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Cultural Transformations of Intimacy on the Example of Polish Contemporary Art of the 21st Century

The title of my dissertation is a paraphrase of the well-known work of the outstanding British sociologist Anthony Giddens from the early 90s.: The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies. Paper important of its significant role in reinterpreting the phenomenon of intimacy and pointing out contemporary changes in its borders. Due to the dynamics of those changes, Giddens' diagnoses need to be verified. Categories that described intimacy had changed since the 1990s, and not only because of the intense presence of social media. The main purpose of my dissertation is to examine the changes in the status and importance of intimacy in contemporary culture on the example of the latest Polish art. I see in contemporary artistic practices both the conscious expression of intimacy, the transformation of its areas, as well as "negotiations" with the cultural boundaries of intimacy. In the dissertation, I would like to prove that contemporary art, however functioning in public space, has its intimate dimension and gives an insight into the cultural issues of intimacy. In the beginning, I do not accept a restrictive definition of intimacy, because the reconstruction of the modern semantic field of intimacy will be one of the tasks of my work.

The subject of the dissertation is the cultural dimension and cultural variability of intimacy in their artistic manifestations in the area of mainly visual arts. The work addresses the issues of intimacy in their relations with tabooed areas of physicality, emotionality and social interaction. The research matter will be selected works and artistic projects. Both projects that directly define their status as intimate, e.g. visual intimate diaries (e.g. works by Bańska Bańda, Agata Bogacka, Jacek Markiewicz and Michał Bogucki) will be analyzed. I would also like to present culturally and socially established borders of intimacy that were presented in Polish contemporary art. (among others: Alicja Żebrowska, Beata Stankiewicz-Szczerbik, Lilianna Piskorska, Michał Dobrucki, Piotr Uklański). Exhibitions would also be an important reference in my dissertation. I will analyze museum strategies for presenting intimacy. One of the artistic initiatives that gathered the works of Young Artists exploring this category in their work was an action organized by the Museum of Art in Łódź, Intimacy and its Art (2014), the coordinator of this exhibition was Katarzyna Słoboda. The intimacy category is also an attempt to comprehensively capture the activities of young artists - such as the exhibition of Anna Michałowska Intymność (16.03-13.04.19 Teatr Nowy Warszawa) or the exhibition of Małgorzata Wróbel-Kruczenkow Between intimacy and absence (27.05-18.06.2017 Galeria Bałucka, Łódź). In my dissertation, I would also like to take a look at the exhibition organized by the Wrocław Contemporary

Museum, States of Concentration (March 15-20.05.19, curator: Małgorzata Miśniakiewicz) - this exhibition is an extremely rich cross-section of Polish art created by women. The works on it represent a dialogue in which various ways to conceptualize intimacy were established. According to my knowledge, in an attempt to capture the importance of intimacy in contemporary art, there are no works that would start from the analysis of visual arts treated as a manifestation of broader cultural processes. Intimacy functions on two separate levels - on the one hand, in the sphere of philosophical and sociological considerations, on the other, as a curatorial label for the selection of artists' works. Research on the issues of intimacy is advanced mainly in the field of social sciences, including sociology, cultural anthropology and psychology (Bamford 1997, Kuligowski 2013, Czykwin 2013, Wojciszke 2005, Sierdzan 2011, Layder 2009, A. Shryock 2004) and philosophy (Kasulis 2002, Layder 2009, Musiał 2015). According to my insights, there is a lack of research on the issue of intimacy that would originate from the analysis of visual arts, treated as a manifestation of broader cultural processes.