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A perception of an economic transformation in Polish critical art

In my dissertation I have been concentrating on new approaches towards Polish critical art, a phenomenon present on Polish art stage after political breakthrough. I try to complicate the narration about this issue, that had been analyzed mostly in an approach of critical theory, especially social control and discipline over body and a culture of memory (Izabela Kowalczyk publications). I work in different fields: New Age influence on critical art (Paweł Althamer), connection between social science and art (Artur Żmijewski), the attitudes towards a notion of critical art in art and academic society. I investigate archival materials to find political and economical links with visual arts. A full title of my dissertation is: *Polish critical art in the background of political and economic transformation*. Due to the expanse of problem, I would like to concentrate on a reception of economical and economic transformation in critical art, as one of subtitles in my thesis.

In Karol Sienkiewicz's opinion¹, there is no reflexion about transformation in Polish visual arts in the 90s. After analysing closely the works like *Adoracja Chrystusa* (1993, Jacek Markiewicz as an author, *Christs Adoration*), *Obserwator* (1992, Paweł Althamer, *Observer*), or a collection of Jerzy Truszkowski's art pieces, shown on *Re-* exhibition (1998, Samsara) I do not agree with the former statement and I propose to interpret economic plots in Polish critical art in the paper. An economic narration in art of the 90s was selective and obsolete, but it did exist. In the proposal I would like to identify specific works and find the causes of a lack of recognising it at the level of art historical, critical and institutional reception. Anna Markowska in her book *Dwa przełomy*² while describing art of the 90s., paid

¹ M. Rachid Chehab, an interview with Karol Sienkiewicz, *Karol Sienkiewicz: kontrowersyjna sztuka w zaniku. Artysci sami się cenzurują*, 30.12.2014, „Gazeta Wyborcza”,

http://wyborcza.pl/1,75475,17192568,Sienkiewicz__Kontrowersyjna_sztuka_w_zaniku__Artysci.html, access: 30.01.2017. The opinion of Sienkiewicz is interesting, because in his monography of Polish critical art *Zatańczy ci, co drżeli*, he gave many facts joining economics and visual art, without interpreting them.

² See: A. Markowska, *Część II. Wtargnięcie artystów agonu*, in: A. Markowska, *Dwa przełomy. Sztuka polska po 1955 i 1989 roku*, Toruń 2012, p. 233-414.

much attention to economical situation in the country, but then she went to the description of visual art. There is a rapture between this two spheres. I suggest that one of the most striking examples of overlooking economic narrations was the reaction to Jacek Markiewicz *Adoracja Chrystusa*, regarded only as a religious provocation. When the film was shown for the first time, it was presented in a room, which looked like a corporate box. The television witch was presented outside the box, shown a live stream of faces of two Markiewicz's employees in a big approximation with emotional expressions and reactions: one of them belonged to a father of the artist. *Adoracja Chrystusa* was a part of of a graduation work, the theoretical paper described a new experience of being a business man (Markiewicz has a company that offers plastic elements, Fol Cup). The work could be interpret as a narration about a life try to connect incompatible roles of an artist, a son, an employer, difficult in new neoliberal reality. The struggle with mass media (especially after Katarzyna Kozyra exhibition of *Piramida zwierząt*) and many additional jobs taken by critical artists (Kozyra and Górna had a photo studio, Althamer produced dolls and viedo clips) illustrated an economical situation of a visual artist after 1989 in comparison to socialist times, when an author who completed state order, received ten times more than an average month income³.

³ Pracownia Sztuk Plastycznych, a state insitution that controlled art in public space dispoded a price list that considered only traditional, material media (sgrafittos, mosaics, reliefs); Ł. Ronduda, *Sztuka polska lat 70. Awangarda*, editorial concept P. Ukłański, , CSW Zamek Ujazdowski, Warszawa 2009, p. 246-247.