflows’. Multiplicity can be also considered a zone without a distinct contour, without staking out a territory. Such multiplicity is also relational in the sense that what counts ‘are not the terms or the elements, but what there is ‘between’, the between, a set of relations which are not separable from each other’ (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: viii).

Furthermore, multiplicities are also presented from the point of view of the notion of *plateau* developed by the anthropologist Gregory Bateson as a theorisation of his insights from Balinese culture. Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 21-22) define a plateau as ‘a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end’. The notion of plateau might be usefully understood as designating a dimension of a rhizomatic multiplicity. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 21) point out, ‘a plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus’.

### ***Borderline functioning as Anomalous: multiplicities as intensive passage in art and/as engineering***

As I have demonstrated in the preceding sections, some chapters of *A Thousand Plateaus* offer a more systematic, philosophical argument in order to explicate the logic of multiplicities, thus continuing in the vein of *Bergsonism* and *Difference and Repetition*. While some of its chapters proceed via dualisms—albeit problematised, contested, complicated—*A Thousand Plateaus* also discovers a new mode of approaching

multiplicities that enlists art in order to tackle qualitative change. In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari open up a bestiary of mythical creatures, liminal figures and rhythmic characters as encountered in modernist literature and music.

While *A Thousand Plateaus* essentially repeats the Bergsonian-Riemannian formulation of multiplicities (cf. 2005: 8, 21, 32-33), the many examples drawn from art highlight the movement of qualitative metamorphosis as encountering a threshold, a borderline, or a limit, or a (nerve) fibre. According to Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 245, 249, 251), intensive multiplicities are defined by their borderline zones inhabited by an anomalous, external factor; an excessive dimension which under auspicious conditions may serve as a threshold according to which—beyond which—qualitative metamorphosis occurs. As can be seen in the prose of the American writer Herman Melville and, in particular, the famous confrontation between Captain Ahab and Moby-Dick (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 243-52), multiplicity is an encounter of radical exteriority encapsulated in the notion of the Outsider, or the Anomalous, that occasions change. Needless to say, such a formulation corresponds to the Bergsonian idea of intensive multiplicity that cannot be divided without changing in nature. Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 9) make this clear when they point out that ‘multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialisation according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities. The plane of consistency (grid) is the outside of all multiplicities’. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 250) explain, passage between multiplicities effectuates qualitative change. This passage is intensive and thus is not conceived in terms of extensive movement from one point to another. Instead, the passage entails a change in the number of dimensions of a multiplicity. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 23) point out, ‘when a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis’.

Last but not least, what is also particularly important—from the point of view of Konieczny’s art and his background in engineering—is that Deleuze and Guattari also formulate their conception of multiplicities and the intensive passage between them implicitly in terms of a physics of tension and strain. Accordingly, as the two thinkers (2005: 249) explain,

a multiplicity is defined not by its elements, nor by a center of unification or comprehension. (...) If we imagined the position of a fascinated Self, it was because the multiplicity toward which it leans, stretching to the breaking point, is the continuation of another multiplicity that works it and strains it from the inside. In fact, the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities.

The above formulation can be linked to Deleuze and Guattari’s (2005: 329, original emphasis) invocation of reinforced concrete as exhibiting a logic of ‘*self-supporting surfaces*’, rather than being grounded upon the binary logic of load-bearing pillars as centers supporting, or anchoring, their dependent beams (cf. Hale 2013 for a discussion of Deleuze’s insights into architectural theory). Deleuze and Guattari consider architecture as art (cf. 2005: 329), and even a *proto-art* for that matter, since for them architecture and its planar manipulations embody the already *proto-artistic* gesture of establishing, or framing, the territory (1994: 185-7). If so, engineering—and its operative logic of tensile surfaces—illuminates architecture as, first and foremost, the art of harnessing forces.



### 3.4.6. Multiplicities and art: Francis Bacon and beyond

The logic of multiplicities—and the notion of intensive multiplicity, in particular—has fundamental implications for art. Intensive properties of multiplicities make them a perfect artistic medium as they engender qualitative change, embodying difference-in-itself. Similarly, the logic of multiplicities proves a great tool not only for art, but also for art writing and art philosophy. Deleuze's (2003) case study of paintings by Bacon is most instructive in this respect, since it is formulated as a multiplicity whose chapters might be said to constitute its dimensions. Deleuze's publication is a record of his encounter with Bacon's art-work, which at the same time offers a new conception of aesthetics. In particular, in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, aesthetics becomes dislodged from its traditional position as a set pre-existing benchmarks to approach and epistemologically contain art and becomes an encounter of multiplicities. Suffice it to invoke here Deleuze's (2003: ix) short introductory remark that prefaces the publication:

Each of the following rubrics considers one aspect of Bacon's paintings, in an order that moves from the simplest to the most complex. But this order is relative, and is valid only from the viewpoint of a general logic of sensation. All these aspects, of course, coexist in reality. They converge in color, in the coloring sensation, which is the summit of this logic. Each aspect could serve as the theme of a particular sequence in the history of painting.

Consequently, Deleuze starts by identifying the constitutive pictorial elements of Bacon's painting (Figure, Contour, Fields of Colour), not as iconographical motifs but as variable dimensions of a multiplicity. The dimensions might be considered directions in motion (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 21) that enter differential relations allowing the deduction of their implicit forces of isolation, coupling and dissipation converging on the body (cf. [Figs. B.10-11]). The differential relations between forces are inaccessible to consciousness—they can only be sensed in the art-work through the ongoing self-differentiating compounded movement of sensation ceaselessly putting its vibrations into mutual resonance and composing the resonances into various poly-rhythms. As Deleuze (2003: 56) points out, 'the sensation gives something completely different from the forces that condition it'. In this way, the encounter of an art-work already effects a passage between multiplicities, affirming ontological difference that necessarily repeats itself 'at a distance', to borrow an insightful expression from Zourabichvili (2012: 103).

It is worth noting here that Deleuze's particular understanding of Bacon's art as a logic of sensation is a point of convergence of different philosophical trajectories and, most notably, those of Spinoza and Nietzsche. Furthermore, the logic of sensation also resonates with the Bergsonian-Riemannian notion of multiplicity (cf. 1994: 171, 183) and Deleuze's (cf. 1994: 139) 'manifesto' for transcendental empiricism, as intimately related to art (cf. 1994: 56-7). It is therefore unsurprising that Boundas (2006: 14) notes that Deleuze's explication of the logic of sensation should be considered as a chapter *Difference and Repetition*, and vice-versa.

In conclusion, that the complex formulation of multiplicities in Deleuze and Guattari engages many different philosophical, mathematical and physical resources in order put forward a philosophy of pure immanence that correlates continuity and heterogeneity; monism and pluralism; repetition and difference. What is most important, however, from the point of view of this dissertation, is that the logic of multiplicities attends to qualitative change. In fact, as we will see in the following chapters, Deleuze and Guattari develop a novel vision of aesthetics from the point of view of multiplicities whereby art is a site of real change and not imaginary resemblance. The logic of multiplicities may thus be proposed as the *modus operandi* of my case study of Konieczny.

### **3.5. Resonances. Multiplicities as a trifold research methodology: Konieczny, Sarmato-Baroque, Deleuze-Guattari**

#### **3.5.1. The logic of resonance**

If the method of this dissertation is to ‘make one multiplicity pass into another’ (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 52), it is therefore not the case of a static juxtaposition of Konieczny and Deleuze. The present dissertation considers all of those areas as mutually resonating multiplicities. The proposed *resonance* can be understood in Simondonian terms as internal communication between heterogeneous systems (cf. Deleuze 1994: 246). The dissertation does not seek to approach Konieczny and Deleuze in terms of an opposition between two fixed terms, but it seeks to find a zone of their mutual indiscernibility, a certain region of proximity that sweeps the two terms away in a zigzagging movement, revealing them as tapping into—each one in its distinctive way—the single, immanent plane. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 25) point out,

between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle.

A multiplicity that effectuates this defacing, or mutation, of the all-too-easy coupling of Deleuze and Konieczny is the anachronistic, untimely—as untimely as Nietzsche’s alleged Polish descent, which can be construed as his becoming-Polish—force of the Polish(-Lithuanian) Oriental Baroque, i.e. Sarmatism, understood as a radical becoming-other and becoming-steppe of Polish (and Eastern European) art and culture. Such a perverse strategy seeks to provide resistance to a particular direction in art research in the field of Polish art and culture assumed in Poland by some scholars and artists vigorously applying Western methodologies (cf. Ronduda 2010b). Rather than trying to avoid considering Poland’s post-colonial dimension as relevant to research, this dissertation embarks on an encounter with what might be considered as Poland’s peculiar ‘Eastern anachronism’ and thus expressly thematises, and problematises, the aspect of the post-colonial. Such strategy resonates with the practice of the artistic collective Slavs and Tatars (2014) with whom I have collaborated on the *Naughty Nasals / Niesforne Nosówki* project.

At the same time, the dissertation seeks to extricate the intensive movement of Turco-Tatar Sarmato-Baroque from the long tradition of its capture by the state apparatus. This tradition goes back to the period of Enlightenment, with a sustained critique of Sarmatism from 1765 onwards (cf. Borowski 2001: 176). In fact, Sarmatism has, more often than not, constituted an example of what Deleuze-Bergson (2002: 18) designates as a ‘badly-analysed composite’. Namely, Sarmatism is most frequently approached as a logic of formal representation that entails the self dialectically opposed to its other. As such, it falls prey to capture by conservative ideologies (cf. Czaplinski 2011 for an incisive charting of this phenomenon) as well as by the Oedipalised structures of Lacanian analysis (cf. Sowa 2011).

#### **3.5.2. Sarmato-Baroque: an outline**

The following dissertation thus sets out to strain the Deleuzoguattarian philosophy to its limit point by presenting novel constellations of concepts that have emerged in cross-pollinating Deleuze, Guattari and Sarmato-Baroque. I posit the term ‘Sarmato-Baroque’ to mark the mutual co-implication of its two constituent terms ‘Sarmatism’ and ‘Baroque’ as a way to counter a certain false dualism that has persisted in both Polish cultural theory and art history. What I mean here is the alleged opposition (cf. Ostrowski 2001: 151) between the Turco-Tatar-leaning Sarmatism as a cultural (and ideological) mode of expression and the Italo-Netherlandish-

tending Baroque—a purely artistic mode distinct from Sarmatism. The dualism encapsulated in the disputed notion of ‘Sarmatian portrait’ (2001: 151) is predicated upon an understanding of art as an aesthetics of form that requires the visible presence of iconographical Sarmatian motifs to seal the rift between culture and art.

In counter-distinction from approaches that see Sarmatism as linked to proto-nationalism, my argument seeks to mobilise Sarmatism as a movement that is at once aesthetic and ontological, and hence, proto-aesthetic. Therefore, the present dissertation seeks to approach Sarmatism as a mode of expression current in the seventeenth-century in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth that—upon encounter with cultures of the East linked to the steppe and the desert—produced a series of becomings in the human and the animal; bodies, thought, metal, ritual and textiles. The metamorphoses could be seen as divergent affective blocs consonant, — or, rather, desonant, to borrow an insightful term from the Deleuzian scholar Zafer Aracagök (cf. 2009) —with the emergent virtual force of a certain fabulation whereby Polish nobles saw themselves an extension of the lineage of Sarmatians—nomad warriors of the steppes from the time of Herodotus. Most interestingly, Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 404, 495) mention Sarmatians briefly in *A Thousand Plateaus* as part of the continuum of the nomadic tribes of the steppes, encapsulating the problem of smooth space and war machine. The above formulation of the seventeenth-century Sarmatism as a creative irruption of the steppe and its co-related nomadic distribution will be further elaborated in the subsequent chapter, enlisting the Deleuzo-Nietzschean notion of the untimely, the Deleuzo-Bergsonian fabulation and the related Deleuzian concept of counter-actualisation. Lack of space does not permit me to go into details of Polish art and culture in the early modern period here. Suffice it to say the art historian Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (2004: 149) points out that there is no evidence of national self-identification as we see it today. Indeed, according to the scholar (2004: 149), the logic of identities does not offer a fruitful path of inquiry into Sarmatism. At the same time, the scholar (2004: 146) invokes peasants’ deadjectival self-designation as *tutejsi*—i.e. ‘those from here’—that resonates strongly with the Deleuzoguattarian concept of *haecceity* (thisness) as a non-identitarian mode of individuation.

It is my assertion that by mobilising specific expressive materials such as Sarmatism for an art-philosophical and art-historical fabulation, the present dissertation can attend to the rhythm of qualitative change as it appears in and across Konieczny’s untimely art-work. Sarmatism is thus proposed as a way of illuminating qualitative metamorphosis in Konieczny. In doing so, it gives voice to a fundamental aspect of Konieczny’s art-work—duration as pure transhistorical memory. It is duration that can account for art’s potential to happen transversally, trans-temporally; to open up parallel realities; to effectuate time travel; to actualise and short-circuit connections across time and space in a way pioneered by Deleuze and Guattari’s *plateaus* acting as time-capsules implicated in the logic of multiplicities.

### **3.5.3. Sarmato-Baroque in accounts of encounter with Konieczny’s art**

If the link between Konieczny and Deleuze can be drawn out from the many accounts of encounters with Konieczny’s art as summoned in the previous sections, the Konieczny-Sarmatism link appears in both primary and secondary sources as a mere footnote, a fractal detail.

Firstly, in 1974 Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) presents an artistic elaboration, or ‘appropriation’, of a portrait of a seventeenth-century Polish nobleman, enigmatically called *1672-1974* (cf. different variations of the piece in [Figs. A.62-6]). Secondly, back in 1978 a group of fellow artists from the Netherlands invited to Konieczny’s studio described him as ‘a man with a shiny bald head and a Tatar moustache’ (Sillevis 1979). Furthermore, in

2007, the art critic Michał Woliński (2007: 55) offers a loose comment about *1672-1974*, pointing out that the likeness of a seventeenth-century Polish nobleman constitutes ‘under communism (as well as today), the symbol of conservatism, anti-enlightenment obscurantism and ‘provincial’ opposition against ‘new trends from the West’.

Focusing on Konieczny’s textured reliefs from the 1980s and the 1990s, Woliński makes a series of contradictory claims. The works are seen at once as manifestations of ‘robust sex appeal’ (2007: 56) hiding the latent impulse towards death; ‘works of decadent *passéisme*’ (2007: 55); as well as works associated with the ‘post-modern’ (2007: 55) and ‘pseudo-modern’ (2007: 55). According to Woliński (2007: 56), Konieczny’s artworks,

bring to light that which has been repressed from rational modernity but which remains unconsciously desired. In these aggressive forms, bringing to mind the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Polish *pompa funebris*—provincial, weird, affected (RP *z manierowany* directly translates as mannered) Baroque—hides, beside the pseudo-modern façade of complexes, a desire for death.

The invocation of the seventeenth-century Polish art acts for Woliński as a threshold that intensifies unresolved contradictions brought about by Konieczny’s art. Konieczny’s practices thus constitute, before anything else, ‘*a shock to thought*’ or, in other words, ‘*a nooshock*’ (Deleuze 1997b: 156). This is all the more important because, elsewhere in the text, Woliński (2007: 56) describes Konieczny’s art in terms of ‘alchemical transmutation’. Similarly, when confronted about a possible link between Konieczny and Sarmatism, one of Konieczny’s friends and fellow artists dismissed the supposition as pure non-sense (Każmierczak 1/06/2014). What is at stake in Woliński’s response to Konieczny’s art is the transgressive potential of the seventeenth-century art as a catalyst for multiple becomings collapsing culture into art, death into life, the before and after, dislodging the negative ontology of ‘anti-’ and ‘pseudo-’ and destroying the chronological vision of time.

Most importantly, however, Szwajewska’s (1979) short three-page typewritten text about Konieczny’s practices of the 1970s focusing on the artist’s *Think Crazy* ‘still life’ installation’ [Figs. A.101-3] and *A Million Pyramids* [Figs. A.104-6]—a performance and installation presented by Konieczny in 1976 and 1979—uses the following quotation from Hermann Hesse’s (1974: 67) 1927 novel *Steppenwolf* as a motto:

And if ever the suspicion of their manifold being dawns upon men of unusual powers and of unusually delicate perceptions, so that, as all genius must, they break through the illusion of the unity of the personality and perceive that the self is made up of a bundle of selves, they have only to say so and at once the majority puts them under lock and key, calls science to aid, establishes schizomania and protects humanity from the necessity of hearing the cry of truth from the lips of these unfortunate persons.

Combining analysis with poetic expression in a unique affirmation of encounter, Szwajewska’s text formed part of Konieczny’s submission to the San-Francisco-based *Intermedia Magazine* back in 1979. Most symptomatically, Hesse’s novel is a *Bildungsroman* seen by some scholars as a precursor of post-humanism (cf. Mathäs 2014). Perhaps, it would be more apt to describe the novel in terms of the more-than-human—or, rather, anomalous human or ahuman—since the human is not so much left behind as a predetermined outcome, but opened up to a path on unpredictable metamorphosis. At any rate, what is important is that the particular passage selected by Szwajewska may be seen in terms of an affirmation of the self as the Deleuzoguattarian multiplicity (cf. 2005: 249), a vibratory plateau of diverse micro-perceptions not anchored in a transcendent plan of organisation (cf. 2005: 213). Hesse’s (1974: 46-7) schizoid protagonist Harry—who ‘was a human being, but

nevertheless (...) was in reality a wolf of the Steppes'—might be understood as embarking on a becoming-wolf that entails not an analogy to the animal but a path of qualitative metamorphosis that opens him up to the immanent ontological plane embodied in the vision of the steppes. For the steppe-wolf, the steppe becomes an intensive passage, a vision of forces that compose an intensive manifold. In this sense, it can be argued that Szwajewska, already as early as 1979, introduces becoming-steppe, and so an intensive Sarmatism, as the operative logic of Konieczny's art-work. In this way Szwajewska thematises the resonance between Konieczny, Sarmatism and the Deleuzoguattarian problematics of multiplicities as embodying qualitative change, bringing together *A Million Pyramids* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, created in 1976 and 1980, respectively.

It is worth remembering here that Konieczny's background was in engineering. He obtained his master's degree in industrial and civil engineering from the Silesian Institute of Technology back in 1961 with the specialisation in construction materials and technologies of prefabrication. While his dissertation was titled 'The Design of Large-Scale Buildings', his interest—as Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015; 10/04/2015) recounts—lay in topology and curved spaces. Most symptomatically, Konieczny's artistic practices harness varying mathematical or physical models as their operative diagrams. One can identify here three tendencies: an orientation towards the axiomatic set theory, an orientation towards the problematic logic of multiplicities, and the middle ground of the semi-random Markov's chains. In particular, Konieczny's actions in public space in the late 1960 mobilise set theory, the latter in turn abandoned in favour of the semi-open Markov's chains and an invocation of stochastic processes in his practices from the early 1970s. In turn, throughout the 1970s and the 1980s Konieczny might be said to rethink the stochastic by engaging the logic of manifolds and curved spaces encapsulated in his installation-performance *A Million Pyramids* [Figs. A.104-6]. In this respect, this dissertation's interest in multiplicities parallels Szwajewska's intuitions that led her to invoke Hesse's *Steppenwolf* and an outline of topology by the renowned Polish mathematician Kazimierz Kuratowski in order to give adequate voice to her encounter of Konieczny's art-work.

### 3.6. Conclusions

If this dissertation engages the logic of intensive multiplicities, it might be said to do so on three interconnected levels that affirm a single ontological continuum. First of all, there is the dimension of Konieczny's art-work—its material composition. The material dimension of Konieczny's art-work is, however, inseparable from the process of its encounter as documented in the 'primary' and 'secondary' sources. The third level is constituted by Konieczny's explicit invocation of the scientific conception of manifolds. The three levels—material composition, its encounter and its scientific elaboration— are distinct, yet inseparable.

My dissertation seeks to harness the power of the culture-specific Sarmato-Baroque anachronism as the 'Anomalous' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 249), or, in other words, a vector of metamorphosis. This singular anachronism is deployed here in order to derail the paradigm of the ostensibly culture-neutral, homogenised—and yet precisely expressing the Western, or Atlanticist, hegemony over art as Gržinić never tires to remind us (cf. Gržinić 2010)—art history and aesthetics from their established paths.

Another aim here is to short-circuit patterns of institutional capture stratifying art into the Arts and thus neutralising its potential for bringing about change. Following Deleuze and Guattari's (cf. 2003) case study of Kafka's literature and its project of articulating a politics of resistance oriented toward a future collectivity, I am seeking to extract the seventeenth-century Sarmato-Baroque not as a set forms tied to a specific historical

lineage, but an encounter of the intensive and the untimely forging a bloc of what Deleuze and Guattari (cf. 2003: 16-27 for their elaboration of *minor literature*) call ‘minor’ art, created for a community-yet-to-come.

Furthermore, such a minor gesture offers itself as resistance to a certain post-Romantic lineage in Polish critical studies, most notably encapsulated in Marian Janion’s (1991) project of phantasmatic criticism formulated in the 1980s, or Dariusz Kosiński’s (2007) genealogy of the Polish theatrical tradition. At the same time, this dissertation seeks to provide an alternative account of the subjectivity and event to the one offered by Alain Badiou. Badiou’s account can be considered implicitly Kantian-Romantic in its insistence on the formation of the subject as a generator of truth and the radical, insurmountable gap between the finite and the infinite (cf. Clayton 2013: 113-7). If, for Badiou, being is mathematic—in the sense of the axiomatic set theory—the event is conceived as an exceptional, accidental, extraontological and extramathematical occurrence that can only be affirmed by the active act of its ‘naming’ that produces the militant and activist subject (cf. Smith 2014: 289; O’Sullivan 2012: 126). In fact, as I have hinted at before, Badiou’s formulations inform Ronduda’s (cf. 2009b: 9-10, 14, 20) analysis of the neo-avant-garde artistic duo KwieKulik as well as his new typology of all the Polish neo-avant-garde practices elaborated in the second half of the 2000s (cf. Ronduda 2009a). The scholar links Badiou and KwieKulik through the latter’s professed interest in set theory. If such a gesture might be productive for the case study of KwieKulik, it certainly cannot be viably extended to all the practices of the neo-avant-garde. In particular, Ronduda understands Konieczny’s art-work in terms of ‘conceptual signs of emptiness’ (Ronduda 2010: 153-4). Such an understanding was not corroborated in the course of my case study of Konieczny.

## 4. Deleuze, Guattari and Aesthetics

### 4.1. Deleuzoguattarian philosophy as a catalyst for disciplinary metamorphoses

In the previous sections, I sought to demonstrate that if transcendental empiricism raises the question of genetic conditions of the lived experience, the logic of multiplicities provides a solution, albeit a necessarily problematic and paradoxical one. The Deleuzoguattarian philosophy of multiplicities affirms ontological difference as an ongoing process of differentiation. In doing so, it attends to qualitative change. As Alliez (2004: 92-3), summarises, Deleuze's 'philosophy is indissociable from a theory of intensive multiplicities insofar as intuition as method is an anti-dialectical method of research and affirmation of difference in the play of the actual and the virtual'. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 47), qualitative metamorphosis, understood as 'movement of the infinite', is a dimension evacuated in the philosophical line of transcendence (Plato-Kant-phenomenology) that is the mainstay of much of Western philosophy. As the French thinkers (1994: 47) explain, the philosophies of transcendence posit a dogmatic image of thought in the form of Universal (the Platonic ideal forms, the Kantian transcendental subject, the phenomenological lived body, respectively). The resulting 'proto-beliefs, *Urdoxa, original opinions as propositions*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 142-3, original emphasis) are subsequently inserted at the intersubjective level, and finally at the level various disciplines and fields of human endeavour (1994: 46-7).

### 4.2. Deleuze, Guattari, Konieczny and Aesthetics: an outline

#### 4.2.1. Kantian schemata

As many Deleuzian scholars point out (Zepke 2005: 3, 28; Smith 2014: 8; cf. Deleuze 1994: 68, 285), Deleuzian thought has far-ranging implications for traditional aesthetics. In particular, it overcomes the Kantian split between a theory of sensation (or: the sensible) determining the objective conditions of *possible* experience, as explicated in *Critique of Pure Reason*, and a theory of the beautiful examining the subjective conditions of *actual* experience, as delineated in *Critique of Judgment*. As Deleuze explains (1994: 68), the former 'captures only the real's conformity with possible experience', whereas the latter 'deals with the reality of the real in so far as it is thought'.

Kant (cf. Deleuze 1994: 137) understands perception as action of the pre-existing human faculties working in unison as Common Sense. For Kant, the notion of Common Sense presupposes, as Zepke (2005: 120) points out, a 'self: as [its] unity and ground'. The self legislates the objective identity of the thing perceived; one and the same subject recognises one and the same object. According to Deleuze (1994: 226), the Kantian theory of faculties is grounded upon the notion of self-identical subject correlated with the self-identical object. Such a formulation establishes a static, 'double identity' that can be considered as the dogmatic image of thought. As Smith (2014: 90) summarises, what Deleuze critiques in Kant is precisely the notion of 'the object in general or object = x (...) [as] the objective correlate of the I think or the subjective unity of consciousness'. At the same time, Deleuze is not simply discarding Kant's insights into aesthetics. Instead, he zooms in on the particular Kantian discovery of a discordant moment when chaos sends the human senses into overdrive—the sublime. According to Kant (cf. Deleuze 1994: 146), in the experience of the sublime propelled by the encounter of oceanic or otherwise elemental vastness, Common Sense comes under the assault of chaos. As Deleuze (Deleuze 1994: 320- 321; cf. Zepke 2005: 171) points out, it is precisely at this point that Kant declares that the faculty of

the Imagination reaches its limit-point, which paradoxically allows us to perceive the supersensible transcendental Ideas via the faculty of Reason that now asserts itself. Deleuze reproaches Kant for turning away from this inassimilable alterity of chaos and instead reaching the transcendental high ground of Reason in a kind of revelatory auto-perception (Zepke 2005: 170-1; cf. Deleuze 1994: 170).

In other words, Kant—in order to keep chaos at bay—ultimately posits a certain *Urdoxa* as a transcendent ground for art's operation. In stark contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's art philosophy highlights and harnesses the productive potential of chaos and its unlivable inhuman power via their notion of art as a chaoid membrane whereby 'a chaoid state (...) refers back to a chaos rendered consistent' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 208). In this formulation, 'art takes a bit of chaos in a frame in order to form a composed chaos that becomes sensory, or from which it extracts a chaoid sensation as variety' (1994: 206). Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 204) characterise art in terms of the Joycean 'chaosmos, a composed chaos', while Guattari posits the ongoing ontological and ontogenetic process of chaosmosis as the 'proto-aesthetic paradigm' that is also ethical (Guattari 1995: 101-2). It is worth pointing out here that Guattari's operative proto-aesthetic paradigm is distinct from art's stratification into the arts. As Guattari (1995: 102) handily explains,

we are not referring to institutionalized art, to its works manifested in the social field, but to a dimension of creation in a nascent state, perpetually upstream of itself, its power of emergence subsuming the contingencies and hazards of activities that bring immaterial Universes into being.

Furthermore, what Deleuze and Guattari propose by way of aesthetics is radically different from the tradition of Plato and Kant grounded upon the mode of recognition, re-presentation and the interplay of constituted forms.

#### **4.2.2. Chaosmosis**

The Deleuzian aesthetics of composed chaos overcomes what O'Sullivan (2012: 138) sees as a bar operating between the finite and the infinite instituted by the Kantian and post-Kantian tradition (Lacan, Žižek, Badiou, Hallward) whereby the subject is effectively barred from the infinite, the phenomenon becomes opposed to the noumenon. In turn, recasting art as composed chaos enacts not a bar, not an opposition, but, as O'Sullivan (2012: 138) points out, a fundamental continuity—we might say here as well: a diagram, threshold or interface—between the virtual and the actual. Art, in such a formulation, cuts across the subject—object division and in lieu of the transcendental subject puts in motion the immanent production of multiple subjectivities (cf. Guattari 1995: 21). In fact, as Deleuze (1994: 246) points out, individuation might be considered in Simondonian terms as crystallisations emerging out of the pre-individual metastable field of potentialities as a response to the problem of difference in intensity of its constituent heterogeneous zones (cf. Sauvagnargues 2013: 59-60; Ansell Pearson 1999: 90-1). Furthermore, instead of teleological agency of the pre-constituted subject, Deleuze and Guattari (2005) put forward the notion of *agencement* which might be understood after Massumi (2015: 158) as the transversal agency of the event whereby subjects come into being only as catalysts endowed with 'the power to activate certain constraints and forces that are embedded in the relational field'. Such understanding of *agencement* resonates with Manning's focus on the agency of the process itself as 'agency-ing' (Manning quoted in Massumi 2015: 157). Furthermore, Manning (quoted in Massumi 2015: 157, original emphasis) importantly highlights 'not the agency of the subject, but the *agencement* of the event in its speculatively pragmatic unfolding', explaining that '*agencement* connotes a doing doing itself. You have to understand the event itself as agency-ing'. It is worth pointing out here that Alliez (2012: 9, original emphasis) offers a similar perspective on *agencement*, translating it as 'the *semiotically machined agency*'.



As I have demonstrated above, according to Deleuze (1994: 68, 285), Kant fractures aesthetics into two, mutually incommensurate poles—the theory of the sensible and the theory of the beautiful. On one hand, Kant posits transcendental aesthetics as a theory of all possible experience that addresses the realm of the universal. On the other hand, Kant conceives aesthetics as a theory of actual experience, the feeling of (dis)pleasure as experienced here and now. Deleuze (1994: 68; cf. similar formulation in Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 195-6) in turn responds to Kant by putting forward the novel notion of a non-dualist aesthetics whereby ‘the two senses of the aesthetic become one, to the point where the being of the sensible reveals itself in the work of art, while at the same time the work of art appears as experimentation’. For Deleuze, thus metamorphosed aesthetics is crucial in his philosophical project of transcendental empiricism. Deleuze’s intervention dislodges aesthetics from its traditional representational paradigm tasked with identifying ‘what *can* be represented in the sensible’ (Deleuze 1994: 56, original emphasis). As Deleuze (1994: 56-57) points out, instead of constituting a science of *a priori* sensibility, aesthetics is implicated in transcendental empiricism, allowing us to

apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of* the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity. It is in difference that movement is produced as an ‘effect’, that phenomena flash their meaning like sign.

As Smith (2014: 98) summarises, Deleuzian aesthetics unites the theory of sensation with the theory of art. It is concerned with the genetic virtual conditions of actual experience in such a way that ‘the genetic principles of sensation are (...) at the same time the principles of composition of the work of art; and conversely, it is the structure of the work of art that reveals these conditions’. In this respect, as I have remarked before, Boundas (2006: 14) considers Deleuze’s 1981 case study of Bacon’s paintings as an integral part of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze’s 1968 philosophical manifesto of transcendental empiricism. It is easy to see why this remark is extremely valid. The qualitative diversity of pictorial elements in Bacon’s works (Figure, Ring, Fields of Colour) and well as insights gleaned from Bacon’s painting process itself (cf. Deleuze 2003: 99-110 for his discussion of ‘the diagram’ as elimination of representational clichés associated with the medium by executing random marks and blurring of selected areas): all of these imply, *potentially*, for Deleuze a whole typology of *really* acting ontological forces—isolation, deformation, dissipation—and their differential relations.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 166-7, 195-6), art captures forces and their varying intensities in diverse materials by unfolding the latter’s inherent potential, and composing, enfolding their various elements, thus at once extracting and constructing ‘a bloc of sensations’ affirming ‘a pure being of sensations’ (1994: 167). As Deleuze (cf. 2003: 56-7) makes it clear, however, art does not represent forces that condition it, but catalyses encounter by producing chaotic effects of vibration, resonance and rhythm. All of those effects reside neither in the viewer, as art’s proper subject, nor in the artwork, as art’s proper object. Instead, the effects engage an intensive dimension as a contagion that sweeps both the subject and the object and constitutes their becoming, their ‘common fact’ (2003: 21), to borrow an expression from Deleuze.

Deleuze and Guattari conceive art as a rhythmically vibrating region of composed chaos whose patterns affect and affirm qualitative change. Such an understanding of aesthetics is consonant with Zourabichvili’s (2012: 105) account of Deleuze’s philosophy as a logic of ‘things that are rolled up and unrolled, enveloped and are developed, folded and unfolded, implicated and explicated’. This is because both fields—art and philosophy—are not fixed territories but processes and practices that affirm the logic of multiplicities as a complex vital rhythm. Both fields might thus be understood as affirming the Nietzschean eternal return as addressing ‘a world

of differences implicated one in the other' (Deleuze 1994: 57), although, as Deleuze and Guattari (1994) point out, they tend to do so in different ways—art captures forces through affects whereas philosophy generates concepts. It can be said that the relation between art and philosophy follows the logic of multiplicities. Both affirm what Zourabichvili (2012: 104, original emphasis) summarises as 'the *univocal*, or the possibility of treating the manifold of what exists as universal self-modification (Nature), where each being implicates all the others by responding in its manner to difference as pure question'. In turn, according to Peter Hallward (2006: 8), Deleuze puts forward an affirmative philosophy that 'equates being with unlimited creativity', which paves way for consideration of all being in terms of an art-work.

#### 4.2.3. **Onto-aesthetics: an introduction**

The co-implication of aesthetics and ontology, art and philosophy in Deleuze and Guattari has been mapped out by scholars such as Éric Alliez, Dan Smith, Anne Sauvagnargues, Dorothea Olkowski, Ronald Bogue, Erin Manning, Brian Massumi, Stephen Zepke, Elizabeth Grosz and Simon O'Sullivan. In fact, since the 1990s, starting with Alliez's 1993 *Signature of the World*, the Francophone and Anglophone academic world at both sides of the Atlantic has yielded numerous encounters with the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari as it relates to art. It was not however until Zepke's 2005 *Art as Abstract Machine* that the term *onto-aesthetics*—defined as 'the co-implication of ontology and aesthetics in art as abstract machine' (Zepke 2005: 4) was expressly used.

The seminal *Deleuze Critical Reader* published in 1996, a year after Deleuze's death, contained important articles relevant to art, such as useful overviews of Deleuze's aesthetics by Ronald Bogue and Dan Smith as well as an important discussion of affect in Deleuze by Massumi. Publications throughout the 2000s tended in turn to focus on lineages of Nietzsche, Spinoza and Bergson in Deleuze (cf. Zepke 2005, O'Sullivan 2006, Sauvagnargues 2013 [2005]), whereas publication in the 2010s set out to unravel the Deleuzian threads of Whitehead (cf. Manning and Massumi 2014), Simondon and von Uexküll as well as paying closer attention to Guattari's thought (cf. Alliez et al. 2011). What all these publications have in common is a certain tendency, more or less pronounced, towards a radical reconfiguration of the very mode of research into aesthetics. The publications do not attempt to trace a closed system of categories as extracted from Deleuze and Guattari, but instead embark on a practice of experimentation parallel to art. The works crystallise their respective arguments around selected Deleuzoguattarian concepts or philosophical lineages, creatively responding to—and, in the process, qualitatively changing—Deleuze and Guattari. By simultaneously constructing and expressing the co-extensive, co-creative realm between the artistic and the ontological creativity, onto-aesthetics extend Deleuzian and Guattarian thought as a multiplicity in ceaseless variation.

What onto-aesthetics brings to art research is an understanding that it is impossible to provide a generalised, overarching theory of art as divorced from the actual art-works. As Grosz (2008: 4-5, original emphasis) points out, Deleuze does not develop aesthetics as 'a theory *of* art, a reflection *on* art' whereby art becomes fossilised as an object in a fixed 'master discipline'. Building on insights from Deleuze, Irigaray and Darwin, Grosz (2008: 2) seeks to create

a nonaesthetic philosophy for art, a philosophy appropriate to the arts that neither replaces art history and criticism nor claims to provide an assessment of the value, quality, or meaning of art, but instead addresses the common forces and powers of art, the regions of overlap between the various arts and philosophy.

What is at stake in onto-aesthetics is thus a philosophy that ‘work[s] *with* art or perhaps as and alongside art’ (2008: 4, original emphasis). As Grosz suggests (2008: 1), art ontology focuses on ‘the material and conceptual structures, of art’ which at the same time reveal art’s conditions of emergence located in the realm of the cosmological, ‘evolutionary and material forces’ (2008: 1), ‘the forces of the earth and of the living body’ (2008: 4).

#### **4.2.4. Art as a capture of forces**

Grosz’s formulation can serve as a useful example highlighting the importance of forces in different cartographies of Deleuze’s aesthetic thought. In fact, the notion of art as a capture of forces in expressive materials is of utmost importance in the Deleuzian perspective. Deleuze (2003: 56) makes it abundantly clear throughout his work that ‘in art, and in painting as in music, it is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces’. Thus conceived art might be considered as an embodiment of the logic of multiplicities since actual differences between artistic modes all respond to the shared problem of forces. As Deleuze (2003: 56) points out, ‘there is a community of the arts, a common problem (...) of harnessing forces’. Therefore, the ‘pluralism = monism’ formula can be transposed as ‘the arts = art’.

According to Sauvagnargues (2013: 38-9), Deleuze’s conception of art as a capture of forces combines two philosophical trajectories. On one hand, it is a question of Nietzsche’s semiology of force relations; and, on the other hand, of Spinoza’s ethical determination of affects, i.e. intensive variations in power. Art thus becomes for Deleuze ‘a composition of material force relations, or speed [the longitude], and the latitude of power or affect’ (2013: 38). Consequently, as Sauvagnargues (2013: 38- 39) sees it, Deleuze puts forward the conception of the artistic image as ‘the affect of force’, operating on signs understood as symptoms of differential relationships between forces. As Sauvagnargues (2013: 39) points out, the Deleuzian philosophy of art might thus be said to

expel the sign from the transcendent plane of sense in order to expose it on the material plane of forces. It is no longer a question of signifier or signified, nor form or matter, but forces and materials, in accordance with Simondon’s principle of modulation. (...) [What] count[s] in art are the materials capable of detecting forces that become more and more intense and affects that emit these configurations, percepts or visions of art. Since the affect designates this ethological mode of power that corresponds to such a state of forces, or images, we can define art as the affect of an image.

Similarly, Grosz sees art as ‘the art of affect more than representation, a system of dynamized and impacting forces’ (2008: 3) that ‘intensifies and eternalizes or monumentalizes, sensation’ (2008: 4) by ‘the regulation and organization of its materials’ (2008: 4) that ‘enables matter to become expressive’ (2008:4). In the same vein, Bogue (1996) talks about the Deleuzian ‘aesthetics of force’, while O’Sullivan (2001)—drawing on Massumi’s invocation of ‘the autonomy of affect’ (cf. Patton 1996)—invokes ‘the aesthetics of affect’.

All those diverse cartographies of Deleuzian aesthetics can be usefully encapsulated by Sauvagnargues’ (2013) notion of art as ‘the affect of force’ or ‘the affect of an image’. Such a formulation affirms the Deleuzoguattarian (1994: 204) understanding of art as an in-between zone of ‘composed chaos’. Furthermore, the conception of art as the affect of force points towards the logic of multiplicities understood as operating at a threshold between the virtual and the actual, or as an ongoing creative process of actualisation of the virtual according to divergent lines. As Massumi points out (cf. Alliez and Massumi 2014), art can be understood processually as mo(ve)ments of generation of new worlds at the threshold of the virtual and the actual. For Massumi (2002: 43), ‘it is the edge of the virtual, where it leaks into actual, that counts. For that seeping edge is where potential, actually, is found’.

Deleuzian onto-aesthetics is seething with such generative thresholds—suffice it to mention concepts such as zones of indiscernibility, crystal-images, prosthesis-organs or the diagram in Bacon’s paintings. By focusing on art as the realm of the onto-aesthetic fields of emergence and their generative thresholds thinkers such as Massumi, Zepke and O’Sullivan show that art is not simply an expression of forces that condition it but constitutes a living zone or entity, a bloc of sensation that emits affects and percepts through vibrations of their constituent materials.

As Bogue (2003: 165) points out, Deleuze’s aesthetics combines the notion of force with the notion of sensation. According to Deleuze (2003: 56),

force is closely related to sensation: for a sensation to exist, a force must be exerted on a body, on a point of the wave. But if force is the condition of sensation, it is nonetheless not the force that is sensed, since the sensation gives something completely different from the forces that condition it.

Deleuze (2003: 62) further elaborates on this relation noting that ‘when (...) sensation confronts the invisible force that conditions it, it releases a force that is capable of vanquishing the invisible force, or even befriending it’. As we have seen in the previous paragraphs, this detection or capture of forces and their simultaneous redoubling in resonant sensation is already implied in Deleuze’s notion of composed chaos. In turn, the notion of composed chaos refers back to Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism and the logic of multiplicities defined in *Difference and Repetition* as ‘complexes of coexistence’ (Deleuze 1994: 186).

#### **4.2.5. Bloc of sensation, percept, affect**

For Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 154), art is a compounded or composed sensation necessarily involving percepts and affects. By invoking percepts and affects, the formulation performs a radical deformation of the Kantian schemata of the human faculties whereby the pre-existing, transcendental human subject recognises the self-identical object. As Zepke (2005: 178) summarises, ‘perceptions and affections are (...) subjective responses to objects’. If for Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 166) ‘percepts, (...) are not perceptions referring to an object (reference)’, it is because art is not founded upon the logic of representation but acts on forces. Percept might be understood in terms of ‘experience enlarged or even gone beyond’ (Deleuze 2002: 37) in the sense that ‘by means of the material’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 167) it emancipates the agency of ‘*nonhuman landscapes of nature*’ (1994: 169, original emphasis) from ‘a state of those who undergo them’ (1994: 164). In other words, percepts are decoupled from the Kantian Subject–object schemata, i.e. ‘the states of a perceiving subject’ effectuating ‘perceptions of objects’ (1994: 167). Deleuze and Guattari turn to literature for examples of percepts. What is at stake, for example, in Melville’s ‘oceanic percepts’ in *Moby Dick* (1994: 168-9) are not perceptions experienced *by* the author, or the literary characters, *of* the ocean, the city, the moor, the steppe, etc., but a generation and expression of ‘the landscape before man, in the absence of man’ (1994: 169). What is at stake in percepts is human subjects and their (literary and artistic) avatars ‘becom[ing] universes’ (1994: 169) by passing into inhuman landscapes which now surpass them and possess their own vital agency.

In turn, affects are different from affections, the latter referring to feelings tied to, and issuing from, a subject. Zepke (2005: 178) usefully summarises affections as ‘the subjective increases or decreases of power (feelings) a perception induces’. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 164), affects ‘go beyond the strength of those who undergo them’ and thus surpass the phenomenological schemata of the lived body and the lived experience (1994: 178). What is at issue in affects are ‘*nonhuman becomings of man*’ (1994: 169, original emphasis). In

other words, affects might be understood in terms of the Spinozian unfolding of the body's virtual potentialities and thus undergoing *actual* qualitative change in the sense of launching the untimely 'process of becoming (...) the Other, our becoming-other' (1994: 112). Such a qualitative metamorphosis is exemplified in the becoming-whale of Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby Dick* (cf. 1994: 169).

As many Deleuzian scholars emphasise, percept and affect together make up two coupled, interpenetrating and co-implicated angles or 'pincers' (Zepke 2005: 180) of artistic composition, of onto-aesthetic creativity. As Deleuze and Guattari make clear (1994: 182), 'the clinch of forces as percepts and becomings as affects are completely complementary' and so the percept 'make[s] perceptible the imperceptible forces that populate the world, affect us, and make us become'. Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 169) formulate this idea of mutual reciprocation succinctly when they assert that in art 'we are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero'. The generative process of becoming as art's affect corresponds to—and is necessarily related to—the grip of cosmic forces (cf. Zepke 2005: 183) elaborated and affirmed as art's percept. Art can be thus conceived as a certain threshold, or a resonance box, which puts co-existent percepts and affects into mutual resonance. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 183), 'the being of sensation is [therefore] (...) the compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos, of man's nonhuman becomings, and of the ambiguous house that exchanges and adjusts them, makes them whirl around like winds'.

As we have seen, Deleuze and Guattari understand art as a bloc of sensations composed of percepts and affects. However, they also emphasise that both percepts and affects are 'autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience or have experienced them' (1994: 168), '*beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived' (1994: 164, original emphasis). Furthermore, what is at stake in art is 'the self-positioning of the created, which is preserved in itself' (1994: 164). In other words, art as a constructed compound must '*stand up on its own*' (1994: 164, original emphasis). What emerges from all the above remarks is a consistent formulation of art as endowed with real existence. Art is an autonomous life, a being in the world whose mode of existence falls outside of the subject and the object dichotomy. Art and its cosmic, inhuman agency emancipates life from the lived experience, and what Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 369, 408-10) call after Simondon the 'hylomorphic' schema or model, i.e. the dualist logic of inert, homogenous, passive matter that receives transcendent, fixed form as in the operation of moulding. Zepke (cf. 2005: 179) strongly emphasises nonhuman potentialities implied by the Deleuzian formulation of art as a bloc of sensation. It is precisely the nonhuman dimension that makes art 'a kind of bio-politics, an experimentation with life as it is lived' (2005: 9), and hence 'a bio-aesthetics' (2005: 183). If art constitutes 'a life'—to summon here the title of Deleuze's last essay (cf. 2000b)—Deleuze and Guattari might be said to put forward a *vital* aesthetics operating at the level of matter-force relations revealing form as intensive. For the two thinkers (cf. 1994: 183), art engages forcefields through the catalyst, or the developing liquid, of its expressive materials.

What is more, Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 182) embark on their project of vital aesthetics by co-opting ideas of the German art historian William Worringer and, in particular, his understanding of Gothic art as 'the abstract and infinite northern line, the line of the universe that forms ribbons, strips, wheels, and turbines, an entire vitalized geometry, *rising to the intuition of mechanical forces*, constituting a powerful nonorganic life'. The notion of art as nonorganic life offers resistance to the conception of the necessarily organised body (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 411)—i.e. a body hierarchically divided into a set of organs performing their allocated, fixed

functions—as the dogmatic image of thought that finds its correlate in organic forms in art as its representations or figurations. In art, ostensibly organic motifs—be it animal, plant, or molecular—are not representational or figurative, but they are contiguous with, and affirmative of, the grip of forces. As Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 183) point out, ‘according to Worringer, the abstract line of force is rich in animal motifs. Animal, plant, and molecular becomings correspond to cosmic or cosmogenetic forces: to the point that the body disappears into the plain color’.

What is important to note here is that Zepke (2005: 154-6; cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 11) correlates Deleuze’s conception of art as an affirmation of forces with Guattari’s invocation and re-evaluation of the notion of ‘autopoiesis’, i.e. the concept of a self-regulating entity taken from the biologists Maturana and Varela (Zepke 2005: 225). In fact, Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 11; cf. Ansell Pearson 1999: 168-70) highlight autopoiesis—understood in terms of ‘self-positing’—as the ontological condition shared across the whole spectrum of beings. As the thinkers (1994: 11) point out, ‘creation and self-positing mutually imply each other because what is truly created, from the living being to the work of art, thereby enjoys a self-positing of itself, or an autopoietic characteristic by which it is recognized’.

In lieu of summary, one might summon here useful insights offered by the Italian aesthetician Marco Perniola. As Perniola (2013: 133) points out, seen from the point of view of the history of the twentieth-century aesthetics, the Deleuzoguattarian ideas mark a profound reconfiguration of the notion of *feeling* that becomes distinguished from its ‘subjective, personal, dimension (...) manifested in perceptions and emotions’, and instead is posited in terms of a ‘de-subjectivized and impersonal’ dimension. According to Perniola (2013: 133), Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of *feeling*, together with formulations of Irigaray and Derrida, affirms ‘the turn from the level of the psychic and phenomenological to the physiological’.

#### **4.2.6. Conclusions**

The Deleuzoguattarian onto-aesthetics overcomes the Kantian divide between the *general* theory of the sensible, the very being of the sensible, and the theory of the *actual* work of art, the pure being of sensation. This is accomplished by ‘making becoming the being of a work of art’, as Zepke (2005: 5) summarises. This truly avant-gardist formulation unities art and life by rendering the aesthetic composition ontological and thus making art affirm and ‘penetrate [life] in its enterprise of co-creation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 169). Accordingly, the percept operates on, and simultaneously extends or constructs, the virtual plane of forces ‘as the real conditions of the affect, the actual becoming expressing this plane’ (Zepke 2005:180). In turn, as Zepke explains (2005: 181), in thus composed sensation, ‘the infinity of the Chaosmos (percept) is immanent to the finite material which expresses it (affect)’.

### **4.3. Onto-aesthetics as a logic of multiplicities: the art of multiplicities**

#### **4.3.1. Introduction**

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 188), art does not presuppose an ontologically separate abstract plane that is subsequently actualised, incarnated or manifested in a given art-work. Indeed, art ‘entails a vast plane of composition that is not abstractly preconceived but constructed as the work progresses opening, mixing, dismantling, and reassembling increasingly unlimited compounds in accordance with the penetration of cosmic forces’. For Deleuze—in counter-distinction from Kant—art does not split into the transcendental conditions of all experience, on one hand, and the subjective conditions of actual experience, on the other. Instead, art’s

composition constitutes *real* experience that affirms its implicit *real* genetic conditions.

The Deleuzoguattarian onto-aesthetics, whose many accounts I have summoned in the previous paragraphs, may in fact be productively restated in terms of the logic of multiplicities whose outline I have presented as part of my exposition of the fundamental philosophical themes in Deleuze. If multiplicities can be defined as that which does not fall back on preconceived essences or units of measure but unfolds through progressive differentiation, they may also be said to affirm—both address and construct, capture and compose—relations between forces. Furthermore, an art-work, through its rhythmical sensations, may be considered a virtual multiplicity as it ‘divides up and does so constantly: (...) But it does not divide up without changing in kind, it changes in kind in the process of dividing up’ (Deleuze 2002: 42).

#### **4.3.2. Stephen Zepke: art as an art machine**

In fact, Zepke (2005: 5) suggests something parallel when he puts forward the notion of art as an art machine ‘express[ing] an infinite plane (...) [via] actual becoming whose very *specificity* and *precision* involves or infolds or a change in its real conditions’. Zepke’s invocation of the aspects of precision and specificity correspond to the Deleuzian (1994: 171, 182-3) characterisation of multiplicities in *Difference and Repetition* as ‘defined’ and thus following the principle of complete determination. Furthermore, the characterisation of the art-work as an intensive multiplicity embodying the monism = pluralism formula corresponds to Zepke’s (2005: 5) understanding of art as a necessarily doubled, yet operating on a single plane, abstract machine which performs the simultaneous autogenetic expression and construction of the world: an ‘ongoing expression of life in the construction of living machines’. In other words, for Zepke (2005: 5) as for Deleuze, art ‘expresses the autogenetic and infinite processuality of its real conditions (the infinite, cosmic world), which appear as the construction of *this* reality, *this* art-work’. If Zepke’s ‘abstract machine expresses the infinite, but also constructs it, right here right now’, it also embodies Alliez’s (2004: 14) useful formula for Deleuzian philosophy, ‘Expression = Construction’. For Zepke (2005: 180), in art’s machine, the processes of expression and construction go hand in hand, corresponding to percept’s machinic ‘cosmicization of forces’ and affect’s effectuating ‘molecularisation of matter in a non human becoming’, respectively. Zepke (2005: 180) not only restates the Deleuzoguattarian notion of art as a compound of sensations in terms of the logic of multiplicities, but also he sees its twin dimensions, percept and affect, in accordance with the theory of content and expression elaborated in *A Thousand Plateaus*, as forging ‘new traits of expression’ and ‘new traits of content’, respectively. Consequently, ultimately what Zepke extracts from Deleuze and Guattari is the conception of art as a *real* mechanism or process for immanent creation of new worlds based on its underlying operative dynamics of the co-implicated Expression and Construction, a composition combining virtual genesis and actual structure. As Zepke sees it (2005: 220), art can thus be defined as ‘a compositional process creating new realities, constructing a work that expresses the world, and expressing in a work the unending construction of the universe’. The creative artistic process is non-teleological and autogenetic in the sense that ‘the becoming of the world is expressed in a construction which works upon its own conditions’ (2005: 5).

#### **4.3.3. Anne Sauvagnargues: art as haecceities**

If Deleuze and Guattari define art as a coupling of percepts and affects, Zepke approaches this co-implication through the notion of abstract machine he takes from *A Thousand Plateaus*. In turn, Sauvagnargues (2013: 38, 42) approaches the problem of art from the perspective of the Deleuzoguattarian (2005: 540-1) notion of *haecceity* derived from Duns Scotus, which designates a mode of individuation distinct from identity-formation.

As Sauvagnargues (2013: 42; cf. Deleuze 1988: 122-7) points out, haecceity can be defined both kinetically and dynamically, which corresponds to its two aspects: longitude and latitude, respectively. The former, also called ‘speed’, refers to a material composition of forces, a configuration of force relations in terms of their relative ‘speeds and slownesses’, as Spinoza calls them (Deleuze 1988: 123). In turn, the latter refers to ‘power’, i.e. variation (degree) of intensity in the sense of the capacity of the body to affect and be affected. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 261) explain, haecceity designates

a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. (...) A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They (...) consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected.

Sauvagnargues correlates the twinned coordinates of a haecceity, its longitude and latitude, with the two dimensions of the Deleuzoguattarian formulation of art as a bloc of sensations: percept and affect, respectively. She (2013: 39) concludes that ‘[s]ince the affect designates this ethological mode of power that corresponds to such a state of forces, or images, we can define art as the affect of an image’. In other words, for Sauvagnargues (2013: 43), affect refers to ‘an ethics of power’, whereas percept belongs to ‘a semiotics of forces’, which I might also usefully call here ‘force-signs’. Echoing Zepke, Sauvagnargues understands percept as exposing relations between forces and affect as constructively redoubling those relations and hence effecting qualitative change. Thus, as (2013: 46) she sees it,

art is not confined to the capturing of longitudes, but allows them to be expressed as latitude. It is not simply a matter of rendering imperceptible forces perceptible by exposing their longitude, but of rendering their latitude subjective and delightful by introducing the intensity of power, which doubles their force relations.

Finally, Sauvagnargues (2005: 42) correlates art’s percept with longitude understood as extensive multiplicity, and affect—with latitude approached as intensive multiplicity and a temporal vector. Clearly, such a formulation invokes Deleuze’s examination of Bergson’s processual ontology in *Bergsonism*. Sauvagnargues’ formulation corresponds to Bergson’s (Deleuze 2002: 31-32) famous analysis of a lump of sugar at once in terms of differences in degree and differences in kind. The difference in degree addresses the aspect of ‘augmentation’ or ‘diminution’, i.e. the lump’s metrically conceived spatial configuration and weight. In turn, the difference in nature refers to the aspect of ‘alteration in relation to itself’ (2002: 92), i.e. sugar’s particular capacity to dissolve over time upon its contact with liquids at a certain temperature. The two dimensions of a multiplicity are distinct but co-implicated and together work to launch a mode of individuation that ensures the emergence of qualitative change. As Sauvagnargues (2013: 42) summarises, ‘latitude expresses the threshold of power’s intensive variation, which results in extrinsic modifications, or encounters that create the body’.

#### **4.3.4. Manning, Massumi, Alliez: art as agencement and diagrammatics**

Last but not least, Manning, Massumi (cf. 2015) as well as Alliez all approach onto-aesthetics from the point of view of the Deleuzoguattarian notion of agencement. In particular, Alliez (2012, original emphasis) develops his own concept of ‘diagrammatic agency’ as a resistance to what he sees as the more traditional, post-Kantian ‘aesthetic regime’. For this purpose, he mobilises the concept of agencement he defines as ‘the *semiotically machined agency*’, on one hand; and the notion of the diagram as developed in *A Thousand Plateaus* and Deleuze’s case study of Bacon’s paintings, on the other. Alliez subsequently argues for a ‘diagrammatics’ of art as an alternative to ‘aesthetics’.



#### 4.3.5. **Onto-aesthetics: contributions and new directions**

The present section seeks to assess the contribution of Deleuzian scholars towards our understanding of art and subsequently map out new directions in onto-aesthetic research. It is clear to me that contemporary accounts of Deleuzoguattarian onto-aesthetics by scholars such as Zepke and Sauvagnargues bring into relief ways in which it overcomes the pitfalls of Kantian transcendental aesthetics by drawing attention to art as an interface, interference or membrane of *virtual* forces as percepts, effecting real, *actual*, material, qualitative change as affects. This complex formulation condenses three distinctive philosophical lineages in its endeavour to overcome the Kantian duality. In particular, Deleuze's onto-aesthetics as Zepke (2005) and Sauvagnargues (2013) see it, mobilises the Nietzschean notion of eternal return; an ontology of becoming implied by Spinoza's philosophy of expressionism, as encapsulated in the dictum *Deus sive natura*, i.e. 'God or nature'; and, last but not least, Bergson's vitalism.

The Deleuzoguattarian post-structuralist onto-aesthetics and its various rhythms and variations—as encapsulated by a wide array of researchers attending to the energetic potentiality of forces and qualitative change—should be at the same time firmly differentiated from the post-modern aesthetics of Rancière and Bourriaud. According to Alliez (2012: 7, 10), Rancière's thought institutes a post-Romantic 'aesthetic regime' grounded on an aesthetics of form, or 'form-signs', to the exclusion of 'forces-signs' and their 'semiotics of intensities'. What Alliez identifies in Rancière as the 'aesthetic regime' operates at the level of discursive registers, imaginary resemblance and metaphorical displacement, reducing art to a 'dialectical play of textual excess with regard to the defiguring/defigured life of forms'. In turn, according to Alliez (2010: 88), Bourriaud's project of *relational aesthetics* is grounded upon a recuperation of art of the 1990s mobilised in the name of what Alliez sees as its 'micropolitics of intersubjectivity' and values of conviviality. Alliez sees relational aesthetics as 'a populism of the multitude' (2010: 87) that enlists Guattari's ideas in order to re-establish the idea of the transcendental Subject and Form encapsulated in Bourriaud's concept of 'the radican' (2010: 99). Alliez sees Bourriaud's philosophy of art as an essentially post-Romantic gesture that, in counter-distinction from perspectives on art current in the 1960s, denies art its potential for revolutionary change and real metamorphosis.

The previous sections sought to present various formulations of art philosophy inspired by Deleuze and Guattari. In conclusion, it might be said that what all the above-mentioned onto-aesthetic conceptual trajectories bring into relief is a profound shift in thinking aesthetics beyond the Kantian-Romantic and post-Romantic paradigm. What is at stake in onto-aesthetics—as it is conceived by contributions of Smith, Zepke, O'Sullivan, Sauvagnargues, Alliez, Massumi and Manning—is not an attempt to formulate a theory of art in the sense of delineation of universally applicable categories. Instead, what is proposed by onto-aesthetics is a process of generation of concepts adequate to the thing, the art-work at hand. Such a formulation is in line with the Deleuzoguattarian understanding of the philosophical concept as condensing the conditions of emergence of a given thing.

#### 4.3.6. **Conclusions: towards an onto-aesthetics**

The onto-aesthetic perspective also informs the present dissertation which stages an encounter with Deleuze and Guattari according to the logic of multiplicities. It is hoped that a new mapping of the Deleuzoguattarian thought will emerge in the process as a multiplicity progressively differentiated through the encounter with Konieczny and Tatar Baroque. In fact, through my dissertation I would like to consider the notion of both art and aesthetics in terms intensive multiplicities gravitating towards ever-new fields and contexts, '*continually transforming*

[themselves] *into a string of other multiplicities, according to [their] thresholds and doors*' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 249, original emphasis). Such onto-aesthetic practice could resonate with Ronald Bogue's project of 'globalism' and 'nomadic research' understood as generating multiple loci of what Deleuze and Guattari call '*local absolute*' (2005: 382, original emphasis) treated as 'a site of proliferation towards unlimited horizons' (Bogue 2007: 135) extending into an open Whole 'beyond those of any one of the sites' (2007: 136). What the logic of multiplicities implies for art research is precisely this—the need to attend to the local absolutes. The latter might be productively understood as infinitesimal fractal worlds implied by the individuality of a specific, given art-work necessarily enveloped in multiple virtual material processes. At this stage, for the purposes of approaching Konieczny's art, one might invoke Sauvagnargues' (2013: 42) understanding of haecceity as a model of individuation whereby 'each individual [art-work] is composed of infinite, extensive parts that belong to it within *one* particular relationship'.

The particular research perspective of this dissertation might be provisionally, and perversely, brought under the rubric of '*onto-aesthetics*' as a marker of its perpetual effort of differentiation from the hegemonic research preoccupations of some approaches within contemporary aesthetics. The present dissertation seeks to effect a mutation in the globalised art discourse by widening the evidential base for art research as fodder for creative fabulation.

## 5. Conclusion

The goal of my dissertation is to attend to qualitative change in Konieczny as a resistance to formalisations of the individual and the social milieus offered by many strategies of analysis in the humanities, encapsulated, for example, by historical readings, ideological critique or approaches grounded upon the schema of positionality. The logic of multiplicities is a useful way of approaching Konieczny since it embodies the idea of the mutual co-implication of the ontological difference in intensity and the singular circumstance, qualitative diversity. The invocation of Sarmatism in Konieczny as intensive variation available to the singular set of spatio-temporal coordinates—Poland, the 1970s, etc.—draws attention to becomings produced in his art-work as necessarily mobilising, in the words of Deleuze (1995: 44), ‘races, tribes, continents, history, and geography, always some social frame’. Indeed, the present dissertation subscribes to the understanding of qualitative metamorphosis as a schizoid voyage produced in—and, at the same time, expanding—the social field. Such a conception constitutes the fundamental tenet of the Deleuzoguattarian *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project. The aim of the dissertation is to map out Konieczny’s metamorphoses as ‘a cartography that is coextensive with the whole social field. (...) [a] diagram [as] a spatio-temporal multiplicity’ (Deleuze 2006a: 34). In other words, the present dissertation diagrams qualitative change in the real as a logic of sensation and an ethology of cultures.

Written at a time when the parameters of Polish participation in global modernity are being hastily and drastically redrawn, the dissertation offers qualitative change as an alternative to ‘Good Change’, a slogan used by the present state authorities in Poland to suggest its program of profoundly undemocratic institutional, social and cultural transformation. Against this virulent takeover of the potential for change by the state apparatus—ensuing in the situation whereby the notion of change is posed as a function and correlate of moral judgment—I would like to offer a more affirmative, ethical stance by putting forward Deleuze’s (1988: 33-5, 71) Spinozist conception of ‘good’ encounter as vital experiment which enhances the capacity of the body to affect and be affected, a transitioning. Rather than seeking to perform an interpretation of Konieczny according to abstract, fixed and pre-existing criteria, this dissertation assumes responsibility for giving an account of Konieczny’s ‘ethics of becoming-imperceptible’, to borrow an expression from Rosi Braidotti (2006). All that can be hoped for as far as the analysis of Konieczny’s art practices is concerned is precisely this: an ethology of a transitioning.

## ***PART B: ETHOLOGY OF CULTURES***

### **Chapter 2: Sarmatism: a topology**

The following chapter seeks to provide an overview of the problem of Sarmatism—or, rather the Sarmato-Baroque—in Polish art and culture. I am not seeking here to develop an essentialist account of this nuanced, rippling, inchoate and manifold vital phenomenon. Therefore, rather than trying to essentialise it, I wish to affirm Sarmatism as an elusive event spanning three centuries and still exerting real influence in Polish culture but at the same time as ‘something’ that is fundamentally unquantifiable and inchoate. Such characterisation of Sarmatism is consistent with the Deleuzian (1990: 148-153) formulation of the double structure of the event that at once has ‘the present moment of its actualization’ (1990: 151) and perpetually eludes the chronological, linear, unidirectional and successive present grounded in persons, individuals, things. The incorporeal dimension of the event inhabits an impersonal, simultaneous and bidirectional past-future as something that at once has already happened and is about to happen. Simply put, the event ‘happens to things’ (1990: 24) as Chronos—in other words, is embodied in the actual states of affairs—but at the same time persists, subsists and insists virtually as the unlimited time of Aion (1990: 53). Sarmatism is an event that does not possess a fixed, determinate essence, but at the same time can be individuated by haecceity. Sarmatism constitutes a certain plateau of intensity that ‘maps out a range of circumstances (...) in which things happen: in what situations, where and when (...), how does it happen’ (1995: 25-26). At the same time, the inchoate insistence of Sarmatism as ‘something’, a haecceity, must be firmly distinguished from its conceptualisation in negative terms—as ‘nothing’ and a ‘lack’ (cf. Sowa 2011: 259-73)

The present chapter sets out to map out the circumstances of emergence of Sarmatism, its line of mutation as well as its variable dimensions. Such a formulation was undertaken by the Polish art historian Tadeusz Mańkowski (1946) in his seminal work *A Genealogy of Sarmatism* where he discusses the event in terms of ‘Historical Fiction’, ‘Ideas and Types’, ‘Elements of Sarmatism’ as well as ‘Triumph and Fall’ tracing the variations of its intensity. The work concludes Mańkowski’s refusal to assign a precise essence to the Sarmatian phenomenon. Interestingly, Mańkowski’s non-essentialist characterisation of Sarmatism in 1946 gave way around 1950 by the paradigm of essentialism, most notably present in the work of the Polish historian Tadeusz Ulewicz (cf. 2006) who analyses Sarmatism in terms of hierarchically structured and mutually exclusive categories. The present chapter reclaims the line of Mańkowski’s (1946: 163-6) productive aporia—if we do not know what Sarmatism is, at the same time we do not yet know what it can do. The Sarmato-Baroque can thus be considered as an *n*-dimensional multiplicity, a joining-together of heterogeneous elements. As Deleuze (1997b: 254-5) argues, building on Nietzsche, ‘if we want to grasp an event, we must not show it, we must not pass along the event, but plunge into it, go through all the geological layers that are its internal history’. However, if the chapter sets out to attend to the open-ended character of the Sarmatian event and mine the ‘stratigraphic’ or ‘telluric landscape composed of its many ‘archaeological layers’ (1997b: 254-6), it must also necessarily include a history of its capture by the state apparatus and a range of academic conceptualisations.

## 1. Sarmatism: an outline

In a nutshell, Sarmatism can be characterised as a hybrid cultural formation (cf. Borowski 2001: 175) of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between the sixteenth and eighteenth century connected to a belief that the members of Polish gentry were descended from a tribe of warlike Asiatic nomads in antiquity inhabiting the steppes north of the Black Sea. When in the sixteenth century Poland entered into a union with Lithuania, the vector of Polish culture turned East, towards the Ottomans and the Crimean Khanate (cf. Zamoyski 1987, Biedrońska-Słota 2010, Ulewicz 2006, Mańkowski 1946, Ostrowski 1999). Since the late fourteenth century, Lithuanians had in fact been encouraging the settlement of Turco-Mongol tribes, the Lipka Tatars. One might say that the inclusion of Tatars was a key moment in development of Polish cultural trajectory in the early modernity. At the time that saw the birth of the capitalist ethics of thrift in the West, Poland significantly deviated from the paradigm of Western culture. Sarmatism—combining a belief in Central Asian origin of Polish nobility with a hybrid Orientalised lifestyle—incurred much criticism from Polish Enlightenment thinkers in the eighteenth century as an epitome of provincial backwardness (cf. Sowa 2011: 261). Most interesting, the term ‘Sarmatism’ did not surface until the eighteenth century as a deprecatory term assigned *après le fait* as a vehicle of Enlightenment critique against what was perceived as the backwardness of the Polish gentry (Borowski 2001: 175-6; Sowa 2011: 261).

The present chapter sets to excavate the layers of the Sarmatian fabulation—together with its Herodotian, archaeological and paleogenetic plateaus—as well as, inseparable from this fabulation, its attendant plane of artistic composition, the Sarmato-Baroque. The chapter will be concluded by the presentation of a range of interpretations of Sarmatism and its relation to modernity.

## 2. Sarmato-fabulation

Sarmatism was a hybrid cultural formation of the Polish gentry that lasted for almost three centuries, roughly corresponding to the periods of Renaissance, Baroque and Enlightenment. In the aftermath of the formal union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Great Duchy of Lithuania—the culmination of a long process initiated in 1385—given the Byzantine influences and Tatar settlements in the latter, Poland decidedly shifted its alignment towards the (south)east (Onians 2004: 158; Żygulski 1999: 69). In the course of the three centuries, the Commonwealth charted a trajectory, in the words of the historian Adam Zamoyski, from the learned ‘Kingdom of Erasmus’ (1987: 105) and Copernicus, with close cultural and intellectual ties to the West, towards the development of a distinctive vernacular multi-ethnic civilisation oriented towards the Ottoman Empire. The ensuing ‘Oriental Baroque’ (1987: 189), marked by autarchic feudalism and egalitarianism amongst nobility, set Poland drastically at odds with the early modern Europe of thrift, colonisation and newly emergent capitalism. The turbulent seventeenth century saw the Commonwealth succumb—in Zamoyski’s phrasing—to the ‘anatomy of decay’ (1987: 174) resulting from demoralisation and xenophobia due to incessant wars with The Ottoman Porte, Cossacks, Muscovy and Sweden. The period of anarchy and chaos lasted well into the eighteenth century only to be followed by the frantic Westernisation and vehement Enlightenment-inspired renouncement of Sarmatism during the reign of the king-elect Stanislaw August Poniatowski (1764 – 1795), and the belated 1971 republican constitution on the eve of the second partition of Poland in 1793.

At this stage, the designation ‘Sarmatism’ merits further clarification. The term encompasses the period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, i.e. between the Polish-Lithuanian Union of Lublin of 1569 to the third partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1795 (cf. Ulewicz 2006: 253-7; Biedrońska-Słota 2010: 34). In turn, the persistence of Sarmatism in partitioned Poland—and, by extension, during the period of Second Republic (1918-1939)—is called ‘neo-Sarmatism’ or ‘Romantic Sarmatism’ (Borowski 2001: 122-4). The nineteenth century saw absorption of the elements of Sarmatism into the Polish High Romantic paradigm as well as the creation of the historical epic *Trilogy* by Henryk Sienkiewicz symptomatically set in the seventeenth century. *The Trilogy* has fared extremely well in contemporary popular opinion polls. As Czaplinski (2009: 261) reports, the novels are in fact considered as the ultimate Polish literary work of art. The extent of the impact of Sarmatism on the interwar period is in turn acknowledged by the Polish historian Janusz Tazbir (1998: 213) who noticed that its particular style of government of evoked Sarmatism.

Let us now return to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. What was at stake in Sarmatism was a belief in the Sarmatian descent of the nobility. This belief was a continuation of a long line in the Polish historiography starting with the fifteenth-century chronicler Jan Długosz. Długosz (cf. Biedrońska-Słota 2010: 36-7) based his theories on the Greco-Roman historiography, which had identified the presence of warrior-like nomadic Sarmatian tribes on the Slavic lands. Most importantly, as Ulewicz (2006: 43-4) reminds us, Herodotus placed the tribe of Sauromatae eastwards of Don and Azov Sea while Ptolemy introduced a distinction between European Sarmatia—stretching from the Baltic, Vistula, Carpathians and Don—and Asiatic Sarmatia stretching between Don, the Sea of Azov, Caspian Sea and Volga, bordering with Scythia to the East. The distinction was taken up by the Polish scholar Miechowita whose *Description of Asian and European Sarmatia and Their Contents*, published in Cracow in 1521, gained international renown. Miechowita equated Asian Sarmatia with Scythia. At the same time, he saw Scythia as home to Tatar tribes. While Miechowita did not expressly mention his compatriots amongst the inhabitants of European Sarmatia, his work nonetheless forms the cornerstone of the

Sarmatian theory of origin of Poles (cf. Ulewicz 2006: 66-75).

Many scholars consider Sarmatism in terms of an ideology (Zamoyski 1987: 107; as ‘ideology and a way of life’ cf. Biedrońska-Słota 2010: 35; as ideology in the Lacanian sense cf. Sowa 2011: 259). According to Zamoyski (1987: 107), Sarmatism was cemented by the mid-seventeenth century as a complex system of world-view and material practice. This complex, heterogeneous aggregate reflected Poland’s hybrid identity brought about by the exposure to—and acculturation of—Ottoman, Tatar and Persian tastes. In turn, Ulewicz (2006: 173) identified the two constitutive elements of Sarmatism: (1) theory, i.e. the Sarmatian myth of origin of Poles, ‘the Sarmatian ancestral myth’ (2006: 254), and (2) socio-political practice. The latter was in turn manifested in, according to Tazbir (1998: 5): (2a) worldview, encompassing ethical and political values, beliefs, mentality; and (2b) lifestyle, comprised of customs, dress, artistic tastes vis-à-vis fine arts and applied art.

In counter-distinction from the hierarchically structured ideology-based readings of Sarmatism, Mańkowski (1946: 103) characterises this phenomenon as a world-view that was vague and inchoate, yet exerted *real* influence. Such world-view did not attain the level of a finished and complete historiosophical system. For Mańkowski (1946: 103), Sarmatism was a vernacular cultural phenomenon that referred to a culture that was paradoxically following the logic appropriation and succumbing to multiple influences. For the scholar (1946: 103), what was at stake in Sarmatism was ‘a historical fantasy and fiction that gave rise to a generation of [its own] vital truth’. Mańkowski formulates the vision of Sarmatism as a creative fabulation that is flush with real. Let us now mine the Herodotian, paleogenetic and archaeological layers of the Sarmatian fabulation.

### 3. Scythians/Sarmatians in Herodotus

Herodotus of Halicarnassus, a Greek scholar who lived in the fifth century BC, enjoys a somewhat dubious fame as at once the creator of historiography and the father of fabulation. The importance of Herodotus lies in the fact that he was no longer satisfied with mythology as a readily available divinely-inspired system of making sense of the world, but, instead, he acknowledged the role of research (*historia*) and seeing for oneself. Histories, however, do not simply mark a conceptual move from words to facts, from the divine to the human, but they chart the ambiguous birth of history as an intimate entanglement of facts and a new secular mythology (cf. Roberts 2011: 1-4; Hartog: 1988: xv-xx). Herodotus took it upon himself to record the *nomoi* (customs) of non-Greek neighbours of the Hellenic world but, as Hartog (1988: xxiii) points out, while doing so, he effectively constructed a rhetoric of otherness serving as a mirror of Greeks themselves. If the barbaric Persians were perceived as the Greek arch-enemy, the founding fathers of the European discourse of exclusion, they could be considered as almost civilised when juxtaposed with the Scythians who held Herodotus in an embrace of entwined horror and fascination.

François Hartog's rigorous analysis of Herodotus's account of the Scythians conjures up the image of a profoundly paradoxical people. The scholar's analysis draws attention to the implication of history in the sedentary culture of the Greek polis whose margins are inhabited by nomadic peoples occupying space in a puzzling and mysterious way. Such an understanding resonates with the Deleuzoguattarian analysis of nomadic distribution and the interplay between striated and smooth space in the 'Nomadology' chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Inhabiting the territories between Ister (Danube) and Phasis (the river Rioni in Georgia), the Scythians inhabit Europe, but are not of Europe. European by residence—since for Herodotus, the river Phasis marks the edge of Europe—the tribe is however Central Asian by origin. In fact, the Scythians had been ousted from the territories of Issedones and Massagetae. They are therefore poised midway between Europe and Asia, traversing their expanses blissfully unaware of borders (1988: 30-2). Those atypical barbarians are not one, but in fact consist of a confederacy of various interrelated tribes. They are nomads in the sense that they have no centralised seat of power akin to the Greek *polis*, but are constantly on the move. At the same time, their territories are divided into rudimentary administrative units under nomarchs (1988: 19). Scythian nomadism may be explained by their hybrid genealogy. According to the Black Sea Greeks, they are descendants of the human-animal hybrid Echidna and the animal-hero Heracles—prone to cruelty and excess (Hartog 1988: 22-27). The Scythian space is a very peculiar one, as the Persian leader Darius who launched a military campaign against them, soon discovered for himself. The inassimilable otherness of the Scythian space consists in the fact that it has no towns, walls, reference points or fixed borders around which a strategy could be formed (Hartog 1988: 59). Furthermore, with its unceasing stretches of pasturelands, it can hardly be considered a territory. Darius's pursuit of the Scythians turns into a mockery as the cunning barbarians lead him astray. Herodotus's account of Scythians fascinated the Polish travel writer Ryszard Kapuściński (2007: 140), occasioning his confused admiration—'Their tactic, their weapon is deceit, evasion, ambush. Where are they? Cunning, fast, elusive as the hare, they appear suddenly on the steppe and vanish just as rapidly'. The fluid, permeable Scythian space folds in on itself should the nomads will so, allowing no *poros*—no access, no opening, no escape—for Darius. The Scythian space thus becomes *aporia*, i.e. inaccessible, without an opening (Hartog 1988: 56-60). Hartog (cf. 1988: 34-60) devotes a whole chapter to this curious interplay of *poros* and *aporia* in Herodotus's account of the Scythians.



The Scythian space is also the space of the deformed body. Herodotus' Scythians do not communicate through words, but through and with their bodies. Self-mutilation constitutes for them an emblem of belonging, memory and power; it thus constitutes a coat-of-arms that highlights their feudal enmeshment in the space they inhabit (1988: 146). The funeral rites, during which the Scythians perform self-mutilation and also embalm the body of their king, highlight the equation of the body of the king with the collective bodies of his subjects. According to Hartog (1988: 171-2),

through this ceremony which left its marks on their bodies, they acknowledged themselves to be Scythians and subjects: their bodies upon which the royal coat-of-arms was incised reminded them that they formed a social body and, through this mnemonics of power, the royal body and the social body were strangely woven together.

Sauromatae (Sarmatians) in turn are mentioned only briefly by Herodotus (cf. 2003: 49) as members of the Scythian confederacy of tribes. They are descended from the nomadic Scythians and the warlike Amazons from Cappadocia, which explains the predilection for hunting, horse riding and men's clothes amongst their women (2003: 251-3). Sauromatae speak corrupted Scythian inhabiting a space between Tanais (Don), Lake Meotis (The Sea of Azov) and the land of the Budini (2003: 224, 235). They are a figure of hybridity and transgression of stable gender roles.

In conclusion, Hartog's account of the Scythian performs a rigorous Foucauldian discourse analysis while foregrounding the corporeal aspect of the Scythians as diagramming power relations of nomarchic organisation. However, by discussing the specific, problematic arrangement of space particular to the Scythians, she opens up the discursive modes of inquiry as well as corporeal ideological inscriptions of power to the radical contingency—*aporia* as 'the thought of the outside', to borrow an expression from Deleuze's (2006a: 108) book on Foucault. In this way, Hartog affirms the Deleuzian understanding of the Foucauldian oeuvre as a multiplicity composed of three co-implicated dimensions or, in other words, an assemblage of the three syntheses that jointly make up the functioning of his thought. Namely, Deleuze (2006a: 96-1001) identifies three co-existing philosophical movements of thought in Foucault's work, corresponding to 3 axes or aspects: (1) the dimension of formalised, stratified relations (Knowledge), (2) the informal, dispersed diagrammatic relations of Power, and (3) the relations with the outside seen from the point of view of an auto-relation of force, its 'power to affect itself' (Thought).

Therefore, it can be said in conclusion that what emerges from Herodotus' accounts of the Scythians and the Sarmatians is a decentred, hybrid, fluid, nomadic space intimately connected with the bodies of its inhabitants and at once surpassing them and going beyond a mere discursive formation or a corporeal inscription (or embodiment) of power upon inert, passive materiality. The Scytho-Sarmatian space is truly rhizomatic in the Deleuzian sense and can indeed be profitably viewed as the Herodotian *aporia*.

## 4. Scythians/Sarmatians: archaeology and paleogenetics

Archaeological research revealed that in the first millennium BC various nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppe belt—extending from the Carpathian basin to Northern China—formed a civilisational continuum (cf. [Fig. B.51]). This unity was epitomised by the recurrence of the ‘Scytho-Siberian animal style’ (Aruz 2000: 2, 41-2) (cf. [Fig. B.31]). The zoomorphic style was encapsulated in the development of *fibulas*, i.e. metal plaques made of hammered gold or bronze and shaped in the figures of deer, griffins, snow leopards and other animals. Unsurprisingly then, the human remains discovered in the Filippovka kurgan in the South Urals were found to combine proto-European and eastern Asiatic morphological features (Aruz 2000: 55), just as the populations of modern Central Asia present an admixture of western and eastern traits (Comas 2004: 496). A recent research into mitochondrial DNA of Central Asian populations has curiously revealed an even split in the sequences between West Eurasian and East Asian lineages (Comas 2004: 496-504).

Iranian-speaking Sarmatians were in turn one of the nomads of the Eurasian steppe zone. Having emerged east of the Volga river and south of the Urals in the seventh century BC, these masters of horses, bows and arrows gradually made their way westwards into Don and Dnieper, ejecting Scythians from the Pontic steppe (north of the Black Sea) in the process (Brzeziński 2002: 3). At the turn of the first millennium, they pushed further into the territory between Dnieper and the Danube estuary, establishing a short-lived tribal kingdom under the king Pharsoes only to be completely dispersed by successive waves of the Gothic and Hunnic invaders by the fifth century (Dobrzańska 1999: 75; Biedrońska-Słota 2010: 35-6). During the first century, a dynasty of Sarmatian origin also assumed power in the Greek Bosporan Kingdom (north of the Black sea). As many accounts point out, the Kingdom thrived thanks to their cultural adaptability (Brzeziński 2002: 4). Exploratory excavations conducted in Poland suggest that the Sarmatian presence in the first century exerted influence on the so-called Przeworsk culture. According to Dobrzańska,

it cannot be excluded that it was precisely on the territories of southern Poland that the Sarmatian rulers sought allies in the beginning of the last quarter of the 1st century, while they were striving to preserve the unity of their proto-state. It is equally possible that they were peaceful contacts, whose aim was to broaden the sphere of influences and develop trade relations (1999: 90).

The Przeworsk-Sarmatian contacts lasted well into the 4th century yielding their emblematic reminder in the form of the *tamga* signs—attributed to the Bosporan Kingdom—carved on metal spearheads. Those symbols associated with Eurasian nomads might have served possible religious, magical or identification purposes, with their analogues excavated on the territories of present-day Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (Dobrzańska 1999: 90; Sulimirski 1970: 153). *The Sarmatians*, the now classical work of the archaeologist Tadeusz Sulimirski (Sulimirski 1970: 151-5; Ascherson 2007: 238-41), claimed that the Sarmatian *tamga* signs (cf. [Fig. B.36]) survived in the old Polish coats-of-arms. Such parallels had been suggested before and it is speculated they indeed could have influenced the myth of the Sarmatian origin of the Polish nobility. The Y-chromosomal equivalent of *tamgas*, yet another reminder of the Eurasian steppe zone, is furnished by the R1a1-M17 haplogroup found in human remains excavated from the Krasnoyarsk area kurgans in southern central Siberia. The haplogroup in question is shared by

western Eurasian (mostly eastern European and Volga–Ural populations), southern Asian (mainly India and Pakistan’s populations), central Asian and Siberian populations (especially southern Siberians) (...) The R1a1 haplogroup frequency reaches a maximum in Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine and decreases in the direction of central and northern Europe (Keyser 2009: 405-6).

Just as the Greek ethnonym ‘Scythians’ (*Skythai*) derives from the Iranian word for ‘bowmen’, the Sarmatian ethnonym most probably derives from the Avestan word for ‘arrow’ (Aruz 2000: 19). The Scytho-Sarmatians emerging out of the telluric landscape of archaeology and paleogenetics can be considered *aporos* in the Herodotian sense. Elusive, always on the move, always one step ahead, they constituted a vector of change rather than displacement along discrete points.

One thus might conclude that the Scytho-Sarmatian nomadism furnishes a model of the Deleuzian (1990: 60, original emphasis) ‘*nomadic and non-sedentary distribution*’ as it is conceived in *The Logic of Sense* as philosophical conceptualisation of the dice throw. This *nomadic distribution*—rather than apportioning, fixing, signifying and coding chance—launches ‘a distribution of singularities, a constellation (...) [whereby] a system of singularities communicates and resonates with the others, being at once implicated by the others and implicating them’ (1990: 60). The Scytho-Sarmatian nomadism affirms the Deleuzian nomadic distribution through its immanent arrangement of space, hybrid exogamous genetic linkages, and, last but not least, the processes of productive disorganisation, deformation and ungendering of the body in the socius as a correlate of non-representative force-signs (*tamgas*). Such an account resonates with the Deleuzoguattarian (cf. 2005: 380-403) discussion of the functioning of resistance of the nomadic war machine under three rubrics—spatial, numerical/logistic and affective.

In conclusion, drawing on insights from archaeology, paleogenetics and historiography pertaining to the Scytho-Sarmatian tribes, one can identify here the larger problem of nomadism that continually challenges the state apparatus and resists its capture. This nomadic resistance is a particular mode of engaging space and inhabiting time. In particular, what is at stake here is the phenomenon of nomadic distribution across spatial, temporal, genetic, bodily and gender registers. It is not a case of parcelling out space, overcoding it, but of occupying and creating space, of distributing and installing oneself in an open space in the manner of a porous membrane selectively modulating access (*aporia*). This membrane functions as a parasite that attaches itself to the state apparatus. As we will see, thus conceived nomadic distribution draws a certain technological lineage that cuts across and links the pre-modern era, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the seventeenth century and the 1970s Poland—with its artistic neo-avant-garde and with its interest in the Polish art and culture of the seventeenth century. Herodotus’ account of nomadism also highlights the history’s necessary relation to the state. Darius’ pursuit of the Scythians finds its correlate in Herodotus’ pursuit of the epistemological capture of the nomads, to overcome and understand them. Historical—and, by extension, art historical—research is undertaken from the sedentary point of view of the state, encountering the hordes of nomadic multiplicities as its limit point. Beyond this threshold there lurks nothing else but the insidious powers of fabulation.

## 5. Sarmato-Baroque

Returning now to the Old Polish period, one might ask what is the mutual relation between Sarmatism and art? If Sarmatism is considered a primarily cultural phenomenon that in turn found its manifestations in lifestyle, customs and material culture, it however did not create its own unified artistic style. As DaCosta Kaufman (1999: 18) points out, Sarmatism ‘received little expression in art’. It is not so much a case of *Sarmatian art*, but *art and material culture at the time of Sarmatism* made up of heterogeneous elements. Needless to say, such scholarly designation of Sarmatism as non-art is predicated upon an understanding of art grounded according to its figurative, pictorial and representational paradigm. For Chrzanowski (1986: 9), Sarmatism never existed as a style, but it signified exactly the meta-stylistic ability to join disparate elements. The cultural historian (1986: 16-17) sees this ‘tacking together of foreign influences—i.e. the eclectic capacity for intercepting, selecting of varied impulses, and their subsequent transformation, adaptation and assimilation—as a consequence of the model of open, pluralist culture lying at the very foundation of the Commonwealth and expressed in the Sarmatian ethnogenetic myth. One might thus understand Sarmatism as an attitude, mobile apparatus or a membrane that affirms difference. Such Sarmatism is not therefore oriented towards one a pre-defined end product, but designates a certain power that unfolds. Chrzanowski’s (1986: 17-18) immanent account of the Sarmatian *eclecticism* should be firmly distinguished from Tazbir’s notion of *syncreticism* pertaining to the realm of the nonmaterial ‘spiritual culture’. Similarly, Mańkowski (1946: 104) sees Sarmatism as a force that brings some vernacular, Baroque and Oriental elements to the surface and conjoins them.

### 5.1. Creolisation and hybridity

Unsurprisingly, it is the motif of the winged horseman, the hussar, which DaCosta Kaufmann (1999: 15-18) chose as the emblem encapsulating the art and culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for an exhibition of the Old-Polish art that opened in Baltimore in 1999 and toured many cities in the U.S. As Ostrowski (1999: 72-3; 369) explains, the hussar heavy cavalry unit was the most prestigious Old Polish military formation, characteristically equipped with a feathered wooden wings fastened either to the cantle or the backplate of the armour [Fig. B.28]. The role of the wings, those prosthetic antlers of sorts, was curious and problematic and as such not fully understood or adequately conceptualised in academic scholarship. According to Ostrowski (1999: 73), the wings had ‘no particular function except for their psychological role of making (...) [the rider] a superhuman creature’. In turn, as Jarymowicz (2008: 60) points out, the wings facilitated ‘a psychological attack par excellence, producing a distinct whirring resonance that frightened enemy horses’. DaCosta Kaufmann (1999: 15) chose the figure of winged horseman as the encapsulation of the Old Polish art because of its fundamental hybridity and instability. The winged horseman—the ostensibly arch-Polish hussar—is a hybrid creature of myth and reality, a commingling of the indigenous with Hungarian and Turco-Tatar fashions. The horseman is an assemblage of the human, the animal and the technological. Always on the run, a nomadic vector of movement, a chimera of war and passion, the winged horseman finds expression in the heterogeneous medium of the emblem which, as Elkins points out (1999: 197), ‘plays out, in a different guise, the desire for an image that doesn’t quite make sense, that works like a trap to keep the viewer’s attention’. The emblematic winged horseman also ushers in the issue of the mutual relation between Sarmatism and Baroque and the constitutive features of the latter.

Most tellingly, in researching artistic Sarmatism, Chrzanowski uses the imagery of nomadism, microbiology and guerrilla tactics to conceptualise its mechanisms of acculturation of foreign influences. He (1986: 14) points out

that ‘we can observe in Polish artistic culture the tell-tale phenomenon of the persistent repetition of certain motives which take time to take hold, initially offering resistance only to explode into hundreds of imitations and mutations’. The heterogeneous dynamics stemmed also from the fact that Sarmatism was a cultural phenomenon particular to the *szlachta* forming multiple dispersed ‘little neighbourhoods’, as opposed to the dynastic centres and estates of rich magnates (Chrzanowski 1986: 12-13). That said, it should be pointed out that the Sarmatian pandemic soon swallowed up all the strata of the society, occasioning a copycat frenzy on the part of the peasants as well as the more subtle transpositions on the part of the burghers and the royal castle. The independent ‘little neighbourhoods’, like viruses, ransacked the official culture of the court and the Islamic culture of the enemy alike for what seemed necessary at a given instant. It comes therefore as no surprise that Chrzanowski (1986: 15-16, 120-121) draws parallels between Sarmatism with its Oriental Baroque, on one hand, and the Mexican provincial Baroque, on the other. The latter was exemplified by the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Santa Fé. For Chrzanowski, the sanctuary embodies a deep creolisation and deliberate contamination of the official Spanish culture. In both cases Chrzanowski notices a similar excess of ornamentation disguising naiveté and structural crudeness.

The Sarmatian period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries combined Baroque—and, in general, Western stylistic ideas—with certain features of the Ottoman culture, thus giving rise to the concoction Zamoyski (1987: 189-205) terms ‘Oriental Baroque’. Mańkowski (1946: 103-7) points out that in the seventeenth century Sarmatism attained its highest pitch of intensity as the overcoming of Humanism through a certain consistency composed of (1) certain vernacular elements, (2) Baroque and (3) orientalisation or Oriental elements. The scholar (1959: 21-22) further expands and relativises the term ‘Orient’ here to embrace *Oriens Christianus*, i.e. Armenian influences, and *Oriens Islamicus* whose one face, the Ottoman culture in fact might be considered an aggregate of Byzantine, Turkic, Balkan, Arabic and Persian influences. Catholic Baroque in turn was characterized by affect-driven paradoxical juxtapositions of disparate elements, testifying to its preoccupation with the bizarre, the peculiar and the shocking (cf. Honour 2009:572). In the Commonwealth, the Baroque style was coexisting alongside the potent tradition of Gothic art (cf. Mańkowski 1946: 92) to the extent that the Hungarian scholar Endre Angyal identified Gothicness as a crucial feature of what he calls the ‘Slavic Baroque’ (cf. Chrzanowski 1988: 44-5). In turn, Chrzanowski (1988: 123-4) identifies important Mannerist features in old-Polish portraiture. As Mańkowski (1946: 77-80) points out, Western influence could be witnessed in the realm of fine art architecture, sculpture and painting. In turn, applied art—i.e. artistic craft, decorative arts—constituted a synthesis of Hungarian, Persian and Turco-Tatar influences. The Sarmatian vision of art did not constitute aesthetics in the Western sense since it was not preoccupied with beauty, but had purely functional, ephemeral and social character. Such art was the realm of mobile structures accompanying and celebrating social events through excess and grandeur (cf. Mańkowski 1946: 79)

Mańkowski (1946: 80-1) identifies Islamic influence and inspiration in goldsmithing, textile making, ‘objects pertaining to the horse and weaponry’, tapestry making, tent manufacturing. According to the scholar (1946: 97-8, Islamic art was not deemed something exotic, but something native and home grown. Furthermore, an engagement with Islamic art and its application in the Commonwealth was deemed a way of restoring the nomadic Sarmatian tradition. As Mańkowski (1946: 104) gives the following account of the Sarmatian ‘turn towards the Oriental elements in art’—‘Sarmatism wishes to discover within them its ancient vernacular traditions as it were; its own Eastern genesis and in [responding to] this thought assimilates them, absorbs and makes national’. Unsurprisingly, all those Eastern-influenced textiles, costumes, weaponry, horse trappings came

to denote something quintessentially vernacular (Borowski 2001: 196). Consequently, as Ascherson (2007: 233) writes in his intricately crafted monograph on the Black Sea,

the Polish-Sarmatian noble was a startling, unmistakable figure. He shaved his skull, cultivated long, drooping moustaches (...), and wore a long kontusz kaftan held in over his paunch by a sash. His sword would be a curved scimitar, its hilt probably encrusted with gold and jewels. In short, he looked like a Turk – or possibly a Turkified Tatar.

just as the archetypically Polish *hussar* cavalryman was almost entirely a creation of Eastern import. Following the logic of the Sarmatian ethnogenetic myth, Oriental features became an expression of affinity and continuity with the alleged nomadic Asiatic ancestors. For example a seventeenth-century custom of placing Oriental tents in mansions survived as late as the 1930s and is presently being revived as part of the Sarmatism-inspired interior design of mansions of Polish celebrities, intended to exude the Old Polish charm (Korduba 2011a: 7-25).

Mańkowski (1946: 95-98) points out that the Eastern influence originated in the military field arising from the necessity to assimilate the tactics of the Islamic Turco-Tatar opponent, while Ulewicz (2006: 200) terms the whole second half of the seventeenth century as the ‘war Sarmatism’. Mańkowski (1946: 95) identifies the Turco-Tatar influence in the particular formation of military units, weaponry, armour, design of war tents, military insignia—including the *buzdygan* war mace and the *buńczuk* [Fig. B.37] standard consisting of a circular arrangement horse tail hairs forming a tassel placed atop a pole, akin to the Turco-Mongol *tugh* banner (cf. Ostrowski 1999: 232, 370)—as well as attire, hairstyle and the creation of bazaars.

## 5.2. Expressionism in literature

The literature of the time of Sarmatism—i.e. between 1580 and 1730—is classified as the period of Baroque (Hernas 2008: 20). Polish literary Baroque was characterised by the overcoming of Humanism through a style that, as Borowski (2001: 102-3) explains, conjoined eclecticism, expressive experimentation as well as emulation of the Classical sources, frequently to the point of their mutation (e.g. a re-vision of the classical image of sylvan nymphs as water-dwelling creatures bestowed with gills, all meticulously described in a poem by Samuel Twardowski, cf. Backvis 1993: 59-98). Baroque literature can also be described as a taste for the bizarre and ‘a certain unusual perception’ (Stanisław Łempicki quoted in Mańkowski 1946: 72). As Claude Backvis (1993: 7) points out, a line from the poet Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński—‘feeble, unfocused, split in myself’—aptly encapsulates this new Baroque aesthetics. The Baroque literature was the realm of expressive allegorical bricolage whose elements—rather than being neatly and snugly woven together—were deterritorialised and torn apart from the reality perceived as an organic whole. The violent, abject allegorical constructs abounded in the literature of the time. Examples can be found in the picaresque journals of the boisterous soldier, short-tempered troublemaker and quarrelsome social climber Jan Pasek parading a domesticated otter and attending a church service in blood-stained attire. The arresting imagery of Samuel Twardowski’s epic poetry perfectly epitomises Baroque aesthetics. Twardowski (quoted in Backvis 1993: 16) describes the entry of a Polish envoy into the territories of the Ottoman Porte in the following way:

Above him the sultan’s banner hangs green  
With the Ottoman crescent and a second one red  
Of the Wallachian lands and countries, fire splatters across it  
A bison’s head.

For Backvis (1993: 16-23), the above description expresses the inorganic life of things by grasping their movement in a dynamic way that surpasses the simple, static description of a green banner hanging passively above the envoy. As Backvis (1993: 17) explains, Baroque poetry is interested in rendering ‘things in the shape dictated by the rational experience, but want[s] to render the sensory effect induced by those very things’. Therefore, what is at stake here is not a representation but a presentation of the degree to which the vividly coloured object, such as the painted head of a bison, occupies, distributes itself—or, rather, explodes—in space. The four lines not so much represent a sensory explosion, but performatively stage this explosion through syntax and its enjambment. Furthermore, according to Backvis (1993: 18-19), Baroque was preoccupied not so much with colour, but the effect of shine associated with gemstones and metals. Baroque poetry was not only interested in movement, but also in rendering sound effects and noises. Baroque poetry can also be characterised as decentred, drawing attention to a detail that served no fixed, pre-defined function (cf. 1993: 23-9). Its proper interest lay not in psychology, but in amplifying an unresolved ‘vibrating and mesmerizing tension’, ‘indiscernibility and ambiguity’ (199: 13) as well as non-hierarchical juxtaposition and accumulation (1993: 43). One might thus say that Twardowski’s poem epitomises the expressive dynamics of the Baroque allegory, which—according to Walter Benjamin (cf. Ronduda 2006: 46)—prefigures the avant-garde technique of montage.

### 5.3. Sarmato-Baroque compositions as nomadic architecture: (coffin) portrait, tomb banner, panoramic scroll, performance piece

According to DaCosta Kaufmann (1999: 18; cf. 2004: 147), what is the most vernacular in Old Polish art (1572—1764) is in fact ‘what could be called distinctively iconographic motifs, namely the appearance of Poles as Sarmatians, and coffin portraits’.

The coffin portrait [Fig. B.30] (cf. Ostrowski 1999: 47; Chróścicki 1974: 67-70) was a bust-length veristic likeness of the deceased, rendered usually on a golden background, painted on a hexagonal, octagonal or oval metal plate attached to a shorter side of the coffin during the elaborate funereal ceremony (*pompa funebris*) (cf. [Fig. B.38]), and affixed to an epitaph that was hung in a church once the funeral rites were finished. The coffin portraits could also be placed atop *castrum doloris* [Fig. B.18]—a mobile structure consisting of elements of painting, sculpture and architecture built inside a church for the duration of a funeral ceremony (Ostrowski 199: 369). The first arrangement was common at the funerals of common gentry, whereas the second configuration was used during the funerals of military leaders and magnates (cf. Chróścicki 1974: 70). In the first case, the dimensions of the shorter side of the coffin (1974: 67) determined the size and shape of the portrait (cf. [Fig. B.32]). As Chróścicki (1974: 69-70) explains, coffin portraits executed by provincial painters were usually painted on copper, lead or sometimes a wooden board, whereas those created by painters working at a royal or magnate court employ silver plates that were at times melted down into an ingot after the interment. The coffin portrait exhibited in a church was usually accompanied by an epitaphic inscription and coats of arms painted on either silver, golden, copper, lead or tin plate.

Some scholars add to the coffin portrait as a singularly Old Polish art form, the so-called tomb banners as well as portraits in the Sarmatian garb—the ‘Sarmatian’ portraits (cf. [Fig. B.29]).

Tomb banners (cf. [Fig. B.52]) were created as rectangular pieces of purple damask that were suspended in a church during the funeral ceremony and kept there afterwards in lieu of or alongside stone monuments. The

banners depicted the deceased in the pose of an orant and were accompanied by the decorative triangular ‘tails’ (Borowski 2001: 27; Ostrowski 199: 48).

In turn, some scholars consider the ‘Sarmatian’ portrait (cf. [Fig. B.29]) with its characteristic full-length likeness as merely a provincial variation of a Netherlandish prototype (Borowski 2001: 150-151). Although regarded at times as derivative, the portrait nonetheless occupies an iconic place in Polish culture. It is worth noting that its other tell-tale features—flat patches of vivid colour, ornamentality, lack of linear perspective and chiaroscuro, conventional background and pose, physiognomic verism, emblematic attributes encoding social status (Chrzanowski 1986: 181-182; Borowski 2001: 148-151)—suggest possible Ottoman and Byzantine influences.

The Old Polish period also saw the creation of a singular artefact. The so-called ‘Stockholm roll’ [Fig. B.28] created around 1605 is a unique scroll (28 x 1528 cm) of ribbed paper depicting the ceremonial entry of a Polish king into Cracow. The frieze is divided into scenes. The piece meticulously records the details of horses, armour, equipment and military formation, rendered in a way that deviates from linear perspective. As Chrzanowski (1988: 243-4) points out, the whole procession is non-narrative, in the sense that it is removed from the scenography. However, its detailed descriptions make up for the lack of narrative background. According to Ostrowski (1999: 103), ‘the composition and the rendering of the figures in perspective, slightly from above, make the whole resemble a filmstrip’.

DaCosta Kaufmann’s (2004: 147) identification of the appearance of Poles as Sarmatians—what he terms ‘Sarmatian self-fashioning’—as central to Polish art and culture merits further investigation. His relegation of this self-fashioning to the static realm of iconography, i.e. ‘study of pictures as carrying meanings in symbols’ (Elkins 1999: 55), seems to ignore the Sarmatian inchoate sense of identity as something that was created anew and transmuted everyday performances. The period of Sarmatism loved elaborate customs, pageants and ceremonies, all exhibiting a profusion of affection, visceral gestures, verbosity, ostentation rather than finesse, sumptuousness rather than beauty, extravagant and excessive display, precession of ornament—the Kantian parergonality (Nadarajan 2007: 51). Zamoyski (1987: 201-204) succinctly describes the very epitome of such spectacles: funereal ceremonies whose splendour and lavishness came to be called *apparatus funebris* or *pompa funebris*:

A magnate would have a huge architectural folly, *a castrum doloris*, built as a canopy for his coffin, and this would be decorated with symbols of his office and wealth, his portrait and coat-of-arms, and with elaborate inscriptions in his honour. Lengthy panegyrics were commissioned (...) The ritual included the old Polish custom of breaking up the dead man’s symbols of office and, if he were the last of this family, shattering his coat-of-arms. Neighbours, friends, family, servants and soldiers would pay their last respects in more or less theatrical ways, while congregations of monks and nuns sang dirges and recited litanies. The funeral of Hetman Józef Potocki in 1751 took two weeks, (...) Over a dozen senators, hundreds of relatives and entire regiments congregated in Stanisławów to pay their last respects in the church which was entirely draped in black damask, before a huge catafalque of crimson velvet dripping with gold tassels, decorated with lamps, candelabra, Potocki’s portrait, captured standards, pyramids of weapons and other symbols of his office and achievements.

The ceremony was concluded by the entry of the two horsemen into the church who would normally shatter the ataman’s weapons only to fall at the foot of his coffin, as was the custom, but on that particular occasion they actually failed to break the attributes due to their inebriation.



Further examples of social spectacles are furnished by the creolised domain of religion characterised by the Polonised imagery of the saints, the devil and the Virgin Mary (cf. Borowski 1946: 158-162). One might thus say that the creolised Polish Catholic religion possessed its own Sarmatian heaven and hell as well as a panoply of Sarmatian saints and devils. Furthermore, for Mańkowski (1946: 63), an important feature of Old Polish religiosity was its anthropomorphism—‘the cult of saint and of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a cult of human beings, as it were’. The exaggerated, affected, imaginative and ostentatious Sarmatian religiousness (cf. Mańkowski 1946: 62-3) found its visceral expression in pilgrimages, processions, self-flagellations and lying prostrate. Charles Ogier reported in 1636 that

when they listen to the sermon, [they] start to groan audibly at the mention of the name of Christ (...) During Mass, when the Body of the Lord is elevated, they violently beat their face, forehead, cheeks and chest, and bang their head against the earth (quoted in Bogucka 1996: 47).

Chrzanowski points to the inherent ephemerality and impermanence of what he calls ‘the Sarmatian happening’ (1986: 28) which Zamoyski (1987: 175) in turn links to absence of the ethics of thrift budding in the early modern capitalist Western Europe of the time. In consequence, the relics of material culture and written accounts on the period of Sarmatism must be considered but mere traces, fragmented documentation of past performances. As Chróścicki (1974: 352), who in the 1970s undertook the task of writing a monograph on the Old-Polish funeral ceremonies, reminisces, Sarmatism turned out to be an inchoate and elusive event:

Just as it is in the case of the finest theatrical productions, little has survived to our days from the sumptuous funerals of the past. It is relatively easy to find second-rate engravings, dull and detailed descriptions, and bills. The most scarce are architectonic designs and such decorative relicts as sculptures and paintings. (...) In spite of the friendly assistance of many people, I was not able to reach important material.

In conclusion, one might say that the eccentric *castrum doloris*—and its associated vortex of rituals—carved out space of the church as a centre of institutionalised religion and held, with the force of its human, animal, metallic and luminous intensities, this space in the manner of a mobile island of nomadic architecture, akin to Turco-Mongol nomadic tents.

## 6. Interpretations of Sarmatism: a paradoxical expression of identity

While frequently interpreted in the category of myth (Ulewicz 2006: 254) by contemporary scholars, Sarmatism is also understood as an expression of a search for identity undertaken by the ruling classes and their academic vanguard, acknowledging the multi-ethnic character of the Commonwealth and its East-bound orientation (cf. Mańkowski 1946: 31-2; DaCosta Kaufmann 1999: 17-8). For some scholars, the phenomenon was a conscious expression of national identity. For instance, according to Borowski (2001: 104), Sarmatism constituted ‘a form of the mature national consciousness of Polish gentry’. In turn, for Sowa and the literary critic Krzysztof Koehler (Koehler quoted in Sowa 2011: 261), the phenomenon remained ‘the basic formulation—and for many years practically the only one—of Polish national consciousness’. In turn, in counter-distinction from the above accounts, DaCosta Kaufmann (2004: 145) points out that the identity whose expression was pursued by the Polish gentry (*szlachta*) cannot however be properly and simply called ‘national’, even though this crude retrospective construction gained currency amongst some Polish historians and is certainly widespread in popular consciousness. The scholar (2004: 145-9) points out that the Sarmatian self-fashioning also differed from ethnic and dynastic identities. He (2004: 149) goes on to suggest that ‘rather than searching for forms of national or ethnic identity, it might be more fruitful to locate and identify signs and symptoms of what may be called *Landes patriotismus*, loyalty to the traditions of a particular place or site’.

Sarmatism is thus predominantly seen as the expression of the distinctive identity of the Polish gentry. According to Sowa (2011: 262), seen in this light Sarmatism served to establish the Laclauan ‘barrier of heterogeneity’ between the gentry and the rest of society in order to legitimize their own political goals. Sowa however fails to attend to the paradoxical nature of such identification. The Polish nobility had come from somewhere else; they were in the Commonwealth, but not of the Commonwealth; other to burghers and peasants; and, given their multi-ethnic character, others amongst themselves. As self-styled noble barbarians, and yet staunchly Catholic, the parochial landed gentry were flaunting their difference both in the face of Western Europe and the Muslim Ottomans. In turn, the Polish academia, in transplanting the Sarmatians into the Polish political body, could not overcome the taint of their association with Scythians equated with Tatars (Ulewicz 2006: 90-4). Furthermore, as Shapira points out (2009: 36), the Sarmatians ‘were wrongly believed, till the mid-19th century, to be Turkic-speaking – in fact, Tatar-speaking’. As a consequence, on the *szlachta* fell the shadow of their heathen brethren swiftly picked up by Western scholarship of the time whose constant interchanging of the terms ‘Sarmatian’, ‘Scythian’ and ‘Slavic’ gave rise to the Enlightenment discourse on Eastern Europe, explored in the work of Larry Wolff. Wolff analyses (cf. 1994: 152, 284-305) how the Scytho-Sarmatian framework came to be woven into the Enlightenment discourse on otherness thus manufacturing a patronising and depreciatory vision of Eastern Europe akin to Said’s *orientalism*. According to DaCosta Kaufmann (1999: 17), however, Wolff’s conceptualisation overlooks the active Sarmatian self-fashioning on the part of the *szlachta* who embraced the hypothesis with all its ambiguities, and projected it outwards. As Dan Shapira (2009: 36) explains,

the Sarmatian theory considered the worst military and political enemies of Poland, the Muslim Turks and the Crimean Tatars, as sharing the same origin as the Polish *szlachta* itself, with the strong emphasis on the redeeming Catholic faith professed by the Sarmatian *szlachta* (...) The Catholic faith and the Sarmatian, that is, Turco-Tatar, origin of the nobility were seen as two sides of the same coin: the Catholic Sarmatians have been already redeemed, while their Muslim brethren in the Crimean steppe were still not.

According to Ascherson (2007: 231-4), the Sarmatian theory served as an ideological tool legitimising political freedoms enjoyed by the gentry, whose epitome was the right to elect their kings during a mounted rally—possibly inspired by *quriltai*, the Tatar and Turco-Mongol mounted assembly of nobles—as well as the right of *liberum veto* whereby an objection made by a single noble could effectively nullify the legislation of the whole legislature. On the other hand, as Tazbir (1998: 88-9) points out, the Sarmatian ethnogenetic myth helped foster integration amongst the multiethnic *szlachta* inhabiting the territory of almost a million square kilometres. Mańkowski (1946: 32) says something similar when he points out that Sarmatism constituted ‘an accurate characterization of the place occupied by Poland in the culture and civilisation of European nations’.

The paradoxical and problematic nature of identity generated by the Sarmatian theory could be also seen in the Old Polish perception of the country as the rampart of Christianity against Islam. Poland was hardly the only buffer state that claimed this title. Tazbir (1989: 57, 92) in this respect also mentions Spain, Venice, Austria and Hungary, noticing that this ‘chain of ramparts’ all experienced a degree of orientalisation of their respective material cultures. The rampart ideology laying foundations for the subsequent Romantic Messianism accorded Poland—and not Lithuania, or the whole Commonwealth for that matter—a unique God-bestowed mission of saving Europe from the heathen Turco-Tatar foes. The *antemurale* as a concept was however a double-edged sword. As Tazbir (1989: 7-8, 76) explains, originally denoting a bulwark—a low wall in front of the actual fortress wall—this concept conjured up a vision of an intermediary space, a permeable border, a voluntary orientation towards and absorption of the other for the greater goal. Such self-perception launched the rhetoric of sacrifice, coupled with the effective severance from the fortress of the West. According to Tazbir (1989: 91), ‘Turkey’s defeat meant the final stop of her further expansion into the heart of Europe; [whereas] the triumph of the culture of Islam expressed itself in a strengthening of Eastern influence on Old Polish culture’.

The legacy of the *antemurale* engenders complexity. During the time of the Partitions (1772 – 1918) the concept mutated into a figure of resistance against the colonial usurpation of Poland unfurling into the vision of a beleaguered castle and a Manichean worldview. Modern cultural theorists, in turn, see the aporia of the bulwark as a liberating performance of the fluid space of the borderlands, rather than borders. Maria Janion (2006: 177) points out that ‘[t]he concept of the strictly delineated boundary gives way to the notion of the borderlands. The latter denotes transculturation, cross-cultural penetration and contamination, hybridity and the heterogeneity of the outcome of these processes’. Such a postcolonial interpretation allows the remapping and deterritorialisation of Polish and Eastern European space, akin to Deleuze’s minoritarian reading of Kafka. Sarmatism can thus, according to Janion (2006: 179), ‘hint at a possibility of an alternative thinking about our place in Europe’. Another example of modern rereading of *antemurale* and Sarmatism can be found in the work of the Altaist Anna Parzymies (2000: 163) who argues that *Polanie*—the ethnonym for proto-Polish tribes—does not derive from the Slavic word for ‘field as commonly claimed, but from a Chinese loanword in Altaic denoting variously a ‘tribe’, ‘region’, ‘zone’ and ‘edge’.

## 7. Neo-Sarmatism: melancholy, resentment, strategic essentialism

The second half of the eighteenth century marked the simultaneous demise and retrospective birth of Sarmatism. The term itself only came to being on the eve of the partition of the Commonwealth at a point when its values came under heavy criticism from pro-Enlightenment intellectuals (cf. Borowski 2001: 175-6). With the Commonwealth finally erased from the map in 1795 by Russia, Prussia and Austria, Sarmatism entered the colonial phase of Polish culture as what the Polish philosopher Rev. Józef Tischner called the ‘straw man of Sarmatian melancholy’ (quoted in Biedrońska-Słota 2010: 42). Such neo-Sarmatism, full of resentment and melancholy, resurfaced from under the assault of Enlightenment bearing what Czapliński (2011a: 214) terms as ‘the unusual stigmata: a hallmark and a stigma’. In the nationalistic nineteenth century, Sarmatism became co-opted as a strategy of anti-colonial resistance. It might be useful to apply here Gayatri Spivak’s notion of *strategic essentialism* understood as a strategy of temporary self-conscious essentialist group presentation employed by certain oppressed groups in order to achieve their goals (cf. Causey 2009: 105). Spivak warned, however, that such *strategic essentialism* was always running the risk of drowning in the solipsistic jar of fixed identity. Indeed, Sarmatism mutated over the course of the nineteenth century into an exclusivist device, appropriated by the Polish national movement which effectively dissociated itself from its Polish-Jewish Zionist counterpart (Silber 2009: 23).

## 8. Sarmatism and Modernity: Czapliński vs. Sowa

Sarmatism entered modernity as a fundamentally ambiguous and heterogeneous complex whose values were prone to paradoxical inversion or affect-laden deviation. It simultaneously constituted a possible means of enslavement and empowerment. Czapliński (2011a: 214) points out that

Sarmatism as described by historians and cultural theorists is a mixture of unconditional hospitality and xenophobia, faith in tradition and vehement anarchism, misogyny with Marian cult, lack of rational arguments with the holy self-righteousness, piousness with existential pompousness, sumptuousness underlined with poverty, aesthetics as an expression of regionalism (so bad it was good).

According to Czapliński (2011b: 19), contemporary Polish culture salvages scraps of Sarmatism in order to construct tradition as a part of self-identification in the present. For Czapliński (2011b: 5-8, 18), Polish modernity is anaemic in nature. No longer at the forefront of the radical charge against tradition, the great trash compactor of Polish modernity now clings parasitically to the past and future it manufactures out of scraps in a closed circuit of capitalist flow of commodities. The ensuing assemblages correspond to Sarmatism and utopia, respectively, the two constituting the main thematic complexes of the Polish culture of the last twenty-five years. While acknowledging the cultural persistence of Sarmatism as a narrative about ways of constructing tradition, Czapliński (2011b: 9-13) claims that the turn of the 21st century saw a shift within the Sarmatian paradigm from the recycling strategy of the 1990s, whereby obsolete symbols mask their trashy origins and participate in the cultural flow purporting to be pure and legitimate, towards decycling—the open, and even ostentatious, acknowledgment of the limitations of the chimerical end-product no longer fit for mass consumption. Czapliński (2011b: 19) understands modern Sarmatism as ‘the founding enemy’ of the Polish modernity, an opponent against which it could define itself. At the same time, this counter-force is as ‘an embodiment of all ‘non-’, ‘anti-’, ‘hypo-’, ‘pre’ modern features’ that undergoes constant metamorphosis and mutation.

Czapliński (2011b: 139) ultimately understands Sarmatism in contemporary Polish culture as ‘a strategy of absorbing diverse alterities, engaging in a sexual contact with them, presenting them with a dose of recognition in exchange for their acceptance of our own embarrassing traits’. It is important to note here that Czapliński (2011b: 11) sets this understanding of the twenty-first-century Sarmatism in stark contrast to the earlier phase of the Sarmatian aggregate defined in more Marxist, historicist terms as

a narrative machine for overcoming contradictions emergent on the path of historical growth: oppositions of class (between gentry and plebeians), ethnicity (between Poles and other nations), religion (between Catholics and dissenters), sex and culture are harnessed into the process of taming otherness and producing a new unity.

The latter definition echoes Czapliński’s (2009: 272) earlier understanding of the Polish cultural canon expressed in literature as ‘a matrix of otherness existing under the surface of education’. Between the two definitions, Czapliński makes a conceptual leap from the more limited textualism and logocentric discursivity towards a more cross-media approach. The trajectory charted by this scholar is not however just from literature to culture, but from machine and encoding towards the microbiological aesthetics of osmosis, from the Manichean binaries and the stable self/other opposition towards heterogeneous organisms; in a nutshell, from discourse to a biologic. Czapliński (2011b: 297) argues that if across the ages Sarmatism had served as means of empowerment of the gentry in the Commonwealth, the intelligentsia in the nineteenth century, the political enfranchisement of the masses in the twentieth century, it can also provide the conceptual framework for empowerment of individual heterogeneous bodies at the turn of the twenty-first century. Czapliński (2011a: 214) ultimately calls for a creative transformation of cultural Sarmatism in a way that would bring empowerment to Polish big Others—the Jew, the woman, those beyond the heteronormative matrix. Czapliński’s project placing Sarmatism in the epicentre of the tectonic clashes between Polish modernity and tradition might be understood an expression of Negri and Hardt’s (2009: 104) notion of ‘altermodernity’ that goes beyond the dialectical opposition between modernity and anti-modernity, through a path of ‘rupture and transformation’. The Polishists German Ritz and Ewa Thompson voice similar views to Czapliński. According to Ritz (2011a: 144), the anti- and pre-modern Sarmatism ‘can return in the form of postmodernism or logocriticism’. Thompson (Mizerkiewicz 2011a: 218) suggests that one can harness the Old Polish non-Cartesian worldview as a means of enfranchisement.

In turn, the Polish sociologist Jan Sowa (2011: 259-73) sees the Commonwealth as an absolute void masked by overblown mythologies, an economically backward entity whose extensive economy derived profit from colonial exploitation of its eastern territories as well as peasants by nobles removed from the lower strata of the society by an impenetrable barrier. In particular, Sowa sees Sarmatism in Lacanian terms as a phantasm and misrepresentation—in other words, a symbolic-imaginary complex that covered up the lack of a proper state apparatus embodied in the figure of a king. Such phantasmatic structure blocked access to the real characterised as the fundamental lack.

# Chapter 3: Marek Konieczny in the fold. The 1970s in Polish history, art and culture

The following chapter seeks to augment the case study of Konieczny by providing background information on the decade of the 1970s. In particular, the present chapter maps out different accounts of the 1970s in Polish history, art and culture. If the notions of context and (art) history can all be rightly problematised, the information presented here serves a pragmatic function. Namely, the chapter seeks to acquaint the reader with a set of knowledges which constitute departure points for Polish research on the subject, to supply its 'taken-for-granted'. While many current interpretations of Polish art in the 1970s subscribe to Žižek's notion of art as symptom and a mere sign of the underlying ideology, the present chapter seeks to provide a more balanced panorama of diverse points of view.

## 1. A Poland in the 1970s

The section will begin with a tentative topology of the period as arising from literature of the subject, opening up a discontinuous field of singularities, eventual folds whose mutual relation is far from being causal and linear, perhaps revealing more of the affective dynamics of cultural historians themselves rather than any kind of transcendental panoramic grand narrative. The subsequent sections will in turn examine selected aspects of the period such as I deem relevant in my discussion of Konieczny: the structures of state power and the novel deployment of simulacra through consumerism and national history. The section will conclude in a case study of Jerzy Hoffmann's hugely successful cinematic venture foregrounding the role of the actor Daniel Olbrychski as an inorganic aggregate precariously tied together by the above forces.

### 1.1. A topology of the decade

The decade of the 1970s in Poland was a period of so-called *real socialism*. Succinct historical overviews of the decade are provided by Paczkowski (1999) and Będkowski (2010). In fact these are the accounts I rely on in this section.

After the anti-Semitic government campaign of 1968 sparked off by Six Day War between Israel and Arab countries supported by the Soviet Union, which led to a wave of student protests and a purge of Jewish intelligentsia, amidst soaring economic crisis, the government led by the communist party's first secretary Władysław Gomułka steadily lost social footing and was heading for a collision course (Paczkowski 1999). March 1968 produced a feeling of shock, inertia and historical rupture, evident in Andrzej Wajda's movie *Wszystko na sprzedaż* [Everything for sale] whose protagonists wander aimlessly amidst an indifferent, desolate landscape, in a style reminiscent of French new wave (Lubelski 2009: 294-5). After a series of workers' protests (December 1970) against massive increases in the prices of basic foodstuffs, there was a change of guard in People's Republic of Poland. The new secretary Edward Gierek, a socialist miner raised in France in the 1920s, promised an affluent, worldly 'second Poland' (Będkowski 2010: 52), a hybrid form of socialism that would combine central planning with consumerism, thus giving rise to what David Crowley (2007: 20) calls 'banal socialism'. The 1970s has already become the stuff of grandiose legend as the *belle époque* (Będkowski 2010: 3), in fact the first half of the period, the so-called 'golden era', brought steady economic growth, albeit funded by foreign loans. A series of legislations strengthening the socialist character of the county and its ties with the

Soviet Union, as well as economic downturn, cast however a dark shadow on the remainder of the decade. In 1976 a series of strikes against the planned rise in prices of basic foodstuffs took place in Radom and Ursus factories. The regime answered with arrests and exceptional police brutality, which led to creation of the first Polish organised opposition in 1976. The subsequent Gdańsk shipyard strikes (August 1980) in turn gave rise of the Solidarity movement that tapped into mounting social discontent and profound disillusionment with the political system. The authorities attempted to stop the imminent social revolution by imposing martial law in 1981.

## 1.2. An anatomy of power

The new, hybrid form of socialism introduced in the 1970s marks a break from lofty heroic, monumental rhetoric of revolutionary strife and rather simply de-ideologising the state becomes trivial, embedded in daily practices, naturalized, taken for granted (Piotrowski 2009: 287, Crowley 2007: 20). With its newfound ideology of pragmatism and competence, Poland of the 70s was celebrating the positive values of progress as worth fighting for, no longer the negative dialectics of fight *against*. Poland, at least officially, abandons the rhetoric of an isolated enclave under siege from its class enemies and enters warm relations with the Atlantic world, thus gaining acceptance for its hybrid modernity as a part of the global world-order while the rudiments of its political system remain intact (Piotrowski 2009: 286-7). It cannot therefore come as a surprise that Gierek played host to Nixon in 1972 and in turn paid a diplomatic visit to the USA in 1974, thus establishing a pattern of mutual visits that continued throughout the decade (Będkowski 2010: 134). This apparent liberalisation can be viewed in context of parallel changes occurring in other countries of the Bloc, except Albania, now drifting towards a socialist simulation of Welfare State, much like Hungary under János Kádár (Będkowski 2010: 25). The liberalisation in fact marked the consolidation phase of socialism that dispensed with, as Antonio Negri (2006) points out, the revolutionary process and its potential for social change. Gierek's advice 'Comrade Rurarz, no reforms please' (Będkowski 2010: 26) can be understood in this very context. According to Negri (2006: 24),

consolidating itself, socialism obtained enormous results. In the first place, it demonstrated that it was possible. In the second place, it imposed on the bourgeois economy a radical modification (the capitalist New Deal, as we will see later). But in its consolidation is also betrayal—corruption in the place of generation, bureaucratization of power instead of its constituent liberation.

Ushering the period of outward Westernization, the decade marked a significant shift in mechanisms of power, from social control exerted through outward persecution to the one of subtle surveillance. In his seminal examination of Eastern European art under communism, Piotrowski (2009: 286- 91) describes this paradigm shifts in terms of the Foucauldian interiorised panoptic *microphysics of power*, contiguous with Vaclav Havel's notion of *post-totalitarianism* whereby a ritualised ideology that appears alongside Western-inspired forms of consumerism points to the underlying societal trade-off of democratic freedoms in exchange for economic stability. A succinct illustration of this situation can be found in the 1979 performance *Triangle* by the Yugoslav artist Sanja Iveković.

During the state visit of Josif Broz Tito to Zagreb Iveković installed herself on her balcony overlooking the street where state-sponsored parades were in full swing. She would drink Western whisky, smoke Western cigarettes at the same time simulating masturbation. After some eighteen minutes her flat was entered by policemen demanding that she left the balcony, as it turned out she had been spotted by one of its members observing the

area from the rooftop of an opposite block of flats (Piotrowski 2009: 355-8). The performance in fact foregrounded the illusory artistic freedom enjoyed under *real socialism* despite, and perhaps because of, the presence of imported liberal culture, a situation Piotrowski (2009: 83) calls after Miklós Haraszti a 'velvet prison'.

### **1.3. Eastern modernism: consumerism, media and simulacra**

The 1970s saw a rise in the relative affluence of Poles whose prefab blocks of flat would be increasingly equipped with household appliances, fitted furniture, colour television, gramophones or tape recorders (Crowley 2007: 20, Będkowski 2010: 60-3). If West-inspired consumerism was deployed by the state as a strategy to diffuse any possible social discontent, the authorities embarked on a very slippery path activating the spiral of desire they could not satisfy, indefinitely postponing consumer satisfaction. In the early 70s Poland drew massive foreign loans, launching production of many products under Western licenses, such as the iconic Fiat 126p, amidst however permanent scarcity and poor quality of materials (Piotrowski 1991: 10-11, Crowley 2007: 18). At the same time the availability of Western consumer products was strictly limited to specialised stores where petty luxuries, such as cigarettes and whisky, could be bought for dollars. Crowley remarks that Gierek's decade created the ersatz culture, a culture of cheap state-produced knockoffs which harnessed the appeal of the brand itself, replete with signs that have no other referent than other signs, the pure Baudrillardian simulacra (2007: 20-4).

Thus Poland entered, if not postmodernism, than certainly a form of what Géza Pernecky termed 'Eastern Modernism' (Piotrowski 2009: 272). During the Gierek period the state would deploy simulacra through the use of new media to disseminate the propaganda of success. Gierek's numerous field visits were broadcast in colour, carefully choreographed by outbursts of simulated spontaneity, and subsequently framed by a newspeak composed of pseudo-scientific technocratic jargon and general, tautological statements. All these elements would freely manipulate events so as to obfuscate cases of mismanagement or Poland's impending economic collapse (Będkowski 2010: 49-53).

#### **1.3.1. The 1970s and the consumption of history as simulacrum**

Piotrowski (1991: 9) begins his study of Polish art in the 1970s with the important insight that the state authorities no longer sought legitimization in Marxist ideology, but instead this legitimization was restated in terms of tradition and national history. In fact, after the rupture of 1969, the 70s saw a hunger for uplifting national history, and the state ideologues readily picked on that. There was therefore a proliferation of books on history, historical films, historical talks on television (Lubelski 2009: 321-2; Piotrowski 1991: 9-10). Tellingly, figures derived from Marxist hagiography which had found way into Polish banknotes were now being gradually phased out by figures derived from Polish history (Piotrowski 1991: 9, Będkowski 2010: 26), designed by Andrzej Heidrich as part of the series *The Great Poles* introduced in the mid-1970s.

Somewhat enigmatically, Piotrowski (1991: 10) points out that legitimisation of power in the 1970s proceeded, beside the national-historical avenue, also by means of Poland's postulated occidentalisation, the latter aspect in the end exerting a more decisive impact on Polish artistic culture, whereas the former left scarcely any trace. One may ask what was therefore the mutual relation between the two forms of legitimisation? Perhaps it would be more revealing say that the legitimisation of power was based, first and foremost, upon the ideology of consumerism and technologically-driven progress. Within this context national history was marketed as another



product, custom-build to buy social docility. Romanticism and Sarmatism fared extremely well here as the desired brands. Unsurprisingly, two grand state-sponsored exhibitions curated by Marek Rostworowski for National Museum in Cracow, *Romantyzm i romantyczność* [Romanticism and Romantic Sensibility] (1975) and *Polaków portret własny* [The Poles' Own Portrait] (1979), proved instant success with busloads of people swarming the museum. The communist authorities officially enshrined the potentially explosive moments of national history thus performing a procedure that Baudrillard (1983: 13-23) called *museumification*, manufacturing and simultaneously effacing the tradition for the purposes of the present. Through projects like the Rostworowski exhibitions which offered a mythologised, stereotypical, uncritical take on history Gierek's regime pragmatically deployed the procession of simulacra while symbolically extending its rule retroactively towards its past. The latter exhibition expressly articulated the ideological pull of simulacric national history. The exhibition space was designed in such a way that, on their way to the exit, punctuated with 300 portraits from the thirteenth century onwards, so towards the final leg of a journey through time as it were, the visitors were faced with mirror (Halawa 2011: 4), experiencing a moment of illusory empowerment as an integral part in the panoply of greatness. According to Przemysław Czapliński (2011: 85-98), a similar effect was produced by *Fire in the Steppe* (1968) and *The Deluge* (1974), cinematic adaptations of Henryk Sienkiewicz's iconic historical epic set in the seventeenth century Sarmatian Poland directed by Jerzy Hoffman.

### 1.3.2. Sex appeal of the inorganic – Daniel Olbrychski and Natalia LL

According to Czapliński (2011: 87-98), Hoffman's project gave the communist masses an opportunity for identification with the Polish seventeenth-century gentlefolk. This toothless adventure did not collide with the socialist modernity and, what is more, treated its audiences to a spectral diet of clichés, phantasms and appearances of the Sienkiewiczian original which blocked possible trajectories for individual independence and transformation, responsible actions propelled by honest self-reflexion. According to Czapliński (2011: 89), Hoffman's films instead ushered in what Tischner had called 'the straw man of the Sarmatian glories', i.e. a crippling lethargy induced by the haze of the vague, yet splendid past that entraps its audiences in charms of indefinitely removed, borrowed imaginary triumphs. An account by Bohdan Tomaszewski (quoted in Wachowicz 1971: 41) epitomises the phantasmatic aspect of such lethargic Sarmatism perfectly:

A screening [of *Fire in the Steppe*] in one of Warsaw's cinemas. The newsreel has just finished. The curtains slowly draw wider. The screen becomes filled with delicate hues. It is still covered with haze, but already one can hear the clop-clop of the hooves. And suddenly there appears a knight upon a white horse, wielding a sabre. A hurricane of applause suddenly fills the auditorium. (...) Even the trailer was welcomed frenetically.

For Czapliński (2011: 98), the 1970s generated a narrow Sarmatism that accommodated general advancement, but turned society into a nondescript pulp; idolised the nation, yet produced anachronistic others; opened itself up to Catholicism, yet did not invite spiritual reflection. The Hoffman Hollywood-inspired venture was a perfect consumer product that inscribed itself easily into the brandscape of Gierek-era banal socialism, accompanied as it was by extensive promotional campaign employing high-quality film stills (cf. [Figs. B.40]), including media coverage, marketing of books and branded clothing, the director's professed, albeit inherently contradictory, truthfulness both to the Sienkiewiczian original and the seventeenth-century historical reality uncovered via historical research (Wachowicz 1971, Oleksiewicz 1975). The phenomenon of the Hoffmanian eastern western, re-articulating national anachronism and occidental consumerism within a context of socialist technocracy, can be interpreted in terms of what Žižek (2005) calls the imp of the perversity which propels an ideological

apparatus, in order to ensure its proper functioning, to articulate its inherent antagonism in the externality of its material existence. Crowley (2007: 21) invokes this notion to account for socialist consumerism, but it also can be applied to the socialist deployment of national history and iconography.

In this respect, it is not unsurprising that Daniel Olbrychski, cast as the volatile and duplicitous, impish Tatar Azja in the first instalment of the Hoffman series, also appeared in the second film, but this time as Kmicic—an equally impulsive, yet arch-patriotic Polish gently man (1992: 114-157). In both roles Olbrychski was equally objectified, his photo stills suffused with Hollywood glamour resembling those of the female leads (cf. the cover of Oleksiewicz 1975; [Fig. B.43, 48-50]). The reification, the becoming-inorganic, along with the compulsion to repeat, testify to the more-than-human simulacra inaugurated by consumerism (cf. the simulacric character of the actors' metamorphosis via make up and costumes, both of which were based upon the 'actual' period drawings and paintings; [Figs. B.44-7]). Unsurprisingly, Olbrychski preparations for the roles consisted in intensive bodily exercises, fencing and horse riding (Lubelski 2009: 348). Muscular exertion, gestural politics and motoric repetition were deployed to grasp the perceived essence of Tatariness. The actor in fact had visited the Podlachia region in north-western Poland, called the Polish Tatarstan, so as to learn that squinting eyes, restrained gestures and taciturn posture would lend him insight into the Tatar identity (Wachowicz 1971: 292-3) (cf. Olbrychski as Azja in [Figs. B.39, 41-2]). The actor's self-proclaimed becoming-Tatar for the duration of the shooting foregrounded not even the performative construction of identity but nonorganic, ahuman pre-individual rhythms. Quite symptomatically, Olbrychski even replaced one of the Crimean Tatars from the MOSFILM crew during the shooting of military scenes as apparently more proficient on horseback, providing a better performance of Tatariness than the Tatar himself (1992: 154). A similar over-identification can be observed in the *Consumption Art* series (1973) by the video artist Natalia LL [Fig. B.33]. In her now iconic performance for the camera she can be seen eating a banana, an act connoting fellatio, in such a way that she instead appears consumed by the machinic repetition of inorganic materiality (Crowley 2007: 16).

Interestingly, the artist's inorganic encounter and her emergent transformation becomes a springboard of empowerment suggesting a valid strategy that succeeds in frustrating the male gaze (Crowley 2007: 148), ushering in the liberating notion of the cyborg, introduced to feminist theory by Donna Haraway (1991) in her 'Cyborg manifesto', and epitomised by a series of self-staged photographs by the artist Cindy Sherman. Discussing Sanja Iveković's series of conceptual photographs where she emulates models off the pages of glossy Western women's magazines, the feminist art critic Izabela Kowalczyk (2010) foregrounds the ambiguous status of Polish consumer culture in the 1970s, discerning, alongside its commodifying drive, the potential of Western consumerism for dislodging ideological structures of the socialist state by sparkling the freedom of individual transformation. Similarly, Czapliński (2011: 93-8) points out, drawing on Ortega y Gasset's phases of cultural emancipation of societies, that although the launch of *The Deluge* in 1974 cemented the first phase of the Sarmatian simulacra—whereby the constructed commodified history bestowed nobility upon the masses equating them with the seventeenth-century gentlefolk, giving rise to egalitarian passivity—it set ground for the subsequent transformations. According to Czapliński's (2011: 97-8) expert eye of a cultural sociologist, the rise of the Solidarity movement in 1980 and the revolt of 1989 could not have happened had the socialist masses not re-appropriated the Sarmatian simulacra and acted on it. The Polish so-called neo-avant-garde of the 1970s offered parallel deterritorialisations. Though his muscle reflexes and squinted Tatar eyes Olbrychski produced difference through repetition, thus entering into a mutual resonance with artistic strategies of Marek Konieczny and Natalia LL.

## 2. Visual arts and Polish culture in the 1970s

While discussing the vagaries of the so-called Polish *neo-avant-garde* of the Gierek era Piotrowski (2009: 290-1) notices a marked asymmetry between the development of literature, film and theatre on one hand and that of visual arts on the other.

In fact, as Lubelski (2009: 298-300) points out, poetry was the quickest to respond to the contradictions of the communist Poland of the day. In 1972 a young Cracow-based poet, Adam Zagajewski, published an article that became a generational manifesto. Its symptomatic title—‘Rzeczywistość nieprzedstawiona w powojennej literaturze polskiej’ [Unrepresented reality in Polish post-war literature]—called for a model of culture engaged with its immediate, mundane reality, a culture that would dispense with artistic posturing, but go out in the field, penetrate the crevices of the here and now of the People’s Republic of Poland. The article, followed by the book of the same title published in 1974, emphasized the need for a responsible, ethical stance on the part of the artist-citizen who would describe and actively engage with the actual problems surrounding her, rather than uncritically subscribe to the propagandist, official take on reality. The proposed straight-talking ethics of the emergent ‘Young Culture’ spawned a cinema that would engage with socialist reality through a whole array of forms, such as existential cinema, documentaries, grotesque, self-reflexive video art (Lubelski 2009: 300-66). Consequently, Polish theatre was enjoying its golden period, employing Young Poland playwrights to articulate of philosophy of social responsibility (Będkowski 2010: 93-4). The pivotal spectacle of the decade, a 1974 adaptation of the *Wyzwolenie* [Liberation] play (1903) by the Young-Polish author Stanisław Wyspiański, directed by Konrad Świnarski for the Stary Theatre in Cracow, symptomatically underscored the need, and the difficulty, to overcome the enslaving residue of lofty Romanticism filled with frenetic phantasms and to embrace the philosophy of individual and social responsibility (Bujanowicz 2004; an arresting 1981 photo of the play’s cast in Barbey 1982). The second half of the decade, post-Ursus, in turn yielded an even more critical engagement through *kino moralnego niepokoju* [the cinema of moral anxiety] and the development of the unofficial *drugi obieg* [second circuit] of oppositional samizdat publications (Lubelski 2009: 367-8; Będkowski 2010: 96, 120-4).

On the other hand, Polish visual arts did not on the whole engage in direct political critique of the regime and, in Piotrowski’s (2009: 290-3) assessment, proved slow in reacting to the outside reality of its socialist contemporaneity. Such critique appeared only in a handful of cases and in veiled form—the Yes Gallery, the artistic duo KwieKulik, the Repassage Gallery—and to the scholar’s eye constitutes a notable exception that corroborated the general rule.

### 2.1. A garden of forking paths: the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s: neo-avant-garde, conceptualism, modernism

The landscape of Polish visual arts in the 1970s became dominated by currents of the so-called *neo-avant-garde*. The term was employed, after Peter Bürger who introduced the term in his seminal 1974 *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, by Morawski (2007) to denote continuation of the pre-war historical avant-garde into the second half of the nineteenth century, as epitomised by Allan Kaprow’s happenings in the USA and Tadeusz Kantor’s happenings and assemblages in Poland. Hal Foster (1994: 5) handily summarises Western neo-avant-garde as

a loose grouping of North American and Western European artists of the 1950s and '60s who reprised and revised such avant-garde devices of the 1910s and '20s as collage and assemblage, the readymade and the grid, mono-chrome painting and constructed sculpture.

Influenced by Marxist criticism, Bürger (2010: 696) saw the dialectic essence of the historical avant-garde in the attack on the institution of art (...) [as the condition for] the revolutionising of life as a whole, challenging the modernist paradigm of autonomous art. In the same vein, Piotrowski (2011: 80-1) sees art autonomy and self-sufficiency as central to Modernism, regarding an attempt to embed art in life as crucial to the avant-garde. Similarly, Wilkoszewska (2006: 9) discerns two conceptions of avant-garde; one foregrounding formal experimentation motivated by purely aesthetic goals and another, a byword for anarchic movements seeking to overthrow artistic-aesthetic norms. Wilkoszewska subscribes to the former interpretation. What I wished to underscore here in invoking Bürger and Wilkoszewska is the way their binary Manichean rhetoric firmly couches the relationship between Modernism and avant-garde in terms of binary oppositions, the frame as a barrier between the inside and outside, the essentially, a priori, defined art and life, aesthetics and ontology. I shall argue later on that such dialectical tension can be relieved by recourse to the Deleuzian *onto-aesthetics* of art that sees art as the realm of the affect traversing the physical body defined as the precarious endurance of material and symbolic forces (O'Sullivan 2006; Braidotti 2007).

Differing views of the above scholars point to the contested territory of the avant-gardes, pictured by Wilkoszewska (2006: 9) as undergoing kaleidoscopic permutations set off by minute perspectival movements. The controversy can be witnessed for example in the assessment of the neo-avant-garde. While Bürger (2010: 704-8) regarded the neo-avant-garde as a futile attempt to effect social change through a formal replication of avant-garde gestures that has since become part for the institution of art, according to Morawski (Wilkoszewska 2006: 8) the neo-avant-garde, unlike its predecessor, succeeded in undermining the paradigm of art. This neo-avant-garde precipitated this shift by introducing processual, eventual forms such as happenings.

Another controversy that mars the discussion of Polish art of the 1970s is the beleaguered notion of Conceptualism. Conceptual Art developed in the Atlanticist West—Great Britain and the US—in the mid-1960s as a set of diverse artistic practices such as Fluxus events, Sol LeWitt's serial art, Joseph Kosuth's analytical art, or Daniel Burren's interventions (Dziamski 2010: 55-99). All of these manifestations shared a belief that, to quote Sol LeWitt's 1967 'Paragraphs of conceptual art', 'the idea becomes a machine that makes art' (Dziamski 2010: 66) marking the next stage of dematerialisation of the modernist art object. Piotrowski (2011: 175) sees the essence of Western Conceptualism in overcoming the modernist autonomy of work of art, opening art to issues related to the outside reality, and the subsequent critique of processes of representation employed by the state to micro-manage public life. Conceptual Art appeared in the context of the post-industrial society of spectacle saturated with consumer goods. This multi-layered comprehensive critique of Modernism undertaken by Conceptual Art went beyond the aesthetic, visual aspect of work to cut deep into its underlying cultural philosophy. Such a definition corresponds to Bürger's fundamentals of avant-garde, attacking the autonomy of art and breaking into the territory of life (2010: 696).

In turn, according to Piotrowski (2011: 175-6; 2009: 286) Eastern European revision of Modernism limited itself to a critique of pictorialism, hence to the level of aesthetics, revealing its underlying visual grammar, but not the critique of the immediate context and its ontologies. Piotrowski (2009: 286-92), a researcher of interstices of art and politics, goes as far as to suggest that the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s—which functioned with the

official approval of the state—corresponded to the paradigm shift within socialism from its heroic phase to the panoptic micro surveillance and from the orthodox central planning to the socialist consumer society. In this context, it is unsurprising that the authorities allowed and even encouraged avant-garde practices as long they did not openly criticise the regime, because the neutral, tautological, abstract manipulations ushered in by Western Conceptualism upheld the illusion of freedom and cosmopolitan internationalism, Haraszti's (2009: 288) 'velvet prison', while projecting Poland's progressive and liberal face to the West.

Piotrowski (1991: 10-1; 2009: 291) develops an argument that sees the Polish neo-avant-garde as an ersatz product typical of the decade—a sparkling pure simulacrum, flashy imported luxury product, uncritically 'serving up shallow intellectual values'. This understanding of the Polish neo-avant-garde as a formulaic, derivative surface phenomenon corresponds to Piotrowski's (2011: 178) conclusion that Polish artists following this pretentious *pseudo-avant-garde* copied Conceptual style rather Conceptual values while at the same time remaining loyal to modernist autonomy of the work of art. Since for Piotrowski this preoccupation with autonomy firmly entrenched Polish art of the decade within Modernism, it did not constitute either *true* Conceptual Art by Western standards as it was not analytical enough or *true* avant-garde as interpreted by Bürger as it was not political enough. Piotrowski's essentialist criticism, despite his assurances to the contrary, epitomises an art history written from the point of view of Western cultural hegemony.

A more nuanced take on the Polish neo-avant-garde can be found in the works of the critic Grzegorz Dziamski (2010) whose understanding of Conceptualism is context-specific and derives from the generational perception of the artists themselves; in other words, such a point of view is postcolonial or culture-specific, rather than deconstructive. Conceptualism, according to the scholar (Dziamski 2010: 205-7), constituted an umbrella term for diverse artistic strategies whose common denominator was their break with traditional art based upon representation, academic formalism and material art object. The artists would appropriate the style, media and methods of distribution of Western Conceptualism to express their independence, their autonomy from institutional and material constraints of the state and the desire to subvert the distance between life and art, seeking new polyphonic ways of expression. This broadly-defined, open-ended do-it-yourself multi-media Conceptualism was an expression of youthful rebellion for the artists whose debut would fall at the turn of the 1970s, a countercultural contestation of the status quo. The Hungarian art critic László Beke emphasised the subversive potential of Conceptual Art under communism noting that it should have been invented in Eastern Europe. Its functioning as a strategy allowing the artists to elude [state] power should be acknowledged as a particular trait of the local version of Conceptual Art (Dziamski 2010: 205). Needless to say such Eastern European Conceptualism was a far cry from its Western counterpart defined as a rigorous, analytical deconstruction and preoccupation with mental, semiotic and semantic processes, but at the same time it echoes Western Conceptualism defined as multiplicity.

Faced with all these facts, piled one upon another, I think it is now worth to take a step back to meditate on this disorienting aporia of the 1970s. By juxtaposing views of Piotrowski and Dziamski I wished to demonstrate exactly what is at stake when researching the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s. In fact, the decade functions in Polish art historical research as the Borgesian 'garden of forking paths' evoking parallel and non-linear time rather than chronological and causal history. Such ambiguity also extends to the whole culture of the Gierek era. Hoffman's resuscitation of the seventeenth-century Sarmatism was only fitting in this respect, since the period engendered analogous multiplicity of views. The multiplicity evokes Baroque perspectivism interpreted by

Deleuze (2006: 20-1) not boiling down to phenomenal world of appearances but an anamorphosis determined by a particular affective engagement with the world that conjures up its momentary subject, a superject, and its transitory object, an objectile. Such perspectivism is intimated by Bieszczad's (2006: 9) kaleidoscopic configurations of the avant-garde, which she however treats as mere metaphor, not signalling an ontological problem. The art historian Luiza Nader (2009) takes a step further, treating Polish Conceptualism as a Foucauldian discursive heterogeneous formation whose shift, ruptures and transpositions can give important clues as to the construction of subjectivity, desire and the role of language. Deleuze, who commended Foucault's method of *the archaeology of knowledge* as an important contribution to the theory of multiplicity but at the same time opened it up to the non-discursive outside, importantly remarks (2006: 21) that

a needed relation exists between variation and point of view: not simply because of the variety of points of view (...), but in the first place because every point of view is a point of view on variation. The point of view is not what varies with the subject, at least in the first instance; it is, to the contrary, the condition in which an eventual subject apprehends a variation (metamorphosis).

An art critical discourse founded upon the notion of art object and thus implicitly assuming severance of subject and object is particularly ill-equipped to deal with the affective component of art unless it introduces some form of eventual vortex that sweeps the subject-object divide to make room for the materiality of the bodies and symbolic processes, as suggested by Bal's (1999a) interpretation of Louise Bourgeois' sculptural installation *Spider*. In turn, the critic Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska (2006) points towards the *event* as lying at the core of the neo-avant-garde revolution, advocating such theoretical approaches that recognise this object-event transition (Erica Fischer-Lichte, etc.). An example of such approach, albeit in a vestigial form, can be seen in Ronduda's (2009b: 9-20) analysis of the artistic trajectory of the KwieKulik duo from the point of view of Alain Badiou's *event*.

Let us now return to the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s whose discussion oscillates between deconstructive idealism and a postcolonial, culture-relative multiplicity. Controversy inhabits every fold of this undulating terrain. I have so far presented differing views on Western Conceptualism, Polish Conceptualism, the much-contested notion of the avant-garde, differing strains of Modernism. Subsequently, I am going to focus on the institutional topography of the decade, significant events signalling different trajectories, as well as shifting topologies of artistic strategies.

## **2.2. An institutional topography of the decade**

Dziamski (2010: 203-4) remarks that the 1970s possessed a unique configuration of artistic institutions whose seeds were already sown in the 1960 with the establishment of, among others, the Warsaw Foksal Gallery (1966), the Elbląg El Gallery (1961), the Wrocław Pod Moną Lisą [Under Mona Lisa] Gallery (1967), followed by many other galleries including the influential Poznań-based Akumulatory 2, the Warsaw based Permafo, Remont and Repassage Gallery and, last but not least, the Lublin Galeria Labirynt [Labyrinth Gallery]. All those so-called independent author's galleries were crucial to the development of Polish neo-avant-garde. Affiliated with either student organisations, local community centres or arts community clubs, placed in provisory non-gallery spaces, they enjoyed a quasi-independent semi-official status as free to shape their program, but at the same time received funds from the state. It is worth noting at this point that Dziamski (2010: 206) calls attention to the subversive potential of these galleries, echoed by Nader (2010: 398-9) who employs here the Foucauldian designation heterotopias to denote counter-places related to and critical of other places; places which explode the

binary relations of space and its division into the public and the private. The notion of heterotopia offers a particularly interesting perspective on the Foksal Gallery, officially a part of the official state-run visual arts monopolist Visual Arts Workshops [Pracownie Sztuk Plastycznych, PSP], which examined issues surrounding interstices of art and power, institutional hegemony and the archive, even though, as Ronduda (2007-8: 66) points out, it failed to voice direct political critique of its specific entanglement in the structures of PSP. The above controversy surrounding Foksal, albeit to a lesser degree, also extends to all author's galleries. Piotrowski's (2011: 211-2) totalising view emphasizing their complicity in the state apparatus—through funding and the required state approval—is countered by Jarosław Kozłowski's (Kinowska 2012) nuanced account of activities of the Akumulatory 2 Gallery which 'succeeded in bypassing the official art system'.

Perhaps it would be fair to say visual arts galleries of the 1970s could be placed on a constantly shifting plane of intensity with respect to their implication and subversion in state structures. With these reservations in mind we can nonetheless put forth a provisional map of Polish visual arts in the 1970s acknowledging that the author's galleries had a different momentum from both their official, state-run centrally planned counterparts—Bureaus of Artistic Exhibitions [Biura Wystaw Artystycznych, BWA]—and a whole host of unofficial galleries, located either in artists' own homes or virtually, which the performance artist Jerzy Truszkowski (2013: 35-8) called 'alternative a-institutional institutions'. The latter included Andrzej Partum's Poetry Bureau [Biuro Poezji] active between 1971 and 1984, Atanazy Wiśniewski's one-man virtual, mobile Yes-Gallery active from 1970, operating via leaflets distributed via mail, or Action, Documentation and Diffusion Workshop [Pracownia Działań, Dokumentacji i Upowszechniania, PDDiU] run by Zofia Kulik and Przemysław Kwiek between 1971 and 1987.

It is also particularly important to reiterate here that artistic activity of the decade was shot through ideological state apparatuses. Ronduda (2007-8: 54) explains that state-run Visual Arts Workshops monopolized the Polish arts market as it awarded all commissions in the sphere of visual arts it had received from public institutions only to the members of Association of Polish Fine Arts [Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków, ZPAP]. Fine Arts Academies [Akademie Sztuk Pięknych, ASPs] (Truszkowski 2013: 6) in turn offered formation tailored to the needs of the socialist state and its propaganda machine, even though some professors would at times offer unconventional and stimulating methods (i.e. Oskar Hansen's 'Open Form' studio at the Warsaw ASP). After graduation, official commissions would constitute the artist's livelihood, because, as Ronduda (2007-8: 54) remarks, there existed virtually no other legal source of income for freelance visual artists, unless of course they decided to branch into other professions. On the other hand, while discussing neo-avant-garde of the 1970s Ronduda at the same time for most part ignores artists without formal academic training. This is redressed by Truszkowski (2013: 6) who highlights the role of self-taught non-professional artists, such as Jacek Malicki. Such artists belonged in the ranks of the avant-garde in the sense that coming from outside the system they could successfully launch an attack on both artistic and state-run political institutions. Curiously, Ronduda (2005: 121-31; 2007-8: 62) sees the avant-garde potential in the artistic strategies of the artistic duo KwieKulik from the early 70s which attempted a revision of the system from within, from a position of complicity of those obliged to turn out *chaltury* [the official hackwork].

In conclusion, it can be said that Polish visual arts in the 1970s constituted a veritable ideological minefield replete with deeply hierarchical structures designed to capture and channel creative endeavour. In this context Conceptualism understood as art of (many) ideas offered a way out. In 1971 Jarosław Kozłowski together with

Andrzej Kostołowski formulated the NET/SIEĆ mail-art manifesto which invited both Polish and international artists to a non-profit exchange of art manifestations via mail correspondence and private contacts thus establishing a rhizomatic network, lateral and vertical, cutting across state barriers (Ronduda 2007-8: 87-91). Kozłowski's proposed rhizome swept the notion of work of art as a fixed, material object along with the notion of artist-as-author and artist-as-professional. Dziamski (2010: 205) remarks that Kozłowski's ideas formed the organizational principle of the majority of author's galleries. The subversive potential of NET/SIEĆ was certainly acknowledged by the secret police [Służba Bezpieczeństwa, SB] who closed down the first exhibition of art manifestations mailed by various artists, which took place in Kozłowski's private flat, a situation akin to the state intervention in Sanja Iveković's *Triangle* performance.

### **2.3. Eventual topologies of the decade: Dziamski and Piotrowski**

In its mighty baroque perspectivism, academic research on the Polish neo-avant-garde draws a multitude of competing trajectories. As Bal (1999a) points out in her case study of Bourgeois' *Spider*, each critic opens up multiple folds, each of whose activates a singular configuration of events, artistic strategies and institutions. It is therefore impossible to provide a homogenised view of visual arts in the 1970s. I will instead provide here a topology of selected events that highlight the internal multiplicity of the period.

Let us begin here with a brief summary of Polish post-war art (cf. Piotrowski 2009, 2011). After the Yalta conference, Poland became part of the Soviet bloc ushering in the period of Social Realism that lasted until 1956. The Thaw in turn brought a period of Socialist Modernism espousing *Art informel* and geometric abstraction that lasted well into the 1960s. The 1960s, the so-called Gomułka period, nonetheless saw the seeds of the neo-avant-garde. Indeed, the landscape of the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 70s with its Conceptual approach had already been prefigured in the 1960s through artistic practices that engaged with the tradition of Suprematism (Malevich's *Black Square*) as well as both Russian (El Lissitzky) and Polish constructivism (the pre-war Łódź constructivists Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński) on one hand, and the anti-art gestures of Marcel Duchamp and Yves Klein on the other (Dziamski 2010: 211-20). The first trajectory—summarised by Piotrowski (2011: 160 -174) as a transition from object to idea (art-as-idea)—was epitomised by Jerzy Rosołowicz, Roman Opałka and Ryszard Winiarski. It appeared alongside the second path (art-as-action) epitomised by Kantor's happenings and assemblages or Włodzimierz Borowski 'syncretic demonstrations', which mark a transition from painting to object, or in broader terms, given Kantor's theatrical background: from mimesis and pictorial re-presentation to a presentation of materiality, from theatre to performance (Piotrowski 2011: 148-60).

In turn, the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s—this Conceptualism *sensu largo*—embarked on multiple tangled paths of mutations. Dziamski (2010: 208-10), expanding on theorisations of the Polish Conceptualists, Jan Stanisław Wojciechowski and Andrzej Kostołowski, discerns a movement from philosophical Conceptualism posing questions about the essence of art to tautological preoccupation with the inherent qualities of the medium—understandable since art as an idea necessitated documentation via video, photography and mail—and subsequently an orientation towards an examination of ethics of art and a pragmatic critical engagement with the extra-artistic context. It is important to note here that Piotrowski (2011: 175-93) discusses all the above manifestations in terms of the transition from idea to reality, a process encapsulated by the seminal manifesto of the so-called 'Contextual Art' by the critic Jan Świdziński.



This 1976 manifesto, 'The 12 Theses of Contextual Art', launched a sustained attack on Conceptual Art entrenched in narrow self-referentiality, written in the same year Gierek's *belle époque* came to a grinding halt with workers' strikes at Radom and Ursus, brutally dispersed by the police. Świdziński's (2006a) post-Conceptual manifesto perceived art 'as a pure sign, cleansed of stereotypes; a sign which is filled by the present reality'. Art was to be a form of social practice, a stimulus encouraging generation of new ephemeral meanings that explode fossilised social, cultural and artistic structures. Contextual Art was a far cry from essentialist criticism introduced by the Foksal Gallery critic Wiesław Borowski (1975a) in his article 'Pseudoawangarda' [pseudo-avant-garde]. The text is grounded upon the rhetoric of a beleaguered castle of the perceived *true* avant-garde characterised by autonomous aesthetic experimentation, which is in sore need of rescuing from the pragmatic dissolution in life. Borowski saw the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s with its do-it-yourself egalitarianism not as an artistic but a cultural phenomenon rooted in unethical opportunism. Curiously, Czapliński (2011) detects similar empowering force set off by Hoffman's Polish western venture that surrendered the lofty Polish national history replete with past glories to the socialist masses.

Let us reiterate that Świdziński's critique ushered in the post-Conceptual turn in Polish visual arts, a move already intimated by Wiesław Borowski. Finally, from this position of embeddedness within reality the neo-avant-garde turned to artificial realities – personal artistic universes as testified by the exhibitions *Prywatne poglądy* [private views] (1978) and *Indywidualne mitologie* [individual mythologies] (1980)—echoing an analogous post-Ursus new wave in literature termed 'Pokolenie Nowa Prywatność' [The New Privacy Generation] which avoided direct engagement with its immediate social and political reality (Piotrowski 2011: 194-202; Nader 2009: 182-3).

I have already remarked that Dziamski's and Piotrowski's mode of writing art history can be subsumed into the sequential model which unfolds a linear chronology plotted into a grid of discrete phases. In turn Ronduda's (2009a) recent monograph on the 70s neo-avant-garde conceived in collaboration with the Polish artist Piotr Uklański underscores the multiplicity of artistic strategies which run parallel to one another sparkling off spontaneous mutations, resonating with one another.

## **2.4. Ronduda's preposterous neo-avant-garde**

In his landmark publication on the Polish neo-avant-garde, Ronduda (2009a) brings to the fore a non-linear art history, which he expressly refers to, borrowing an expression from the art historian Mieke Bal (1999b: 7), as the preposterous history of art. He does so by drawing attention to the material process of manufacturing—or, better still, a synthesis—of the 1970s in the present. Uklański, who made his debut in the 90s, epitomises this very process, since his artistic strategies engage and re-invent the Gierek-era neo-avant-garde. Uklański's gesture to invite his teacher Marek Konieczny to exhibit his work alongside his own at the Zachęta National Art Gallery in 2012 foregrounds this newfound posteriority of Konieczny which now runs parallel to Uklański's oeuvre. This curious phenomenon can be considered in terms of what the cultural historian Przemysław Czapliński (2011: 5-8, 18) sees as the anaemic nature of Polish post-transformation modernity sustained by a past manufactured out of fragments by the incessant machinic pull of capitalism. We might add here that capitalism works according to Deleuze (2004: 500) by producing decoded flows, branching out into ever new territories. Interestingly, Czapliński (2011: 86-98) in his recent extended essay on tradition and modernity devotes much space to examination of the 1970s he regards as the threshold of simulacric Sarmatism, an aggregate I have approached in terms of consumerism and history. Needless to say, Ronduda's work signals an analogous preoccupation.

Ronduda's reactivation of the 1970s, which parallels Czapliński's focus on Sarmatism, are just two instances out of the larger flow of re-appropriations propelled by the decoded flows of capitalism. Unsurprisingly, Klara Kemp-Welch (2010) sees Ronduda's album on the neo-avant-garde as a big, sexy, coffee table affair. Other notable examples, structured like a treasure chest of artefacts, are recent resuscitations of Polish interwar graphic design, 60s industrial design, Communist propaganda murals, Modernist architecture and pre-war Constructivism.

By foregrounding preposterous art history, Ronduda attempts to bypass the characteristic combination of psychoanalysis, post-structuralism and text-centricism—grounded in the Polish Romantic tradition of transcendental idealism—which has dominated Polish cultural theory since Maria Janion's 1991 manifesto, called *An Outline of Phantasmatic Criticism*. However, Ronduda (2009a: 15) has yet to develop his postulated 'interdisciplinary tools (...) beyond art history', in the sense that he has yet to formulate a comprehensive philosophy of art criticism along more immanent lines.

It is certainly true that, as Nader's (2009: 28-36) correctly points out, Ronduda's project can be inscribed into a string of consecutive attempts to remap the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s by reclaiming artists stigmatised by Borowski, undertaken by such artists as Lachowicz (1975), Zbigniew Warpechowski (2002) or Zbigniew Libera (2004). In fact, the case studies selected by Ronduda (2009a: 8) in his publication—subsumed by the author into the categories of *existential post-essentialism* and *pragmatism*, both characterised by their 'opening to the extra-artistic reality' (2009a: 8)—were amongst the ones mentioned in Borowski's article as proponents of the pseudo-avant-garde. However, it should be noted the critic makes no claims about delivering a representative, bird's-eye view of the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s. He instead chooses to focus on a heterogeneous assemblage of art and life, aesthetics and ontology, he conceptualises as art's opening to reality (2009: 8) proceeding from two vantage points.

#### **2.4.1. Existential post-essentialism and pragmatism**

The artists belonging to the *existential post-essentialist* current into which Ronduda inscribes, amongst others, Marek Konieczny, were still posing questions about the essence of art, understood not as a universal, immutable essence, but mystery, aura, neutrality of pure idea (2010: 151) persisting amidst the technocratic reality of the Gierek era. The Rondudian *post-essentialists* were also enquiring about the extra-artistic reality in the sense of rudimentary existential questions about the essence of Being as well as human relation with the world (2009a: 9). The artists also opposed the discursivisation and disenchanting of art professed by the pragmatists.

Pragmatism as a philosophy of art in turn launched a radical critique of Conceptualism, advocating the branching of art into the immediate context of life, the particular here and now, and from the ensuing condition of embedment, transformation of life via critical social action (Ronduda 2009a: 12-5). This was encapsulated in Świdziński's (2006b) formula REALITY ÷ INFORMATION ÷ ART ÷ NEW OPEN MEANINGS ÷ REALITY which found way into his 1976 manifesto *The twelve theses on Contextual Art*. Inspired by reality the pragmatists would open art to productive connections with science, politics, design, photography or cinema (Ronduda 2009a: 14).

#### **2.4.2. Conceptual signs of emptiness and post-conceptual empty signs**

Returning now to *existential Conceptualists* and *pragmatists*, according to Ronduda (2010: 150-5) both artistic strategies engage with reality through an interplay of signs and nothingness, semiotics and philosophy. The point of contact with reality is reached through generation of the *post-essentialist* conceptual signs of emptiness and, at the same time, by the *pragmatic* post-Conceptual empty signs. Ronduda (2010) introduced the above distinction in his publication entitled *Warpechowski, Konieczny, Uklański, Bodzianowski. Warpechowski, Dawicki*, which constitutes an elaboration of the theme of the Polish neo-avant-garde's opening to the outside reality.

According to Ronduda, the conceptual *signs of emptiness* explore the inside of the sign, the void behind it, the pure, unselfish nothingness supposed to bring us closer to the essence of art (...) or to the, identical with it, existential essence of experience, operating within a certain essential [artistic] reality, a space of essence (2010: 153-4). In turn *post-conceptual empty signs* investigated the outside of the sign, (...) the meaning presently filling it depending on the context in which it is presented. Those pragmatic *empty signs* pertain to the reality of interpersonal communication, linguistic games, the social reality in which art is made (Ronduda 2010: 153-4).

#### **2.4.3. Ronduda between idealism and immanence**

Ronduda (2009: 9) situates Konieczny alongside Natalia LL and Krzysztof Zarębski within a *sensual-corporeal* sub-strand of *existential post-essentialism* as opposed to its *poetic-personalist-existential* version.

He correctly identifies ontology as the crucial vantage point for artists such as Konieczny. However, elsewhere (2010: 152) he clarifies that what he means here are in fact philosophies of nothingness as epitomised by Buddhism and existentialism. Furthermore, he points towards the pathos of humanist philosophies, as evident in his phrasing 'philosophical reflection on the human condition' (2009: 9). At one point, Ronduda (2010: 152) associates *post-essentialist* strategies with 'an existentialist sense that the individual is nothingness – a constant becoming'. The phrasing marks a profound rupture whereby the existential pessimism and negativity is broken by an intimation of a different modality. Unfortunately, this promise of multiple ontologies remains unfulfilled as Ronduda (2010: 152-4) proceeds to interpret Konieczny's strategies in terms of the transcendental sublime whose constituent parts are oppositional individualism and unattainable beauty. Here a glorious, sharply delineated male subject, the dissident, faces the unnameable. Ronduda thus analyses Konieczny's strategies (2010: 152) in terms of a sage pondering the sublime: He created signs fascinating with their visual dimension, arousing a longing for something elusive, mysterious. Such an image evoking Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* [Fig. B.14] in fact has a correlate—at least in the sense of formal resemblance—amongst one of Konieczny works (cf. [Fig. A.79]).

#### **2.4.4. Towards the Deleuzian onto-aesthetics**

Despite his efforts to go beyond the Kantian-Romantic paradigm of Polish cultural theory, Ronduda offers a decidedly High Romantic interpretation of Konieczny. The case study chapter of the present dissertation shall argue for a different vision of Konieczny's art – as an expression of immanent materialism coupled with dispersed spirituality; a plateau of flows, productive transformations which embed art in life as affect, resonating with the Deleuzian onto-aesthetics of Zepke (2005) and O'Sullivan (2006). Konieczny does not let himself be captured by sequential unfolding of time but makes resonances with the steppe and the Baroque harnessing history into his multiple strings of becoming, shamelessly consuming history like Daniel Olbrychski's Azja and Kmicic.

## ***PART C: THE CASE STUDY OF KONIECZNY***

### **Chapter 4: Konieczny. Primary and secondary sources**

The present chapter seeks to complement academic research on Polish neo-avant-garde by providing a systematic overview of available material pertaining directly to Konieczny. Instead of master narratives, generalisations, or general trends, the material opens up a heterogeneous world of fragmented and frequently mutually contradictory pieces. At this point, I want to unlearn retrospective classifications and pay attention to the fold opened by Konieczny alone.

The present chapter aims to chart a map of primary and secondary sources relating to Konieczny, many of them presented for the first time in scholarship, in order to construct a new account of Konieczny practices. The chapter will thus conclude with what might be called here, after Szwejewska (1986), a ‘topology’ of Konieczny’s practices whereby life and art become indiscernible. The chapter, intended as a work in progress, attempts to unfurl a kind of extended annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources pertaining to Konieczny. As such it forms a novel attempt to bring together all available sources on Konieczny in order to draw a diagram of forces at play in his work, a blueprint for his art machine.

All translations of Polish quotes are mine except for situations when the sources were originally published in English. For the sake of clarity, I decided not to include the original Polish versions of block quotes, but only their English translations. The BWA abbreviation used in names of galleries refers to Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych [Bureau of Art Exhibitions], a regional branch of the state-run Centralne Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych [Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions].

I will begin my chapter by identifying particular traits of Konieczny’s sources. Subsequently I am going to tackle his meta-sources, i.e. bibliographies embedded in other sources. The sections immediately following will be devoted to his primary sources and in particular the exhibition catalogues and press articles. I will then go on to discuss the secondary sources in so that I can conclude my chapter with a handful of closing remarks.

#### **1. Sources on Konieczny – hiatuses and omissions**

The available sources on Marek Konieczny are scarce and fragmented. This situation is partly due to the artist’s involvement with what the Polish art critic Wiesław Borowski (1975) called *pseudoawangarda*, the pseudo-avant-garde—a group of artists marginalised by mainstream art-historical discourse until the early 2000s. Furthermore, throughout the 1970s Konieczny was connected to various semi- or non-official so-called ‘author’s galleries’ (*galerie autorskie*), such as Janusz and Maria Bogucki’s Galeria Współczesna [Contemporary Gallery], Paweł Freisler’s Sigma Club and ‘Galeria’, Andrzej Partum’s Biuro Poezji [The Poetry Bureau], Henryk Gajewski’s Galeria Remont, or Zdzisław Sosnowski’s Galeria Studio. Also, given the conceptual, ephemeral and process-based character of Konieczny’s early works, the artist was initially not exhibiting in the modernist sense, i.e. producing discrete art objects for display, but provoking certain situations that necessitated their video and photographic documentation. Unfortunately, Polish avant-garde artists of the 1970s had very

limited resources and the documentation they carried out was, for most part, sketchy at best.

Moreover, even nowadays, the communist times remain to some extent a taboo subject in Poland. This lingering legacy of the harsh realities of the communist regime can certainly help explain why the few accounts I managed to obtain from witnesses to Konieczny's activities tend to be full of sudden shifts, hiatuses, silences, and meaningful omissions. Many of the artists active in the circuit of the avant-garde, such as Andrzej Ekwiński, Paweł Freisler, Zdzisław Sosnowski, had emigrated to the West, while the majority of Konieczny's most insightful critics, including Stefan Morawski, Andrzej Mroczek and Zbigniew Thielle, had passed away.

## **1.1. Meta-sources, references, appendixes: between a discursive compass to navigating Konieczny's work and an artistic map of intensities**

I began my task of gathering sources pertaining to Konieczny by locating his meta-sources, i.e. reference sections containing bibliographies charting his art practices, as well as lists of his exhibitions and actions. I found out that, curiously enough, this kind of information is embedded in Konieczny's primary sources, and, in particular, his exhibition catalogues. At the same time, this crucial component was lacking in the available secondary sources. What follows is an in-depth discussion of the meta-sources and their mutual interconnections. I am proposing here a twofold interpretation of Konieczny's meta-sources woven into the fabric of his exhibition catalogues. On one hand, these can be considered pragmatic, at least on the surface, gateways for obtaining more material. On the other, they can be construed as art-works in their own right.

### **1.1.1. The 1982 exhibition catalogue—BWA Bielsko-Biała**

Although the catalogue of Konieczny's 1969 exhibition at the Boguckis' Galeria Współczesna already features skeletal information about his activities in Poland and abroad, the first systematic overview of primary and secondary sources pertaining to Konieczny did not appear until 1982 at the end of the catalogue accompanying the artist's exhibition in Bielsko-Biała.

The reference part of the catalogue consists of sections on Major exhibitions and actions, Museums and collections and Bibliography. The first of those meticulously lists each single appearance of Konieczny's work, however small or ephemeral. Therefore, much of the space of the list is occupied by collective exhibitions abroad and, especially, international exhibitions of mail art. The exhibitions are arranged chronologically and grouped under the following headings '1967-70', '1971-72', '1973-74', '1975-1976', and '1978-81'. The sections contain seven, twelve, twenty, twenty-two and fifteen entries, respectively—giving the astounding total of seventy-six entries. The entries contain numerous spelling mistakes with respect to foreign proper names, while the entries for the Remont Gallery and a group exhibition in Osetnica are erroneously duplicated.

The section on collections of Konieczny's artwork, in turn, lists seven entries, constituting a kernel that would be repeated verbatim in all the other meta-sources on Konieczny's art embedded into his exhibition catalogues from 1983, 1985, 1986 and 2012.

The Bibliography section contains a list of sixteen selected references to various press articles published both in Poland and abroad, and one reference to an art-historical book published in Poland. Curiously enough, the entries are arranged alphabetically by the name of the relevant source while not indicating the title or author of the article. The art-historical publication, Alicja Kępińska's 1981 retrospective overview of Polish art of the 1970s, is in turn identified solely by its title and the place of publication. The entries in the bibliography section contain numerous errors. Either the name of a particular source is given incorrectly, or the incorrect page number or year of publication is given.

### **1.1.2. The 1983 exhibition catalogue—BWA Lublin**

It was in 1983 that the BWA Gallery in Lublin hosted Konieczny exhibition *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel*. The Polish version of the exhibition catalogue features a critical essay written by Szwajewska. Her surname is placed at the end of the article, followed by two pages containing sections on bibliography, filmography and Konieczny's works in both Polish and international art collections.

The English version of the catalogue features Szwajewska's name on its front page. This version does not contain any sections described above, but instead includes a two-page list of Konieczny's selected exhibitions placed under three headings: '1967-1974', '1975-1976' and '1978-1983'. The exhibition list focuses mostly on collective exhibitions. Most of the events referred to testify to Konieczny's participation in the international network of mail artists. The objects presented during such exhibitions were mostly ephemera: printed materials, postcards and stamps. However, the still staggering number of entries in this section amounting to fifty in total as opposed to the seventy-six of the 1982 catalogue—twenty-eight (sic!) under 1967-1974, sixteen under 1975-1976, and another sixteen under 1978-1983—paints Konieczny as an internationally recognised and prolific artist.

#### **1.1.3. The 1985 exhibition catalogue—SBWA Forma Warsaw**

The glossy catalogue of Konieczny's 1985 exhibition at the SBWA Forma Gallery in Warsaw is concluded by a brief reference section prepared by Szwajewska. The section contains a list of the works reproduced, while also reiterating the contents of the sections on filmography and art collections from the previous 1983 catalogue. Minute, yet important changes occur in the bibliography section, which essentially forms a mirror image to its 1983 antecedent. The only changes introduced here consist in the addition of one entry for Felicja Uniechowska's 1969 article on creative improvements in the artist's own apartment, left out in the 1983 catalogue, as well as another entry, this time for Konieczny's 1983 exhibition catalogue.

#### **1.1.4. The 1986 exhibition catalogue—BWA Lublin**

Another list of sources relating to Konieczny appears in the exhibition catalogue accompanying his 1986 exhibition *Marek Konieczny. Elements of Think Crazy Topology*. Szwajewska's name appears on the title page—in lower case and above the exhibition title—pointing to her role as a curator of her partner's work. The catalogue features a critical essay by Szwajewska followed by an appendix-like grouping of sections on *faktografia artystyczna (wybór)* [artistic factography (a selection)] listing Konieczny's selected actions under four headings: '1968-72', '1973-1975', '1976-1979' and '1980-1985'; selected exhibitions, with the headings: '1967-1974', '1975-1980' and '1981-1985'; filmography; Konieczny's works in art collections; bibliography and a list of references to Szwajewska's text.

The first ever list of Konieczny's actions is an important addition to his sources, whereas the list of his exhibitions constitutes a verbatim reiteration of its 1983 predecessor except that the content has now shifted to fit the new headings. Furthermore, the '1981-1985' section became updated with four most recent entries. The art collections section in turn remains the same with respect to the 1985 version. The same holds true for the filmography except for the addition of two new films from 1986.

#### **1.1.5. The 2012 exhibition catalogue—Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw**

It was not until Konieczny's 2012 unexpected exhibition at Zachęta—an institution associated with the more traditional, conservative paradigm of art—that another factographical appendix on his artworks appeared by way of the exhibition's catalogue. The catalogue, or simply the 'leaflet,' as is termed by Zachęta (Brewińska 2012: 20), is available online as a pdf as a part Zachęta's strategy of reaching wider audiences. Most importantly, the leaflet includes a text by the curator Maria Brewińska licensed under Creative Commons.

The 2012 catalogue has no section on bibliography or works cited, even though Brewińska's text contains quotations in double inverted commas. What the publication contains however is a streamlined list of twenty-

four selected exhibitions. Needless to say, this significantly reduced list offers yet another remapping of Konieczny's work. Brewińska's listing glosses over the artist's diverse activities before the first systematic presentation of *Think Crazy* in 1978 at the Warsaw Studio Gallery. Similarly, no attention is here accorded to Konieczny's ephemeral mail art activities, which occupied much space in the 1983 and 1986 catalogues. The section focuses on the artist's Polish exhibitions throughout the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, perhaps in an attempt to fend off claims of Konieczny's withdrawal from the art world after the 1970s (cf. e.g. Woliński 2007: 56) and to bring him into the fold of mainstream Polish art.

The Selected Actions section in turn provides a comprehensive list of Konieczny's iconic art manifestations between 1968 and 1995. It includes the artist's early actions in public space engaging with Conceptualism and Fluxus, but overlooks his ongoing involvement with XX1 Gallery in Warsaw since 2003. The catalogue's reference section lacks the playfulness; the shifting, topological character of its 1983 and 1986 antecedents. Instead, since it contains none of their entries for mail art ephemera or total art actions, the 2012 list of Konieczny's selected actions earnestly proceeds to construct the definitive canon of Konieczny's work.

The reference section of the catalogue is concluded by a list of Konieczny's works in both Polish and international art collections. The list essentially repeats the entries in the analogous sections of the 1983, 1985 and 1986 catalogues. It is only the entry for the BWA Gallery in Lublin that is left out.

On the whole, the entries in the appendix section unfold a map of artistic endeavour that primarily focuses on Poland, but is also recognised abroad.



## 2. Primary sources

### 2.1. Individual exhibition catalogues

#### 2.1.1. The 1978 exhibition catalogue—Galeria Studio, Warsaw

The first exhibition catalogue of Konieczny's work did not appear until 1978 to accompany his first *Think Crazy* exhibition, which took place in Warsaw's Galeria Studio.

The catalogue, which can be perhaps more accurately described as an artist's book, was printed in black and white on both sides of a single, yet folded, accordion-style, A4 sheet. The catalogue is composed—in the direction from left to right—of five vertical sections or panels. The title section printed horizontally is followed by four panels with vertical text orientation. The three of those stripes are subdivided into two columns containing portions of Szwejewska's mock interview with Konieczny to the left and a panel with the Think Crazy motto and two photographs of Konieczny's various art objects to the right. The fourth panel at the bottom of the page contains a centrally aligned photo still from one of Konieczny's installations. The reverse page in turn features five vertically-oriented stripes, each subdivided into two fields. The page unfurls a mosaic which features three panels containing photos documenting Konieczny's performances, four panels with the Think Crazy motto, two fields containing an English translation of the mock interview featured the front page, and, last but not least, a blank field in the upper left corner.

#### 2.1.2. The 1982 exhibition catalogue—BWA Bielsko-Biała

The catalogue of Konieczny's 1982 exhibition in Bielsko-Biała comes in both Polish and English language version. Both versions feature selected quotes derived from reviews of Konieczny's art manifestations by a range of artists and scholars. In particular, the catalogues feature accounts of the psychologist Zbigniew Thielle; the art critics and historians Edward Ekwiński, Łászló Beke, Stefan Morawski and Alicja Kępińska; the curator of the Lublin BWA Gallery Andrzej Mroczek and the international artists John Sillevs (the Netherlands), Elwyn Lynn (Australia) and Klaus Groh (West Germany). The reviews are prefaced by Konieczny's short invocation reminiscent of a Baroque epitaph. The epitaph charts various vectors of Konieczny's artistic metamorphosis. Juxtaposed below are the two versions of the epitaph retaining their original wording.

Urodzony pod znakiem Raka	Born under the sign of the Cancer,
syn Księżyca,	Son of the Moon, likes orchids and emerald gives
kocha orchidee,	him luck.
a szczęście zapewni mu szmaragd	Graduate of two universities - artist, upon time
niegdyś inżynier, narciarz,	engi-neer brilliant skier, romantic, visionary,
wizjoner, kusiciel	creator of
twórca IDEI THINK CRAZY	ideas THINK CRAZY, temptator. [ <i>sic!</i> ]
	Lives in Europe.

The accounts of witnesses/participants to Konieczny's art manifestations are in turn followed by a reference section, the artist's own comment on his early 1968-9 *Drop something in here* (cf. documentation of the series in [Figs. A.6-10]) strategies and, finally, black and white reproductions of his ten selected works concluded by their index. The English version of the catalogue is in turn limited to mere four pages, containing the Think Crazy epitaph on its title page followed by a poor quality English translation of selected reviews of Konieczny's work.

### 2.1.3. The 1983 exhibition catalogue and photographic documentation—BWA Lublin

The black and white catalogue accompanying Konieczny's 1983 Lublin exhibition *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel* (cf. documentation of the 1983 exhibition in [Figs. A.138]) features an extended introductory part, akin to a libretto of an opera, rendered in exuberant poetic language. The introduction is composed of 'Invocation' and a quote from T.S. Eliot ('In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo'). The quote is followed by 'Preface' and 'Introduction'. All the above ornamental opening sections are interspersed with reproductions of Konieczny's textured reliefs. The catalogue also features a mock art-historical essay by Monika Szwajewska followed by a reference section, a poetic evocation of Konieczny's textures, and a list of works reproduced.

The section entitled 'Textures—a Documentation' is a piece of immanent criticism which, instead of applying proper contexts to the listed art objects, calls upon the affective forces of the body so that art can be construed as an encounter, an event, a rapture. In a similar vein, the catalogue includes a loose leaf featuring an article of the art critic Maria Domurat-Krawczyk documenting her encounter with Konieczny's work in impressionistic and sensual terms.

Konieczny's playful 1983 catalogue is a far cry from the matter-of-factness of its 1982 predecessor, which is perhaps best epitomized by its foldable leaf boasting a colour reproduction of Konieczny's 1980 installation *Conversations in the Tent of the Prince de l'Avant-Garde* [Fig. A.117] comprising a stuffed stag head affixed to a black oblong frame filled with shimmering textures of gold and fabric and further complemented by the *trompe d'oeil* of painted drapery.

The much shorter English version of the catalogue features Szwajewska's name on its front page. While it omits, amongst other things, 'Introduction', 'Textures—a Documentation' as well as Szwajewska's mock art-historical article along with Domurat-Krawczyk impressions, instead it includes one photograph of the prior 1976-1980 *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel* installation in the artist's studio [Fig. A.97] and one more photograph, this time depicting a mahogany cupboard mutated by addition of textured panels as well an erratum, all missing in the Polish version.

Most importantly, the BWA Gallery holds a photographic documentation of Konieczny's 1983 exhibition consisting of five stills from the artist's performance *Fresco* [Fig. A. 137] that accompanied the exhibition. The performance involved Konieczny producing perforations in the gallery wall with the use of a hammer and the subsequent filling of the resulting holes with golden tinfoil. The documentation held at BWA Lublin is complemented by a number of photographs [Fig. A.138], both in colour and in black and white, depicting the above-mentioned Konieczny's installation made up of a reconfigured mahogany cupboard. It is worth pointing out here that the Lublin gallery is also in possession of the photographic documentation of Konieczny's performance *Skupienie i ekstaza* [Concentration and Ecstasy] [Fig. A.147], which took place in December 1985. The documentation executed by Andrzej Polakowski comprises four stills depicting Konieczny in silk kimono

spring to his feet from a sitting position and proceeding to splash the walls of the gallery with colourful liquid.

#### **2.1.4. The 1986 exhibition catalogue—BWA Lublin**

The catalogue features Szwajewska's art-historical and art-critical essay, mixing earnestness and poetic imagery. The article starts off as an attempt to chart Konieczny's artistic trajectory in a systematic and chronological way, beginning with his late 1960s geometric abstractions. While analysing Konieczny's strategies, Szwajewska skilfully weaves a handful of available research articles into her argument. However, subsequently the text mutates into a specimen of Baroque sensualism as it reprints the documentation of textures from the 1983 catalogue. Szwajewska's text passes through the documentation of textures—delivered in an impressionistic style highlighting ceaseless mutations of vibrant matter—only to be concluded by a poetic invocation of *Think Crazy*. The latter part of Szwajewska's article harnesses the performative potential of language in order to enter a productive encounter with Konieczny's work. Such stance echoes the digressive, meandering trajectories of Konieczny's 1983 catalogue.

#### **2.1.5. The 1993 exhibition catalogue—BWA Lublin**

The catalogue of Konieczny's 1993 *Monoceros* exhibition in Lublin's BWA Gallery opens with a reprint of Szwajewska's 1978 interview with Konieczny presented in both Polish and English version, followed by a similarly bilingual open letter to the authorities of the new post-communist Republic of Poland. The letter denounces their lingering communist cultural policy, which according to Konieczny has effectively prevented artworks of Polish artists from freely circulating in the international art market. The catalogue is concluded by a list of six works reproduced therein. The selection has been made out of works executed since 1979, focusing on new pieces completed in the 1990s. The catalogue relates Konieczny's art to Poland's entry into the period of post-communist transformation and market economy under the aegis of Chicago school of economics, a gesture perhaps best epitomised by the tell-tale addition of ©All rights reserved into the footer placed on the reverse of the title page.

#### **2.1.6. The 1999 exhibition catalogue—ZPAP Gallery, Warsaw**

Konieczny's catalogue published for his 1999 exhibition at the ZPAP Gallery in Warsaw is comprised of a mere four double-sided pages. The catalogue includes a Konieczny's text reflecting on the unexpected change of his artistic vector from Baroque incarnations towards the craft of making decadent, bourgeois furniture. The piece had been previously read aloud by the artist as a part of his 1995 performance at Cracow's QQ Gallery. The remaining pages of the catalogue are filled with specimens of Konieczny's newfound artistic strategy – the design of mutated pieces of furniture.

#### **2.1.7. The 2009 exhibition catalogue—ART+on Gallery and Auction House, Warsaw**

The next catalogue accompanies Konieczny's exhibition *think crazy rococo*, which took place at the ART+on Gallery of Contemporary Art and Auction House in Warsaw back in 2009. This catalogue, printed in colour on glossy paper, running for the impressive forty-one pages, remains in stark contrast with its 1999 predecessor.

The catalogue includes a still from Konieczny's 1971 action *Think Crazy for the Flag* [Fig. A.83] accompanied by a motto from Heraclitus on the importance of change, followed by an introductory text by the exhibition's curator Marika Kuźmicz. Kuźmicz's text draws on Konieczny's 1995 reflective text read at the Gallery QQ and subsequently reprinted in the 1999 ZDAP catalogue, as well as Ronduda's 2009 publication on Polish avant-garde of the 1970s.

The subsequent pages of the catalogue list Konieczny's seventeen art objects composed of banal found objects, such as plastic toys or chocolate boxes, and sections of thick ornamental picture frames cut into either oblong or triangular shapes and subsequently reconfigured into irregular panels. The ensuing list of art objects specifies their physical parameters, such as size, material, artist's signature, as well as their bidding prices, which vary between 3,400 and 25,900 EUR, along with titles and dates of execution.

#### **2.1.8. The 2012 exhibition catalogue—Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw**

The bilingual Polish-English exhibition catalogue comes in a pdf format. The catalogue features an article by the curator Maria Brewińska, which chronologically charts the development of Konieczny's art strategies. The text essentially draws on Szwajewska's art-historical article included in Konieczny's 1986 catalogue but does away with the latter's detour into sensuous criticism. Brewińska's contribution lies in the addition of a section on Konieczny's activities during the post-1989 transformation period, starting with his one-year professorship at Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw between 1989-1990. The catalogue also includes the text of Szwajewska's interview with Konieczny from 1978 and the Think Crazy epitaph in its 1982 version, as well as a footer presenting the exhibition's various sponsors.

## **2.2. Collective exhibition catalogues**

The catalogue of a 1969 collective exhibition at Bogucki's Galeria Współczesna, for example, includes a brief introduction into its particular context written by Janusz Bogucki. Seven Polish artists (Group Seven), including Konieczny, exhibited their works in 1967 in Poland and in 1968 in Denmark. It was in Denmark where the Polish artists made acquaintance of several Danish painters. Bogucki's text foregrounds the exhibition's collaborative character, bringing together artists across national borders united by their shared preoccupation with geometric abstraction. The catalogue includes a two-page section on Konieczny comprising a reproduction of his piece from 1968 and a short list of his exhibitions in both Polish and English.

Important Polish collective exhibitions that featured Konieczny's works took place in Lublin's BWA Gallery. These included *Nurt intelektualny w sztuce polskiej po II wojnie światowej. Performance polskie* [The Intellectual Current in Polish Post-War Art. Polish Performances] in 1985, *Labyrinth Gallery 1974-94* in 1999, and *Autonomiczny ruch konceptualny* [Autonomous Conceptual movement] in 2002. All of them feature stills from Konieczny's performances.

## **2.3. Press articles**

Press articles prove, besides individual exhibition catalogues, a major primary source for Konieczny. These comprise a wide array of pieces. Some of them were published in daily newspapers and contain reviews of Konieczny's exhibitions and appearances. Another strand that could be identified here encompasses pieces written by Konieczny himself or a person relaying his responses in an interview. Finally, there exists yet another host of pieces featured in all-Polish cultural magazines. These are various research articles dealing with Konieczny's work in itself or in conjunction with other artists of the 1970s neo-avant-garde.

#### **2.3.1. 1969-1974. The dawn of new humanity**

The first of those articles comes from 1969 and deals, surprisingly enough, with the innovative layout and interior design of Konieczny's own apartment. The artist is referred to in the article as a young painter (Uniechowska 1969a: 39). The author Felicja Uniechowska sees extendable fixtures that can be modified to

individual needs as an expression and extension of Konieczny's geometric abstractions composed of interchangeable, permutational pieces. According to Uniechowska, Konieczny's unique re-arrangement—we might call enfolding—of private space testifies to the equal importance of emotional and rational aspect of human existence.

In 1970, an exhibition of Konieczny's works at DAP Gallery on Mazowiecka Street in Warsaw receives a brief mention from a correspondent of a Warsaw daily newspaper, Stanisław Witz (1970), who expresses his deep aporia at seeing an exhibition display composed of an ovoid structure with two forms stuck into it, resembling wings of old plywood toy planes, all painted violet, installed on a floor covered with sawdust.

The subsequent 1971 article in the *Perspektywy* [Perspectives] weekly, titled *Organizacja wyobraźni* [Organisation of Imagination] (D.K. 1971) contains a short interview with Konieczny discussing his 1969-70 action *Do Something with It* [Fig. A. 15-19] whereby he would send pieces of silver foil with the self-same caption to thirty-four people randomly selected from a phone book. Konieczny's work is interpreted here as an unusual subset of visual arts. The artist himself sees his primary goal in enriching the audience's imagination by introducing defamiliarised, odd objects into routine everyday lives. Konieczny welcomes creative encounters between art and science and extends the notion of artistic activity to describe either material or even conceptual manipulation of his silver foil by his audiences.

The same year saw the publication of Konieczny's response to a survey on the role of art, commissioned by the *Argumenty* [Arguments] magazine. The article (Konieczny 1971) restates Konieczny's central preoccupation with art understood as a way of shaping imagination. Konieczny assumes the role of a Constructivist visionary, predicting the advent of post-technological, post-scientific organic societies calling for new process-based, open-ended art. The artist identifies the arrival of new art transcending the bourgeois modernist paradigm with its obsolete notion of artwork which merely encapsulates a set of predetermined meanings.

Also in 1971, Magdalena Hniedziewicz reported for the *Słowo Powszechne* [The Common Word] daily an interdisciplinary meeting of artists, critics and members of other disciplines organised by Konieczny. Hniedziewicz (1971) sees the resulting discussion as an expression of Konieczny's professed artistic goal of activating human imagination through stochastic processes. The artist subsequently referred to the 1971 event as an action called *Trwająca dyskusja* [Ongoing Discussion] [Figs. A.45-6].

The 1972 article published in English in the Polish Art Review magazine is in turn a self-reflexive text on the character of Galeria Współczesna [Modern Gallery], written by its co-founder and curator, Janusz Bogucki. Bogucki mentions the 1970 *Informacja—Wyobraźnia—Działanie* [Information—Imagination—Activity] exhibition as an important encapsulation of the gallery's avant-garde, socially engaged profile and its desire to transcend the traditional art object by giving prominence to non-traditional media, as well as ephemeral events, actions and situations. The article (Bogucki 1972: 21) features a photograph documenting *Violet*, i.e. Konieczny's 1970 action in public space which consisted in pasting pieces of violet paper on Warsaw pavements in order to 'evoke a coincidence and the evanescent moment when the link between time and cause is not evident'.

### 2.3.2. 1975. Critiques and re-evaluations

In 1975 an article on Konieczny's belated arrival in San Francisco during his brief visit to the U.S. in spring funded by the Kosciuszko foundation was written by the San Francisco Bay dadaist Anna Banana and published in her ephemeral art newsletter *Banana Rag*. This brief article (Ana Banana 1975) features a photo of Konieczny and Ana Banana, together with Konieczny's friend, Klaus Groh from West Germany, all holding a rectangular panel with the Think Crazy motto. Konieczny's late arrival is seen here as an expression of a Dada joke.

In the same year Konieczny's artistic strategies, termed as 'manipulations', were lampooned by the curator of the conservative Foksal Gallery, Wiesław Borowski (1975a), along with a group of other artists, such as Paweł Freisler or Przemysław Kwiek. The artists were derided as a manifestation of *pseudoawangarda* [pseudo-avant-garde]. Borowski coined the term to denote a cheap, gaudy knockoff of the proper western Conceptualism. For all Borowski's scathing criticism of the new avant-garde, the designation 'manipulations' however turns out a surprisingly accurate way of describing Konieczny's strategies as it draws attention to the Constructivist underpinnings of his artistic practice, a common thread that unites the artist's practices both before and after Think Crazy.

Borowski's article set off a polemic exchange with Andrzej Lachowicz, a member of the pseudo-avant-garde whose work explores the qualities of the photographic medium and critically interrogates its possibilities of rendering reality. I have already discussed issues at stake in this polemic in greater detail in my previous chapter. Let it suffice to say here that in response to Borowski's article, Lachowicz (1975) denounced his colleague's hidden modernism. According to Lachowicz, in fetishising the interwar black-cloaked avant-garde, Borowski returns to the modernist paradigm of lofty, self-referential art, a formation he mockingly calls *retroawangada* [retro-avant-garde]. Lachowicz's text in turn occasioned Borowski's (1975b) retort whereby the critic continued to further depreciate *pseudoawangarda* as a cultural, socially marginal, or even criminal activity. According to Borowski, the pseudo-avant-garde could not be seen as a proper artistic phenomenon since it was more preoccupied with issues stemming from life, while lacking a systematic engagement with purely artistic issues.

A similar charge of a lack of systematic interrogation of the role of art within the socialist context is voiced with respect to Konieczny's strategies in Morawski's article from 1975. This renowned scholar of aesthetics carefully constructs his argument based on his one visit to Konieczny's exhibition at Zapiecek Gallery in 1974, and another, this time to the artist's studio. Morawski (1975a) meticulously reconstructs Konieczny's artistic trajectories, juxtaposing them with selected strands of Western and American Conceptualism. The scholar rightly draws attention to Konieczny's demolition of the traditional concept of artwork and artist as an expression of his desire to bring art closer in line with contemporary transformations of technology and science. However, for all Konieczny's avant-gardist zeal and his intriguing mental alchemy, Morawski (1975a: 35) finds the artist's strategies to epitomise a more general problem of the Polish neo-avant-garde—a lack of rigorous, systematic, analytical enquiry together with a marked absence of the artist's reflection on the role of art in the specifically Polish context which necessitates the generation of its own manifestations, idioms and grammars. Morawski suggests a vocabulary parallel to psychoanalysis as a means of expressing what he identifies in Konieczny as a preoccupation with the unconscious.

Morawski's above insights into Konieczny's work can be plotted onto a larger map of Polish Conceptualism sketched by the same author in his comparative article on strands on Conceptual thought, both in Poland and

abroad. Morawski identifies four paths within Polish Conceptualism: (1) the trajectory of events, actions and happenings, (2) the production of various devices built upon scientific and technological research designed to spark intellectual reflection, (3) the use of the photographic and videographic medium to interrogate both the medium and issues of representation and, finally, (4) works which employ ‘documents-diagrams’ (Morawski 1975b: 32) to spark scientific and philosophical speculation on the stochastic nature of reality. Konieczny is inscribed into the latter current. This time Morawski proves more sympathetic to Konieczny’s claims, suggesting that the artist’s professed preoccupation with ‘pre-decisional processes’ stimulated via a range visual props, such as various banners and boards, while lacking a systematic theoretical base, nonetheless points to some model of proto-creational processes competing with the Freudian concept of the unconscious (1975b: 32).

### **2.3.3. 1978-80. The vagaries of Think Crazy**

The subsequent 1978 article published in the Warsaw-based *Literatura* [Literature] magazine is an interview conducted by Marcin Giżycki with the artists Ewa Kuryluk, Jan Stanisław Wojciechowski and Marek Konieczny apropos the VII Festival of Fine Arts at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art. The article (Giżycki et al. 1978) features a photograph [Fig. A.76] taken during Konieczny’s stay in the US back in 1975, showing a group of Konieczny’s friends at Rutgers University (NY) taking the Think Crazy oath. The discussions revolve around the relevance of modern art for the wider public. Konieczny offers laconic, scarce comments here. He sees the role of art not in the modernist production and propagation of objects, but in provoking new experiences transcending the confines of the rational, Cartesian thinking. Interestingly enough, Ewa Kuryluk gives Konieczny’s reflection a phenomenological twist by referring to the Polish thinker Roman Ingarden. Konieczny applauds the demise of traditional artistic concepts and welcomes the creative lawlessness of going beyond the established programme. The artist regards the festival, and art in general, more in terms of an encounter.

Szwajewska’s 1978 review of the 1977 International Festival of Art Films hosted by Ewa Partum’s Galeria Adres [the Address Gallery] regards the use of the filmic medium in art as an expression of the expanding field of art, enriched by creative encounters with other disciplines of human activity, and life itself. Szwajewska (1978: 108) surveys diverse art manifestations presented at the festival, giving special emphasis to her partner’s short videos she regards as markedly different from the remainder of the works presented in the sense that they do not constitute a documentation of reality, a recording of a sequence of events as they unfold but open up a reality unto themselves through their endlessly looped sections. Such *żywe obrazy* [live images] (cf. [Figs. A.73-4, 77-81])—themselves manifestations of Konieczny’s Think Crazy artistic strategy—according to Szwajewska (1978: 108) ‘become an alternative, new symbol of duration’.

Another article by Szwajewska, written for the Odra weekly in 1980, is an interview with Konieczny prefaced by a short chronological overview of his artistic strategies. Konieczny gives a succinct introduction to themes and constitutive elements of his Think Crazy strategy. The artist (quoted in Szwajewska 1980: 109) regards his art as an expression of his willingness to explore ‘the mystery of our existence instead of a consciousness of existence’. Konieczny’s desire is to open up singular, artificial new realities for the audiences in order to shake off habitual perceptions and routine actions. Konieczny (quoted in Szwajewska 1980: 109) seems to implicitly point here to values inculcated by the communist society, those ‘exceptionally potent, rigid, and even destructive, external structures which surround us’. The artist subsequently discusses a wide array of his artistic techniques. He suggests that behind the use of even the most traditional of forms, such as the still life, lies his desire to manipulate or install an obsolete art form. Most importantly, Szwajewska interprets this strategy in

terms of Constructivism. Konieczny (quoted in 1980: 109) subsequently goes on to illustrate his underlying strategy of harnessing the artifice of the constructed situation by recourse to a recurrent motif of his work, the one of the pyramid (cf. [Fig. A.73-4]). This ancient figure constitutes for Konieczny an artificial combination of rational geometry and the supernatural, an assemblage of reason and faith left exposed to the destabilising processes of life. Szwajewska concludes her article by designating Konieczny's various techniques and devices as 'special equipment'—constituting mere tools, effects, documentations or materialisations of the Think Crazy idea. Szwajewska embarks here on a detour into performative writing and logical tautologies. The peculiarity, the material parameters of Konieczny's objects make sense only as manifestations of Think Crazy, but the whole idea is in itself expressed in self-referential, tautological terms. According to Konieczny, Think Crazy points to a certain beyond, a new reality, but the one that is nonetheless inchoate and mysterious. Szwajewska does not seek to frame Think Crazy in other terms than the strategy itself. Besides a cursory mention of Constructivism, the art historian leaves Think Crazy as a sign of mystery and unknowing, pregnant with potentiality.

#### **2.3.4. 1974 and 1978. The Dutch sources**

Another group of primary sources document Konieczny's exhibition in Groningen 1974 and the subsequent visit of his Dutch friends John Sillevius and Jurjen de Haan to Warsaw in August 1978.

Eric Benker's 1974 article discusses Konieczny's preoccupation with pre-decisional processes and the almost immaterial character of his works presented at the Groningen exhibition where Konieczny showed an installation consisting of clear plastic sheets with random scratches pegged on a clothes line amidst a darkened space illuminated by spotlights. Benker (1974) also discusses Konieczny's earlier works such as his 1969-70 *Do Something with It* [Fig. A. 15-19] or 1971-72 *Think of Something* [Fig. A. 43].

In turn, John Sillevius contributed two articles to the Hague-based artistic magazine *Pulchri*. The first of those contains Sillevius' translation of Szwajewska's interview with Konieczny from 1978. Konieczny is referred to here as a Polish Conceptualist, and the whole interview gains the attribute of Conceptual. The second article is an account of the Dutch artists' visit to Warsaw, featuring a whole paragraph on their visit to Konieczny's studio where they were treated to shots of vodka and a private screening of Konieczny's looped videos from 1975 – *Santa Conversatione* [Fig. A. 80-1], *Dialogue with Pyramid* [Fig. A. 73-4] and *24012008 Think Crazy* [Fig. A. 79]. Konieczny is characterised as a man sporting a shiny bald head and a Tatar moustache and a close friend of the Polish Constructivist Henryk Stażewski.

#### **2.3.5. 1983-7. A sensuous incorporeal materialism**

An article by the art historian Maria Domurat-Krawczyk written in February 1983 in Warsaw appears on a loose leaf forming part of Konieczny's 1983 catalogue *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel*. The text documents Domurat-Krawczyk's impressions upon her visit to the artist's studio. The art historian renders her intimate encounter with Konieczny's work in terms of an interplay of textures and their virtual forces producing an affective response. The sensuous incorporeal materialism exuded by Domurat-Krawczyk's Baroque performative writing enters into mutual resonance with Konieczny's exhibition catalogue and in particular Szwajewska's ecstatic artistic genealogy of the *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel* cycle, and, last but not least, her sensual invocation of textures of Konieczny's art objects.

Janusz Jaremowicz's article affixed to the cover of Konieczny's 1986 exhibition catalogue and subsequently published in a 1987 issue of *Literatura*, in turn, tackles Konieczny's play with conventions of the art world. In



particular, the critic identifies a shift in the artist's strategies from a dialogue with audience via various actions in public space towards the more traditional paradigm of the visually appealing art object designed for private contemplation. Jaremowicz (1986) argues that the buzz of encounters previously generated by the conceptual play with audiences carried out in public space did not cease but has now come to be generated by overinflated, aggressive verbal activity of Konieczny's exhibition catalogues. Such textual strategies—which also deliberately play with the artist's self-image—act as a smoke screen mitigating Konieczny's enmeshment in the traditional Apollonian understanding of art, his ultimate subscribing to the traditional category of painting and his definitive choice of the exhibition mode as a way of communicating his work. According to the critic, Konieczny's art has overcome life through its artificiality, thus returning to the proper Olympian field of autotelic painting situated above reality. Such transcendental referent of Konieczny's painting is corroborated by what Jaremowicz identifies as a preoccupation with overcoming multiplicity and heterogeneity of elements through a utopian vision of the harmony between earth-facing matter, connoting existence, and light, connoting the lightness and loftiness of an idea.

#### **2.3.6. 1996. German sources**

A whole new host of articles were sparked off by Konieczny's 1996 *Opera for a Sculpture, or the Leaf of Acanthus* exhibition in Micro Hall Art Center in Klein Scharrel in West Germany curated by the artist's friend Klaus Groh. It was Groh who prepared a press release for the exhibition. The press information comprises a short biographical information—focusing on (and amplifying) Konieczny's professional credentials as a Warsaw Fine Arts Academy graduate and erstwhile guest professor as well as his background as a consulting architect—followed by a brief overview of major features of Konieczny works. There are two articles that go beyond the staple information provided by Groh. Erhard Drobinski's report on arrangement of objects within the gallery space also provides details about Konieczny's performance involving breaking a gypsum bust. He concludes by dwelling on the performance's underlying theme. Jürgen Weinhardt in turn focuses on Konieczny's performance and its particular choice of objects.

### 3. Recombinations—secondary sources

#### 3.1. 1981. Alicja Kępińska

Konieczny has received a brief mention in Kępińska's 1981 art-historical survey of Polish art between 1945 and 1978. His activities are discussed in two chapters which taken together unfold a panoramic view of artistic strategies of the 1970s.

In the chapter titled 'Thought Process as a Medium for Art. Conceptual activity and the Limits of the Impossible', Kępińska considers Konieczny's *Do Something with It* 1969-70 action [Fig. A. 15-19]—whereby he sent out sheets of the titular silver foil to addresses randomly selected from a phone book— alongside activities of Atanazy Wiśniewski and Andrzej Partum, as a manifestation of a particular strand of *mail art*. As identified by Kępińska (1981: 218), this particular thread of mail art focuses on the process of sending and receiving a message via the sending out of parcels. This distributive strategy according to Kępińska (1981: 218) explores the informational activity of art and as such can be linked to Conceptualism *sensu stricto*, tied to the idea of art based upon conceptual activity (1981: 227).

Kępińska (1981: 227) devotes her subsequent chapter called 'Actions, Their Scripts and Documentations' to art perceived as durational, ephemeral '*activité* (doing, activity, action) [which] takes as its medium, programmed by the artist, a script of behaviours, gestures, actions, interventions into the given reality'. In the chapter Kępińska discusses Konieczny's various activities between 1969 and 1975. In a paragraph devoted to Konieczny, featuring a still from his 1975 performance *Think Crazy Oath* (cf. [Fig. A.76]), previously reprinted in *Literatura* in 1978, Kępińska (1981: 240) identifies the idea of contact with a potential, frequently incidental, receiver, together with the larger concept of stochastic processes as the artist's central preoccupation. Subsequently, Kępińska proceeds to trace a shift within Konieczny's strategies from provoking real-life situations to provoking purely conceptual signals along with reflection on pre-decisional mental processes. She (1981: 241) importantly subsumes *Think Crazy* into the pre-decisional sphere, encapsulating 'various perverse aspects of thought processes, not forming part of the commonsensical order'.

#### 3.2. 1981-2007. Diagramming absence

Let me reiterate here that further academic, art-historical investigation into Konieczny's work was caught up in critical differences and bitter divisions encapsulated by Wiesław Borowski's 1975 text on what he perceived as the pseudo-avant-garde. Furthermore, Konieczny occupies a liminal, uncertain place in the fold of the neo-avant-garde itself, caught up as Ronduda (2007: 35) points out, between neo-avant-garde and modernism. Consequently, during the period in question, Konieczny is absent from the mainstream Polish art-critical and art-historical discourse.

Konieczny's work is omitted from all of Piotr Piotrowski's publications: *The Decade* (1991), *In The Shadow of Yalta* (2009), *The Meanings of Modernism* (2011), even though he discusses other artists of the pseudo-avant-garde such as KwieKulik, Elżbieta and Emil Cieślak, Józef Robakowski, Zbigniew Dłubak and Natalia LL.

There is only a brief mention of Konieczny in Jerzy Truszkowski's recent (2013) subjective history of Polish avant-garde between 1968 and 1988 in the context of an action which took place on 1 May 1972. Amongst the artists participating were KwieKulik and Konieczny. Truszkowski (2013: 29) sees the action as a manifestation

of optimistic social reformism of the young intelligentsia.

There is no mention of Konieczny in Grzegorz Dziamski's 2010 overview of Polish conceptual practices. Similarly Luiza Nader's (2009) map of Polish Conceptualism leaves out artists associated with the pseudo-avant-garde, including Konieczny. The rehabilitation of the pseudo-avant-garde, initiated by an exhibition organised by the performance artist Zbigniew Warpechowski in 2002 and subsequently in 2004 by the young artist Zbigniew Libera, according to Nader (2009: 33) constituted a superficial phenomenon lacking a systematic interrogation of the artists involved, and in fact replicating the old divisions established by Wiesław Borowski back in 1975.

This marked absence was recently redressed by pioneering work of the young scholar Ronduda with the dual background in art history and film studies who started his research from Józef Robakowski's conceptual explorations of qualities of the film medium but since then has been involved in many collaborative projects mapping Polish art of the 1970s (cf. Adam Mazur 2013-14: 66).

### **3.3. The seminal 2007. Articles by Ronduda, Woliński, Ronduda and Woliński**

Academic marginalisation of Konieczny, which lasted nearly three decades, suddenly came to a grinding halt with the eighth issue of the *Piktogram* magazine published in 2007. This particular issue contained not one, but three articles on Konieczny.

In 2006 Ronduda and Michał Woliński published an interview with Uklański who originally came to be associated with the 1990s critical art in but whose work diverges from this paradigm making a productive connection the neo-avant-garde of the 1970s. Following the political breakthrough of 1989, Konieczny agreed to tutor at Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw. During this brief episode, which lasted from March 1989 to February 1990, Konieczny became Uklański's mentor. In the interview, Uklański talks at length about his perception of Konieczny's strategies. An important thread emerging in the course of the discussion are Konieczny's strategies of escape from institutional constraints of artistic life. Uklański offers an interesting insight remarking that running concurrently to Konieczny's desire for escape from institutional structures is an equally strong desire for protection of his intellectual property and the artist's closer relation to the art market.

Ronduda's subsequent 2007 article, this time devoted exclusively to Konieczny, consists of five sections. The first two of them, 'Do Something with It' and 'Think Crazy', trace a chronology of Konieczny's practices. The two sections constitute a compilation of earlier primary sources: Konieczny's exhibition catalogues from 1982, 1986 and 1993, along with passages from Kępińska's 1981 history of post-war Polish art until 1978. The overall structure and content of the two sections closely correspond to Szwajewska's art-historical essay embedded in Konieczny's 1986 catalogue.

In the section entitled 'Imagination', the scholar brings together Konieczny's earlier statement about the role of this important human faculty and a short quotation from Zbigniew Thielle drawing attention to the countercultural potential of Konieczny's consciousness-expanding practice. While the two above sources had already been quoted in Szwajewska's 1986 article, this juxtaposition serves as a departure point for Ronduda's attempt to chart a novel map of the 1970s neo-avant-garde. Ronduda begins drawing this map by identifying one particular strand of the neo-avant-garde shared by Konieczny and Natalia LL. This strand, as Ronduda (2007: 35) argues, was preoccupied with the establishment of

an alternative reality, one projecting a different order, a different experience of reality (...) [which] makes it possible for imagination to radically transgress the existing socio-political order, to transform it without any physical or symbolic struggle, to simply invalidate it'. Konieczny's work thus occupies an uncertain space between modernism and radical anti-artistic avant-garde.

Another important aspect brought to light by Ronduda's 2007 article are Konieczny's anti-institutional strategies and amongst them his appetite for creating legends and fabulations. In this respect, Ronduda (2007: 37) remarks that 'the rare catalogues of (...) [Konieczny's] exhibitions which are virtually the only source of information about his practice, feature absurd, misleading interviews that irritate a professional reader'. Ronduda points here to Szwejewska's 1978 mock interview with Konieczny as an epitome of a curious tension within his exhibition catalogues between their informational value and their functioning as artistic devices.

The final aspect of Konieczny's work brought to attention by Ronduda's 2007 *Piktogram* article has to do with the artist's enmeshment in the communist system and his affiliation in the early 1970s with the so-called *second social realism* revisionist movement (together with KwieKulik) known as 'Think Communism' known as Think Communism. This intervention builds on Ronduda's (2005) previous article on KwieKulik. The critic employs here Žižek's concept of the subversive potential of ideological *over-identification* he had already applied to Konieczny in his previous article.

In turn, Michał Woliński's 2007 article on Konieczny—published in the self-same issue of *Piktogram* as Ronduda's pioneering piece—attempts to plot the artist's strategies into the context of the ideological dynamics of real socialism as practiced in People's Republic of Poland of the 1970s. What Woliński identifies as an important litmus test for Konieczny's strategies are oscillations in his treatment of art object between materiality and dematerialisation. Woliński interprets Think Crazy as a threshold phase that transforms the earlier *stochastic generators*, i.e. props designed to provoke chance situations, into Special equipment [**Figs. A.33-4**]). In this way, he extends Konieczny's term *stochastic generator*—originally applied by the artist only to a black, mobile cube (object no. 3 in [**Figs. A.33-4**])—to other art-works from the early 1979s. According to Woliński (2007: 55), the absurd paraphernalia of Special equipment, such as a colourful horn Konieczny would affix to his head, retain the function of generators of stochastic processes, it is only the ways of generating those processes were becoming increasingly crazy.

The third article which appeared in the eighth issue of *Piktogram*, this time co-authored by both critics and including new photographic documentation from Uklański's private archive, tackles Konieczny's activities during his one-year tenure as a professor at Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (ASP).

### **3.4. 2009. '[A] big, sexy, coffee table affair'**

An important contribution of the three 2007 *Piktogram* articles lies in the inclusion of previously unpublished photographic material from Konieczny's private archive as well as high-resolution colour versions of the material which had previously been included in Konieczny's past exhibition catalogues in a poor-quality black and white version.

Such gesture, enhancing the perceived sensuous aspect of Konieczny's strategies, is taken to a whole new level in the subsequent 2009 album on art of the Polish 1970s neo-avant-garde which constitutes a fruit of collaboration between Ronduda and Uklański. The album brings together Ronduda's earlier articles on various artists of the neo-avant-garde published in *Piktogram* and Uklański's visually striking layout weaving performance stills and

reproductions of art objects. This publication, described by Kemp-Welch (2010) as ‘a big, sexy, coffee table affair’, features a still [Fig. A.81] from Konieczny’s 1975 video *Santa Conversatione* on its cover. The book’s section on Konieczny—which essentially reprints Ronduda earlier *Piktogram* article—now features glossy photos, which are between twice and eight times the size of their 2007 antecedent. The only difference with respect to the earlier articles is the addition of three paragraphs which tackle Konieczny’s mock-bourgeois strategies of the 1980s and also the inclusion of a quotation from Szwejewska’s 1978 mock interview with Konieczny.

The 2009 publication can be understood as an art-work in its own right. According to the art critic Adam Mazur (2013-14: 71), ‘it was not your typical scholarly book, although it became an art-historical event. It is a textbook and a work of art at the same time, therefore it works’. Indeed, the 2009 Ronduda-Ukłański publication can be best described as an art machine fuelled by the engine of appropriation. It is worth noting here Ukłański continued his engagement with visual materials made available to him by members of the neo-avant-garde assembling. The artist weaved the obtained visual material into his recent work, symptomatically called *Polska Neo-awangarda* [the Polish Neo-avant-garde], exhibited in 2012 in the London Carlson Gallery.

### **3.5. 2012. KwieKulik’s monograph**

The last publication to date that mentions Konieczny is Ronduda’s collaboration with Georg Schöllhammer and the KwieKulik artistic duo resulting in a monumental monograph of KwieKulik’s activities between 1963 and 1988, augmented by a host of articles, interviews, a bibliography section and a valuable Contextual glossary. This thoroughly researched and meticulously executed work proves of enormous value to the art-historical study of Konieczny, because it sheds light on the artist’s involvement in KwieKulik’s activities. The glossary, besides its entry on Konieczny, also includes several entries on galleries and persons enfolded into Konieczny’s artistic trajectory. The entry for Konieczny suggests artistic affinity of his strategies with Oskar Hansen’s concept of Open Form and also to Dadaism. Ronduda (Ronduda et al. 2012: 486) understands Think Crazy in terms of its evocation of ‘an aura of luxury and elegance, the use of golden gadgets, unusual costumes and gestures, a certain atmosphere of mystery’. Most importantly, the scholar draws attention to Konieczny’s links with the Sigma Club and Boguckis’ Galeria Współczesna.

### **3.6. Konieczny in international art-historical publications: László Beke**

The sphere of Eastern European art history has until the very recent times functioned as a lacuna in Western mappings of global art. Suffice it to point here to the engaging work of Marina Gržinić, which interrogates this lack in terms of post-colonial theory and the Žižekian take on Lacan. In Poland, the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art established in 2005 functions as a conduit for creative collaboration with the former West European and East European art critics and institutions. One example of such productive cross-pollinations was an exhibition of experimental videos from Poland curated by Ronduda and Florian Zeyfang back in 2007.

Surprisingly enough, Konieczny is mentioned in László Beke’s (1999: 47) article on Eastern European Conceptualism forming part of the exhibition catalogue accompanying a major exhibition of American and global Conceptualism organised in the US in 1999. Faced with the demanding task of drafting a map of diverse Conceptual practices in the communist Eastern Europe within the confines of a mere ten pages, Beke understandably only devotes a small paragraph to Poland, looking for a genealogy of Polish Conceptualism in Kantor’s happenings, pre-war Constructivism and systemic paintings of Roman Opałka whom he likens to a

medieval monk copying manuscripts. Konieczny's *Think Crazy*, qualified as Fluxus-like, is mentioned between Opalka's activities and Wodiczko automobile-like installations. This particular positioning of Konieczny implicitly points to his links with spirituality (via Opalka) and surrealism (via Wodiczko). Beke in fact curated the 1979 exhibition *European Dialogue* forming part of the important Third Biennale of Sydney where Konieczny's works were also exhibited. Beke's enthusiastic account of Konieczny's pieces—involving a pyramid, the artists' golden head, and a woman tied to a radiator—was quoted in Konieczny's 1982 exhibition catalogue.

## 4. Other primary sources

*Notatnik Robotnika Sztuki* [Art Worker's Notebook] was an important samizdat-quality artist publication associated with the Elbląg EL Gallery. It was published between 1972 and 1973, showcasing conceptual and ephemeral art practices of artists associated with the annual Biennale of Spatial Forms taking place in Elbląg. Konieczny participated in the 1971 edition of Biennale called 'Zjazd Marzycieli' [Dreamer's Congress]. The first issue of *Notatnik* features Konieczny's (1972a) two-page exposition of his artistic strategies. Konieczny's text is suffused with the almost visionary, Constructivist sense of entering the threshold of a new era giving rise to new post-technological societies, breaking down the boundaries of established disciplines. This new era necessitates according to Konieczny a new paradigm of art, one that demolishes the traditional concept of a work of art, ushers in the death of the author, and destabilises the power of causality as a predominant mental schema with to approach the world. In his avant-garde manifesto resembling a futurist call-to-arms Konieczny puts forth a novel concept of art as preoccupied with shaping societies by activating the deep stores of human imagination. Konieczny's manifesto is augmented by black and white photographic documentation of his earlier actions: *0.15-sec Contact* (1970) [Fig. A.27] and *Discussion* (1971) [Fig. A.27]. Both art manifestations explore the role of imagination in generating random, stochastic processes. The third issue of *Notatnik* (1972b) in turn features a documentation of Konieczny's *Think of Something* (1971-2) [Fig. A.43] action. The action consisted of the artist's sending the titular T-shirt to the EL Gallery. *Notatnik* features photos of a worker of the Zamech propeller plant to whom the Gallery subsequently handed the T-shirt.

A documentation of Konieczny's 1995 exhibition at Cracow's QQ Gallery—comprising three black and white photos showing the artist dressed in the guise of a Chinese sage, as well as a text of the artist's manifesto read aloud during his performance—can be found online.

Another important primary source on Konieczny is afforded by the text of an address given by the prominent Polish art critic and theoretician Jerzy Ludwiński during the opening of a 1994 anniversary exhibition summing up the activity of the BWA Lublin Gallery. The critic contrasts Konieczny's relatively tame performance carried out during the exhibition with the artist's another performance (*Fresco*, also known as *Think Crazy for the Sistine Chapel*) [Fig. A.137] which took place at the gallery back in 1983 as a part of his exhibition *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel*.

The 2010 online publication written by the artist Jan Rylke is a brief overview of clandestine art exhibitions he would organize in his studio on a yearly basis around 11 November between 1984 and 1992. These events, coinciding as they were with the Polish Independence day, were a potent expression of interdependent culture in Poland of the 1980s. Following the institution of martial law in the early 1980s Polish artists decided to boycott official art institutions. Thus, the famed counterculture was born. In Konieczny's interpretation, the phrase independent referred primarily to artistic, not so much political, freedom (Rylke 2010: 11). The publication provides an important insight into Konieczny's independent activities in the 1980s—the ones falling outside the official art circuit. Rylke's material contains numerous photographs which paint the following picture of Konieczny's activities. While Rylke provides no photographic documentation for Konieczny's works at the 1984 exhibition, mentioning them only as forms, he includes rich material pertaining to the exhibition organised in the following year. In 1985 Konieczny exhibited the installation *Epitaph* (1976) [Fig. A.109], as well as stills from his sensuous 1975 looped videos —*24012008 Think Crazy* [Fig. A.79] and *Dialogue with a Pyramid* [Fig.

**A.73**—presented in decorative, ornamental frames. The following year Konieczny presented an ephemeral 60-second action which involved a simulation of a ski jump from the altitude of 30 cm. The section for 1987 contains a photograph captioned *Akt z przemocą* [An Act with Violence], depicting Konieczny in striped hospital pyjamas sitting in a wheelchair. The photograph pointed towards an incident whereby the artist had his legs broken by the functionaries of Secret Police. The 1989 exhibition in turn featured a copy of Konieczny's text about the situation of art at the time of post-communist transformation and a Kilim-like installation which featured a rectangular panel inscribed with a shape resembling the outline of a sex-doll. Rylke's publication also contains a photographic dossier on Konieczny's works (2010: 132-7), giving prominence to his exuberant installations combining elements of ornamental picture frames and fields of shimmering textures. The dossier is complete with a short biographical information on Konieczny.



## 5. Conclusions. An overview of Konieczny's artistic activity

### 5.1. Introduction

Before discussing temporal metamorphoses in Konieczny's work, it is necessary to give an overview of his artistic activity, its critical response, as well as a short biographical note. At the same time, one should take on board the artist's own reservations about attempting such a task. An interview conducted by Sz wajewska (cf. Brewińska 2012: 12-13) on 5 April 1978 attempts to trace back the decisive moments of Konieczny's 'artistic evolution' and link his practice to 'the traditions that [he] originated from' while suggesting the schema teleological agency as accounting for his artistic process. Importantly, Konieczny resists all those attempts by responding to Sz wajewska by resorting to the Beckettian a-signifying language of repetitions, omissions and pauses. In this way, Konieczny turns his own artistic biography into a material for his art practice. The following section, nonetheless, attempts an outline of Konieczny's art practice since the early 1960s until the 1980s, in keeping with the scope of the present dissertation. However, the present outline is undertaken as a more pragmatic endeavour in the sense of a necessarily selective mapping out of Konieczny practices—one that builds on my analysis of the available 'primary' and 'secondary' sources, carried out in the previous chapter. The following account is thus a multiplicity that crystallises around a given perspective. Sz wajewska already intimated such an approach when she called Konieczny's 1986 exhibition catalogue *Elements of Think Crazy Topology*. The present overview sets out to chart dimensions of Konieczny's topology. The present topological mapping of Konieczny's practices will not be shying away from giving minute, sometimes incongruous details that complicate art-historical givens. By doing so, the present sections attend to history as always already in a process of nomadic becoming. In the following overview of Konieczny's practices, I will be drawing on existing accounts by Morawski (1975a), Kępińska (1981), Sz wajewska (1986a, 1986b) and Brewińska (2012), as well as my own analysis of collected sources, including my interviews with Konieczny and his friends, fellow artists, conducted between 2013 and 2015.

### 5.2. Engineering

Konieczny was born in 1936 in the city of Sosnowiec in southern Poland. He grew up in the nearby city of Bielsko-Biała where he also obtained his leaving certificate (Helena Dobranowicz in Dobranowicz and Przedpelski 14/10/2013). He studied industrial and civil engineering at the Silesian Institute of Technology in the nearby Gliwice. Konieczny obtained his Master's degree in 1961—specialising in construction materials and technologies of prefabrication—but it was not until 1964 he was granted his professional 'license for the design of various building objects, installations, paramedical facilities as well as [selected] architectural designs' (Konieczny 1974: German translation of his professional license, available from Klaus Groh Collection, Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, Bremen). During his studies in Gliwice, Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) took an interest in topology and curved spaces. In fact, most of his tutors were professors from the now Ukrainian city of Lwów—in the interwar period, home to the so-called 'Lwów school of mathematics', well-known for its significant contributions to functional analysis, set theory and point-set topology. At the same time, between 1961 and 1966, Konieczny studied interior design at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Art. For his final Master's project, Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) designed a multifunctional piece of furniture in resin that could variously serve as a coffee table or a chair. During his studies at the Academy, Konieczny also participated—as a constructor—in several architectural teams responsible for designing major modernist landmarks of the day. Those included the Przyczółek Grochowski modern housing estate in Warsaw; the Osiedle Słowackiego estate in

the southern Polish city of Lublin where he constructed a hyperbolic paraboloid roof in reinforced concrete he affectionately called *Birds* [Fig. A.1-5]; Warsaw's Central Railway Station and the Warszawianka Sports Club stadium in Warsaw (Szwajewska 1986b: 3). The teams were led by eminent Polish modernist architects such as Jerzy Sołtan or Oskar Hansen. The former was a close collaborator of Le Corbusier, while the latter—a student of Fernand Léger. During his studies in Warsaw, Konieczny struck a friendship with the Polish pre-war Constructivist artist Henryk Stażewski.

Already during his civil engineering studies, Konieczny took an interest in art. In particular, he started creating monochromatic geometrical abstractions (cf. Szwajewska 1986b: 3; Brewińska 2012: 5). Even though Bogucki (1969) inscribes Konieczny's works in 'the geometric-visual trend', they were, as Morawski points out (1975a: 34), far from constituting autonomous, autotelic modernist structures. In fact, those early geometric abstractions consisted of discrete, interchangeable geometric panels that could be manipulated so as to produce different combinations. Therefore, rather than functioning purely optically, the works already mobilised thought and the sense of touch. Those early works invited the viewer to engage in 'permutational-combinatorial game' (Morawski 1975a: 34) with them. As Szwajewska (1986b: 3) points out, in the mid-1960s, i.e. 1965-6, Konieczny's abstractions featured a visual ornament that functioned as an implicit rule limiting the number of possible combinations [Fig. A.12,14]. This particular permutational strategy was finally abandoned, making way for geometric abstractions that allowed unconstrained arrangement of its constituent elements [Fig. A.13].

### 5.3. Actions

Upon graduating, Konieczny abandoned his work as an architectural engineer (Szwajewska 1986a: 3) allegedly telling Sołtan—Walter Gropius's successor to the post of the chair of the architecture department at Harvard—he could no longer bear those 'heaps of aerated concrete'. Around 1968, Konieczny (quoted in Brewińska 2012: 5) declared interest in 'experiences and ideas' rather than a material art object, abandoning painting in favour of performance pieces that engaged the viewer through messages or, to be precise, instructions designed to stimulate an action. The inscriptions were stencilled on sheets of either silver or golden foil.

It should be pointed out that Konieczny's actions from the late 1960s were critically read as not so much Conceptual—inasmuch Conceptualism *sensu stricto* can be understood in Joseph Kosuth's and Terry Atkins' sense of analytical meta-artistic reflection (cf. Morawski 1975b: 29)—but as manifestations of 'Strategic Art (actions, aleatorics, happening)' (Morawski 1975a: 35) or 'ludic-type actions' (Morawski 1975b: 29). As Morawski (1975b: 29) explains, Kosuth sees the latter practices as continuation of a certain Romantic lineage or strand, also embodied in Dada and Action Painting, within Conceptualism that gets mistaken for Conceptualism proper. Similarly, Ekwiński (1971: 8) sees Konieczny practices more in terms of 'ludic' practices. For the purposes of this dissertation, I consider Konieczny's early actions as Conceptual—in the sense of engaging the dimension of virtual ideas—but also as Fluxus-inflected.

Konieczny's early actions communicate their call for action in a variety of ways. For example, they do so via inscriptions on silver foil sent out by Konieczny as tubular parcels to thirty-four recipients randomly selected from a phone book. The sheets of silver foil mailed by Konieczny in 1969 urged their recipients to—eponymously—*Do Something with It* [Fig. A.15]. Later on, in 1970, the artist contacted the recipients of his parcels, documenting their various applications of the foils in a series of photographs [Figs. A.16-19] that were subsequently displayed as part of his exhibitions. In turn, in another series of Konieczny's art situations,

provoked in 1968 and 1969, the call for action was communicated by the titular *Drop Something in Here* [Figs. A.6-10a] instructions stencilled on bags made out of golden foil. The bags were subsequently installed on metal stands in various places throughout Warsaw. One of such places was the Rożycki Bazaar (Bazar Różyckiego)—Warsaw’s oldest continuously trading bazaar located in the Praga district, founded in 1901 and during the communist times running a successful black market of goods. As Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) recounts, he obtained the foil from a margarine manufacturer. Konieczny subsequently commissioned the photographer and artist Zygmunt Rytko to document responses of the passers-by to his call for action inscribed on the bags.

## 5.4. Stochastics

### *The problem of stochastics as a new perspective on art*

At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, Konieczny (cf. abstract of his talk from 1/07/1970, Konieczny 1970b, included in the artist’s *Violet* 8-page catalogue, Konieczny 1970c) started to expressly link his calls for actions to an interest in the specifically Markovian formulation of stochastic processes. The new stochastic understanding is expressly extended by Konieczny (1970c) to his calls for actions communicated:

- (1) via mail art—or, rather, as Konieczny calls them elsewhere (cf. Szwejewska 1986b: 14) perhaps in reference to Kozłowski’s *sieć* decentred network of artistic distribution, ‘net’[work] actions. The ‘net’ actions included Konieczny’s 1969-70 *Do Something with It* [Fig. A.15] and the early, 1969 version of *Think of Something* whereby ‘[i]n 1969 [the artist] sent [a *Think of Something* slogan] to seven casually selected residents of Urbana, USA, not giving them [his] address and not keeping their addresses’; or,
- (2) via actions in public space. The action mentioned here is Konieczny’s 1970 *Violet* (cf. [Figs. A.31-2]), but one might also extend this understanding to 1968-9 *Drop Something in Here* ([Figs. A.6-10a]).

Konieczny (1/07/1970) defines the Markovian stochastic process as a specific logic, a ‘system’ of ‘forgetting the past’ whereby ‘we get information concerning the interval of time on the basis of information from the given moment’ and not on the basis of ‘the additional information about earlier moments’. Therefore, as Konieczny (1/07/1970, original emphasis) further explains, the information drawn from the present state of affairs, ‘the knowledge of realization in one given moment of time’—independently of its past displacements—allows us ‘to calculate the probability connections of [a] certain realization in the future moments’. In the same text, beside the Markovian formulation of stochastic processes, something we might call stochastism *sensu stricto*, Konieczny also gives a more general—*sensu largo*—definition of the stochastic process in terms of randomness and non-causality. Furthermore, elsewhere Konieczny (*Pokaz Nr. 1* [Show No. 1] exhibition catalogue, cf. 1970: 19) develops an understanding of human nature itself as a stochastic process *sensu largo* driving human actions and emotions. According to the artist (Konieczny 1970: 19),

The stochastism of human nature is the driving engine of emotions and actions. A set composed of people, complemented by a given element or a set of elements, produces in itself stochastic processes; the role of such a complement is a generation and creation of that process.

The objects-catalysts produced by Konieczny at the turn of the 1960s and the 1970s may thus be designated as ‘generators of stochastic processes’, even though the artist (cf. Ekwiński 1971:8) reserves this phrase for one specific art-work. *Generator Procesów Stochastycznych / Generator of Stochastic Processes* (object no. 3 in [Figs. A.33, 34]) was in fact a small cuboid device fitted with casters and motors. Its autonomous movement

was, as Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) explains, driven by cosmic rays.

Konieczny's (1970c) *Violet* catalogue at once performatively expresses and generates the newfound stochastic perspective. What is at stake here is not a documentation of interactions within a group but unleashing a random distribution affirming—to borrow Morawski's (1975a: 34) apt designation—*żywiol stochastyczny* [stochastic (elemental) force], cutting across distinctive individuals. Accordingly, the first pages of the catalogue containing algorithmic calls for actions (for *Think of Something*, *Do Something with It* and *Violet*) are interchangeable with respect to its final pages containing the photographic documentation of *Violet*.

### ***Generators of stochastic processes: a catalogue of actions affirming the stochastic perspective***

Konieczny set out to stimulate the postulated stochastic processes through a wide array of actions. One of those—variously called: *Fiolet—Nasz mozól / Violet—Our Labour*; *140 sztuk fioletowego papieru (Nasz mozól) / 140 Pieces of Purple Paper (Our Toil)*; or *Fiolety / Violet Pigments* [Figs. A.31, 32]—was carried out in 1970 and entailed Konieczny placing the eponymous blank sheets of violet paper, 650mm by 480mm in size, in various places across Warsaw, affixed to the pavements and pasted up on the walls of houses. Konieczny subsequently captured reactions of passers-by on both 16mm film video camera and a photo camera.

Another of Konieczny's stochastic works was his 1971 action called *Trwająca dyskusja / Ongoing Discussion* (also translated as *Prolonged Discussion*) [Figs. A.45-6] that sought to provoke a stochastic situation by inviting a group of fellow artists and art critics for a discussion on the mutual relation between imagination and stochasticism in art and subsequently recording the outcome. A parallel action called *Poznanie / Cognition* (RP 'poznanie' could be more adequately translated as 'making acquaintance' or 'getting to know') was performed in 1971 in the Praga district of Warsaw and repeated at Paweł Freisler's *Galeria* [Gallery] artists' space as part of the *Depozyt* [Deposit] group exhibition that took place between 10 August 1972 and 28 February 1973. The action entailed Konieczny's installing an arrangement of small printed cards in the middle of a larger space. The cards, suspended on thin threads, were designed to facilitate the eponymous *Getting to Know*, and thus generate contact, first between a group of young people in 1971 and subsequently amongst the audience at the gallery space run by Freisler.

A different type of stochastic situation was provoked by Konieczny in 1971 in Elbląg as part of the Third City Meetings art festival with the street action called *Festiwal zapachów / Aroma Festival* whereby the artist presented an unscented handkerchief to passers-by, asking them to identify its scent. As Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) reminisces, the recorded answers were 'beer, narcissus, chlorine, scrap metal, lily of the valley'.

Yet another group of Konieczny's stochastic actions consisted of sending out signals—either physical or mental—and communicating the fact of such a relay through postal messages addressed to his fellow artists, both in Poland and abroad. The many postcards sent by Konieczny from 1969 onwards communicated the exact date and time of his prospective transmission of a signal. Some of those signals took shape of a light installation called *0.15 kontakt / 0.15 Contact* [Figs. 22-30], repeated frequently between 1969 and 1971. The signal relayed here consisted of short bursts of light emitted from a special flash lamp. This was documented in a series of photographs. Besides triggering emissions of light, Konieczny also implemented, many times between 1971 and 1973 so-called 'mental actions' (Szwajewska 1986b: 5) involving purely mental signals. The latter actions were named *Nadam Ci sygnał ... / I'll Send You a Signal ...* [Figs. 60-61]. Konieczny's mental actions were

subsequently documented by the written responses of his addressees confirming the receipt of the signal. In their critical analysis of Konieczny's signal art-works, both Morawski and Szwajewska note a shift from interventions in physical space to provoking 'new mental situation[s]' (Szwajewska 1986b). In particular, what Szwajewska (1986b: 5) sees as a transition from 'purely physical to mental potentialities', Morawski (1975a: 34) identifies as 'an overcoming of the physical barrier' in favour of 'a singular, ephemeral contact'. The shift from physical situations to mental signals was also expressed by Konieczny in his new strategy of 'mental predecisional process' that will be discussed in further detail later on in the section.

What might be also considered as an expression of stochastic processes is an interior design project that the artist embarked on in 1969 [Figs. 20-21i]. Namely, Konieczny refurbished his apartment giving it a unique layout that included flexible, customisable open spaces filled with innovative multifunctional furniture and fixtures. Another stochastic project that tackles, albeit in a more oblique way, furniture design is Konieczny's action from c. 1971 or 1972 variously called *Naturalna interwencja dzieci w status artystyczny / Natural Intervention of Children into Artistic Status*; or *Naturalna interwencja dzieci / Children's Natural Interference* [Fig. 11]. As Konieczny's friend and a fellow artist Paweł Freisler (2/07/2015) reports, this particular action entailed Konieczny asking his son to glue back together a chair that had been taken apart the week before, using the 'technique' of starch-based glue and *codzienna makulatura* [daily paper waste], i.e. copies of communist dailies Trybuna Ludu [The People's Tribune] and Ekspres Wieczorny [Evening Express]. Freisler (2/07/2015) considers Konieczny's action performed at the Sigma club, a student gallery space located in the basement of a building belonging to Warsaw University, in terms of 'an interaction prepared by Marek [Konieczny] as part of [Freisler's own] anti- and counter-cultural activity ... called a *game without rules*'. Interestingly, Konieczny's investigation of furniture design as an artistic technology is taken up by the artist in his *still life* installation *Skyscraper* from c. 1972 composed of a miniature model of a wooden table and two chairs placed on a platform atop a pillar, all set against a white—maculated, stained or smudged—background [Figs. 47]. The furniture design *qua* aesthetic technology thread is also picked up in 1983 with Konieczny's manipulations of a mahogany cabinet [Figs. 138] as part of the *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel* exhibition.

Responding critically to Konieczny's practices back in 1971, Ekwiński (1971: 8) saw the artist's stochastic actions in terms of a certain metamorphosis of the Constructivist tradition. If Constructivism was interested in 'the idea of construction, and functional arrangement of the environment', this preoccupation was in Konieczny's case turned inwards, towards 'the internal space of a community' focusing at the same time, however, only on 'processes that can be rationalised'. Furthermore, Ekwiński (1971: 8) claims that Konieczny's practices—epitomised, for example, by *Drop Something in Here* [Figs. 6-10a]—served to stimulate perceptions and conscious reactions of a given, constituted collectivity. Those collective responses were being subsequently documented and shown to yet another collectivity of viewers. According to Ekwiński (1971: 8), when confronted with documentation of human actions, the viewer was bound to experience a sense of 'enter[ing] into the neutral field of distance towards our own selves (...) and what we are'. Ekwiński further argues that this inward-looking self-reflexivity fostered by Konieczny's actions did not however touch on the problematics of the unconscious, as explored by surrealism. Instead, the general preoccupation of Konieczny's actions stopped at conscious actions.

## 5.5. Predecisional Process

Starting from 1971, Konieczny began to emphasise the role of imagination in the artistic process (cf. Konieczny quoted in D.K 1971; Konieczny quoted in Ekwiński 1971: 8; Konieczny 1971: 8; Konieczny 1972a). He also engaged in a string of actions that highlighted non-rational unconscious processes inhering in human actions. This group of art manifestations called *Procesy przeddezyjonalne* and variously translated as *Predecisional Process* or *Predecisional Processes*—created between 1972 and 1975—involved (1) a series of randomly etched transparent sheets of foil (executed between 1 March 1972 and 24 September 1973; exhibited in January-February 1974 at Groningen's de Mangelgang gallery and in October 1974 at Warsaw's Zapiecek Gallery) [Figs. 49-51]; and (2) a series of postcards and artist's books stamped 'mental predecisional process' [Figs. 52-8]. The latter works were created between 1973 and 1975 and could be considered as mail art. The mail art works from the *Mental Predecisional Process* series were frequently accompanied by stamps featuring vegetal outlines (cf. [Figs. 52-4, 58]) that c. 1974 were either replaced by—or tended to coexist and merge with—the Think Crazy stamp (cf. [Figs. 58] for the latter development).

At the same time, between 1971 and 1975, Konieczny embarked on a series of performances in public space [Figs. 35-42, 69, 83] (cf. Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015) that, for the purposes of the present dissertation, will be referred to as 'running pieces', 'walking pieces', 'spectral pieces', or, better still, 'wandering pieces'. Those particular performance pieces were unlike his earlier instruction-based participatory actions that had taken place between 1968 and 1970. The new pieces focused on the artist in motion and entailed Konieczny traversing the streets of Warsaw—either walking or running—usually accompanied by a piece of red or violet cloth flapping in the wind. The cloth was either draped around the artist's head as a red ribbon or affixed atop a pole, thus forming a flag. The former variation was employed in the so-called *Widmo wolności* series [Figs. 35-40]—variously translated as *Spectre of Freedom* or *Spectre of Liberty*—performed many times between 1971 and 1972. The series also included the 1971 *Widmo na śniegu / Spectre on the Snow* performance [Figs. 39-40]. As Szwajewska (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015) recounts, the performances saw Konieczny traverse various areas in Warsaw, including, for example, sections of the Łazienkowska Thoroughfare. The Thoroughfare was under construction between 1971 and 1974 as a major infrastructure project of the new communist authorities under the First Secretary Edward Gierek. The existing documentation of the *Spectre of Freedom* series records Konieczny emerging out of an underground passage, briskly walking along the window displays of department stores, and also surrounded by welders working on the construction of the Łazienkowska Thoroughfare. The latter situation Konieczny recreated in the privacy of his own studio where he was photographed in the process of welding while donning a protective helmet as well as a red ribbon over his head. As Szwajewska (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015) points out, this particular stand of Konieczny's performances, or 'street actions', was initially called the *Red Tape* series and it was only in the 1980s that she (cf. Szwajewska 1986a, 1986b) coined the 'Spectre of Freedom' designation. Looking at the *Red Tape* performances from the perspective of the 1980s—and, in particular, the beginning of the Martial Law (1981-1983) in Poland—Szwajewska (1986b: 5) emphasised their possible political undertones, symbolically associating those works with the past and especially the Polish national uprisings in the nineteenth century (cf. [Figs. B.3-4]).

Another group within Konieczny's pieces involved the artist running in the streets while holding a violet silk flag either with—as in *Think Crazy na flagę / Think Crazy for Flag*, 1975 [Fig. 83]—or without the Think Crazy emblem inscribed in red lettering (*Oparte o niebo / Propped Against the Sky*, 1974) [Figs. 69].

The ‘walking pieces’ could also entail Konieczny traversing the streets with the eponymous *Chodźmy na 1-go maja* banner, variously translated as *Let’s Join the First of May Demonstration* or *Let’s Join the May Day Parade* [Figs. 41-2]. The performances were repeated many times between 1971 and 1973, both during the annual Workers’ Day celebrations and on unrelated occasions throughout the year.

In 1973 Konieczny travelled to the town of Edewecht in Lower Saxony where he visited the artist Klaus Groh. The year before Groh had started an international mail network whose premise was to foster cooperation between artists across the national divisions. As Groh (Groh et al. 14/01/2015) recounts, the so-called ‘I.A.C.’, i.e. International Artists’ Cooperation, was ‘the first network for artists [that was] outside the normal art system, without the gallery, museum, art exhibition’. Even though Konieczny had known Groh’s home address via I.A.C., the two did not meet in person until 1973. Klaus, born in the Silesian town of Nysa, would become Konieczny’s lifelong friend (cf. Groh et al. 14/01/2015; Groh 13/10/2015). In 1973 they started exchanging mail correspondence, including postcards, letters, artist’s books and exhibition catalogues. This postal exchange has continued to this day. The correspondence merits the designation of ‘mail art’ because of the intricate artistic elaboration of each item that was sent out—via techniques such as stamping, collage, etc. In 1974, accompanied by Groh, Konieczny visited the Dutch city of Groningen where he exhibited [Fig. 51] works from his *Predecisional Processes* series—transparent sheets of plastic with randomly etched marks. Konieczny and Groh also paid a visit to the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum where Konieczny took an interest in the Dutch Golden Age paintings and especially the seventeenth-century architectural painting from Delft. As Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) recounts, what interested him most were the works of Emmanuel de Witte and Pieter Saenredam (cf. [Fig. B.6]).

## 5.6. Special Equipment and Think Crazy

### 5.6.1. Special Equipment

Around 1974 Konieczny started incorporating material objects into his art practices. He called such object his ‘Special Equipment’ (cf. Brewńska 2012: 7). Special Equipment produces an astounding variation in terms of its constitutive materials, shapes and functions. It might be understood in the Deleuzoguattarian (cf. 2005: 141, 511) terms as a machine that generates a resonance between heterogeneous, unformed matters with their singularities, i.e. energetic matter characterised by varying levels of intensity (*phylum*), on one hand and material traits of expression, i.e. transitory, informal and diagrammatic functions that stretch assemblages to their limit point (*tensors*), on the other. Since what is at stake in Special Equipment is a machinic functioning beyond the subject-object divide, I will henceforth qualify the notion of object with single quotation marks.

#### *Phyla. Material variation of Special Equipment*

Some of the Special Equipment ‘objects’ were covered with either real or imitation golden foil or leaf—the so-called ‘schlagmetal’. Such golden Special Equipment included:

- (1) a golden sickle (*Sierp Oriona / Orion’s Sickle*, 1974) [Figs. A.70-1];
- (2) a miniature golden pyramid (*Dialog z piramidą / Dialogue with a Pyramid*, 1975 [Figs. A.73-4]; *Omnifer*, 1976 [Fig. A.111]; *Martwa natura / Still-Life*, also known as *Think Crazy*, 1976 [Figs. A.101-3]; *A gdy się uniesie / And when it rises*, also translated as *And when it takes off*, 1980 [Fig. A.119]);

- (3) a miniature golden ship (*Na morzu—siedem wieczorów, siedem poranków / At Sea—Seven Evenings, Seven Days*, 1975 [Fig. A.77-8]), there is also a version of the miniature ship rendered in clear, transparent plastic (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015);
- (4) a miniature golden cone (*MG 14 Beronika*, c. 1976 [Figs. A.112-13]);
- (5) a golden horn (*Think Crazy na autoportret / Think Crazy for Self-Portrait*, 1978 [Fig. A.114]; *Nieczule skały / Unfeeling Rocks*, 1979 [Fig. A.115]; *Nieczule skały z autoportretem / Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait*, 1979 [Fig. A.116], *Jednorożec / Unicorn*, 1980 [Fig. A.122]), *Powrót do źródeł / Return to the Springs*, also known as *Return to the Sources*, 1986 [Fig. A.152-3, 155-6]), or
- (6) a three-metre plywood spike dotted with golden leaf (*Milion piramid / A Million Pyramids*, 1976 and 1979 [Fig. A.104-6]).

Special Equipment could also consist of non-golden ‘objects’ such as:

- (1) a plastic bird figure (*Martwa natura z ptaszkiem / Still-Life with a Little Bird* from 1974, also known as *Bez tytułu / Untitled* [Fig. A.72]);
- (2) a feather duster (*Berło / Sceptre*, c. 1974 [Fig. A.99]; *Berło i kielich / Sceptre and Chalice*, 1978 [Fig. A.100]);
- (3) a black velvet embroidered cloth (*24012008 Think Crazy*, 1975 [Fig. A.79]);
- (4) a thick cord tassel (as appearing in *Think Crazy*, a metal relief from 1975 [Fig. A.84]); as well as
- (5) pieces of fur (*Miciofutro / Micio-fur*, 1983) [Fig. A.132]; or
- (6) wooden mock-ups of furniture pieces (*Skyscraper*, c. 1972 [Fig. A.47]).

Special Equipment could also take shape of Konieczny’s dachshund (*Zimowy koncert na psa / Winter Dog Concert*, 1975, involving a recording of the dog’s voice; a 1975 performance in the artist’s studio called *Rozmawiając z psem* [Fig. A.94], variously translated as *Conversing with a Dog* or *Talking to a Dog*; *Rozmawiając z psem. Rozmawiając z piramidami / Conversing with a Dog. Conversing with Pyramids* [Fig. A.95]; a 1976 performance at the BWA Lublin gallery).

***Tensors. Provisional functioning of Special Equipment: as body art, still-life installation, live images, miniatures/collages, kinaesthetic performances, planar manipulations***

Special Equipment lent itself to performing diverse provisional functions (tensors) in Konieczny’s practices.

It could be directly used by the artist on his body during his performances and thus partake in what the artist called ‘body art’ (Szwajewska 1986b: 14). This functioning was exemplified by *Orion’s Sickle* [Figs. A.70-71] from 1974. As Szwajewska (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015) recounts, the latter *performans z ciałem* [body-based performance] was made possible thanks to Konieczny’s discovery of a bunch of rusty sickles at a Peasants’ Co-Op store.



Alternatively, as Brewińska (2012: 7) and Sz wajewska (1986b: 5) point out, Special Equipment could be used as a part of installations accompanying the artist's performances. Konieczny designates such functioning of Special Equipment as *martwe natury*, i.e. 'still-lives', or—to be precise—*instalacje martwych natur*, i.e. 'still-life installations' (Szwajewska 1986a: 9). An example of such still-lives would be Konieczny's *Skyscraper*, c. 1972 [Fig. A.47]; *Martwa natura / Still-Life*, also known as *Think Crazy*, 1976 [Figs. A.101-3]; *Omnifer*, 1976 [Fig. A.111]; *MG 14 Beronika*, c. 1976 [Figs. A.112-13]; *Rozmawiając z psem. Rozmawiając z piramidami / Conversing with a Dog. Conversing with Pyramids*, 1976 [Fig. A.95] as well as *Berło i kielich / Sceptre and Chalice*, 1978 [Fig. A.100]. A further example of Konieczny's still lives is an arrangement of glowing tubular elements, staking out a territory approximating a red hot burning pit, outlined against a pitch-dark background (*Martwa natura—ŻAR / Still life—EMBERS*, also known as *Red Coal*, 1972 or 1973/4) [Fig. A.48]. Most importantly, Sz wajewska (1986b: 5) associates the still-lives with the Dutch notion of *aandacht*, i.e. decorativeness combined with concentration.

Last but not least, Konieczny documented his encounters with Special Equipment in 1975 and 1976 on the 16mm film as short looped videos. The artist called those videos *żywe obrazy*, i.e. 'live images' or 'live paintings'. Sz wajewska (1986b: 8) also uses the expression 'tableau vivant' to describe those particular artworks. In the summer of 1975 Konieczny shot a series of live images in various places in Warsaw. The shooting locations included a terrace of Stażewski's apartment atop a Warsaw skyscraper [Fig. A.82], the artist's own apartment, or a sandbar located in the old riverbed of the Vistula. The 1975 video series famously featured nudity, stark blue sky and golden objects. The videos in the series included *Santa Conversatione* [Fig. A.80-1]; *Dialog z piramidą / Dialogue with a Pyramid* [Fig. A.73-4]; *Na morzu—siedem wieczorów, siedem poranków* [Fig. A.77-8] variously translated as *At Sea—Seven Evenings, Seven Days* or *At Sea (Inspired by G. Battcock's Voyages)*; *24012008 Think Crazy* [Fig. A.79] and *Uśmiech / Smile* [Fig. A.161, bottom-right photograph]. In turn, stills captured from Konieczny's live images could also be developed, printed and mounted and then subsequently exhibited as what Sz wajewska (1986b: 9) calls 'miniatures' (cf. [Fig. A.150]). Another mode of manipulation of images were Konieczny's collages (cf. Sz wajewska 1986: 7)—a technique he frequently used in his mail art pieces. The manipulation could be also implemented by retouching the photographic reproduction of a seventeenth-century painting. Such an operation in fact gave rise to the whole series of 'installations' (cf. Sz wajewska 1986b: 14) created in 1973 and 1974, including Konieczny's 1974 emblematic work *1672—1974* [Fig. A.64-6].

While Sz wajewska (1986b: 5) linked Konieczny's still-lives to a decorativeness combined with concentration, she also noticed that another important stand of Konieczny's activity—a series of performances Konieczny embarked on since 1976—breaks this concentration with 'an unprecedented outburst of expression, both destructive and extravagant' (1986b: 9). What Sz wajewska (1986b: 11) refers to is a series of Konieczny's performance pieces that entailed a rapid movement of his body wielding an object or a rapid movement of an object itself. Konieczny's choreographies could entail various types of motion. It could be a movement along a straight line—as in *Million pyramid / A Million Pyramids* [Fig. A.104-6] from 1976 repeated in 1979; or a spinning motion along the object's own axis—as in the 1978 *Berło i kielich / Sceptre and Chalice* [Fig. A.100]. The movement could also take shape of an outwardly expanding vortex, as exemplified by *Fresk / Fresco* (1981, repeated in 1983, the work is also known as *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel*) [Fig. A.137] or *Skupienie i ekstaza / Concentration and Ecstasy* (1985) [Fig. A.147]. The Special Equipment objects used in those kinaesthetic performances frequently caused destruction (cf. Rylke 22/05/2014; Kaźmierczak 01/06/2014). The performances

could also involve suspending an object on a string or a wire.

As Szwejewska (1986b: 10) reports, yet another strand of Konieczny's actions—or, rather, *installations* (1986b: 14)—involved propping paintings against a wall. One might consider those pieces as diagramming the mutual co-implication of engineering technologies and art, in the sense that those manipulations harnessed the expressive properties of the planes and their power to tap into their underlying tensile forces. This particular type of art-works was exemplified by *Think Crazy oparte o ścianę* [Fig. A.59], variously translated as *Think Crazy Propped against a Wall*, *Think Crazy Leaning against a Wall*, or *Think Crazy against a Wall*. The works were created between 1973 and 1975.

### 5.6.2. Think Crazy

At the same time Konieczny started using Special Equipment—around 1974 (cf. Groh et al. 14/01/2015a; Groh 13/10/2015)—he also initiated the artistic strategy he called Think Crazy. One of the earliest manifestations of Think Crazy, called *Sierpniowe Boże Narodzenie / August Christmas* [Fig. A.67-68], took place on 8 August 1974 in the garden of Groh's house in Oldenburg. As Groh recounts (14/01/2015b), the action, or 'happening' as Konieczny (Szwajewska 1986: 14) labels it, consisted of Konieczny decorating a tree with Christmas ornaments—multi-coloured paper chains and baubles—as if it were Christmas. Think Crazy is a practice that Konieczny has pursued ever since. As Szwejewska (1986a: 7) explains, Think Crazy was a continuation of Konieczny's earlier pursuit of 'experiences and [the pure] idea' as art-works, rather than 'the material object'. In particular, according to Szwejewska (1986a: 7), what interested Konieczny as part of Think Crazy were 'experiences of a very special kind, harbouring madness under the layers of rationalism'. In a nutshell, the Think Crazy strategy was conceived as an exploration of elements of madness in human experience. In turn, as Morawski and Ekwiński (quoted in Szwejewska et al. 1982) pointed out, Think Crazy constituted a sustained attack on the established forms and clichés. At the same time, according to Morawski (quoted in Szwejewska 1986b: 8), Konieczny's invocation of madness possesses a consistent logic to it, engaging as it is with 'the current transformations of culture and civilisation'.

The Think Crazy strategy as a mad thought is coincident with various art-works—performance, installation, body art and video pieces—Konieczny has created since 1974 out of, with, or as his Special equipment. In fact, there exist various critical accounts of the mutual relationship between Think Crazy and Konieczny's pieces.

For example, Szwejewska (1986b: 9) offers diverse accounts of this relation. On one hand, she offers a distinctly Kantian-Romantic, or even theological, understanding of the relation between the idea of Think Crazy and Konieczny's actual art-works. In particular, she points out that all of Konieczny's art-works are 'material objects', 'works of art' that may be seen as expressions—variously referred to as 'record[s]', 'materialis[at]ions', 'methods of communication', 'effect[s]', 'attributes'—of Konieczny's idea. At this juncture, Szwejewska's equates the Think Crazy idea not with a thought, but she ascribes Think Crazy to the grand figure of 'the Artist, (...) the Master himself, the Creator'. As Szwejewska (1986b: 9) sees it, it is by virtue of the artist's action of actually using his art-works that they are 'raised to a different dimension'. On the other hand, Szwejewska (1986b: 9) understands Konieczny's art-works as his Special Equipment. In fact, in an earlier text, Szwejewska (1980: 110) approaches Konieczny's works as, first and foremost, his Special Equipment while emphasising the latter's Constructivist lineage.

In turn, Kępińska (1981: 240-1) links the Think Crazy idiom to Konieczny's ongoing exploration of various dimensions of the creative process through his professed preoccupation with 'mental predecisional processes'. According to the art historian (Kępińska 1981: 240-1), Think Crazy explores 'mental predecisional processes' via 'situations (...) encompassing various perverse aspects of thought processes, not taken into account in the common sense line of reasoning' (*sytuacje (...) obejmujące różne przewrotne aspekty procesów myślowych, nie wkalkulowanych w tok zdroworozsądkowy*).

Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) himself understands Think Crazy as a pinnacle of stochastic processes, the latter understood in the colloquial sense as non-causal thought and chance processes. According to the artist (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015),

the blurring of rational thinking came about through random processes, through stochasticism. (...) Think Crazy is a crazy thought, that is, a crowning moment—as it were—of the non-causal mode of thinking' (*rozmycie racjonalnego myślenia odbyło się przez procesy przypadkowe, przez stochastyzm. Think Crazy jest myślą szaloną, czyli jak gbyby ukoronowaniem sposobu myślenia nieprzyczynowego*).

### 5.6.3. Think Crazy in America

On the spring of 1975, Konieczny travelled to the United States as part of a grant he had received from the Kościuszko foundation. In particular, he was invited by the Canadian mail artist Ana Banana to attend her artistic event called Banana Olympics that was scheduled to take place in San Francisco on 30 March. It took Konieczny two days to travel on the Greyhound bus from New York to San Francisco where he joined Groh (cf. a photographic collage depicting Groh and Konieczny in [Fig. A.75]) and Ana Banana. As the latter (Ana Banana 2014) reminisces, 'unfortunately, Konieczny misunderstood the bus schedule from NYC, arriving in San Francisco at 10 pm, Sunday March 30, 5 hours after the Banana Olympics were over!' While in San Francisco, Konieczny participated in artistic activities of the so-called 'Bay Area Dadaists', including the mail artist Bill Gaglione. With a miniature Hanimex 110 Micro camera [Fig. A.90], Groh and Konieczny documented their activities in San Francisco [Figs. A.88-93]. It is on the shores of the San Francisco Bay that Konieczny arranged the first public presentation of the Think Crazy emblems consisting of two 'Think Crazy' inscriptions stencilled on golden and silver aluminium panels he had brought along with him to the U.S. Konieczny called this presentation *Think Crazy nad zatoką / Think Crazy on the Bay*. As Ana Banana (27/05/2014) recalls, the Think Crazy emblem sported 'the lettering in black on the thin, but firm metal'. Upon his return to New York, Konieczny met the artist Geoffrey Hendricks (cf. 4/05/2015) as well as his brother Jon, the co-founder of Guerrilla Art Action Group. Konieczny also met the artist and art critic Gregory Battcock, to whom he dedicated one of his short looped videos created later on, in the summer of the same year. Geoff Hendricks, an artist as well as a professor at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, acted as Konieczny's guide to New York. Together they visited an exhibition of aluminium reliefs from the so-called 'Brazilian series' by the American minimalist artist Frank Stella. The exhibition, called *Metal Reliefs*, was at the time running at the Leo Castelli Gallery until the end of May 1975. Stella's exhibition was the location of Konieczny's performance called *Obrazki z wystawy / Pictures at an Exhibition* that saw him traversing the gallery space with the Think Crazy emblem while donning a white wig. As Hendricks (4/05/2015; cf. Szwejewska 1986b: 7) recalls, on his invitation Konieczny gave a talk about his artistic strategies to students in the art department at the Douglas College of Rutgers University. The talk was concluded by taking the collective eponymous *Przysięga na Think Crazy / Think Crazy Oath* [Fig. A.76] on 6 May 1975. Konieczny subsequently left the United States on 21 May, but over the years has remained in contact with Ana Banana and Hendricks, both of whom paid him a visit in

Warsaw. Following his return from the United States, in September 1975 Konieczny presented a 52 x 70,5 cm *Think Crazy* metal plaque, dated 1974 (cf. Jakimowicz and Sitkowska 1975: 1, 6) at the *Information and Emotion* exhibition of graphic works organised in the Contemporary Art Gallery at Warsaw's National Museum upon the occasion of the AICA Congress.

#### 5.6.4. *Think Crazy for Paintings / Images*

Around 1976, Konieczny turned his attention towards painting as a medium, thus embarking on the strategy he called *Think Crazy na obrazy*, variously translated as *Think Crazy for Paintings* or *Think Crazy for Images*. For Szwajewska (1980: 109), Konieczny's engagement with painting had already been intimated by the 'quasi-painterly' series of randomly etched sheets of transparent foil Konieczny created back in 1972 and 1973 as part of his *Predecisional Processes*. The artist's interest in aspects of painting is also already visible in his 1973-5 installation *Think Crazy Propped Against a Wall* [Fig. A.59]. It is worth pointing out that back in 1976 Konieczny did not paint in the traditional sense of figurative painting on canvas. Instead, as many critics (cf. Szwajewska 1986b: 11; Domurat in Szwajewska 1983; Szwajewska 1980) pointed out, what he set about to create were—allusively titled and flamboyantly textured—painted metal reliefs or textural paintings on panels of engineered wood, such as plywood or fibreboard. Incorporating a vast array of objects and materials, such as feather and fur, Konieczny's sculptural paintings seemed to overflow their irregularly shaped frames. At the same time, those new works—also simply called *faktury*, i.e. 'textures', by Szwajewska (cf. 1983a)—harnessed the particular expressive traits of golden alloys: their non-organic artificiality, variable lustre and textured surface, thus inviting a close-range, haptic vision (cf. Szwajewska 1980).

The new art-works included *Epitańium / Epitaph* (1976) [Fig. A.109]; *Nieczule skały / Unfeeling Rocks* (1979) [Fig. A.115]; *Ognipiór / Fire-feather* (1980) [Fig. A.123], variously translated as *Exudative Diathesis* or *Fire-feather*; the sculpture *Pieta / Pietà* (1980) [Fig. A.126]; *Rozmowy w namiocie księcia de l'Avant-garde / Conversations in the Tent of the Prince de l'Avant-Garde* (1980) [Fig. A.117]. Other works created from 1976 onwards were *Niezrozumiała całość / Incomprehensible Whole* (1981) [Fig. A.127], which gave rise to the whole eponymous series; *Preapes I* and *Preapes II* [Fig. A.98, item no. 4] from c. 1976—the latter works were also affectionately called *Żagielki*, i.e. 'Little Sails' (cf. Szwajewska in Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015); and, last but not least, *Niedokończone śniadanie / Unfinished Breakfast* (cf. oblong wooden plank part covered with golden leaf, located in the top right corner of the wall, close to the ceiling in [Figs. A.96-97]), c. 1976. All of those art-works were gradually being incorporated into *Think Crazy na Kaplicę Sykstyńską / Think Crazy for the Sistine Chapel*—an installation on the wall of the artist studio (cf. its various stage in [Figs. A.96-8]) that lasted until 1980 (cf. Brewńska 2012: 7).

Konieczny's new relief works created from 1976 might be said to undergo metamorphoses along divergent lines. This secret movement had already been detected by the art critic Maria Domurat (quoted in Szwajewska 1983). Back in 1983, Domurat pointed out that, during her encounter with Konieczny's textures,

tightly crowded beside one another, the works kept losing their [ontological status as an] autonomous being, becoming an important element of the composition; they kept affecting one another, exchanging shapes and reflections. It now seemed that they were giggling ironically while blinking meaningfully—or then again, that they kept trying to open a dialogue with me.

What was singular about Konieczny's textural art-works was that they were being either assembled together for a limited span of time or otherwise entered encounters with Special Equipment and the artist's body.

For example, *Epitaph* [Fig. A.109] was coupled with *Unfinished Breakfast* (a horizontally placed wooden plank in [Figs. A.96-97] in 1979, thus generating a new, short-lived situation [Fig. A.110] whereby the latter functioned as a bar that crossed the former at a 45° angle.

In turn, *Unfeeling Rocks* [Fig. A.115]—having already incorporated within it a protruding horn as its Special Equipment—was mutated via an encounter with *Conversations in the Tent of the Prince de l'Avant-Garde* [Fig. A.117]. The latter piece had already consisted of two detachable wooden panels. What emerged in the process of encounter was *Nadleśnictwo Think Crazy (dawniej dyptyk, teraz tryptyk, 1979-83)* [Fig. A.118], variously translated as *Think Crazy Forest Inspectorate, Formerly a Diptych, Now a Triptych; Forest Inspector. Think Crazy Triptych* or *Think Crazy Forest Inspectorate. Formerly Diptych at This Moment Triptych 1979-83*. The emergent compound, manifold work is presently exhibited on a wall of the artist's own apartment, further complicated by addition of the two *Preapes* panels [Fig. A.98, item no. 4]. What is of utmost importance here is that Konieczny inscribed in the name of this particular work a record of its respective path of mutation.

A further example of Konieczny's strategy of compounding is *Think Crazy for Self-Portrait* [Fig. A.114] from 1978. In 1979, the self-portrait was combined with *Unfeeling Rocks* [Fig. A.115], already sporting a protruding golden horn, thus giving rise to the coupled horns of *Nieczule skąły z autoportretem / Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait* [Fig. A.116].

#### 5.6.5. Woodworks and beyond

Looking back at his art-works from the point of view of the end of the 1990s, Konieczny (1999) identified yet another mutation in his art practice when—at the turn of 1982 and 1983—he also became interested in the traditional decorative technology as applied to wooden furniture-making and design. Most importantly, for the purposes of his 1983 *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel* exhibition [Fig. A.138] at Galeria Labirynt [The Labyrinth Gallery] in Lublin, Konieczny refrained from replicating the spatial configuration of his previous, eponymous studio installation [Fig. A.96-8]. Instead, he arranged his previous art objects created between 1974 and 1983—both the reliefs and the earlier Special Equipment—in compartments of an imposing wooden cabinet finished in mahogany and Caucasian walnut burl veneer. One might say that the previous spatial configuration of *Think Crazy for the Sistine Chapel* is turned inwards, serving as a frame, a matrix or a threshold out of which, as Konieczny (1999) reports, 'various forms and textures were issuing forth and descending to the floor'. One notable exception from this configuration was *Unfinished Breakfast* [Fig. A.138, the middle photo + the second one from the top] that was suspended above the cabinet on a string.

In the tempestuous 1980s, Konieczny boycotted state-run galleries as a gesture of resistance against the communist authorities. He made a notable exception for Galeria Labirynt. Under its director Andrzej Mroczek, this particular gallery constituted a hub for independent Polish art. At the time, Konieczny also exhibited his works at various places of the so-called 'second circuit', i.e. the independent art scene, such as the private apartment of the artist Jan Rylke. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, during the turbulent time of the collapse of communism in Poland, Konieczny was briefly employed as a visiting professor at the painting faculty of the Warsaw School of Fine Arts. During the three semesters he spent working as a tutor at the Academy, he exerted enormous influence on several young Polish artists, including Piotr Uklański and Cezary Bodzianowski (cf.

Ronduda 2010a).

The decade of the 1990s in Poland saw introduction of free market economy under the sign of Chicago-school neoliberalism. Throughout this so-called post-communist ‘transition’ period, Konieczny continued his interest in woodworking and furniture design as part of an artistic strategy he had formally pursued since 1986. Looking back on his practices from the 1980s, Konieczny (1999) coined the term ‘crypto-conservatism’ to refer back to his engagement with ‘the traditional decorative technology’ of woodworking and furniture making. As the artist (1999) explains, crypto-conservatism was an apt characterisation of his practice as it evoked for him bourgeois undertones—‘decadent bourgeois spirit’. Reflecting on his art practices of the 1980s, Konieczny (1999) perceives them as a form of capture of his earlier spirit of experimentation.

In the 2000s, the artist produced refined framed relief objects typically incorporating ready-mades derived from contemporary consumer culture. The consumer objects employed by Konieczny were mostly made of plastic and included toy animals, such as an imitation beetle, spider, crocodile, etc., as well as chocolate boxes and Christmas baubles. Those paraphernalia, new Special Equipment of sorts, were embedded into plywood or fibreboard panels and subsequently treated with paint and gold flakes.

It was not until the 2010s that Konieczny returned to his earlier neo-avant-garde pursuits from the 1970s. Namely, in 2012, a major retrospective of Konieczny’s work took place at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw [Figs. A.157-61], facilitated as it was by his erstwhile student and presently an internationally acclaimed New York-based artist Piotr Uklański.

#### **5.6.6. Critical responses to Think Crazy: Towards a Think Crazy topology**

For Szwajewska, while the Think Crazy idiom epitomises Konieczny’s interest in ideas and experience rather than the traditional material art object—an interest professed already back in 1968 (1986b: 7)—the subsequent 1976 mutation of Think Crazy should be considered as a return to the material object (cf. Szwajewska 1986b: 9, Jaremowicz 1987: 37; Brewńska 2012: 7). In turn, in Konieczny’s (10/04/2015) non-dialectical account, Think Crazy has managed to reconfigure the very status of materiality in the first place, putting forward a processual understanding of the image. What is at stake here is the pure image as a virtual movement of expression, in Konieczny’s words ‘the image itself, the pure idea of communicating it, how to communicate it’. What all those diverse accounts bring into relief is a certain tension between materiality and its virtual dimension. This tension can be certainly linked to an oscillation, aporia and indiscernibility that defines the very functioning of Think Crazy. Furthermore, the larger problematics opened up by various critical accounts of Think Crazy is the issue of the mutual relationship between dualism and monism and also a related, more pragmatic question—how one can overcome the dialectical mode of thinking? In a recent interview, Konieczny (10/04/2015) brought up the latter issue, at the same time pointing towards topological thinking as capable of offering a viable resistance to dialectics.

In this respect, it should be pointed out that Szwajewska, a major commentator of Konieczny’s work, does not simply offer a dialectical account emphasising the role of material object in Konieczny as antithetically opposed to ideas borne out of the faculty of imagination of the transcendental subject. There is no denying that at some stage Szwajewska (cf. 1986b: 9, 13) forcefully puts forward such an account. However, elsewhere she highlights the extent to which Think Crazy—as an embodiment of madness—defies easy binary divisions through the excess it harbours. According to Szwajewska (1986a: 12), ‘THINK [CRAZY] resides in a crevice fleeing control

where madness runs wild; in an abyss of uncertainty and undecidability where discoveries and acts of creation are made'. Szwajewska's two accounts, the dualist and the non-dualist one, are not contradictory since they affirm a shift in art analysis from the mode of interpretation towards a logic of experimentation. In fact, Szwajewska's particular treatment of Konieczny's practices in the *Marek Konieczny. Elements of Think Crazy Topology* exhibition catalogue from 1986 puts forward an understanding of both art and art analysis in terms of the eponymous experimental logic of topology.

# Chapter 5: Contemporary, creative involution. Konieczny—a case study

## 1. Introduction: Konieczny's art as a 'contemporary, creative involution'

The present chapter seeks to outline temporal modulations in Konieczny's work that tend—with the power of their various *phyla* and *tensors*—towards a certain logic of multiplicity and affirm qualitative change. Konieczny's vision establishes a virtual plane of composition that doubles the empirical world of lived perceptions and furnishes a limit point whence various art-works burst forth. This process of creating art's bloc of sensation—as something beyond chronological time, measurable homogenous space and sharply delineated subjects and objects—is neither instantaneous nor easy. Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 164) make it clear that the only thing required of art as a monument of sensations is that it stands on its own. Konieczny's practices constitute an ongoing experiment that at once operates on thought and materials, striving to give them internal consistency so that they may continue to produce their percepts and affects. The artist's creative voyage can be erratic at times, sometimes reaching an impasse, only to surface again as a locus of production of new constellations. Beneath the historical accounts of the creative 'artistic evolution' (cf. Brewńska 2012: 12-13) of the artist, there inheres a certain sub-representative and sub-historical or trans-historical layer. This layer is the vital thread of art's own will, Riegl's *Kunstwollen*, a 'will to art' (quoted in Deleuze 2003: 122). Konieczny's search cracks open—not all at once, but obliquely, gradually, imperceptibly—the figure of its artist. Konieczny's ongoing experimentation engineers the immanent plane of art as a living being, and not a transcendent plan executed by the artist.

The present chapter examines temporal modulations in Konieczny's practices in the period from the late 1960s until the onset of the Think Crazy strategy in 1974. It is during that period that there emerges a crack, a fissure in Konieczny's strategies, a profound yet imperceptible metamorphosis that sweeps the artist away in the creative explosion of Think Crazy as the absolute novelty, a radical aesthetics of the future. When the crack builds up it bites into the chronological order of time and chips it unequally, bit by bit, in diverse ways. And then the chronometric time breaks and there burst forth a temporal series. At the ontological level, there is but a single process that Konieczny undergoes, first as an agent, a catalyst, then as a bearer, a patient and a force; as an *agent*, *voyant* and *agencement*. The process that is set in motion is the one of becoming-crazy, of becoming-imperceptible, of entering the other side of the self and its objects and subjects, of a passage into the future of the eternal return and its multiplicities whence art derives its power of sensation. But, if Konieczny enters a creative delirium, this delirium is also world-historical. As we will see, beyond the discursive art-historical account of linear, progressive, teleological and sequential creative evolution, there subsists a web of metastable creative embryonic potentialities extracted or fabulated from atavistic, anachronic, belated, untimely and preposterous histories. In other words, Konieczny's art creates a plane of composition that tends toward and affirms an ahuman 'contemporary, creative involution' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 164). The becoming-crazy is a becoming-Sarmatian and a becoming-steppe of artistic practices. It invests the social. As pure becoming, it never exists in isolation but it insists, subsists, endures and inheres in the actual. How else could we account for the singularity of Konieczny's work? It gives us steppe-images, sabre-images, gold-images, horn-peoples, tubular-



peoples and the intensities of a black epitaph, a fire-feather or the mutations of a burl veneer—the people-yet-to-come that enunciate change.

## 1.1. Konieczny and the problem of time

Let us start with a simple assertion that Konieczny's practices are preoccupied with time, movement and change. This interest was actively represented in Konieczny's auto-reflections in both the 1990s and the 2000s when he prefaced his exhibitions with mottos from Zhuangzi—'Each instant is metamorphosis' (Konieczny 1995)—and Heraclitus—'Only change matters' (Konieczny 2009). Regardless of whether those mentions are sufficient for identifying a philosophical or reflexive turn in Konieczny's later works, they point towards some important aspects of the artist's practice. In Konieczny, it is only ever a question of exploding, contracting, flattening or proliferating time. Konieczny's work operate on time but at the same time it is not an easy leap into the untimely, an all-too-easy abandonment of the empirical and chronological succession of time. Konieczny has created a new world inhibited by a multiplicity of spatio-temporal dynamisms. His art-works are always conceived as a part of a series. The series include *0.15 Contact* (1969-1972) [Figs. A.22-30], *Drop Something in Here* (1968-1969) [Figs. A.6-10a], *Red Tape* (1971-1972) [Figs. A.35-40], *Predecisional Process* (1972-1973) [Figs. A.49-58], *Special Equipment* (1974—) (e.g. [Figs. A. 70-4, 77-9, 111-13, 114, 122]), *Think Crazy for Paintings/Images* (1976—) (e.g. [Figs. A.109-10, 114-18, 120-1, 123, 126]) and *Crypto-conservatism* (1986-1996) (e.g. [Fig. A.138]). Konieczny's art-works are never single, but inherently doubled or tripled. They never happen for the first time but coexist with their own variation and other works with which they create complex neural networks. This is especially visible in Konieczny's installation *Think Crazy for the Sistine Chapel* [Fig. A.138] at Galeria Labirynt in 1983 whereby the open compartments of a mahogany cabinet standing in the middle of a gallery space function as porous structures that hold diverse art-works together while opening them to the outside. Another interesting temporal aspect of Konieczny's art-works is that they have gained a dual name over time. For example *Żagielki / Little Sails* [Fig. A.98, item no. 4] are also *Preapes*, the Latin for 'winged' or 'bird', while *Red Tape* [Figs. A.35-40] doubles as *Spectre of Freedom*. The difference between the two series of names eludes a simple distinction between the instantaneous, on one hand, and the deferred, symbolic and associative, on the other. When considered in terms of their material composition, Konieczny's art-works possess an internal structure that allows manipulation of their constitutive planes (e.g. movable panels in Konieczny's geometric abstractions throughout the 1960s) or multiple foldings of a single plane (e.g. the catalogue accompanying *Think Crazy* exhibition at Galeria Studio in 1978 or *Think Crazy Triptych*, 1979-83 [Fig. A.118]). Konieczny's art-works may use durable materials such as metal (e.g. *Epitaph*, 1976 [Fig. A.109-10]) or stage evanescent light emissions (*0.15 Contact*, 1969-1971 [Figs. A.22-30]) or even purely conceptual situations (*I'll Send You a Signal ...*, 1971-1973 [Fig. A.60-1]). Furthermore, Konieczny's practices engage time insofar as some of them (e.g. *Drop Something in Here* [Fig. A.6-10a], *Spectre of Freedom* [Fig. A.35-40], *Concentration and Ecstasy* [Fig. A.147]) might be considered durational pieces that pertain to the art-historical lineage of time-based art that includes Fluxus activities, happenings, body art and performance art. Of course, such an understanding is grounded on the false distinction of between what is seen as the 'traditional' 'material' art-works that are merely the static objects of passive contemplation as distinguished from the temporally variable, dynamic contemporary pieces that call for active participation of its audiences.

Konieczny's relation to time also plays out on the level of history and art history. Konieczny is clearly opposed to a history conceived as historicism. As Lundy (2012: 3-4) explains, historicism is a schema that sees history as a linear, chronological, causal, teleological unfolding that operates on the level of essences and representation. Konieczny's summoning forth of something that at a first glance appears as invocation of historical and art-historical events (1683, Sistine Chapel) sets him apart from his many avant-garde peers that were pragmatically anchored in the living present (e.g. KwieKulik) or conceptually preoccupied with the neutral, impossible, speculative time (e.g. Jerzy Rosołowicz). Konieczny, or rather the circuit he forms together with Szwejewska, often exhibits (cf. Szwejewska 1986a) an impulse towards auto-periodisation and auto-cataloguing whereby the names and execution dates of his art-works burst forth in detail. The dates are frequently misleading while the suggested periodisations and names of art-works Konieczny are mobile. In close encounters, as corroborated by Szwejewska (1978), Ronduda and Uklański (2006: 95-6) as well as Przedpełski (Konieczny et al. 01/04/2015), Konieczny is frequently vague, inexact and cryptic, but at the same time accentuates and repeats certain points in his story that serve as seeds that further crystallise his avant-garde legend. Konieczny is interested in 'making history' but as a flexible material for his art-works. The many retrospective glances Konieczny casts at his earlier practices can be at once understood as actively representing his earlier practices but at the same time these representation frequently refers to an inchoate, germinal moment of giving birth to change that is essentially non-representational. For example, in 1986 Konieczny (Szwejewska 1986a) was quoted referring to his earlier practices from the late 1960s as the becoming obsolete of art's material object, whereas in 1995 Konieczny (cf. Brewińska 2012: 7) talked about a surprising transition in his practices back in 1982 towards the traditional technologies of decorative furniture-making in terms of an imperceptible, impersonal hatching—'it hatched'—of a sturdy wooden object [Fig. A.138].

At other times, most notably in a series of printed postcards featuring reproductions of the art-works forming part of his *Think Crazy for the Sistine Chapel* installation as well as in his performance pieces, Konieczny refrained from assigning precise dates. In this way, he opposed the self-historicisation of the Polish neo-avant-garde in the 1980s. According to Szwejewska (Szwejewska in Konieczny et al. 10/04/2015), the 1980s in Poland saw a veritable antedating fever experienced by many artists who sought to become named as the precursors of various media.

Finally, Konieczny consequently resisted institutional history measured by what was retrospectively constructed as the period- and genre-defining events. The artist often intuited and avoided—missed, forgot, etc.—important events-in-the-making or, more precisely, something that was retrospectively construed as genre-defining. This puzzling situation can only be explained by art's paradoxical power to summon, or will, events in order to take a flight from them before they materialise. Such an understanding epitomises Konieczny's nomadic flight from sedentary history, always written from the point of view of the state. For example, he did not attend the so-called 'Zjazd Marzycieli [Dreamers' Festival]' avant-garde festival held in Elbląg in 1971; the 1977 Festival of Art Films organised by Ewa Partum at the Adres Gallery in Łódź or the *I AM* performance art festival at the Remont Gallery in Warsaw in 1978. Konieczny's irreverent stance towards artistic and non-artistic events can be further evidenced by his missing of Ana Banana's *Banana Olympics* in 1975 or failing to attend a group exhibition featuring his works held in Łódź in 2011.

In conclusion, the brief survey of Konieczny's practices undertaken above shows that the artist has made his home in time, calls forth and manipulates time. We will see later on that time for Konieczny envelops radical qualitative change. Konieczny's practices not only inhabit and harness temporal paradoxes in diverse and complex ways, but those temporal modulations lay out a plane of coincidences and radical breaks, incessant repetitions and syntheses, variations and series. All of those effects explode our commonsensical understanding of time and thus problematise the chronological schema as an account of time's operation, calling for a new understanding of time. Morawski (1975b: 32) identified this need already in 1975 when he saw Konieczny's avant-garde as implying 'some philosophical, metapsychological or mathematical conception of time, (...) some strict model of proto-creational processes alternative to the Freudian conception of the unconscious'.

## 1.2. Deleuze, Guattari and the problem of time

### 1.2.1. The three passive temporal syntheses of time and the unconscious in *Difference and Repetition*

Responding to Morawski's insight, Deleuze's philosophical work furnishes a sophisticated apparatus to tackle the problem of time. Drawing on Hume, Bergson and Nietzsche, Deleuze elaborates the vision of time as a complex multiplicity composed of the three interrelated passive syntheses of time—of habit, of memory and of eternal return, respectively. The three syntheses are passive in the sense that they occur in the mind on the sub-representative, unconscious level. More accurately, one might also say that those syntheses appear in the brain that functions as interface or folding between a psychic interiority and the radical exteriority of the cosmos. The three syntheses are not the active faculties of the mind in the sense of the Kantian theory of faculties but they are processes of production that can be captured and actively co-opted by conscious syntheses and incorporated into the level of representation. Each of the syntheses offers a different perspective on the present, the past and the future by making each of them respectively always the main point of view on the two other elements. In the first synthesis, the past and the future are two asymmetrical dimensions of the present. In the second synthesis, the former and the present present are two dimensions of the past. In the third synthesis, the present and the past become two *a priori* dimensions of the future.

The first passive synthesis of time—the 'empirical' (1994: 81) passive synthesis of habit—provides the foundation, the 'for-itself', of time in the living present that 'contracts the successive independent instants into one another' (Deleuze 1994: 70) and retains the difference it draws from their repetition, producing an expectation of similar occurrences in the future as 'a living rule in the future' (1994: 71) that can be assigned probabilities. The originary synthesis of time is linear and asymmetrical in the sense that it establishes in the present the vector of time that goes from the past to the future. The living (or lived) present proceeds case by case, as it can only retain one case at a time, 'like a sensitive plate, it retains one case when the other appears. (...)[] produces one case only when the other has disappeared (1994: 70-1). The living present operates as a repetition of elements (A,A,A), as theorized by Bergson, or cases (AB, AB, AB). In the latter case, as furnished by Hume, what is repeated are two elements that are 'joined together by a relation of opposition (...) [whose] function (...) is to impose a limit on the elementary repetition' (1994: 72). The first passive synthesis constitutes the living present as a non-psychological, primary vital habit that draws difference from repetition and is located in the contemplative soul. Deleuze (1994: 73) sees the first synthesis operating even beyond the sensible and perceptual level of Hume's and Bergson's analyses. The synthesis is also running on the level of all organisms where it accounts for their sub-perceptible 'primary vital sensibility' that composes them as 'a sum of contractions, retentions and expectations'. The first synthesis (1994: 73) that constitutes the lived present in time should not be confused with the bare material repetition of the same, on one hand, and the actively represented repetition, on the other. Instead, according to Deleuze (1994: 76) it is question of imagination—'the for-itself of repetition'—that moves within each and between both and 'makes that which it contracts appear as elements or cases of repetition'. The external bare material repetitions reveal the internal core of imagination understood as 'a kernel of difference and more complicated internal repetitions' (1994: 76). The synthesis of the living present does not yield a perpetual present. It is 'intratemporal' in the sense that it 'constitutes time as a present, but a present which passes' (1994: 79). However, this particular synthesis does not answer the question why the present passes and thus necessitates another synthesis—the second passive synthesis of time.

The second passive synthesis of time—the ‘transcendental’ (1994: 81) erotic passive synthesis of memory—constitutes the pure past as the ground, i.e. ‘the in-itself’, of time and ‘makes the former and the present present (...) two asymmetrical elements of this past’ (1994: 81). Deleuze invokes the Bergsonian pure past in order to account for the passing of the present. The pure past—the past in general—is preserved in itself and doubles, reflects and coexists with the present present as its most contracted state (degree). Thus, the new present possesses a supplementary dimension wherein the former presents are preserved and may be focused upon (1994: 80). The second passive synthesis is characterised by the ‘virtual coexistence between the levels of a pure past, each present being no more than the actualisation (...) of one of the levels’ (1994: 83). Deleuze (1994: 83-5) argues that this non-empirical, virtual coexistence should be firmly distinguished from the bare material repetition understood as succession of independent instants (parts). Instead, the virtual coexistence can be understood as a ‘spiritual’ and ‘clothed’ repetition of the whole on various levels. The pure past as the virtual coexistence is conceived by Deleuze as a repetition of the same life, past or story that resonates at diverse levels in a non-causal and problematic way, yielding in response the essentially erotic impulse to embark on a search. The pure past can be also approached as a certain ‘metempsychosis’ that ‘implies between successive presents non-localisable connections, actions at a distance, systems of replay, resonance and echoes, objective chances, signs, signals and roles which transcend spatial locations and temporal successions’ (1994: 83). One problem that Deleuze (1994: 85) identifies in the second passive synthesis of time, however, is that it harbours the risk of reducing the pure being of the past to the mere representation of a former present, effecting a simple memory recall in the present. What is at issue here is that the pure past still remains relative to—and is grounded in—what it grounds. This can lead to the idea of a circular or periodic time and ‘an ancient *mythical* present’ (1994: 88) as in Plato’s Ideas that elevate the present as resembling the past that is identical to it and thus establish the representational schema.

The third synthesis of time—the desexualised synthesis of eternal return—decouples the being of the pure past from its lingering role of ‘a correlate of representation’ (1994: 88). The pure past is a temporal element that is neither empirical nor mythical but purely an ‘effect’, like an optical effect, or rather the erotic effect of memory itself’. In counter-distinction from the *cardinal time* that is subordinated to ‘the periodic movements which it measures’ (1994: 88) in cardinal points, i.e. joints, the third synthesis performs a radical ungrounding of time as the Hamletian ‘time (...) out of joint’. The third synthesis constitutes *ordinal time*—‘a pure *order* of time’, ‘time (...) as an empty and pure form’ (1994: 89)—that is no longer subordinated to movement and the rhyming, circular form of time within which things unfold, but breaks the circle and unfolds itself. The third synthesis of time produces pure change. It constitutes time as a radical break, a static *caesura* that creates the past and future as its non-empirical dimensions, the before and the after. It marks a fracture in the self. The third, ‘esoteric’, passive synthesis is the time of the event as ‘a totality of time’ that can only be constituted symbolically in ‘the image of a unique and tremendous event, an act which is adequate to time as a whole’ (1994: 89). Such symbolic image adequate to the event, for example ‘to make the sun explode, to throw oneself into the volcano, to kill God’ (1994: 89), draws together the caesura and its two unequal parts—its past and future—in order to distribute them in a temporal series. The first time in the series designates a moment that orients itself towards the event as its limit but at the same time the imagined act is still considered ‘too big for me’ (1994: 89; cf. 1989: 275). The second time is defined by the caesura that ushers in the present of metamorphosis whereby the agent becomes equal to and capable of the event. The third time of the series is a time when the act and the event resonate and explode the self that is ‘carried away and dispersed in the shock of multiplicity to which it gives birth: what the

self has become equal to is the unequal in itself (1994: 89-90). This passage into the impersonal and pre-individual leads toward the future constituted by the eternal return. The eternal return is the excessive and ex-centric bursting forth of the new as a repetition that moves beyond the past and the present that are now also revealed as but different modes of repetition. As Deleuze explains (1994: 90), 'the absolutely new itself, is (...) nothing but repetition: the third repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return'. The eternal return (Deleuze 1994: 90-94) is a straight line that affirms the decentred circle of pure difference at the heart of the formless, expelling and excluding the past as a set of historical conditions that paved the way for it, as well as the present metamorphosis of its agent. The first and second syntheses are stages that are traversed but must be ultimately left behind. The third synthesis finds the unconditioned and unmediated 'order of time' in difference-in-itself—'a universal ungrounding which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come to return' (1994: 91). This third synthesis is 'esoteric' in the sense that it is 'a belief of the future, a belief in the future' (1994: 90). Interestingly, Deleuze (1994: 90) understands the eternal return of difference in terms of art since it generates 'the autonomy of the product, the independence of the work' (1994: 90), a 'new world' (1994: 89) erasing its historical condition and the agent.

Deleuze (1994: 115-128) proceeds to map out this new world of the future constituted by the eternal return. What is revealed is effectively an ongoing creation of the world of mutually communicating multidimensional multiplicities guided by chance whereby there are no pre-existing but only emergent rules. The intensive, differential systems of the future are constituted by in the first instance by a '*coupling*' (1994: 117, original emphasis) between heterogeneous series thanks to the force of a hidden catalyst—its 'invisible, imperceptible, *dark precursor*' (1994: 117, original emphasis)—that causes 'an *internal resonance*' (1994: 117, original emphasis) within the series and at the same time 'a *forced movement* the amplitude of which exceeds that of the basic series themselves' (1994: 117, original emphasis). Armed with their three dimensions—the forces of coupling, resonance and forced movement—the multiplicities affect diverse metamorphoses affirming change in itself. What is also important is that the systems constituted by the eternal return are inhabited by 'spatio-temporal dynamisms' (1994: 118). Deleuze conceives the dynamisms in terms of an embryo traversed by intensive morphogenetic virtual processes. Such vital movements—including 'the augmentation of free surfaces, stretching of cellular layers, invagination by folding, regional displacement of groups' (1994: 214)—can only be sustained by germinal entities. Deleuze and Guattari subsequently elaborate the embryological formulation of intensive multiplicities constituted by the eternal return in their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project and, in particular, through the concept of BwO (cf. 2005: 149-66).

For Deleuze (1994: 96-115), the three syntheses together make up the functioning of the unconscious. The first synthesis sets up for the systematic operation of drives as bound excitations in the Id. Id is an apparatus that institutes the pleasure principle that accords value to bound excitations. The second synthesis gives a ground that sets conditions under which the pleasure principle is applied to the Ego. The synthesis refers to workings of a system of libidinal displacements and disguises as virtual objects. The third element gives the Superego that announces the death instinct as nothing but the desexualised energy of the narcissistic libido. According to Deleuze (1994: 113), in the third passive synthesis 'the libido loses all mnemonic content and Time loses its circular shape in order to assume a merciless and straight form'. The desexualisation that defines the third synthesis inhibits action of the pleasure principle. This creates the possibility of 'a resexualisation in which pleasure is invested only in a pure, cold, apathetic and frozen thought, as we see in the cases of sadism and masochism' (1994: 115).

### 1.2.2. The three passive temporal syntheses of time and the cinema

In a move that is sometimes considered controversial (cf. Williams 2011a: 159-64), Deleuze (cf. 1997a; 1997b) subsequently applied his novel conception of the three syntheses of time in his analysis of cinema where he identifies two types of images that essentially correspond to the pre-war and the post-war cinematography—the movement-image and the time-image, respectively.

As Deleuze (1997a: 8) explains, the movement-image expresses movement as a set of mobile sections that form parts of an open whole. The image gives the indirect re-presentation of time since within it time is subordinated to punctual movement measured in mobile sections such as shots, montage or plot devices, i.e. the chase in action movies. The punctual movement corresponds to the physiological action of the sensory-motor system that actively relates the received sensory impressions—synthesised into perceptions of objects—to motor action that constitutes its resolution. The movement-image operates according to the organic schema, in the sense that it engages sensory-motor actions and reactions performed by agents in a pre-existing, lived reality. It thus expresses in a simplified way the actively represented first passive synthesis of time.

In stark contrast to the movement-image, the time-image (cf. 1997b: 81) offers a direct presentation of the constitutive splitting of time into the passing present and the past that is preserved in itself. Thus, the time-image gives access to the duration of the pure past elaborated in the second synthesis. In a new array of cinematic images, time is emancipated from movement. In crystal-images (cf. 1997b: 69) this is achieved through circuits whose signs produce the mutual indiscernibility and exchange between the actual and the virtual, the real and imaginary, the present and the past, the mental and the physical, etc. This undecidability corresponds to the rupture of the sensory-motor linkages and emancipation of affect that fills their interval.

Deleuze also began discerning the third type of image, more closely related to the third synthesis of the Nietzschean eternal return. In particular, he identifies untimely images that no longer concern the actual and the virtual but harness the ‘power of the false’ (1997b: 131) and thus effect creative fabulation. He also drew attention to the cinematic images that work on the order of time, creating a mosaic of coexisting pasts or presents, or even exploding time in the burst of a temporal series. Patricia Pisters (cf. 2012: 299-306) named the third type of cine-images the ‘neuro-image’. Pisters draws on Deleuze’s (2000: 365-73) preoccupation expressed in his 1989 essay symptomatically called ‘The Brain Is the Screen’ that identifies the future of the cinema with brain’s functioning as a screen and effecting non-localisable connections between a series of stimuli. According to Deleuze (1997b: 206), the new cinema announces ‘the identity of the world and the brain (...) [as] a limit, a membrane that puts (...) in contact (...) [t]he inside, (...) the psychology of depths [and] the outside, (...) the cosmology of galaxies’. Pisters (2012: 300-1) identified the fall of the Berlin Wall and the destruction of the Twin Towers as the twinned caesura that marks the passage towards the neuro-image. One may or may not agree with the vision of the future of the cinema—the post-cinema—as an exploration, cataloguing and stimulation of neural regions and synaptic connections. What is important however is that the post-cinematic time-images do not fall back on pre-existing spatio-temporal coordinates as a background for its sensory motor actions but create the new ungrounded and unhinged world beyond the localisable connections in chronological time, metric space, organisation of the body and the psychology of the stable self. This radical cine-future cannot be assigned probabilities and thwarts expectations. Time-image opens up a new nonorganic regime beyond the lived, empirical present. Rather than expressing movements of thought and bodies in the extensive space, it at once expresses and constructs the real, effectuating qualitative change.

### 1.2.3. The two readings of time in *The Logic of Sense*

In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze (cf. 1990: 5, 61) further elaborates the third passive synthesis of time and its event of the eternal return of difference from the point of view of the Stoic philosophy. The philosopher develops two simultaneous yet disjunct ways of reading time—Chronos and Aion. Each event possesses a double structure. It has ‘the present moment of its actualisation’ (1990: 151) or embodiment *existing* in the corporeal depth of bodies, individuals and the states of affairs. Chronos constitutes ‘the always limited present, which measures the action of bodies as causes’ (1990: 61). It is in relation to this living present grounded the mixtures of bodies, individuals and the self that the past and the future are determined in a linear, unidirectional and successive fashion (cf. 1990: 77). At the same time, the event has, or *subsists* in, its pure virtual dimension (Aion) that eludes and exceeds, or according to Williams (2011a: 140) ‘undoes’, the definitive present of the states of affairs. The pure event—unlimited, infinite, neutral, pre-individual and impersonal—is only grounded in itself (1990: 151) and endlessly subdivides its instantaneous, impersonal mobile present ‘in both directions at once, into past-future’ (1990: 166). The pure event is always both at once ‘something which has just happened and something about to happen; never something which is happening’ (1990: 63), the ‘already-past’ (1990: 151) and the ‘still-future’ (1990: 151) in relation to the event’s corporeal actualisation. The pure event is an entity in the process of becoming, effectuating a ‘counter-actualisation’ (1990: 151). It subsists as a ‘paradoxical instance’ (1990: 174) that allows reversals and exchanges between the past and the future, the active and the passive, etc. and is always ‘*both at once (...)* [and] *neither the one nor the other*’ (1990: 8, original emphasis). As Williams (2011a: 152, original emphasis) explains, Deleuze’s world ‘*moves forward through the work of the new and at the same time moves backwards as a wave of changing intensity through the pure past*’. The excessive virtual dimension of the incorporeal event is not conceptualised as the plunge into the depths of ‘the volcanic *spatium*’ (1994: 241) of the caesura as it is *Difference and Repetition*. Instead, the pure event is conceived here as incorporeal surface effects resulting from the bodies. The surface effects can be expressed by infinitives, e.g. ‘to cut’, ‘to grow’, etc. (1990: 6) and the impersonal nouns such as ‘one’, ‘they’ (1990: 152). As Deleuze (1990: 297-301) explains drawing on Klossowski’s literary vision of ‘breaths/spirits’, incorporeal events are inhabited by mutually communicating and interpenetrating amplitudinal waves of pure intensities—and pre-individual singularities, i.e. ‘intensit[ies] which come back to [themselves] through others’ (1990: 299)—that affirm difference in itself. The pre-individual singularities are modelled upon Simondon’s conception of metastable systems. Deleuze (1990: 103) defines the singularities as virtual energetic potentialities nomadically distributed in shimmering metastable fields. The ever-changing intensities subsist beyond the self, giving rise to systems whose series function and communicate through resonance and forced movement (1990: 239). Deleuze (1990: 148-50) believes that art can harness, inhabit and embody the intensive multiplicities of the incorporeal event only by redoubling—i.e. ‘replay[ing] differently’, to borrow an expression from Williams (2011a: 153)—its actualisation in the depth of states of affairs by the creation of virtual surfaces whereby the event can be reflected. We can thus become actors or mimes of our own events, acting as if we caused them. Art can effectuate an actualisation on the surface and this superficial *counter-actualisation* is the only way of communicating and changing the virtual potentialities. For Deleuze, the incorporeal event finds its avatars in such phenomena as the flat surface of the mirror (1990: 148, 150), crystal (1990: 9), mist (1990: 5) or spirits (1990: 297). Incorporeal effects are also conceptualised as edges and borders with no thickness that allow but a sliding lateral movement (cf. 1994: 9-10, 103).



As Williams (2011a: 138) explains, the two readings of time can be plotted into the three passive syntheses. Chronos is the living present of the first synthesis. Aion expresses the passive synthesis of the eternal return. In turn, the second passive synthesis as the perspective whereby the present and the future are dimensions of the past is rendered through the notion of intensity that mediates the relation between Chronos and Aion. Pure becoming on the plane of Aion has an intensity that expresses its ongoing differential variation in relation to itself and other becomings as well to the actual process. Intensity can thus be conceived as an amplitudinal force that modulates Aion as the time of the infinitives. An example Deleuze (1990: 1) gives of this is the figure of Alice from Lewis Carroll's books and the process of pure becoming by which she grows smaller and bigger at the same time. Interestingly, Lundy (2012: 3) identifies a shift in conceptualisation of the event from *Difference and Repetition* to *The Logic of Sense*, from the envelopmental abyssal becoming towards the static simultaneous surface becoming, respectively. Furthermore, Lundy (cf. 2012: 3, 10, 83) also argues that the latter work also already implies an unravelling, developmental movement between depth and surface that culminates in the 'Nomadology' chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*. This can be certainly seen already in Deleuze's (1997c: 21-22) article on Carroll where he adopts the notion of the single, multiply folded topological space.

## 2. 1968-1974: the three syntheses of sensation in Konieczny

In the period between 1968 and 1974, Konieczny explicitly mobilises time as an ally in his practices. There is an intensification of different perspectives on time deployed heuristically in various art-works. In the process, he becomes-equal to the event of Think Crazy, to the unlivable sensation of Think Crazy that now stands on its own as a bloc of percepts and affects. In 1969, he sets the shutter speed of his camera to 0.15 seconds (e.g. [Fig. A.22]), listening in to the dispersion of light. In 1972 and 1973, he meticulously records different dates of his random acts of scratching of transparent plastic sheets [Fig. A.49]. In 1975, he sees the future of 2008 as a repetition of the imperceptible internal difference whose potential animates the flapping edges of a black velvet cloak [Fig. A.79]. In between, Konieczny creates many constructions that trigger some of the passive temporal syntheses theorised by Deleuze. However, not all of them form autonomous blocs of sensation in the Deleuzian sense. The period in question opens up a panoply of diverse practices, some of them dead ends, some of them shimmering with promise and potential, some of them botched creations and some—the splendid crystalline surfaces that reflect and give life to the event. Think Crazy works as an artistic strategy because it has created a time-machine that qualitatively changes reality and not a time-capsule that endlessly repeats the same. Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) sees the latter in practices of artists like Daniel Burren and Roman Opałka. According to the artist, Burren and Opałka are artists who, regardless of the changing world, hold fast to one fixed strategy that consists in repeating one motif—in this case, stripes and numbers, respectively. This however ‘does not generate anything’ and furthermore stages ‘a return to the Newtonian times, causal relations as the only ones that make growth possible’.

Between 1969 and 1975 Konieczny embarks on experimentation that addresses, first and foremost, time. The chapter seeks to map out Konieczny’s process of synthesising art as a lasting bloc of sensation. What is at issue here is giving chaos just the right amount of consistency, creating a membrane that could extract and retain a little chaos without providing too much structure. In the period in question, Konieczny is trying out different contraptions with the hope of creating a self-positing art machine. He embarks on the ongoing experimentation on the real in the belief that this vital heuristics will create one day a lasting plane of composition, art’s plane of immanence. The period in question sees the creation of three syntheses of sensation that jointly make up the functioning of Think Crazy. The first synthesis (1968-1971) can be called the synthesis of infection/contraction, the second (1971-4)—the synthesis of incubation/germination, the third (from 1974 onwards)—the synthesis of burst/egress.

## 2.1. The synthesis of infection/contraction

### 2.1.1. 'Verbal alchemy' as a representation of change: Konieczny's manifestos 1969-1972

At the turn of the 1960s and the 1970s, Konieczny orients himself towards the avant-garde understood as the creation of the absolutely new. The artist remained in contact with Henryk Stażewski, the legendary artist of the Polish inter-war avant-garde, whom he invited in 1971 to a discussion about art conceived as an art manifestation in its own right. This fascination with, and interest in, art's potential for creating the absolute novelty exploded in Konieczny's numerous manifestos, talks, interviews and pronouncements about art that proliferate between 1969 and 1972 (Uniechowska 1969a and 1969b; Konieczny 1970a and 1970b; Konieczny in D.K. 1971, Ekwiński 1971, Konieczny 1972a). In 1975, Morawski's (1975a: 34) called this aspect of Konieczny's practices as a 'verbal alchemy'. Konieczny adopted the avant-garde ethos or, rather, the outward appearance associated with the avant-garde. During the period in question, he gave enthusiastic talks about the future of art while sporting a shaved head and donning a pipe, just like Stażewski and Rodchenko. The legendary avant-gardists are figures of resemblance and imitation, unlike the conceptual personae of Zhuangzi and Heraclitus in the 1990s and the 2000s, respectively.

The avant-gardist zeal of Konieczny seeks to theorise and illustrate change as a way of overcoming the divide between life and art. Konieczny strives to lay a theoretical groundwork for art's power of the new and demonstrate this practically in a range of artistic manifestations. It may also be argued that Konieczny performs the opposite by drawing general theoretical propositions from his artistic praxis. At any rate, Konieczny's manifestos until 1972 are reflexive representations that are grounded upon the opposition between substance and form, the abstract and general and the concrete and particular. Konieczny accords special role to the active imagination residing in the human mind and functioning according to its own non-rational logic that operates on the level of sensory perception, emotion and association. Konieczny actively represents change, postulating a new type of art that leaps into the future. Such future art goes beyond the existing system, pronounces the obsolescence of the notion of the artist and 'the work', art genres, art disciples and art institutions. Ontologically this new art wishes to forgo the importance of (unique) form and the deterministic intentionality of causal links. Konieczny's manifestos between 1968 and 1972 operate however on the level of representation. They are grounded upon the prior doxa as a composition of clichéd opinions. They are *about* art, life and the new, but give us neither. Considered in themselves, Konieczny's pronouncements do not compose chaos into blocs of sensation as art-works. They do not cut into chaos with philosophical concepts or neither do they give chaos the scientific power of 'reference' (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 206). However, at the same time, the manifestos already set in motion a certain pendular structure that probe the issue of chance in art. In this way, Konieczny's early texts contain or imply the diagrams of a certain oscillation capable of generating art-works.

### 2.1.2. Conceptual oscillations: stochastic force vs. Markov chains in Konieczny's texts

In a text from February 1970, Konieczny (1970a) articulates his interest in stochastics and declares its relevance for art. In particular, the artist introduces two aspects of the stochastic process. First of all, Konieczny's text considers the stochastic process as a force driving human action and emotion, their 'motor'. Secondly, the stochastic process is understood as a productive element complementing a set of people. The text fuses what are in fact two distinct and disjunct perspectives on stochastics. On one hand, we have an understanding of stochastics in terms of pure force and pure chance. On the other hand, the stochastic force is subsumed into a

scientific model, in this case the axiomatic set theory. While the first aspect addresses the non-representative or sub-representative virtual level of intensities, the second is the level of the fully actualised measurable empirical reality. Interestingly, Konieczny has turned his first insight, i.e. stochastics qua driving force of human action and emotion, as a frequently used motto.

In turn, in a text from 15 July 1970, Konieczny (1970b) ponders the relevance of stochastic processes for art while decoupling its two previously identified aspects. In this respect, he makes an important distinction between:

(1) the strict Markovian model of stochastic processes, and

(2) the general, non-Markovian understanding of stochastic processes. The Markovian process entails ‘forgetting the past’ and calculating future probabilities based on the ‘discrete realisation’ of the present state of affairs. The non-Markovian formulation of stochastic process is in itself contradictory as it encompasses two related yet divergent aspects that for the sake of clarity will be henceforth referred to here as ‘(2a)’ and ‘(2b)’, respectively.

(2a) In some passages, stochastic process simply refers to randomness, freedom, non-causality and chance.

(2b) At the same time, Konieczny (1970b) explains that, in the general sense of the word, ‘stochasticism (...) denotes everything that is casual, unstable, dependent on time (...) as a series of variables’ (2b). The second understanding (2b) is not strictly ‘casual’ as it already implies the scientific understanding of time as an independent variable whereby—as Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 227) explain—‘time changes without changing in kind’. One might say that everything changes in time, but time itself does not change. Such an understanding produces temporal displacements, but this extensive movement does not yield qualitative change.

The problem of stochastic processes posed differently in a somewhat esoteric text from 1972 (Konieczny 1972a). The text makes a break from the earlier representational model of art writing and deploys creative fabulation as a proper mode of art’s functioning. The problem of stochastics is now posed here as a question of two types of imagination:

(1) the first type is grounded upon a statistical and combinatorial model that merely applies pre-existing rules to sets of discrete elements and calculates their sums. The first type of imagination ‘draws on [pre-existing] resources’ and is concerned with ‘description’, ‘result’, ‘effect’ and ‘measurability’. Such a formulation is close to the Deleuzo-Bergsonian notion of extensive, numerical multiplicities that operate on the level of pre-existing reality with its attendant chronological time and measurable, metric and homogenous space. Such a multiplicity is the environment of changes in degree. Most importantly, Konieczny equates the traditionally understood artwork with the role of a discrete element in a set.

(2) In counter-distinction from the ‘elements-artworks’, the second type of imagination identified by Konieczny is the indeterminate, infinite ‘far zone of associations’ that creates a ‘thought system’ that is ‘never complete, but in the process of continual formation’. Imagination embodies a paradox, since it is ‘a stimulus, a concrete [entity] and at the same time its opposite’. An artist’s thought engages the ever deeper layers of the human mind

and taps into ‘yet another, wider imagination, composed of many other imaginations’. The imagination is not lodged within the artist as his active faculty, but forms a zone or an environment that the artist returns to. Imagination is the autonomous environment of potentiality where the artist merely functions as a catalyst for activating its certain zones and thus ‘chang[ing] the human psycho-physical structure’. Artist taps into the plane of the indeterminate imagination, but in undertaking such voyage runs the risk of losing his or her bearings and personhood. The text thus opposes the axiomatics of set theory with what can be considered as a mutation of the Kantian theory of faculties, not unlike the one performed by Deleuze.

All the three texts analysed above (Konieczny 1970a, 1970b, 1972a) run productive interference between the mathematical referencing of change through the axiomatics of sets or the Markovian process/Markovian chain, and the philosophical understanding of change as an ontology of forces. In a recent interview, Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) has confirmed this dual understanding of the stochastic process as a ‘mathematical phenomenon’, on one hand, and random choices triggered by ‘cosmic radiation’, on the other. Furthermore, for Konieczny, the artistic act does not so much reside in the pure force of chance as in the moment of accepting, willing and inhabiting the fundamental randomness to the extent it informs our choices. Such a formulation strongly resonates with the Deleuzian third synthesis of time elaborated on the basis of Nietzsche’s notion of the eternal return. Cosmos as the source of randomness appears quite early in Konieczny’s artistic thought, embodied in his *Generator of Stochastic Processes* (object no. 3 in [Figs. A.33-4]). Created at the turn of the 1960s and the 1970s, the generator was a black cube ‘steered by cosmic rays’ (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015). Konieczny’s interest in the relation between chance processes and the cosmos is corroborated by Morawski (1975a: 35) in 1975 when draws attention to the artist’s preoccupation with ‘the cosmic law’.

### **2.1.3. Theoretical stochastics vs. artistic praxis**

How did Konieczny’s para-philosophical and para-scientific reflections on the status of chance and time in art relate to his artistic practices at the time? In particular, one might ask if Konieczny’s artistic practices were capable of generating change through temporal syntheses or was this something at this stage only theorised, postulated and speculated about?

#### ***Geometric abstractions***

It is easy to see why Konieczny should wish to co-opt the Markovian formulation of the stochastic process for his avant-garde project. Markov’s processes sport the property of ‘forgetting the past’ (Konieczny 1970b) and instead anticipate the future, allowing the calculations of probability of the basis of a present state of affairs. Such an understanding at first glance promises to radically sever the past of the tradition, ensure the absolute novelty of artistic creation and thus to fulfil the fundamental goal of the avant-garde. Konieczny’s early geometric abstractions [Figs. A.12-14] consisting of a finite number of countable, discrete mobile elements can be seen as Markovian in the sense that each consecutive movement of one of the elements yields a different set of probabilities. Each time, what matters is the living present as a window to the future. Such an understanding might, on the surface, suggest Deleuze’s first passive synthesis of habit. Konieczny’s early works featuring a visual ornament limiting the selection of a new element [Figs. A.12, 14] might be understood in terms of the Humean repetition of cases (AB, AB) consisting of two elements incorporating an internal opposition (cf. Deleuze 1994: 72), whereas Konieczny’s later abstractions [Fig. A.13] featuring only the mobile segments without any additional limitation might be considered in terms of Bergson’s simple repetition of elements (A, A) (cf. 1994: 72). However, even through Konieczny’s works operate on repetition, they do not stage the

contraction of a habit constitutive of Deleuze's first passive synthesis. Konieczny's abstractions do not attain the level of the Deleuzian first passive temporal synthesis because the repetition that they offer is only available within a closed set. Furthermore, in Konieczny's geometric abstractions, there is no synthesis involving a mechanism for drawing difference from repetition. It is important to remember that what is at stake in the first passive synthesis is not so much the constitution of empirical, chronological time or bare material repetition, but their sub-representative 'kernel of difference and more complicated internal repetitions' (1994: 76). In other words, the temporal synthesis of the living present refers to a primary vital sensibility that draws difference from repetition on the basis of organic need. Konieczny's abstractions only address difference in degree. They do not only repeat discrete elements, but also repeat the tradition of the Polish inter-war avant-garde as encapsulated by Katarzyna Kobro's multi-planar sculptures [Fig. B.5] and Stażewski's geometric panels. At the same time, Konieczny's abstractions resonate with American minimalism and, in particular, Sol Le Witt's cubic transformations and Carl Andre's planar sculptures.

The first series of Konieczny's abstractions (AB, AB) harnesses the sensory-motor apparatus that links optical perception to kinaesthetic action. The eye performs the unproblematic integration of space and presides over the hand. The eye directs the hand to resolve the problem signalled by the existence of a particular visual rule embodied in the ornament. The geometric abstraction creates the Deleuzian movement-image as a certain puzzle that propels the viewer towards its successful completion. Optic organisation takes priority over the haptic aspect of the work. This happens to a lesser degree in the second series, but even there what is established is chiefly the optical space that allows no full emancipation of the hand.

#### *Experiments in interior design—modifications of Konieczny's own apartment*

Konieczny's artistic struggle with chaos mobilises one, albeit mobile, plane. The artist creates a flat plane that has only one orientation and makes possible only one type of movement—a controlled sliding along its surface. This changes with Konieczny's design of his own apartment [Figs. A.20-21i]. Konieczny's interior design offers a modification of the simple planar surface composed of units, found in his geometric abstractions. In fact, Konieczny's apartment is an extension of the planar project that had started with the abstractions. It now offers not one, but a whole environment composed of many, differently oriented, planes. Konieczny's apartment is fitted with many contraptions that make possible a transformation of one function of a given piece into another function. Such multifunctional design approach had already been applied by Konieczny back in 1966. As the artist recounts (Konieczny in Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015), his final project at his MA in Interior Design course at Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts was a multipurpose piece of furniture. The same piece of furniture that initially functioned as a chair could be subsequently transformed into a coffee table. Similarly, in 1969 Konieczny's apartment featured for example an individual drawing board that could be extended into a table [Fig. A.21g, first photograph from the left]. Such transformation is successive, mutually exclusive, reversible and repeatable. A coffee table cannot be a chair at the same time; it is always 'either this or that'. Konieczny's experimental interior design puts forward a design philosophy that merely switches between the pre-established, transcendent functions of a thing. As such, it should be firmly distinguished from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the plane of BwO whereby new functions are immanently created in response to zones of varying intensity. As the thinkers (2005: 164) explain, 'the organs distribute themselves on the BwO, but they distribute themselves independently of the form of the organism; forms become contingent, organs are no longer anything more than intensities that are produced, flows, thresholds, and gradients'. In stark contrast, in Konieczny's design, the sheer possibility of producing recombinations of set elements does not change the ontological status of space. This

space can still be understood in terms of the Deleuzo-Bergsonian extensive, numerical multiplicity. Such extensive multiplicity does not go beyond the chronologically unfolding, linear time.

***Geometric abstractions and experimental interior design—between the Markovian process and metallic potentialities***

Both the geometric abstractions [Figs. A.12-14] and the transformations of Konieczny's apartment [Figs. A.20-21i] operate on the measurable, homogenous space that forms a whole composed of discrete units. As such, Konieczny's space does not live up to the avant-garde promise of creation of the absolutely new. It does not generate a new world beyond the lived, the empirical, the representable, but instead falls back on perceptual and artistic clichés. This is in fact the same problem Alliez sees in Bourriaud. As Alliez (2010) critique of relational aesthetics suggests, Bourriaud's ethos of interactivity and remixing operates on the level of pre-existing reality, changing nothing in the ontological status of the real and effecting no qualitative change. Konieczny creates the multiple and the multi-functional without a multiplicity. That said, inhering within Konieczny's strongly territorialised composition of his apartment there are already two ex-centric, germinal lines of flight that will come to fruition in the Think Crazy strategy. The first line of flight inheres in a specific support system devised for Konieczny for use with different fixtures, contraptions and pieces of furniture in his apartment. This system is composed of angle bars and bent steel pipes [Figs. A.21e, g] whose function is to enable joining of differently oriented planes. Konieczny's support system revolves around the already proto-aesthetic figure of a metallic hinge. The metallic hinges harbour pure potential, a metallic 'will to art' (Riegl quoted in Deleuze 2003: 122) that will emancipate itself in the Think Crazy strategy, becoming as a topological point of deformation and a source of nonorganic life. The second line of flight is already implied by Konieczny's decision to destroy the fixed, default layout of the apartment with its many compartmentalised, non-communicating rooms and open them up to one space designed as a stimulus for events [Fig. A.21i]. Such partial open-plan layout resonates with the Leibnizian diagram of the Baroque house [Fig. B.26] (cf. Deleuze 1993: 4-5) whereby monadic enclosures open themselves up to the world but not one another.

Konieczny's abstractions bring into relief the ways in which Markov's processes can be distinguished from the basic Deleuzian process. According to Norris (1997: xiii, original emphasis), *Markov's processes* form systems whereby the state 'retains *no memory* of where it has been in the past (...) [so] that only the current state of the process can influence where it goes next.' In *Markov's chains*, 'the process can assume only a finite or countable set of states' (Norris 1997: xiii). Furthermore, as Norris (1997: xiii) points out, since a Markov chain has no memory of its previous displacements, 'it [is] possible to predict how (...) [it] may behave, and to compute probabilities and expected values which quantify that behaviour'. Konieczny's abstractions epitomise the logic of the Markovian chains as they only allow linear selection within a closed set. As Williams (2011b: 69) explains, Markov's chains cannot produce a real event in the Deleuzian sense because they fail to account for the emergence of the new in the process of making transversal connections across and between series. Instead, they only add states on to an existing sequence. This problem is already visible in Konieczny's (1970a) understanding of the stochastic process back in 1970, when he sees the introduction of a transforming agent as yet another element of a sequence, as a unit functioning on the level of the whole set. In stark contrast, Deleuze's vision of multiplicities conceptualises a passage through a limit that brings about qualitative change. This does not happen in Konieczny's early practices that offer the logic of mere differences in degree expressed as a multiplication and division of the same essential element. This philosophy can be encapsulated by the following cyclical formula—*Now I start with another element by moving it into one of the available positions. Once finished, I will repeat.* In

Konieczny's early practices there is no notion of the event of intensive change that emerges from the coupling of two series. Nor do they allow the secret insistence of a dark precursor that at once resonates within each series and sweeps both of them in the momentum of its forced movement. As Williams (2011b: 69) points out, what is at stake in the Deleuzian formulation of process is 'a relation across series and a radically aleatory disjunction between different states of single series rather than a serial unfolding'.

#### **2.1.4. Struggling against chaos and the cliché. Konieczny's reticular pieces and the first synthesis of sensation**

As Brewńska (2012: 5) reports, in 1968 Konieczny allegedly remarked that the material object had become obsolete and what was at stake in art were ideas and experiences. Despite such conceptual-experiential formulation of art, what follows from this point onward is a period of intense experimentation that problematises the neat dualism between the actual objects and the virtual ideas. In fact, ideas, objects and experiences coexist in various art-works. At times, they become indiscernible and inaugurate a synthesis but, most often than not, this synthesis collapses into chaos as it has no 'in-itself' (Deleuze 1994: 81), no ground and no enduring catalyst. At the same time, Konieczny still struggles against the clichéd repetition that produces nothing but differences in degree. Konieczny's struggle can be understood in terms of what Deleuze identifies as the twin danger of falling into the black hole of chaos, on one hand, and merely recycling the cliché, on the other. One solution to this is offered in *What is Philosophy?* where art is understood as a chaotic membrane endowed with a certain consistency or, in other words, a diagram that provides a minimal structure that supports chaos. In turn, in his case study of Francis Bacon, Deleuze advocates the artistic deformation of the Figure while at the same time rejecting both the absolute chaos inhabited by Pollock's abstract expressionism and the clichéd coding of optical space he sees at play geometric abstraction. Finally, concluding *What in Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari change slightly their focus. They repeat (1994: 218) their caution against the chaos and the dogmatic cliché for art, science and philosophy, but ultimately affirm art's celebration of chaos against the more pressing danger of the cliché. In turn, if in the 1960s Konieczny was held back by the clichéd discrete units of geometric abstraction—however interactive, combinatorial and permutational they might have been—in the 1970s, it is a question of the necessary modulation of event's intensity. In the 1970s, Konieczny (1982) pursues what he will subsequently call a 'mannerism'. Konieczny's mannerism is a specific, singular modulation or a porous membrane that will hold his art-work together and prevent it at once from disappearance into chaos and from becoming indistinguishable from daily life understood as the actual states of affairs and their clichés.

The present section zooms in on a transition occurring sometime between 1968 and 1971. This transition can be conceptualised as a pendulum swing from repetition to synthesis. Such a metamorphosis was articulated *après le fait* in terms of the plane of imagination in Konieczny's (cf. 1972a) text from 1972. The period in question saw the coexistence of three disjunctive series of Konieczny's works that at some point entered resonance and briefly articulated the event of a metamorphosis. Between 1968 and 1971, Konieczny lived in his apartment, manipulating and controlling of its many planes [Fig. A.20-21i]. At the same time, between 1969 and 1972, as part of the *0.15 Contact* series [Fig. A. 22-30], Konieczny used a flash lamp of his own design to initiate bursts of light that he subsequently recorded photographically, setting the shutter speed to a quarter of a second. Between 1968 and 1969, the artist placed golden bags with the inscription 'Drop Something in Here' on stands throughout Warsaw as parts of his eponymous series of actions [Fig. A.6-10a]. Last but not least, between 1969 and 1970, Konieczny gifted random recipients with pieces of aluminium tinfoil asking them to *Do Something With It* [Fig. A.15-19]. Out of all those coexistent series, it only *Drop Something in Here* [Fig. A. 6-10a] that has



continued to capture Konieczny's attention. In fact, the golden bag has reappeared numerous times during Konieczny exhibitions throughout the years.

### **2.1.5. Konieczny's light installations: between photo-synthesis, metallic agency-ing and evanescence**

Szwajewska (1986b: 5) calls the works from the *0.15 Contact* series [Fig. A.22-30] 'light installations'. The light installations are complex systems designed to catalyse an event. Konieczny's flash lamp is placed in various public outdoor spaces—at the rooftop of a house, in a forest, in the middle of a road, at the top of a hill. Interestingly, Deleuze readily dismisses the photograph as a clichéd representation (2003: 11) and as an immobile section of movement (1997a: 2). In stark contrast, Konieczny's work reveals photography as an art machine in its own right. The photographic art machine effectuates a synthesis that goes beyond a failed attempt to reconstitute movement through a repetition of frames. Konieczny's light installations celebrate the potentialities of light-sensitive film housed within a camera and emancipate its nonorganic life. One might say that the light-sensitive film—or, to be precise, its particular distribution of light-sensitive metal salts—functions like a sensitive plate that for Deleuze (1994: 70) encapsulates the sub-representative first passive synthesis of time. In fact, the sensitive plate lies at the very heart of the first synthesis before it becomes represented in sensory and perceptual syntheses. According to Deleuze, the basic action of the plate is the extraction of difference via repetition. The sensitive plate is a sub-representational machine that Deleuze (1994: 70) calls imagination. The plate 'contracts cases, elements, agitations or homogenous instants and grounds them in an internal qualitative impression endowed with a certain weight.' The photo-synthesis that occurs in the light-sensitive film expresses what Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 73) call a 'primary vital sensibility' that contracts 'water, earth, light and air'.

The light-sensitive film can be exposed to light one frame at a time and thus the contraction retains one element only. The camera can only advance to a next successive independent instant when the previous one was released. The camera's life however also includes the aspect of duration in the sense that the photographic film negative envelops a virtual imprint of the intensity of its encounter with light. This virtual imprint needs the catalysing force of photo-chemicals in order to be developed. In Konieczny's case, the virtual imprint on the photosensitive film records the differential relation between the light intensity generated by his lamp, on one hand, and the darkness of his mostly nocturnal surroundings, on the other. Under normal circumstances, the photographer uses the parameters of aperture and exposure teleologically in order to obtain a uniform distribution of light. In this way, the photographer manipulates the basic operation of light-sensitivity. In stark contrast, Konieczny emancipates the light-sensitive life of the film because he proclaims the formal, fixed interval for the exposure and thus creates the caesura of the event. The event happens in the depth of the camera housing the light-sensitive film. The film is penetrated by the excessive burst of light that floods it. The eternal return of the photosensitive film literally 'make[s] the sun explode', to borrow Deleuze's (1994: 89) memorable example from *Difference and Repetition*. When the film is developed, its event rises to the surface, in the sense that it can be seen as a white zone biting into the blurred silhouettes and shapes looming in the night.

Konieczny's series of light installations do not merely counter-actualise the event as something happening on a metaphysical surface highlighting the artist's role as a producer of 'surfaces and linings in which the event is reflected, finds itself again as incorporeal and manifests in us the neutral splendour it possesses in itself' (Deleuze 1990: 148). What is at stake in Konieczny's photographic manipulations is an encounter of intensity as

a movement between depth and surface. It is not a question of not becoming in isolation but a crystalline seed that needs an environment in which it can grow. There are multiple becomings that are triggered here. First of all, there is a becoming of the film and its photo-chemicals. Secondly, the light installations probe Konieczny's own (bodily) neural response within the infinitesimally small interval of 0.15 seconds. Finally, Konieczny photographic art-works explore its immediate environment and its variations of light intensity.

The *0.15 Contact* [Fig. A.22-30] series offers a promising emancipation of inorganic life while drawing attention to the world as the developer of intensities, highlighting the way the event of transmutation and qualitative change does not appear isolation, but always necessarily invests the world. However, the problem here is that the complexities of the synthesis can only be unravelled in the process of philosophical or conceptual analysis such as the one attempted above, while on the artistic level the whole bloc of sensations dissipates into chaos.

Konieczny's photographic series might be a good philosophical model—and, in this sense, a good model for Conceptual or conceptually driven art—but the series does not provide an enduring structure to support and preserve sensation. Ultimately, despite the synthesis unfolding on the level of the photosensitive film and the artist's own neural interval, the series does not create a lasting virtual plane of composition, but performs the actualisation of an evanescent event according to fixed parameters. Chaos may override the photosensitive film, it may cause an imperceptible transformation in the artist's neural response; however, from the point of view of the art-work, the event—as it is recorded in photographs—is reduced to a purely optical situation. The event and its attendant world of complex repetitions become reduced to spiritual ascension into the purely optical, luminous surface. This is the singular moment Deleuze (2003: 127-9) sees at play in Byzantine art [Fig. B. 24].

What is exactly the problem occurring in Konieczny's photographic series? Clearly, the art-works produce sensation and thus entail a difference in intensity. The problem here is that the created sensation does not endure. Let us take an example from the photographic process to illustrate this point. During the film development process, when the photosensitive film is placed in a lightproof tank, the so-called 'stopper solution' is needed to curb the intensity of the developing event, which, unless blocked, will ruin the surface. The example illuminates the need for a monument of sensations, a container that endures. If the sensation is not self-positing, i.e. autopoietic, it simply dissipates. This is something that can be seen in Konieczny's series of mental signals or sheets of violet paper pasted in Warsaw in 1970. Bogucki (1972) symptomatically understood the latter manifestation, called *Violet. Our Toil* [Fig. A.31-2], in terms of 'an evanescent event whereby the link between time and cause is no longer evident'. In all those art-works, there occurs a break in chronological time and causality; there is a counter-actualisation and the provoking of an event, but all this in itself does not guarantee the *bloc* of sensation.

#### 2.1.6. *Drop Something in Here* [Figs. A.6-10a]—the first time in the temporal series constituted by *Think Crazy*

In stark contrast to the *0.15 Contact* series [Figs. A.22-30], Konieczny's 1968 *Drop Something in Here* [Figs. A.6-10a, all subsequent mentions of this piece refer to the latter figure numbers] manages to preserve and amplify the sensation of its constituent materials. This is achieved through a complex synthesis that harnesses Konieczny's experiments with light intensity, propagation and dissipation in the *0.15 Contact* series [Figs. A.22-30], on one hand, and the planar manipulations of Konieczny's geometric abstractions [Figs. A.12-14] and his experiments in interior design [Figs. A.20-21i]. *Drop Something in Here* gives rise to the untimely event whereby the chronologically earlier pieces, such as the geometric abstractions, and the later pieces, such as the

*Contact* series [Figs. A.22-30], cease to be subject to empirical succession but become its two intrinsic aspects, the two dimensions of one multiplicity.

*Drop Something in Here* is a paradoxical piece that can be approached on many levels. It constitutes the first time in the temporal series constituted by *Think Crazy* as the radical future of the eternal return that ends the chronological progression of time. *Drop Something in Here* is the first time in the temporal series in relation to the radical, impersonal future of *Think Crazy*. With *Drop Something in Here*, Konieczny firmly orients himself towards the avant-garde as the pursuit of the absolutely new. The avant-garde becomes a shining crystal lurking in the horizon as its vanishing point. He becomes Captain Ahab from Melville's *Moby Dick* and enters a relation with the white whale of the avant-garde perceived at this stage as the still larger-than-life object of his fascination and determination (cf. Deleuze and Guattari on becoming-whale 2005: 249).

*Drop Something in Here* consists of a bag made of creased golden aluminium tinfoil inscribed with the eponymous minimal set of instructions. The bag was attached to a stand made of bent steel rod forming a triangular base (cf. e.g. [Fig. A.10a]). The bag was displayed in 1968 and 1969 in different places throughout Warsaw and, most notably, amongst the stalls of the Różycki Bazaar in the Praga district of Warsaw. This rudimentary description already points towards the several coexistent dimensions of Konieczny's artwork.

#### ***Drop Something in Here as an overcoming of the Markovian-Hansenian reticular logic***

Various commentators in the 1970s (Morawski 1975a, 1975b; Ekwiński 1971) reduce the complex dimensions of *Drop Something in Here* to its instructions. When interpreted in this way, Konieczny's piece becomes an exponent of score-based actions akin to Kaprow's activities or Fluxus actions. According to Morawski (1975a: 35), Konieczny's piece abandons the traditional schema of the artist + the work in favour of generation of the stochastic force, but at the same time it remains within the empirical level of actions. Morawski's understanding of Konieczny's work is in fact close to the Markovian chains, in the sense of triggering a linear semi-random process. *Drop Something in Here* is an action 'designed to elicit specific sequence of answers' (1975a: 35), but these answers will be dictated by chance. Furthermore, for Morawski (1975b), what is at stake here is an attempt to 'program situations forced by calls'. Similarly, Ekwiński (1971) sees Konieczny's work on the level of interactive, conscious processes addressing actions and emotions of a given community. In stark contrast, many Deleuzian scholars analysing score-based actions from the 1960s and the 1970s see them as affording an opportunity for the disruptive, creative counter-actualisation of an event (cf. Scholtz 2015: 265-79). Stephen Zepke (cf. 2009: 109-25) in turn remains ambiguous about the status of score-based actions, drawing attention to the Deleuzoguattarian conflicted stance towards John Cage's noise pieces. According to the thinkers (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 269), Cage's pieces create the Aionic 'plan(e) (...) of nonvoluntary transmutation' but also run the risk of dissipating into chaos, of plunging into a black whole whereby 'anything goes in but nothing comes out' (Zepke 2009: 121). According to Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 344), 'the claim is that one is opening music to all events, all irruptions, but one ends up reproducing a scrambling that prevents any event from happening'. The case of John Cage is a useful thermometer for art analysis. When considering his 1952 piece *4'33''*, which consisted in instructing the orchestra to remain silent for the eponymous amount of time, one can discern ways in which it can become an obstacle for an event rather than its trigger. For Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 344), it is question of territorialisation brought about by too much chaos. The problem one might see here is rather that the chance process is reduced to a small opening that forms a reticule operating under fixed parameters. Such understanding is close to Deleuze's (1990: 60-1) critique of manipulated chance. Deleuze

notices that such approach selects one aspect at the expense of others. In this way, chance is confined to a fixed point produced by provoking an encounter between two series, like the motion of the roulette and the movement of the ball. The encounter between the two series subsequently establishes a rule, immune from change. This semi-random schema is precisely what Morawski objected to in his critique of Konieczny's actions.

The larger problem is Konieczny's work is its risk of being complicit in the system. The capacity of *Drop Something in Here* to produce a lasting bloc of sensation should not be treated in isolation but was relative to the hierarchical and stratified communist system that wished to preside over the transformations of its citizens. In fact, the semi-randomness and manipulated chance associated with Markov's chains could be seen as a strategy serving the state apparatus. The work of the Polish architect Oskar Hansen is instructive in this matter. The large housing estates of his design epitomise the pacifying effect of Markov's chains. Hansen (2005) devised a whole new architectural theory grounded upon the notion of 'Open Form' that focused upon providing small openings in his otherwise modernist, larger-than-life housing projects. Those seeming concessions for the individual freedom were called 'the absorbent backgrounds for events', epitomised by a small variation in the layout of apartments in the same building or the so-called 'the theatres of Open Form', i.e. elevated spaces surrounded by ramps, specially designated for artistic or recreational activity. An encapsulation of state-sponsored semi-randomness promoted by Hansen was his idea of Linear Continuous System [Fig. B.12]—a monumental urban planning project that envisaged the creation of four parallel continuous belts of urban settlement running the whole length of the country, from north to south, that would serve as the axes for services as well as residential and industrial zones. Hansen had profound influence on many Polish artists, and most notably KwieKulik, who attended his workshops at the Warsaw Academy of Fine arts. Konieczny's *Drop Something in Here* is the radical overcoming of Hansen's grip on Polish art. If Hansen can be seen as the very encapsulation of the reticular logic of Markov's chains that—to borrow an expression from Deleuze (1990: 59)—'divid[e] and apportion[ing] chance', we can see how Konieczny's geometric abstractions, his experiments in interior design and the fixed exposure of the *0.15 Contact* series [Figs. A.22-30] are still Hansenian. They all run the risk of subsuming chance under the fixed parameters of their programmed situations and plunge us deeper into the punctual time of Chronos, instead of going beyond its definitive specific spatio-temporal coordinates. The chief problem of the art-works created under the sign of the Markovian-Hansenian logic is that—rather than triggering an event—they channel creativity onto one limited area and thus establish a security valve in the state apparatus. Such creativity directed at specific objects perpetually moves in chronological time and homogenous space without effectuating qualitative change

### ***Drop Something in Here: photo-metallic ontogenesis between the Egyptian bas-relief and the Gothic nomadic line***

What sets *Drop Something in Here* apart—something that eluded Ekwiński and Morawski—is that the eponymous set of instructions is just one dimension of its bloc of sensations. Konieczny's piece goes beyond the Markovian logic of performing a specific action with an object of choice, of executing an action centred on a pre-chosen, specific place—indexed 'here'. *Drop Something in Here* thus overcomes the Kantian active synthesis of Subject acting on its pre-existing Objects. This overcoming is achieved by opening up a metallic new world for the audience to explore, inhabited by decentred multiple zones of variable lustre lurking in the infinitely folded creases of the golden bag. This scintillating world will one day be emancipated from its dependence on the viewer and the artists. Such emancipation of the nonhuman is epitomised in Konieczny's exhibition at the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw where Think Crazy rises as a frothing, meandering labyrinth beyond

the lived perception. *Drop Something in Here* further explores Konieczny's interest in material processes associated with metals. The hidden processes of silver salts investigated in the *0.15 Contact* series [Figs. A.22-30] are now turned outwards and spread on a folded surface. The photosensitive film of *0.15 Contact* series [Figs. A.22-30] now enters a constant process of development through the multiple angles of view that it invites. The multiple points of view are nothing else than light intensity hitting—or, rather, irradiating—the retina to varied degrees. Akin to the so-called neural interval whereby the response to a stimulus on level of the skin and the synapses in the brain comes a half second before the conscious mental reaction (cf. Massumi 2002: 28-3), the encounter of light intensity is a virtual bodily event that is only later on subsumed by consciousness. This energetic, non-representative encounter with intensity that constitutes the mystery of metallic shine places the human on the same level as the metal itself. Metal's encounter with light also takes place beyond the human perception on the sub-representative level of passive selves that extract intensive difference from repetition.

What is at issue in *Drop Something in Here* is the mobile ontology of a bas-relief. The piece creates a flat space that supports no perspectival illusion. It does not foster the active perceptual synthesis grounded one central point, but invites the close-range haptic looking which can be here briefly summarised here as a decentred, ungrounded wandering. Under this new haptic function, the eye assumes a tactile role. The haptic vision is a modality Deleuze saw, after Riegl, as embodied in Egyptian art [Fig. B.13]. According to Deleuze (2003: 122-3), 'it is a frontal and close view that assumes this haptic function since the form and the ground lie on the *same plane* of the surface, equally close to each other and to ourselves'. What separates the flattened form and the ground is the contour that highlights the form's eternal, mysterious essence. Konieczny's haptic space already radically overcomes Egyptian art as it dispenses with the human figure and the only contour it has is the nonorganic outline of its eponymous, black stencilled inscription that expresses not eternal essence, but the power of metamorphosis. The inscription is a black caesura whose outline merges with the topological space of the aluminium bag. The bag's creases (cf. [Figs. A.8a, 10a]) are mobile metallic lines, unravelling cracks that engage both depth and surface. The occurrences on the metallic surface of the bag might be understood in terms of what Deleuze (2003: 46) calls, after Worringer, 'the northern Gothic line' or 'abstract line' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 496). What Worringer identified in Barbarian or Gothic Art [Fig. B. 25] was a non-representational, non-figurative line that no longer delimits form. Instead, it embodies the nonorganic vitality and inherent forces of matter liberated from form. This abstract, nomadic, nonorganic vital line opens up a world of matter-energy, material-force relations as it 'goes to infinity (...) by continually changing direction, perpetually twisting, splitting, and breaking off from itself' (Deleuze 2003: 129). If indeed there an Egyptian dimension in *Drop Something in Here*, it is inextricably bound up with the abstract Gothic line.

#### ***Drop Something in Here: the aesthetics of a minor gesture***

Under these conditions, the *Drop Something in Here* inscription ceases to be a categorical call for performing a specific action, but becomes an esoteric formula whose letters are merely energetic intensities that lure the viewer with an implicit promise of transmutation. *Drop Something in Here* rejects the notion of time as the empirical sequence of instants. Instead, it creates a new and different time, one that abolishes the distinction between the true and the false. This time of the eternal return explodes in becoming understood as a burst of series whereby the before and the after are now, as Deleuze (1997b: 275) explains, 'a matter of (...) the intrinsic quality of that which becomes in time'. Konieczny's piece offers the gift of the event to its audiences. The viewer embarks on the path of metamorphosis, experiencing 'a becoming as potentialization, as series of powers' (Deleuze 1997b: 275). The trajectory here is the one of Lewis Carroll's character Alice (cf. Deleuze

1990: 1-3). The *Drop Something in Here* inscription finds its correlate in the magical objects that Alice encounters—a cake labelled ‘EAT ME’ and a potion ‘DRINK ME’—whose consumption causes her to both shrink and grow, to inhabit the past and the future at the same time. One of the photos taken by Zbigniew Rytka documenting *Drop Something in Here* captures a man trying to lift a woman and fit her into the golden bag. This humorous, minor gesture is a sign of metamorphosis that involves a passage through a limit. From this minor gesture, there unfolds a revolutionary journey between surface and depth. As Erin Manning (2016:1) understands it, a minor gesture is ‘the gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation’. However infinitesimally small such gesture can be, Konieczny’s art-work creates the possibility of a future collectivity that emancipates life from its capture by the state and its habitual clichés. The revolutionary schizoid potential of minor gestures made possible by *Drop Something in Here* should be distinguished from the reactionary power of Hansen’s reticules, his ‘Open Form’ theory with its attendant ‘absorbent backgrounds for events’ and ‘Open Form theatres’. Unlike Konieczny’s surfaces, Hansen’s paranoiac reticules—epitomised by his (unrealised) idea of fitting the balconies of his grand modernist housing projects with special racks designed to hold containers for cooling kissel (cf. Springer 2013)—telescope the grip of the state apparatus into the infinitely small space.

### ***Drop Something in Here: mannerism***

Let us now come back to the interconnected Egyptian and Gothic dimensions of Konieczny’s work. If we can talk about a secret essence in Konieczny, this essence is isolated as multiplicity and as pure difference. As Deleuze (1994: 89) summarises, in the third passive temporal synthesis, ‘time is the most radical form of change, but the form of change does not change’. When no longer subordinated to movement in extensive space, the third synthesis can be understood as establishing a static, immobile, ‘formal and empty order of time’ (1994: 89). Konieczny (1982b) refers to *Drop Something in Here* in a complex way that fuses art, philosophy and engineering,

... One can also look at the very concrete works such as *Drop Something in Here* as a mannerism. This syntheticity, this derealisation is a call for (...) a de-standardisation of the human. The enigma of our existence (instead of) the consciousness of existence. (...) Each our existence is elementally (**RP** the modifying adverb *pierwiastkowo* at once refers to a chemical element, the philosophical fundamental property of matter, the mathematical operation of *n*th root and a synonym of ‘crucially’) enigmatic, singular—even when it responds to *Drop Something in Here*. This de-standardisation of us—thus our resulting enigmaticness—is particularly productive (**RP** *nośny* is also a specialised term in engineering meaning ‘supporting’ or ‘load-bearing’) and constructive, especially with respect to the very robust and rigid, even downright destructive, external structures that surround us.

For Konieczny (1982b), *Drop Something in Here* at once possesses a concrete dimension, in the sense that it concerns the states of affairs inhabiting chronological time and empirical reality, but also constitutes a ‘mannerism’. Konieczny’s notion of mannerism refers to a certain synthesis and modulation engaging not ‘the consciousness of our existence’ but its enigma. This new and secret essence does not express the pre-existing *doxa* but constructs itself and unravels in the process. Similarly, when Konieczny captions the photographic documentation of *Drop Something in Here* ‘anti-intellectual, primitive, messy’, this refers at once to its empirical ludic spirit and to its liberated nonorganic vital metallic line. Konieczny’s work inhabits the virtual plane of immanence of art that creates change in the real. One might understand its mannerism, after Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 56-7), as the ‘cutting edge’ of an assemblage that inevitably faces the strata.

### ***Drop Something in Here and the problem of détournement***

As Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) recounts, one of the photos accompanying *Drop Something in Here* shows a trashcan coexisting side by side with his golden bag. The two are ‘different yet similar in a sense’. The bag performs an artistic counter-actualisation of the event, in the sense that it retains the material contour and function of a bag while at the same time it metamorphoses into a pure crystalline structure. The crystalline surface of the bag reflects the impersonal, pre-individual and non-chronological nature of the event, its ‘splendour’ (Deleuze 1990: 148). At the same time, *Drop Something in Here* is a bloc whose affects and percepts qualitatively change the real. Such an understanding should be firmly distinguished from those interpretations of Konieczny’s actions that consider them in terms of the Situationist strategy of *détournement* (cf. Guzek 2015). As Debord and Wolman (2006: 44-59) explain in a text from 1956, *détournement* is a strategy of the dialectical reversal of meaning whereby the original meaning is hijacked and turned against the dominant political system. An example of this strategy would be Marcel Duchamp’s ready-made, e.g. his mustachioed Mona Lisa. *Détournement*, however, does not account for Konieczny’s work because this very notion operates on the level of ideology and representation. The Debordian concept ultimately constitutes a mere re-coding or remixing of discrete visual and textual elements which merely gain a different meaning in a new context. *Détournement* does not transcend the parameters of the fixed, pre-existing empirical reality and thus does not effectuate qualitative change. According to Guzek (2015: 185), Konieczny’s art

employed (...) the iconosphere of People’s Republic of Poland that was the bearer of (...) [the country’s] ideological dimension (...) However, (...) [this iconosphere] was treated like a ready-made, which means that it was not in itself important but was designed to point towards meanings that lay beyond it.

Through *détournement*, art’s operation is reduced to Marxist dialectics applied to the level of meaning and context (cf. theses on *détournement* in Debord 2006b: 144-6). Ronduda takes a similar approach when he discusses Konieczny’s art in the early 1970s in terms of ‘subversion’ (2007: 33) and ‘perverse configurations of political symbols’ (2007: 31).

*Détournement* draws attention to art’s relation to the social and political realm. If *Drop Something in Here* may be said to create and engage the virtual plane of composition, it also at the same coexists with the social field. The artist’s action invests the social realm, but not as an ideological, discursive, subversive, figurative or representational play. How is the possible? Konieczny’s (1982b) account already implies that while his work operates on the virtual, immanent enigmatic level it also faces ‘the robust and rigid (...) external structures’. Konieczny’s (1982b) piece draws attention to the immanent logic of flows whereby the ‘external structures’ are nothing else than the transcendent mechanisms of capture and regulation by the state. *Drop Something in Here* is a mobile assemblage, an agencement that works on and conjoins diverse flows—psychic, metallic, economical, etc. The Deleuzoguattarian philosophy in this respect provides an important contribution because it transcends Freudo-Marxism, in the sense that it sets out to ‘find a single basis for a production that [is] at once social and desiring in a logic of flows’ (Deleuze 1990: 144). Konieczny’s piece is flush with the world whose flows it taps into. *Drop Something in Here* is an art machine that plugs into the singular zone of the Różycki Bazaar [Figs. A.6-8]. Under the conditions of Real Socialism, the Bazaar importantly continued to run a successful black market of goods. As Crowley’s (2007: 16-27) useful overview implies, the socio-economic system of Real Socialism remained rigid in its coding of capital while creating isolated pockets—such as the specially designated shops—that only simulated the capitalist circulation and consumption of goods through the allure of luxury products made selectively available. Through its black market activities, the Różycki Bazaar resisted the

rigid coding, distribution and apportioning of capital by the state. In this sense, *Drop Something in Here* might be considered as yet another, albeit nonhuman, stallholder from the Różycki Bazaar, sitting upon and harnessing the disruptive power of black market flows. Konieczny's action draws attention to capital's immanent self-differentiation, its smooth space and 'surplus value of flux' (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 228). *Drop Something in Here* experiments with the necessarily ambiguous process of capital's axiomatisation (cf. Holland 2001: 12). Under the conditions of Real Socialism, the artist's piece conjoins deterritorialised flows and thus re-doubles, counter-actualises the power of the state. *Drop Something in Here* takes a surplus margarine bag from its manufacturer (cf. as per Konieczny's account 1/04/2015), circulating it as an emancipated metallic figure in the zone of decoded economic flows and opening it up to gratuitous consumption as pure excess. Interestingly, in the 1990s, Konieczny was a staunch advocate of free-market economy. He is also known for his love of luxury products (cf. Ronduda 2007: 54). Interestingly, some critics pointed towards the ambivalent status of consumerism in art of the 1970s. For example, Kowalczyk (2010) in turn identifies a certain tactical alliance between consumerism and feminism. For the critic, this interplay between consumerism and empowerment was epitomised by the artistic strategies of Natalia LL (cf. [Fig. B.33]), an artist who shares many commonalities with Konieczny.

***Drop Something in Here: a bloc of sensation corresponding to the temporal synthesis of infection/contraction***

In summary, *Drop Something in Here* is a counter-actualisation of the event of the avant-garde, not so much on the surface and not so much in depth but as the intensive movement between the two. The piece gives rise to agencement that works on diverse flows. Konieczny's piece forges a nonhuman Figure that incorporates planar manipulations, haptic surface and a future audience that it summons forth and sends on a path of metamorphosis. In *Drop Something in Here*, the Deleuzian (cf. 1990: 151) pure event, *eventum tantum*, as it is initially conceived in *Logic of Sense*—the time of infinitives and surface effects—is modulated by intensities, by mater-force relations, by the immanence of life itself. In other words, the grand event is modulated by the intensive passages of Klossovskian breaths/spirits (Deleuze 1990: 297-9). The modulations are furnished by the artificial life of metallic elements and the aberrant black market flows arising under the conditions of Real Socialism and its Eastern Modernism. In *Drop Something in Here*, there is a metallic wave that surges in the interval between perception and action where it shines like a crystal, modulating the intensity of the event. The Aionic time of infinitives in *Drop Something in Here*—the infinitive 'to drop'—is modulated by the powers of its mutable shimmering material and its virtual forces. The plane of materials-forces determines the degree to which the neutral event will be actualised in the many encounters and affects it creates.

There is a curious photograph [Fig. A.30] that sees *Drop Something in Here* and the *0.15 Contact* [Figs. A.22-30] coalesce. This symptomatic gesture is a thermometer and encapsulation of Konieczny's practices in the early 1970s. *Drop Something in Here* is a synthesis and a variation that constitutes the first time in the temporal series triggered by Think Crazy. The piece is the magnetic needle of Konieczny's compass that orients itself towards the avant-garde, drawn towards its promise of the event of absolute novelty and an intimation of its metallic component. However, the event of the avant-garde is still too distant, looming beyond the horizon, impossible to capture. *Drop Something in Here* cycles between the close-range, haptic agitations of the material it has discovered and the Byzantine splendour of the infinitely distant, purely optic surface event that it ascends to, all too quickly. Konieczny's artistic path, its will to art, has found itself at a crossroads and demands further experimentation.



*Drop Something in Here* encapsulates the first time in the temporal series constituted by *Think Crazy*. The piece creates a bloc of sensation that corresponds to what might be called here ‘the temporal synthesis of infection-contraction’ as the period between 1968 and 1971. The period in questions is a passage through a certain zone of intensity wherein Konieczny contracts a fascination with the avant-garde and gets infected with its shining metallic potentialities, something that the Italian Futurist Marinetti has identified as avant-garde’s ‘gift of mechanical prophecy, or the flair for metals’ (Marinetti quoted in Banham 1970: 123).

## 2.2. The synthesis of incubation/germination

Between 1971 and 1974, Konieczny's practice takes a different turn that is at the same time difficult to grasp. The artist's praxis becomes consumed by intense heuristics that do not find its adequate explanation in artist's auto-reflection. It is a period of the incubation of an imperceptible 'something'. The period sees an imperceptible germination whereby—to borrow the title of Erik Benker's review of Konieczny's 1974 exhibition in Groningen [Fig. A.51]—'Konieczny does something'. During this period, the artist declares his interest in what he identifies as 'predecisional processes'. Konieczny's notion of predecisional processes can be understood as the processes that are ontologically prior to sensory-motor actions, i.e. conscious decisions, in extensive space and chronological time (cf. Kępińska 1981: 240,243)

Morawski (1975a: 34) was right when he remarked in 1975 that the strategy of the predecisional process 'boils down to the principle of the omnipotent randomness and overcoming of the physical barrier' that is in fact indistinguishable from Konieczny's earlier preoccupation with the pure stochastic force of chance. The critic (1975a: 34-5) essentially commends Konieczny for his philosophical orientation towards the stochastics of the creative process. At the same time, he notices that the concept of the predecisional process has not yet generated anything new in terms of Konieczny's artworks and therefore necessitates a discovery. Morawski (1975a: 35) concludes by recommending that the problem of the stochastic process should be 'brought into relief (...) in such a way that would be captivating or at least stimulating thought'. Interestingly, Morawski paradoxically suggests a certain reduction. According to the scholar (1975a: 35), Konieczny's stochastic understanding of the creative process is as promising for contemporary art as Freud's conception of the unconscious used to be for the nineteenth-century art, but yet needs to be 'articulated, ordered and confronted with existing philosophico-aesthetic conceptions'.

The present sections will demonstrate that the period in question has managed to adequately satisfy Morawski's requirement for a focusing element. The period between 1971 and 1974 might be understood as the time of an imperceptible change in Konieczny's practice. It might be thus usefully termed 'the temporal synthesis of incubation/germination'. The artist has launched a search for an in-itself— in other words, a container, bloc, limit or a focusing point—capable engendering further metamorphosis of his art-work without effecting the Markovian-Hansenian reticular capture of its potential. The period in question functions on the level of the Deleuzian second passive synthesis of time. The second temporal synthesis grounds time in the element of the pure past—any present moment splits into a past that is preserved in itself and a present that passes. What Morawski (1975a: 34) has identified in Konieczny's works as 'the principle of omnipotent randomness' has no duration and thus does not tap into the virtual coexistence implied by the second temporal synthesis. This randomness can be characterised as unstable and *atopon*, i.e. without place (Deleuze 1990: 166). In stark contrast, the period in question unfolds within Bergson's cone of time as a virtual multiplicity (cf. Deleuze 1994: 212). Diverse threads of Konieczny's practices coexist topologically as different levels of the cone, mutually resonating with one another without any apparent causal link. On the face of it, when understood in terms of linear development, Konieczny seems to have taken a massive step back in his artistic progress. All the practices between 1971 and 1974—running pieces [Figs. A.35-40, 69], scratched sheets [Figs. A.49-51] and mail art pieces [Figs. A.52-7]—in diverse ways rehearse the single problem of a resonant and productive limit, threshold or constraint. All of those coexistent virtual levels entail a secret doubling, incubation and displacement. It would be however a gross oversimplification to pin this operation down to unconscious mental processes.

### 2.2.1. Conceptual delimitations, paper topologies, rubber reliefs

At the most simple level, Konieczny's practices between 1971 and 1974 frequently thematise the idea of limitation. This idea is also frequently expressed as a single yet multi-dimensional plane. Konieczny's mail art pieces from 1973 onwards are stamped with the caption 'mental predecisional process—limited to one situation, one program' and—in their final avatar in 1975—'mental predecisional process, limited to: think crazy' [Fig. A.58]. The series of scratched transparent sheets from 1972-3 (*Predecisional Processes*) [Figs. A.49-51] is turn accompanied by the motto 'adopting one program, I was repeating it many times'. Furthermore, yet another group of Konieczny's mail art pieces points toward the topological formulation of the event. Through the following motto placed on two faces of a single red-coloured postcard [Figs. A.56-7] —'consciousness of the situation, subconsciousness of the situation' on one side and 'subconsciousness of the situation, consciousness of the situation' on the other side—the postcard becomes a Möbius strip.

What is especially important in all those practices is that they treat the technologies that have produced them as an ontological—or, rather, ontogenetic—concept. At the same time, the art-works express and construct this ontology through a certain spatial synthesis. For example, Konieczny's 1973 series of images of flowers (*Mental Predecisional Process*) [Figs. A.52-4] which made up his submission to Groh's International Artists' Cooperation network were in fact impressed with a rubber stamp. In this way, Konieczny's series of embossed images draw attention to their underlying technique of relief printing. In this technique, it is the protruding parts of the surface of a printing block that are covered with ink and thus give rise to the actual image. What is at stake here is therefore the virtual event conceptualised as a negative imprint residing on the surface.

### 2.2.2. The Groningen installation [Fig. A.51]: scratch marks and the intagliated event

As Benker reports (1974), as part of his 1974 exhibition at the de Mangelgang Gallery in Groningen, Konieczny exhibited a series scratched sheets hanging on a line [Fig. A.51]. The sheets were accompanied by four square panels made with waterglass—two of such surfaces were placed on the wall and another two on the ground— as well as a panel with the *Think of Something* emblem (cf. [Fig. A.44]).

In counter-distinction from Konieczny's rubber reliefs, the etched/scratched sheets of transparent foil that make up the *Predecisional Processes* series engage the event whose virtual aspect resides in depth—i.e. the recessed parts of the image—and thus establishes a volume. Thus created volume redoubles—or, rather, counter-actualises—actual objects as their virtual shadow, embodying a zone of intensive passage, indiscernibility and potentiality. This profound spatial synthesis of 'intensive depth' (Deleuze 1994: 229-36) is brought into stark relief in Konieczny's 1974 exhibition in Groningen. The Groningen exhibition created an intagliated environment whereby the imperceptible 'something' (Benker 1974) germinates in depth—in the volume of the cave-like milieu of the exhibition space. It is in the depths of the darkened exhibition room that the impressions on Konieczny's transparent sheets are brought to life through spotlights. The latent image enveloped in the scratch marks becomes developed in the event of chiaroscuro. The manual marks are translated into the contrast between shadow and light, the purely optical relations of value (cf. Deleuze on chiaroscuro 2003: 120). Such an understanding of the Groningen exhibition is consonant with Groh's (13/10/2015) account of the exhibition:

I remember [Konieczny] told me that the shadows which were made by the hanging white papers are the main, [most] important parts of the exhibition. His question always is What is between? and what ist virtuell parallel to the existing reality.

Konieczny's Dutch exhibition resonates with Deleuze's (2003: 99-110) notion of the chaotic 'diagram' he identifies in Bacon's process of creating paintings. Bacon's works start with random manual marks which also already constitute a germ of a semi-ordered structure. Furthermore, Konieczny's work finds also its analogue in Dick Higgins' 1968 Fluxus piece called *A Thousand Symphonies* whose randomly bullet-ridden score is subsequently performed by an actual orchestra. Scholtz (2015: 275-9) analyses Higgins' piece as a classic example of affect-producing artistic counter-actualisation.

### **2.2.3. The Groningen installation: towards crystalline thought as an encounter of difference**

According to Konieczny (as recorded in Benker 1974), the Groningen installation probes a threshold between consciousness and unconsciousness. This threshold can be understood at once as a 'mystical impression'; 'the initial instant of thought and making visible' that operates on the rational level; as well as 'the very beginning of the process of consciousness in response to something'. The above account points towards Konieczny's installation as a fundamental aporia with respect to the non-representative 'something' that fulgurates at once at the edges of consciousness and at the edges of matter. This aporia occurs both on the level of Konieczny's theoretical thought and simultaneously on the level of the installation's material composition. The Groningen exhibition explores the oscillation between thought's functioning as the reflective representation of a perceived pre-existing object, on one hand, and thought that only crystallises *après le fait* as response to an imperceptible difference in intensity, on the other. In other words, Konieczny's piece investigates the vacillation between (1) the active synthesis of consciousness that subsumes difference as the perception of an object qualified as some *thing*, and (2) the liberation of pure hallucinatory situation without a corresponding object and its concrete space-time coordinates. In the second case, 'something' is emancipated as a non-representative force that consciousness merely envelops and subdues. This oscillation can be expressed as a difference between the phrase 'to think *about* something' and 'to think *of* something'.

In summary, the Groningen exhibition establishes what Deleuze (1997b: 68-78) calls a 'crystalline circuit' between making visible and making imperceptible, the limpid and the opaque, between consciousness and its blind spot. It is a question of an exchange between consciousness traditionally construed in philosophy as light actively unearthing things from the dark and the Bergsonian notion of consciousness as 'an opaque blade without which light would go on diffusing itself forever, never reflected and never revealed' (Boundas in Deleuze 1991: 5). Konieczny's installation makes resonance with the Deleuzian (cf. 1994: 139) invocation of thought as the encounter of difference. Most importantly, Deleuze's conceptualisation appears to have been modelled on Simondon's analysis of crystal formation. Thought can thus be understood as nothing else than a crystallisation forming in response to a difference in intensity in a metastable environment filled with potential. It is thus only fitting that Konieczny should use, as part of the Groningen exhibition, the waterglass process that harnesses metallic salts. Yet again, the artist gravitates towards the avant-garde potentialities afforded by metals.

### **2.2.4. Wandering pieces: between the schizo's stroll and the Situationist *dérive***

In Konieczny's 'running pieces' involving only a red ribbon or a purple flag (1971-4) such as the *Spectre of Freedom* [Figs. A.35-40] series or *Propped Against the Sky* [Fig. A.69]—the art-works that might also be called 'wandering pieces', the previously unlimited surface of the event becomes reduced to the artist's body. Those early 'running/walking' performance pieces [Figs. A.35-40, 69] work on two coextensive levels. They can be understood in terms of (1) the artist's actual movement in extensive space that coexists with (2) a virtual journey across the metastable zones of intensities traced on the artist's body. Deleuze and Guattari (1984: 1-8) in fact

identify such two-dimensional multiplicity in their analysis of workings of the unconscious in *Anti-Oedipus* as the so-called 'schizo's stroll'. In fact, *Anti-Oedipus* begins with a case study of the schizophrenic experience of a stroll that serves to uncover the material processes of production of desire and the operation of the unconscious (cf. Buchanan 2008: 39-45). The schizoid figure, the 'schizo', inhabits a world that annuls the nature-civilisation divide. When out for a stroll, the schizo's experience becomes intensified, more forcefully revealing the world as but one continuum filled with the ubiquitous sites of production of diverse flows. As the thinkers explain (1984: 2), part quoting Georg Büchner's literary account of the schizo's stroll, such experience can be encapsulated by a feeling of bliss derived from

a contact with the profound life of every form (...) [It is] to have a soul for rocks, metals, water, and plants, to take into himself, as in a dream, every element of nature, like flowers that breathe with the waxing and waning of the moon.' To be a chlorophyll- or a photosynthesis-machine, or at least slip (...) [one's] body into such machines as one part among others.

This 'productivism or constructivism of the unconscious' (Deleuze 1995: 144) cuts across the self of psychology as well as the Marxist examination of the socio-economic conditions of an urban environment. The schizophrenic experience reveals the processes of production in the unconscious that are also fundamentally aesthetic and proto-artistic. Konieczny's wandering pieces map out the schizo-artistic experience that encounters 'nature as a process of production' (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 3), as perpetually working machines. As the thinkers (1984: 7) explain, the schizo becomes a 'universal producer' who goes beyond the dualism of 'producing and its product', the natural and the artificial, the self and the other, man and nature, the outside and the inside. The schizo thus inhabits zones of indistinction, living and breathing the formula 'Nature = Production'.

At the same time, Konieczny's wanderings should be firmly distinguished from the Situationist concept of the *dérive* (Debord's theory of the *dérive* in 2006a: 137-48). Konieczny's pieces do not constitute a *dérive*, in the sense of a walk in the city whose primary objective is to raise consciousness of the actual, shifting connections between different zones in the city conceived as spaces of economic, political and social distribution. If anything, Konieczny stroll is a transcendental-empirical radicalisation of the *dérive*. *Dérive* operates on the level of empirical observation of the existing world whose habits it sets about to change, thus creating awareness of new 'possibilities and meanings' (2006a: 141) afforded by the urban landscapes. Debord (2006a: 141) in fact cautions against the surrealist dissolution of the physical urban coordinates and the surrealist promise of 'antideterminist liberation'. The theorist believes that the insertion of chance leads to the reactionary replication of the existing conditions. He shudders at Pierre Vendryès's image of the *dérivers* as tadpoles whose random movement is not subjected to any transcendent, external organisation principle. Debord's writing demonstrates the rift between the Freudian examination of the unconscious and the Marxist inquiry into relations of production, circulation and consumption. This rift between Freudian and Marxist concerns is something that is clearly overcome by both Deleuze and Konieczny.

### 2.2.5. Wandering pieces: between the movement-image and the time-image

The wandering pieces grapple with the powers of imperceptible metamorphosis that supplants action with vision. What is at issue here can be productively described in terms of the Deleuzian (cf. 1997b: 272) typology of cinematic images. Konieczny's wandering pieces utilising a red ribbon or a purple flag such as *Spectre of Freedom* [Figs. A.35-40] are qualitatively different from the pieces involving a banner, such as *Let's Go to the First May* (also known as *Let's Join the May Day Parade*) [Figs. A.41-2]. As part of the latter series Konieczny paraded with the eponymous banner during different months across a three-year period (1971-1973). Konieczny 'parading pieces' [Figs. A.41-2] inhabit the empirical level of the Deleuzian first passive temporal synthesis. They merely replace one habit with another and thus subordinate time to the cyclical movement of seasons. In this way, the performance pieces subordinate time the cyclical designations (seasons). The function of thus conceived time is to measure those cyclical designations, i.e. seasons, through a set of cardinal points, i.e. months. Konieczny's parading pieces find their correlate in the cinematic movement-images that subordinate time to the measurement of movement. Simply put, the pieces can only be understood by juxtaposition of the banner's caption reading 'May' with whatever (other) month may presently be. The eponymous 'First May' can happen in August, September, etc. by the artist's own sovereign decision. Be that as it may, such strategic displacement does not change the cardinal, punctual and linear character of empirical time. Konieczny's parading pieces occupy the familiar territory of the *dérive*.

In turn, the running/walking pieces [Figs. A.35-40, 69] involving only a red ribbon or a purple flag break or relax the sensory-motor links as the Deleuzian time-images that directly present the unfolding of time. Konieczny's walk does not proceed according to a fixed, punctual itinerary but progressively unfolds. The artist makes his way as he goes. The figure of the consciously acting artist—an *actant*—gives way to the Figure of a visionary—a *voyant*. In other words, the agent executing an action in the pre-existing world becomes a seer that creates a new world. In this new world, distinct places become indistinct zones with strange attractors whose crossing effects qualitative change in the artist-as-material. Konieczny does not have a perception of the city and the red ribbon/purple flag, but has passed into both and has become indiscernible from them. In the running pieces [Figs. A.35-40, 69], Konieczny enters a zone of mutual indiscernibility with the Gierek-era Warsaw and his vividly coloured textile strips. The artist has become a mere catalyst through which the city and the ribbon/flag are able to stand on their own as percepts, hallucinations, pure visions. At the same time, Konieczny's pieces are clearly not surreal. In fact, the running pieces are flush with the real and not in opposition to or above the real. It is not a question of Konieczny's vision but of *a* vision. It is a question of art as a self-positing vital creation.

### 2.2.6. Wandering pieces: the powers of metallic transmutation, individuation by haecceity and nomadic subjectivities

The running pieces invest the social whence they extract their power of metallic transmutation. The deterritorialisation engendered by Konieczny's walk feeds off the territory of the *socius*. The artist's performance pieces extract differences in intensity from the social field. It is around those intensive differences that Konieczny's subsequent works of art will crystallise. In other words, Konieczny's works emerge out of differences in intensity implied in the social field. This point can be illustrated as follows. For example, during one of his performances forming part of the *Spectre of Freedom* [Figs. A.35-40] series, while passing through the Łazienkowska Thoroughfare Konieczny passed by—and possibly brushed against—a group of welders. This brief encounter effectuates a change in Konieczny's practice. This imperceptible metamorphosis can only be

seen in its effects. After the piece, *après le fait*, the artist—or rather a ‘something’, a virtual dimension that the artist taps into through his art—contracts attraction to welding, as corroborated by one of the photographs [Figs. A.35] documenting the *Spectre of Freedom* series. Konieczny’s interest in the artistic potential of metallurgy also coincides with his interest in fire as a metabolic process and coal as a metabolising agent. This coalescence can be seen in Konieczny’s photographic work called *Red Coal* [Figs. A.48] executed c. 1972 that shows what appears to be a fire burning inside a stove. At the same time this aporia of *Red Coal* articulates something akin to plate recording the ultrasound scan of an embryo, whence it extracts a map of embryonic intensities or, in other words, a future harboured by gleaming potentialities, as encapsulated by William Blake’s (2005: 73) arresting delirious image of ‘Tiger, tiger burning bright/ In the forests of the night’ from his 1793 ‘The Tiger’ poem. Taking an interest in the metallic process, Konieczny the artist becomes himself a sensitive plate that resonances with its attractors. Konieczny becomes nothing more, nothing less than Vendryès’s (Debord 2006a: 141) tadpoles, liberated from the actively represented ‘intelligence, sociability and sexuality’. This is precisely the specific type of a cinematic situation explored by Deleuze (1997b: 272) whereby the organic sensorimotor logic of action/reaction is overcome in favour of purely optical, haptic and sonorous situations. Szwajewska captures this change perfectly when she recasts the series [Figs. A.35-40]—initially called *Red Tape* or *Red Ribbon*—as *Spectre of Freedom*. Konieczny’s running/walking pieces create a zone of mutual indiscernibility between (1) the artist who passes into the impersonal landscape inhabited by multiplicities, and (2) a piece of cloth that becomes the diagram of the artist’s non-localisable intensive metamorphosis. The piece of cloth encapsulates the logic of a sensitive metal plaque that expresses and effects change. *Spectre of Freedom* overcomes the reductive logic of identity and resemblance that only ever yields the representational, figurative, illustrative referential schema of interpretation. Instead, the running pieces suggest a different, non-essential mode individuation. Such individuation proceeds through haecceity, i.e. the circumstances in which a thing emerges. In Konieczny’s running pieces, it is precisely the intensive force of the wind working upon the red ribbon/purple flag that furnishes a means for the mobile individuation by haecceity.

In his running pieces such as the *Red Tape* series [Figs. A.48] or *Propped Against the Sky* [Figs. A.69], Konieczny wanders off and escapes into a spectral shadow that counter-actualises his presence in the world. This spectral shadow appears as modulation of the zones of pure colour. For Konieczny (1/04/2015), ‘what was at stake in the structure of the red colour was achieving an individual value, (...) an individualisation vis-à-vis collective, mass processes’. In turn, Szwajewska (in Konieczny et. al 1/04/2015) sees the *Red Tape* series more on the symbolic level. She understands the performances in terms of an opposition between the national use of the red colour and its artistic turnaround/reversal. For Szwajewska, what is at issue in the *Red Tape* series is that ‘I can have a red ribbon that is *my* ribbon, *my* individual message (RP *przekaz*)’. In stark contrast, for Konieczny, the red colour constitutes an individuation by means of haecceity and not by essence. Those two different yet entwined ways of understanding the mutual connection between the red colour and individuality can be productively understood through the Deleuzoguattarian (1984: 16; cf. Holland 2001: 34) account of the creation of nomadic subjectivity in the schizo-artistic experience that already contains within it the impulse for claiming, subjugation and capture. This rudimental ambiguity and aporia is encapsulated in the following syntax ‘It’s me, and so it’s mine....’. In Konieczny, the red colour is not so much a case of an individual subject retrospectively claiming ‘it’s mine’ but an emergent nomadic subjectivation that recognises itself in the material and utters ‘it’s me’.

### 2.2.7. Wandering pieces: *Propped Against the Sky* and nomadic art as intensive engineering

The above nomadic logic finds its epitome in *Propped Against the Sky* [Fig. A.69, all subsequent mentions of this piece refer to the latter figure numbers]] whereby the sky's shimmering field of colour is the unlimited universe that makes becoming possible (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 180) and endlessly divides the actual movement of the artist and the camera operator into a perpetual gap. In this way, each step taken in the empirical, extensive space brings about qualitative change. The piece in question is an accidental work of art. It started off as a videographic documentation of one of Konieczny's performances entailing his running in the public space while holding a flag. However, somehow the footage captured on a 16mm film camera became distorted. In *Propped Against the Sky*, the faulty mechanism of the camera decouples the sensorimotor schema that sandwiches together perceptions (the received movement), the intermediate affective interval and the executed motor movement (cf. Deleuze 1997b: 40-1, 272). *Propped Against the Sky* emancipates the hitherto suppressed interval in the cine-brain. The work probes the loophole in the sensorimotor linkages and discovers it as a zone of mad forcefields. To borrow an expression from Deleuze (1997b: 211), *Propped Against the Sky* discovers 'a void, nothing but a void, between a stimulation and a response', between the artist's action and its recording. The work emancipates the nonhuman life of the camera itself. It is a question of the camera's own *will to art* regardless of its human operator. *Propped Against the Sky* probes the zone of indiscernibility between the camera and the artist, both effectuating a passage. Both the camera and the artist—the nonhuman and the human—enter the intensive process of becoming that cuts across the nature-technology opposition and the subject-object divide.

The work's title, *Propped Against the Sky*, is most instructive in this matter as it offers a vision of art as intensive engineering. Instead of the idea of an immobile support that offers concrete ground for a movable object, it is now a question of a mobile support accompanying an equally mobile figure. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 401) point out, the latter relationship finds its encapsulation in the Scytho-Sarmatian *fibulae*, i.e. metal plaques [Fig. B.31] attached to horse trappings and other nomadic objects whereby the artistic motif is a 'trait of expression of pure speed, (...) pure mobility'. The cosmos that supports *Propped Against the Sky* constitutes the radical ungrounding of eternal return. The eponymous sky is not an abstract idea but a plane of *really* acting, concrete forcefields. If the eponymous sky can be understood as the sublime, it is a singularly intensive, immanent one. Such an understanding of cosmos is in fact offered in Deleuze (2003: 6) case study of Bacon's paintings. The philosopher analyses the vast monochromatic fields that surround the Figure in terms of a 'material structure' or a sculptural 'armature' (cf. [Figs. A.10-11]).

### 2.2.8. Wandering pieces: towards the delirium of freedom

The running pieces involving the red ribbon/purple flag find much in common with the performances belonging the *Catalysis* [Fig. B. 23] pieces by the American artist Adrian Piper, which took place between 1970 and 1973. As part of the *Catalysis* series, the artist traversed the streets of New York with a white cloth stuffed into her mouth. Zepke (2009: 123) importantly discusses Piper's practices in terms of 'the aleatory catalysis (...) that exists immediately on and as a social plane of composition, and operates as a mechanism of its construction. This social plane of immanence directly envelops the artist who 'inhabits alterity close to madness' (2009: 123). Konieczny's running pieces open a plane of composition that runs parallel to Piper's social catalysis.



In Konieczny, the pure mobility—attained through the modulation of colour and the metallurgical process—unleashes and expresses absolute freedom. Szwajewska picked on this revolutionary potential of the *Red Tape* series [Figs. A.35-40] when she dubbed them *Spectre of Freedom*. In a text from 1986, Szwajewska (1986b: 5), links *Spectre of Freedom* to a nineteenth-century engraving by the Polish artist Artur Grottger, depicting a group of revolutionaries readying themselves to join the January Uprising of 1863, a national revolt against the Tsarist rule over Poland, by forging their unique weapons—war scythes [Fig. B.3.]. Szwajewska thus provided the event of Konieczny’s imperceptible revolution with an image. Szwajewska’s image draws attention to the revolutionary avant-garde as an emancipation of the inchoate powers of metal. Szwajewska’s designation is not a symbolic capture, but exemplifies what Deleuze and Guattari (1984: 21) call ‘the names of history’. Assigning the names of history is a practice that is crucial to the Deleuzoguattarian conception of the world-historical delirium. Since 1975, Szwajewska, in tandem with Konieczny, has succumbed to the world-historical thought delirium of Think Crazy. For Deleuze and Guattari (1984: 16-22), the delirium constitutes a schizophrenic, and schizo-artistic, experience that conjoins (1) intensive flows of desire in the unconscious that are traced on the body with (2) the social field engaged through a wealth of designations derived from history and geography. According to the thinkers (1984: vii), ‘every delirium is social, historical, and political’, and thus desire always invests the socius.

### 2.2.9. Time for a change: the synthesis of incubation/germination and the search of a limit

Konieczny’s diverse practices between 1971 and 1974 re-pose the problem of a limit from different angles and through different techniques. This, at times, blind search and meandering experimentation can be understood topologically. The artist seeks adequate ways of living up to the great event of the avant-garde, its promise of ‘throw[ing] time out joint’ (Deleuze 1994: 89), but, at the same time, it is art’s vital impulse that wills to break forth through the artist and crack open his stable self. There is an oscillation between the still Conceptual, mental mapping of art—effectuated by the unified consciousness of the artist—and a ‘something’ that demands to be affirmed in the lasting monument of sensation, ‘something’ that attaches itself to the artist’s body and makes it become-other. It is variously a question of (1) the emergent thought spatialised as a mobile distribution in depth rendered through chiaroscuro (*Predecisional Process*) [Fig. A.51]; (2) mental processes rendered as a series of imprints on the flat surface of a page giving rise to a sharp contour that at the same time slows, stifles or momentarily arrests the proliferating abstract, nomadic metallic line of *Drop Something in Here* (cf. [Fig. A.8a]) and makes it become a mere outline of distinctive vegetal forms (the mail art series of *Mental Predecisional Process*) [Figs. A.52-4]; or, (3) the intimation of a nonorganic life going beyond artist’s own organised body, rendered through the modulation of colour and the ontology of metal (*Red Tape, Propped Against the Sky*) [Figs. A.35-40, 69]. It is however the running pieces [Figs. A.35-40, 69]—and their engagement with life as locus of intensive production—that point towards the vector for Konieczny’s metamorphosis.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 245), metamorphosis entails a passage through a limit, a line of flight, an encounter of the Anomalous, the Outsider. This intensive passage—as Deleuze (2003: 15-18) shows in his analysis of the artistic strategies of Bacon—also might be understood as an internal spasm tending towards a vanishing point, a necessary reduction that proceeds through the so-called *prosthesis-organs*. The prosthesis-organs are something trivial and mundane—e.g. the drain hole in a washbasin [Fig. B.11], the tip of an umbrella, the hole in a syringe, the eye of a needle or the surface of a mirror. It is the prosthesis-organs that amplify the Figure’s internal exertion allowing it to escape into the vast fields of colour. In *Difference and Repetition*, the metamorphosis has to do with the becoming-equal to, and becoming capable of, ‘a unique and tremendous event,

an act which is adequate to time as a whole' (Deleuze 1994: 89). This 'heroic metamorphosis' (1994: 298) entails a certain doubling of the agent (1994: 89). Konieczny's practices between 1971 and 1974 install themselves on different lines of flight, experiment with various prosthesis organs and attempt to live up to the event of the avant-garde and its radical promise, to borrow an expression from Deleuze (1994: 89), 'to throw time out of joint' in an event that is both trivial and heroic.

A series of postcards Konieczny sent to Groh in 1974 are marked with a small, bright red dot that resonates with their white paper (cf. [Fig. A.63]). This setting winter sun is the threshold of qualitative change in Konieczny's practice, a signal of metamorphosis and a point of creative deformation. The many diverse practices between 1971 and 1974 seek to become equal to the avant-garde and thus become art-works that would be truly *contemporary*. It is therefore a profound paradox that it should be the pure *anachronism* the Polish seventeenth-century art—with its Netherlandish and Ottoman overtones and its attendant fabulation of the Sarmatian nomadic lineage—that has catalysed the revolutionary qualitative change in Konieczny's art. It is through the invocation—or, better still, fabulation, hallucination and delirium—of the Sarmato-Baroque that Konieczny's practice has become a lasting bloc of sensation that continues to produce its affects and percepts in 2016, over forty years on. How is this possible? As I have demonstrated, Konieczny various pieces between 1971 and 1974 undertake an exploration of virtual potentialities variously as depth, surface or pure mobility of the intensive body. However, it is the running pieces that put in motion a certain resonance that will yield an important vector orienting Konieczny's artistic trajectory.

#### **2.2.10. The revolution of 1974: world-historical *délire* as the threshold of metamorphosis in Konieczny**

In a profoundly paradoxical turn, change in Konieczny's practices—a veritable revolution that operates on the level of pure intensities—is brought about by a remarkable reduction that proceeds through the body of the artist and his manipulations of metals, conjoined with history and art-history. This brings us into the realm explored by the Guattarodeleuzian own revolution, *Anti-Oedipus*, and its discovery of the schizophrenic process of 'delirium' (*délire*) that necessarily invests the social field. According to the thinkers (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 88), 'all delirium possesses a world-historical, political, and racial content, mixing and sweeping along races, cultures, continents, and kingdoms'. Art is delirium understood as the process—or the matrix of production—by which, as Smith (2014: 210) explains, 'the intensities and becomings of the body without organs directly invest the socio-political field, (...) history and geography'.

The notion of world-historical delirium cannot be properly understood without an understanding of the three syntheses, also called 'productions', of the unconscious that jointly make up the functioning of the psychic apparatus, as elaborated in *Anti-Oedipus*. The three syntheses of *Anti-Oedipus* build upon the Deleuzian syntheses of the unconscious developed earlier on in *Difference and Repetition*. The syntheses account for the production of desire that is material—at once psychic and social. As Holland (2001: 26) explains, the first synthesis—the connective synthesis of production—concerns continual desiring-production, understood as the instinctual habit of mechanical connections between organs. This basic force of production—expressed syntactically as *and then... and then...*—connects organ-machines, e.g. a breast and a baby's mouth, or the diverse flows of capital. The second synthesis—the disjunctive synthesis of recording—is the counter-force of anti-production that introduces disjunctions in habitual connections and at the same time constitutes a recording surface that registers connections as signs and maps out 'networks of relations between connections' (Holland

2001: 28). The recording surface is called BwO (i.e. body without organs), a term the thinkers borrow from Artaud. BwO breaks continual connections between organs and undoes their fixed functions. BwO disorganises the body and in this way opens up the potential for new, different and divergent connections. The syntactic expression of the pure potentiality of BwO is ‘*either... or... or..., or*’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 76) or, as Young (2013: 54) understands it, ‘both-and-neither’. BwO is an elastic surface that can oscillate between (1) an unproductive taut barrier that repulses any connections and (2) a productive sieve whose multiple ‘points of disjunction’ (Deleuze and Guattari 184: 12) invite new, alternative connections. In the third production (1984: 16-22)—the conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation—the mutual proportion between forces of production (attraction) and anti-production (repulsion) on BwO generates different intensities that give birth to a fleeting, residual subject that emerges on the BwO only *après le fait* as an after-effect of the act of enjoyment, consumption and consummation of the intensive states it undergoes. This larval subject constituted in response to difference in intensity can be expressed syntactically as ‘*so, it’s me...*’ (1984: 20) The distribution of the forces of attraction and the forces of repulsion on BwO produces different intensive states and their corresponding subjects. What can be generated here is a whole continuum—ranging from the zero intensity of catatonia and to the universal production of the schizophrenic delirium (and the schizo’s stroll). *Délire* affirms the forces of production and counter-production, producing a ‘nomadic subject’ that is constantly reborn in ever-new states (1984: 84; cf. Holland 2001: 35-6). According to the thinkers (2005: 153), BwO is a matrix of emergence of intensities encapsulated in the egg as an embryonic environment filled with potentiality and mobile intensive differences ‘where things and organs are distinguished solely by gradients, migrations, zones of proximity’ (2005: 164) and thus not yet organised into forms and fixed functions. The embryonic BwO is a ‘Zero intensity as principle of production’ (2005: 164) that generates intensities and pre-individual singularities depending on the ratio of its constitutive forces.

### **2.2.11. The names of (art) history in *Anti-Oedipus*, *Difference and Repetition*, and *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation***

Delirium (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 85) does not *represent* peoples, history, geography and the social milieu, but extracts from them proper names, wrenching something out of the socius that Deleuze calls, after Nietzsche, ‘the names of history’ (1984: 21). The names of history mark the passage through a threshold of intensity in the metastable field of potentials that are traced on the body, ‘the races and cultures designate regions on this body—that is, zones of intensities, fields of potentials’ (1984: 85). This body is however disorganised in the sense that it no longer obeys the fixed, localised distribution of functions. Delirium cannot be separated from ‘the intense crossing of the thresholds of history’ (1984: 86). This idea is already present in its germinal form in *Difference and Repetition* where Deleuze (1994: 90) points out that the future of the eternal return reveals time as the realm of ceaseless repetition in the temporal series. Becoming-equal to the absolute novelty of the eternal return is attained through a repetition of the past. The past is revealed not a historical fact, but operates by default as ‘the historical condition under which something new as effectively produced’ (1994: 90). Of course, the event of the eternal return ultimately sweeps away both its historical condition of the past and the present of the metamorphosis. As Deleuze (1994: 90) explains,

*Repetition is a condition of action before it is a concept of reflection. We produce something new only on condition that we repeat - once in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis. Moreover, what is produced, the absolutely new itself, is in turn nothing but repetition: the third repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return.*

The philosopher (Deleuze 1994: 90) gives example of the French Revolution of 1789 as the event made possible through the revolutionaries' resolve to 'lead their lives as 'resuscitated Romans'' and thus to repeat the past. However, at this stage, Deleuze (1994: 90) considers this strategy in terms of a 'necessar[ly] identif[ication] with a figure from the historical past'. It is therefore a case of assuming an imaginary identity. In turn, in delirium, a historical figure is only the name of a certain effect—for example, 'a Joan of Arc effect' (1984: 86)—traced by the schizoid experience of an intensive threshold. As Smith (2014: 210) points out, it is a question of 'identifying thresholds of intensity that are traversed on the body without organs with proper names'.

Deleuze deploys his insights from *Difference and Repetition*—and, in particular, his discovery of the necessary, yet contingent nature of repetition—combined with the theory of delirium and the names of history from *Anti-Oedipus*, in his case study of Bacon's paintings. In this way, Deleuze creates the conception of what we might call, an 'art-historical delirium'. According to Deleuze (2003: 135), a painter repeats—or, better still, 'recapitulates'—the history of painting by traversing different periods that are not chronological determinations but different responses to a certain problem, crystallisations seeking to resolve a certain difference in intensity. As Deleuze (2003: 135) explains, the periodic time is 'like the space covered by the unity of a single, simple gesture. The historical recapitulation consists of stopping points and passages, which are extracted from or reconstitute an open sequence'. The problems enveloped by the names of different historical periods are the problems proper to the medium of painting. In painting, it is a question of an oscillation between line and manual space, on one hand, and colour, light and optic space, on the other (cf. Bogue 2003: 6). However, since art's plane of composition taps into the real, it is ultimately a matter of onto-aesthetics—art's validity as a self-positing, living entity: a multiplicity. For example, Bacon's art is Egyptian, and creates a new Egypt, in the sense that it responds the problem of space and colour through the haptic space associated with Egyptian art. The immanent place of composition of Bacon's art fashions the artist a BwO traversed with different gradients and vital zones of potentiality, akin to the productive state of an undifferentiated embryo. The 'Egyptian', 'Byzantine', 'Baroque' art are simply names of various intensities that are traversed by Bacon's BWO, effecting qualitative change and themselves qualitatively changing in the process. It is therefore not a matter of simple repetition, reproduction or formal/structural correspondences, but a counter-actualisation of the problem enveloped in each of those periodic names. Art operates as an art-historical delirium. As the title of the relevant chapter in Deleuze's (1994: 122) Bacon book suggests, 'Every Painter Recapitulates the History of Painting in His or Her Own Way ...'.

#### **2.2.12. 1974: a map of Konieczny's creative involution**

If Konieczny becomes-equal to the event of the avant-garde, it is only possible through a certain divergent repetition that is not an identification or a representation, but a summoning forth of the intensities of the seventeenth-century made possible by an art practice that has attained, imperceptibly, the mad freedom of the schizoid BwO. Konieczny's revolution of 1974 is irreducible to an overcoming of Conceptualism in favour of body and performance art. Instead, Konieczny's revolution establishes a vital circuit, a rhizomatic connection between them on art's virtual plane of composition. Such new world constituted by the immanent, lateral connectivity cuts across the established genres of Conceptual, body and performance art. All of those categories are predicated upon the binary opposition between the mind as the active subject and the body as the passive object. Konieczny's metamorphosis can also be understood in terms of what the art critic Jan Verwoert (2014: 124-5) identifies in works of some Eastern European avant-garde artists working under the communist regime as establishing a certain non-representational, non-ideological 'Archimedean point from which to view, build or

unhinge the world’ so that an art ‘practice invents its own beginnings. (...) a new virtual reality (...) out of which tumbles a new body of work’.

But what does this glorious involution in Konieczny’s practice, this metamorphosis at once heroic and trivial, entail? The following sections will map out the intensities of the artist’s Archimedean revolution.

### **2.2.13. 1672-1974: a burst of series**

Upon his return from Groningen where he exhibited his scratched transparent sheets of plastic [Fig. A.51], Konieczny sends a curious postcard to Groh, dated 1 February 1974 [Figs. A.62-3]. It is a gelatine silver print with a manipulated black-and-white reproduction of a portrait of a Polish seventeenth-century nobleman. The reproduction is mounted on a stock white card with clipped corners. A caption accompanying the portrait reads ‘Time is going backwards. I in my preceding edition’ [*sic!*] [Fig. A.62]. There is a dark red circle glued to the front side of the postcard [Fig. A.62] and a smaller bright red dot on the verso [Fig. A.63]. The work was created at some point between 1973 and January 1974 as a part of a larger series of manipulations of the same reproduction. The series establishes a certain rhythmic pattern whose variation resides in (1) the almost imperceptible manipulation of a small detail in the reproduction, such as orientation of the ends of the nobleman’s moustache, or (2) the selective addition of colour to parts of the reproduction.

In the version of the reproduction Konieczny sent to Groh, the ends of the nobleman’s moustache are facing downwards. This particular version [Fig. A.62] was also featured on a print subsequently published in a 1976 edition of the *Vile* magazine [Fig. A.66]—Ana Banana’s and Bill Gaglione’s San-Francisco-based independent artists’ periodical.

Another version of the reproduction has the moustache curved upwards. This version was exhibited in October 1974 at Warsaw’s Zapiecek Gallery under the title *1794-1974* [Fig. A.65] and, subsequently, in 1978 at Warsaw’s Studio Gallery under the title *1672-1974* [Fig. A.64]. The work is also subsequently listed in a 1986 catalogue as *1683-1973*.

As Konieczny (1/04/205) explains, there exists yet another version of *1672-1974*—with a horn affixed to the nobleman’s head, and at least one more—this time with blue and green colour fields painted on the reproduction with ink.

### **2.2.14. 1672-1974: the vertigo of the eternal return**

The artist (1/04/205) describes *1672-1974* [Figs. A.62-6, all subsequent mentions of this piece refer to the latter figure numbers unless stated otherwise] as ‘appropriation’, making a reference to a 2015 exhibition at Zachęta called *Cannibalism? On Appropriation in Art*. In turn, Szwajewska (Konieczny et al. 1/04/205) refers to the work as ‘a certain treatment [performed] on the portrait of [the Polish seventeenth-century] King Jan Sobieski’. Interestingly, Ronduda (2007: 46) calls this particular art-work an installation. *1672-1974* has exploded in the unprecedented burst of a series. The ever-changing names of this particular art-work cause a sense of vertigo and confusion. Its incessantly shifting eponymous year dates reveal a fundamental vital instability at the heart of the chronological understanding of time. Dates—normally understood as the punctual and cardinal determinations of time—are revealed, to borrow a striking image from Williams (2011b: 66), as shifting beads on a string, resonating and then carried away in the dizzying burst of the intensive force of the wind. For Szwajewska (1/04/205), *1672-1974* is a case of ‘absolute resemblance’ between the reproduction, on

one hand, and a photo of Konieczny's himself, on the other. Yet, at the same time, for Konieczny (1/04/205), this specific art-work somehow eludes memory. For Konieczny, *1672-1974* is not so much the case of resemblance but an 'interven[tion] through colour, [an] introduc[tion] of the concept of colour'. Upon encounter, *1672-1974* unfolds a zone of indiscernibility between the portrait as reproduction and the extent of its manipulation.

*1672-1974*—with all its indiscernibility—marks a radical break. It is not Badiou's extra-ontological event or a plunge into nothingness understood negatively as an empty void, as Ronduda (2010a: 153) suggests. Neither is this work pure appearance. Konieczny's overcoming of the empirical, as encapsulated in *1672-1974*, does not open up a void. Instead, it constitutes a productive affirmation of the world of multiplicities. *1672-1974* furnishes the caesura of the metamorphosis that plunges the artist in the ongoing revolution of Think Crazy as the future of the eternal return. And yet, in this future, all is revealed as variation of a single surface constituted by *1672-1974*—its meanders, passages and flows. Suffice it to have a brief look at the photographic documentation of Konieczny's 2012 exhibition at the Warsaw Zachęta gallery [Figs. A.157-61]. *1672-1974* envelops all the developments in Think Crazy. This should not be understood as a chronological succession but as the creation of a past-future that perpetually eludes the present. At the same time, through the conduit of *1672-1974* Think Crazy is oriented towards Konieczny's early constructions as an engineer whence it extracts a preoccupation with topology and the metallurgic process. *1672-1974* marks a topological metamorphosis of the temporal synthesis of incubation/germination that has imperceptibly passed into Konieczny's final synthesis—the production of what might be called here 'burst/egress'.

#### **2.2.15. *1672-1974* as a complex temporal synthesis: bio-logic, erotic memory and eternal return**

Konieczny's 1974 manipulation of a portrait of a Polish seventeenth-century nobleman is riddled with paradoxes. How does it work?

*1672-1974* is a complex temporal synthesis that marks the becoming-equal to the avant-garde. At the same time, the piece already opens up the world of intensive multiplicities, the eternal return, and thus inaugurates the temporal synthesis of burst/egress that still continues nowadays. The piece's invocation of the seventeenth-century Polish art and culture opens up the radical, metallic avant-garde of Think Crazy.

#### ***1672-1974: the rudimentary bio-logic of contractile auto-contemplation***

On its most basic level, *1672-1974* is founded upon the mechanical reproduction of a reproduction from which it extracts difference through the minimal manipulation of a detail—injection of colour, changes in the orientation of the ends of the moustache (cf. [Fig. A.64 vs. Fig. A.66]) or clipping the bottom right corner of the reproduction in the 1974 postcard [Fig. A.62]. The contraction of something new from repetition is the level of the Deleuzian (1994: 73-8) first passive synthesis of time that points towards a certain 'primary sensibility' constituting organic synthesis. At its most rudimentary level, this particular temporal synthesis refers to the necessary auto-contemplation—in the passage, variously called a 'passive self', 'contemplative soul' and 'imagination'—that constitutes an organism through its drawing of elements from the environment to the point of fatigue. It is fatigue that puts this contractile capability to a stop. As Deleuze (1994: 74) explains, 'we exist only in contemplating – that is to say, in contracting that from which we come'. Deleuze's (194: 73) vision of 'organic syntheses' can be read here in the light of *Anti Oedipus* not as a fixed organisation, but as a mobile, emergent subjectivity constituted only in the consummation and consumption of the process that have produced

it in the first place (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 16-17). This is already expressed in Deleuze's (1994: 78) notion of 'larval subjects'. As Deleuze (1994: 78) explains, 'selves are larval subjects; the world of passive syntheses constitutes the system of the self, under conditions yet to be determined, but it is the system of a dissolved self'.

Konieczny's treatment of Sobieski portrait is a basic operation that draws a minimal difference from repetition and thus creates a sign, a larval self and an auto-contemplation that refers back to, and is composed of, its underlying operation of vital forces. In this way, Konieczny's work sets up a basic vital rhythm that will resonate in works of the Think Crazy series. He creates an onto-aesthetic life that is a vibration flush with the contractile syntheses of 'water, carbon, chlorides and sulphates' (Deleuze 1994: 75). Such bio-logic of art, its production of production, recapitulates Konieczny's earlier pieces that have already harnessed (1) the photochemical process and its metallic salts (the *0.15 Contact* series) [Figs. A.22-30], (2) the expressive traits of metallic surfaces as material technology (*Drop Something in Here*) [Figs. A.6-10a] and as hallucination (*Spectre of Freedom*) [Figs. A.35-40], or (3) the swerving of a cloth in the intensive burst of the wind (*Spectre of Freedom*) [Figs. A.35-40]. At the same time, this rudimentary bio-logic of contractile auto-contemplation will reappear in (1) the rhythmic flicker of the filmic surface of *At Sea—Seven Evenings, Seven Days* (1975) [Figs. A.77-8] and its invaginated, topological space responding to a metallic object; (2) a black velvet cloak flapping in the wind (*24012008 Think Crazy*) [Figs. A.79]; (3) the sensitive textures of works forming part of the *Think Crazy for the Sistine Chapel* series [Figs. A.96-8, 138], 'vibrating intensely with light and colour' (Domurat 1983); or (4) the hot, fiery lustre of golden curtains that formed part of Konieczny's 2012 exhibition in Zachęta [Figs. A.157-61].

*1672-1974* explores art's mode of being as a simple sensation. It can be approached in the first instance as planting a micro-brain as a 'soul', a vital force that 'preserves by contracting that which matter dissipates, radiates, furthers, reflects, refracts, converts' (1994: 211) and expresses these elements in the qualitative diversity of expressive traits such as light and colour. For Deleuze and Guattari, this simple—at once ontological and aesthetic—sensation is epitomised in rocks and plants. According to the thinkers (1994: 212), 'the plant contemplates by contracting the elements from which it originates—light, carbon, and the salts—and it fills itself with colors and odors that in each case qualify its variety, its composition: it is sensation in itself'.

#### ***1672-1974: between the Markovian universes of prefabrication and clinamen***

Through *1672-1974* Konieczny's art becomes-capable of the avant-garde that it at the same time discovers as metallic. This rudimentary metallic avant-garde pertains to the level of the primary synthesis of production, i.e., to borrow an expression from Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 212), 'a faculty of feeling that coexists with embryonic tissues'. *1672-1974* harnesses its metallic powers, giving rise to Think Crazy as a magnetic conduit that attracts, contracts together and explicates Konieczny's both past and future art-works that use metal. At the same time, *1672-1974* and its minimal, creative and divergent repetition, bring into sharp relief Konieczny's early geometric, planar abstractions is a case of crude repetition without synthesis. Those early works might be seen as instituting bare, material repetitions that harness the Markovian logic of 'forgetting the past' (Konieczny 1970b) in order to create a perpetual present coextensive with the official socialist doctrine of the scientific-technical revolution (STR) (cf. Kodjak-Piotrowska 2014, Verwoert 2014: 123; Pospiszyl 2014: 111).

The STR project could be seen a program of the ideological capture of the future by the state. This was constituted by the operation of projecting a particular, communist vision of the future manufactured in the

present. In this way, the perpetual present was infinitely telescoped forward, like the eternal looping of a prefabricated element. Under this schema, there is no past except for isolated pockets of history understood as capitalist and reactionary. Between the present and the future there is only a difference of degree, if any at all. Needless to say, such circumstances hold no possibility of there ever arising a revolutionary future understood as qualitative change. Konieczny himself participated in this prefabrication of future as a constructor of ready-made elements in the 1960s [Fig. A.2], a task that he subsequently denounced as ‘heaps of aerated concrete’ (cf. Brewińska 2012: 5). Those prefabricated segments constituted strata, ‘the rigid, external structures’ (Konieczny 1982a) that epitomised the state’s control over its citizens. However, at the same time they already harboured the possibility of change through a certain rhythm of hollows and protuberances. Konieczny’s diagram of the construction of a hyperbolic paraboloid roof in Lublin back in 1962 [Figs. A.2] already points towards a minimal variation harboured by those set elements. Konieczny’s 1974 postcard to Groh [Figs. A.62-3] subtly hints at the dangers of prefabrication as well as its inchoate potentialities and lines of flights. In particular, a clipped edge of the reproduction [Fig. A.62] makes resonance a structural element labelled ‘3’ [Fig. A.2] on the diagram of Konieczny’s 1962 roof. Back in 1971, when asked in a survey about the role of art during the era of STR, Konieczny (1971: 8) importantly pointed out that STR only constitutes an intermediate phase. The transitory phase of STR already ‘ushers in the new image of what might be called ‘organic societies’ grounded upon a new type of imagination, decoupled from causality and technology. According to the artist (1971: 8), this ‘emancipat[ed] imagination ceaselessly unfolds, [and] is ‘perpetual[ly] giving birth’.

Konieczny’s invocation of the notion of ‘appropriation’ in order to describe *1672-1974* draws attention to the sub-representational and non-representational level of appropriation art. Appropriation art envelops a fundamental gesture of claiming something else. For Deleuze (1994: 74), such minor gesture is nothing other than the case of the first passive synthesis and its ‘contracting contemplation’.

Through the manipulation of detail in *1672-1974*, the minimal quantitative change—a slight difference in the work, e.g. a single clipped corner, a minimal operation on colour, a barely perceptible changing of the orientation of the moustache—marks a quantitative change. This is what Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 361, cf. Deleuze 2003: 135-6) refer to, after Lucretius, as *clinamen*, i.e. the minimal angle of a curve as the smallest deviation of a straight line. Deleuze invokes Lucretius’s notion of *clinamen* understood as an infinitesimal swerve on the path of an atom, ‘the smallest angle by which an atom deviates from a straight path’ (2003: 361). Seen from a different point of view, the work implements the Baroque technology of planting an ‘incongruous detail that spills over into the entire image’ (Bal 1999b: 7), most notably seen in Caravaggio.

### ***1672-1974 and the problem of time: between active recall and metempsychosis***

*1672-1974* also gives rise to an art-historical and world-historical delirium that proceeds through the body of the artist and the intensive surface constituted by the nobleman’s portrait. The title of the work thematises the telescoping together of the former present and the present present. In this way, the titles draws attention to the pure past as virtual coexistence whereby the present of 1974 is only the most contracted degree of the past of the seventeenth-century. This would be consistent with the functioning of the Bergsonian duration whereby at any given moment, time divides into a present that passes and a past that is preserved in itself. At the first glance, such an understanding could be seen as illustrative of (1) the action of memory understood as an active recall—a re-presentation—of the past in the present, on one hand, and (2) the notion of metempsychosis whereby one life is relayed at a different level, on the other.



Therefore, one might point towards two competing modes of understanding *1672-1974*.

In the first model, pure past is immediately co-opted by consciousness (cf. Deleuze 1994: 81), in the sense that a reproduction of the past affords a reflection in the present. This model constitutes the active synthesis of memory grounded upon the mode of re-presentation. An example of this first strategy in the 1970s was KwieKulik's 1971 pragmatic appropriation of footages showing different public appearances of the First Secretary of the Communist Party, Edward Gierek. The montage of Gierek's past public appearances served as a reflection on the artistic nature of his journeys (cf. Ronduda and Georg Schöllhammer 2012: 100-3). KwieKulik's pragmatic approach objectifies and represents the past drawing attention to its present uses. As such, it encapsulates a certain germinal attitude that came to fruition in the Polish 'Critical Art' of the 1990s.

In the second model, the one of metempsychosis or the cyclical present, freedom resides in accepting the destiny. The future is a dimension of the past and constitutes, as Pisters (2016) points out, 'the expectation of a repetition of an event whose outcome is based on the past'. This is in fact suggested in Konieczny's caption 'me in my previous edition'. In this way, Konieczny's avant-garde could be seen as an actualisation or activation of one of the pre-existing virtual levels of the pure past. Such an understanding could also lead to an assumption that Konieczny creates a bloc of sensation through the seventeenth century as the ultimate container, form and context for his work and thus opens up the notion of future that is based on a verbatim repetition of the past. This would place Konieczny amongst the Polish artists who constructed artistic visions of the messianic future as fulfilment of a past prophecy, specifically invoking the Polish national context and its Christian-national symbols. Works in this vein include Leszek Sobocki's series of painted self-portraits as a Polish seventeenth-century nobleman (The *Coffin Portraits* series, 1974-6) [Fig. B.1] and as the Polish Pope (1979); Warpechowski's *The Champion of Golgotha* (1978) [Fig. B.20] that saw him performing Christ-like poses in in futuristic sports attire; or the performances of Jerzy Bereś [Fig. B. 21] that utilise Polish national and Romantic imagery. This notion of metempsychosis and the cyclical time was also implied by the 1978 exhibition at Zachęta called *Poles' Own Portrait*. The exhibition was curated by the art historian Marek Rostworowski. It featured a mirror installed in a room at the end of the exhibition space otherwise packed tight with Polish national portraits from the Middle Ages up to 1979. Following Deleuze (1994: 88), one could say that the pure past becomes reduced to the notion of 'an ancient *mythical* present', one that forever banishes the injection of new in the eternal return. This type of thinking resonates in contemporary art practices. For example, the artistic collective Slavs and Tatars explores, amongst other things, the legacy of the Polish seventeenth-century culture, but this search is grounded upon Antoine Compagnon's (cf. 2005) notion of the 'anti-modern'. For the artists (Slavs and Tatars 2014: 27), it is a question of 'facing the past but moving forward towards the present, like Molla Nasreddin, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Sufi wise-man-cum-fool, often depicted riding backwards on his donkey'.

### ***1672-1974 and the problem of time: Proustian dark precursors***

Konieczny's work creates a bloc of sensation that is irreducible to either the pragmatic activation of the past as a use of the present, or grounding the present in the cyclical, mythical and immemorial model. In this respect, it might be worthwhile to summon here Deleuze's invocation of the famous Proustian literary description of the so-called 'madeleine episode' in *In Search of Lost Time* whereby the taste of a madeleine prompts the protagonist's vision of his childhood village of Combray and the experience of accessing 'a little time in its pure state'. As Ansell-Pearson (cf. 2001: 167-205; 2010: 161-74 for an insightful discussion of the second and third temporal synthesis and the madeleine episode) points out, Deleuze returned many times to the madeleine

episode. Deleuze's repeated exploration of the Proustian experiences yielded his conception of the virtual and contributed towards his subsequent typology of cinematic signs.

In *1672-1974*, Konieczny's 'treatment' and 'appropriation' of the likeness of a Polish nobleman guided by an inchoate feeling—an operation irreducible to the logic of resemblance with respect to an actual photograph of the artist—does not pragmatically re-present the validity of the Polish seventeenth-century art and culture in the context of the 1970s as a form of voluntary memory. Nor does it bring back the seventeenth century back to life as the living myth, fulfilment of a past prophecy or incarnation of a past self. In fact, one can say that in *1672-1974* the seventeenth century is irreducible to both to the present—the present of Konieczny's own photograph—and the past, the past as it was lived. To paraphrase Deleuze's (1994: 122) understanding of Combray in the madeleine episode, *1672-1974* is irreducible both to the present present that it could be and the former present that it was. In fact, the physical resemblance between Konieczny's photo and a seventeenth-century portrait of a Polish nobleman only constitutes the initial level of empirical experience that envelops something else altogether. As Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) points out, it is 'not just a resemblance'.

The seventeenth century 'envelops something =  $x$ , something which can no longer be defined by an identity (...) [,] the object =  $x$ ' (Deleuze 1994: 122). As Benker (1974) pointed out, Konieczny's 1974 Groningen installation [Fig. A.51] was preoccupied with accessing the inchoate 'something'. However, in Groningen this 'something' was perhaps too quickly subsumed into the schema of discursive representation. In turn, *1672-1974* thematises a secret fusion of two series—the past and the present. The seventeenth century rises precisely as the inchoate 'something', an imperceptible *dark precursor* (Deleuze 1994: 119) that is *atopon*, i.e. has no place of its own. Dark precursor is an *atopon* that perpetually displaces itself but yet exerts a real power as a 'differenciator' (1994: 119-20) that works between two heterogeneous series, makes them resonate and finally sweeps them both away in the shock of qualitative difference. 1672—and, the whole seventeenth century, for that matter—gives Konieczny a means to become-equal to the event of the avant-garde, beyond any psychological and empirical memory. The portrait of a nobleman functions as a dark precursor whose impact can be seen only in its effects and can only be assessed afterwards. *1672-1974* has created Think Crazy as an art machine that until this very day keeps progressively unfolding itself. This particular art-work constitutes a quasi-cause indistinguishable from its effects. The unfolding effects of *1672-1974* can be seen in Konieczny's 2012 exhibition at Zachęta. What unities different art-works presented at this particular exhibition is not their formal resemblance, but a certain consistency of their expressive materials affirming the intensive movement of forces. As Deleuze (1994: 119) explains, 'thunderbolts explode between different intensities, but they are preceded by an invisible, imperceptible *dark precursor*, which determines their path in advance but in reverse, as though intagliated'. The seventeenth century in Konieczny is not a form or essence to be copied, but a modulation. It is a certain intaglio technology whereby its virtual potential—its hollow areas—are multiplicities in the process of divergent development.

### ***1672-1974 and the overcoming of the Deleuzian erotic synthesis of pure memory***

The role of the portrait of a nobleman and the seventeenth century in Konieczny however merits further qualification. This role might be best described in terms of the Proustian encapsulation of the madeleine experience as providing access to 'a little time in its pure state' (Deleuze 1994: 122). It does not reside on the level of lived experience, nor psychological or empirical memory. If it ultimately forms a bloc of sensation that goes beyond the lived—beyond both the conscious selection of voluntary memory and the involuntary memory

of the reminiscence—it is not just a leap into the radical future of the eternal return either. First of all, the seventeenth century as the object =  $x$  first resonates between the two series, the past and the present, constituting the seventeenth century in itself, 1672 as pure past. It is a seventeenth century that resurfaces ‘in a splendour which was never lived, (...) a past that never was present’ (Deleuze 1994: 85), ‘a fragment of the pure past’ (1994: 122). The empirical memory of a physical resemblance is overcome, Konieczny’s ‘not just a resemblance’, gives rise to the artist’s cloud of forgetting that extends over the whole discussion of the piece. At this level, the piece forms a crystal-image (cf. Deleuze 1997b: 69)—a crystalline circuit, a zone of indiscernibility between two disjunct facets, the virtual image of the past and the actual image of the present, a virtual co-existence between the past and the present. This crystalline exchange and the doubling it effects is encapsulated in the shifting orientation of the nobleman’s moustache. At this level, the piece shows the constitutive splitting of the present in two different directions whereby, as Deleuze (1997b: 81) explains, ‘time splits in two dissymmetrical jets, one of which makes all the present pass on, while the other preserves all the past’. This is the level of the second, erotic, ‘transcendental’ passive temporal synthesis that is encapsulated in Konieczny’s provocation ‘time is going back. Me in my preceding edition’ [Fig. A.62]. Konieczny’s motto unfurls the vision of multiple mirror versions of the artist and thus extends the invitation to engage in an erotic search of Konieczny ever ‘new’ incarnations. Many researchers (cf. Jaremowicz 1986, Ronduda 2006, Uklański interviewed in Ronduda 2006) testify to this erotic lure occasioned by Konieczny’s art and his elusive charm and/or the aura of luxury. Under this schema, Konieczny himself becomes a shiny object that ‘unfolds within representation like a field of problems, with the rigorous imperative to search, to respond, to resolve’ (Deleuze 1994: 85).

However, the dizzying resonance induced by the seventeenth century, as well as the mobile dates: 1672, 1683 or 1772 that belong the period of Sarmato-Baroque, ultimately goes even further than the erotic exchange in the crystal of time. It is extremely important for the researcher attend to this final and more profound moment of radical overcoming of the erotic synthesis of memory. This moment is marked by the global grayscale conversion of the reproduction in *1672-1974* whose black-and-white tonality metallicises, flattens and throws cold water on the erotic effects of the work. At the same time, according to Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015), some variations of the work selectively introduce colour. For the artist, what is at stake in *1672-1974* is precisely the passage into ‘the concept of colour’ (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015). This passage into colour is something that can be already seen at play in the little red dot on Konieczny’s 1974 postcard to Groh. In *1672-1974*, the likeness of a seventeenth-century nobleman forms a crystalline circuit that shows the operation of the pure past, but at the same time the portrait envelops something else, something more profound—the ontological qualitative difference. The seventeenth century is an invisible, virtual object =  $x$  that first induces the erotic resonance between the past and the present, but at the same time sweeps both of those determinations away in ‘the amplitude of a forced movement’ (Deleuze 1994: 122) that ushers in the final synthesis of the eternal return as ‘the pure and empty form of time’ (1994: 122).

### 2.3. The synthesis of burst/egress

1672-1974 [Figs. A.62-6, all subsequent mentions of this piece refer to the latter figure numbers unless stated otherwise] marks a topological metamorphosis of the temporal synthesis of incubation/germination that has imperceptibly passed into Konieczny's final synthesis of burst/egress. Konieczny becomes-equal to the event of the avant-garde through a metamorphosis made possible through the seventeenth-century portrait. At the same time, Konieczny's act, his passage through the vanishing point—or, better still, the point of deformation—constituted by the seventeenth century makes his self, his personhood, his organised body and sharply delineated, finished artistic objects disappear, *de-formed* in the event of the avant-garde. As Deleuze (1994: 89-90) explains, in the future of the eternal return, now that the agent's metamorphosis has become-equal to the event, both

turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces, as though the bearer of the new world were carried away and dispersed by the shock of the multiplicity to which it gives birth: what the self has become equal to is the unequal in itself.

Konieczny's passage draws attention the fundamentally ontological—or, rather, ontogenetic—character of the avant-garde as the radical, revolutionary overcoming of time-space coordinates, empirical and psychological memory as well as the linear, successive and chronometric time. In this way, Konieczny's qualitative change enveloped by the seventeenth century runs counter to Bürger's (cf. 1994) reduction of the avant-garde to a historically situated moment of unique *trans-formation* intent on bringing art and life together, the 'historic avant-garde' (Bürger 1994: 109) constituted by a distinctive visual formal experimentation that can never be repeated in the neo-avant-garde practices.

Konieczny plunges into the event of the avant-garde that constitutes the third and final time in the temporal series distributed intrinsically by the eternal return. Most importantly, for Deleuze (1994: 122), the future of the eternal return, 'the pure and empty form of time', is fundamentally onto-aesthetic. It can be only accessed by art and experienced as a *real* artistic, optical or otherwise, effect (cf. Ansell-Pearson 2010). The eternal return of the avant-garde gives birth to the absolutely new that leaves behind, expels and exceeds its historical condition and the agent. The event of the future yields an autonomous, unconditioned work or product. The created severs itself from its creator who has now become a no-one—effaced, defaced, made anonymous and impersonal. It is also independent of the conditions of its production (Deleuze 1994: 90-4).

#### ***1672-1974: the artist's becoming-imperceptible as an intensive passage into the world of multiplicities***

The 1672-1974 marks the fracture of the stable self, opening up the 'crevice' (Szwajewska 1986a: 12) of craziness unfurling the schizo-art of Think Crazy. It is through the seventeenth-century that Konieczny discovers Think Crazy as the world of heterogeneous multiplicities. This new world is made possible through the death of the subject conceived as an active synthesis. What ensues is, as Szwajewska (1986a: 12) aptly summarises, the 'absence of tension between the soul and the objective world, dreams and facts, the internal world and the external reality [that] characterises both the illusions of Don Quixote and the artist's fabulations (RP *fantazje*)'. Konieczny's art has attained this single, virtual plane of composition. Think Crazy is nothing else than the intensive plane of experimentation that disorganises the body and dismantles the face, a BwO. Thus, through Think Crazy, Konieczny's art achieved what he had only theorised in 1971—the erasure of the artist as art's subject as a correlate of the work as art's formal object. This qualitative change in the status of the artist and the art object is palpable in Konieczny's artist statement from 1977 [Fig. A.113a] whereby the Think Crazy emblem

re-appears under all its three rubrics:

- (1) 'being an artist',
- (2) 'a piece of work', and
- (3) 'more concrete proposal for creating a new and free cultural atmosphere by means of Art wherever we [might] live in this land'.

The statement shows the diagram and the formula for Think Crazy as a three-dimensional multiplicity. This multiplicity is, most importantly, oriented towards the future.

The death of the figure of the artist as a correlate of his passing into madness is inscribed in the very beginnings of Think Crazy. Death can be understood here in the double Blanchotian sense (Deleuze 1994: 112; 1990: 151) as (1) dissolving the self as an anchor for the chronological time, meeting a personal limit in the present, but at the same time (2) a passage into the impersonal time that now constitutes a nonhuman point of view. Blanchot's double formulation of death resounds in the Deleuzoguattarian (1994: 169) notion of becoming-imperceptible. Becoming-imperceptible is a productive disappearance of the human that gives rise to the self-positing monument of sensation composed only of nonhuman affects and percepts. The effacing of the organism and the self does not lead to the void of absolute negation, but affirms a certain productive ungrounding that opens onto the world of intensive multiplicities. The world of multiplicities is the realm of heterogeneous, metastable systems filled with shifting zones of potential, traversed by intensities, pre-individual singularities and non-localisable connections forming provisional organs.

### **2.3.1. 1672-1974 and 24012008 Think Crazy: nonhuman diptych and the overcoming of the Kantian sublime**

Going beyond the human-centred empirical reality is the necessary condition that allows art as a bloc of sensation to stand on its own. In *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise this necessary emancipation of the other-than-human very forcefully. The percepts and affects that make up a monument of sensation go beyond the lived experience, lived perceptions and affections. They constitute 'autonomous and sufficient beings that owe nothing to those who experience or have experienced them' (1994: 168). The *1672-1974* as an intensive exploration of potentialities of the past brings into relief all those points, especially when one considers it as forming a past-future diptych together with Konieczny's 1975 looped video called *24012008 Think Crazy* [Fig. A.79]. *24012008 Think Crazy* is a 'living image' that features the Figure constituted by a black velvet cloak flapping in the wind, captured against the monochrome of a deep blue sky. The black Figure continues to swerve and flap in the wind infinitely into the future of 2008. Together, the two art-works constitute the impersonal, nonhuman time of Think Crazy as a caesura that perpetually eludes the present and brings the past and the future together as its two intrinsic aspects (cf. Deleuze 1997b: 275). Seen together, the two art-works draw a diagram for Think Crazy. This diagram shows Think Crazy as an art machine that effaces the chronological, empirical time and psychological memory grounded in the figure of the artist. Instead, Think Crazy becomes pure potentiality. It is conceived as the splendid and excessive event that moves in two directions at once (cf. Deleuze 1990: 166). Emerging out of the past-future diptych, Think Crazy is 'something which has just happened and something about to happen' (1990: 63).

Szwajewska (in Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015) importantly call *24012008 Think Crazy* ‘a life after life’. She explains that the art-work has to do with ‘the anticipated date of artist’s death’. Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015) in turn explains that the work ‘is linked to the self-portrait (RP i.e. 1672-1974)’. The designation of *24012008 Think Crazy* as ‘a life after life’ brings into stark relief a puzzling metamorphosis whereby the black Figure at once marks the death of the artist and the birth of a nonhuman life that resides on the level material-force relations. In particular, this nonhuman life resides in (1) affects of the sensitive surface of a cloth that unfolds according to intensive forcefields, (2) the vast cosmic monochrome of the sky, and finally (3) a shroud, sheath or cloak that non longer envelops and organises the human form. If the black cloak envelops anything, it is qualitative difference. *24012008 Think Crazy* launches itself towards the future world of the more-than-human intensities. The intensities bring about a collectivity in the perpetual making.

Konieczny’s art effectuates a topological transmutation of the German High Romantic *Rückenfigur* [Fig. B.14]—a human figure captured from behind while contemplating the view. The *Rückenfigur* is sharply outlined against the background that constitutes the object of its contemplation. The pictorial back-view figure is a correlate of the Kantian system of faculties whose active synthesis proceeds through the central figure of the Subject. In the Kantian transcendental experience of the sublime, the human senses are overwhelmed and short-circuited by a discordant elemental vastness. Disappointingly, Kant squanders this pure potentiality afforded by chaos. According to Deleuze (1994: 321), for Kant, the sublime marks precisely the moment when thought is ‘forced the think the supra-sensible as foundation of both nature and the faculty of thought’. In stark contrast, *24012008 Think Crazy* plunges into the chaos as a sieve that extracts from it a nonhuman, or more-than-human, chaoid sensation. This sensation is created as the shivering expressive trait of a black cloth. The black cloth is a purely rhythmic, onto-aesthetic figure sounding eternal return. It is a shadow of the human than has now emancipated itself as a productive bloc sensation, a world onto its own.

### 2.3.2. 1672-1974, *24012008 Think Crazy*, *Epitaph*: a world-historical becoming-imperceptible

*Think Crazy* is the event that gives rise to the temporal series constituted by 1672, 1974 and 2008. In this way, *1672-1974* [Figs. A.62-6] and *24012008 Think Crazy* [Fig. A.79] make up as a triptych that shows an impersonal, non-chronological past-future. In the triptych, the past of the nobleman’s portrait modulates the monochrome fields of *24012008 Think Crazy*. The ensuing situation is not unlike Bacon’s triptychs whose figures flee the inexorable gravity of their locale and own bodies, their spatio-temporal coordinates and the merciless present. Such flight proceeds through certain prosthesis organs that open onto the cosmic monochrome.

The Baconian dynamism of intensive flight is most palpably rendered in 1976 in *Epitaph* [Figs. A.109-10]. This particular piece extracts a world of intensities from the aesthetic figure of the old-Polish coffin portrait (cf. [Fig. A.30]). The seventeenth-century coffin portrait was characterised by a veristic rendition of the face of the deceased, painted on a hexagonal metal plate. The intensities of the coffin portrait function like Bacon’s depopulating prosthesis organs (cf. the washbasin and the sinkhole in [Fig. B.11]). The implied human face is dismantled and molecularised, giving rise to an artistic image that unfurls as a textured metallic relief, a black, shimmering field of potentiality. The extent of Konieczny’s intensive manipulation of the coffin portrait in *Epitaph* is brought into relief when it is juxtaposed with Sobocki’s *Coffin Portraits* series [Fig. B.1] that retain the face and merely treat it with the painterly broken tones. In stark contrast, Szwajewska (1986a: 12) describes *Epitaph* as ‘a black, creeping, all-embracing texture—knowing the secret of the other side of life’. The

dissolution of the stable selfhood and the organised body is intimately connected with the artist's metamorphosis and the emancipation of a bloc of sensations. It is thus only fitting that *Epitaph* should mark the beginning of a new series—*Think Crazy for Paintings/Images*. Verwoert (2014: 125) makes a similar observation when he points out that throughout the 1960s, in the avant-garde practice of the Slovak artist Stano Filko, the artist undergoes a 'death experience, (...) giving birth to a new virtual reality'. The triptych constituted by *1672-1974* and *24012008 Think Crazy* is a generative diagram for the new world of intensities. At the same time, the works mark the radical becoming-imperceptible of the artist.

The triptych constituted by *1672-1974* and *24012008* finds a profound commonality with Vermeer's *Art of Painting* [Fig. B.15]. What is at stake in art for Vermeer is the artist's passage into another word, a becoming-imperceptible of the artist that is the prerequisite for the creation of percepts and affects by a self-positing, autonomous sensation. This sensation resides beyond the lived experience but is a primary vital sensibility operating on the level of forces. As Deleuze (194: 199) points out drawing on Blanchot, art unfolds from a problematic blind spot in consciousness, 'that blind, acephalic, aphasic and aleatory original point which designates 'the impossibility of thinking that is thought', that point at which 'powerlessness' is transmuted into power, that point which develops in the work in the form of a problem'. This is precisely the crazy thought of *Think Crazy* that affirms and thinks the unthinkable pure difference. *Think Crazy* is the impossible vital thought that arises as a response to the intensive shock of multiplicity and celebrates it in the monument of sensation. This too is the art machine of Vermeer. As Svetlana Alpers (1984: 168) explains, in *Art of Painting* it is no longer a case of the erotic tension between figures. Instead, the artist

withdraws to celebrate the world seen. Like a surveyor, the painter is within the very world he represents. He disappears into his task, depicting himself as an anonymous, faceless figure, back turned to the viewer, his head topped by the black hole of his hat at the center of a world saturated with color and filled with light. We cannot tell where his attention is directed at this moment: is it to the model or to his canvas? Observation is not distinguished from the notation of what is observed. (...) [T]he picture (...) represents an *Art of Painting* that contains within itself the impulse to map.

At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the becoming-imperceptible of the artist coexists with the social field. Deleuze and Guattari make this abundantly clear when they remark that the schizophrenic delirium—a complex synthesis that shares the same territory with art—is also world-historical, feeding off history and geography whence it extracts intensities that are experienced on the body. Just as the thinkers (1984: 85-6) emphasise that Artaud's notion of productive BwO cannot be separated from Mexican culture and Tarahumaras tribal lore, Ana Mendieta's becoming-imperceptible in her *Siluetas Series* (1973-80) [Fig. B.19] is rendered through the Cuban hybrid belief system of Santería. In the same way, Konieczny's becoming-imperceptible proceeds through the Sarmato-Baroque.

Most importantly, Konieczny's (1981) sculptural *Epitaph* since the early 1980s has been frequently accompanied by a short verbal epitaph (cf. the first four lines: *Born under the sign of Cancer/ Son of the Moon/ Loves orchids/ And emerald will bring him luck*) whereby the artist does not represent himself as an agent, but furnishes the rhythmic figure of a poetic epigram that defines his posthumous art as a series of powers. The epitaph—coincidentally, one of the literary forms of the Sarmato-Baroque—renders Konieczny's death in terms of a vision, a passage into the intensive realm. In his death, Konieczny has passed into a chaoid sensation celebrating the cosmic (*Born under the sign of Cancer/ Son of the Moon*) through the power of affective resonance (*Loves orchids*) and the crystalline circuit of pure chance (*And emerald will bring him luck*). Thus, the future of the

eternal return that eludes the present constitutes the point of view of the epitaph.

### 2.3.3. **Konieczny and the lesson of Saenredam: the eternal return of the seventeenth century**

How is the eternal return possible through the seventeenth century? The artist's manipulation of the portrait of a nobleman in *1672-1974* envelops a whole series of metamorphoses catalysed by Konieczny's encounter with the Dutch Golden Age art in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1974. Konieczny's trip to the Netherlands in 1973 and 1974 can be considered as grand intensive voyages whereby an exploration of a milieu brings qualitative change. When considered in this way, Konieczny's Dutch, German as well as, later on, American and Italian peregrinations belong to a long line of migrations. This line has already started with the wandering pieces back in 1972 and 1972.

*1672-1974* provides a surface that reflects the event of the avant-garde as a map of intensities it extracts from the seventeenth-century Polish (and Dutch) art. More precisely, the portrait's conversion to grayscale creates not so much a surface, but an effect—the hallucination of the bas-relief as a haptic space (cf. [Fig. B.13]). The haptic space, the term Deleuze (2003: 189) borrows from Riegl, is constituted by the close-range non-optical view that bestows upon the eye a new tactile function, 'a properly visual sense of touch, or a haptic sense of sight' (2003: 153; cf. 122-3, 161). The haptic eye is surveying a surface that is neither fully flat and neither endowed with a deep volume. This curious surface has a shallow depth that can be touched with the eye, as if bevelled, engraved. Haptic vision maps out a milieu by touching it. It is not attempting to organise the space according to a perspective and thus succumb to the pictorial illusion. The notion of haptic corresponds to the Deleuzo-Proustian (Deleuze 1994: 122) spatialisation of 'qualitative difference' as that which 'does not exist 'on the surface of the earth', but only at a particular depth'.

### 2.3.4. **Saenredam: elastic planarity and the aesthetics of silence**

In 1973 or 1974, Konieczny visited the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. As he (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015; 10/04/2015; 12/06/2015) recounts, what particularly attracted him was a still-life with asparagus by Emmanuel de Witte and a church interior by Pieter Jansz. Saenredam. In particular, what is Konieczny's drawn to in Saenredam's architectural painting from 1636—*Interior of the Grote or St Bavokerk in Haarlem Seen from the South Ambulatory through the Choir and the North Ambulatory with the Large Organ* [Fig. B.6]—is a large column in the foreground. For Konieczny (12/06/2015), it was the painted column—or, more precisely, 'the ovals of the column'—'occup[ying] one third of the painting' that 'opened, as it were, a path to abstraction' as 'a documentation of something that does not [necessarily] have to be a reality'. As Svetlana Alpers (1984: 51-2) points out, Saenredam's work epitomises the particular Dutch understanding of perspective. This 'northern perspective' should be distinguished from the linear perspective. It is a matter of the image conceived not as 'the representation of an object in respect to its spatial relationship to the viewer', forming a window through which one can look, but 'the way by which appearances are replicated on the pictorial surface. According to Alpers (1984: 248), Saenredam

like the cartographe[r] (...) accepts the image as a flat surface rather than conceiving of it as a framed window through which we look, as did the practitioners of linear perspective. The question is not only what's *in* a picture, but what *is* a picture.



The artistic image is not a matter of re-presentation, of a window into an essence, but of ‘assembling’ multiple ‘views of the architecture viewed’ (Alpers 1984: 52) afforded by a single flat surface. What is more, Saenredam’s paintings can be seen as a membrane that oscillates between (1) the pictorial, perspectival illusion of depth and (2) a two-dimensional painted flat surface. The flat surface is characterised by linear patterns and luminous colour tonalities with a narrow, almost monochromatic colour range (cf. van Heemstra 2001: 82-8). This oscillating ‘elastic planarity’, to borrow an expression from Walter Liedtke (1982: 36), can be seen in (1) the chiaroscuro of the column where an illusion of volume is rendered by contrasting the values of light and dark shadows and (2) the flattened plane of the large church organ, manually gilded by the artist (cf. gilding in Saenredam in van Heemstra 2001: 82-8), that traces a nonorganic linear pattern.

Saenredam creates a virtual plane of composition through the fabrication of a certain BwO whereby the eye becomes liberated from its fixed organisation as an organ of sight and enters into a mobile connection with the sense of touch. This can be encountered in the cylindrical column that creates a palpable sensation, one that yields a resonant space that wants to be embraced, as if demanding that the viewer presses one’s body against it, seizes it and passes entirely into this energetic, undulating surface. What Konieczny’s response to Saenredam highlights is the artistic image conceived as a passage into ‘abstraction’—the non-figurative, non-representational realm of nonorganic vitality. It marks the end of time, the becoming-imperceptible of the human, the dissolution of the human as an organising principle and an essence. However, the passage into abstraction is at the same time only the beginning of art as an emancipation of the future world of multiplicities constituted by the circle of eternal return. Deleuze (1994: 299) expresses this point succinctly when points out that ‘the circle is at the end of the line’. Saenredam’s painting is not so much prefiguring Mondrian as Alpers would have it (1984: 52), the latter understood as a flat, purely optical surface, but a passage into a shiny metallic, textured surface or enfolded plane that captures the vibrations of imperceptible forces harboured by the material. Saenredam’s ensuing metallic effect of a bas-relief is a bloc of sensation that celebrates and preserves the affects of the painted surface, the affects of brushstrokes and the affects of its golden leaf. The robust column in the foreground constitutes a certain point of deformation. At the same time, it obscures and opens up the view. This is because the blocked view marks the exhaustion of the optical vision and an affirmation of vibratory, virtual powers of matter. The column is a cylinder that presses on the human figure and makes it dissipate, but at the same time opens into the pre-individual intensities of the surface. Therefore, the column is a topological figure functioning as a dead end in one respect and a conduit in the other. What many diverse accounts of Saenredam’s art-work (cf. Barthes 1972: 3-5, Eco 1991: 120-1, Nadler 2003: 163-7) have in common is the designation of his pictorial space as sparse, vacant, depopulated, rarefied, still, silent; devoid of narration, human subjects and objects. At the same time, this empirical, extensive iconoclasm merely envelops and makes possible the vision of a different world peopled by effects, intensities, the mannered nonorganic nomadic line and contorted geometries that at once affirm, express and construct forces. Barthes (1972: 3) suggests something similar when he points out that Saenredam’s church interiors effectuate a ‘negation [that] goes much further than the destructions of the idols’. As Howard Caygill (2002: 39-40) usefully explains, for Barthes, Saenredam’s architectural paintings articulate a double negation—the negation of the negation of the object. For Barthes (1972: 3), this more profound negation paves way for ‘a ‘modern’ aesthetics of silence’. We might add here that this vaulted silence of Saenredam’s church interior is not a nihilistic, catatonic stupor that has defeated all identity, representation, narration, figuration and entered the black hole of an entropic standstill, but is the full BwO as a zero-intensity that generates a new, immanent world.

### 2.3.5. *Think Crazy Propped Against a Wall: elastic planarity and intensive engineering*

One might say that Konieczny's *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel* [Figs. A.96-8, 138] installs into the real Saenredam's space as a productive germinal environment and an embryo filled with potential for multiple, rhizomatic and non-localisable connections. According to Szwajewska (1983), Konieczny's *Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel* 1976-83 installation is

not a system, (...) not images, (...) not just raging texture, either, (...) not an adventure of the artist and the spectator. It is a chapel, but at the same time also the last place in which the ceremony of worship should take place. (...) A new idea which cannot yet be put into words, which is a still unknown, INEXPLICABLE WHOLE.

However, Konieczny encounter with Saenredam's vaulted interior of the church of St. Bavo in Haarlem [Fig. B.6] makes resonance already with his 1973-5 installation *Think Crazy Propped Against a Wall* [Fig. A.59]. Konieczny's installation brings into relief the intensive dimension of Saenredam's surfaces and their pictorial bas-relief. It counter-actualises the event of Saenredam's architectural painting and creates a novel distribution of intensities. Konieczny durational installation extracts from Saenredam a radical passage into the non-human world of intensities that gather as effects on the surface of a blank framed canvas that is propped against a wall that supports a semi-cylindrical barrel vault. Konieczny's installation puts a three-dimensional structure in contact with a flat, two-dimensional, slightly blemished, matte surface that absorbs light to varying degrees. Konieczny's work creates a membrane—Liedtke's (1982: 36) 'elastic planarity'—that makes possible qualitative change. This transmutation arises in a shimmering movement back and forth between the volume, depth and its chiaroscuro, on one hand, and the haptic surface, on the other. The engineered construction of the wall and the ceiling highlights a tension between the forces and counter-forces, the outward lateral thrust of the vault, and the grounding and absorbing counter-forces of the wall. It is this tension that enables the manual installation of a framed canvas. We might say that it is an interplay and proportion of forces that makes art possible. The framed surface captures forces and extracts from them a chaoid sensation that unfolds as a vision, percept and hallucination of its surface and its the affects of its blemishes, maculations and matte zones. Konieczny's radicalises Saenredam's paintings by further metamorphosing their diminutive, anonymous figures—described by Nadler (2003: 167) as 'dwarfed by the vaulted space that encloses them, (...) isolated, faceless and mute, even when (...) posed for conversation'—into a resonant, conversant contact surface. In doing so, he articulates a singular vision of art as intensive engineering and manipulation of forces, a minor gesture of getting hold of life's nonorganic vitality. Konieczny's installation engineers *Think Crazy* as an intensive Saenredam. Such an account of the installation is corroborated by Konieczny's (1/04/205) intuition that already grasps the imposing cylindrical volume of a column in the foreground in Saenredam's 1636 painting in a spasm of deformation as multiple 'ovals'. For Konieczny, ultimately Saenredam no longer even designates vaulted church interiors, but names a passage through a limit. This passage may also be called a prosthesis organ that is not localised in one fixed place, but corresponds to a function. What is at issue here is a *Saenredam effect* that is mobile and can be engendered in diverse new circumstances. The Saenredam effect can be understood here as 'a borderline functioning as Anomalous, (...) [that] carries the transformations of becoming or crossings of multiplicities always farther down the line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 249).

### 2.3.6. *1672-1974 as a radicalisation of Saenredam*

*1672-1974* [Figs. A.62-6] is a radical art-work that seems to take place within the chiaroscuro of Saenredam's column whereby the two-dimensional surface pattern of lines and zones from Saenredam's 1636 painting now seamlessly passes into a shallow depth that creates the effect of a bas-relief. Konieczny's art-work extracts Saenredam's 'elastic planarity' as the vital experiment of a shiny metallic surface filled with multiple accidents brought about by imperceptible forces—the intensive movements of vibration, resonance and forced movement. What Eco (1991: 120) identified in Saenredam's architectural painting as 'a metallic and material light' already intimates such embryonic vision of Saenredam, the Saenredam effect. In turn, as summarised by Eco (1991: 120), for Barthes, Saenredam's church interior, 'reject[s] the discovery of an essence in order to seize every vibration of the appearance'. What is more important, however, is that what Konieczny's art extracts from Saenredam is the very notion of 'elastic planarity' and its ongoing, rhythmic systolic-diastolic deformation. This 'elastic planarity' is an onto-aesthetic figure that reveals art as a certain chaotic membrane. The notion of art as a membrane is thematised in Saenredam's painting by the intermediate position of the grand Haarlem church organ that for the protagonist of Melville's (2009: 853) *Moby Dick* was analogous to the baleen system of keratin bristles inside the mouth of the right whale, an organ functioning to filter out the food. Finally, Konieczny's work draws attention the germinal mannerism of Saenredam that liberates the line from its organic contour and thus creates the Worringerian Northern line. As Liedtke (75-7) points out, Saenredam

transformed the closely viewed architecture found in his sketches into taut patterns of lines, shapes and tones by means of his often eccentric use of a one-point perspective scheme (...) [so that] distorted architectural forms became the elements of refined design' in a way that was reminiscent of the pattern of contorted figures on Mannerist engravings of the artist's father, Jan Saenredam. (cf. [Fig. B. 22])

Konieczny's art-work creates a metallic surface that combines the close-range haptic view of the bas-relief with the manual, nonorganic character of the nomadic line. In this way, the work envelops different moments in art history that should not be understood in a representational sense. Instead, *1672-1974* opens a passage through different intensive states—including the Egyptian moment of the bas-relief and the Gothic, or Barbarian, amplitude of the nonorganic line. The Egyptian and the Barbarian are two frequencies bound together, entwined as two dimensions or of a single membrane constituted in the Saenredam effect.

However, Konieczny's art-work goes further than a lesson derived from Saenredam. *1672-1974* amplifies Saenredam's profound iconoclasm—an iconoclasm that goes beyond the destruction of the idolatrous object—as a means of approaching the seventeenth-century portrait of a Polish nobleman. Saenredam is launched as an affective weapon that extracts—both from the old-Polish art and the painted likeness of the body of a nobleman—an intensive, embryonic body that is filled with potential. Konieczny's treatment of the reproduction is achieved through the operation of the temporal synthesis of resonance and forced movement between 1672 and 1974, as described in the preceding sections, coupled with global grayscale conversion of the reproduction, bi-directional manipulation of the moustache, and selective injection of colour. All those operations produce a metallic plane and induce the varied, mobile and intensive dynamisms that traverse it. Konieczny's manipulations resonate with Saenredam eccentric technique of gilding as well his trademark elastic treatment of line and space. Konieczny's (12/06/2015) work—with its transversal connection between 1672 and 1974 as well his emphasis on art as a technology of documentation of the imperceptible 'abstraction', 'of something that does not [necessarily] have to be a reality'—makes resonance with what Liedtke (1982: 22-6) identifies in Saenredam as 'the realistic imaginary'. The scholar is referring to Saenredam's practice of the faithful documentation of

purely fictive objects, not *actually* existing in the depicted churches.

### 2.3.7. 1672-1974: Sarmato-Baroque as the creative involution of BwO

The Polish seventeenth-century art and culture rises as a bloc of sensation in 1672-1974 [Figs. A. 62-6]. Through Saenredam, it brings about Think Crazy as the event. With 1672-1974, Konieczny's art leaps into the untimely event of the avant-garde, giving rise to what Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 164) call 'a contemporary, creative involution'. The planar, tensile surface of 1672-1974 installs in the portrait of a Polish seventeenth-century nobleman a BwO as a membrane. This membrane oscillates between its functioning as a sieve or baleen—a semi-porous modulation of flows—and an inaccessible taut barrier. It is now receding into the stupor of its jet-black pools, now partaking in circulations of intensities that travel the expanse of its non-human landscape. The intensities occupy regions of shallow bevelled interlocking armour plates wrought in convex, semi-cylindrical shapes punctuated by rivets and traversed by metallic shine. Another type of intensive passages is exhibited by the virtual, whirling movement of the nobleman's flanged, cone-shaped ceremonial mace forming a turbine. Yet another region quivers with contractile excitations harboured by a strip of creased fabric whose flows are modulated at a single point. Last but not least, a nomadic, nonorganic Mannerist ornamental line springs forth from the hemmed textile edges running the length of (semi-)circular shapes that define the figure's pauldron and mantle, respectively.

This complex, heterogeneous landscape is the embryonic tissue of the ovoid BwO of Think Crazy. The diverse regions, the intensive climates of this new world correspond to a continuum that at once is about to yield and has already yielded different becomings. Those germinal neighbourhoods of pure potential will be progressively unfolded in the practice of Think Crazy as multiplicities differentiated along divergent lines. For example, the turbine envelops a series of Konieczny's kinaesthetic performance pieces [Figs. A.100, 104-6, 137, 147] that took place between 1976 and 1985, but at the same time finds its dark precursor in the random movements of Konieczny's 1970 black (object no. 3 in [Figs. A.33-4]) steered by cosmic rays. In turn, the problem of textile excitations will be developed in 1975 in the invaginated, topological space of *At Sea—Seven Evenings, Seven Days* [Figs. A.77-8], but at the same time had already been developed between 1971 and 1972 in Konieczny's *Spectre of Freedom* [Figs. A.35-40]. The metallic surface will be—or, rather, is about to be—unfolded most notably since 1976 in Konieczny's *Thing Crazy for Images/Paintings* (e.g. [Fig. A.109-10]), but had already appeared in germinal form in *Drop Something in Here* [Figs. A.6-10a] in 1968. The nomadic line will turn into abstract expressionist outlines of *Grasses* [Figs. A.124-5] in 1981, just as it had already been developed into the lattice of unfolding creases on the surface of the golden bag in *Drop Something in Here* [Figs. A.6-10a]. 1672-1974 is also a germinal repository of various materials and shapes that will be—or, rather, will happen to be—subsequently used by Konieczny, such as strips of fabric (e.g. *24012008 Think Crazy*, 1975) [Figs. A.79] and tubular objects (e.g. *Sceptre*, 1976) [Figs. A.99-100].

At the same time, various movements of the intensive landscape of 1672-1974 already refer back to Konieczny's earlier pursuits—his interest in (1) curved spaces, (2) topology, (3) fabrication of hinges and articulated joints, (4) construction of vaults as tensile surfaces that escape the load-bearing function of pillars, (5) variation and repetitions within compound systems, (6) metals and the metallurgical process, (7) the powers of the cosmos as a groundless support. 1672-1974 brings into stark relief art's capacity to construct a monument of sensation that celebrates the incorporeal event. As Deleuze (cf. 1990: 2) shows in *Logic of Sense*, this event of pure becoming perpetually eludes the present, or rather pathologises, perverts and infinitely divides the present, as 'it moves in

both directions at once', the past and the future. In this way *1672-1974* ushers in Think Crazy as a world-historical delirium where the states of intensity that are traced upon the artist's own body are at the same time the problems of engineering and the problems of the seventeenth-century Polish art and culture. As I will further demonstrate, the two realms are fused together in Konieczny's leap into the art of the steppes. This situation finds its analogue in Barbara Glowczewski's discovery of the topological reasoning at play in the Australian Aboriginal kinship system of the Warlpiri tribe. As the anthropologist (2016: 284) remarks,

it was not an image of the primitive man I was catching a glimpse of, but that of the man of the future. The one who does not think of the universe as limited and men as elected but who examines thought in infinite cosmological paradoxes.

In his seminal essays, Chrzanowski (1988: 181-2, 221, 230) has identified several features of the so-called 'Sarmatian portrait' [Fig. B.29] that *1672-1974* exemplifies. These include sharp physiognomic verism bordering on caricature; the face of the sitter (as well as the whole body, as we might add) rendered without regard for the pictorial illusion of volume in chiaroscuro; the characteristic planarity of the whole scene; meticulous attention paid to the intricately crafted jewellery, attire as well as the attributes of social class and heraldic clan; and, last but not least, the portrait's non-narrative, conventional background with set elements, such as a column or a curtain. Other scholars also add to this typology flat patches of vivid colour and lack of linear perspective (cf. Onians 2004: 159). Chrzanowski (1988: 122) draws attention to the contrast between the veristic likeness of the sitter's face, on one hand, and the idealisation of his or her attire and staffage, on the other. This latter is defined by Chrzanowski (1988: 122) as 'a planar, ornamental and conventional treatment of the whole figure and the scenery'. The above features of the old-Polish portraits lead Chrzanowski (1988: 224-51) to assert that the Sarmatian figure does not have a body (although, we might add, it does have a BwO). The scholar (1988: 243) links this notable absence to the Polish Baroque literature with its tell-tale lack of proper narration, or rather *narrativeness*, understood as the use of plot devices, such as a description of the background, with which one can set the scene and create a properly narrative perspective. According to Chrzanowski (1988: 243), instead, Polish literature of the period succumbed to a meticulous, almost passive, flat recording of details.

### **2.3.8. 1672-1974: intensive modulation of the Sarmatian (coffin) portrait**

Konieczny's treatment of the reproduction [Figs. A.62-6] further emancipates the Worringerian (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 493-9) nomadic, ornamental nonorganic vital line of the Sarmatian portrait (cf. [Fig. B.29]). By rendering the reproduction black and white, Konieczny effectuates the creative involution of the Sarmatian portrait that traces its lineage back to the sixteenth-century sepulchral bas-reliefs made of stone (cf. Chrzanowski 1988: 43-53). In this germinal, 'early phase' (1988: 52) of Sarmatism, as Chrzanowski (1988: 48) points out, 'subtlety of the earlier portraits metamorphoses itself into the sharp explicitness of the later [Sarmatian] portraits; to borrow an expression from Wölfflin, *linearism* begins to give way to the pictorial, *malerisch* aspect'. A parallel untimely (after Nietzsche) or preposterous (after Bal) effect attained through the nomadic affects of metal can be seen in a 1986 re-working [Fig. A.8, 8a]—or, better still, a manipulation, transmutation or modulation—of the image of the 1968 *Drop Something in Here* aluminium bag (cf. [Figs. A.10a]) that now pulsates with the secret, inhuman motility of stone.

*1672-1974* [Figs. A.62-6] thus finds in the Sarmato-Baroque, the Polish seventeenth-century art and culture, a fundamental intensity encapsulated in the bas-relief and its haptic visions, the vital logic of a sensitive metal plate, a resonant metallic surface traversed by flashes of light, giving rise to unpredictable (trans)mutating lines

emancipated from the organic outline. Such metallic logic can be seen in the seventeenth-century Polish artistic craft—jewellery, curved weapons, horse trappings and textiles. Converting the reproduction into grayscale brings this radical, non-human metallic vital aspect of Sarmato-Baroque, literally, *into relief*. In this way, *1672-1974* becomes the old-Polish coffin portrait [Fig. B.30]. The coffin portrait was a smaller version of the Sarmatian portrait, painted on a hexagonal copper, lead or a silver plate. The hexagonal shape of the coffin portrait is used in Konieczny's 1976 *Epitaph* [Figs. A.109-10] which transmutes the expected customary veristic likeness of a face into a metal relief composed of 'heterogeneous pieces of thin aluminium' (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015). The metallic logic summoned forth by *1672-1974* has wide-ranging implications that in fact constitute a manifesto for the metallic avant-garde.

### 2.3.9. *1672-1974: Sarmato-Baroque as a manifesto for the metallic avant-garde*

First of all, *1672-1974* [Figs. A.62-6] strips the reproduction of possibilities of the iconographic, figurative and representational interpretation that aims to furnish the proper *sense* of the portrait by deciphering the sitter's social and economic position. Instead of describing a grand military commander, a man claiming for himself particular victories, occupying a specific social position, supporting financially a particular foundation, etc., there emerges an anonymous entity stripped of all rank, class and economic status—in fact, stripped of all the coordinates of measurable, extended space and chronological time. This entity instead emerges as an embryonic body, a bearer of metamorphosis, a larval self equipped with a series of elastic powers of *sensation*—to whirl, to reflect light, to shimmer, to resonate, to bend, to fold, to be divided, to mutate, to germinate, to be poised in continual motion, to wait and to fall silent and motionless. All those powers are being progressively unfolded in the practice of *Think Crazy*. One can even say that *Think Crazy* is but a series of powers that unravel from *1672-1974* as their zero-degree of intensity (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 163). It is a matrix or principle of production of intensities that are as embryonic as they are world-historical, immediately conjoining pure potentiality with social production, fusing intensive passage with temporal and geographical designations in a world of whirring naturalcultural, naturalhistorical production. In fact, Konieczny explicitly draws attention to the question of artifice (cf. Szwajewska 1980). He also problematises the very notion of organic life in his the 1975 series of *live images* [Figs. A.73-4, 77-81] and processual 'installation of the still-lives' (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015) (cf. [Figs. A.72, 99, 101-3]. In those works life is reconfigured as a bundle or entanglement of pre-individual, inhuman inorganic forces. Most importantly, Szwajewska (1983b) identifies Mannerist intensities in Konieczny's *Think Crazy for the Sistine Chapel* [Figs. A.96-8, 137-8] by detecting the artist's preoccupation with *fordi maniera* defined as 'creation without a natural pattern, exclusively on the basis of imagination'. In turn, what Konieczny (10/04/2015) has extracted from his encounter with the Sistina in Rome is its ornamentation characterised by the artist as 'non-homogeneous, non-identical, (...) [and] destabilising' (*niejednorodny, niejednakowy, destabilizujący*). Konieczny's metallic Sarmato-Baroque, which has achieved the highest pitch of intensity in 2014 [Figs. A.158-61], resonates with Stażewski's luminous metallic surface complicated with barrel-shaped protrusions (cf. Bogucki 1983: 203-4) created in the series of his copper reliefs executed between 1963 and 1967 (cf. [Figs. B.8-9]).

Konieczny's art-work destroys the anthropocentric vision of the man presiding over the world and forming dull, impassive matter under the regime of his face and the tyranny of its distinctive features that bear the imprint of authority—something that Barthes (1972: 10) calls *numen* with respect to the seventeenth-century Dutch guild portraits. Konieczny *1672-1974* dismantles the face as the central seat of power, personhood and individuality, just as it disorganizes fixed body functions by neutralising the eye's power to read the gaze of the portrait's

figure and the whole reduction of art to practices of looking, seeing and gazing. What is more, *1672-1974* emblematises the rupture of the sensory-motor link. The figure's head has no face as a correlate of the active synthesis in the mind but a Petri dish of larval shapes disconnected from the motor actions of the hand that is frozen in the act of seizing the baton.

**2.3.10. Body-works: *Orion's Sickle* [Figs. A.70-1], *At Sea* [Figs. A.77-8]. Sarmato-Baroque as a productive disorganisation of the body and a production of desire distributed in new provisional organs**

Disorganising, dismantling, defacing, Konieczny's work [Figs. A.62-6] extracts from 1672 a pure Sarmatism as the vision of a rhizomatic and continuous modulation of material-force relations, decoupled from the hierarchical moulding of matter by the human agent. Konieczny's work expresses the idea of freedom wherein the lineages of the embryonic body, the pure potentiality of BwO, and the metal are intertwined, thus entering multiple, non-localised connections, passing through various mobile stages, encountering provisional functions. The embryonic body and the metal do not engender the relations of control, mastery and dominance but the relations of reciprocal, yet asymmetrical determination; the relations of resonance induced by mutual use, prosthesis, incubation and catalysis. This can be seen in Konieczny's 1974 *Orion's Sickle* [Figs. A.70-1] whereby the eponymous mythological, world-historical figure of a hunter designates an intensive passage; an abstract, nomadic line that creates a new organ inside his thighs at the same time as the artist's sexual organs appear in a stage of involution. The new, fleeting organ, lasting only as long as the grip of the Konieczny's hand or his muscular contraction, relays the particular expressive traits of the metal sickle, its curved edge, cylindrical hilt; cold, uneven and nodular surface. The sickle is an affective weapon on the hunt for new intensities. The sickle-thigh organ is not a tool that performs a pre-established function or executes a prior program. Instead, it introduces a disjunction in the prescribed functioning of organs grounded in the pleasure principle. The sickle-thigh organ creates an open-ended virtual diagram of potentialities that it records and maps out on the skin of the body and the surface of the metal. The metallic and the human belong to one planar surface whose material composition is immediately ontological—or, rather, ontogenetic. The surface is a correlate of a single, resonant ontological plane, a single non-anthropocentric auto-modulating continuum. Konieczny's body has passed into a metallic bas-relief, but in this becoming-imperceptible, it has gained a new life. Therefore, *Orion's Sickle* is not merely a case of disjunction, the coming to a halt of one bundle of connections. At the same time, the provisional organ invents an actual new function, a short-lived connection whose affect lasts as long as its material support, the metalhuman machinic coupling. Konieczny's body passes into a world of intensive multiplicities inhabited by Saenredam's column. He has not been punished with a catatonic halt like the Biblical figure of Lot's wife who turned into a pillar of salt as punishment for catching a glimpse of Sodom. The non-representational operations or modulations of provisional organs in *Orion's Sickle* [Figs. A.70-1] set up a vital, inorganic rhythm that makes the organised, signified and subjectified body buckle under pressure. Such vector of metamorphosis of the eponymous sickle-organ should be firmly distinguished from the *détournement* of Sándor Pinczehelyi's pop-art take on the sickle in his 1973 photographic self-portrait *Hammer and Sickle* [Fig. B.34] where it is a case of a remix or an exchange of symbolic meaning residing in distinctive political iconographical (and iconic) motifs of the communist era. Konieczny's work instead finds a strong resonance and complementarity with the Romanian artist Ion Grigorescu's eccentric bodily displacements (cf. his 1977 self-portrait *Delivery/Birth* [Fig. B.35] or his 1976 film *Masculine/Feminine*) where his organs circulated within unforeseen future economies of desire beyond gender and specieist dichotomies, as if suspended *in potentia* in a metastable colloidal solution traversed by nodular islands of bustling reproductive activity.

*Orion's Sickle* [Figs. A.70-1] as well as other art-works that employ Special Equipment (1974-) (cf. [Figs. A.72, 99]), together with Konieczny's 1975 looped videos [Figs. A.73-4, 77-81] and *Conversing with a Dog* (1976) [Fig. A.94] have a particular relation to desire. This relation to desire is not adequately conceptualised as sensual, sensory, (homo-, hetero-) erotic and sexual pleasure, or pleasure in itself, for this matter. In fact, Konieczny has achieved a remarkable un-gendering and un-sexing of the male/female or even species determinations, unparalleled in Polish (male) contemporary art. All the above works establish trans-gender, trans-sexual (and zoo-sexual insofar as animality or becoming-animal as in [Fig. A.94] functions as a conduit for becoming-imperceptible) and trans-human connections between organs—a breast-organ, vagina-organ, thigh-organ, head-organ, mouth-organ, etc. This connectivity and mutual resonance is frequently thematised in the titles of Konieczny's works as a conversation or a dialogue (cf. [Figs. A.73-4, 80-1, 94-5,117]). Multiple connections produced here are however not of the order of habitual patterns or of mechanical repetition. Neither are those connections primarily erotic. Each coupling is at the same time radically disjunctive as it engenders qualitative change, each time marking a new intensive passage, rather than performing the arithmetic calculation of mere differences in degree. The type of connectivity effectuated by those couplings is desexualised from the point of view of the normative pleasure (and reality) principle that endows objects with erotic value and thus creates the erotic effect of memory. Konieczny's body-works can be called body art only insofar as they offer a revelation of BwO beneath the organisation of the body, showing BwO as the force of anti-production, that as Holland (2001: 28) explains, 'desexualize[s] desire by neutralizing the organ-machine connections, and thereby constitute[s] a surface that records networks of relations among connections'. At the same time, this desexualisation is creative and joyous, giving way to an eccentric new world of the future that constitutes larval subjectivities and new organs flush with a continuum of ever-changing intensities, creates its own sexes and transitory sexualisations in a different way. Such creative desexualisation that generates nomadic larval subjects can be understood as the Deleuzoguattarian (1984: 16-22) conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation.

Konieczny's vision of body art affirms a sense of freedom found in the iconoclasm of the eternal return that 'inhibits the application of the pleasure principle as the prior directive idea' (Deleuze 1994: 114-5). Konieczny's body art pieces produce a creative, artistic desexualisation that finds desire in surveying endless plains of the metallic bas-relief. In fact, this can be seen in the whole metallic line that unfolds from *Santa Conversazione* (1975) [Figs. A.80-1], *Portrait with Unfeeling Rocks* (1978) [Figs. A.115-6], *Tricorn* (1983) [Figs. A.139-45], *Concentration and Ecstasy* (1985) [Fig. A.147] and, most recently, in Konieczny's 2014 Think Crazy exhibition in Zachęta Gallery [Figs. A.157-61]. Just like in Deleuze and Guattari's (2005: 155-6) account of masochism as a BwO, Konieczny's surfaces produce a desire that occupies a plateau of undifferentiated, unformed and inchoate intensity; pure potentiality that is not measured by and resolved in sensual pleasure. Such plateau of vibrating intensity unfurls in *At Sea* (1975) [Figs. A.77-8] where it becomes the eponymous oceanic smooth space traversed by rhythmic flickers the artist (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015) calls 'waves'. One might also name this infinite, intensive space as the steppe, to bring into relief its untimely link to the nomadic Sarmato-Baroque. Such an understanding of planar surfaces in Konieczny resonates with Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (Deleuze 2006d: 54) world-historical invocation of nature as the (Sarmatian) steppe —'a cooling force which transforms desire' sweeping away both the sensual pleasure and the inherent sadism of the Oedipalised structures. Konieczny's conversation-works yield a mutation of body art, giving rise to what might be called a BwO art. The artist's vision of the body can be understood in terms of Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza. What Deleuze (1988: 123) shows us that already in the Spinoza books is a radical reconfiguration of the concept of the body



which is no longer an organism, in the sense of a fixed organisation of its organs, but a precarious set of relations vibrating with inchoate potentialities, ‘speeds and slownesses between particles’, distinct yet inseparable from its ‘capacity for affecting and being affected’. Such perspective cuts across the traditional Artifice-Nature distinction. Already in *Spinoza. Practical Philosophy*, the body is defined simply as ‘life, (...) living individuality’ (1988: 123) on the plane of immanence.

Konieczny’s (et al. 1/04/2015) humorous account of *At Sea* [Figs. A.77-8] testifies to the production of provisional organs. When asked about the location of the miniature ship, the artist replied that it was located ‘in a mouth’. For Szwejewska (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015), what is at stake in Konieczny’s body art pieces is not erotics, but ‘an intimation of another world; a new world, yet unknown to us (...), completely de-realised’. What happens on Konieczny’s planar surfaces are not erotic encounters and lived experiences of subjects and objects, but molecular phenomena, effects and forces harboured by expressive materials. Konieczny shares this preoccupation both with the seventeenth-century Sarmatian Baroque and its distinctive portraiture as well as the church interiors of Saenredam. Barthes’ (1972: 3) description of Saenredam’s practice—‘to paint so lovingly these meaningless surfaces, and to paint nothing else’—might also be applied to the Polish artist. For Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015), what is at stake in his video and body art pieces alike is the absolute artifice encapsulated by the golden colour, which ‘does not appear in the spectrum of natural light’, but is merely an effect, ‘a reflection of natural light off the mineral that is gold’. Konieczny creates conductive material surfaces that capture, amplify and qualitatively change the real. According to the artist (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015), it is precisely—gold and, more specifically, the sheer artificiality of the golden colour—that is at stake in Baroque. Konieczny’s Baroque is defined as an essence but is individuated by a haecceity that operates on the level of vital forces and their affects. Such an understanding is in fact already implied in Konieczny’s designation of ‘living images’ that conceives the artistic image as flush with life itself. What *At Sea* [Figs. A.77-8] extracts from the Sarmato-Baroque is a wealth of potentialities inhabiting its ubiquitous metals—found in the metal plates of coffin portraits, horse trappings, jewellery and curved sabres. What the video piece wrenches out of the Sarmato-Baroque is a becoming-steppe, becoming-nomadic of Polish culture and art.

### **2.3.11. *Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait* [Fig. A.116]: becoming-steppe as BwO and metallic agency-ing**

The question of the mutual relation between the human body and metals in Konieczny’s practices merits further qualification. This problem is posed more explicitly in *living images* [Figs. A.73-4, 77-81] as well as a series of works that employ Special Equipment (cf. [Figs. A.72, 99]), but it is also already implied in the series constituted by Konieczny’s metal reliefs (cf. [Figs. A.96-8, 139-45, 158-9]). We have seen that in all those artworks, the human and the metallic enter a single continuum composed only of materials and forces, matter and energy, pure potentiality harboured by resonant matter—akin to ore deposits buried in rocks. As *Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait* [Fig. A.116] aptly demonstrates, the concept of BwO insufficiently accounts for this plane of pure potentiality. Of course, the BwO at once designates unformed matter (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 43), pure intensity as a matrix of production of intensities, the embryonic aspect of the body and an experimental disorganisation of the body. At the same time, the concept is still human-centred, since it implies a process of liberation and subtraction that proceeds through the human body and its processes of production of desire. Such an understanding would imply that Konieczny is fabricating himself a BwO through the use of metals and thus

initiates a one-sided process. *Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait* [Fig. A.116] in turn expressly thematises the necessarily mutual becoming of the body, a golden prosthetic horn, and the metallic surface of a bas-relief—the eponymous, metal-bearing rocks. A new, complementary concept is therefore needed to attend to this curious metallic synthesis in Konieczny whereby the artist functions as a metallurgist who celebrates the event of metal’s becoming. Seen from this point of view, Konieczny becomes a mere conduit in a long line of metallic life that had started with extraction of ore from the eponymous unfeeling rocks. Metallic materials summon forth its nomadic subject into being. The metallurgist only comes into existence in the process of unfolding—or rather, intuiting—inchoate potentialities harboured by metals. It is in this sense that we can say that Konieczny’s exhibition at Zachęta in 2012 is a great work of metallurgy that reveals the artist as merely an emergent thought that arises in response to a difference of intensity on the surface of the metal. Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 404–15) accounted for such metallic line, epitomised by a curved sabre propagated by the Scythian (and Sarmatian) tribes, through their notion of *machinic phylum*, i.e. technological lineage. The Sarmato-Baroque curved sabre *karabela* (cf. [Fig. B.27]) as well as Konieczny’s prosthetic horn in *Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait* [Fig. A.116] affirm an analogous movement of nomadism and in this sense the three belong to—or, better still, extend—a single technological lineage.

The machinic phylum designates at once unformed vital matter in ceaseless variation—an ‘operative and expressive flow [that] is as much artificial as natural’ (2005: 406) encapsulated in the conductive properties of metal—and a particular technological lineage that unravels its potentialities. Machinic phylum in the first sense reveals all matter as fundamentally metallic. In other words, ‘metal is coextensive to the whole of matter’ (2005: 411). This ‘panmetallism’ (2005: 411) is a vision of matter in continual variation, pliability and conductivity. In turn, machinic phylum in the second sense harnesses the singular material composition of a metal. It does so through a set of operations that in turn determine the metal’s traits of expressions, such as ductility, colour, etc. In other words, the particular type of a metallurgical process that operates on a metal and produces to an object—a weapon, for example, a sabre—determines what the latter can do, its affects. According to the thinkers (2005: 411), ‘metallurgy is the consciousness or thought of the matter-flow, and metal the correlate of this consciousness’. Such an understanding finds its correlate in the art of Sarmato-Baroque that can be understood as nothing else than artistic craft. Rather than belonging to the paradigm of pure (and representational or figurative) Fine Arts, the Sarmato-Baroque was an instance of decorative arts that affirmed the powers of metals and extended their nonorganic life, even and especially in portraits. This is especially visible in the coffin portrait [Fig. B.30] whose metal surface was at times melted down into an ingot after the funeral ceremony so that it could be moulded into something else (Chróścicki 1974: 70). The complex funereal ceremony, *pompa funebris*, crystallised around the expressive traits of the coffin portrait whose hexagonal shape corresponded to the shape of the front side of the coffin, while its metallic surface was designed to reflect the light of candles.

*Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait* [Fig. A.116] brings together the BwO and machinic phylum as two complementary, co-implicated points of view onto the plane of immanence of art. The dismantling of organism unleashes the intensive fact of the body as an embryonic ontology of force relations: ‘waves and vibrations, migrations, thresholds and gradients’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 153). At the same, the technological lineage of a tool, such as the curved Tatar sabre or Konieczny’s Special Equipment, encapsulates ‘a matter-movement bearing singularities, haecceities, qualities or even operations’ (2005: 512). Konieczny’s neo-avant-garde practices foreground an understanding of art as technology. In the artist’s practices, art is an intensive

engineering of forces and the process of ongoing installation that is flush with the real. This approach can be seen very clearly in Konieczny's metal-works (cf. [Figs. A.115-6, 123, 131, 139-45]). It also expressly invoked in *Propped Against a Wall* (1973-5) [Fig. A.59] and captured by Konieczny (cf. Szwajewska 1986) in his notion of 'installation of the still-lives' (cf. [Figs. A.101-3, 111-3]). In this way, Konieczny's art-works created as part of Think Crazy are inseparable from his earlier construction projects developed as an engineer and his interest in curved, topological spaces rendered in reinforced concrete. For example, *Birds* (1962-3) [Figs. A.1-5] extract a rhythmic aesthetic Figure, what Deleuze (2003: 21) calls 'the quivering trait of a bird'. The piece thus attains an intensive multiplicity whose dimensions are strain, ductility and strength. This is achieved by modulation and deterritorialisation of concrete through the tensile powers of steel. In fact, Konieczny's art *per se* with all its elastic planes—its intensive landscape of the steppe—contemplates the Deleuzoguattarian (2005: 329) mystery of reinforced concrete whose 'self-supporting *surfaces* form a complex rhythmic personage whose 'stems' have different sections and variable intervals depending on the intensity and direction of the force to be tapped (armature instead of structure)'.

### 2.3.12. 1672-1974 as the Sarmato-Baroque matrix of production of intensities

*1672-1974* [Fig. A.62-6] opens up an intensive landscape, unfurling a tensile, planar surface that records and reflects Konieczny's vision of the seventeenth-century art. This vision launches Think Crazy as a new, virtual plane of composition of art, in other words, a BwO as a matrix of artistic production residing the plane of immanence of desire. Konieczny's BwO is filled with metastable fields of potential. It is a revelation of the world of progressively unfolding multiplicities. At the same time, *1672-1974* releases something within the seventeenth-century Polish art and culture itself. It does not produce Konieczny's becoming-Sarmatian without the Sarmato-Baroque culture becoming something else, something more—a becoming-steppe of Polish art and culture. Paraphrasing Deleuze's (1990: 1) description of Carroll's protagonist Alice that opens *The Logic of Sense*, Konieczny becomes bigger than 1974, more-than-contemporary, and at the same time less than 1672, less than the seventeenth century. Think Crazy emancipates art as a transversal, untimely force that sweeps both determinations away. Konieczny's shock of encounter extracts from Saenredam an ontology of planar, metallic elasticity beyond the human. This intensive Saenredam gives rise to a Sarmatism that Konieczny now produces as the absolutely new, as the infinite expanse of the steppe, a Sarmatism of the future. With *1672-1974*, Konieczny creates a formula for art as a weaponised (intensive) multiplicity. *1672-1974* is a world-historical delirium conceived as the schizoid BwO. While this BwO resides on the level of the pure potentialities harboured by the body and the earth it also immediately invests the social. *1672-1974* constitutes precisely a delirium that ties the crossing of an intensive threshold to a name in (art) history, creating Think Crazy as a whole series of such world- and art- historical intensities—*Sistine Chapel* [Fig. A. 96-8, 138], *Fresco* [Figs. A.137], *Image/Painting* (the series starting from [Fig. A.109]), *Triptych* [Fig. A.118], *Self-Portrait* [Figs. A.114, 116]. One can even say, that all the names of art-works that unfold the virtual plane of Think Crazy are names of history that correspond to a series of intensive states, or better still, varying degrees of intensity. This can be seen in a series of avatars fashioned by Konieczny, or Szwajewska (the evocation of Odysseus and Paris in the names of his art-works; Michelangelo, Don Quixote, Elijah, etc. in Szwajewska 1983a); the peculiar syntax of the titles of Konieczny's art-works—([Think Crazy] + [*na*, i.e. for/onto/in the direction of] + [Fresco, Trees, Paintings, Sistine Chapel, Flag, etc.]); and the artist's *après le fait* account of change in his practices in terms of ([something, it] + [has happened, has hatched]) (cf. Morawski 1975a: 35, Konieczny and Szwajewska 1978, Konieczny 1999). At the same time, all those various designations are modes that derive from, contemplate and

envelop a fundamental Sarmato-Baroque. The seventeenth-century Polish art and culture is stripped of all its representational, empirical and chronological content. Instead, it gives birth to a non-human, more-than-human—or, better still, ahuman—and metallic ontogenesis that operates on the level of matter-flows and force relations whence it extracts intensities and pre-individual singularities. This activates the inherent power of the seventeenth-century Sarmatism as first and foremost a fabulation of the nomadic, steppe lineage. This Sarmato-Baroque gives power to the false, to its constitutive fabulation. Thus, Konieczny's art emancipates the seventeenth-century as a real becoming-steppe, not an ideology, Platonic myth, phantasy, identity-formation (either national, proto-national or regional) or a combination of those, yielding, for example, 'a dream of power' (Biedrońska-Słota 2010). Think Crazy creates becoming-steppe as a capture and amplification of forces, but not as a capture and coding of forces by the state apparatus. Think Crazy is the seizing of life in its infinite movement and not seizing control. Finally, Think Crazy reveals Sarmatism as a diagram of experimentation. It is not a phantasy either since this psychoanalytic notion, as Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 151) explain, is merely 'an interpretation that must itself be interpreted'. Neither is Sarmatism a closed whole whose meaning needs to be deciphered. Such seventeenth century is the principle of production in Think Crazy, a matrix of emergence that proliferates and affirms connections whose madness short-circuits social production to such extent that the artist is practically effaced from the mainstream art history.

### **2.3.13. The Sarmato-Baroque of Think Crazy as an alternative history of Polish art of the 1970s**

Konieczny's art occupies a singular place on the landscape of Polish art of the 1970s. As we have seen, *1672-1974* [Figs. A.62-6] gives rise to the virtual plane of composition that will be progressively differentiated the series constituted by Think Crazy. The whole lineage of Think Crazy unfolding from the germinal *1672-1974* encapsulates a vision of art as a line of material-force relations, of the co-implicated BwO and the machinic phylum encapsulated in metals, operating on the level of the third passive temporal synthesis—the future of the eternal return. Think Crazy inhabits the world of intensive multiplicities that directly invest the social through the schizoid madness of the world-historical delirium. In this future of the eternal return, the Sarmato-Baroque names an intensive passage. In this way, the onto-aesthetic processes of material, and thus panmetallic, deformation in Konieczny is conjoined with a fabulation that operates on the level social production whence it derives its 'races, tribes, continents, history, and geography' (Deleuze 1995: 44). The intensive Sarmato-Baroque of Konieczny's practices, its becoming-steppe, creates a vision of the people-yet-to-come, a radical new collectivity. *1672-1974* thus encapsulates a certain perspective that can be used to distinguish an array of various approaches in Polish art of the 1970s that creates different germinal intensities that are still being unfolded today. This can be brought into stark relief when one juxtaposes Konieczny's pieces with Zofia Kulik's *The Splendour of Self* series from 1997 [Fig. B.16], on one hand, and Sobocki's 1977 *Three Roses Yesterday — Three Roses Today* [Fig. B.2]. First of all, if Konieczny's work launches an aesthetics of the future and a belief in its pure potential, Kulik's work formulates a critique of power that is lodged firmly within the present. Kulik's work is mobilised around the premise that 'form is a fact of society' (Ronduda 2009b: 4). Kulik's art-work—a continuation of KwieKulik's practices from the 1970s—introduces an active or activist subject endowed with the power to reverse or transform ideological and symbolic structures inscribing bodies with the arbitrary gender roles and objects with specific functions. In stark contrast, in Sobocki's anti-modern piece, the present is a mere deterioration of the past understood as an ideal Form that is also patriarchal and Romantic in nature. Just like Kulik's critical piece, Sobocki's work operates through a logic of representation and symbolic form. The depicted metal can merely function as a symbol of deterioration and commercialisation of the seventeenth-

century patriotic ideals emblematised by the nobleman's armour.

Konieczny formulates an aesthetics of the future that overcomes the ideological re-coding of the present and the melancholic contemplation of the past. If Konieczny's art inhabit the realm of intensive multiplicities, the resonant environment of qualitative change, difference in kind, both Kulik and Sobocki, the Critical and the Romantic, are united in their aesthetics of form that remains trapped in the logic of differences of degree. To borrow a phrase from Deleuze (2002a: 76), Sobocki and Kulik enter the logic of 'the negative (the negative of deterioration as well as the negative of opposition)', respectively.

On the other hand, Konieczny's art engenders a mutation in Stażewski's abstraction. Around 1968, the artist abandoned copper reliefs (1963-7) [Figs. B.8-9] in favour of an investigation of colour. At this stage, Stażewski (Stażewski 1995: 89), perceived metal as something that merely had served as a means to highlight the movement of form in space. In turn, his newfound exploration of colour obeyed the order of the natural spectrum of light, allowing only a small dissonance to arise. Writing from the perspective of 1974—the year that yielded *Composition No. 64* [Fig. B.7] and its vortical displacements of concentric square forms disappearing into the deep blue—Stażewski (1995: 89-91) further contemplates the mystery of colour endowed with the power to transcend the geometric coding of matter. According to Stażewski (1995: 91),

Just as cosmic rays colour with invisible colours—ultraviolet, infrared—bringing out physical changes, so the artist can effect changes through colour, the changes that last, just like the air that we breathe. One should embark on observation of the invisible world that demands a mental effort in order to discern the phenomena of decomposition, decay and withering of the plant world. A parallel decomposition and decay—one that occurs so that it can be born again—takes place in the micro- and macrocosm (...). This is more than the automatic perception of that which exists as real.

Konieczny overcomes Stażewski's constant falling back on geometry and passes into the world inhabited by the mannered, manual, nomadic and non-representational line that traverses his planar tensile surfaces. This intensive steppe is the vision of art as a capture of forces. Konieczny's 2012 retrospective exhibition at Zachęta embarks on a becoming-steppe that resonates with Michelangelo's *Doni Tondo* [Fig. B.17]. It unfurls 'acrid and strident polychromy, striated with flashes, like a metal plate' (Deleuze 2005: 161). Konieczny's metallic and curvilinear BwO understood as a becoming-steppe of Polish avant-garde art constitutes a gesture analogous to Francis Bacon's (quoted in Deleuze 2005: 176) intensive deformation of the genre of portraiture in a desire 'to make a Sahara of the appearance—to make it so like, yet seeming to have the distances of the Sahara'.

If Stażewski (1995:90-1) discovers in 1974 'the magic of matter' and its 'state of utmost vibration', Konieczny takes this modulation of matter-force to the limit, to the vanishing point of the creative madness. The artist mutates Stażewski's germinal onto-aesthetic revolution by conjoining the logic of matter-force—now encapsulated in the pure mobility and the sheer artifice of the golden colour—with the (art) world-historical delirium of the Sarmato-Baroque. Konieczny's *délire* identifies the crossing of an intensive threshold on thus constituted BwO with various zones and aspects of the seventeenth-century Polish art and culture with its Turkic, Netherlandish and Italian Mannerist undercurrents. In this sense, Konieczny's art combines the Nietzschean schizoid affect of becoming a Polish nobleman with intensities inhabiting Stażewski's vibrant matter. In his 1888 *Ecce Homo*, an auto-commentary that traces the philosopher's fall into madness, Nietzsche (2005: 77) declares, somewhat perplexingly, 'I am a pure blooded Polish nobleman (...) [b]ut I am a huge atavism, even as a Pole'. This Nietzschean fabulation operating through degrees of intensity leaves his

biographer, R.J. Hollingdale, puzzled. As he (1999: 34) notes,

why he wished to believe that a family of Lutheran parsons had Polish noblemen for their forebears cannot be determined with certainty, but my own feeling is that he wanted not so much to be thought aristocratic as to be thought Polish.

Think Crazy fabulates a response to Hollingdale's question by extracting nomadic intensities from the Sarmato-Baroque. Unmoored from stable, empirical spatio-temporal coordinates, Konieczny's practice forges the Deleuzo-Nietzschean 'power of the false' (Deleuze 1997b: 131) coextensive with an exploration of the inchoate potentialities of materials, 'the breath, the sensibility, and the instincts of metals, stones, woods, and so on' (Marinetti 2009: 122). Konieczny's metallic avant-garde opens up the infinite expanse of the Great Steppe populated by machinic phyla whereby, to borrow the phrase from Manuel DeLanda (1997), 'metals become a special type of population'.

Konieczny's crazy Sarmato-Baroque avant-garde with its endless surfaces invests the social field because it diagnoses and harnesses the twin processes of the Gierek-era Poland: (1) its selective introduction of elements of Western capitalism and a generation of simulated consumer culture based on the circulation of ersatz products; and (2) the application of this consumer logic to history, as epitomised by *The Trilogy*—the iconic series of historical blockbusters set in the seventeenth century. Konieczny's harnesses the above processes of social production and derails them his burst of untimely creative madness. Even though Konieczny's art is not explicitly political, its molecularisation of matter as well as its endless variation of forces is already proto-democratic. In this way, the artist's practice resonates with the grass roots, bottom-up cellular social self-organisation of the Solidarity movement—a non-governmental union composed of little unions that sparked the revolution of 1989. Think Crazy intimates a decentred future collectivity, expressing genuine freedom. Such freedom is nothing else than the power to change the parameters of existing reality, to effectuate qualitative change, to emancipate the potential to vary. The artist's emancipates the human from the scaffolding of habitual clichés and thus loosens the grip of the state apparatus so as to provide a training ground for what Manning (2016: 2) calls 'the minor gesture' as that which 'creates sites of dissonance, staging disturbances that open experience to new modes of expression', that which is 'gesturing always toward a futurity present in the act, but as yet unexpressed. This is its force, this is its call for freedom' (2016: 24). Czaplinski (2011: 98) says something similar when he notices that *The Trilogy* was in itself a productive simulacrum whose fabulative power contributed to the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland. The political potential of Konieczny's nomadic avant-garde might also be understood in terms of Kemp-Welch's (2014: 2-11) concept of 'anti-politics' describing Eastern European art under communism or Guattari's notion of 'molecular revolution' (cf. his discussion of Solidarity in Guattari and Rolnik 2007: 75-6).

Finally, Konieczny's art-work brings into relief the revolutionary character of the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s. The manipulations of Think Crazy counter-actualise Wiesław Borowski's (1975a, 1975b) negative, deprecatory and essentialist view of what the critic had identified back in 1975 as the pseudo-avant-garde. For Borowski, the pseudo-avant-garde undermines art understood as an autotelic phenomenon and as a formal gesture inscribed in the legitimate lineage of a specific art-historical canon. The pseudo-avant-garde opens art to the vagaries of life that Borowski sees as a dangerous entity that is hostile to art and culture, breeding anxiety, fear, and disgust. Such subject pseudo-avant-garde is considered anomalous, impure, 'amoral' and 'anti-intellectual'. What Borowski objects to is the power of the pseudo-avant-garde to displace the central

institutional role of the art gallery by opening art up to various nomadic pluralised, serialised, non-hierarchical and lateral unofficial modes of distribution such as mail art. Rather than simply negating the logic of negation inscribed in Borowski's formulation in a dialectical manner, what Konieczny's Sarmato-Baroque extracts from the pseudo-avant-garde is an affirmation of its bastard powers of the pseudo as a vital art; an affirmation of art *qua* an illegitimate, proliferating mutation; an affirmation of art as a bundle of forces or in other words a radical, inorganic avatar of the Bergsonian *élan vital*. The schizoid material thought of Think Crazy unleashes the Nietzschean powers of the false, plunges headfirst into art's rogue and threatening vital intensities that are neither the same or the of the order the proper, original, essential model entity (in Borowski's case western Conceptualism) nor its legitimate copy or authorised interpretation or reproduction (in Borowski's case Tadeusz Kantor). Konieczny's art-work affirms the freedom of the pseudo-avant-garde, since, to borrow Deleuze's (1990: 263) discussion of the simulacrum in *The Logic of Sense*,

it involves the false as power, *Pseudos*, in the sense in which Nietzsche speaks of the highest power of the false. (...) It renders the order of participation, the fixity of distribution, the determination of the hierarchy impossible. It establishes the world of nomadic distributions and crowned anarchies. Far from being a new foundation, it engulfs all foundations, it assures a universal breakdown (*effondrement*), but as a joyful and positive event, as an un-founding (*effondement*).

Therefore, what is at stake in Konieczny's Think Crazy—which might now be profitably approached as a pseudo-avant-garde Sarmato-Baroque art-work—is its functioning as the pseudo or the false. The 'pseudo' in the pseudo-avant-garde is not a question of illusory appearance that denatures a perceived essence but a fabulating machine producing real effects: a machinic event of affective engineering.

#### **2.3.14. Resonances: Think Crazy as a becoming-Sarmatian and becoming-steppe**

If we can account for Konieczny's artistic metamorphosis in terms of becoming-Sarmatian, we must necessarily attend to the reciprocal determination that is crucial to the process of becoming as an intensive passage.

Konieczny does not embark on becoming-Sarmatian without the Sarmato-Baroque becoming something else, becoming at once less- and more-than-Sarmatism. We might say that Sarmatism rises in 1974 in Think Crazy, but only as a bloc of sensation, as already something else.

This new, intensive Sarmato-Baroque is not an ideology on one hand and a set of discrete objects, on the other. The seventeenth-century hybrid Polish Oriental Baroque can now be understood not as an essence, but a power of joining together of heterogeneous dimensions, its ephemeral and functional character is nothing else than pure mobility and nomadic distribution, rather than a displacement along fixed points in measurable space and chronological time that gives rise to representation. Chrzanowski (1988: 221-2) already intimates such an understanding when he understand Sarmatism in art as 'never an autonomous phenomenon' but, first and foremost, something that manifested itself in 'a capacity for assimilation and interpretation'. Sarmato-Baroque unfurls a panoply of curious artefacts—tomb banners, horsetail *tugh* ornaments, ornamental coats of arms, jewellery-encrusted curved weapons, (coffin) portraits; all incorporated into funereal installations (*castrum doloris*, cf. [Fig. B.18]) used during the funereal ceremony (*pompa funebris*). Each of those artefacts affirms the fundamental pure mobility is a different way. Following Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 166), one can say that the duration of their material composition develops sensation but at the same it their materials pass into sensation and become expressive, generating sensation that is textile, curved, metallic, etc. By following such logic of nomadic multiplicities, the Sarmato-Baroque can now be understood as a living fabulation that makes an untimely connection with the Scythian, Sarmatian and Turco-Mongol art of the steppes as analysed by Deleuze

and Guattari in their ‘Treatise on Nomadology’. Such nomadic art celebrates metals as an expression of pure mobility. For the thinkers (2005: 401), this metallic ontology of pure motility—or, ‘speed’—is encapsulated in the Scytho-Sarmatian fibula [Fig. B.31]. The fibula is a metallic plaque attached to another moving object, for example a piece of jewellery affixed to a fragment of horse harness. The fibula-harness relation overcomes the dichotomy between form and matter. The metal plaque constitutes a ‘motif’ that is supported by a mobile ‘ground’ whose vibrations it transmits. At the same time, the plaque lends a specific quality to the ground whose speed it expresses. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 401) explain, the plaques, ‘constitute traits of expression of pure speed, carried on objects that are themselves mobile and moving. (...). They lend colors the speed of light, turning gold to red and silver to white light’. One might also add that this event of pure mobility is expressed figuratively in the Scytho-Siberian [Fig. B.31] animal style of the plaques that depicts animals (stags, griffins, etc.) whose antlers unfurl into a plane animated by circular, vortical movements. Since the fibulas do not fulfil a specific, pre-defined function, they should not be considered tools, but open-ended affective weapons ‘of the order of free action’ (2005: 401).

Konieczny’s practice has mastered the art of forging fibulas and affective weapons. These are not only created as Konieczny’s prosthetic horn and various other protuberances (cf. *Think Crazy Triptych*, 1979-83, [Fig. A.118]), but also forged as Special Equipment (cf. [Fig. A.72]), the planar surfaces of metal reliefs (cf. [Figs. A.139-45]) and, last but not, least the surfaces dotted with gold leaf, fur and black cloth (cf. [Figs. A.120-1, 132, 79]).

Nomadic Sarmatism erupts in Konieczny’s practices as an embryonic field of potentiality that at the same time has a specifically metallic and fibular, planar and elastic character found in Saenredam (cf. [Fig. B.6]) and the Sarmatian (coffin) portrait (cf. [Figs. B.29-30]), while it is also characterised by pure mobility of its art-works that are functional, ever on the move, always implicated in something else. The latter trait aptly describes Sarmatian art of the seventeenth century understood in terms of decorative arts, ornamental artistic craft rather than Fine Art, but it equally finds its correlate in the funereal machine, *pompa funebris* (cf. [Fig. B.18]), and its mobile arrangement of light, sculptural, architectural and pictorial elements that celebrated the event of crossing of a threshold, a molecularisation of the body of the deceased and its conversion into metallic effects. The curvilinear and metallic character of the BwO in Konieczny’s practices and its nonorganic Worringerian ‘abstract and infinite northern line’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 1994: 182) without contour is corroborated by, for example, in his kinaesthetic performance pieces such as *Fresco* (1983) [Fig. A.137], *Concentration and Ecstasy* (1985) [Fig. A.147] and the use of prosthetic golden horn (cf. [Fig. A.116]), as well as Konieczny’s preoccupation with vaulted, curved spaces (e.g. *Birds*, 1962-3, [Figs. A.1-5]; *Tricorn*, 1983 [Figs. A.139-45]) in turn makes a resonance with the vortical, lateral and decentred dynamic movement of *karabela* [Fig. B.27]— a Turkic-inspired cast steel sabre with curved blade that was the most characteristic weapon of war in the seventeenth century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Ostrowski in Borowski 190-3; cf. Deleuze and Guattari on sabre 2005: 404).

*1672-1974* produces *Think Crazy* as a dated plateau of intensity akin to the dated chapters of *A Thousand Plateaus*. The art-work creates the BwO of *Think Crazy* through 1672 or 1683. The date that does not embody essence but is in itself an artistic image (cf. Deleuze 1995: 26) that condenses the highest pitch of intensity of Sarmatism that found its incarnation the reign of Jan Sobieski (1674-96). This particular period constituted for Mańkowski (1946: 105-6)



the moment when the mutual interpenetration of heterogeneous elements making up the concept of Sarmatism went the farthest. It was then that Polish Baroque attained the most of vernacular features [and that] the Eastern elements reached their deepest penetration of decorative arts at the same time undergoing assimilation. (...) Having reached a relative uniformity of style, since Sobieski's times, Sarmatism does not however move forward. It appears to us as something unfinished, stopped short before the end of a [long] way it perhaps still had to go. It did not produce a finished style, neither in art, nor in any other field that could be acknowledged outside of Poland. Neither did it produce a fully elaborated theory in any area. It might not have reached a high level [of quality], but the culture of Sarmatism did however leave lasting traces (...).

Sarmatism is a three-dimensional multiplicity that reached the highest level of consistency at some point in the seventeenth century. Sarmatism is a model of the Deleuzian event that is perpetually eluding the present, something that cannot be assigned an essence, be individuated in terms of 'things, persons, or subjects' but only 'map[s] out a range of circumstances (...) in which things happen (Deleuze 1995: 25-6). Mańkowski (1946: 163) makes it clear that while it is possible to map its dimensions, but it impossible to understand 'what was Sarmatism in its essence?'. Mańkowski's particular research perspective implies that Sarmatism happened, but instead of seeking its essence, we might instead harness its aporia and affirm its powers, ask what it can do. *1672-1974* is a baseline that creates the radical avant-garde of Think Crazy under specific conditions. The artwork opens up BwO as a plateau of intensity coextensive with the social field. It is the nomadic art specific to the seventeenth-century—as a intensive plateau—that provides its affective weapons and lends Konieczny's avant-garde 'its own climate, its own tone or timbre', its singular, 'different space-time' (Deleuze 1995: 25).

## ***PART D: CONCLUSIONS***

In conclusion, let me repose the initial questions of this dissertation. How does Konieczny's art-work attain qualitative change, metamorphosis that envelops pure difference and intensive multiplicity—in short, how does Konieczny's practices attain the absolute novelty in the radical future of the avant-garde? And secondly, how does this change relate to the Sarmato-Baroque as the seventeenth-century hybrid cultural and artistic formation of Polish gentry that conjoined the fabulation of their nomadic lineage with a composition of Turkic, vernacular and Western elements (Gothic, Mannerist, Baroque)?

First of all, the present dissertation has identified temporal modulation and, in particular, the absolute novelty of the avant-garde as the proper vector of Konieczny's artistic metamorphosis. The artist's pursuit of the avant-garde—art's qualitative change—has sparked off a whole line of becomings. It is the event of the avant-garde that establishes a temporal series in Konieczny's practices whereby the past and the future cease to constitute extrinsic empirical and chronological determinations, but become intrinsic aspects of the event, its before and after. If what is at stake in Konieczny's practice is attaining the radical future of the avant-garde, in the first time of the series (1968-1971), the time of infection/contraction, the artist orients himself towards the avant-garde. This period is characterised by disparate formal and conceptual experimentation as well as actions in public space and photographic installations, accompanied by a wide array of theoretical reflection mobilised around the notion of stochastic force. The period yields the first synthesis of sensation in the germinal 'mannerism' (Konieczny 1982) of *Drop Something in Here* [Figs. A.6-10]. This 1968 art-work articulates its interest in the avant-garde through the potentialities afforded by the metallic process and its attendant nomadic, non-representative line encapsulated in a golden bag made of aluminium foil. The second period (1971-4), the temporal synthesis of incubation/germination, is a phase of imperceptible changes that do not find expression in Konieczny's artist statements at the time. The diverse art-works that now include installation and performance pieces in the streets of Warsaw persistently rehearse the notion of a threshold or limitation. This second period brings about the caesura of metamorphosis through *1672-1974* [Figs. A.62-6] whereby the artist attains the horizon of the avant-garde, thus giving birth to *Think Crazy* as the future of the eternal return and the third and final time (1974- ) in the series, the temporal synthesis of burst/egress. Paradoxically, Konieczny's fall into creative madness and the avant-garde world of intensive multiplicities was only attained through a significant reduction, a threshold afforded by the seventeenth century Polish hybrid art and culture, the Sarmato-Baroque. *1672-1974* maps out this curious bringing together of the past and the future, coalescing in the novel vision of an avant-garde, nomadic and intensive Sarmatism. *1672-1974* is a matrix of avant-garde production but at the same time it constitutes the beginning of *Think Crazy* in the act of a creative involution that is a becoming-Sarmatian and, ultimately, becoming-steppe of Polish art and culture. *Think Crazy* gives rise to a burst of series. It is a limit that turns all Konieczny's art-works into its various dimensions, degrees or powers, makes them all resonate, become and embark on intensive journey.

Secondly, zooming in more closely on Konieczny's transition into the avant-garde, the present dissertation has identified a more internal trajectory filled with risks, experimentation and failed creations that brought about c. 1973 or 1974 two distinct yet co-incident dimensions that coalesce in the event of *1672-1974*. Those two moments can be identified with (1) the conceptual figure of Proust and his madeleine episode, and (2) a conversation between Artaud, his concept of BwO, and Nietzsche's fall into madness and the discovery of

‘names of history’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 21), respectively.

*1672-1974* is a manipulation of a seventeenth-century portrait of a Polish nobleman. In this particular piece, Sarmatism merely envelops object =x that expresses pure difference. In this way, the Sarmato-Baroque envelops a dark precursor that puts the past and the present into mutual resonance and sweeps both of them away, thus catalysing a metamorphosis whose caesura plunges Konieczny into the event of the avant-garde as a world of intensive multiplicities. *1672-1974* is the overcoming of memory and the birth of Sarmatism as an artistic effect or image. In other words, in the piece, Sarmatism rises as a bloc of sensation—as a impersonal fabulation, the vision of a non-human percept that affords diverse affects—rather than personal or collective memory. Just like the Proustian Combray, one can say that the bloc of Sarmatism ‘like it never was, is, or will be lived’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 168). It is a bloc of the seventeenth-century Polish art and culture that rises as the intensive Great Steppe. The Sarmato-Baroque is a productive fabrication that marks a passage from Konieczny’s apprenticeship in art to the future of the avant-garde. Furthermore, Konieczny’s artistic fabulation of the seventeenth-century Polish art is a Nietzschean traversal, *untimely* becoming that in turn extracts from this historical period its own ‘transhistorical [and] unhistorical’ (2005: 296) inner kernel of the productive fabulation of the Sarmatian nomadic lineage.

However, the Deleuzo-Proustian approach to *1672-1974* on its own does not exhaust the complexity of the artist’s metamorphosis. How can we account for Konieczny’s qualitative change that in 1974 burst forth as an unparalleled coalescence of avant-garde pursuits, the advent of body, performance and (in 1975) video art as well as operations on art history and world history? How can we account for this crazy co-implication of art’s material composition, its intensive world of matter-energy, and the emergent thought of Think Crazy that invests the social field?

Konieczny’s practice attains its bloc of sensation as a world-historical delirium that conjoins ‘*Homo natura*’, the desiring-production and its disjunctions on a continuum of material-force relations, and ‘*Homo historia*’ (1984: 21, 33)—the social production and its historical, geographical and economic designations. Morawski’s (1975a: 35) account of Konieczny’s auto-commentary in 1975 already implies as much: ‘something beyond my control happens in me and something analogous happens every day beyond me in the psychic and social matter’. Think Crazy is a thought delirium that addresses, and responds to, the differential world of intensities that are traced on a flat, resonant plane afforded by Konieczny’s expressive materials whereby the human and the metallic has entered a zone of indiscernibility. Seen from one point of view, the Nietzschean ‘names of history’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 21) in Konieczny—starting from Saenredam, De Witte and 1672—envelop a more primary nomadic subject designated by Konieczny as ‘something’ or ‘it’. This nomadic or larval subject is nothing else than an affect borne out of the crossing of an intensive threshold. It is nothing more than a residue left in the wake of the event and a feeling unmoored from the empirical spatio-temporal determinations.

At the same time, through *1672-1974* the Sarmato-Baroque becomes a BwO as a matrix of production of intensities. In other worlds, a germinal, intensive and nomadic seventeenth-century Polish art and culture—the Polish-Lithuanian Turco-Tatar Oriental Baroque—creates a virtual plane of artistic composition and thus rises as the landscape of pure potentiality. If BwO is always constituted ‘under one relation or another’ (2005: 165; cf. 1984: 29; 2005: 168), it is the nomadic aspect of the vernacular Polish Sarmato-Baroque that functions here as this specific, singular relation. It is a question ‘of pure matter, a phenomenon of physical, biological, psychic,

social, or cosmic matter '(2005: 165). This Sarmatism of the future is a specific, consistent zero-intensity. It constitutes a productive new environment that disorganises the body and its sexual and gender determinations as well as its chronological and temporal coordinates, thwarting the generation of stable subjectivity and fixed meaning. What the BwO of Think Crazy extracts from the Sarmato-Baroque—with its operative nomadic fabulation coextensive with a purely functional and ornamental art, celebration of metals, curved weaponry, elaborate and ephemeral funereal ceremonies, proto-expressionist literature, planar and linear (coffin) portraiture, unfolding textiles and human-horse assemblages—is a bloc of sensation that has its own, specifically curvilinear, metallic and fibular character. Such virtual plane of composition affirms the continuum of life beyond the nature-artifice divide through elastic planar surfaces that follow the logic of intensive multiplicities and their nomadic distribution—identified by Herodotus as the *aporia* of the Scythian (and Sarmatian) tribes. This intensive Great Steppe that rises in Konieczny's Think Crazy conjoins matter-force modulations with historical and art-historical designations, Stażewski—with Nietzsche, and 'nature'—with 'culture'. If Konieczny's practices inhabit qualitative change, this change at once happens as variation in expressive materials and as an 'ethology of culture' (Sauvagnargues 2013: 176). In other words, Konieczny's becoming-imperceptible is also a becoming-steppe. In turn, Konieczny's becoming-steppe is the limit point of the artist's line of metamorphosis that had started with his becoming-Sarmatian through a manipulation of the nobleman's portrait in 1974. Konieczny's intensive engineering rediscovers earth and cosmos. However, the artist's practice at the same time invests the social through its distinctive fabulation that taps into the specific material—social, economic and cultural—processes of People's Republic of Poland in the 1970s. As we have seen, those material processes were (1) the consumption of simulacra, and (2) the production of history as simulacrum.

Starting with *1672-1974* as its degree zero of intensity, the world-historical delirium of Think Crazy constitutes a weaponised multiplicity—an intensive multiplicity as a 'plateau (...) [that] maps out a range of circumstances' (Deleuze 1995: 26) and thus invests the social. Think Crazy is an ongoing process of learning. For Konieczny (et al. 1/04/2015; phrasing repeated 10/04/2015), what is at issue in Think Crazy—on the particular occasion of the researcher's visit—is 'stochastics, De Witte, topology'. Konieczny's passage into the Sarmato-Baroque that unravels the potentialities enveloped by de Witte and Saenredam cannot be properly understood without researching the artist's experiments with stochastics. Think Crazy is a membrane that puts the shimmering field of stochastic forces in contact with history and geography, conjoining them as two mobile sides of a single, enfolded topological space that never ceases to unfold. Konieczny's art practice affirms stochastic forces as a creative, topological involution that at once has already harnessed and is yet still to harness the seventeenth-century art and culture.

The findings of the present case study of Konieczny have relevance in a range of fields.

First of all, Konieczny's aesthetics of the future complement Ronduda's mapping of the Polish neo-avant-garde of the 1970s by identifying a range of various approaches on the basis of their relation to time. At the same time, the present dissertation offers a more immanent formulation of Ronduda's (Ronduda and Georg Schöllhammer 2012: 527) category of Existential Conceptualism/Existential Post-Essentialism that can now be decoupled from its Kantian-Romantic presuppositions. The dissertation offers a novel account of Konieczny's practices in terms of its double emancipation—the overcoming of the Markovian-Hansenian logic of manipulated chance through the celebration of qualitative change and the overcoming of Stażewski's pure avant-garde through its contamination with the world-historical fabulation of the Sarmato-Baroque.

Secondly, the present dissertation offers a sustained re-reading of Deleuze and Guattari's oeuvre in terms of the logic of multiplicities. What it discovers in the process is the Deleuzoguattarian formulation of multiplicities as triptychs—certain trifold syntheses that tend to affirm the forces of vibration, resonance and forced movement. Those triple forces inform the Deleuzoguattarian conceptions of the syntheses of time, space, desire and (metallic) matter.

Thirdly, the dissertation contains a new vision of the Sarmato-Baroque at once in terms of nomad art and a metallic avant-garde. Such approach tackles Sarmatism as a badly analysed composite that needs to be dissociated from its takeover by the State and the level of (national) identity formation, representation, figuration and phantasm. Such revision seeks to offer an affirmative ethics of empowerment in a contemporary world where reactionary politics turn to history as the paranoid matrix of production of others. The dissertation ultimately sides with Czapliński who prescribes the aporia of intensive Sarmatism—its conjoined Sarmato-Baroque and Sarmato-fabulation—as an empowering altermodern aesthetics of the future.

Moreover, the present investigation of Konieczny's art is of strong relevance to contemporary artistic practices as it opens up a panoply of immanent creations that cut across the traditional art-historical determinations of genre and medium grounded upon transcendental *doxa*. Instead of yielding body, installation, video and performance art grounded upon the conscious agency of the artist, the artist's practices unfold a continuum of BwO art, still-life installation, living images and the fabulative *agencement*. Konieczny's vision makes a strong resonance with contemporary earth art, bio-art, post-screen art and sound art. Konieczny's art-works go beyond the dualist philosophical presuppositions at work in the traditional categorial designations of the artistic genres. For Konieczny, body art, understood as operating on the organic material, enters a zone of indiscernibility with still life, traditionally understood as a celebration of the inorganic. The ensuing inorganic agencement is called by the artist *still-life installations*. Furthermore, Konieczny's art-works enter a zone of indiscernibility between the real and the unreal, the true and the false. Instead, they affirm the immediate reality of all artistic manifestations through their fabulative powers of the pseudo, the potentialities of the false. What is more, my investigation into change in Konieczny's practices has detected a moment of transition from (1) the artist's Fluxus-inspired algorithmic actions of the late 1960s that still concern a relation between fully constituted entities, individualised as subjects and objects anchored in linear time and metric space, to (2) art machines for the generation of contingent stochastic processes that operate on the level of forces. This shift can be now understood in terms of Karen Barad's (2007) distinctions between the 'inter-actions' and the 'intra-actions'. What is at stake in the latter (Barad 2007: 34) is 'mutual constitution of entangled agencies'. As Barad (2007) further explains, 'space, time and matter do not exist prior to the intra-actions that reconstitute entanglements'.

Finally, the present dissertation combines an exploration Deleuzian onto-aesthetics with an investigation of specific circumstances—the neo-avant-garde of the 1970s in a country with a hybrid Eastern-Western culture. If, according to onto-aesthetics, art is a capture of forces that is flush with the real, it must also invest the social production under determinate circumstances. The ensuing complication—the onto-aesthetics—can be used a useful model of researching art in contemporary world that tends towards the capitalist capture of difference and the resulting homogenisation in the name of hegemonic cultures. In other words, the present dissertation furnishes an onto-aesthetics for the Anthropocene through its co-implication of qualitative change, *délire* and material-force modulations.

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**BECOMING-SARMATIAN, BECOMING-STEPPE.  
DELEUZOGUATTARIAN MULTIPLICITIES | THRESHOLDS | POTENTIALITIES  
AND THE ART-WORK OF MAREK KONIECZNY**

**APPENDICES**

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## APPENDIX A: VISUAL REFERENCES: MAREK KONIECZNY 1962-86

### Abbreviations use in the “Collection or source” column in the List of Illustrations

- ANA: Ana Banana/Vile (1976) [Konieczny 1976]
- ARGU: *Argumenty* magazine (1971) [Konieczny 1971]
- BREW: Brewińska (2012) *Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy* (exh. leaflet) Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw
- FSO: Forschungsstelle Osteuropa – The Research Centre for East European Studies/Klaus Groh Collection [Osteuropasammlung Klaus Groh (FSO 02-22)]
- GOLD: *Think Crazy - Gold Crazy* (exh. documentation) 2004, XX1 Gallery: Warsaw.
- GROH: Klaus Groh private collection
- HANS: Oskar Hansen Archive hosted by Museum of Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts
- KKAR: KwieKulik Archive
- LAB: Galeria Labirynt
- LEIB: Steven Leiber Basement San Francisco
- LITE: *Literatura* (1987) [Jaremowicz 1987]
- MK: Marek Konieczny's collection
- MNW: Muzeum Narodowe Warszawa – National Museum in Warsaw (inventory numbers included in the list of figures)
- MONO: *Monoceros* (1993) (exh. catalogue) [Konieczny 1993]
- MSN: Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie
- PAVA: *Polska Awangarda* [Ronduda 2009]
- PIKT: *Piktogram* magazine [Ronduda 2007]
- ROCO: *Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy Rococo* (exh. cat.) [Kuzmicz 2009]
- RP: Radosław Przedpełski
- TOPO: *Elements of Think Crazy Topology* (1986) (exh. cat.), Galeria Labirynt. [Szwajewska 1986]
- TYIJ: *Ty i Ja* magazine [Uniechowska 1969]
- THCA: *Think Crazy* (exh. cat.) 1978, Studio Gallery: Warsaw. [Konieczny and Szwajewska 1978]
- XX1: XX1 Gallery in Warsaw
- ZACH: Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw
- ZAMK: Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski, Warsaw (The Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle)

## List of figures: A.1—A.11

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
1	1962-63	<i>Birds</i>	A photograph documenting retail and service pavilions located on the edge of Lublin's Osiedle Słowackiego (Słowacki Housing Estate) on 11 Zana Street, designed by Oskar Hansen and constructed by Konieczny. The pavilions formed an annex to the building of a teacher training college, now a student residence belonging to the Maria Skłodowska-Curie University (UMCS). Since 1978 the pavilions housed the 'Galeria KONT' student art gallery.	PIKT reproducing material obtained by Ronduda from HANS	15
2	1962-63	<i>Birds</i>	Diagrams depicting: (1) different types of prefabricated elements designed by Konieczny for use in assembling the hyperbolic paraboloid roof of the service pavilions; (2) the specific mode of assemblage (i.e. welding together, Konieczny et al. 12/06/2015) of the prefabricated elements	PIKT/HANS	15
3	1962-63	<i>Birds</i>	A photograph documenting a scale cardboard model of the original concept of the construction of the pavilions rendered in aerial view. The pavilions were created as free-standing, unenclosed interlocking structures comprised of pillars supporting a hyperbolic paraboloid roof. (Konieczny et al. 12/06/2015). Should there arise a need for an enclosed space such as the one of a retail unit, a brick partitioning wall could be erected.	MK	16
4	1962-63	<i>Birds</i>	A photograph documenting the construction process of the pavilions. The nearby block of flats at 13 Zana Street can be seen in the background.	MK	16
5	1962-63	<i>Birds</i>	A photograph documenting the construction process of the pavilions. The already completed building of the adjacent teacher training college can be seen in the background.	MK	16
6	1968-69	<i>Drop Something in Here</i>	A photograph by the photographer Marek Czudowski (or possibly Zygmunt Rytka) documenting a golden aluminium bag placed on a steel stand installed in the middle of Rożycki Bazaar in Warsaw's Praga district as part of Konieczny's action in public space. The photograph also documents reactions of the Bazaar's stallholders and customers.	MK	17
7	1968-69	<i>Drop Something in Here</i>	A black-and-white approx. A4 poster/leaflet reproducing two Czudowski's/Rytka's photographs with a caption 'Antiintellectual. Primitive. Massy' [sic]	FSO	17
8/8a	1968-69	<i>Drop Something in Here</i>	(8): Czudowski's/Rytka's photograph documenting Konieczny's action in Rożycki Bazaar. (8a): Czudowski's/Rytka's photograph documenting Konieczny's action in Rożycki Bazaar: a detailed, enlarged view of the golden bag	PIKT courtesy of the artist	18-19
9	1968-69	<i>Drop Something in Here</i>	A photograph documenting Konieczny's action in the streets of Warsaw, forming part of a 4-page 18 x 18 cm booklet/concept-book documenting <i>Drop Something in Here</i> .	MNW D.W.28	20
10	1968-69	<i>Drop Something in Here</i>	As above.	MNW D.W.28	20
10a	1968-69	<i>Drop Something in Here</i>	A photograph showing a stylised rendition of the <i>Drop Something in Here</i> bag set against a white background, included in the English-language, hardbound version of Konieczny's 1986 <i>Marek Konieczny. Elements of Think CTopolorazygy</i> 11 x 17 cm exhibition catalogue printed on glossy paper with colour reproductions (cf. Szwajewska 1986b). The catalogue indicated Monika Szwajewska as its author on its front page. The front page also includes a handwritten dedication to Klaus Groh dated August 1987. The photograph is also available on its own, mounted on a stock white card.	TOPO / FSO	20
11	1971-72	<i>Natural Intervention of Children into Artistic Status</i>	Photographic documentation of Konieczny's action at the Sigma club located in the basement of a building belonging to Warsaw University, entailing the assemblage of a previously disassembled wooden chair by Konieczny's son and a friend of his son (Freisler 2/07/2015). The photographs were included in an approx. A3 black-and-white poster.	FSO	21



## List of figures: A.12—A.24

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
12	c.1965-68	[untitled geometric abstraction with a visual motif]	Photographic documentation of an untitled geometric abstraction by Konieczny composed of mobile panels featuring a visual motif. The photograph was included in the exhibition catalogue of a 1969 group exhibition of Polish and Danish abstract painters at Warsaw's Galeria Współczesna (Bogucki 1969).	ZAMK	22
13	c.1965-68	[untitled monochromatic, textured geometric abstraction]	Photographic documentation of an untitled geometric abstraction by Konieczny composed of monochromatic mobile panels covered with textured, thick paint. The work was presented at a group exhibition of Polish and Danish 'concrete' painters in Copenhagen's Charlotteborg. The photograph was included in the exhibition catalogue called <i>Polsk kunst i Danmark</i> [Polish art in Denmark] prefaced by the art historian and critic Bożena Kowalska (1968).	MK	22
14	c.1965-68	[untitled geometric abstraction with a visual motif]	Photographic documentation of an untitled geometric abstraction by Konieczny composed of mobile panels featuring a visual motif. The work was presented at a group exhibition of Polish and Danish 'concrete' painters in Copenhagen's Charlotteborg. The photograph, taken by Waclaw Charewicz, was included in an article that appeared in a Copenhagen's daily newspaper (Virtus 1968) with a caption 'Konieczny and one of his moveable images in Charlotteborg'	MK	22
15	1969-70	<i>Do Something with It</i>	A photograph of a sheet of silver aluminium foil sent to randomly selected recipients as part of Konieczny's 'net[work]' action (cf. Szwajewska 1986a: 14).	PIKT, courtesy of the artist	23
16	1969-70	<i>Do Something with It</i>	Photographic documentation of different uses of the sheet of silver foil sent by Konieczny to random recipients. The photos were taken by the recipients of the foil and incorporated into a 12-page 18 x 18 cm <i>Do Something with It</i> booklet/concept-book.	FSO	23
17	1969-70	<i>Do Something with It</i>	As above.	FSO	23
18	1969-70	<i>Do Something with It</i>	As above.	FSO	23
19	1969-70	<i>Do Something with It</i>	As above.	FSO	23
20-21i	1969	[photographic documentation of the interior design of Konieczny's apartment no. 8 at 3 Pruszkowska St., Warsaw]	Editorial photographs by J. Pisarski documenting the interior design of Konieczny's apartment. The photographs accompanied Felicja Uniechowska's 1969 article on Konieczny's apartment comprising 'four rooms, kitchen, bathroom and a closet (...) [occupying] the space of 46 sq. metres (...) [T]here were three small boxed spaces there and one big room' (Konieczny et al. 1/04/2015). Figs. 20-1 show the large space; Fig. 21a shows one of the small rooms; Fig. 21b shows Konieczny's study. In turn, Figs. 21c-h show different technical solutions/contraptions constructed by Konieczny. Finally, Fig. 21i shows a floor plan of the apartment.	TYIJ	24-27
22	1969-72: 1969	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series: <i>Bidental 0.15</i>	A photograph captioned <i>Bidental 0.15</i> documenting Konieczny's series of light installations entailing taking photographs of/with a flash lamp installed in various outdoor spaces, in this case the light source is placed in the middle of a road or an alley. The photograph at once documents and makes up the installation. The photograph, dated 1969, was included in Konieczny's 1982 <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> exhibition catalogue (cf. Dobranowicz et al. 1982).	FSO	28
23	1969-72: 1970	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series: <i>0.15 Contact</i>	A photograph captioned <i>0.15 Contact</i> documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. As per a previous arrangement/compact made via mail, Konieczny and a fellow artist from Montreal were to simultaneously transmit a 0.15-second light signal. In Konieczny's case, the light source is placed in the middle of a scarce, perhaps urban or suburban, forest. The photograph, dated 1970, appears in the Piktogram magazine.	PIKT, courtesy of the artist,	28
24	1969-72: 1972	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series: <i>0.15 Sec</i>	A photograph captioned <i>0.15 Sec</i> documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. In this case, the light source is placed in the middle of what looks like a barn housing a cow shed with rows of cows' heads outlined against their enclosures and water troughs. The photograph, dated 1972, was included in Konieczny's 1978 <i>Think Crazy</i> catalogue of an exhibition at Warsaw's Studio Gallery (cf. Konieczny et al. 1978).	THCA /ZACH	28

## List of figures: A.25—A.38

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
25	1969-72	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. In this case, the light source is placed in the middle of what looks like a country road climbing onto a slope. The photograph is included in a 5-page 18 x 18 cm booklet/concept-book.	MNW D.W.29	29
26	1969-72	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. In this case, the light source is placed in the middle of what looks like a city park. The photograph is included in a 6-page 18 x 18 cm <i>Contact 0.15 Sec</i> booklet/concept-book.	FSO	29
27	1969-72	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. In this case, the light source is placed in the middle of what looks like a forest, in a black-and-white cropped version of Fig. 23. The photograph is included in a 6-page 18 x 18 cm <i>Contact 0.15 Sec</i> booklet/concept-book.	FSO	29
28	1969-72	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. In this case, the light source is placed atop a roof. The photograph is included in a 5-page 18 x 18 cm booklet/concept-book.	MNW D.W.29	30
29	1969-72	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. In this case, the light source is placed atop a roof, in a slightly different shot than Fig. 28. The photograph is included in a 6-page 18 x 18 cm <i>Contact 0.15 Sec</i> booklet/concept-book.	FSO	30
30	1969-72	<i>0.15 Contact</i> series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of light installations. In this case, the light source is placed atop a hill or a mound, behind the <i>Drop Something in Here</i> aluminium bag. The photograph is included in a 4-page 18 x 18 cm booklet/concept-book devoted to <i>Drop Something in Here</i> .	MNW D.W.29	30
31	1970	<i>Violet   Our Toil</i>	A photograph documenting Konieczny's action in public space created as part of <i>Information-Imagination-Action. Poster Anti-Biennale</i> organised by Warsaw's Galeria Współczesna. The action entailed a distribution of sheets of violet paper pasted on pavements, on the streets and up on the walls of houses of various locations across Warsaw. The action was recorded not only photographically, but also on 36mm film.	BREW,	31
32	1970	<i>Violet   Our Toil</i>	As above.	PIKT, courtesy of the artist	31
33	1971	[generators of stochastic processes: equipment used by Konieczny 1968-71]	A photograph documenting equipment used by Konieczny in his various actions between 1968 and 1971. The equipment, along with the documentation of Konieczny's actions, was exhibited in 1971 at the <i>Porównania 4</i> [Comparisons 4] group exhibition in Sopot.	ARGU	32
34	1971	[generators of stochastic processes: equipment used by Konieczny 1968-71]	Key to Fig. 33: 1. Photograph documenting <i>Ongoing Discussion</i> 2. Containers used in <i>Drop Something in Here</i> 3. Automated cube used in <i>Generator of Stochastic Processes</i> 4. Signalling device/lamp used in <i>0.15 Sec</i> 5. Frame from <i>Once</i> film containing the following credits roll 'direction, actors, music: co-viewers' 6. Leaflet used in <i>Do Something with It</i> 7. Violet paper sheets used in <i>Violet</i>	ARGU	32
35	1971-72	<i>Red Tape</i> (also: <i>Spectre of Freedom</i> ) series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of performances called <i>Red Tape</i> that sees the artist performing various activities whilst donning a red ribbon wrapped around his head. The photograph documents the artist in his studio donning a protective mask (and possibly a worker's overalls) while welding.	MK	33
36	1971-72	<i>Red Tape</i> (also: <i>Spectre of Freedom</i> ) series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of <i>Red Tape</i> performances. The photograph documents the artist walking briskly along a broad Warsaw avenue, passing a shopping mall.	PIKT	33
37	1971-72	<i>Red Tape</i> (also: <i>Spectre of Freedom</i> ) series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of <i>Red Tape</i> performances. The photograph documents the artist walking briskly along Łazienkowska Throughfare.	MK	34
38	1971-72	<i>Red Tape</i> (also: <i>Spectre of Freedom</i> ) series	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of <i>Red Tape</i> performances. The photograph documents the artist amidst an large, vacant space.	MK	34

## List of figures: A.39 – A.51

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
39	1971-72	<i>Red Tape</i> (also: <i>Spectre of Freedom</i> ) series: <i>Spectre on the Snow</i>	A photograph documenting a cycle called <i>Spectre on the Snow</i> belonging to Konieczny's series of <i>Red Tape</i> performances. The photograph documents the artist amidst a snowy park.	PIKT	35
40	1971-72	<i>Red Tape</i> (also: <i>Spectre of Freedom</i> ) series: <i>Spectre on the Snow</i>	A photograph documenting a cycle called <i>Spectre on the Snow</i> belonging to Konieczny's series of <i>Red Tape</i> performances. he photograph documents the artist performing a ski jump.	MK	35
41	1971-73	<i>Let's Join the First May Demonstration</i>	A photograph showing two spread 18 x 18 cm pages of a leaflet stamped with the <i>Let's Join the First May Demonstration</i> slogan.	FSO	36
42	1971-73	<i>Let's Join the First May Demonstration</i>	A photograph documenting Konieczny's series of performances in public space. The performances entailed the artist walking the streets of Warsaw while holding a banner with the eponymous slogan during the actual Labour Day Parade but also throughout the whole year. The photograph shows Konieczny emerging out of an underground passage.	FSO	36
43	1971-72	<i>Think of Something</i>	A documentation of Konieczny's action, labelled by the artist as 'body art' (Szwajewska 1986b: 14), whereby he sent a T-Shirt with the <i>Think of Something</i> logo to Elbląg's Galeria El for their distribution to a random recipient and prospective wearer between 10 July and 10 September 1972. The gallery picked a worker from the Zamech propeller plant. The photographs depicting the wearer, Czesław Meloch, in Sopot were subsequently included in the <i>Notatnik Robotnika Sztuki [Art Worker's Notebook]</i> art zine published by Galeria El (cf. Konieczny 1972b).	PIKT	37
44	1971-72	<i>Self-Portrait with Think of Something</i>	A photograph dated 1971 depicting Konieczny holding a sheet of paper printed with the <i>Think of Something</i> logo.	BREW	37
45	1971	<i>Ongoing Discussion</i>	A photograph by Zygmunt Rytka documenting Konieczny's action, labelled by the artist as 'installation+lecture' (Szwajewska 1986b: 14), entailed Konieczny giving a talk on imagination vs. stochasticism (Hniedziewicz 1971) and subsequently hosting a discussion with a group of invited artists and critics. At the same time, the discussion was being recorded via a tape recorder, a video- and a photographic camera.	PIKT, courtesy of the artist	38
46	1971	<i>Ongoing Discussion</i>	Frames from the videographic documentation of Konieczny's action. A miniature version of the frames appears mounted on a loose 20 x 20 cm stock glossy white card forming part of Konieczny's 10-page loose leaf catalogue of his 1974 exhibition at Warsaw's Zapiecek Gallery.	FSO	38
47	c.1972	<i>Skyscraper</i>	A photograph documenting and at the same time co-creating Konieczny's <i>still life</i> installation featuring a miniature model of a wooden table and two chairs placed on a platform atop a pillar, all set against a white—maculated, stained or smudged—background. The large scale (61 x 53 cm) reproduction of the photograph was included in a volume of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> (cf. Konieczny 1980).	MNW Gr.W.7988	39
48	c.1972	<i>Red Coal</i>	A photograph documenting and at the same time co-creating Konieczny's <i>still life</i> installation featuring an arrangement of glowing tubular elements, staking out a territory approximating a red hot burning pit, outlined against a pitch-dark background. The large scale (61 x 53 cm) reproduction of the photograph was included in a volume of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> (cf. Konieczny 1980).	MNW Gr.W.7988	40
49	1972-73	<i>Predecisional Process</i>	A label on the cover of a volume of nine 70 x 50cm sheets of transparent foil, engraved/etched between 1972 and 1973 as part of Konieczny's <i>Predecisional Process</i> .	MNW Rys.W.7506	41
50	1972-73	<i>Predecisional Process</i>	A photograph by Radek Przedpelski documenting a fragment of the textured surface of one of Konieczny's etched sheets, set against the background of a plain red sheet so as to set off the sheet's pattern of manual marks.	MNW Rys.W.7506	41
51	1972-73	<i>Predecisional Process</i>	A photograph documenting the arrangement of the <i>Predecisional Process</i> etched sheets exhibited by Konieczny in 1974 in the space of The De Mangelgang Gallery in Groningen. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1982 <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> exhibition catalogue (cf. Dobranowicz et al. 1982).	FSO	41

## List of figures: A.52 – A.67

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
52	1973	<i>Mental Predecisional Process</i>	A photograph documenting Konieczny's submission to Groh's International Artists' Cooperation labelled <i>LAC 36. Predecisional Process. Marek Konieczny</i> , comprising a series of flower outlines stamped on the pages of 10,4 x 7,2 cm booklet.	KKAR	42
53	1973	<i>Mental Predecisional Process</i>	As above.	KKAR	42
54	1973	<i>Mental Predecisional Process</i>	As above.	KKAR	42
55	1973	<i>Consciousness of the Situation, Subconsciousness of the Situation</i>	A scanned reproduction of Konieczny's 'mental action' making up his contribution to the August-September 1973 issue of the Canadian 'Mix Magazine' art magazine.	FSO	43
56	1973	<i>Consciousness of the Situation, Subconsciousness of the Situation</i>	A photograph of one side of a plain red stock card with the typewritten motto "consciousness of the situation... / ...subconsciousness of the situation' Konieczny sent out to Groh in 1973 as part of his <i>Mental Action Part 3</i> .	FSO	43
57	1973	<i>Consciousness of the Situation, Subconsciousness of the Situation</i>	A photograph of the other side of a plain red stock card with the typewritten motto "subconsciousness of the situation... / ...consciousness of the situation' Konieczny sent out to Groh in 1973 as part of his <i>Mental Action Part 3</i> .	FSO	43
58	1975	<i>Mental Predecisional Process</i>	A scan of the recto and verso of a postcard sent by Konieczny to the artist Andrzej Partum that features vegetal outlines entering a zone of indiscernibility with the Think Crazy logo.	MSN	44
59	1973-75	<i>Think Crazy Propped against the Wall</i>	A photograph documenting Konieczny's installation that entailed propping a framed canvass or metal relief against a wall.	TOPO / FSO	45
60	1971-73	<i>I Will Send You a Signal</i>	A postcard, dated 1973, sent by Konieczny to a fellow artist from Canada. The postcard contained the following message: 'On 23 January 1974 at 19.00 I will send you a signal'.	MSN	46
61	1971-73	<i>I Will Send You a Signal</i>	A photograph by Radek Przedpelski of a transparent sheet of foil sent by Konieczny to Klaus Groh, containing the following typewritten message: 'On 23 January 1974 at 19.00 I will send you a signal'.	FSO	46
62	1974	<i>1672-1974</i>	A photograph by Radek Przedpelski of the recto of Konieczny's postcard to Klaus Groh, dated 1 February. The postcard featured the artist's manipulation of a reproduction of a portrait of a seventeenth-century Polish nobleman.	FSO	47
63	1974	<i>1672-1974</i>	A photograph by Radek Przedpelski of the verso of Konieczny's postcard to Klaus Groh, dated 1 February. The postcard featured the artist's manipulation of a reproduction of a portrait of a seventeenth-century Polish nobleman.	FSO	47
64	1974	<i>1672-1974</i>	A reproduction of Konieczny's manipulation of a portrait of a seventeenth-century Polish nobleman. The art critic Michał Woliński (2007: 46) calls this work an 'installation'.	PIKT, courtesy of the artist	48
65	1974	<i>1672-1974</i>	A photographic reproduction of Konieczny's manipulation of a portrait of a seventeenth-century Polish nobleman. This particular version is a miniature mounted on a loose 20 x 20 cm stock glossy white card forming part of Konieczny's 10-page loose leaf catalogue of his 1974 exhibition at Warsaw's Zapiecek Gallery.	FSO	48
66	1974	<i>1672-1974</i>	A photographic reproduction of Konieczny's manipulation of a portrait of a seventeenth-century Polish nobleman. This particular, mimeographed version was featured in Ana Banana's <i>Vile</i> artzine in 1976.	ANA	49
67	1974	<i>August Christmas</i>	A photograph by Radek Przedpelski of the recto of Konieczny's postcard to Groh, dated, featuring a signed photograph documenting Konieczny's action <i>August Christmas</i> . The action involved decorating a tree (as well the artist himself, his erstwhile wife Barbara and Klaus Groh) with Christmas baubles and chains.	FSO	50

## List of figures: A.68 – A.79

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
68	1974	<i>August Christmas</i>	A scanned reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's action <i>August Christmas</i> , sent to Radek Przedpeński by Klaus Groh. As Groh (15/10/2015) explains [ <i>sic!</i> ], 't]he (...) picture was [taken] in Summer 1974. Marek and his wife would spent our christmastime in Friedrichsfehn, where I lived. But Marek did not get the travel-permission in Winter. So we celebrated Christmas in July ( high summer.,) with chrtistmas tree in the garden. This picture was made at that visit. In the bACKGROUND YOU SEE THE DECORATED CHRISTMAS-TREE: From left: Thomas Henricks from Montreal(Canada), Marek, my son Malte ( born 1966), Renate, my first wife, Barbara, Marek's first wife and me on the right.'	GROH	50
69	1974	<i>Propped Against the Sky</i>	Stills from a DVD conversion of a VHS conversion of a 16mm film documenting Konieczny's street performance from 1974. The performance entailed Konieczny traversing various urban spaces while holding a pole with a violet flag. A glitch in the camera's recording mechanism produced the effect of blurring, thus giving rise to an art manifestation in its own right.	MK	51
70	1974	<i>Orion's Sickle</i>	A reproduction of a colour photograph documenting Konieczny's 'body art' (Szwajewska 1986b: 14) performance in the artist's studio. The performance involved Konieczny holding a gilded sickle between his thighs.	BREW	52
71	1974	<i>Orion's Sickle</i>	A reproduction of a black-and-white photograph documenting Konieczny's 'body art' (Szwajewska 1986b: 14) performance in the artist's studio.	PIKT	52
72	1974	<i>Still Life with a Little Bird</i>	A scan of a photograph documenting Konieczny's body art performance in the artist's studio.	PAVA	53
73	1975	<i>Dialogue with a Pyramid</i>	A reproduction of a postcard featuring a film still from Konieczny's 3 min 16mm looped video shot at a Warsaw's nudist beach situated on a sandbar on the Vistula River. The film, belonging to Konieczny's <i>live images</i> video series, features a miniature pyramid coming into contact with a vagina.	MK	54
74	1975	<i>Dialogue with a Pyramid</i>	Film frames from Konieczny's 3 min 16mm looped video.	PIKT, courtesy of the artist	54
75	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [a <i>Think Crazy</i> demonstration in San Francisco]	A scanned reproduction of a photographic collage of Konieczny and Groh holding the <i>think crazy</i> banner while standing on a pavement of a street in San Francisco. The reproduction was sent to Radek Przedpeński by Klaus Groh.	GROH	55
76	1975	<i>Think Crazy Oath</i> [a <i>Think Crazy</i> performance at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey]	A scanned reproduction of a photographic collage of Konieczny and a group of students at Rutgers University taking <i>Think Crazy Oath</i> . The collage was included in Konieczny's 1978 <i>Think Crazy</i> catalogue of an exhibition at Warsaw's Studio Gallery (cf. Konieczny et al. 1978).	THCA /ZACH	56
77	1975	<i>At Sea – 7 Evenings, 7 Days</i>	A reproduction of a film frame from Konieczny's 4 min 30 sec 16mm looped video featuring an extreme close-up of a miniature golden ship embedded into the labia of a vagina. The film belongs to Konieczny's <i>live images</i> video series.	BREW	57
78	1975	<i>At Sea – 7 Evenings, 7 Days</i>	A reproduction of a film frame from Konieczny's 4 min 30 sec 16mm looped video.	PAVA	57
79	1975	<i>24012008 Think Crazy</i>	A photographic reproduction of a film still from Konieczny's 3 min 16 mm looped video. The photograph was included in the English-language, hardbound version of Konieczny's 1986 <i>Marek Konieczny. Elements of Think Crazy Topology</i> 11 x 17 cm exhibition catalogue printed on glossy paper with colour reproductions (cf. Szwajewska 1986b). The film belongs to Konieczny's <i>live images</i> video series and features the figure of the artist, donning a black cloak flapping in the wind, set against a deep blue sky. Konieczny's head is gilded. The video was shot at a Warsaw's nudist beach situated on a sandbar on the Vistula River.	TOPO / FSO	58

## List of figures: A.80 – A.93

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
80	1975	<i>Santa Conversatione</i>	A scanned reproduction of a film still from Konieczny's 3 min 16 mm looped video at once documenting and featuring a contact situation between the gilded breasts of a female model and Konieczny's gilded head. The film belongs to Konieczny's <i>live images</i> video series and was shot at the terrace of Henryk Stażewski's studio on the top floor of a Warsaw skyscraper at Apt 118, 64 Al. Solidarności Street, now housing Avant-Garde Institute.	PAVA	59
81	1975	<i>Santa Conversatione</i>	A scanned reproduction of a film still from Konieczny's 2 min 16 mm looped video at once documenting and featuring a contact situation between the ungilded breasts of a female model and Konieczny's gilded head. The film belongs to Konieczny's <i>live images</i> video series	PAVA	59
82	1975	<i>Santa Conversatione</i> [shooting location]	A photograph by Radek Przedpełski of the shooting location of <i>Santa Conversatione</i> .	RP	59
83	1975	<i>Think Crazy for Flag</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's performance with the <i>think crazy</i> flag.	ROCO	60
84	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i>	A photograph of a <i>Think Crazy</i> aluminium relief with a tassel.	ZACH/RP	61
85	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's activities in San Francisco]	A reproduction of a photograph taken with a miniature Hanimex 110 Micro camera, documenting a public presentation of the <i>think crazy</i> banner in front of a skyscraper.	MK	62
86	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's activities in San Francisco]	A scanned reproduction of a photographic collage of Konieczny and Groh holding the <i>think crazy</i> emblem while standing on the pavement of a street in San Francisco. The reproduction was sent to Radek Przedpełski by Klaus Groh.	GROH	62
87	1975	<i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i> [documentation of Konieczny's stay activities in New York]	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's action at New York's Leo Castelli's gallery, entailing a casual display of the <i>think crazy</i> banner.	TOPO / ZACH	62
88	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's activities in San Francisco]	A reproduction of a photograph taken with a miniature Hanimex 110 Micro camera, documenting a public presentation of the <i>think crazy</i> banner among the stalls of a street fair.	MK	63
89	1975	<i>Think Crazy Oath</i> [a <i>Think Crazy</i> performance at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey]	A scanned reproduction of a photographic collage of Konieczny and a group of students at Rutgers University taking <i>Think Crazy Oath</i> . The collage was included in Konieczny's 1978 <i>Think Crazy</i> catalogue of an exhibition at Warsaw's Studio Gallery (cf. Konieczny et al. 1978).	THCA /ZACH	63
90	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's activities in San Francisco]	A photograph depicting Konieczny's miniature Hanimex 110 Micro camera used by the artist to document his activities in the U.S.	MK	63
91	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's activities in San Francisco]	A reproduction of a photograph taken with a miniature Hanimex 110 Micro camera, documenting Konieczny's activities at San Francisco Bay.	MK	64
92	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's activities in San Francisco]	A reproduction of a photograph taken with a miniature Hanimex 110 Micro camera, documenting a public presentation of the <i>think crazy</i> banner on the wooden door of a waterfront warehouse. Also pictured is Klaus Groh.	MK	64
93	1975	<i>Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's activities in San Francisco]	A reproduction of a photograph taken with a miniature Hanimex 110 Micro camera, documenting a public presentation of the <i>think crazy</i> banner on the wooden door of a waterfront warehouse.	MK	64

## List of figures: A.94 – A.105

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
94	1975	<i>Conversing with a Dog</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's performance in his studio, entailing playing with his dachshund.	THCA / ZACH	65
95	1976	<i>Conversing with a Dog, Conversing with Pyramids</i>	A reproduction of twinned photographs documenting Konieczny's performance in his studio, subsequently repeated at Lublin's Galeria Labirynt. The photographs were included in a printed leaflet advertising Konieczny's Lublin performance. The performance entailed an arrangement of two coffee tables draped with black cloth. One of the tables featured two miniature golden pyramids while at the other Konieczny was playing with his dachshund.	LAB	65
96	1976-80	<i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i>	Photographic documentation of a stage in Konieczny's durational installation in the artist's studio (Moonarium), entailing an arrangement of framed metal reliefs, textured paintings and sculptural elements on a wall of the studio. The installation, as captured in the photograph, now included Konieczny's sculpture <i>Pietà</i> [Fig. A.126].	PIKT	66
97	1976-80	<i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting a stage in Konieczny's durational installation in the artist's studio, entailing an arrangement of framed metal reliefs, textured paintings and sculptural elements on a wall of the studio. The photograph was printed on a stock white postcard.	FSO	66
98	1976-80	<i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting a stage in Konieczny's installation in the artist's studio, entailing an arrangement of framed metal reliefs, textured paintings and sculptural elements on a wall of the studio. The installation, as captured in the photograph, now included woodworks featuring irregular, jagged edges. Those griffin-tailed objects were labelled by Konieczny (3) and (5). In turn, (1) refers to Konieczny's <i>Conversations in the Tent of the Prince de l'Avantgarde</i> [Fig. A.117]; (4) is an index of <i>Preapes I</i> and <i>Preapes II</i> ; while (2) points towards <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> [Fig. A.115]. The photograph was printed on postcard-sized white glossy paper.	FSO	66
99	c. 1976-8	<i>Sceptre</i>	A photograph of a slide documenting Konieczny's body art performance in his studio, entailing the naked artist holding a piece of Special Equipment (this time, a feather duster) between his thighs.	MK	67
100	1978	<i>Sceptre and Chalice</i>	A reproduction of a large scale (61 x 53 cm) photograph documenting Konieczny's performance at Warsaw's ZPAP Gallery, entailing a feather duster and a spinning shot glass suspended on a thread. The photograph was included in a volume of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> (cf. Konieczny 1980).	MNW Gr.W.7988	67
101	1976	<i>Think Crazy / Still Life</i>	A photograph of a slide documenting one of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> , i.e. an installation (entailing an arrangement) of Special Equipment objects—a miniature bird, a miniature pyramid, a golden sickle, a feather dust and a black velvet <i>think crazy</i> cloak—used during one of Konieczny's performances. Brewińska (2012: 7) understands Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> in a slightly different way, as 'performance-accompanying installations'.	MK	68
102	1976	<i>Think Crazy / Still Life</i>	A reproduction of a large scale (61 x 53 cm) photograph documenting one of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> , composed of a range of Special Equipment objects distributed on a table casting a shadow onto a white background. The photograph was included in a volume of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> (cf. Konieczny 1980).	MNW Gr.W.7988	68
103	1976	<i>Think Crazy / Still Life</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting one of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> , composed of a range of Special Equipment objects distributed on a table casting a shadow onto a white background. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1982 <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> exhibition catalogue (cf. Dobranowicz et al. 1982).	FSO	68
104	1976-79	<i>A Million Pyramids</i>	A reproduction of a gelatine silver print photograph documenting Konieczny's 1976 performance at Warsaw's Studio Gallery entailing the artist bouncing his head against a three-metre plywood spike suspended on a thread. The photograph was printed on a postcard-sized glossy paper.	FSO	69
105	1976-79	<i>A Million Pyramids</i>	A reproduction of a mimeograph print documenting Konieczny's 1976 performance at Warsaw's Studio Gallery entailing the artist bouncing his head against a three-metre plywood spike suspended on a thread.	LEIB	69

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Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
106	1976-79	<i>A Million Pyramids</i>	A reproduction of a photograph by A. Polakowski documenting Konieczny's 1979 installation and performance at Lublin's Galeria Labyrinth entailing the artist bouncing his head against a three-metre plywood spike suspended on a thread. The photograph was included in Jan Świdziński's interview with Andrzej Mroczek, the director of Galeria Labirynt (cf. Mroczek and Świdziński 1984: 49).	MK	69
107	1976	<i>A Million Pyramids</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's 2004 exhibition at Warsaw's XX1 gallery. The exhibition featured large prints documenting Konieczny's 1976 performance at Warsaw's Studio Gallery. The exhibition also displayed a three-metre plywood spike used by Konieczny in his performance.	XX1	70
108	c.1976	[documentation of an unidentified performance]	A photograph of a slide documenting an unidentified performance by Konieczny.	MK	71
109	1976	<i>Epitaph</i>	A scanned reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's textured aluminium relief in hexagonal frames, forming part of the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1983 <i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> 11 x 17 cm exhibition catalogue (cf. Konieczny and Sz wajewska 1983).	FSO	72
110	1979	<i>Epitaph</i>	A scanned reproduction of a photograph documenting a variation of Konieczny's textured aluminium relief in hexagonal frames, forming part of the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio. The relief is put in contact with an oblong part-gilded plank ( <i>Unfinished Breakfast</i> ). The arrangement is lit from a nearby directional floor spotlight. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1982 <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> exhibition catalogue (cf. Dobranowicz et al. 1982).	FSO	72
111	1976	<i>Omnifer</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting one of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> , composed of a range of Special Equipment objects including a miniature parrot and a miniature golden pyramid. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1982 <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> exhibition catalogue (cf. Dobranowicz et al. 1982).	FSO	73
112	c.1976	<i>MG 14 Beronika</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting one of Konieczny's <i>still lifes</i> , composed of a range of Special Equipment objects including a miniature golden cone, a black cloak and a fragment of tangled transparent cord.	MNW Gr.W.7988	74
113	c.1976	<i>MG 14 Beronika</i>	A detailed view of <i>MG 14 Beronika</i> .	MNW Gr.W.7988	74
113a	1977	<i>5 Years' Research Project 1976-80</i>	A photographic reproduction of Konieczny's <i>think crazy</i> art manifesto dated 7 November 1977, titled <i>Five Years' Research Project '76-'80</i> , printed on a single folded A4 page and sent out to Klaus Groh.	FSO	75
114	1978	<i>Think Crazy for Self-Portrait</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting a performance in Konieczny's studio, entailing the artist posing for a portrait with a prosthetic golden horn glued to his temple. The photograph was printed on a postcard-sized glossy paper. Its verso side features the following text dedicated to Klaus Groh: 'Interior emigration in Moonarium'.	FSO	76
115	1979	<i>Unfeeling Rocks</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's textured aluminium relief in right-angled trapezoid frames, featuring a protruding gilded horn. This sculptural work formed part of the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1982 <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> exhibition catalogue (cf. Dobranowicz et al. 1982).	FSO	77
116	1979	<i>Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting a performance in Konieczny's studio, entailing the artist posing for a portrait against the background of <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> . The artist dons a prosthetic golden horn glued to his temple.	PIKT	77
117	1980	<i>Conversations in the Tent of the Prince de l'Avantgarde</i>	A reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's two-leaved oblong textured oil painting dotted with golden leaf and incorporating fragments of fabric. The diptych also featured a stuffed stag's head. The work belonged to the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1983 <i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> 11 x 17 cm exhibition catalogue (cf. Konieczny and Sz wajewska 1983).	FSO	78



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Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
118	1979-83	<i>Think Crazy Forest Inspectorate, Formerly a Diptych, Now a Triptych</i>	A reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's arrangement of <i>Conversations in the Tent of the Prince de l'Avant-Garde</i> and <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> that now formed a triptych. The work belonged to the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio.	PIKT	79
119	1980	<i>And When It Rises</i>	A reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's drawing. The drawing depicts the outline of a pyramid emerging out of a cluster of hair/bushes. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1982 <i>Unfeeling Rocks</i> exhibition catalogue (cf. Dobranowicz et al. 1982).	FSO	80
120	1980	<i>Additional Dimension</i>	A reproduction of a photograph by Bartosz Górka of Konieczny's 52,5 x 70 cm oil painting on fibreboard, featuring a collage employing golden leaf.	ZACH	81
121	1980	<i>Additional Dimension</i>	A reproduction of a photograph by Bartosz Górka of Konieczny's 52,5 x 70 cm oil painting on fibreboard, featuring a collage employing golden leaf.	ZACH	81
122	1980	<i>Unicorn</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's performance at Warsaw's Galeria Zapiecek involving the artist's Special Equipment: this time, a prosthetic golden horn.	MONO /FSO	82
123	1980	<i>Fire-feather/Exudiative diathesis</i>	A reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's sculptural piece composed of a fragment of a painting frame and a number of wedge-shaped textured strips. The work belonged to the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1983 <i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> 11 x 17 cm exhibition catalogue (cf. Konieczny and Szwajewska 1983).	FSO	83
124	1980	<i>Trees for Think Crazy</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's 2009 exhibition at Warsaw's Art +on Gallery. The photograph shows various Konieczny's artworks: (1) <i>Miciofur</i> , (2) an arrangement of golden sickles and (3) <i>Trees for Think Crazy</i> , i.e. oversized oil paintings on black paper, featuring a vegetal ornamental line merging with the outline of trees.	GOLD	84
125	1980	<i>Grasses</i>	A reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's oil painting.	LITE	84
126	1980	<i>Pietà</i>	A scanned reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's sculptural installation. The work belonged to the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1983 <i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> 11 x 17 cm exhibition catalogue (cf. Konieczny and Szwajewska 1983).	FSO	85
127	1987	<i>Incomprehensible Whole</i>	A scanned reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's painted metal relief mounted on a triangular wooden frame. The work belonged to the <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> installation in the artist's studio. The photograph was included in Konieczny's 1983 <i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> 11 x 17 cm exhibition catalogue (cf. Konieczny and Szwajewska 1983).	FSO	86
128	1982	<i>Calvus Cancer</i>	A reproduction of a photograph of Konieczny's art object created out of a recycled painting frame. The photograph was included in the catalogue of the artist's 1985 exhibition at Warsaw's Galeria Forma (cf. Konieczny 1985).	FSO	87
129	1982	<i>Spire</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's 42 x 43 x 5cm sculptural installation composed of a blue cardboard spike embedded in a framed metal relief. The work belongs to the collection of Lublin's Galeria Labirynt. The photograph is available on the gallery's website.	LAB	88
130	1982	<i>Spire</i>	A photograph of Konieczny's sculptural installation taken by Radek Przedpeński at Galeria Labirynt.	RP	88
131	c.1983-84	<i>Golden Knife</i>	A photograph of Konieczny's object taken by Radek Przedpeński at FSO. The object is composed of a golden knife embedded in a painted postcard-sized plastic sheet. <i>Golden Knife</i> was sent by Konieczny to Groh as a gift.	FSO	89
132	1983	<i>Micio-fur</i>	A reproduction of a photograph documenting Konieczny's installation composed of a piece of black fur attached to a wooden frame.	PIKT, courtesy of the artist	90

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Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
133	1983	<i>Step Pyramid</i>	A photograph of Konieczny's 126x105 cm painting, taken by Radek Przedpełski at Galeria Labirynt. This painting was created—using Konieczny's own technique—on paper mounted on cardboard.	LAB	91
134	1983	<i>Step Pyramid</i>	As above.	LAB	91
135	1983	<i>Step Pyramid</i>	As above.	LAB	92
136	1983	<i>Step Pyramid</i>	As above.	LAB	92
137	1983	<i>Fresco / Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i>	Photographs by Andrzej Polakowski documenting Konieczny's 'performance na fresk' [fresco-based performance] (Szwajewska 1986b: 14) that took place on 12 April 1983 at Galeria Labirynt. The performance accompanied Konieczny's <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> exhibition and entailed the artist knocking holes in a wall with his a hammer and subsequently filling them with pieces of golden foil.	LAB	93
138	1983	<i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i>	Photographs by Andrzej Polakowski documenting an installation composed of Konieczny's <i>Unfinished Breakfast</i> suspended on a thread as well as various <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> objects previously arranged on a wall in the artist's studio (cf. Figs. A. 96-8) but now placed inside a mahogany cabinet. The installation was displayed as a part of Konieczny's <i>Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel</i> exhibition at Galeria Labirynt.	LAB	94
139	1983	<i>Tricorn Hat</i>	A photograph of Konieczny's 57 x 57cm framed, oil-painted metal relief, taken by Radek Przedpełski at Galeria Labirynt. This relief work was purchased by the gallery on 11 April 1983.	LAB	95
140	1983	<i>Tricorn Hat</i>	As above.	LAB	95
141	1983	<i>Tricorn Hat</i>	As above.	LAB	96
142	1983	<i>Tricorn Hat</i>	As above.	LAB	96
143	1983	<i>Tricorn Hat</i>	As above.	LAB	97
144	1983	<i>Tricorn Hat</i>	As above.	LAB	97
145	1983	<i>Tricorn Hat</i>	As above.	LAB	98
146	1985	<i>Varsoviana from the Incomprehensible Wholes Cycle</i>	A reproduction of a photograph by Bartosz Górka of Konieczny's 68 x 45 cm oil-painted metal relief, featuring a collage employing golden leaf.	ZACH	99
147	1985	<i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i>	Photographs by Andrzej Polakowski documenting Konieczny's performance which took place on 12 December 1985 at Galeria Labirynt at the opening of the artist's <i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> exhibition. The <i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> performance entailed the artist knocking holes in a wall with his a hammer and subsequently filling them with pieces of golden foil.	LAB	100
148	1985	<i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> [individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt]	Photographs by Andrzej Polakowski documenting Konieczny's 1985 <i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt.	LAB	101
149	1985	<i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> [individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt]	Photographs by Andrzej Polakowski documenting Konieczny's 1985 <i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt.	LAB	101
150	1985	<i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> [individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt]	Photographs by Andrzej Polakowski documenting Konieczny's 1985 <i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt.	LAB	102
151	1985	<i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> [individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt]	Photographs by Andrzej Polakowski documenting Konieczny's 1985 <i>Concentration and Ecstasy</i> individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt.	LAB	102
152	1986	<i>Return to Sources</i>	Photographs documenting Konieczny's performance at Warsaw's Culture Park, entailing (1) the artist making a toast with a glass of wine while seated in the middle of a large fountain and (2) following a previously installed golden line on the park stairs.	MONO	103
153	1986	<i>Return to Sources</i>	As above.	MONO	103
154	1986	<i>Return to Sources</i>	As above.	MK	104

## List of figures: A.155 – A.161

Fig. A.	Year	Title	Misc. information	Collection or source	Page
155	1986	<i>Return to Sources</i>	As above.	MONO	104
156	1986	<i>Return to Sources</i>	As above.	MK	104
157	2012	<i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]	Photographs documenting Konieczny's retrospective at Zachęta Gallery. The photograph depicts a golden line installed on the gallery stairs as part of the exhibition.	ZACH	105
158	2012	<i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]	Photographs documenting Konieczny's retrospective at Zachęta Gallery. The photograph depicts a sculptural installation composed of a golden wall and a golden horn.	ZACH	106
159	2012	<i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]	Photographs documenting Konieczny's retrospective at Zachęta Gallery. The photograph depicts a sculptural installation composed of a golden wall and an embedded <i>Drop Something in Here</i> bag.	ZACH	107
160	2012	<i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]	Frames from videographic documentation created by Mirek Szewczyk, depicting an arrangement of Think Crazy objects forming part of Konieczny's 2012 Zachęta exhibition.	ZACH	108
161	2012	<i>Marek Konieczny. Think Crazy</i> [documentation of Konieczny's exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]	Frames from videographic documentation created by Mirek Szewczyk, depicting an arrangement of Think Crazy objects forming part of Konieczny's 2012 Zachęta exhibition.	ZACH	109

1962-63

*Birds*



Fig. 1

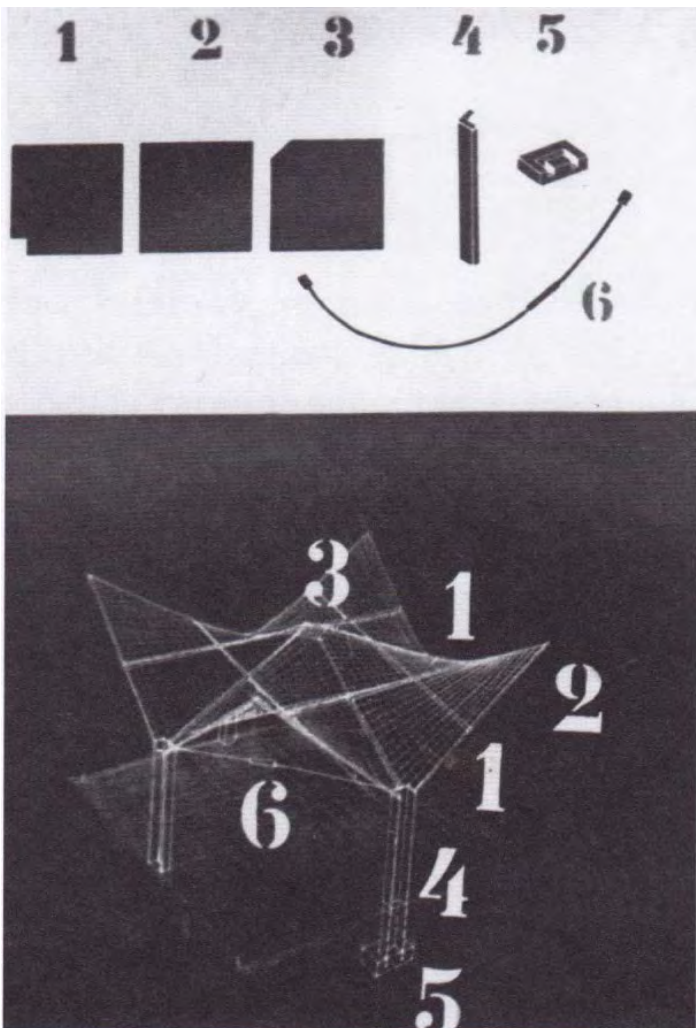


Fig. 2

1962-63  
[Lublin, Pawilony Wileńska]

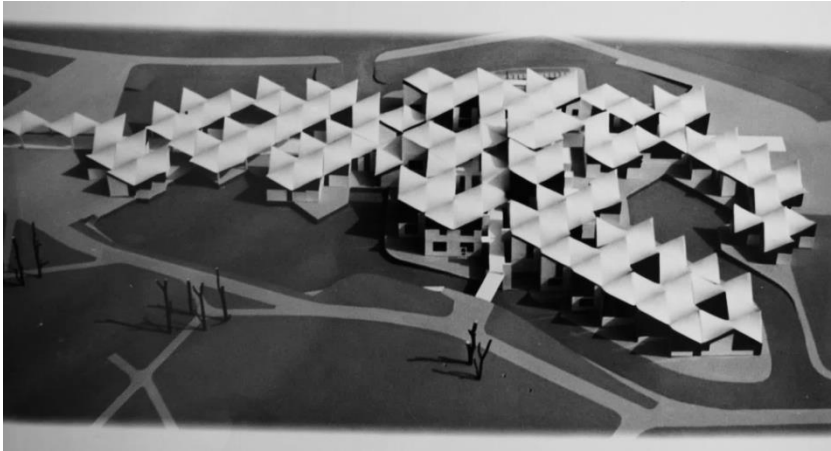


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

1968-69

*Drop Something in Here*



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

1968-69

*Drop Something in Here*



Fig. 8

1968-69

*Drop Something in Here*



Fig. 8a



1968-69

*Drop Something in Here*



Fig. 9/10



Fig. 10a

c. 1971-72

*Natural Intervention of Children into Artistic Status*



NATURAL  
INTERVENTION  
OF CHILDREN  
INTO  
ARTISTIC STATUS

MAREK KONIECZNY  
WARSZAWA  
UL. PRUSZKOWSKA 3 m. 8  
TEL. 29-42-45  
POLAND

Fig. 11

c. 1965-68

[Untitled geometric abstraction]

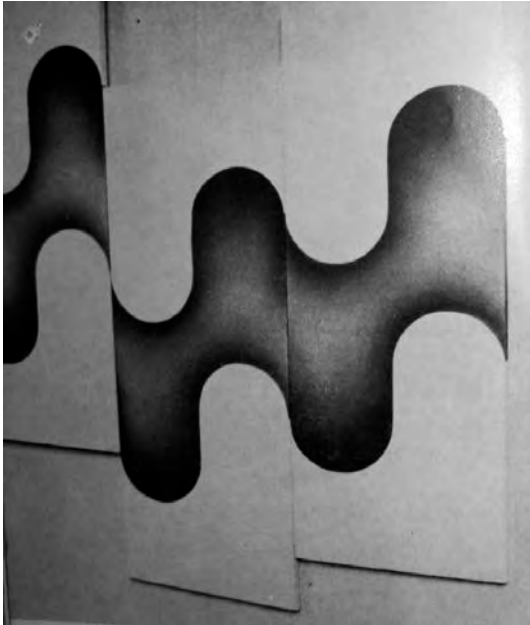


Fig. 12

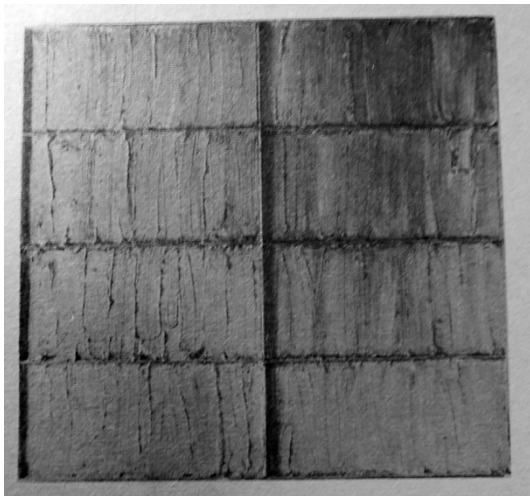


Fig. 13

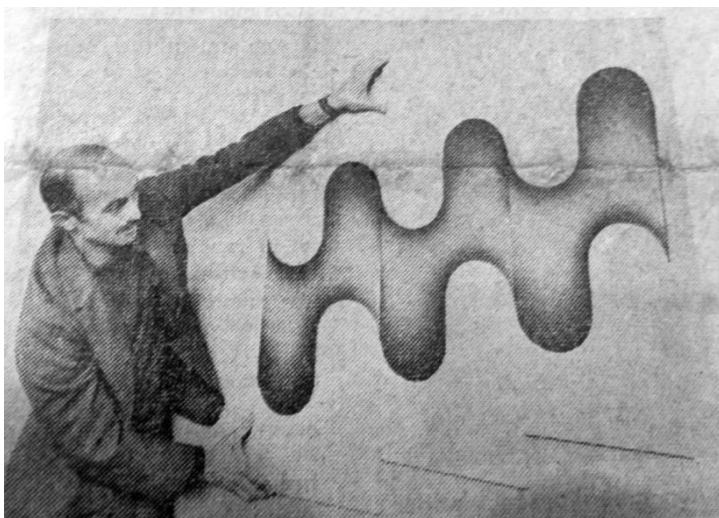


Fig. 14

1969-70

*Do Something with It*



Fig. 15



Fig. 16 | 17



Fig. 18 | 19

**1969**  
**[Photographs of Konieczny's apartment]**

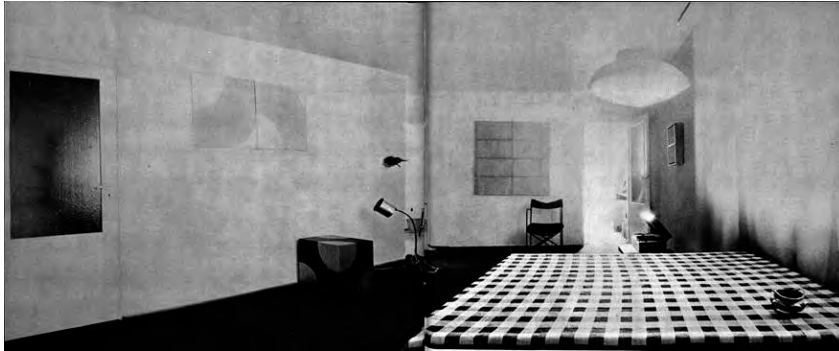


Fig. 20

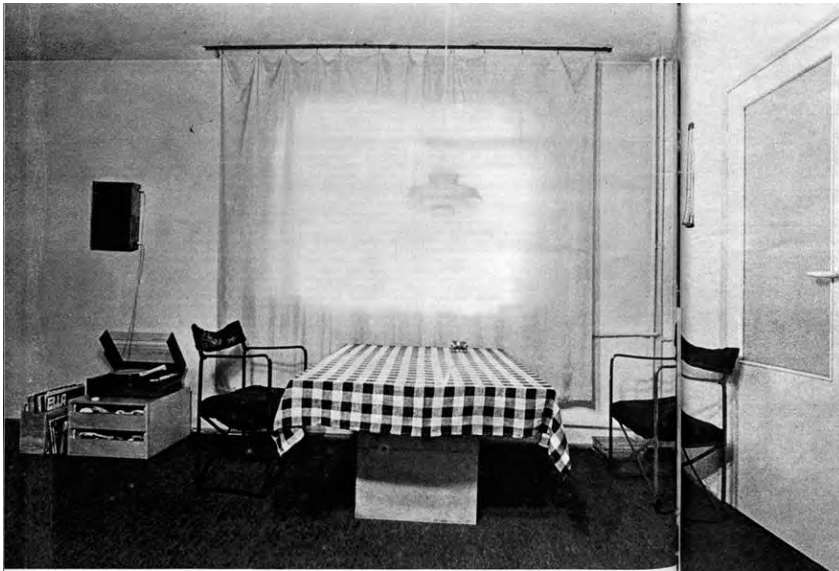


Fig. 21

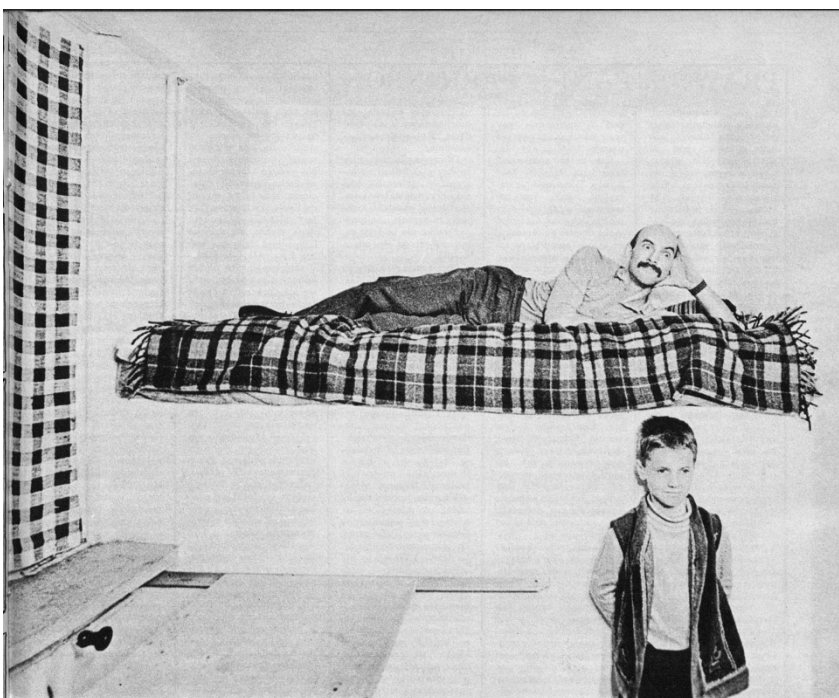


Fig. 21a

1969  
[Photographs of Konieczny's apartment]

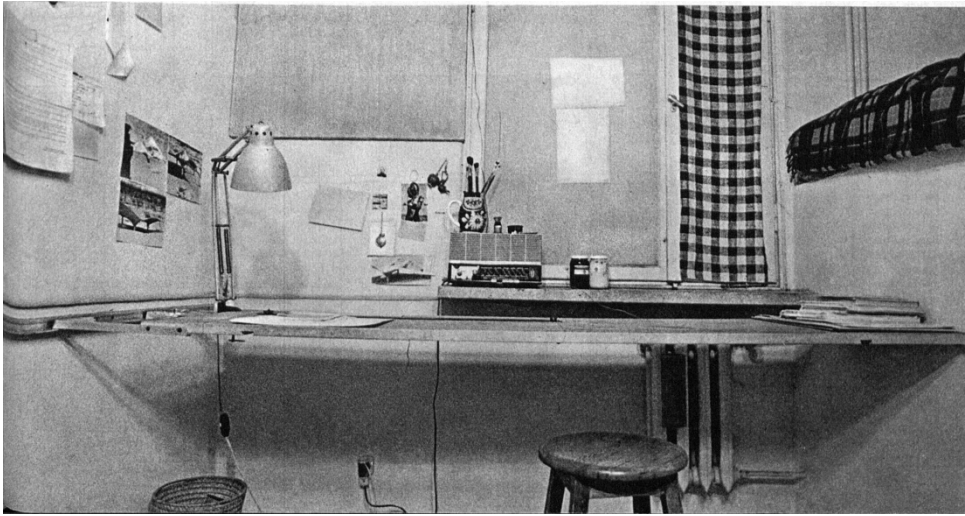


Fig. 21b

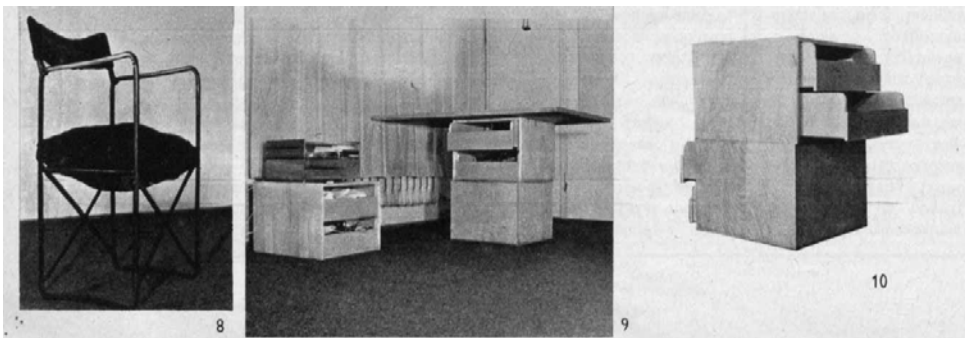


Fig. 21c

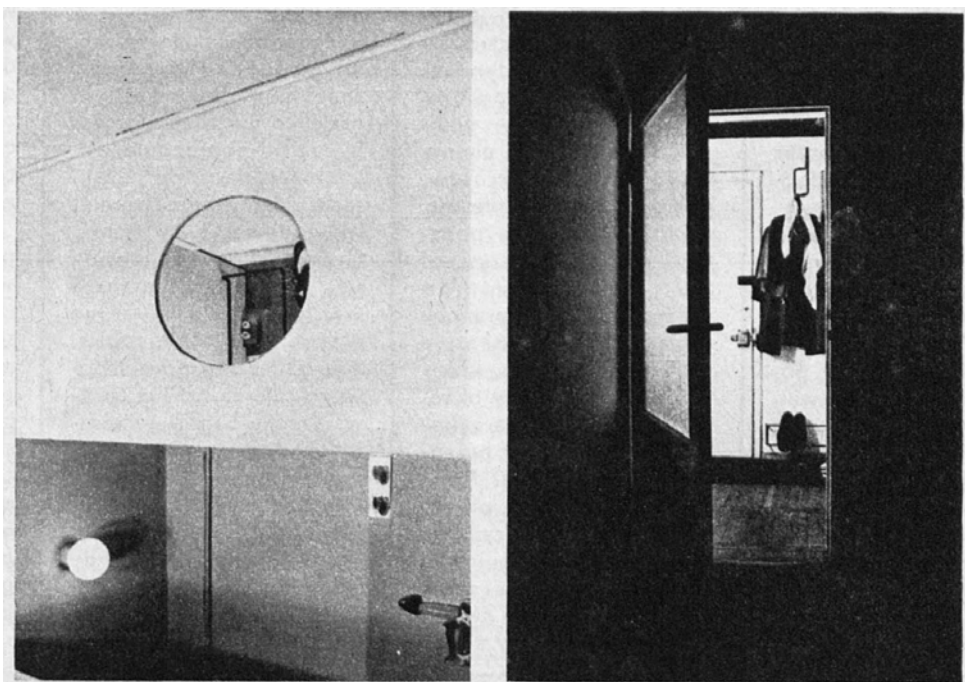


Fig. 21d

1969  
[Photographs of Konieczny's apartment]

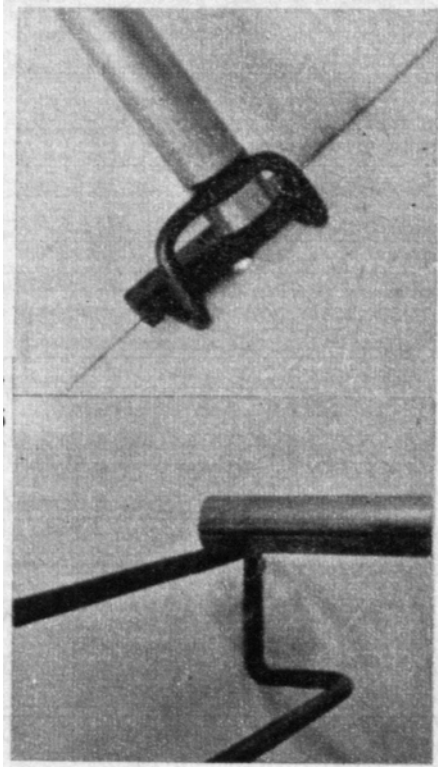


Fig. 21e/f

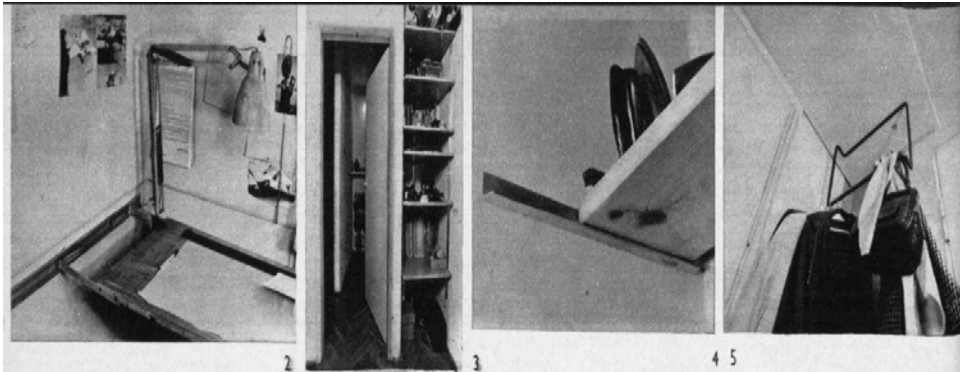


Fig. 21g

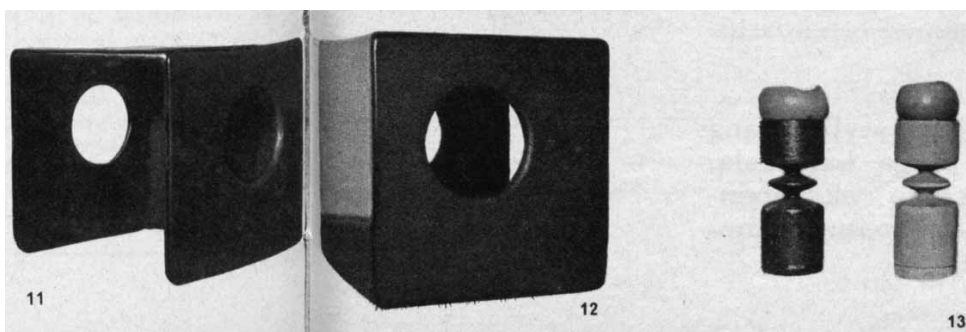


Fig. 21h

1969  
[Photographs of Konieczny's apartment]

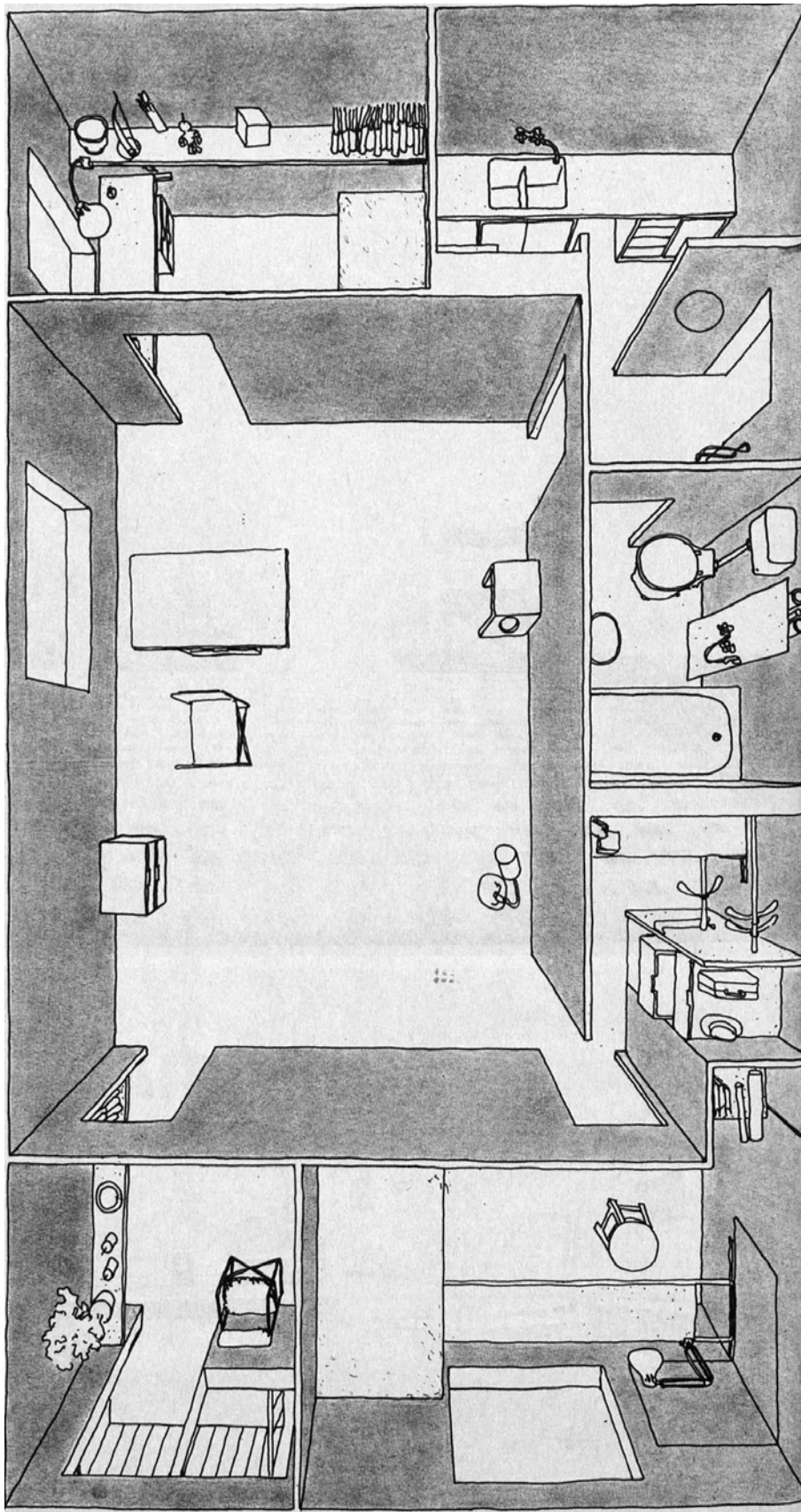


Fig. 21i



1969-1972

*0.15 Contact series*



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24

1969-1972

*0.15 Contact series*



Fig. 25



Fig. 26



Fig. 27

1969-1972

*0.15 Contact series*



Fig. 28 | 29



Fig. 30

1970

*Violet | Our Toil*



Fig. 31



Fig. 32

c. 1971

*Generator of Stochastic Processes*

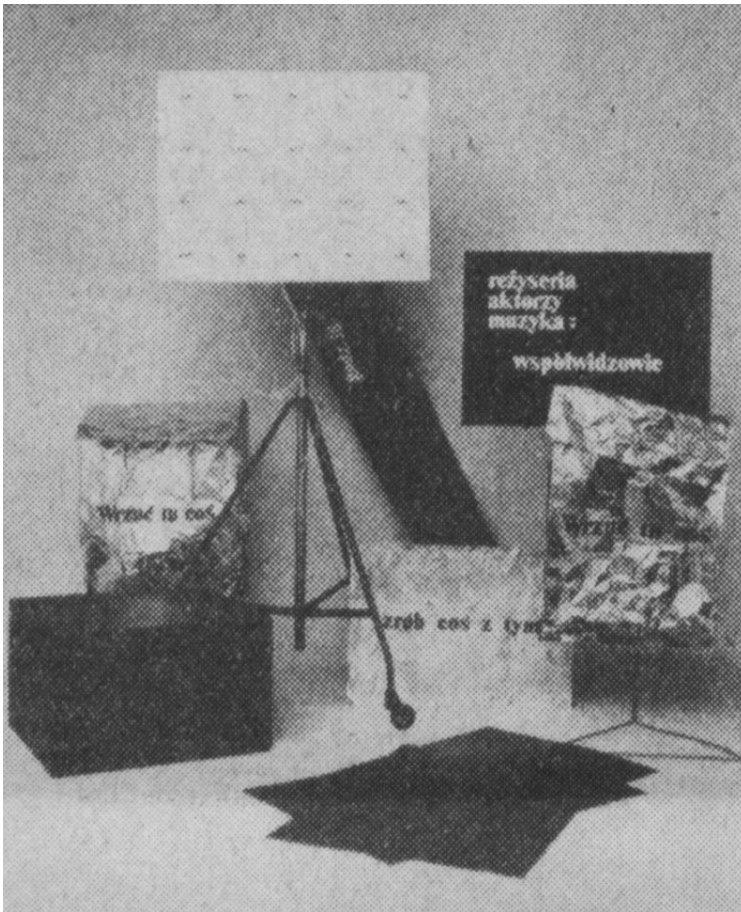


Fig. 33

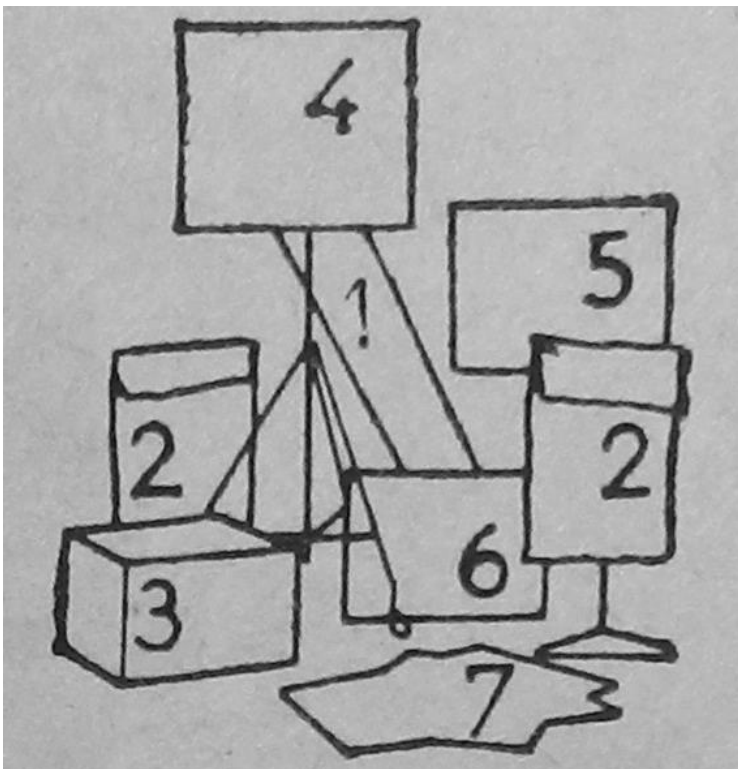


Fig. 34

1971-72

*Red Tape* [also: *Spectre of Freedom*] series



Fig. 35



Fig. 36

1971-72

*Red Tape* [also: *Spectre of Freedom*] series



Fig. 37



Fig. 38

1971-72

*Red Tape* [also: *Spectre of Freedom*] series



Fig. 39

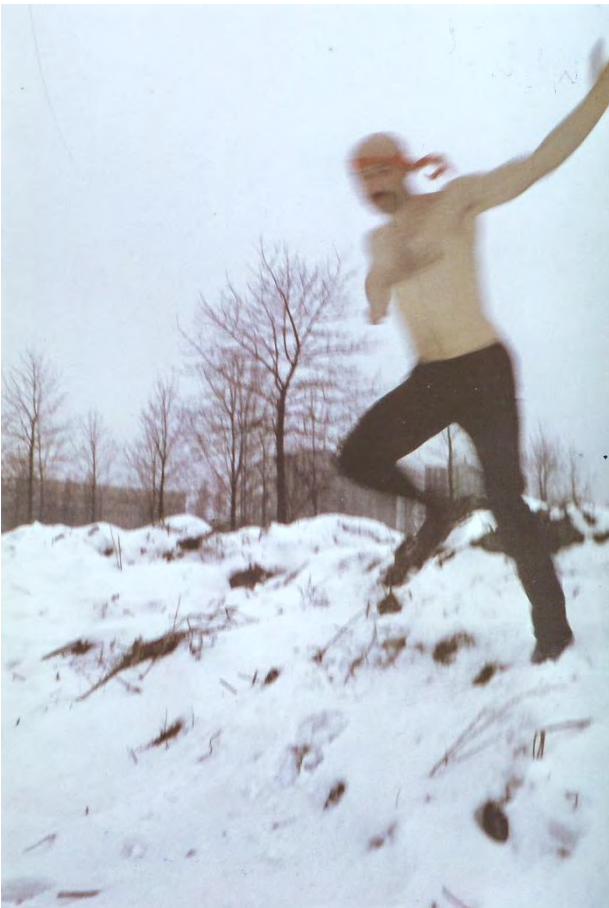


Fig. 40



1971-73

*Let's Go First May*

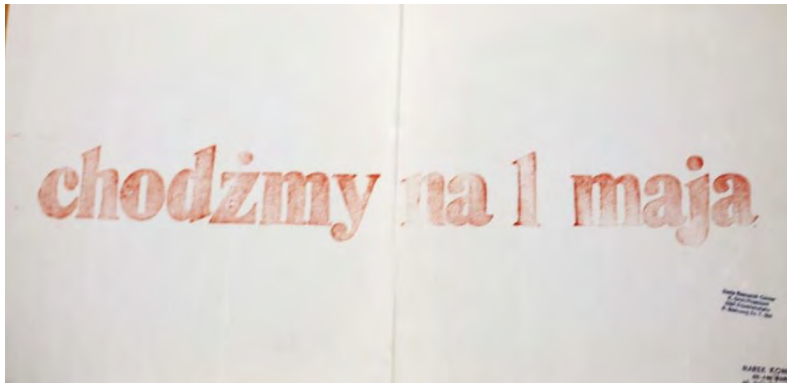


Fig. 41



Fig. 42

1971-72

*Think of Something*

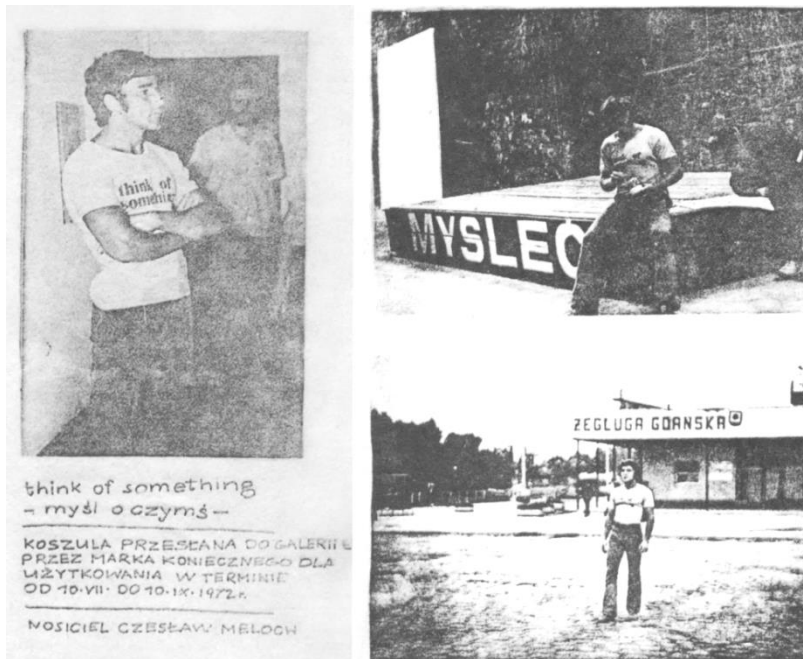


Fig. 43



Fig. 44

1971  
*Ongoing Discussion*



Fig. 45



Fig. 46

c. 1972  
*Skyscraper*



Fig. 47

**c. 1972**  
***Red Coal***



Fig. 48

1972-73

*Predecisional Process*



Fig. 49



Fig. 50



Fig. 51

1973-75

*Mental Predecisional Process*

Fig. 52

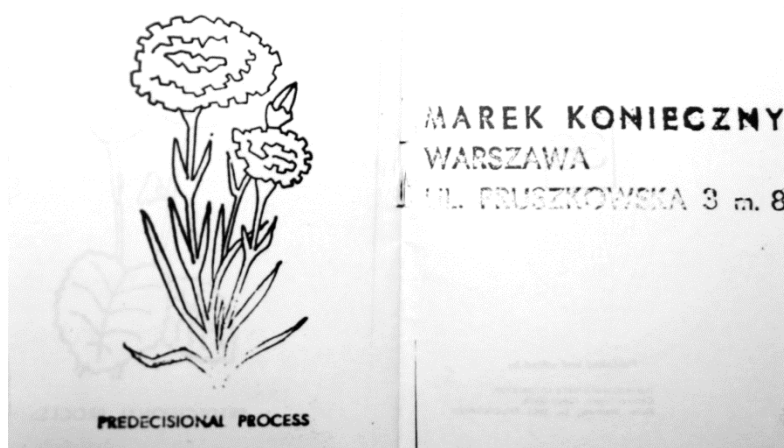


Fig. 53

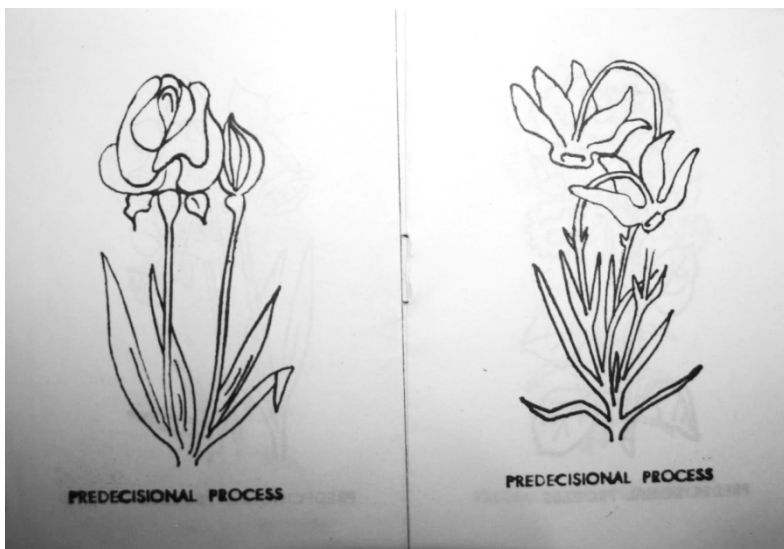
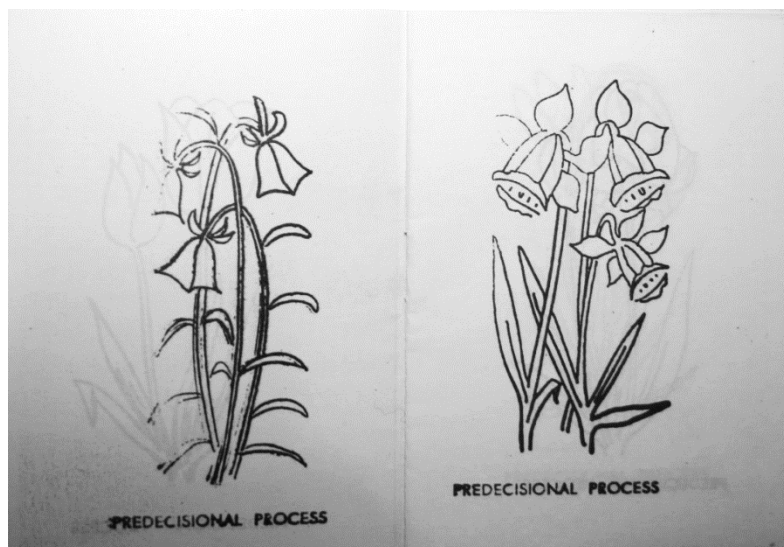


Fig. 54



1973

*Consciousness of the Situation, Subconsciousness of the Situation*

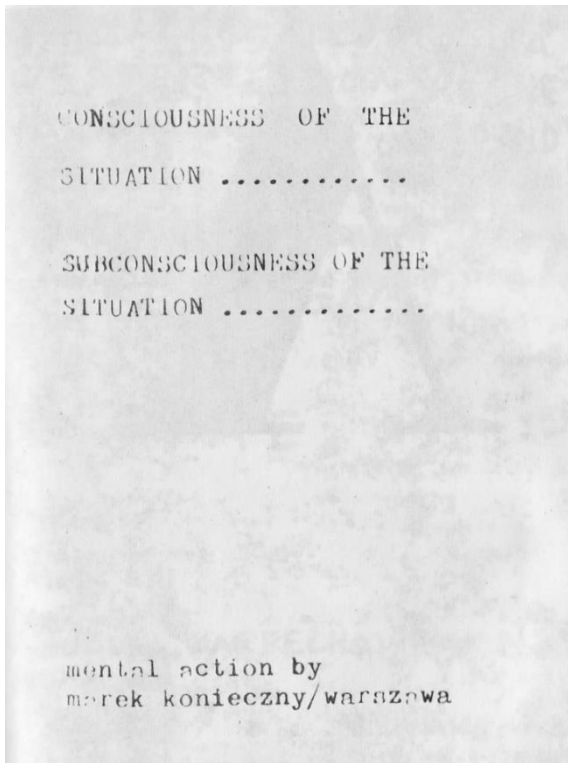


Fig. 55

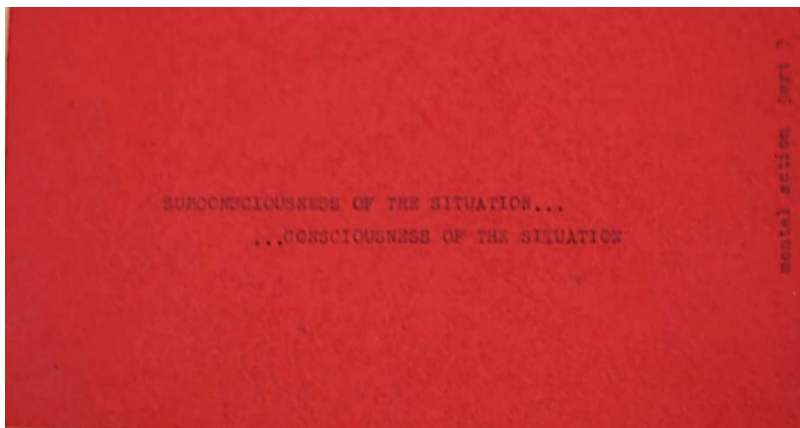


Fig. 56

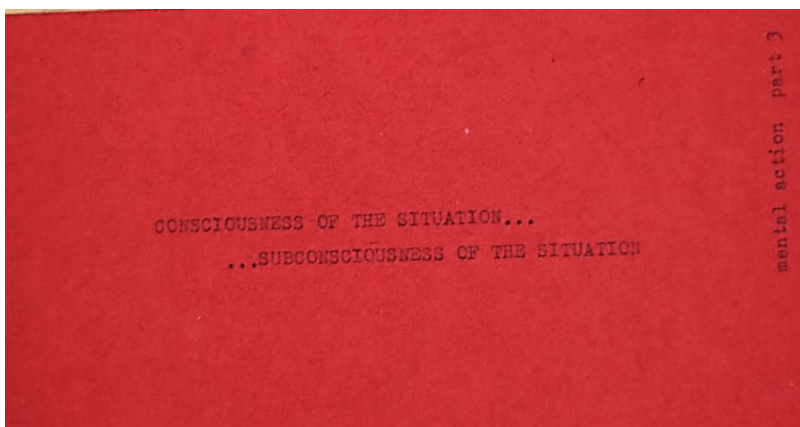


Fig. 57



1975

*Mental Predecisional Process*

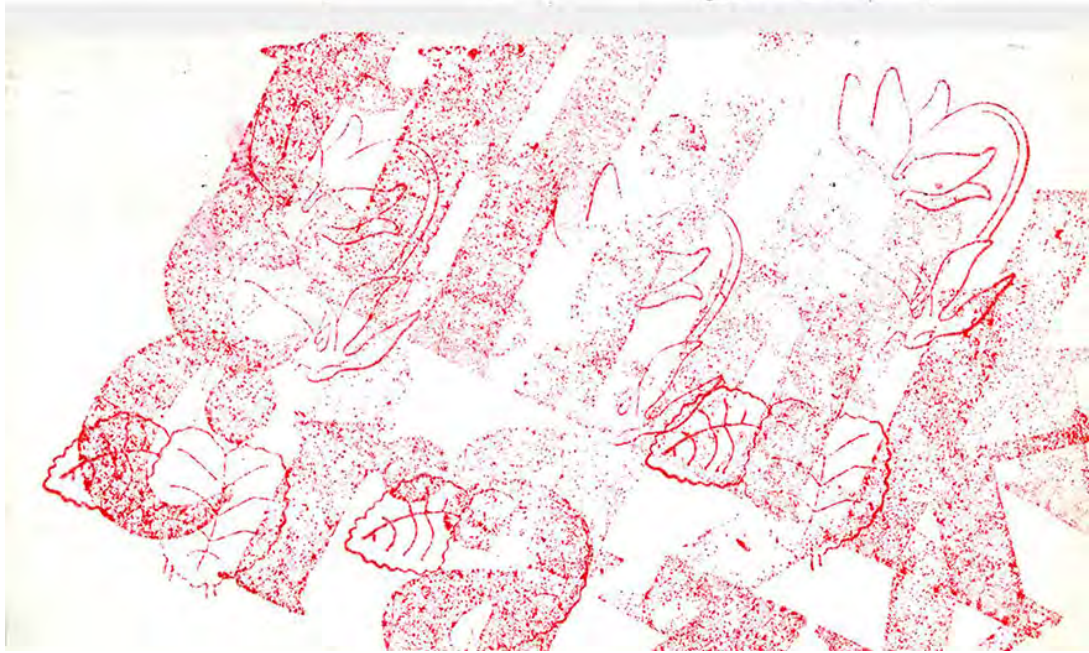


Fig. 58

MR.

*Shaw*  
*Chirrupel*  
mpp crazysm

ANDRZEJ PARTUM  
BIURO POEZJI  
WARSZAWA  
UL. POZNAŃSKA 38  
[POLAND]



1973-75

*Think Crazy Propped against the Wall*

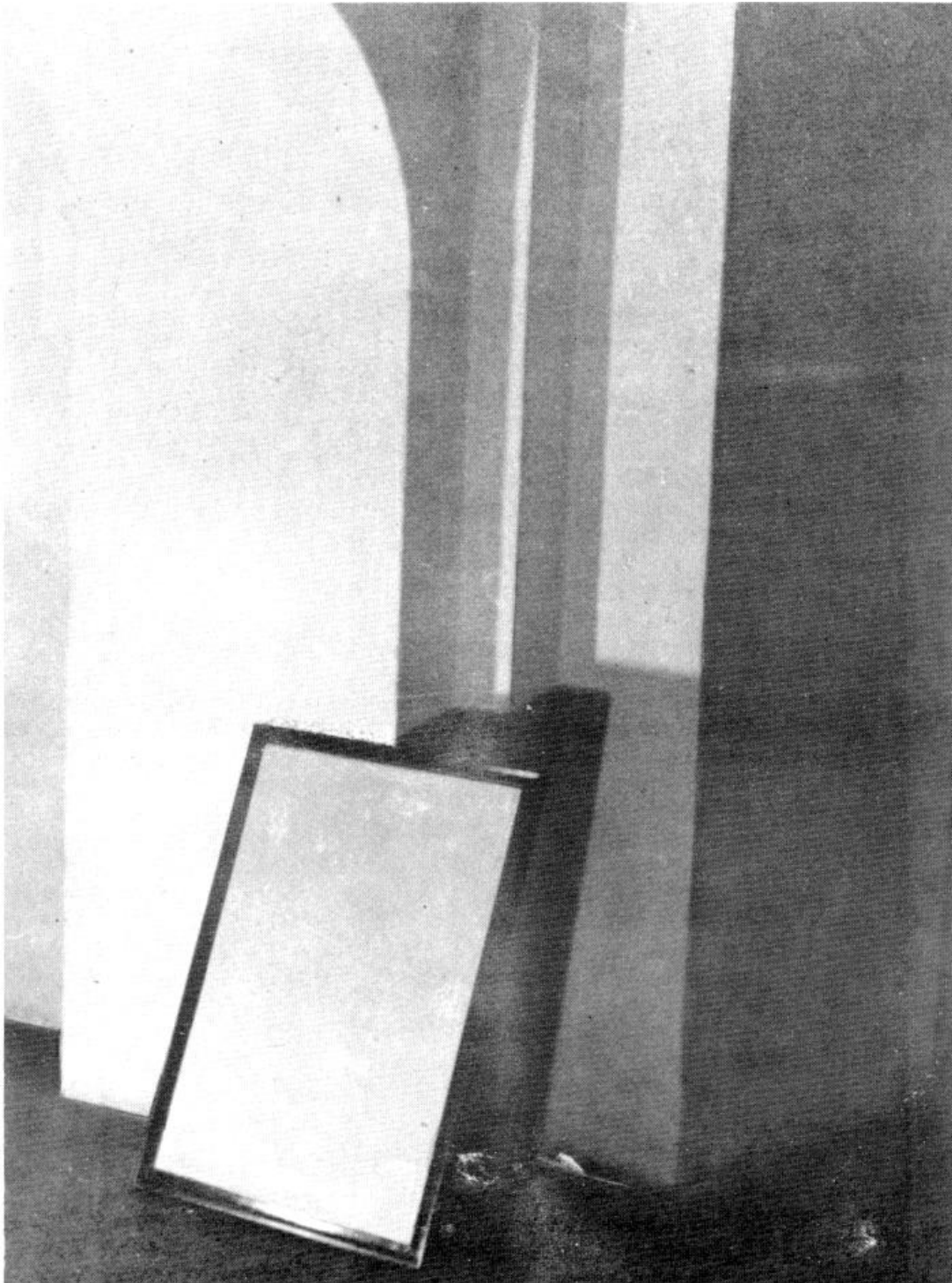


Fig. 59

1971-73

*I Will Send You a Signal*

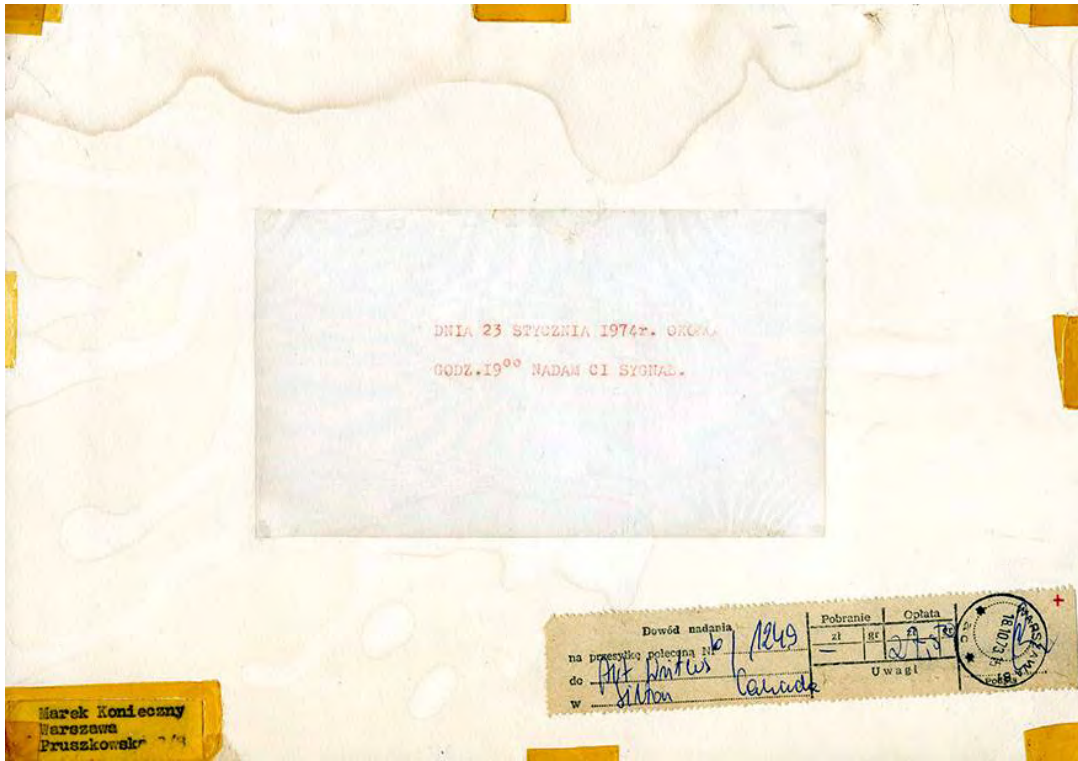


Fig. 60

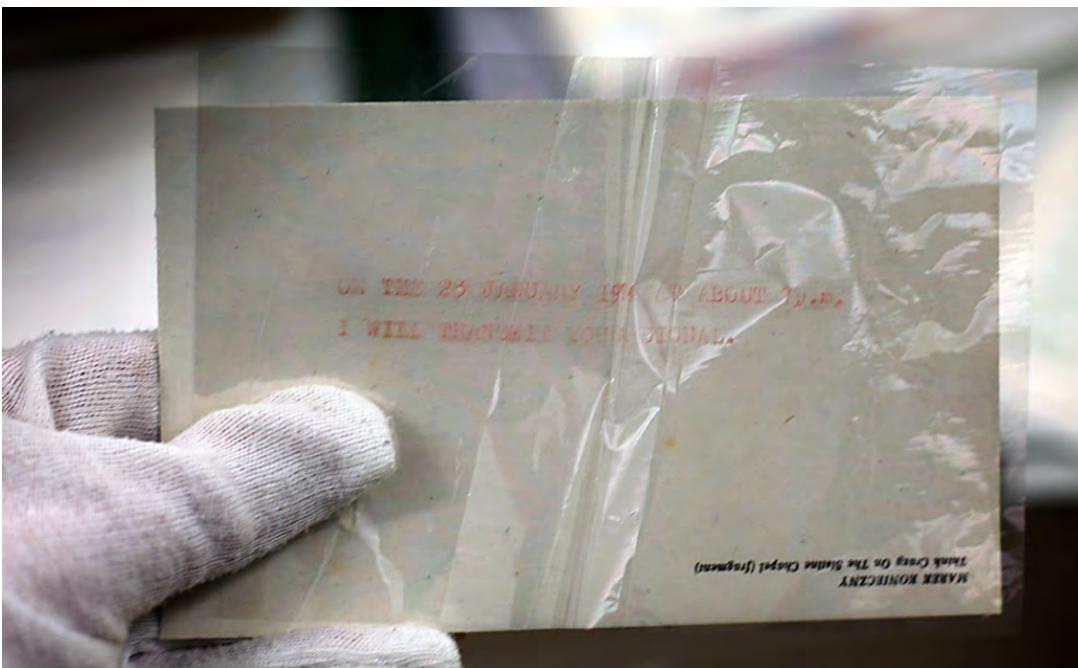


Fig. 61

1974

1672-1974



Fig. 62

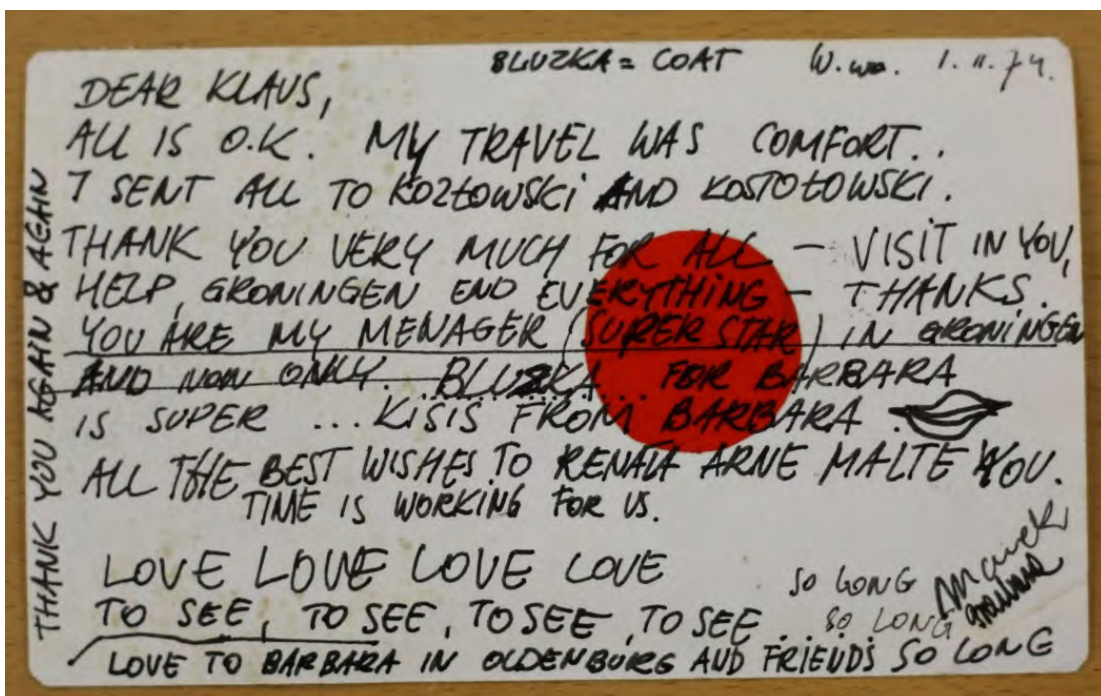


Fig. 63

1974  
*1672-1974*



Fig. 64



Fig. 65

1974

1672-1974

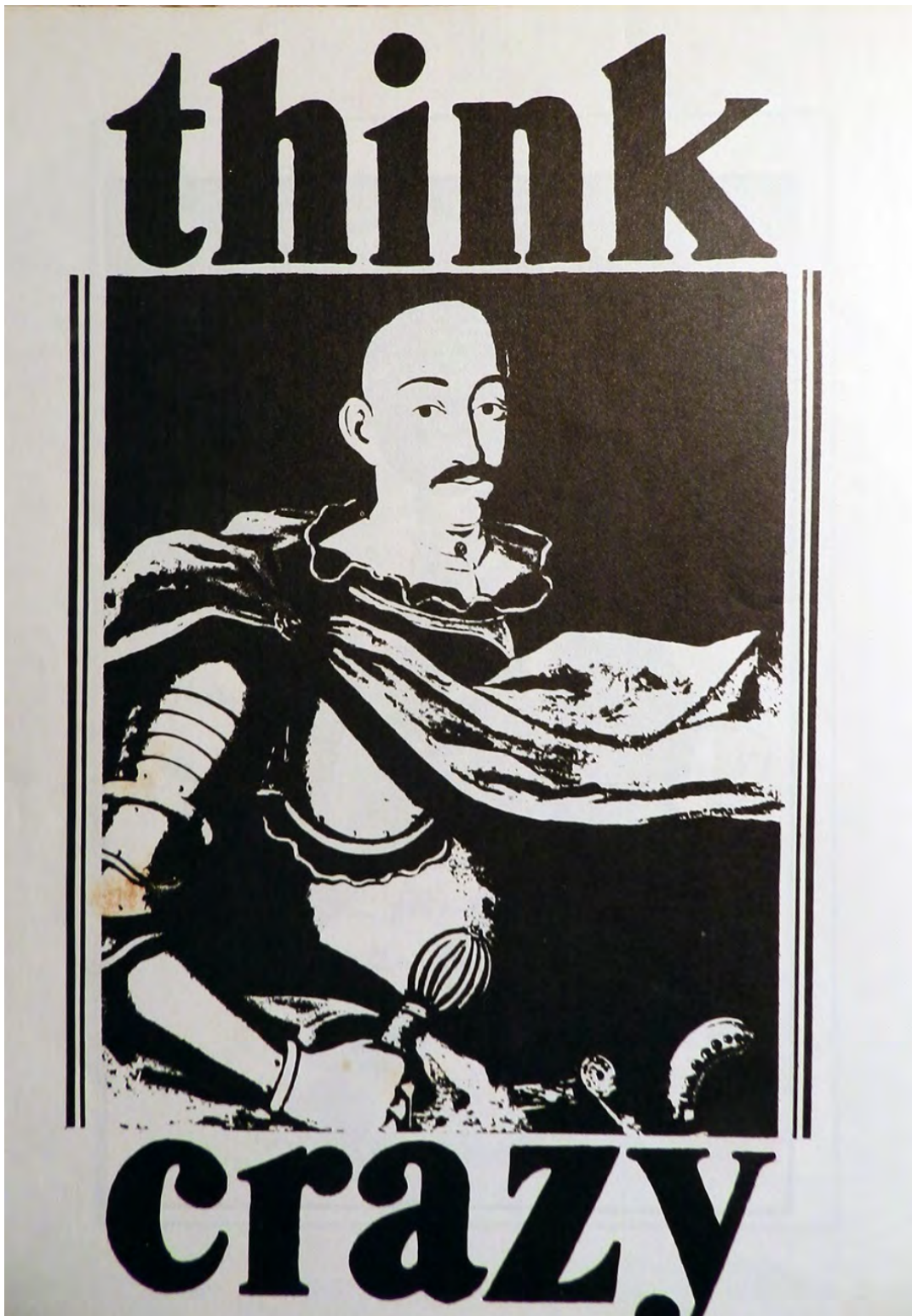


Fig. 66

1974

*August Christmas*



Fig. 67



Fig. 68

1974

*Propped Against the Sky*



Fig. 69



1974

*Orion's Sickle*



Fig. 70



Fig. 71

1974

*Still Life with a Little Bird*



Fig. 72

1975

*Dialogue with a Pyramid*



Fig. 73

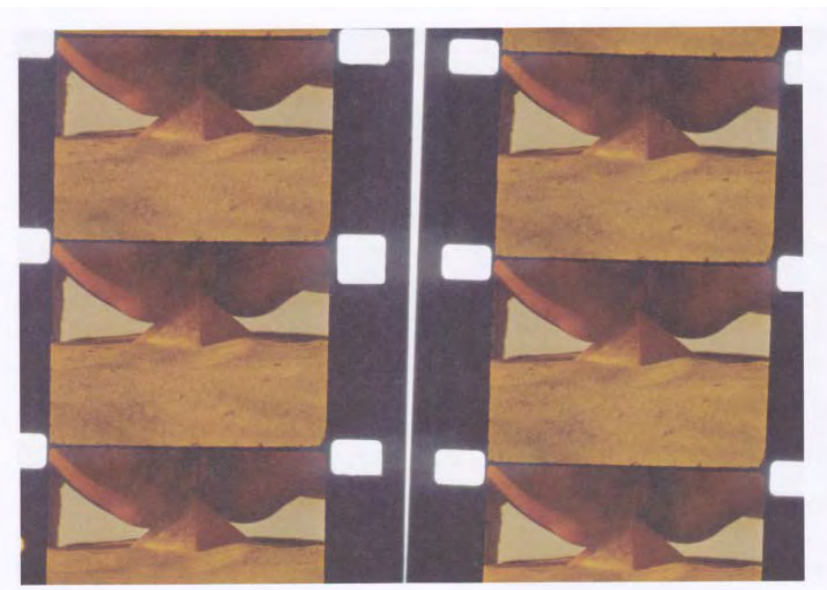


Fig. 74

1975

*Think Crazy* [manifestation San Francisco]



Fig. 75

1975

*Think Crazy* [Oath New Brunswick New Jersey]



Fig. 76

1975

*At Sea – 7 Evenings, 7 Days*

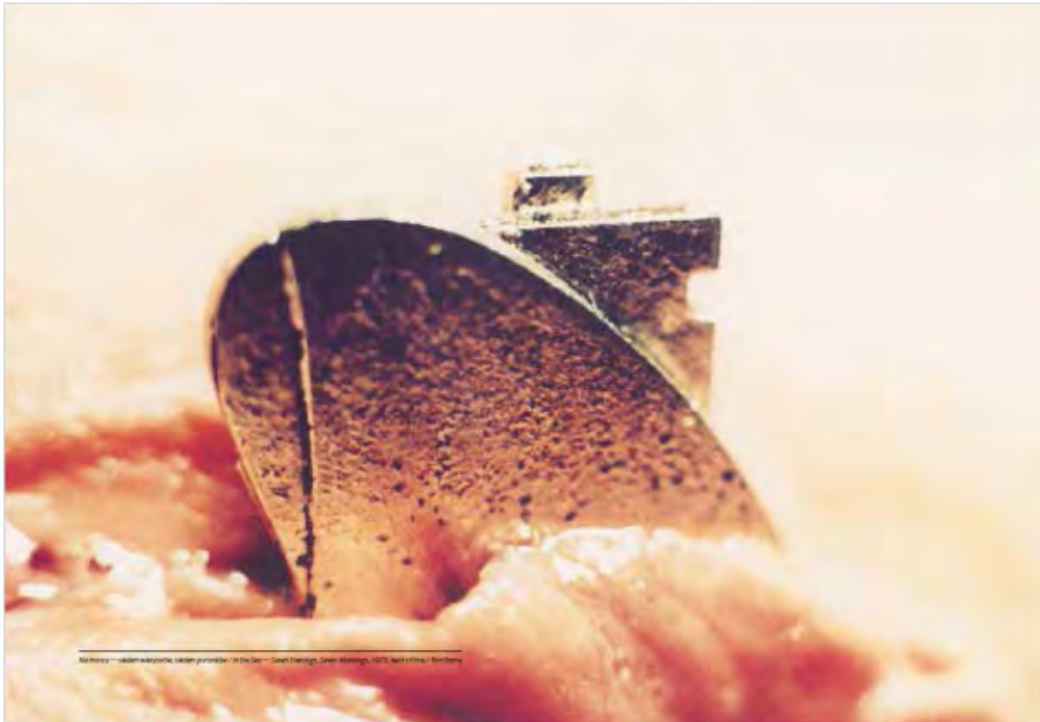


Fig. 77

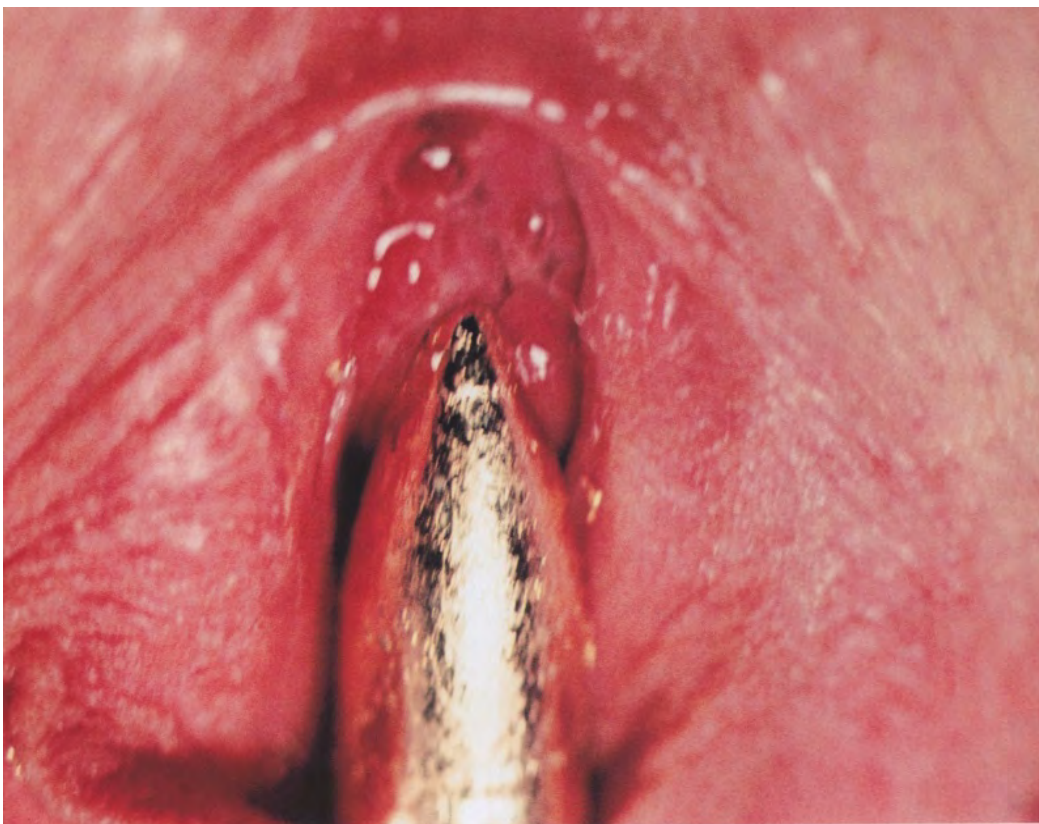


Fig. 78

**1975**

*24012008 Think Crazy*

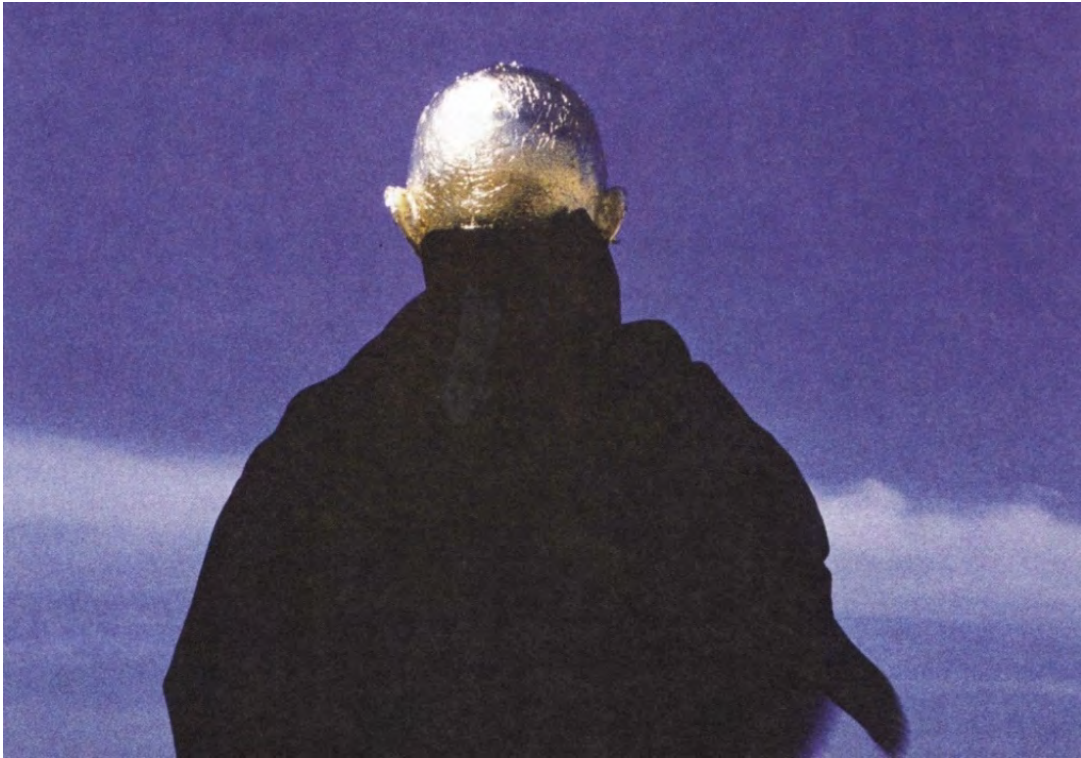


Fig. 79

1975

*Santa Conversatione*



Fig. 80



Fig. 81



Fig. 82



1975

*Think Crazy for Flag*



Fig. 83

1975  
*Think Crazy*



Fig. 84

1975

*Think Crazy* [Manifestations US]



Fig. 85

Fig. 86



Fig. 87

1975

*Think Crazy* [Manifestations US]



Fig. 88



Fig. 89



Fig. 90

1975

*Think Crazy* [Manifestations US]



Fig. 91



Fig. 92



Fig. 93

1975/76

*Conversing with a Dog | Conversing with a Dog Conversing with Pyramids*



Fig. 94

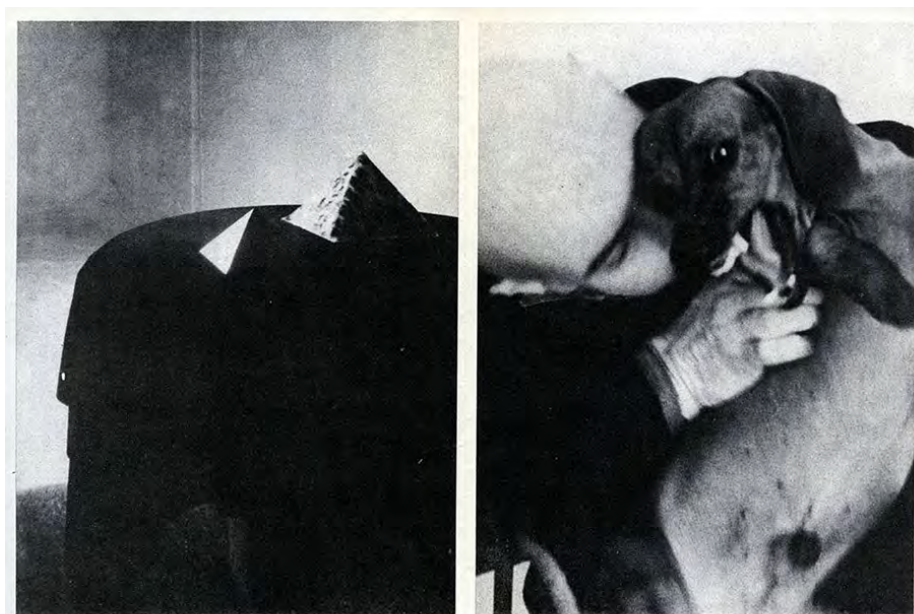


Fig. 95

MAREK KONIECZNY

ROZMAWIAJĄC Z PSEM  
ROZMAWIAJĄC Z PIRAMIDAMI

GALERIA SZTUKI LDK „LABIRYNT”  
RYNEK 8 — 20-111 LUBLIN

19. VI — 5 VII 1976

WDK/L-n D-5-1220

1976-80

*Think Crazy for Sistine Chapel*



Fig. 96

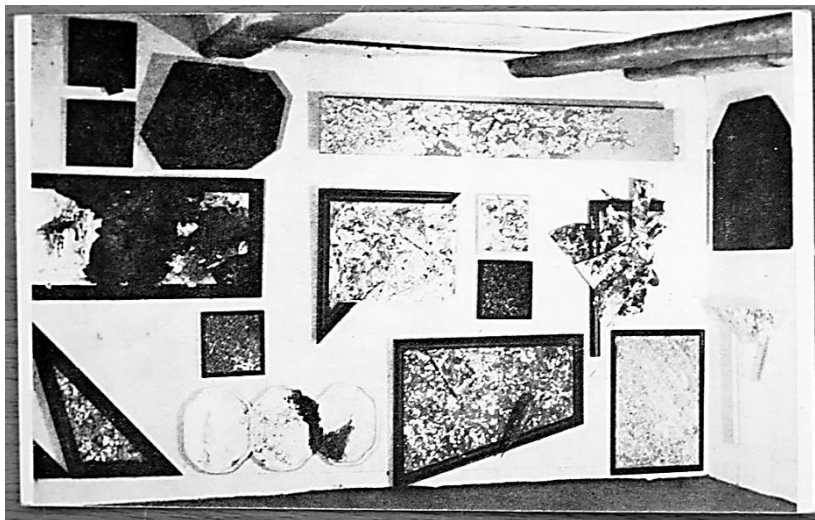


Fig. 97

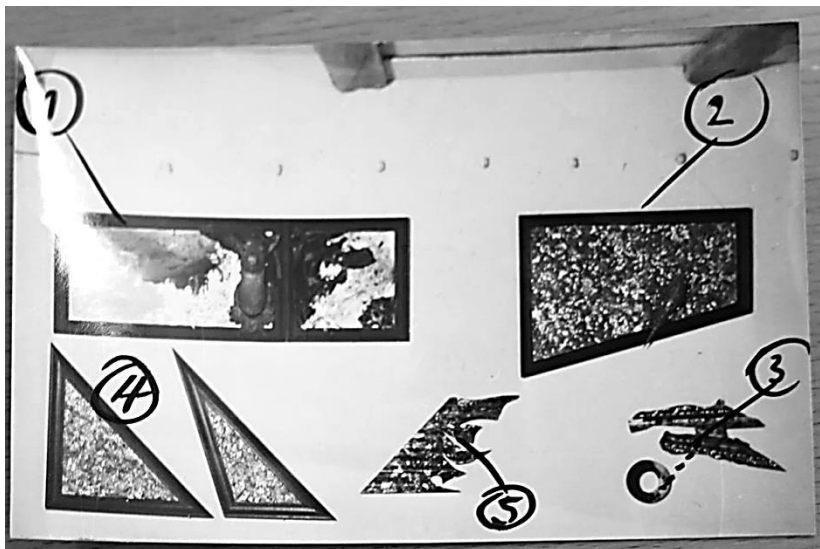


Fig. 98

C. 1976/78

*Sceptre | Sceptre and Chalice*



Fig. 99



Fig. 100



1976

*Think Crazy* [Still life]



Fig. 101



Fig. 102



Fig. 103

1976-79

*A Million Pyramids*



Fig. 104



Fig. 105



Fig. 106

1976

*A Million Pyramids*



Fig. 107

c. 1976  
[Unidentified]



Fig. 108

1976/79  
*Epitaph*

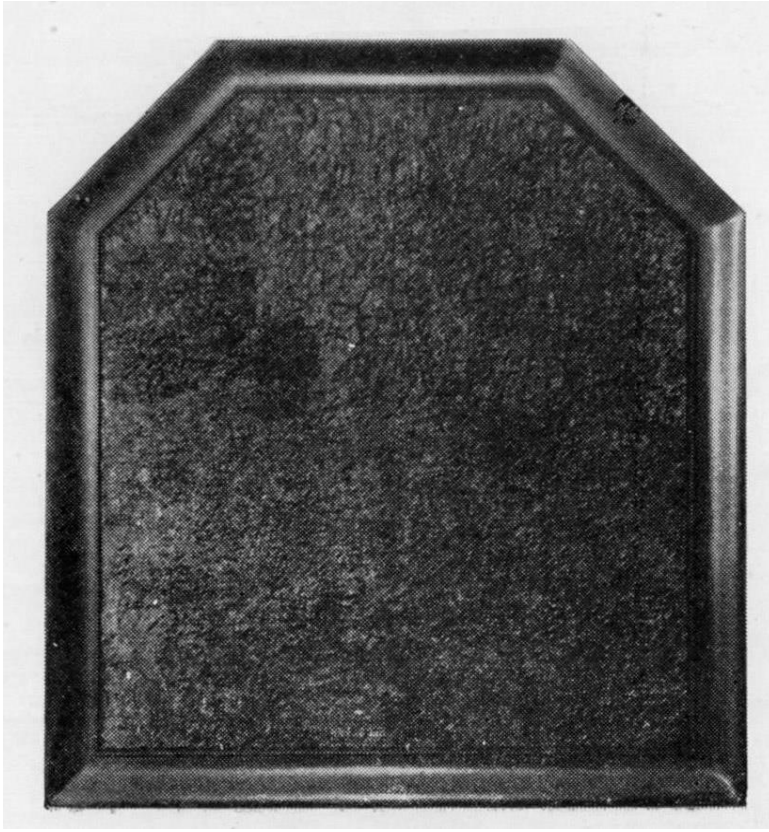


Fig. 109

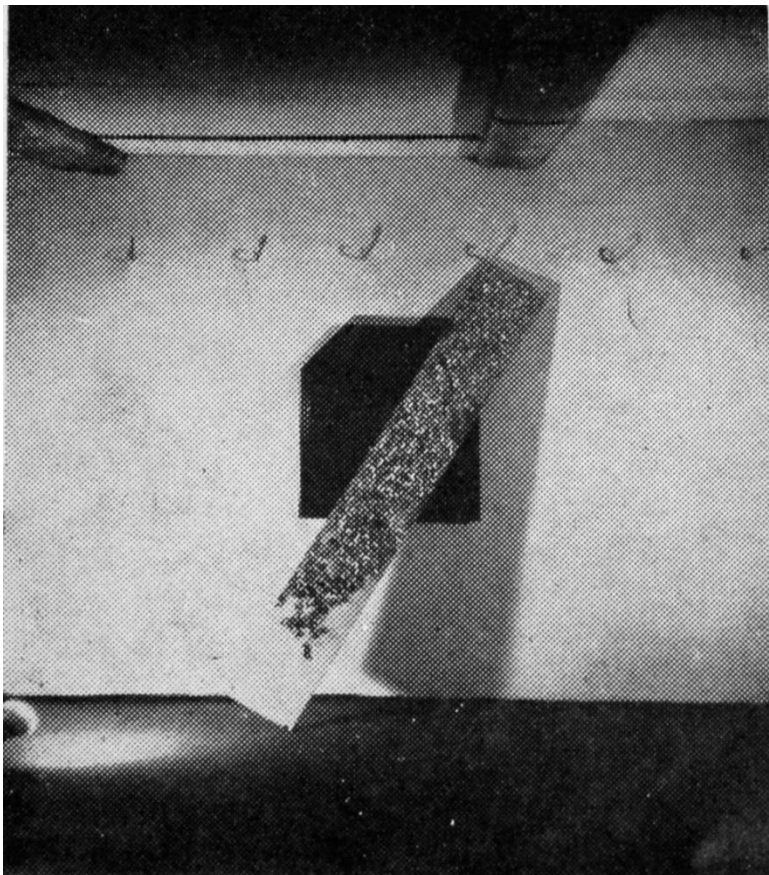


Fig. 110

1976

*Omnifer*

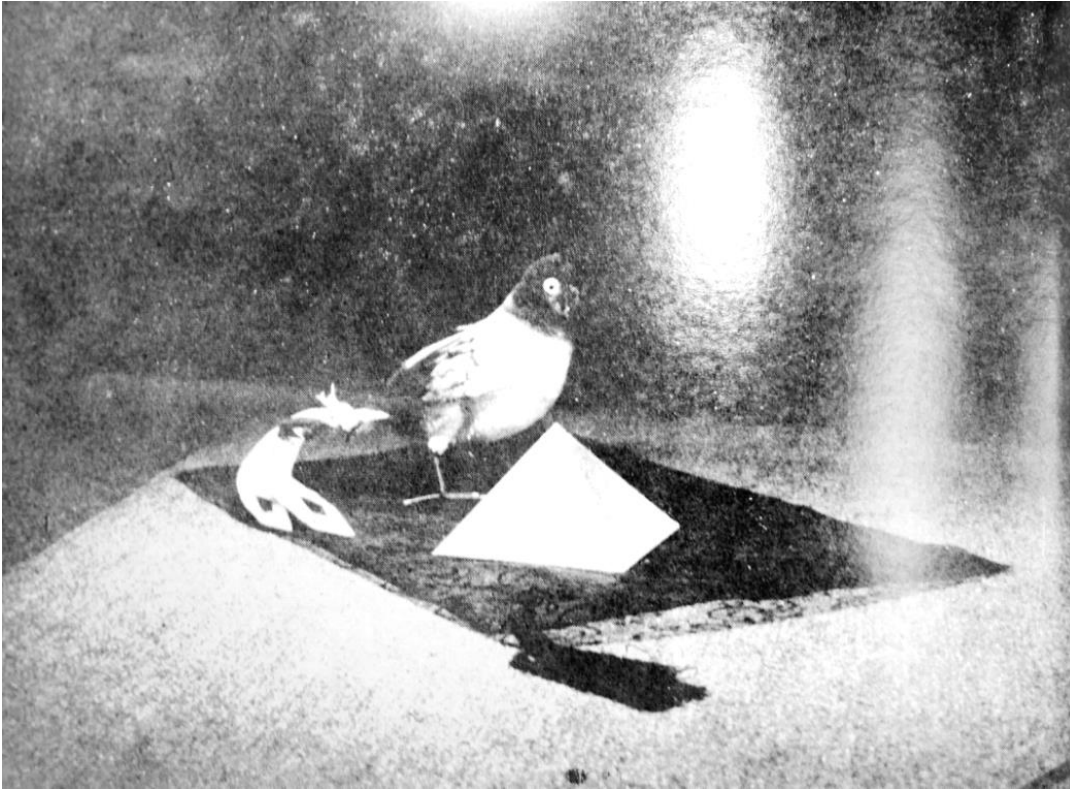


Fig. 111

c. 1976

*MG 14 Beronika*



Fig. 112

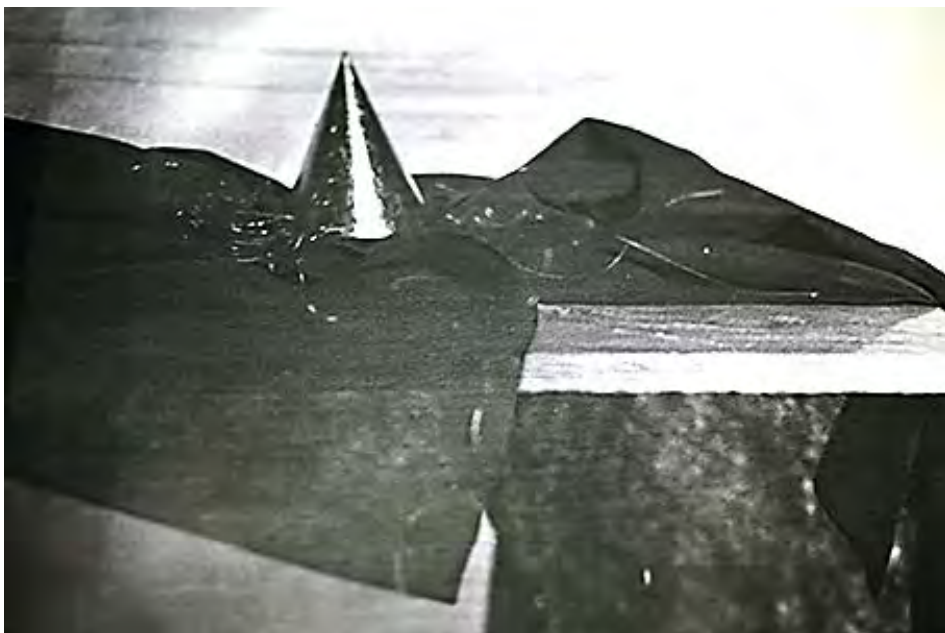



Fig. 113

1977

5 Years' Research Project 1976-80

Fig. 113a

<b>FIVE YEARS' RESEARCH PROJECT '76-'80</b>	
1. being an artist / <i>definition note</i>	
<b>think crazy</b>	
2. a piece of work / <i>definition note</i>	
<b>think crazy</b>	
MAREK KONIECZNY ROZMAWIAJĄC Z PSEM ROZMAWIAJĄC Z PRAMDAM GALERIA SZTUKI LAOPYNT BYTYEK 8 - 3001 LUDLIN 12 11 - 11 11 1977	
3. More concrete proposal for creating a new and free cultural atmosphere by means of Art wherever we live in this land	
<b>think crazy</b>	
<b>project: two definition-notes and one proposal</b>	
<b>ART DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>name:</b> MAREK KONIECZNY
	<b>address:</b> 02-117 WARSZAWA, ul. POWIĄKOWSKA 24B
	<b>date:</b> 7.11.77
<small>Please don't be afraid of submitting something for storage with artists. Tel.: 022 244 24 24. 02-117 Warszawa, ul. Powińska 24B, 02-117. Fax: 022 244 24 24.</small>	



1978

*Think Crazy for Self-Portrait*



Fig. 114

1979

*Unfeeling Rocks/Unfeeling Rocks with Self-Portrait*

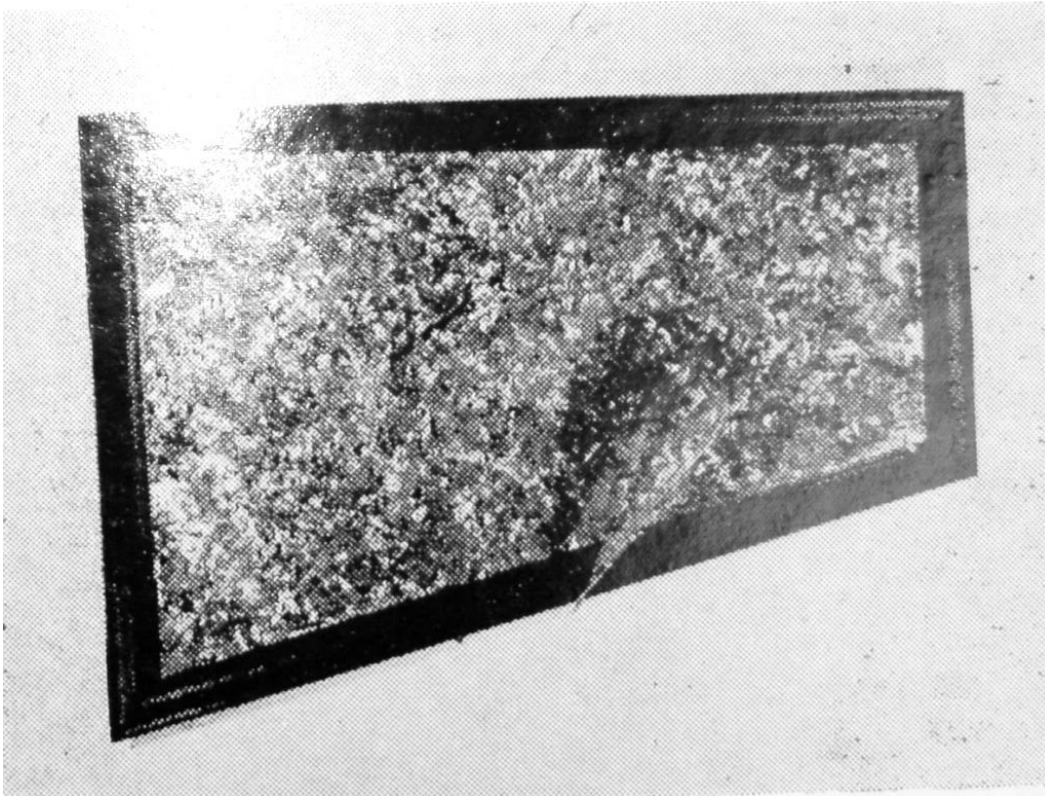


Fig. 115



Fig. 116

1980

*Conversations in the Tent of the Prince de l'Avantgarde*

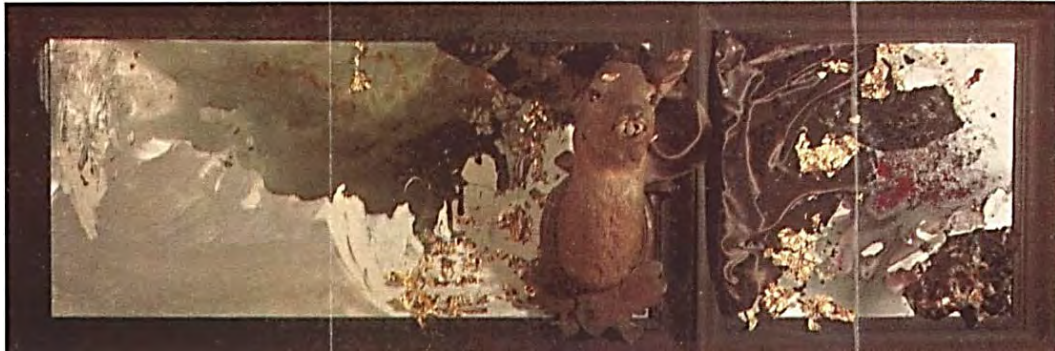


Fig. 117

1979-83

*Think Crazy Forest Inspectorate, Formerly a Diptych, Now a Triptych*

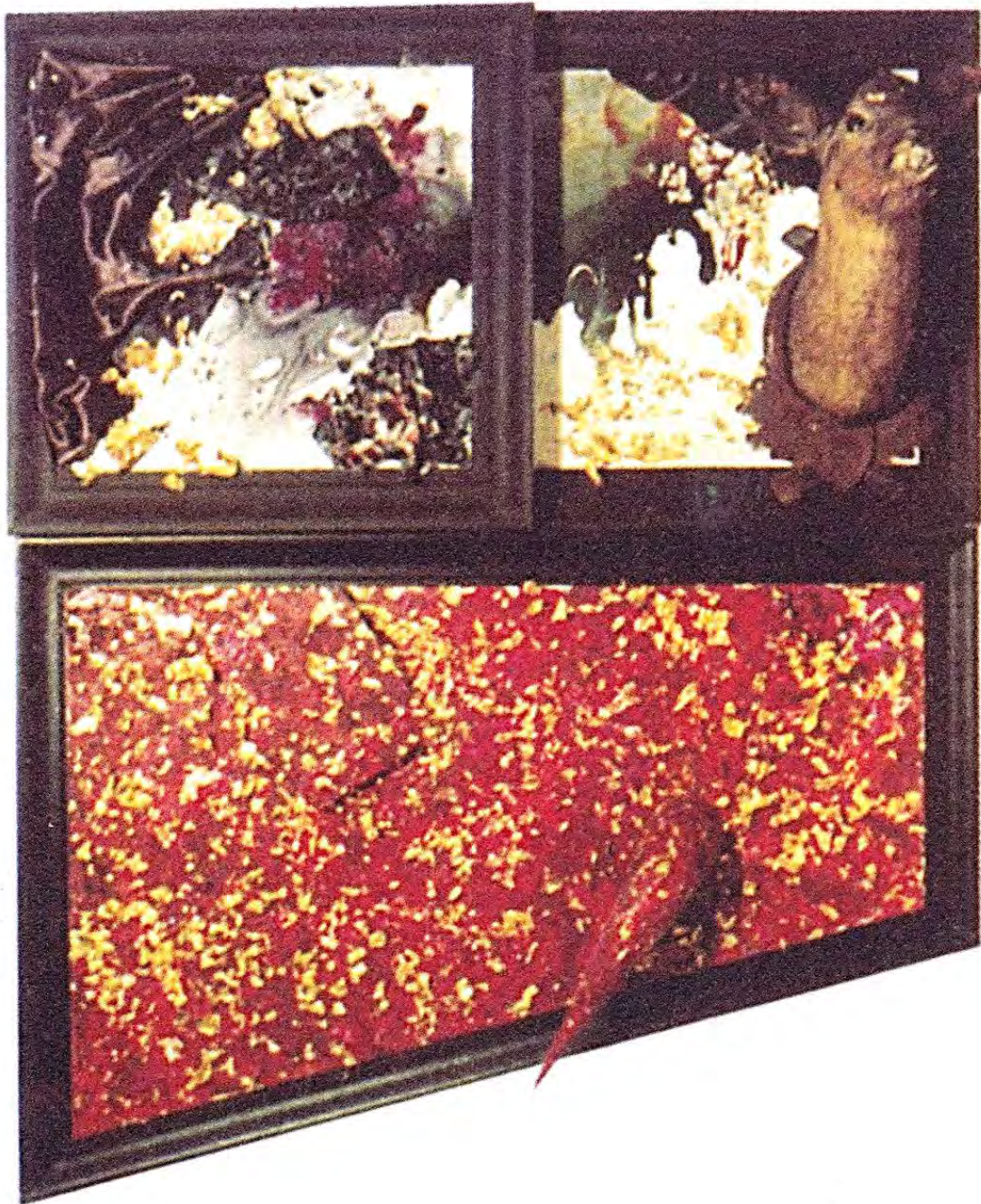


Fig. 118

**1980**

*And When It Rises*



Fig. 119

1980

*Additional Dimension*



Fig. 120

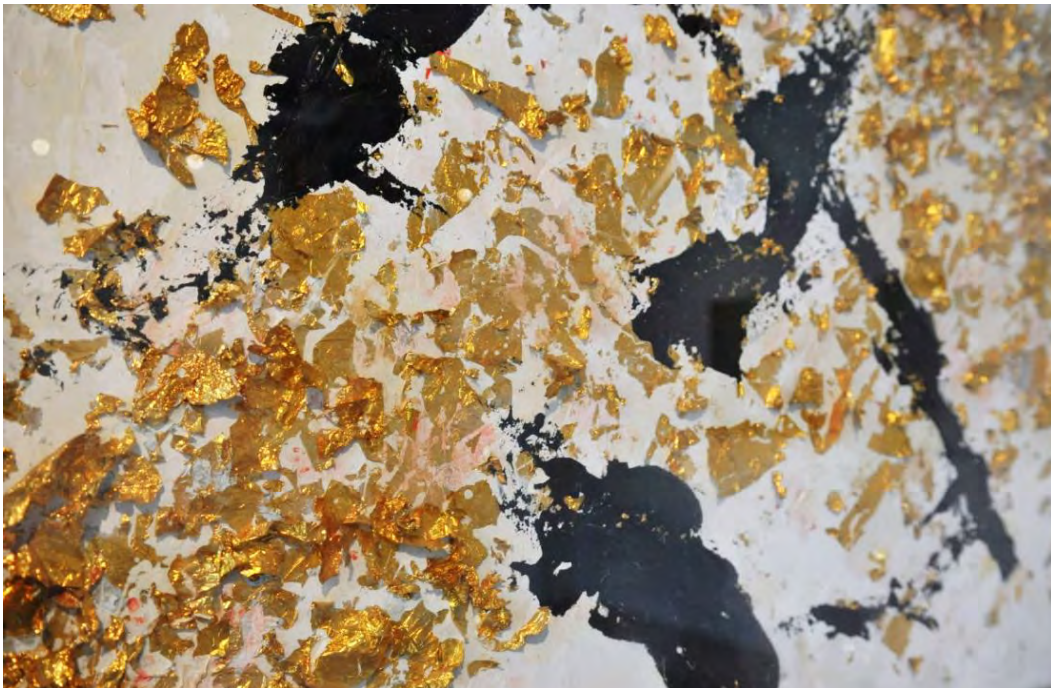


Fig. 121

**1980**

*Monoceros*

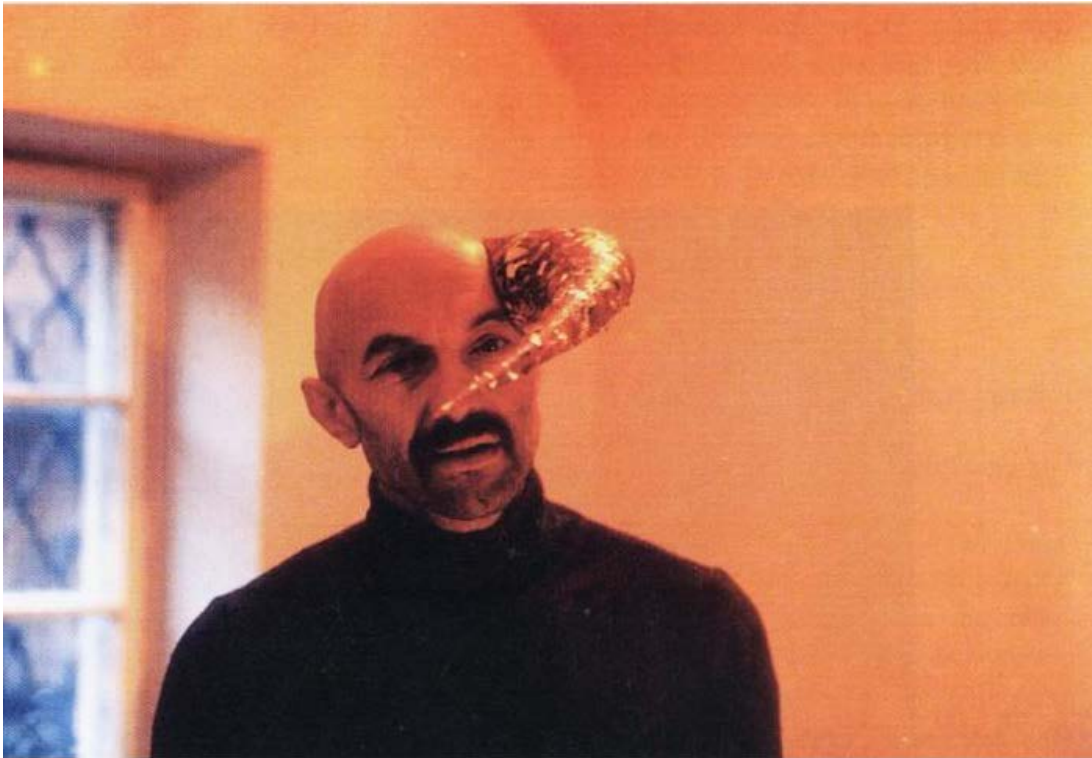


Fig. 122

1980

*Fire-feather/Exudative diathesis*



Fig. 123



1980

*Trees [also: Grasses] for Think Crazy | Grasses for Think Crazy*



Fig. 124



Fig. 125

**1980**  
*Pietà*



Fig. 126

1981

*Incomprehensible Whole*



Fig. 127

1982

*Calvus Cancer*



Fig. 128

1982  
*Spire*



Fig. 129



Fig. 130

**c. 1983-84**  
***Golden Knife***



Fig. 131

**1983**  
*Miciofutro*



Fig. 132

1983

*Step Pyramid*



Fig. 133

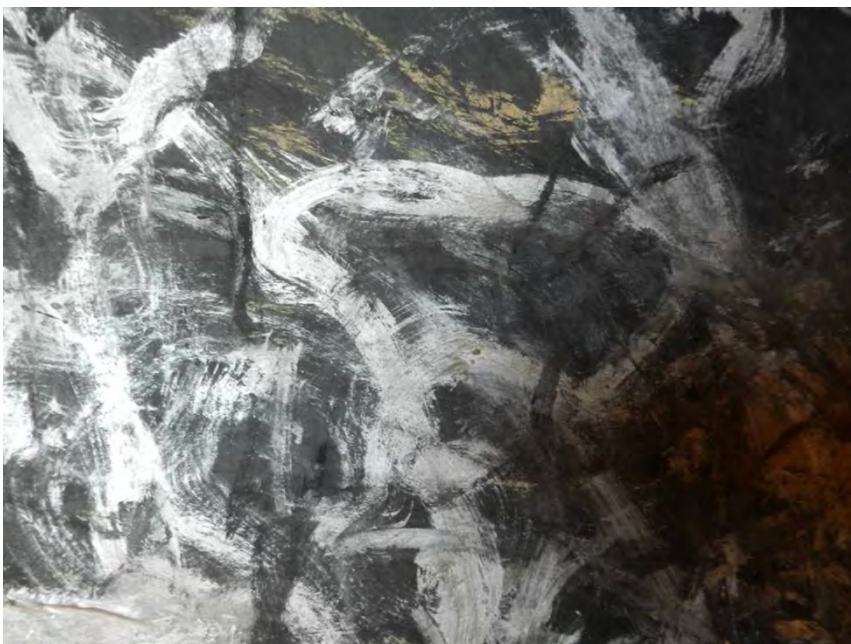


Fig. 134



**1983**  
*Step Pyramid*



Fig. 135



Fig. 136

1983

*Think Crazy Sistine Chapel*



Fig. 137



1983

*Think Crazy Sistine Chapel*



Fig. 138

1983

*Tricorn Hat*



Fig. 139

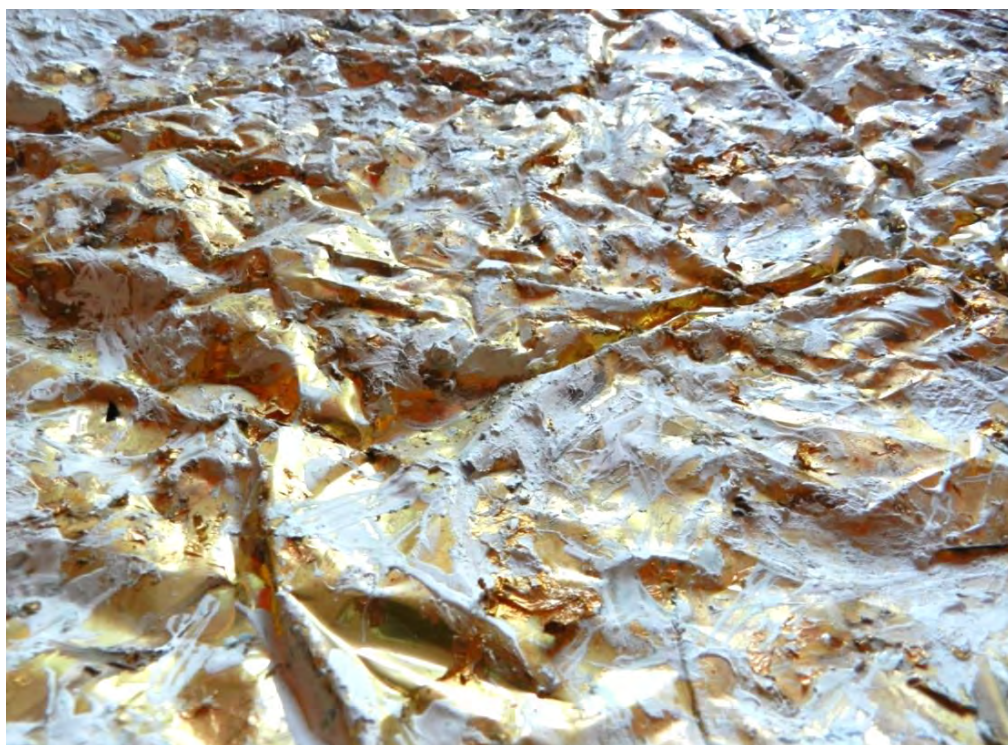


Fig. 140

1983

*Tricorn Hat*



Fig. 141

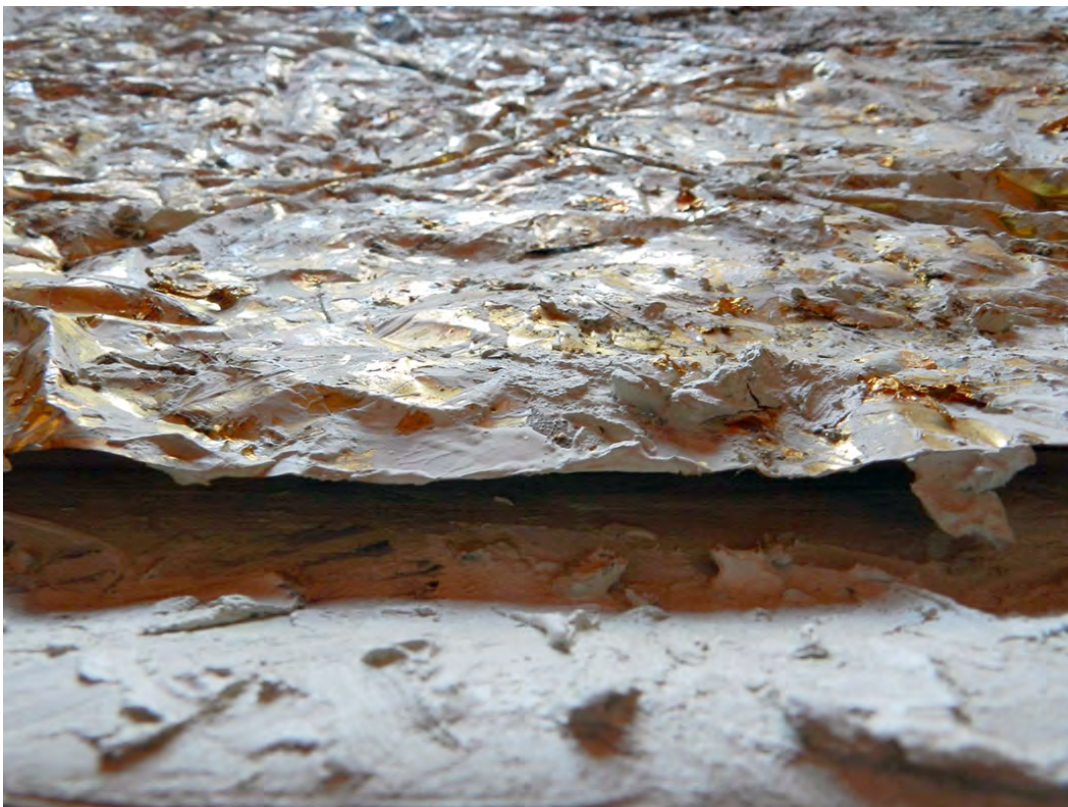


Fig. 142

1983

*Tricorn Hat*



Fig. 143



Fig. 144

1983

*Tricorn Hat*



Fig. 145

1985

*Varsoviana*



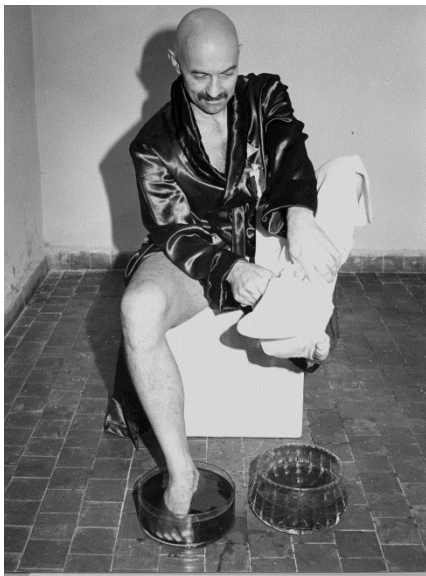
Fig. 146



1985  
*Concentration and Ecstasy*



Fig. 147



**1985**  
**[Individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt]**



Fig. 148



Fig. 149

**1985**  
**[Individual exhibition at Galeria Labirynt]**



Fig. 150



Fig. 151

1986

*Return to Sources*



Fig. 152



Fig. 153

**1986**  
*Return to Sources*



Fig. 154



Fig. 155



Fig. 156

2012

[Individual exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]

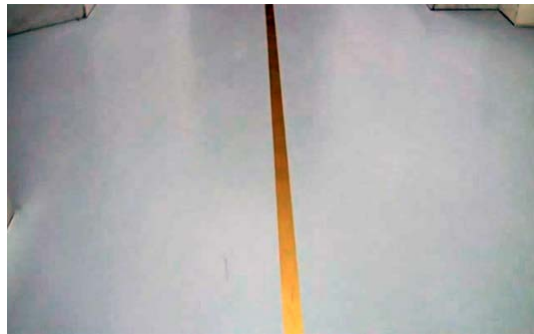


Fig. 157



2012

[Individual exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]



Fig. 158



2012

[Individual exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]

Fig. 159





2012

[Individual exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]



Fig. 160



2012

[Individual exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw]



Fig. 161



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**Leszek Sobocki**  
**Portraits from the *Coffin Effigies* series (1974-76)**



Fig. B.1



**Leszek Sobocki**

*Three Roses Yesterday – Three Roses Today (1977)*



Fig. B.2

**Artur Grottger**  
*The Forging of War-Scythes (1863)*

Fig. B.3





**Artur Grottger**  
*Spectre* (1864-66)

Fig. B.4



**Katarzyna Kobro**  
*Spatial Composition 4 (1928)*



Fig. B.5

**Pieter Janszoon Saenredam**  
*Interior of the Church of St. Bavo in Haarlem (1636)*



Fig. B.6

**Henryk Stażewski**  
*Composition No. 64/74 (1974)*

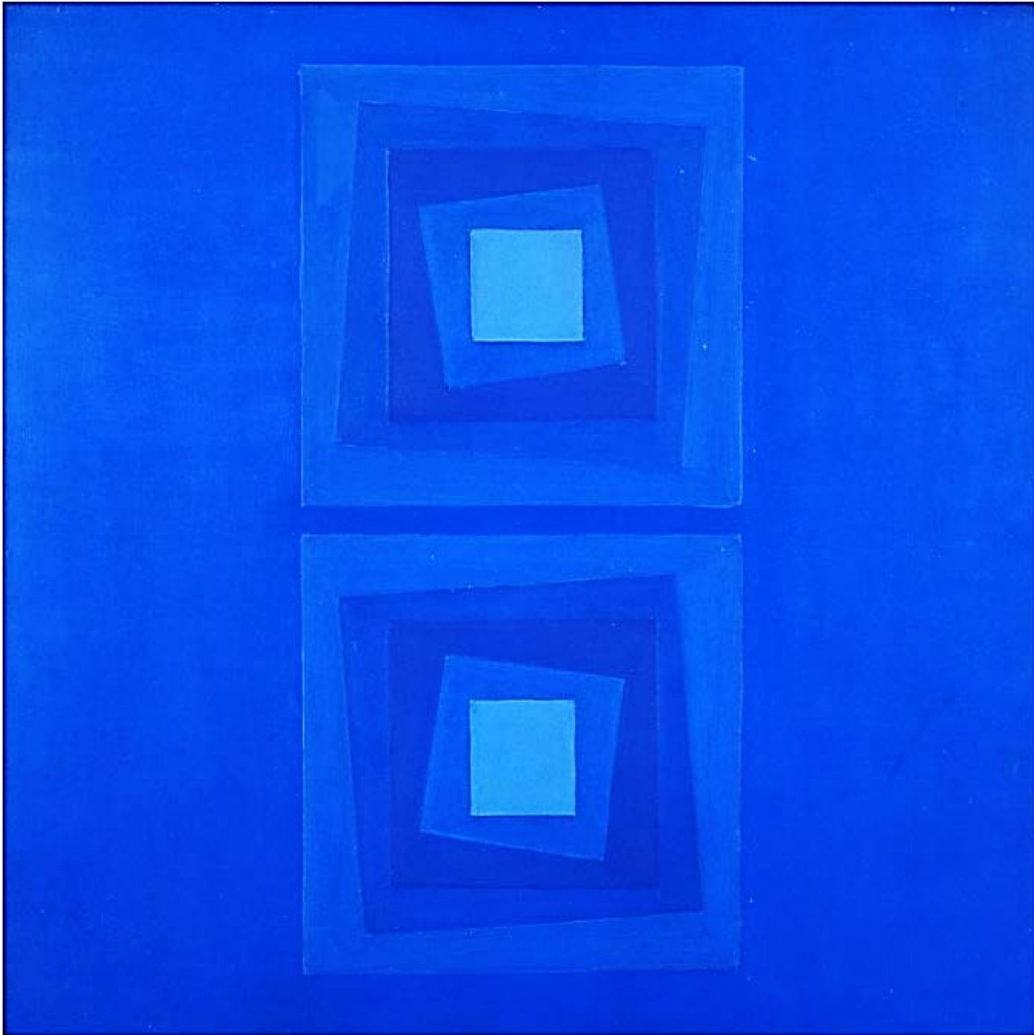


Fig. B.7

**Henryk Stazewski**  
*Copper Relief 28 (1964) / Copper Relief (1963)*



Fig. B.8



Fig. B.9

**Francis Bacon**

*Study for the Nurse in the film 'The Battleship Potemkin' (1957)*



Fig. B.10

**Francis Bacon**

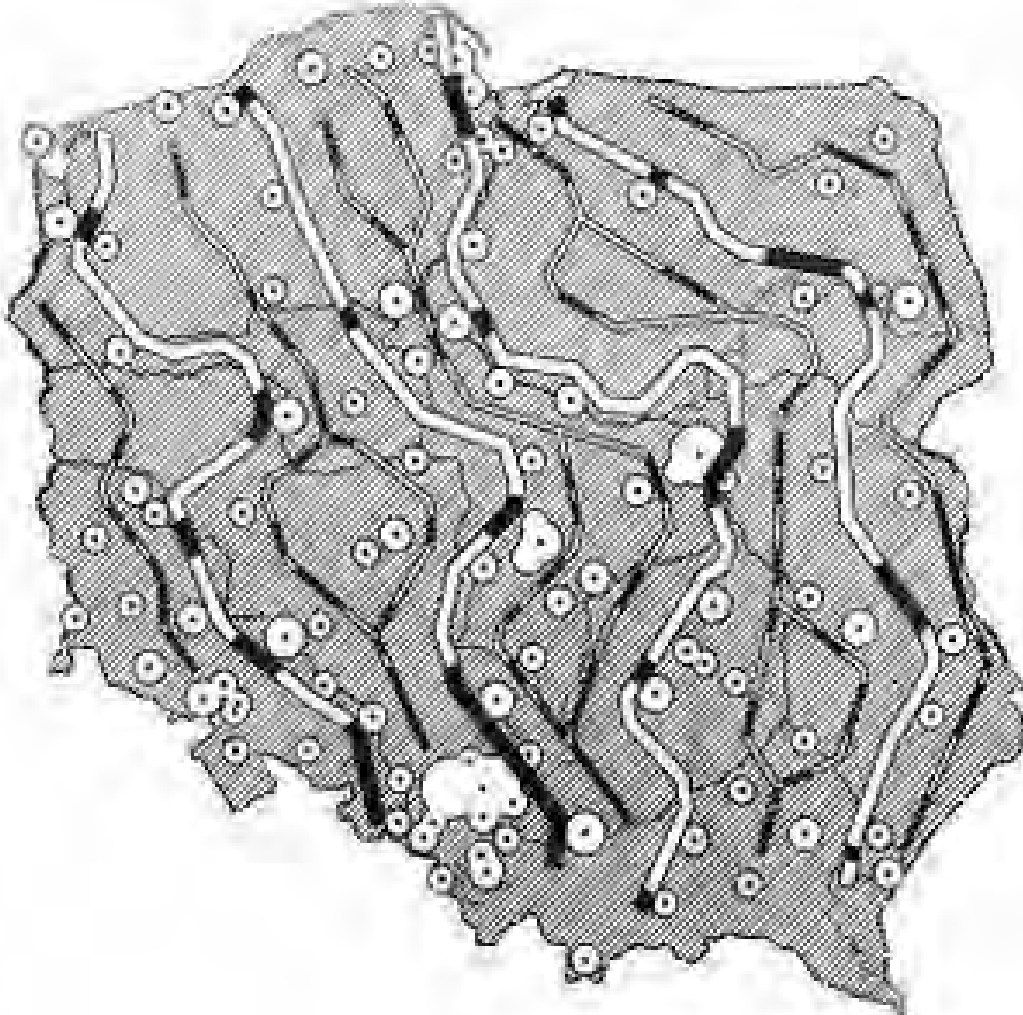
*Francis Bacon: Figure at a Washbasin (1978)*



Fig. B.11

**Oskar Hansen**  
*Linear Continuous System (1967)*

Fig. B.12





## Temple of Seti I bas relief



Fig. B.13

**Caspar David Friedrich**  
*Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*



Fig. B.14

**Johannes Vermeer**  
*The Art of Painting* (1665-1668)



Fig. B.15

**Zofia Kulik**

*The Gorgeousness of the Self (Mother, Daughter, Partner) (2007)*

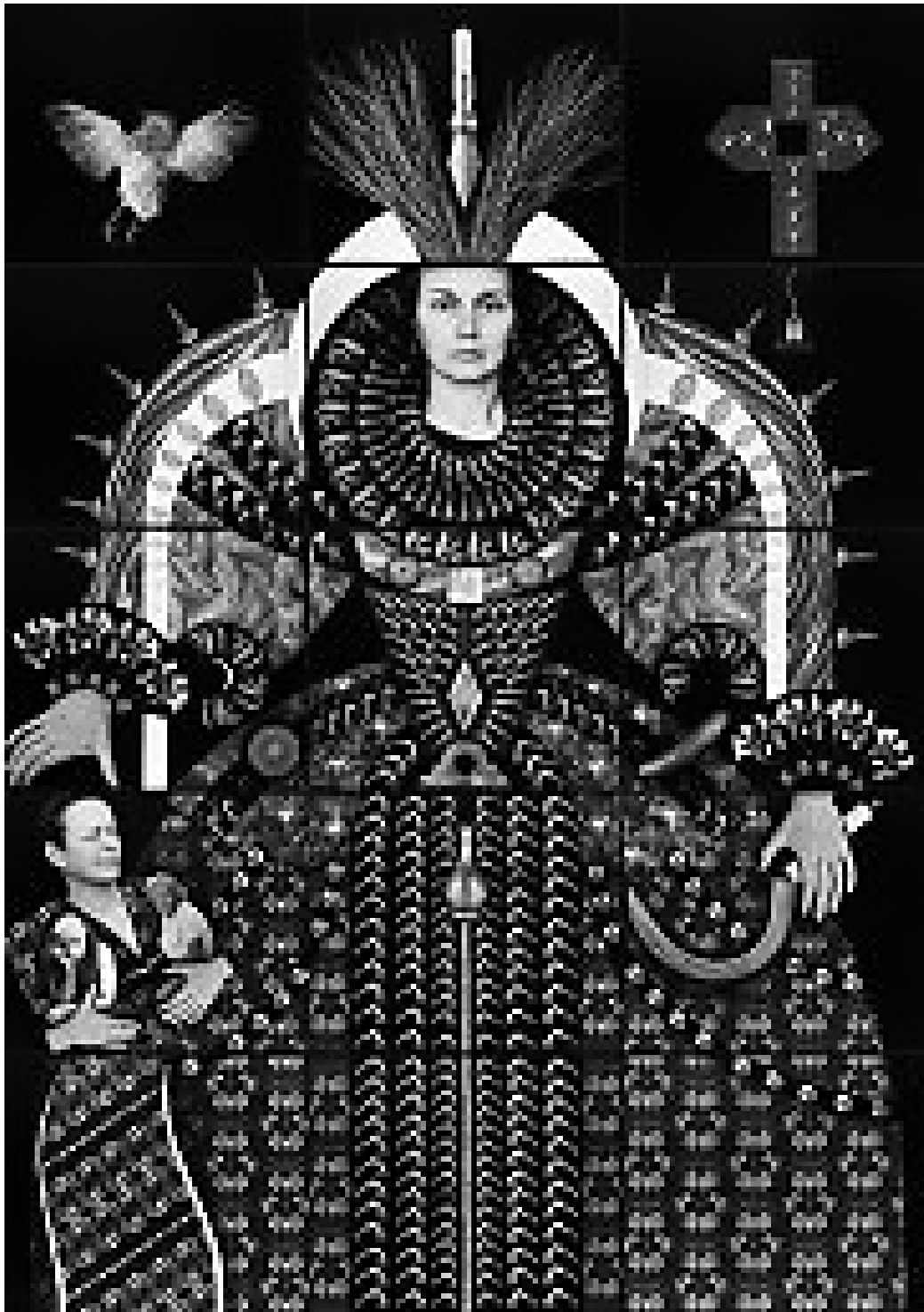


Fig. B.16

**Michelangelo**  
***Tondo Doni* (c.1503-04)**



Fig. B.17

**Tylman van Gameren**  
***Castrum doloris of Gryzelda Wiśniowiecka (1672)***

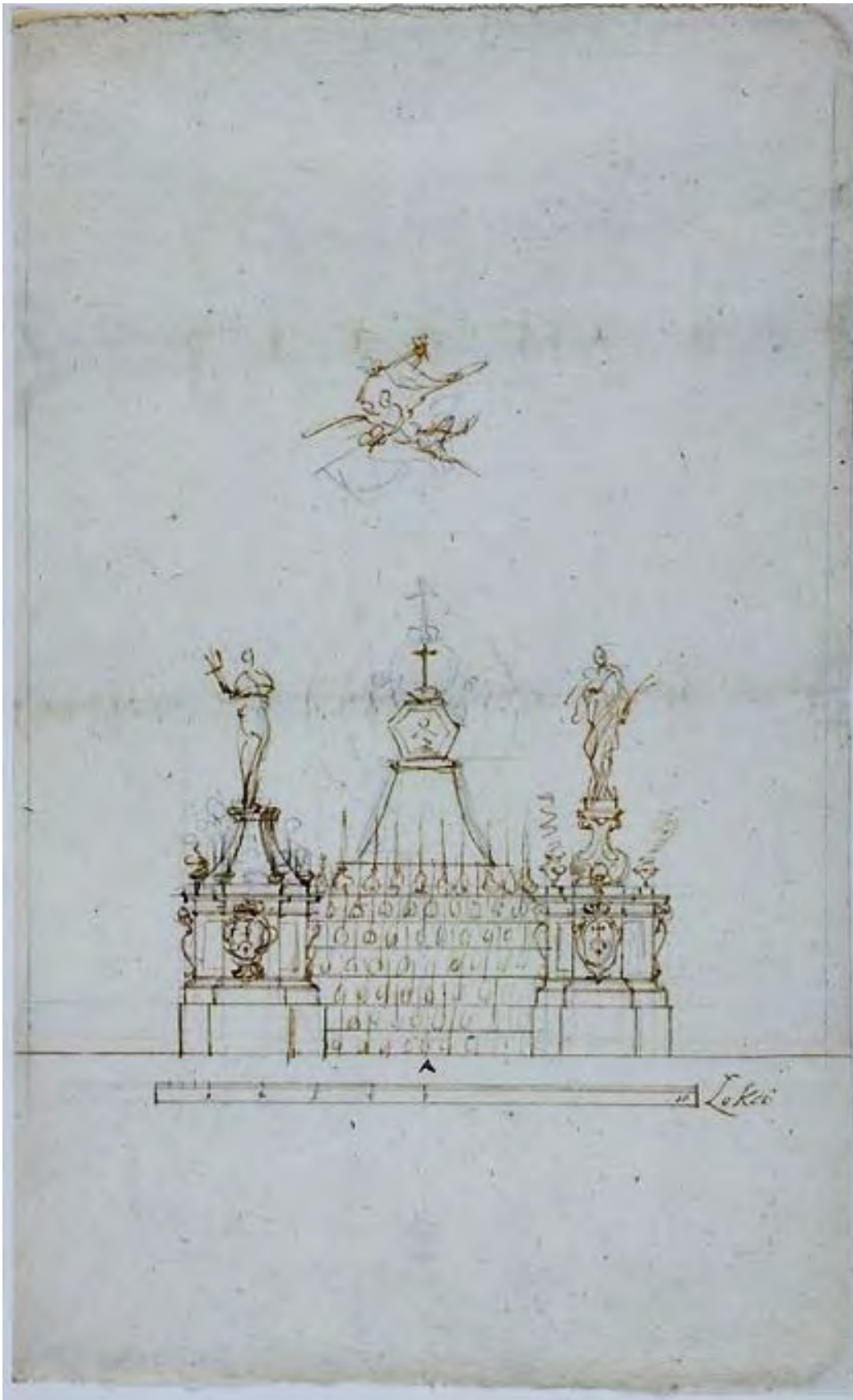


Fig. B.18

**Ana Mendieta**  
***Silueta Works in Mexico (1973-77/91)***

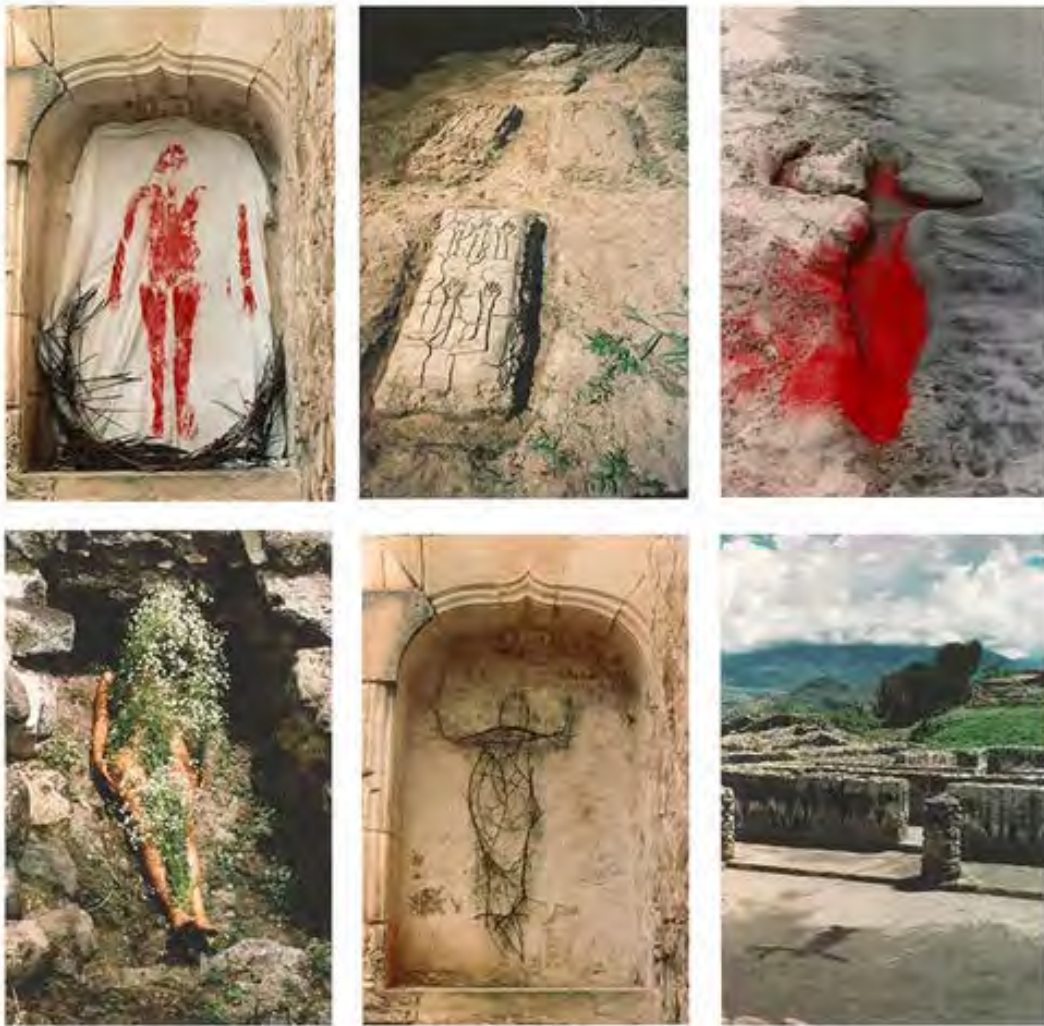


Fig. B.19

**Zbigniew Warpechowski**  
*Champion of Golgotha (1978)*

Fig. B.20





## Jerzy Beres 'Manifestations'

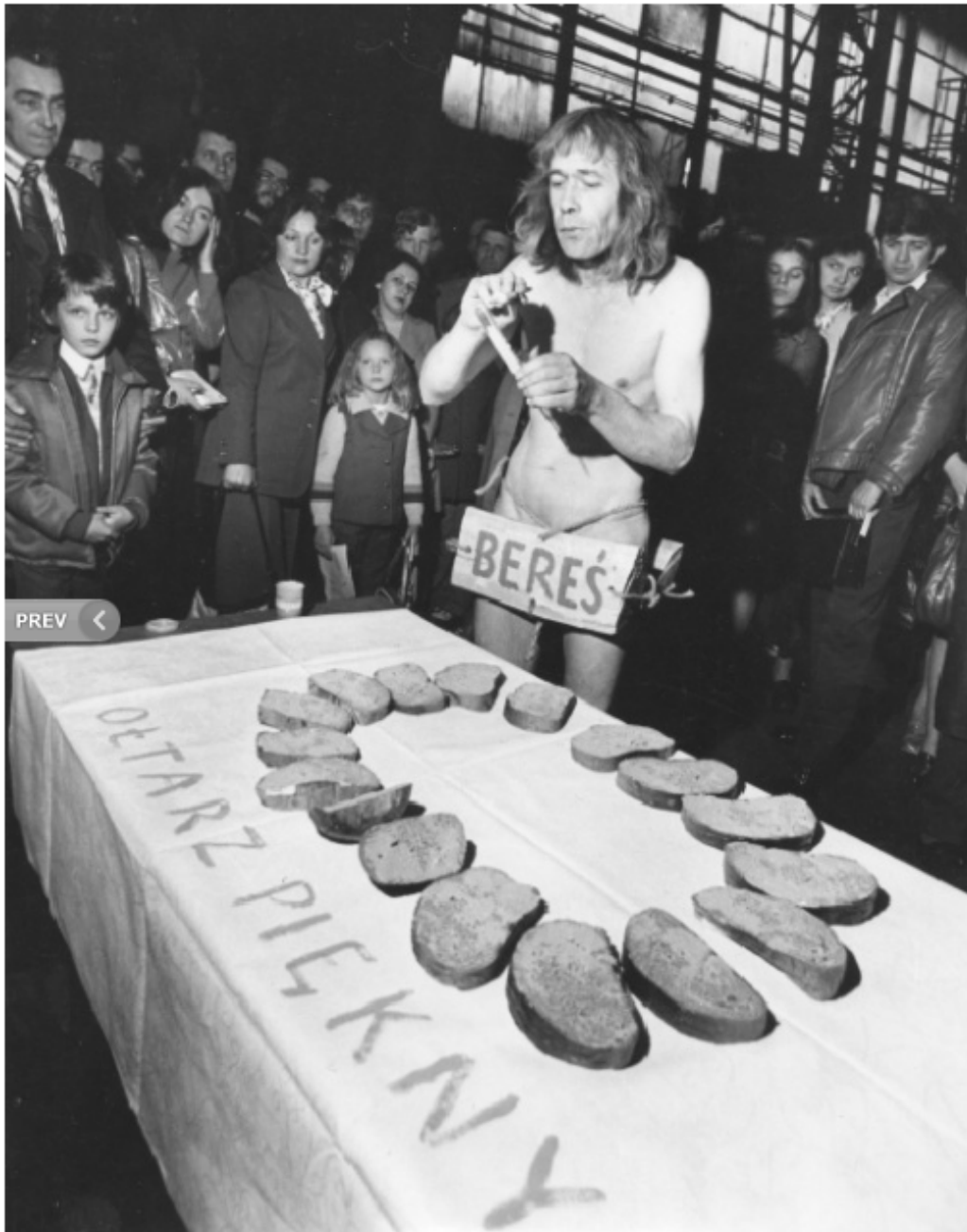


Fig. B.21

**Pieter Janszoon Saenredam**  
***Stranded Whale (1602)***

Fig. B.22



All rights reserved

SAENREDAM Jan Pietersz, Der gestrandete Wal am Strand bei Beverwijk, Galerie Gerda Bassenge, Berlin

**Adrian Piper**  
*Catalysis IV* (1971)



Fig. B.23

**An example of the Byzantine mosaics of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople**



Fig. B.24

**An example of gothic architecture rose window**

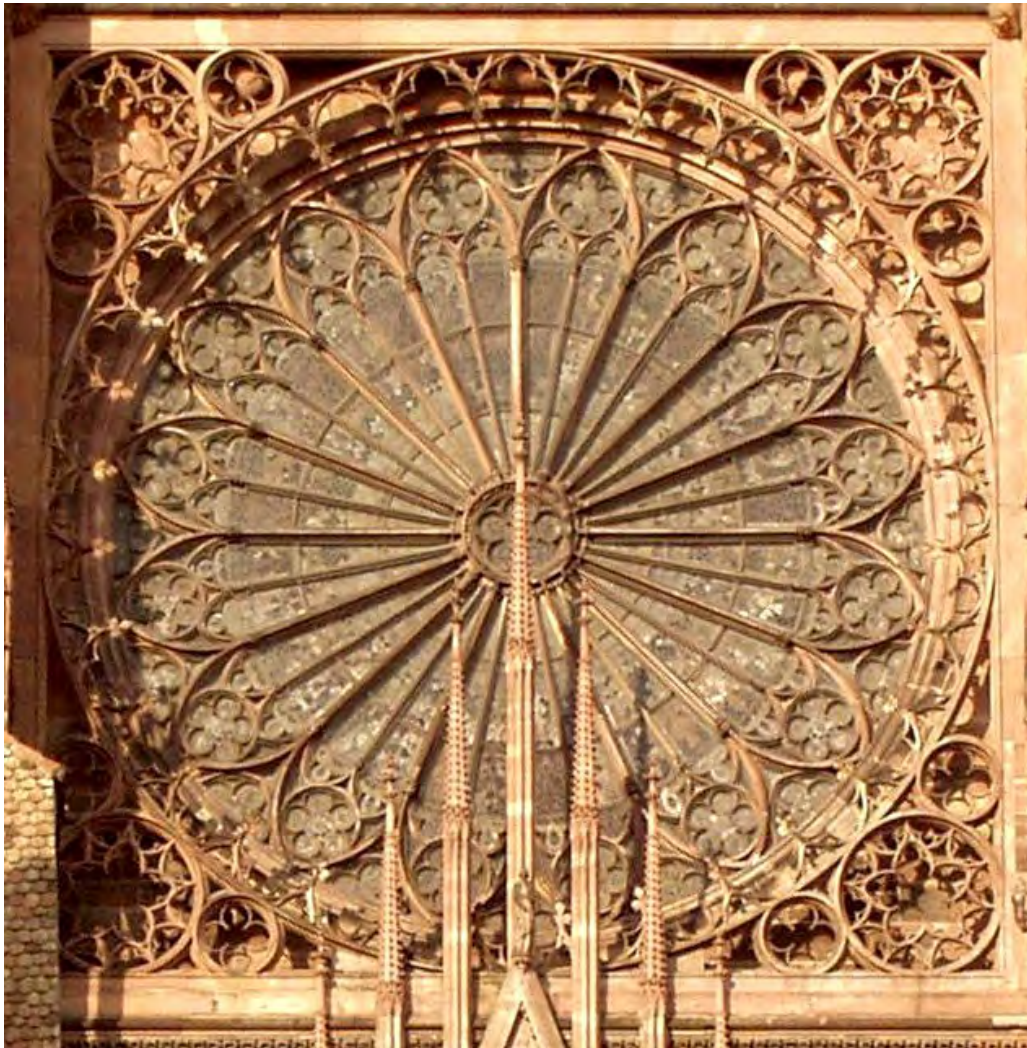


Fig. B.25

## Baroque house diagram

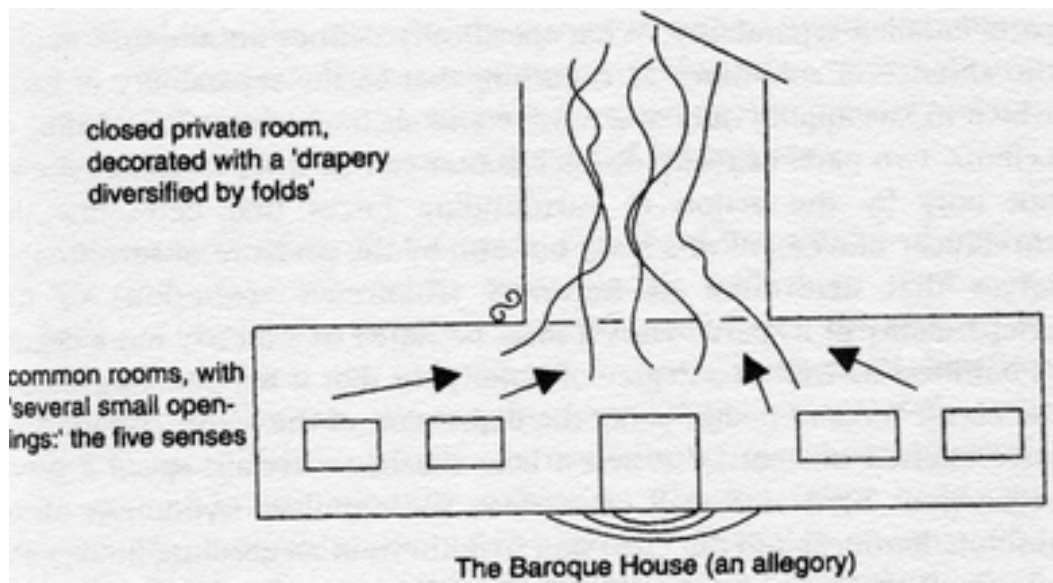


Fig. B.26

**An example of *karabela* (Polish sabre)**



Fig. B.27

**Detail of *Stockholm Roll* (1605)**



Fig. B.28





**Artist unknown**

***Portrait of Janusz Radziwiłł (c.1654)***



Fig. B.29

## Examples of Old Polish coffin portraits



Fig. B.30



## Examples of Scytho-Siberian zoomorphic style in art



Fig. B.31

*Coffin on a Catafalque with the coffin portrait of Teresa Antonina Łącka*



Fig. B.32

**Natalia LL**

*Sztuka Konsumpcyjny / Consumer Art (1972)*



Fig. B.33

**Sándor Pinczehelyi**  
*Hammer and Sickle (1973)*



Fig. B.34

**Ion Grigorescu**  
*Delivery/Birth* (1977)



Fig. B.35





***buńczuk* (tugh banner)**

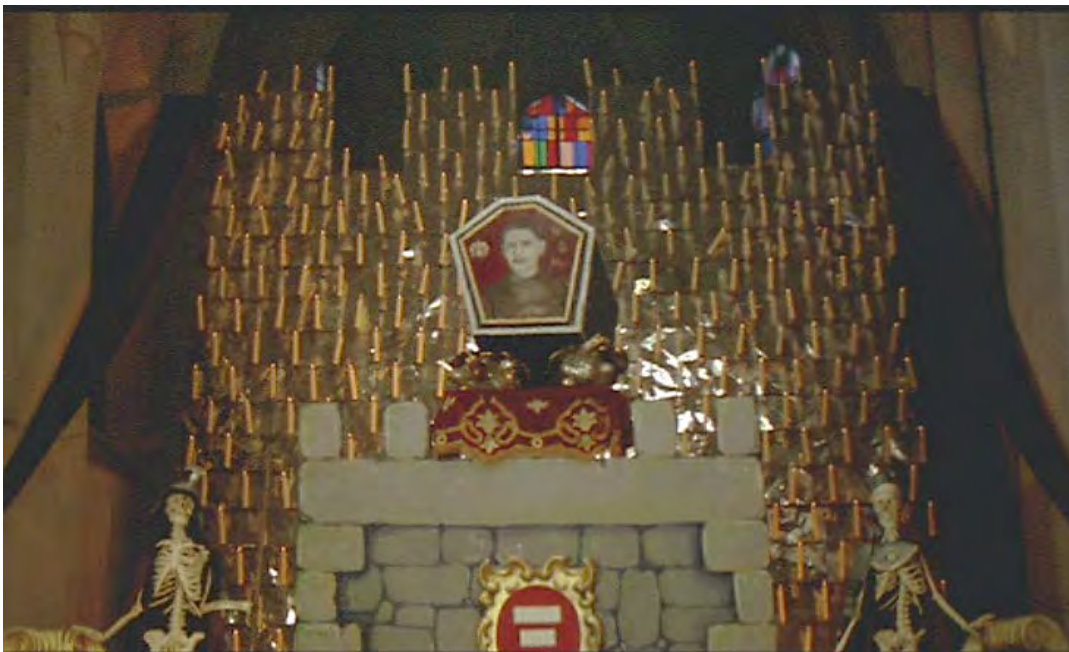


Fig. B.37

*Fire in the Steppe* (1968)  
Example of *pompa funebris*



Fig. B.38



*Fire in the Steppe* (1968)  
Photo stills featuring main cast



Fig. B.39

*Fire in the Steppe* (1968)  
Photo stills featuring main cast



Fig. B.40



***Fire in the Steppe* (1968)**  
**Photo stills featuring main cast**



Fig. B.41

***Fire in the Steppe* (1968)**  
**Photo stills featuring main cast**



Fig. B.42

***The Deluge* (1974)**  
**Photo stills featuring main cast**

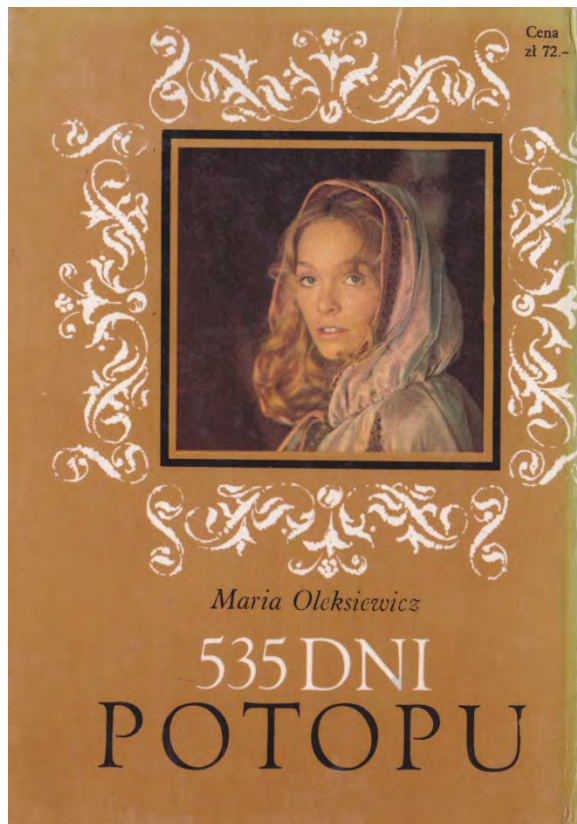


Fig. B.43



*The Deluge* (1974)

Photo stills featuring main cast

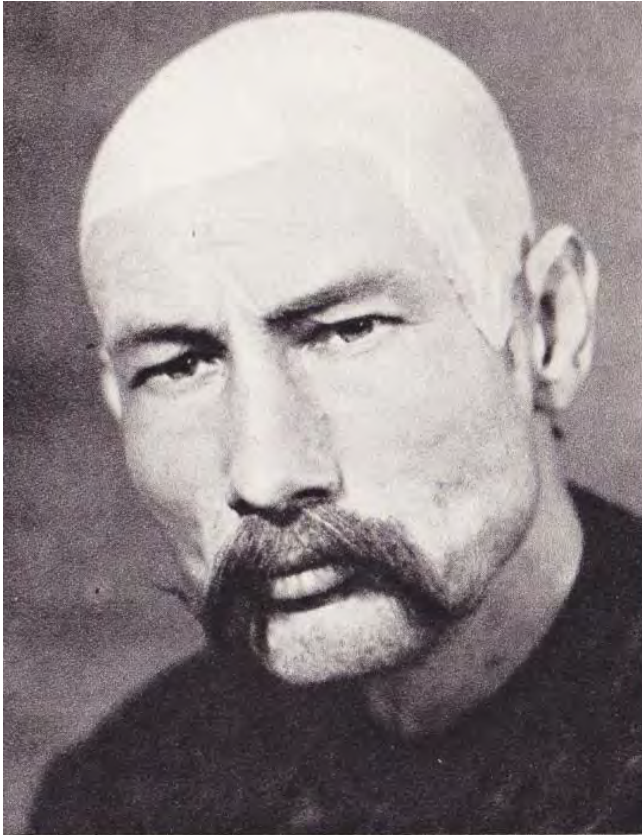
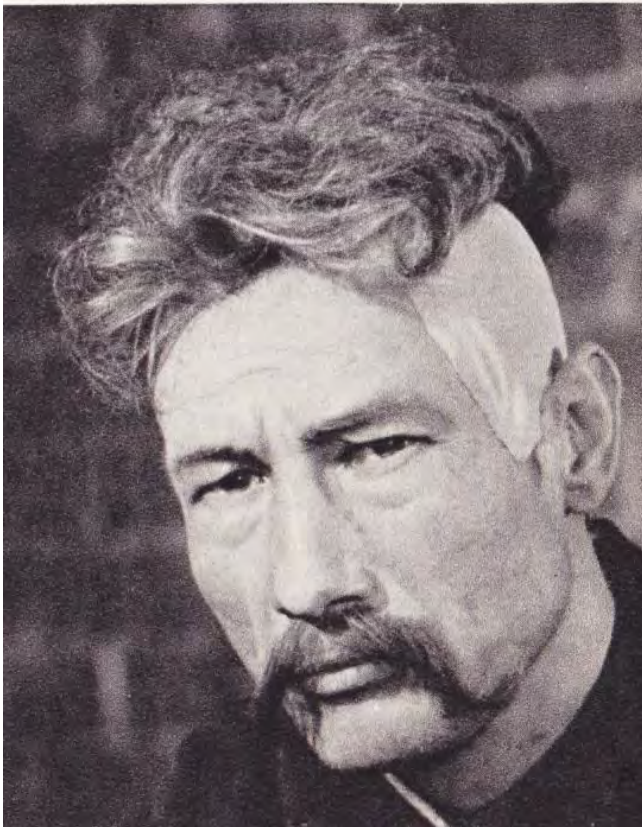


Fig. B.44





***The Deluge* (1974)**  
**Photo stills featuring main cast**



Fig. B.45

*The Deluge* (1974)

Photo stills featuring main cast



Fig. B.46

***The Deluge* (1974)**  
**Photo stills featuring main cast**



Fig. B.47



*The Deluge* (1974)

Photo stills featuring main cast



Fig. B.48

***The Deluge* (1974)**  
**Photo stills featuring main cast**



Fig. B.49

*The Deluge* (1974)

Photo stills featuring main cast



Fig. B.50

## Euroasian nomads in the first millennium BC



Fig. B.51

**Tomb banner of Jan Białyński (b. 1643)**  
**Parish church, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie**



Fig. B.52