



**Doctoral School of  
Social Communication**

## **SUMMERY OF THE Ph.D. THESIS**

**Mónika Bálint**

**The notion of participation in art and in social sciences**

Ph.D. Thesis

**Supervisors:**

**Éva Judit Kovács Ph.D.**

(MTA TK SzI tudományos tanácsadó; osztályvezető)

**and Anna Wessely Ph.D.**

(ELTE, egyetemi docens)

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**Institute of Behavioural Sciences and Communication Theory**

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## **I. Preliminary considerations and relevance of the topic**

The subject of this study is participatory (or participation based) art. The word *participatory* refers to an artistic process, which is accomplished by the artist together with others, predominantly non artists, involving their actions into the process, and to the artwork. The term *participatory art or participation based art* became widely known and used in artistic discourse in the past 20 years, predominantly in the art discourse in English language. It refers to artistic methods, which has its precursors in other notions and terms used by artists and art critiques: *involvement, engage, collaboration or collaboratory, interactive, intersubjective, relation based, dialogical*. Artworks connected to these notions can be related to different genres and artistic classification, which cannot always be separated from each other, therefore these notions can be perceived sometimes as synonyms. It depends of the criteria of classification whether we perceive them as *neo-conceptual, community artwork, public art, new-genre public art, socially and/or politically engaged art, activist or critical art*. It is also an attempt of this analysis to describe, interpret and find out the relations in between these terms, with the exploration of their connections in art theory.

Participatory, collaborative artworks involve the public, and the people who are part of the social relations which are explored by the artist, they become part of the artistic process. In most cases the artist, like a researcher relies on social scientific knowledge, and concepts, and often uses methods of observation and research, that has its origin or precursors in psychology, social psychology, anthropology or sociology. The compliance is sometimes only post factum, it is made when scientists and the critiques who are sensitive to social issues notice the use of these methods. While conceptualizing social topics, artists often work together with social scientists. Sometimes the expectations about the effective and ethical use of social methodology are in contradiction with the expectations on the autonomy of the artwork and the artist.

The Participation Theory of Communication (PTC) looks at participation as the means and conditions of taking part in a community (Horányi 2007: 112). ‘Participation’ refers to the process in which individuals or groups get together in order to communicate with each other, to interact with each other, to inform others and to be informed by others, to accumulate some knowledge, to make decisions and to solve problems together.

The purpose of the common communicative action is the common (cumulative) problem recognition, and problem solving, which depends on the abilities of the participants. In accordance with the Participation Theory of Communication all artworks can be considered „participative”, even those that are realised without involving other creators than the artist. Still, some elements of the participatory art projects can be analysed with the help of the PTC. The patterns of the specific roles of the agent are characteristic to these projects. Generally it can be stated, that in participatory artworks the artist and the participants involved constitute a group, that have access to artistic perception, cognition, and communication, and also to channels of publicity, as means of problem recognition and problem solving. It is especially characteristic to works identified by Grant H. Kester (2006) as dialogical.

In this research I was looking for examples of participatory art projects in the Hungarian and Polish art scenes, which help me to analyse participatory artistic processes, their specific features in the millennium. This Ph.D. thesis includes the Polish case studies only.

The main questions of the inquiry are:

- How the notion of participation is conceptualized during the different artistic activities?
- What kinds of references are made to the discourses of the contemporary art scene?
- What kind of artistic traditions are referred to? What is the relation that the artists have with these traditions?
- What kinds of references are made to the use of the notion *participation* in the social sciences?
- What types of the notion of participation can be conceptualized through the different discourses?
- What kind of historic references are made in the discourses?
- Is there any interaction in between the use of the term *participation* in art, art theory and social sciences?

The thesis is based on the facts and terms of art history, still I do not have the aim to challenge concepts and theory of art history or philosophy of art. This writing is based on theoretical traditions of the sociology of arts, communication theory and cultural studies. The aim of the research was to explore dispersion of the term participation in contemporary arts, and to see, how the artists working in this field think about it, and

what the specificities of this type of artistic practice are. Therefore the questions of the enquiry are related to conceptualization and use of the notion participation. The method of the enquiry is discourse analysis. The case studies are based on texts: descriptions of the art projects, critiques and interviews made with the artists and curators. I have also collected texts which are not directly related to the art projects that are analysed, but are helpful in understanding the context. While analysing the projects and the discourses I examine the following topics:

1. *Participation*: how is the term participation used? What level of inclusion can be noticed? Whose participation is emphasised? (I introduce the concept of the three dimensions of participation). What other classifications are used to the projects? How the roles of the artists and the participants are described?

2. *Tradition*: What are the artistic traditions that the artists/ authors/ speakers are referring to? How do the authors describe the relation of the artworks to other national or international precursors?

3. *The political*: how the relations of art and the political are presented?

4. *Social engagement (of the artist)*: What kind of social aims or problems are formulated in the projects/ texts? What political aims are formulated in the texts?

5. *The relations between art and cognition*: what are the possibilities of cognition about the world and society through the means of art?

6. *What is the connection and interaction* of art and science?

7. What is the *social status* of the artists, art institutions?

8. What is the role of art in the public sphere?

9. How is the autonomy of the artist and the artwork described?

## **II. Methods**

### **II.1. Discourse analysis**

In the research process I examined works of nine artists which were made between 2000 and 2010 in Hungary and Poland. With the help of the documentations of the projects and some texts (interviews with the artists and art critiques) I explore what kind of artistic practice is referred to as participatory, and how participation and inclusion achieved in the practice, through action is. At the same a big portion of the analysis is referring the use of terms in the texts, and the structure of the discourse about

participatory artworks. The empirical materials are texts. There is an analysis of the individual texts and also at some level the connections between the discourses are explored too, so that to comprehend their context. Each project and the related texts are analysed in the following way:

1. presenting the project
2. analysis of the texts directly related to the projects
3. Analysis of interviews and other texts (of the context).

It is important to construe, how the different terms are related to different artistic practices, and how their context is built. Therefore the primary tool of the research is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary method and field of research, that examines the told and the written use of language through the analysis of (written and told) discourses. Discourse analysts share the presuppositions that the use of language and social reality interact. Texts mirror our views of the society (textual construction of reality) and shape it.

The principles of discourse analysis described by Teun A. van Dijk (1997) are conducted in the thesis in the following way:

- I analyse the original texts in their original form and language (the Polish texts in Polish) and present them in the annex in translation (in Hungarian).
- Important part of the analysis is examining the source of the text, the position of the speakers, the institutionalized structures and the cultural particularities. This can be explored through the context.
- All interviews, video and sound recordings are analysed as written text, while I found it important to keep the characteristics of the spoken language in writing.
- The interpretation of the social function of the text in their context is an important part of the analysis.
- Analysis is done on different levels. First the structure and the use of terms are investigated: how the different terms are conceptualized in the own-world of the speaker.
- All analysis is made linearly. When new statements and terms are analysed, I examine their connections to the previous ones, and the previous sentences. I build the interpretation from the individual communicative events towards the context.

- I make an attempt to examine the inner structure of the texts (topics, relation of terms, referential connections).
- I examine the function of the use of the different terms.
- I am looking for the use of genre norms or their questioning.
- I am looking for the goals of the expressions, and what are the strategies of the speakers.
- When examining the use of terminology, the content of the texts and the context, I am looking also for the social knowledge that is necessary for understanding, interpreting and using them.

While examining the texts I use the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of the text, what is their genre, medium, and social position? Does it follow the rules of the genre?
- Who is the speaker? What is his position?
- Who is she/ he talking to?
- What is his intention? What is the direct goal of the statement?
- What is the indirect goal/ stake of the statement? (I am looking for the role of the statement in power relations, how the speakers relate to the fields of science and art, how do they try to form these fields?)
- Use of terminology: What are the „central notions“ of the text, what is the function of the use of these notions? What types of genres are mentioned in the statements? What are the terms that help in exploring the concept of participation?
- What is the inner structure of the texts (topics, relation of topics, and their referential connections)?

### **III. Main results**

#### **III.1. The notion and the dimensions of participation**

Building on the concepts of the Participation Theory of Communication (PTC), we have to ask the following question, when we talk about participation: from whose point of view do we consider an art project participatory? We have to separate the different three

different actors and agents ( $a_1; a_2; a_3$ ) of the situation (state). I call these perspectives of the agents the dimensions of participation. I differentiate the following dimensions:

1. Participation in the dimension of the artist - the artist as a participant.
2. Participation from the perspective of the audience, the people being involved in the creation process - “participation based creation”.
3. Participation from the perspective of the public - a dimension of social participation.

It is necessary to separate what can be seen and perceived about the acting agents by others (these are the features of the actor ( $\langle \hat{a} \rangle$ ), what is perceived by the agent - the features of the own-world of the agent ( $\langle \hat{w} \rangle$ ).

- 1.(x) Participation in the dimension of the artist - the artist as a participant.

In this dimension of the participation the role of the artist can be compared to the “participant observer” role applied in social sciences. In this position the actor - the artist initiating the creation of the artwork - is moving away from a passive observer role to an active acting role. The nature of the participant observer role is that the researcher is learning about the researched society, community or group by participating in its everyday life, meaning that he unfolds the other’s “own world” and makes an attempt to place himself into the other’s own world. During this process there is still a kind of distance, the other party has limited opportunity to get an insight into the researcher’s own world. And it is even more important that the “observed parties” have only the role of the “data providers” when formulating problems and looking for solutions. The “participatory researches”, “participatory action research” that evolved in the second part of 20th century, brings change from this perspective. The distance between the “observer” and the “observed” party, between “me” and the “other” gets reduced and each of the actors are participating in the process of learning.

One of the main characteristics of participatory artworks is that the specific nature of interpersonal communication is revealed here, in opposition with the classic means of fine arts. Claire Bishop emphasizes this special nature when originating the participatory artworks from the tradition of “performance and action art” and this is what connects fine art and theatre in the field of the participatory art. In the case of the classic performance and action the artist involves his own actions and body, by trying to connect to the

audience, as part of the work and makes the audience to also initiate actions and to get their bodies involved. In these performative situations the body and actions of the artist turn into a medium.

In the case of artworks that are created in communities, the emphasis shifts from unfolding the artist's own world to learning about the other. The more room the involved parties have to form the artwork, the more chances we will have to unfold some elements of our own world. The contact and interaction between the artist and the participants can be analysed by the roles played during the interaction and also based on the self-presentation of the participants. In each of the cases the artist deliberately manages the interactions depending on what actions he would like to achieve from the involved actors and how he would like to present himself. The goal might be to establish the interaction itself. The behaviour of the person initiating the interaction is special because in general his own self-presentation fulfils the social expectations and patterns in regards to an artist role according to the partners' (other) expectations, however, he often moves on to other roles. These roles might be the teacher, the researcher, the journalist or the supporting roles. The artist partly mixes these roles deliberately or deliberately steps up in other roles instead of the artist role to influence the partners' actions and the outcome of the interaction by it.

When featuring a specific artwork, creation process we can describe the characteristics of participation in its first dimension along the following questions:

From the intern perspective ( $\langle \hat{w}_I \rangle$ ):

qx1 - What is the (artist's) aim to initiate contact?

qx2 - What is the goal of the interaction?

qx3 - What kinds of problems can the actor formulate?

Questions helping to unfold the external perspective ( $\langle \hat{a}_I \rangle$ ):

qx4 - What roles does the artist play?

qx5 - How does the artist define his own role for the participants?

qx6 - What are the means of self-presentation? How do participants perceive the artist's role?

2. (y) Participation from the perspective of the audience, the people being involved in the creation process - “participation based creation”.

In this dimension the concept of participation relates to the individuals involved in creation, therefore it is worth to analyse the degree and methods of involvement. Unfortunately this is the dimension where the possibilities to carry out an analysis are the most limited. In order to learn more about the “involved” actors’ dimensions and obtain the appropriate knowledge about them, the project documentations are just of very little help. However from the documentations we can judge to what degree the involved actors had an opportunity to influence some of the elements of the common action and what opportunities they had for self-presentation, but through a very strong filter, through the filter that is provided for the audience by the artist. This filter will be discussed further when introducing the third dimension. The actors involved get in an interaction where several details are determined by the artist. The degree of participation also depends on what possibilities the involved actors have to choose or change when determining these factors. It is worth to analyse in connection to the involved parties’ dimension, in what way the actors can influence the outcome of the project (artwork). Suzanne Lacy (1994) has noted that the concept of interactivity that became popular in media arts is lacking real mutuality and provides for the involved actors only the possibility to make a choice, which on the other hand means a lower level of involvement. In these cases the individual can only choose between ready scripts, meaning one of the solutions offered by the artist for solving the problem that is present in the interaction. On the other hand, in artworks that are called by Grant H. Kester (2004) dialogical, a real dialog evolves that requires mutuality and cooperation. The outcome of the interaction in this case is not defined in advance, there are no finished scripts to choose from. Kester’s concept is based on the communicative action theory of Habermas and the speech act theory. According to the theory of Habermas (1986) the actors (in the action theory of Habermas they are called actors) have a symmetric (hierarchical) relation in the dialog. However, we can say that it is difficult to make this idealistic situation to happen in an art project, nevertheless the actors are striving for it. During interaction the actors participating in the dialog have to avoid two sources of danger. Namely the risk of not reaching a mutual understanding (not agreeing or misunderstanding) and not reaching an action plan (failure). However in practice these sources of danger do not threaten each of the actors equally. In case of art projects it can be assumed that if the appropriate level of involvement and commitment is

missing, nor the possibility of a misunderstanding, neither the failure of the action is as threatening for the involved actors as it is for the artist whose interest is to realize his plans. Some questions that can be formulated in regards to the second dimension:

From external perspective (from the point of view of the actors involved ( $\langle \hat{a}_2 \rangle$ )):

qy1 What are the means of involvement? (What is the environment and situation like where the interaction takes place?)

qy2 On what level does the involvement happen, what are the activities it affects?

qy3 How does the artist define the participants in regards to their roles and identities?

qy4 What roles do the actors play?

qy6 Does a coalition come to life between the participants?

From the intern perspective, the perspective of the agents own-world ( $\langle \hat{W}_2 \rangle$ )

qy6 What opportunities do the involved parties have to shape their self-representation, their roles and to present their identities? In what roles do they reveal themselves?

qy7 What are the actors' relations to identifying and eliminating problems?

qy8 If the artists would like to obtain knowledge through the interaction to be built into the artwork, how open is this process, what are the premises it is based on and how much does it rely on the own worlds of the partners?

qy9 What topics are demonstrated by the involved actors (which parts of their own world do they reveal)?

3. (z) Participation from the perspective of the public - a dimension of social participation.

In the case of a process based and performative participatory art project the artwork is usually presented to the wider public through the documentation of the interaction, photographs, videos, flashbacks. The *secondary audience* can meet the representations of the interaction. The documentation contains only those elements of the original interaction that were selected by the artist when editing the artwork. The elements of the participants own world become cognizable only through the filters of his eyes and mind. It can be revealed: What general information we might have about the audience of the artworks? Who are these works addressing? If we consider ourselves as the audience, we can tell about what "messages" the artwork has for us, what parts of reality it is related to

and what picture it reflects in our own world and maybe what actions it triggers in us (the perspective of the actor)?

The political concept of participation is as close to this dimension of the participation, as much we can imagine that the artwork connects the involved actors (individuals, groups) and the social publicity. For the audience some information in regards to the involved actors - their own world - become available through the artworks.

Questions in regards to the third dimension:

From external perspective, the characteristics of the viewer as an actor ( $\langle \hat{a}_3 \rangle$ )

qz1 What are the characteristics of the audience, publicity for which the artwork is revealed and becomes available? (At what scene is the artwork presented and who is the creator targeting?)

qz2 In what way becomes the process and its outcomes available for the wider publicity? (What media is used and through what actions becomes the artwork available for the audience?)

From the intern perspective ( $\langle \hat{w}_3 \rangle$ ), questions regarding the own-world of the viewer:

qz3 What problems are revealed for the audience (for me)? Which wider social problem is addressed by the problems revealed in the artwork?

qz4 What information can I obtain about the own world of the different actors in the artwork?

qz5 In the process of constructing reality, which one of the actors perspectives gets more emphasized, whose interpretations become for me available?

### III.2. Conceptual grid of the art discourse

When we make an attempt conceptualizing the notion participation, it is necessary to present its conceptual framework, the terms and theories related. The term participatory is often used in connection with or as a synonym of other artistic terms. The professional backgrounds of speakers define which terms are used. The thesis presents terms and theories that are used by the artists and critiques while describing participatory art projects. This conceptual framework is complex, in practice the artworks can be described by various terms, and often cannot be categorized clearly by the categories, genres, types we would like to separate.

The three dimensions of participation can be analysed through practice, through the different separate projects. Still all genres can be defined with a particular set or pattern of the levels of participation characteristic to them in general. I present the descriptions of the following artistic terms and genres:

*project, conceptual art, action, happening, performance, socially engaged art, critical art, social sculpture, public art, new genre public art, collaborative art, community arts.*

### III.3. Analysis of the scientific context

Analysing the roles of the artist is particularly important when we try to understand participatory art projects and the related artistic discourse. One of these possible roles is the role of the researcher, which lead to analysing the connection in between art and science, particularly social sciences. Socially engaged artworks and public art has long been related to social sciences, as some theorists make a comparison between the role of the artist and the role of the anthropologist: Susanne lacy, when describing the term new genre public art, and it's characteristics in her article *Debated Territory: Towards a Critical Language of Public Art* (Lacy 1994) separates four different nonfixed roles of the artist. These are the artist as an experiencer, a reporter, artist as an analyst, or the artist as an activist. The concept of *The Artist as Ethnographer?* becomes more widely used after the text of Hal foster with the same title (Foster 1996). Building on his concept Mark Hutchinson has separated *four stages of public art* (Hutchinson 2002).

In chapter III. point 2. I present social scientific topics and heritage, which are related to the notion of participation. Hutchinson describes the changes in public art by comparing it to the changing relation in between the anthropologist and its subject of analysis. This relation can be described also by the changing extent and level of participation. I present theoretic and methodological approaches, which can be related to the notion of participation in the scientific discourse, and also can be put in comparison with the concepts of participation in art:

- participant observation
- participatory research, the question of involvement / engagement in anthropology
- reflectivity of the researcher and the scientist as an activist (action research, action anthropology and public sociology).

#### III.4. Case studies: art projects and related discourses

In my research I made an analysis of the following discussions and some of the art projects they are related to, using the methods and analytical questions introduced above. The original texts (in case of the Polish language texts their Hungarian translations) are attached to the dissertation in the Annexes. The main findings and are summarized in the III. 5. point of this booklet:

##### **Texts related to works of Paweł Althamer:**

Sebastian Cichocki: *Park Rzeźby – O projekcie*  
[http://www.targowek.waw.pl/park\\_rzezby/](http://www.targowek.waw.pl/park_rzezby/) on 2012.09.07

Althamer: *Wybrałem to Bródno, Zapiski ze spaceru z Pawłem Althamerem po parku Bródnowskim* (<http://zrobtowwawie.blox.pl/2009/06/Althamer-Wybralem-to-Brodno.html>)

*Polski Beuys w akcji*, „Kultura”, dodatek do „Dziennika. Gazety Prawnej” 27.11.2009.

Edyta Błaszczak: *Złoty człowiek*. Gazet Wyborcza – online. 06.12.2010, aktualizacja: 06.12.2010 19:17

[http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114873,8777528,Zloty\\_czlowiek.html](http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114873,8777528,Zloty_czlowiek.html)

## **Texts related to works of Joanna Rajkowska**

### About Airways project

Joanna Rajkowska: *Linie lotnicze*, Rajkowska 2008. - (online

<http://www.artmuseum.pl/filmoteka/?l=0&id=1382>)

Somlyódi Nóra: „*A paramilitáris gesztusokat láttam*” – Joanna Rajkowska képzőművész, Magyar Narancs, 2008/ 46. (2008.11.13.)

Kürti Emese: *Légitársaság* (kritika), Magyar Narancs 2008/46 11.13.

### Interview with Joanna Rajkowska – contextual texts:

Interview with Joanna Rajkowska (Monika Bálint)

*Sztuka publicznej możliwości. Z Joanną Rajkowską rozmawia Artur Żmijewski.* In: Rajkowska, Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej, Wydawnictwo Krytyka Polityczna, Warszawa 2010.

## **Texts related to works of Artur Żmijewski - Polak w szafie (Pol in the closet) project:**

*Polak w szafie i obrazy sandomierskie*, Dyskusja, Kwartalnik Literacki, „Kresy” 2007, nr 4. 198-208.old.

Żmijewski: *Sztuka może prowokować*, Artur Żmijewski w rozmowie z Katarzyną Nowakowską Dziennik, december 10, 2007.

### Contextual texts:

Artur Żmijewski: *Stosowane sztuki społeczne.*

Artur Żmijewski, *Drżące ciała*, Rozmowy z artystami, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, Warszawa, 2008 (második, bővített kiadás) 16-24.old

*Trzeba dostrzec polityczność.* Kwartalnik Literacki, „Kresy” 2007, nr 3. 179-187.old.

Artur Żmijewski: *Idź i patrz!* Krytyka Polityczna, 18., August 8. 2009.

## **III.5. Conclusions summery of the case studies**

By discourse analysis I explored the characteristics of the projects and the discourse connected to them in the Polish art scene in between 2000 and 2010. I examined how the different dimensions of participation can be extrapolated in artistic practices and in the discourse.

## **The notion of participation in the analysed projects and the related discussions**

The notion of participation does not appear in all discussions and if it does, it is not always have an important role in the texts. Also the term participatory art is used only by some of the speakers, artists (Rajkowska, Żmijewski) in the interviews and the contextual texts. Paweł Althamer uses the term participation in a rather technical way (*taking part*) the emphasis is made on terms like community, communal, and the critical social and political positions. He talks about the relations made with the participants involved in his projects in details, their common experiences, the dialogues in a local context. We can describe all three dimensions of participation in and by his projects and the related texts.

In the projects of Joanna Rajkowska the emphasis is put on the public sphere, the shaping of public space, and participation is realized predominantly through these spaces and situations created in the space. She is very conscious and strategic about the appearance of her project in the public, in the media. The main sphere of discussion about the projects and its aims is the media.

In the works of Artur Żmijewski, and the related discussions the notion of participation is important, while the goals of involvement and engagement are contradictory. Participation seems to be highly manipulative, as Żmijewski strongly regulates and controls the actions made by the participants involved, and the documentations of the projects, the video works which are presented later in the galleries and cinemas, are edited in a way that it fits his own concepts and message. A strong example of this manipulation is the project *They*. The dimension of political participation is important for all the three artists. It is essential to all projects that identities and roles of the artists and the people involved are expressed in a performative way. Spoken and written language supplements these performances, making them more interpretable and discussable.

## **The role of social responsibility – art and the political**

Works of Paweł Althamer and the related texts do not contain direct references to political issues or statements. The notion of power is highlighted in connection to the role of the artist and the art institutions. The term *activist* is one of the roles mentioned as the interpretation of the position of the artist in his projects, who by engagement and involving others compels them to common action, with the aims of creating long term effects (changes) in the relation between the place of living (area of the city) and the

inhabitants (*active involvement and harmony*). The project of Rajkowska and the related discussions political is related to the use of space, and body (in connection to her own body and the body of the participants). While speaking about her views on society, Rajkowska refers to antagonistic model of Chantal Mouffe (Mouffe 2007), her ideal is the state without nation.

The connection in between the body and the political, and making political statements are also important to Źmijewski. In his works he stresses the use of visuality and performative expression against the verbal or written. In connection to performativity he refers to the term *passage al l'acte* of Jacques Lacan. When describing his own role, social and political engagement on a wittingly leftist position is seen as an important characteristic of his artistic activity. He asks for real consequences of artistic actions and statements (on society, politics, science, and our view of the world).

In the projects and the texts we can perceive two different views of society, the political, and democracy. One is the consensual, dialogical (or even deliberative) model (as of Jürgen Habermas). It can be detected in the works of Althamer, and the discussions related, where cooperation is an important element of the practice and the discourse. For Rajkowska and Źmijewski contradictions, conflicts are more relevant and they relate to the antagonistic world view of Chantal Mouffe. In their project we can see a lot of examples of collision, of contrast, and conflictual situations and the possibility of agreement and dialogue is dubious.

### **The social status of art and the public sphere**

In the case of Paweł Althamer the social status of the artist and its effect on the participants is particularly important in the discussions about his cooperation with the Nowolipie Group. While art critiques, curators and other speakers find the social status of the artist and the supporting art institutions very important, Althamer does not articulate its importance, he even denies the effects of his social (and public) position, and rejects privilege.

Rajkowska conceives the use of publicity and public space as the means of forming the public sphere, and the means of struggle for hegemony. She is conscious about the use of publicity, the use of her own position, fame, and interested in the public discourse generated by her projects. In the writing and statements of Źmijewski some kind of rivalry can be detected. He conceives artists, politicians and scientists on an equal social position in the public sphere in discussing social and political issues, with an equal ability

and competence in finding solutions for social and political problems. There are only a few references made in the discussions about how many the artists are known in the public and what is their position in the national and international art scene, which is also important in defining the position of the genres they work in. All three artists are linked strongly both to the national and international art scene, and they are well known, they are public figures. All use this position consciously.

### **Art and cognition – the link between art and science**

In the works of Althamer the process of individual and communal cognition, reasoning is very crucial, with the artist in the centre, who helps in „seeing”; perceiving the world, their close surroundings, place of living from a different perspective. In this process of perception the irrational, the emotional, and fictional is confronted with the rational, and also complements it. This attitude can also be detected in the works and texts of the other two artists. Rajkowska builds in her projects on intuition, and she believes that making connection between the rational and the irrational is a task for artists.

For Źmijewski some parts of his projects are also manifestations of the actions directed by the subconscious, and for him it is an important role of art, to help rational science understand and incorporate the irrational with artistic means. He is interested in wounds of the body and the soul. He makes experimentations in how art can explore and present social problems, conflicts, and what is the relation in such an artistic process with scientific investigations. How the means of art and science can be linked. When talking about the *Pol in the closet* project many several (Źmijewski, Anna Bikont, Tokarska-Bakir) express their believes that science can describe social problems, but it is hapless in proposing real solutions, while art can help in initiating change.

Artists can be seen as explorers in several projects, and we can also follow the process of observation and reasoning. There is a dichotomy in the texts concerning the relationship between art and science. On one hand there is cooperation on one side in the process of observation and representation. On the other hand – mainly in the texts of Źmijewski – art is not only cooperates with science but also challenges it. Competition with social science can be seen as an attempt of rearranging the connection in between the two fields, and changing the hierarchy. The conflict also has an ethical dimension. Critiques of the individual art projects and social scientists are confronting the artists with the norms of research that has been long evolved and discussed for decades in the scientific field.

## **The autonomy of the artist and the artwork**

The question of autonomy is highly emphasized in the statements of Źmijewski. For his artistic practice he uses the term *applied*. Seemingly he rejects the position of the autonomous artist. Positioning himself as a leftist, politically engaged person can also be seen as something challenging for his autonomy. Also he offers his „services” to society and science which is a limitation to his independence. This is the precondition for having „real effects” of his artistic actions, as he states. Autonomy – Źmijewski explains – is giving immunity, but at the same time it makes the actions of the artist weightless (inconsequential). The discussions on autonomy are sometimes contradictory in the reasoning, texts of the artists.

## **References, genres, heritage**

The term participatory art is appearing indirectly in the texts, in the critiques and analysis of the art projects. When describing their projects the artists are emphasizing other terms and categories. For classifying works of Althamer critiques use terms like *public art*, *land art* and the heritage of Beuys – *social sculpture*. As his precursors he names Janusz Korczak as someone giving a great inspiration to his art, and his master at the academy, Grzegorz Kowalski.

For Rajkowska the most important place of artistic action is public space, therefore her artworks are predominantly categorised as public art. All three are connected to the wave of Polish *critical art*.

Contrary to my preconceptions, the question of embeddedness of participatory art on the local art scene does not appear often in the texts. Even if there is some tension in between local and international perceptions of art discourse and terminology – as Rajkowska describes concerning the reception of western art theory and curatorial practice – this tension is not very strong, and the projects analysed in the dissertation are well accepted and supported with great interest. Direct references are made to the heritage of actions, happenings, collaborative works, performance, political and critical art practices.

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