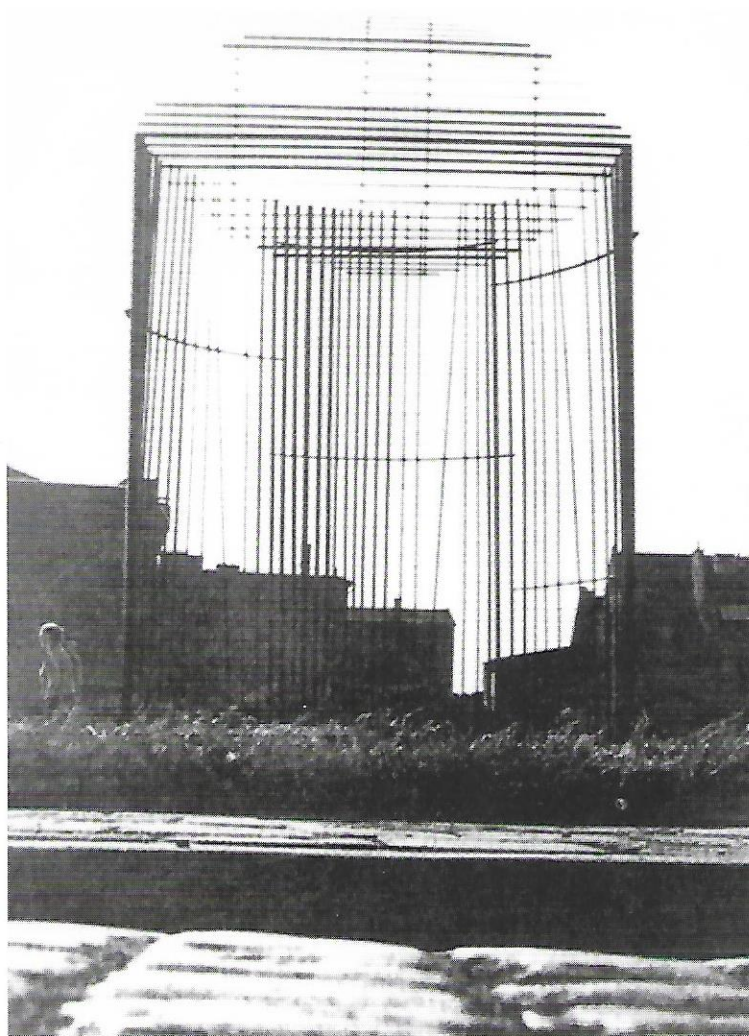


WANDA GOŁKOWSKA



UKŁAD OTWARTY JAKO PROCES TWÓRCZY
OPEN SYSTEM AS A CREATIVE PROCESS

BWA WROCŁAW 2001

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translated by Agnieszka Licznarska

WANDA GOŁKOWSKA

Born in Rzeszów

1946-1952

Education: the Higher School of Art in Wrocław (presently the Academy of Fine Arts) in the Painting Department, under Prof. Eugeniusz Geppert
Activities in the field of painting, drawing, spatial forms, Conceptual Art and Mail-Art

1980

lecturer

1989

associate professor

1991

full professor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław

Since 1953 participated in ca. 300 group and one-man shows, open-air workshops, events and symposia, including:

1953

One-man show - Wrocław

1955

The exhibition of Young Visual Art *Arsenal* - Warsaw

1957

Looking for Form and Colour - Wrocław

1959

One-man show - Zielona Góra

1964-1981

Koszalin Open-Air Workshops - Osieki

1965

1st International Spatial Forms Biennial - Elbląg

1966

Symposium of Visual Artists and Scientists *Art in the Changing World* - Puławy, Lublin

One-man show - "Od-Nowa" Gallery, Poznań

One-man show - Wrocław

1967

The exhibition of the Wrocław Group - Lambert Gallery, Paris

1968

One-man show - "Mona Lisa" Gallery, Wrocław

1970

Wrocław '70 - Visual Arts Symposium

Conceptual Art - "Mona Lisa" Gallery, Wrocław

One-man show - Lublin

One-man show - Koszalin

1971

One-man show - Zielona Góra

1972

Atelier 72 - Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh

1974

Actual Art - Ystad

1977

One-man show - Wrocław

1978

The Space of a Town - Chełm

1980

One-man show - Opole

One-man show - 72 Gallery, Chełm

1981

International Drawing Triennial, Wrocław

Meetings in Cracow - Cracow

1982

The Five Towers Micro Hall Center Symposium - Augustfehn

1983

The Exhibition of Experimental Art - Norrköping

1984	<i>The Language of Geometry</i> - Zachęta, Warsaw
1985	<i>Konkretister</i> - Göteborg
	One-man show - Kleinsassen
1985 -2000	Open-Air Workshops and Symposia of Artists <i>Using the Language of Geometry</i>
1987	<i>Edinburgh International Festival</i> - Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh
	<i>Polnische Gegenwarts Malerei</i> - Vienna
	<i>Freiraum</i> - Kleinsassen
1988	One-man show - "W Pasażu" Gallery, Wrocław
	<i>Inscrizione di Aprile</i> one-man show - Bergamo
	<i>Null Dimension - Konstruktive Strömungen</i> - Fulda
	One-man show - "Pokaz" Gallery, Warsaw
1989	<i>Null Dimension</i> - Gmunden
1989/90	<i>Null Dimension 2</i> - Wrocław
1990	<i>Zeichen der Zeit</i> - Fulda
	<i>Zeichen und Licht</i> one-man show - Fulda
	<i>Konstruktive Strömungen</i> - Düsseldorf
	<i>Präsentation der Sammlung Jürgen Blum</i> - Hünfeld
	<i>Geometry in Polish Contemporary Sculpture</i> - Poznań
1991	<i>Redukta</i> - International Art Exhibition - Warsaw
	<i>Constructive Art in Poland</i> - Arts Museum, Calgary
	<i>Konstruktiv + Konkret</i> - Wels
1992	<i>Kunst in der Landschaft</i> - Erfurt, Bielefeld, Cologne
	<i>Concrete Art - Unlimited</i> - Wrocław
1993	<i>"Od-Nowa" Gallery 1964-69</i> - Poznań
	<i>Forum Konkrete Kunst</i> - Museum der Künstler, Erfurt
1994	<i>Wanda Gołkowska, Jan Chwałczyk - the 40th Anniversary of Artistic Activities</i> - Wrocław
	<i>Wanda Gołkowska, Jan Chwałczyk</i> - Warsaw, Lublin
1995	<i>Hommage á Henryk Stażewski</i> - Chicago, Athens
1996	<i>Konstruktiv - Konkret - International</i> - from the collection of the Modern Art Museum, Bonn
	One-man show - 72 Gallery, Chełm
	<i>Art Against Its Time</i> - Museum, Chełm
	<i>Aus der Sammlung</i> - Modern Art Museum, Hünfeld, Bonn
	The presentation of 8 artistic attitudes - Gerard Foundation, Świeradów
	<i>Das Kleine Format</i> - Museum "Zeichen der Zeit" - Gerard Foundation, Sellin
	<i>A Spiral</i> - Gerard Foundation, Świeradów

- 1997 *Geometry in Polish Sculpture* - Contemporary Sculpture Museum, Orońsko
Beauty - an Outworn Category - (Okuninka '96) - District Museum, Chełm
Origins of Freedom - Berlin, Wrocław, Lvov
- 1998 *Neue Dimension* - Forum Konkrete Kunst - Peterskirche, Erfurt
Other Dimensions - KRAA Association, Zielona Góra
Konstruktive Kunst in Polen (aus dem Museum von Chełm) Schwarzes Kloster Galerie, Freiburg
After Fifty Years - (the 52nd anniversary of Association of Polish Visual Artists), BWA "Awangarda" Gallery, Wrocław
Between Great Narration and Individuality (Okuninka '97) - District Museum, Chełm
Painting: Other dimensions - Zielona Góra
Art Function Is Your Imagination one-man show - Orońsko
- 1999 *Geometry and Art Borders* (Okuninka '98) - District Museum, Chełm
Konstruktive Kunst in Polen (aus dem Museum von Chełm) - Innsbruck
Polish Prints (Tadeusz Mysłowski's Collection) - Polish Consulate, New York
The North - the South - Transcultural Visions - X. Dunikowski Museum, Warsaw
Den Enda Dimensionen - Länsmuseet Västernorrland, Härnösand
Conceptual Reflection in Polish Art - Art Centre, Warsaw
Das offene Buch - Museum "Modern Art", Hünfeld
- 1999/2000 *Utopia and Vision* - Centre of Polish Sculpture, Orońsko, Zachęta, Warsaw
- 2000 *Continuation and Disagreement I* - "Działalność" Gallery, Warsaw
Continuation and Disagreement II - BWA Zielona Góra
Continuation and Disagreement III - "Miejska" Gallery, Wrocław
Wanda Gołkowska, Jan Chwałczyk - BWA Słupsk
The Place of Geometry in Art at the Turn of the 20th Century International Open-Air Workshop, Okuninka
One-man show (painting) - 261 Gallery, the Academy of Fine Arts, Łódź
The Language of Geometry II - BWA Katowice
- 2001 *Intertime in an Open System* - BWA "Awangarda" Gallery, Wrocław

Works in museums and in private collections in Poland and abroad

Looking at my own artistic activities at a distance, I can locate characteristic features of changes and transformations on a grid of events, situations and places.

My creative uneasiness - in accordance with my nature and interests (studies in arts and Polish philology) - has been giving rise to a constant dispute with established conventions and stereotypes.

Superficial inconsistency and paradox:

Tradition and disagreement - they have been markers of my creative choice. In Poland the period of 1960s and 1970s rich in artistic events was very crucial for the appearance of an avant-garde scene of intellect and creativity. Together with Jan Chwałczyk, my husband and partner, we solved most of theoretical problems during our discussions. Some independent galleries participated in an intensified art movement. New artistic actions took place initiated by the artists and art critics: Marian Bogusz, Janusz Bogucki, Bożena Kowalska, Gerard Kwiatkowski, Jerzy Fedorowicz, Ludmiła Popiel, Jerzy Ludwiński, Andrzej Matuszewski, Kajetan Sosnowski, Stefan Morawski, Alicja Kępińska. It became possible to organise meetings and have lively and creative discussions. Personalities of artists, poets, critics and the figures of stature (Henryk Stażewski, Tadeusz Kantor, Julian Przyboś, Artur Sandauer) played an enormous role in the atmosphere of intellectual incitement.

For me the participation in the *First Spatial Forms Biennial* in Elbląg in 1965 was an artistic event. My work had been preceded by long discussions with friends - first of all with Henryk Stażewski - and the decision was a result of the choice of a thought, logic, certain assumptions of geometry representing the discipline and the order.

My next one-man show in 1968 at the Wrocław "Mona Lisa" Gallery, whose leader was the critic Jerzy Ludwiński, was a further declaration in favour of intellectual art. The text *Open Systems* characterised my attitude.

The symposium *Wrocław 70* and exhibitions of *Conceptual Art* in Wrocław and Edinburgh were the consequence of the artistic incitement, a rise in temperature and in level of discussions on the Wrocław scene. After the exhibition *The Language of Geometry*, initiated in 1980 by the art critic Bożena Kowalska, international open-air workshops-and-symposia for artists using the language of geometry became a definition of artists' attitudes.

SELF-ANALYSIS OF A CREATIVE PROCESS

The concept of "creativity" late entered the European culture. For about thousand years the definition creativity did not exist in philosophy, theology or arts. Only in 19th century the term "creator", as a synonym of an artist, entered the language of art.

The 20th century started to use the word *creator* to describe creativity in all fields of human production.

A presently existing definition of creativity covers all kinds of human activities, products of artists, scientists or technicians, social activities, a field of community relations and self-creation.

According to a widely understood notion of creativity, each man has potential creative abilities. The creative activity helps an artist recognise himself/herself. It is the affirmation of own personality; it answers the natural need to satisfy own creative egoism, the creative act.

Creation - means constructing the world within philosophical frameworks, introducing notions of man's intellectual space and building new artistic reality.

Creation requires assuming some attitude towards existing achievements and **opposing** (denying) **obligatory stereotypes**.

Defying his/her attitude towards the surrounding reality, a creator uncovers his/her knowledge, consciousness and beliefs.

A creative process lasts for the whole period of an active conscious life of an artist and - taking into account all changes and transformations - **realises itself in an open system**.

Creativity includes both the process and results of the process.

Artistic creativity is a specific model of creation.

Here I would like to quote Władysław Tatarkiewicz:

The power of mind used to create a new thing is a measure of creativity, not less than its novelty. It is, in fact, the second - apart for novelty - measure of creativity. And so creativity has two criteria, two measures.¹

Aesthetic opinions and methods referring to the meditations on a work of art and **a course of the creative process** have developed in connection with philosophical attitudes.

Basing on the philosophy of rationalism, people of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century believed that a scientific development appeared unexpectedly as the crown of a logical activity. The notion of 'imagination', which earlier had been put against the conception of a scientific activity, was rehabilitated in the middle of the 20th century. It was mostly the Anglo-Saxon school which rediscovered and rehabilitated imagination as a significant element of creative processes.

An intuitive method (heuristic procedure) used during the studies on the process of discovery has distinguished three phases of this process: logical, intuitive and critical, and considered the intuitive phase as a fundamental one and of basing meaning.

Intuitive methods and logical methods are two sides of the same behaviour and each of them is tightly connected with one another.

The process of creation includes a whole range of conditions:

- individual - personal (psychological in which the psychology of creativity, a research discipline, is interested)
- social
- cultural and everyday life (economic and technical changes).

The whole creative process consists of three separate phases:

1. Pre-execution phase: A) process of perception, B) origins of creative inspirations, C) creative inclinations, D) motivations for creativity, E) impulse to undertake the creative process, F) transformations of outside signals into internal images, G) conception of an art work
2. Phase of execution - the process of execution
3. Post-execution phase: A) work evaluation, B) distance from the art work

In my opinion, the conception of an art work, composition or creative activity is the most crucial phase of the creative process.

Władysław Strzemiński writes about the process of perception:

Perception is not only a passive, biological act of reception of visual experiences, or a strictly mechanical reflection of the world once and for all exact and invariable like a reflection in a mirror. We do not learn the world because we see it. Because we think and learn (underlined by W.G.) what each of visual experiences tell us, a piece of knowledge of the world an eye transmits - in a word, we learn through an analysis of visual experiences, their generalisation and rechecking [...]

During the process of perception it is not important what an eye mechanically grasps, but what a man perceives through his/her sight. Therefore, the growth of visual consciousness is the reflection of the process of human development.²

While exploring the idea of creative inspirations - visual or intellectual - I have put together opinions of three creators: Leonardo da Vinci, Pablo Picasso and Henryk Stażewski.

These three people do not differ only in historical periods of their lives, but in artistic conventions too. The conventions use different communications and represent different artistic attitudes. However, at the moment of the reception of stimuli - the creative inspirations - these artists present certain similarity of their statements, they direct to similar origins, and their next phases of the creative process include essential changes and transformations.

Leonardo da Vinci thinks:

*Sometimes there is no harm in stopping to observe spots on walls, ash from a fire or clouds, or mud, or other similar things. If you look inside them, you will find charming ideas arousing a painter's mind to new ideas, both to compositions of battles, animals, people, and to various arrangements of the landscape, and to atrocious things like devils, and the like. It will bring you fame. Since entangled things prompt a mind to new inventions.*³

Pablo Picasso says:

*An artist is a container for emotions coming from everywhere: the sky, the earth, a piece of paper, a figure passing by or a cobweb. Therefore, one should not make differences between objects. They are not of noble birth. One should take own property from the place where it is found, provided it is not own creativity. [...] A painter is subject to the states of the plenum and the vacuum. It is the whole mystery of art. I am walking in the Fontainebleau forest. I am overeaten with verdancy. I must throw this sensation out of myself into a canvas. The canvas is dominated by the verdancy. As the urgent need to get free from his/her sensations and visions, a painter performs a picture.*⁴

Henryk Stażewski notes:

For an artist, the nature and the thing awaking abhorrence and disgust can contain richness and beauty of shapes. The vigilance of our eye causes that ephemerality leaves a trace and an incident becomes the order.

*A thing which is banal, everyday, unnoticed, dirty, shabby or repulsive can influence us in such a way that we look at it, as if we saw it for the first time. Mud is beautiful, or the puddle in which the sky, buildings, trees are reflected in opalescent colours of putridity and rottenness - the disorder and the dilapidation - holes in rooftops - spots on walls - in gardens heaps of stones or bricks, stems, logs, trees, etc. They are the biggest creative inspiration: **the looking for the order in chaos** - (underlined by W. G.).⁵*

A. Töffler writes in *The Shock of the Future*:

We constantly compare images; we contrast them with one another in a new way and hide them again. This is exactly what we define as a mental activity and - similarly like a physical activity - it is a form of work. Keeping a system in motion requires high energy.

The psychological and mental activity incited by external and internal stimuli is necessary to make the decision to start the creative process. Observation of the real world, drawing conclusions, perceiving certain inadequacy or shortages awakes the desire to make some changes, to introduce new aesthetic values through a creative act.

And a critical attitude towards the world and hitherto existing artistic achievements, and certain fascination: rapture over the existing reality or natural phenomena, they both awake the desire to execute and hand over own experiences and thoughts. The accumulation of personal problems, reflections, emotions leads to the need to get free, to purify oneself in a form of a creative act.

The conception of an art work includes two sub-phases: an artistic intention and an artistic vision.

An artistic intention - is a settlement of an idea, its mental materialisation and making a conscious choice how to transmit own thoughts.

An artistic vision - is a mental image, programming of a fundamental construction of a work-object, a prediction of basic correlation of elements. A choice of adequate expressive agents and materials takes place during this phase.

It should be mentioned here that during **the phase of conception** - like during other phases of the creative process - there appear movements in a sequence of particular phases. The movements depend on a kind of personality and other conditions.

For an intuitive kind - there might simultaneously appear the phase of execution and the phase of conception (a conception is being born during the execution of an art work). For a meditative kind, in which full consciousness participates - particular phases are distinctly separated from one another and the phase of conception proceeds the phase of execution. I call the period of changing an idea - an artistic intention - into an objective thing **the phase of execution**.

There are the following variations of artist's participation in the process of execution:

- an artist realises his art work himself
- an artist programmes an art work - a machine or a computer performs
- an artists realises a project - performers or craftsmen realise it
- an artist allows an audience to participate in the execution of his art work
- an artist sanctifies a ready object⁶
- an artist defines himself as an art work⁷

The phase of execution might include changes of a conception of an art work. Sometimes an incident⁸, some improvisation⁹, is programmed in advance. In case of artistic activities, e.g. happenings, the execution of an action is preceded with a script, a score, which are a materialised artistic conception.¹⁰ Changes of an art work conception during the execution might also appear due to the characteristics of material.

New artistic facts appear in which a centre of gravity is definitely moved from a structural sphere into a cognitive sphere (to a concept, to an idea), into the sphere of **purely mental activities**.¹¹

OPEN SYSTEM - AS A CREATIVE PROCESS

Wanda Gołkowska

Open systems

(the text accompanying a one-man show at the "Mona Lisa" Gallery)

Not only certain notions from the field of mathematics were absorbed and complete theories were taken over, but also a language simultaneously changed and there appeared the necessity to transfer definitions from exact sciences. A language of a poetic metaphor has become inadequate to describe certain objects or notions. Probabilistic theories and all the consequences connected with them, i.e. calculus of probability, notion of frequency, statistical theories, theory of a mistake, a relativistic attitude are not only becoming of help to examine existing art works but they are, simultaneously, giving an incentive for new mental inquiries.

A visual object I am presently interested in - I can describe as a set of open systems.

Presently I proclaim myself in favour of open systems.

Not treating this statement as a manifesto and predicting possibilities of changes, movements and hesitations, I also include myself as an artist into this system.

An open system - is a contradiction to an idealistic concept of art, i.e. search for a unique absolute solution. It is a contradiction to a traditional notion of stability of an art work. It assumes that there is mathematically defined / non-defined number of changes caused by mechanical movements, spectator's motion, introduction of physical motion, introduction of light motion. It gives a recipient the possibility to actively participate in a creative act. An artist makes a choice, decides and predicts.

Programming a fundamental construction of an object, an author predicts the correlation of elements, which exists within each system. Each system - created as a single object - follows the same rights. Systems' actions include light, space, movement, sound, silence, time.

I allow an emotional element to participate in:

I The creative phase,

i.e. mental materialisation, making a conscious choice, programming. Stanisław Lem in his Summa technologiae defines what each mental or spiritual decision is:

[...] It is an act of choice that depends on such an arrangement of synaptic points that one kind of information is passed through, while the others are stopped (blocked). It is the arrangement of defined rules of movement priority, i.e. giving privilege to certain signals within neural networks. Since certain signals are, thus, more valued than the others, so it is an act of value creation: the act, this seemingly specially and exclusively human creative activity, already appears at a plainly elementary level of the cyber mechanics of neural networks [...].

II Phase - the execution

is a mechanical craftsmanly translation of thoughts into another language, in this case - a visual one. In relation to a thought, a conception, the execution is epigone-like. What we call the execution is only a record in an archive. The true, authentic execution existed only at the moment of discovery, locked within the mental energy not photographed yet, multidimensional, sound and colourful. Until not photographed, so far true, disinterested, authentic. The creative egoism or the desire to satisfy needs of physiology of creativity - a creative act - supports the idea of execution.

The moment of marking yourself is not hidden in a left trace of a tool or a hand of an artist - but in a personal choice of a thought - a conception. The whole effort, emotional involvement, moved itself to the process of intellectual penetration.

Paweł Beylin said during the Polish sessions of art critics (Poznań 1966) that:

[...] Authenticity of an art work is somehow connected with its uniqueness. An authentic work as a whole, I repeat - as a whole - is unique and non-reproducible... You cannot, with impunity, change particular elements in an authentic art work under the sentence of invasion of identity of an art work. [...]

The above mentioned remarks become out-of-date while conclusions useless and exactly contrary to the assumptions stated by Henryk Stażewski in a introduction to the catalogue of his exhibition (Warsaw 1965), and by the critics H. Ptaszkowska and J. Ludwiński.

In his works Henryk Stażewski precisely eliminates individual features impossible to reproduce. He introduces an open system in which [...] there is the possibility of changes, movements, motion, elements adding, subtracting, decomposition [...] We deal here with **the probability of the existence of certain formal systems** which can be changed within certain borders (H. Stażewski).

[...] The conception of Stażewski's picture includes the possibility of appearance of unpredicted systems - includes the possibility of an incident. So Stażewski's picture is not a determined picture [...] (H. Ptaszkowska).

[...] The most significant development in Stażewski's art would hence be the introduction of a notion of system change - inconceivable in traditional Geometric Abstract Art - and what follows it - enriching the forms shaping in space with an endlessly huge number of possibilities [...] (J. Ludwiński).¹²

Within the range of many years, according to the conception of "an open system", there appeared many acts, works or theoretical statements, which all, faced with stereotypes of those days, were my retort - my contradiction.

Defining my own attitude, possibilities and questionability of changes, I predicted a reaction against then existing art tendencies and simultaneously experienced the transformation of my own personality.

After studies, the protest against enforced tendency of Soviet-Realism grew stronger; I experienced the conversion from academism to the richness of drawing. Faced with emptiness and schematisation - to spontaneity, to emotions, to baroque-like statements. The joy in creation and exploration of new expressive agents gave me fulfilment and satisfaction with the execution. The fact of leaving won positions and the drastic change in favour of a different visual language became my form of protest - **an intuitive fear of creating own stereotype.**

There appeared a series of spatial colourful compositions with wooden blocks fastened to flat surfaces of a board. These works were presented in 1957 at the group exhibition (Boroń, Chwałczyk, Gólkowska, Zdanowicz) *Looking for Form and Colour*. The next transformation took place in 1957-60 when I introduced rich matter, texture, collage, and quotations into painting and drawing.

The following texture reliefs were created: *Leftovers from the Fortune of a Magnate, The Tablet with Sanskrit, The Bright Fact, The Dark Fact, Tablets with Miniatures, Composition with two portraits, Raining, Raining II* and others (most of these works were destroyed during the 1997 flood).

The First International Spatial Forms Biennial in Elbląg in 1965, whose originator was the artist Gerard Kwiatkowski, became a global cultural innovation and broke through artistic conventions of those times. Within the architecture of the town of Elbląg, I made a spatial form; with the help of a line or metal bars, I constructed an open-work screen, while not losing the sight of the background. (Illustration on the cover; a model in the collection, Museum of Architecture, Wrocław - editor's note).

A line - a space organiser - became one of more important means of expression in my later paintings and drawings.

A year later, in Puławy the theoretician and critic Jerzy Ludwiński organised the **International Symposium of Visual Artists and Scientists** entitled *Art in the Changing World*. During the symposium I executed *The Tablet from Puławy* (metal and material) which was a series of tablets-and-reliefs of geometrised orderly systems.

In 1978 at the suggestion of the art critic Bożena Kowalska and the artist Kajetan Sosnowski, the Museum in Chełm organised the symposium *The Space of a Town and an exhibition of projects*. Then I made the proposal of a spatial form for the Town of Chełm, situated in an open area and using a line as a compositional element of a construction. In that period (1965-1968) I clearly started preferring minimalised art based on logical systems; it meant entering the sphere of Geometric Art.

UNCONVENTIONAL FORMS OF RECORDS

Open systems allowed to introduce different unconventional statements adequate to the essence of contents.

Tradition and disagreement - it is an antinomy that includes a stimulating, creative act. In my opinion tradition is a rich set of principles, methods of thinking and skills. A choice out of the total and use of certain values give stimuli to the protest and **the possibility of conscious resistance to stereotypes**.

My whole artistic activity includes periods of an urgent need to present an artistic statement realised in other, non-traditional, form of record being a result of resistance to mental stereotypes, situations and conventions.

The records, as the reactions of disapproval, have not created formal unity or pretended to be "art objects" - they were intellectual information, message, announcements. These creative acts were a disinterested activity, a statement, **an artistic game**, in opposition - both from a formal and cognitive point of view - to artistic trends functioning then. They were created basing on a decision of choice and admiration for the genre of Intellectual Art.

One-man show at the "Mona Lisa" Gallery and the text in the "Odra" magazine (1/1968) entitled **Open Systems** - were significant facts of my artistic biography. The originator of the Pod Moną Lisą Gallery (since December 1967) **Jerzy Ludwiński** said in the "Odra":

Golkowska's pictures includes the possibility of outside intervention. Out of a set of elements you can take each out and put into a different place, so you can freely change a system. Thus, Golkowska's picture does not only exist in space but in time too. Although you cannot talk about anything like composing of systems which follow one another, because the possibility of repetition of certain defined visual situations is highly improbable. In her latest works the artist nullifies everything what was so far connected with the notion of an art work: first of all, its physical inviolability. Here you can move everything, change, add or subtract, because the process of art work creation has either not finished yet or it has finished just in a first moment of making a picture a material object. We deal here with a frankly paradoxical situation: the process of creation and the picture execution are two completely different things which might - but do not have to - indent with one another. And the biggest paradox: an art work executed in material does not agree with a notion of an art work at all.

*An art work is not only a picture, or any other artistic object, but also a whole series of other phenomena regarded so far as non-artistic. Often a picture is only a visual record of facts existing beyond its limits, a way to convey information, a kind of a code. [...]*¹³

As a consequence of accepting the principle of "an open system" (... Systems' actions include light, space, movement, sound, silence, time [...]) there were created works, in which appeared: movement and sound (*Bujak I* - 1965, *Bujak II* - 1968).¹⁴ The possibility of a spectator to intervene in an arrangement of particular elements was a certain novelty.

My statements, found in the text *Open Systems (In relation to a thought, a conception, the execution is epigone-like)* met with hostility or, at least, with the complete lack of understanding.

Cultural policy of those times (1970 - 80) and artistic systems connected with it awoke my understandable disagreement.

*[...] Unfortunately - our official group of critics together with officials responsible for culture, with persistence they had better keep for more valuable things, close the entrance door to the stage to everybody who could play a significant role, and keep place for epigones and venerable pensioners. [...]*¹⁵

The Action of Disinterested Reproduction of Materialised Art Works - announced by me in 1970 at the open-air workshop in Osieki - was a ironic commentary to chaos and lack of competence in institutions dealing with cultural policy. It was the protest against the systems calling for "a solely obligatory and right doctrine of creation" and allowing the maximum of 20% of independent ideas (i.e. Abstract Art) at exhibitions.

Disapprover I, Disapprover Triple, Disapprover - Spool (length 22 m) - performed in 1971 - are objects-things whose names forged by me informed about the essence and character of conveyed information. The texts included the strong protest against the overproduction of ideological gobbledegook and artistic rubbish. A black illustration *The Phases of a Threat* had a similar meaning. (Illustration on a p. 22 - editor's note)

Overproduction of art works and overabundance of information make the possibility of choice difficult and blur differences between authenticity and secondariness. Automatism and habits are often called the necessity of an artistic expression - included in kilometres and tonnes of materials available on the Earth. Unavoidable overabundance of energy has to be stored. I make the proposal to open a global repository of artistic information. It would be managed on a principle of the Patent Office accepting applications for priority and excluding secondariness of a conception. To avoid old systems of evaluating by the jury and commissions - computers would issue opinions qualifying for acceptance to the repository.¹⁶

Kinesteżjon - is a 1970 virtual project of a spatial installation (called by me after the word: *kinaesthesia* or a sensation of positions and movements of parts of a body); published in the catalogue "SP" (in Polish *Sztuka Pojęciowa - Cognitive Art*) at the "Mona Lisa" Gallery in 1970, and also in the publications: Klaus Groh, *Aktuelle Kunst in Osteuropa*, 1971 and presented at the following exhibitions: *A Conceptual Reflection in Polish Art* (CSW, Warsaw 1999); *Utopia and Vision*, (CPS Orońsko, 1999), *Utopia and Vision* ("Zachęta", Warsaw, 2000).

Kinesteżjon is a cognitive installation and is contained within the sphere of Cognitive and Conceptual Art.

INTERTIME IN AN OPEN SYSTEM

An open letter - was the answer to questions and issues concerning the situation and notions of art, placed by Janusz Kaczorowski and Stanisław Urbański. Stefan Morawski's article entitled *At the crossroads* was an introduction to the discussion.

In *An open letter* I say:

In my opinion art is an endless argument, discussion with yourself, continuous commutation and a creative series that realises itself in time.

"Intertime" - is a period in which I come back to my previous thoughts, signals. Thus, keeping my distance, I gain a run and dynamics necessary to jump over my today's attitude, sensitivity, knowledge, acquired creative consciousness. For me, the returns to tradition and the returns to my own creativity of previous years are necessary to regain courage to break habits, dogmas and conservatism of thinking.
[...]

While questioning my own formulas, both verbal and connected with the execution, I create a series of transformations of my artistic personality.

I have talked about the overproduction of art works in the text included in Disapprover (1971). While recently dealing with an analysis of the creative process, I have discovered an overuse of the term "creativity" in relation to all kinds of visual production. If an element of novelty + intellectual effort + invention are conditions necessary for creativity to appear, the term should function truly more rarely and for cases confirming the existence of conditioning elements.¹⁷

*"Intertime" - a break, a stopover - is (acc. George Kubler) a crevice between the past and the future and gives the possibility to introduce an ideological-and-asymmetrical system according to the principle of **continuation and disagreement**.*

I have accepted the notion of "intertime". It explains the returns to my own earlier works, beliefs and thoughts that keep transforming themselves in time.

"An open system" also contains my attitude towards Geometric Art. Geometry, as a branch of mathematics concerned with examining figures and spatial relations, offers possibilities of an intellectual game and understanding of a notion of Post-Conceptual art.

Art has something in common with logic, mathematics and science at last. Yet, as they do their best to be useful - art is not useful. Art exists only for its sake.¹⁸

While space is constructed with the help of visual means, mathematical methods and systems allow to create a philosophical structure of the world. Art has taken over some of mathematical theories (e.g. system of Leonardo Pisano, called Fibonacci, a mathematician from the Middle Ages) and, thus, broadened its possibilities to visualise the mental world.

Geometric forms are letters of an alphabet that enables to write the world into a visual shape. The vertical, the horizontal, a square, a triangle, a circle become symbols, magical marks. They are the simplest primary elements that can be arranged into open systems. They enable to freely edit the world in philosophical structures.¹⁹

[...] Górkowska created "Open systems" or "Spatial Tablets", which were the continuation either of her earlier reliefs, geometrically arranged, or of her open-work, full of simplicity, monumental form of metal bars, created during I Spatial Forms Biennial in Elbląg in 1965. The connection with mathematics, the harmony of geometry and thinking with space have become main vectors defining the future of her art. [...]²⁰

COLLECTIONS

While introducing the notion of "COLLECTIONS" to my creative activities, I have discovered that the totals of events and artistic facts become sets, the collections of mental constructions. The collections were created within the time range of my artistic activities.

Notions, words, objects, surnames, people, names and other element become the material for my sets. The collections were executed in different ways by numerous means of expression and of record.

The list includes as follows:

"The Art" Collection

A set of names, tendencies, genres of art. Its first version was realised in 1972 at an open-air workshop in Osieki. The collection included pictures, letter and graphic compositions, among others *A Playground of Contemporary Art*.

"The Earth" Collection

A set of words and notions of "Earth" in different languages. It was created at an open-air workshop-and-symposium in Osieki in 1972. Among others, Prof. Artur Sandauer (Hebrew and Aramaic languages) and the artist Koji Kamoji (Japanese language) helped me execute my idea. *The Earth Collection* expanded its activity, changed itself, assumed various forms of record - both in letter arrangements, compositions, pictures, natural collections of earth - created anecdotal stories.

Information on the action the *Earth Collection* were conveyed by Mail Art contacts - Ystad, in 1974.

In 1982 Paolo Barrile from Milan, the author of the book *Messaggio Terra*, asked me to send him earth from Poland: from Częstochowa and Wadowice (2 kg each). A photographic documentary account of earth gathering in Wadowice was sent to Milan and placed in the catalogue *Storia di Messaggio Terra*. When I prepared a parcel with earth I learnt that it was forbidden to carry earth out of Poland. However, due to the help of the people unknown to me, the parcel was transported by the car that moved the furniture of a young Polish and Italian couple.

The Monument of Art

A collection of artists' surnames, in the form of a traditional monument - 1974.

Klepsydra of Art

A set of surnames of outstanding figures of scientists - 1975 (klepsydra in Polish means two things, i.e. an obituary and an hourglass).

Collection - Catalogue

Numbered collection, from 1 to 399, cool colours - 1974 -75.²¹

The Collection "Blue"

Tautology - the 1976.²² *An Open Book - an artistic idea of Gerard Kwiatkowski*, started in 1996 and realised in Hünfeld. It is a poetic collection of statements, thoughts, words and signs of artists from different parts of the world. Gerard Kwiatkowski created a unique form of the collection of poetic thoughts, which placed on building walls, now exist in the space of the town-planning system of the town of Hünfeld. My 1976 idea of the *Collection "Blue"* was realised in 1999 in the project *An Open Book* in Hünfeld.

Mental Collection of an Art Works

Its motto was: *A man is a materialised art work*. It was a collection of surnames of participants of the 1975 symposium *Interventions* held in Pawłowice. The artist **Andrzej Matuszewski** was an originator and organiser of the meeting. The idea of the collection was repeated at the exhibition of the group *Continuation and Disagreement* - put together in the period: 1975-2000.

Evaluation of the Verticals

A set of answers of the participants of the 1981 open-air workshop in Osieki. Artists and art theoreticians in a different way interpreted the assigned banner *Evaluation of the Verticals* on a board divided into squares. The political situation of Poland of August 1981 had a big influence on a character of the answers.²³

MAIL ART

In the years 1965-1985 Mail Art movement offered opportunities for artists of the whole world to communicate with each other. It was a means of communication that is presently fulfilled by the internet and computers. In Poland during its cultural isolation, Mail Art played a positive role of a means of exchange of artistic information.

Forged in the years 1965-85, contacts or disinterested and cordial international friendships have been functioning until today. Mail Art movement gave rise to many interesting, unconventional situations; certain artistic actions were given further social existence and entered new areas. Thus, many actions, exhibitions, publications, catalogue appeared.

Out of enormous variety of artists' attitudes to Mail Art, I would like to present several people of an opposite scope of activities (in alphabetical order): Paolo Barrile, Guglielmo Achille Cavellini, Jan Chwałczyk, Robin Crozier, Klaus Groh, Géza Pernecky.

I have already described my co-operation with Paolo Barrile while talking about the *Earth Collection*.

Paolo Barrile is a representative of the group of intellectuals who use the way of communicating by Mail Art for their studies. Gathered theoretical information and material samples went into the published book: *Messaggio Terra*. This kind of activity is an example of the possible co-operation of a scientist-and-writer with artists.

Guglielmo Achille Cavellini (GAC) - is an exceptionally colourful, eccentric artist who has generated a myth of his personality and his own biography, setting them in the years 1914-2014. He published series of publications, books, prints, stamps, labels, etc. GAC - exceptionally active, proficient both in the field of literature and visual arts, ran correspondence with historical figures, identifying himself with some of them. He immediately responded to each Mail Art signal. In 1979 together with Stanisław Urbański, we organised the exhibition of Cavellini's works in Wrocław, in the "Na Jatkach" Gallery. Then, my *Cavellini's Pyramid* was created and I received a special letter of gratitude from the author.

Jan Chwałczyk initiated in 1972-75 and ran the "Sztuka Informacji Kreatywnej" Gallery. He started constant co-operation and an exchange of information with art magazines and artists active in Mail-Art (*Art and artists, Art and Ideology, Artist's Co-operation, Endlich was neues* - Klaus Groh, Klaus Kalkmann, Janos Urban, Jiří Valoch, Jochen Gerz, Rolf Nörtemann, Beke Laszlo and others). The "Sztuka Informacji Kreatywnej" Gallery issued the following publications: the catalogue *Gang*, *A Black Catalogue* and *Counterpoint*. *Counterpoint* is an anthology of the answers of 68 artists, theoreticians and critics to the question asked by Jan Chwałczyk and concerning the avant-garde art condition.

Robin Crozier - an artist from Great Britain. He used Mail Art to perform the 1974 action *The Portrait of Robin Crozier*. He asked artists, personally unknown to him, to send a portrait of Robin Crozier. In this way he generated an imaginary myth of his own person. The results of the action were two catalogues with the answers to the assigned banner. Robin Crozier several times took part in the International Drawing Triennial in Wrocław. His works always include some curtain, a situational plot that perfectly fits Mail Art contacts.

Klaus Groh - was one of the founders of International Art Communication and emerging global Mail Art movement. He is the author of the book *Aktuelle Kunst in Osteuropa* published by Dumont-Aktuell in 1971. In the West it was one of the first professional studies of contemporary and avant-garde arts of the Soviet Block. In this publication Polish artists have been strongly represented. In 1983 Klaus Groh organised a symposium and exhibition in Edewecht, in which Polish artists took part. He is the author of the publication *Artists' Books, Künstler - Bücher - Buchobjekte* including statements and drawings of artists of the whole world. A book layout has an unconventional visual solution.

Géza Perneczky - took part in many Mail Art actions and his activities were characterised by mockery and a biting joke. Postcards sent to Poland during the martial law had to confuse the Post office and censorship; the postcards bore the inscription "TOP SECRET" in different languages. In 1987-1988 he prepared the publication *Transcendental Mail Art* - an anthology consisting of editions of *Secret Society of Diligent Mail-Artists*. In 1988 Géza Perneczky published an album *A HÁLÓ (the trends of alternative art and in the light of their periodicals 1968-1988)*, which is a detailed documentary account of artistic activities of alternative art. The presentation of artistic and publishing activities of Géza Perneczky - prepared by me - was exhibited in Wrocław at the "Faktograf" Gallery in 1988.

In 1987 at the "Rekwizytornia" Gallery, due to co-operation with Małgorzata Kościelak, there took place the first opening of Mail Art exhibition - the *History of Kurt Schwitters' Artistic Activities*, in the 100th anniversary of artist's birthday.

In 1988 after Henryk Stażewski's death I sent, by mail, a drawing, *In memoriam Henryk Stażewski*, published in the art magazine *Ideas* in the Netherlands.

In 1989 with Małgorzata Kościelak, an artist, and Elżbieta Kościelak, a critic, we organised an International Mail Art exhibition *Hommage à Henryk Stażewski* at the "Rekwizytornia" Gallery. The exhibition, consisting of works of more than 90 authors, was presented at the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Athens - Art Centre in 1991 and then in Chicago.

In 1989 I responded to the action *Mail-Art-Show Femmes Casées* in Burgelette. I was one of the 13 invited women-artists from the whole world. Each of us was given a convent cell to arrange the room with her works. An additional condition was to perform a self-portrait in actual size. Because of the difficulties with travelling, I sent my works by mail.

Mail Art movement, in which I actively participated, was a playground both for difficult art - i.e. intellectual one - as well as for Pop Art and alternative art too. It was the reflection of the whole artistic situation of that time all over the world.

ARTISTS - EVENTS

Artistic facts are embedded in a defined time, situations and various artistic and, cultural establishments. In Poland, the beginnings of the intellectual and artistic movement took place in a difficult political situation; they met resistance and series of obstacles also put by the conservative art world. Only due to individual efforts, initiative of some artists and critics, the important - now historical-artistic events took place, thus, allowing to develop contacts and perform creative actions.

Open-Air Workshops Osieki were held each year from 1963 till 1981. Not all meetings in Osieki were at a similarly high artistic and intellectual level. It depended on an influence of the authorities on a programme and list of invited artists, critics and scientists.

I Spatial Forms Biennial in Elbląg. In 1965 in spite of positive opinions and articles, this unconventional idea was not further continued. The author and organiser of the Elbląg innovative event **Gerard Kwiatkowski** was attacked by artistic and political establishments.

In Poznań the artist **Andrzej Matuszewski**, working as a one-man institution, founded the R-55 Group, the "Od-Nowa" Gallery (1964). He organised a train of meetings-and-symposia (Pawłowiec - 1975; Dłusko - 1976). On a principle of disagreement with traditional establishments, he was regarded as somewhat eccentric.

Puławy - The International Symposium of Visual Artists and Scientists Art in the Changing World was held in 1966 with the participation of many outstanding artists, critics and scientists. The critic and theoretician Jerzy Ludwiński was an originator of this artistic event. After the symposium he was forced to leave Lublin.

The "Mona Lisa" Gallery was founded in 1967 in Wrocław and a founder and creator of its programme was **Jerzy Ludwiński**. Apart from author's exhibitions, there was organised the exhibition "SP" (in Polish - *Sztuka Pojęciowa: Cognitive Art*). There was put forward the proposal of the **Wrocław 70 symposium**. Out of 35 projects submitted by invited artists, only two proposals were executed (*Composition vertical unlimited* - an ephemeral light action by H. Stażewski on May 9, 1970 and *Live Monument* - Arena by Jerzy Bereś).

Okuninka - International Open-air Workshops-and-Symposia for Artists Using the Language of Geometry, initiated and run by the critic and art theoretician Bożena Kowalska, have been organised since 1983.

The Museum in Chełm each year organises an exhibition of works of the artists - participants of previous open-air workshops.

The above list includes only those artistic events in which I had participated.

For most of the activities and actions significant for Polish artistic culture it was not possible to issue publications recording contemporary culture events. It was caused by the fear to lose control, the attachment to established, comfortable stereotypes and the threat to destroy hitherto seeming stabilisation.

In later period only several publications appeared, i.e. the efforts to reconstruct the history of artistic events from before several years.

An examination of any artistic activities demands regard to historical consciousness accompanying their creation. Because "the world " of other, ideological and formal, values is being created during the clash of an artist's personality with widely accepted stereotypes.

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1. Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć*, Warszawa 1976
 2. Władysław Strzemiński, *Teoria widzenia*, Kraków 1958
 3. Leonardo da Vinci, *Traktat o malarstwie*, Wrocław 1961
 4. Pablo Picasso, talking with Christian Zervos, [in:] *Artyści o sztuce*, ed. E. Grabska, H. Morawska, Warszawa 1963
 5. Henryk Stażewski, CDN, *Galeria Współczesna*, 1976
 6. Marcel Duchamp
 7. Ben Vautrier
 8. Ryszard Winiarski
 9. Jackson Pollock
 10. John Cage, Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg
 11. Joseph Kosuth, *Art after Philosophy*, Galeria „Remont”, Warszawa 1978
 12. Wanda Gołkowska, *Układy otwarte*, „Odra” 1/1968
 13. Jerzy Ludwiński, *Proces twórczy czy produkcja przedmiotów*, „Odra” 1/1968
 14. *Bujak I*, collection, Centre of Polish Sculpture, Orońsko; *Bujak II*, collection, National Museum, Wrocław
 15. Antoni Dzieduszycki, *Sztuka w procesie samoznisczenia*, „Odra” 2/1971
 16. Text published in *Disapprover*, Opolno, 08. 1971. Published in catalogue: Edinburgh International Festival - R. Demarco, „Atelier 72”, 1972
 17. Wanda Gołkowska, *List otwarty*, „Sztuka” 4/5 1978
 18. Joseph Kosuth, *Sztuka po filozofii*, Galeria „Remont”, Warszawa 1978
 19. Wanda Gołkowska, statement in catalogue: *Język Geometrii*, 1984
 20. Bożena Kowalska, text in catalogue: *Jan Chwałczyk, Wanda Gołkowska*, Museum of Architecture in Wrocław, 1994
 21. The picture, collection, ASP Museum, Wrocław
 22. The picture, collection, Museum in Chełm
 23. The work, collection, Museum in Koszalin

WANDA GOŁKOWSKA

UKŁAD OTWARTY JAKO PROCES TWÓRCZY
OPEN SYSTEM AS A CREATIVE PROCESS

Katalog towarzyszący wystawie w Galerii BWA Awangarda
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