aspects/positions

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Artists

Tadeusz Kantor

1915 born in Wielopole; 1933 - 1939 studied painting and stage design at the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts; 1942 - 1944 directed independent experimental theatre created by himself; 1945 - 1949 participated at the artists "Group of Young Plasticians"; 1955 created avantguard theatre "Cricot 2"; 1956 first night performance: "Cuttlefish" of S.I. Witkiewicz; 1957 co-founder of the artists association "II Group Krakowska"; 1975 first night performance of his play "Late Class" at the "Cricot 2"; 1980 world premiere of "Wielopole, Wielopole" in Rome; 1990 posthumous premiere of "Today Is My Birthday"; he painted, drawed, was stage designer and director of films, a creator and theoretician of the experimental theatre and author of happenings; 1990 died in Cracow.

Solo exhibitions, participations and happenings (selection): 1945 "1st Exhibition of Contemporary Art", Art Palace, Cracow. 1957 Gallery Krzysztofory, Cracow. 1959 documenta II, Kassel. 1960 Biennial of Venice. 1961 "The Art of Assamblage. 15 Polish Painters", Museum of Modern Art, New York. 1963 "Popular Exhibition (Anti-Exhibition)", Gallery Krzysztofory, Cracow. 1964 Alice Pauli Gallery, Lausanne. 1965 "Cricotage", Society of Admirers of Fine Arts, Warsaw. 1966 "Line of Division", Association of Art Historians, Cracow. 1967 Biennial of Sao Paulo; "Letter", Foksal Gallery, Warsaw; "Panoramic Sea Happening", Osieki. 1968 "Lesson of Anatomy According to Rembrandt", Art Gallery

Nuremberg; "Hommage to Maria Jarema", Gallery Krzysztofory, Cracow. 1971 "Chair", Sonja Henje-Nils Onstadt Art Centre, Oslo. 1975 Museum of Art at ŭódz. 1976 "Emballages", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. 1987 documenta VIII, Kassel. 1994 "Europe - Europe. The Century of Avant-garde in Central and Eastern Europe", Art- and Exhibition Hall of FRG, Bonn; retrospective, Museum of Art, Tokyo. 1997 "Art from Poland", Art Gallery, Budapest.

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materials to include water, sand and iron, and his installations and performances became charged with more emotion (*Auschwitz Stone*; *The Scream*; *Area Site of S. Sasaki's Suicide*). [M.J.]

Koji Kamoji. Hole – Wind – Stones. Installations, painting, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi: Łódź 1990 [exhibition catalogue]

Exhibitions in Galeria Foksal:
1967 /fig. 30/
1971 *Air – Room – Space*
1972 *Two Poles*
1973 *Metal Bar, Paving Stone and Sky* /fig. 31/
1975 *Hole*
Line
Mirror
Draught
1984 *Człowiek – A Human Being*
1986 (Joint exhibition with Edward Krasiński and Henryk Stażewski)
1986 *Middle Ages* /fig. 32/
1991 *Lake in the Pyramid*
1992 *Night*

Tadeusz Kantor

Born 1915 in Wielopole. Graduated from the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts in 1939. Died 1990 in Kraków.
During World War II established the *Teatr Podziemny* (Underground Theatre) where he staged Słowacki's *Balladyna* and Wyspiański's *Powrót Odysa* (The Return of Odysseus). Was one of the organizers of the First Exhibition of Modern Art (Kraków 1948). In 1955 established the Cricot 2 theatre in Galeria Krzysztofory – a "theatre of concrete reality, not scenic illusion" – staging *Mątwa* (The Cuttlefish) by S.I. Witkiewicz (1956) and *Cyrk* (1957). In 1957 he exhibited his first informel paintings in the "Po Prostu" salon in Warsaw, subsequently formulating the concept of informel theatre (Witkacy's *W małym dworku* (In a Small Manor), 1961). In 1963 Kantor proclaimed the "Emballage Manifesto", concerned with reinstating the relation between art and reality. Kantor first made use of emballages in Cricot 2; in his painting they were a device to overcome informel, to escape from the "inferno of invisibility". For Kantor, return to the real world meant returning to a reality that was degraded and rejected. The sacks, bags, envelopes and umbrellas appearing on his canvasses are there by virtue of belonging to the lowest stratum of life. His paintings do, however, retain elements from the painterly past: vivid blots of colour or figures painted in among *objets trouvés* /fig. 12/. At the *Popular Exhibition* (Galeria Krzysztofory, 1963) Kantor showed not the results of the artist's work but a unique "personal assemblage" of objects used in the process and then abandoned (notes, drawings, scraps). Also in 1963 he published the Zero Theatre manifesto, determining the principles of autonomous scenic action. In 1965 Kantor co-founded Galeria Foksal in Warsaw, where he was to stage his first happenings (*Cricotage* 1965; *The Letter* /figs. 6, 7/; *The Panoramic Sea Happening* 1967 /figs. 8, 9, 10, 11/; *The Anatomy Lesson After Rembrandt*, 1968). Kantor's happenings are a natural development of his theatrical experiences (he was at the time realizing his vision of a theatre of happenings in *Kurka Wodna* (The Water-hen), 1967). Galeria Foksal was also the venue of *Multipart I* (1970) where forty identical paintings were "leased out" on terms fixed in an agreement between the author and the recipient; *Multipart II* (1971), showed the individual interventions by the owners into the matter of the paintings. In the 1971 *Cambriolage*, a gigantic chair was built, of which only a fragment fit into the gallery itself, with its further, immaterial part extending into neighbouring rooms /fig. 13/. In 1973 in Galeria Foksal Kantor exhibited paintings – clean canvasses to which he attached a bundle of wood, a stuffed pigeon, an umbrella, a wheel and other items – suspending the relation of the painting to the object (*Everything's Hanging by a Thread* /figs. 14, 15, 16/), later holding exhibitions documenting his happenings and theatrical activities. The next stage in the development of Cricot 2 was the "impossible theatre", as realized in *Nadobnisie i koczkodany* (Dainty Shapes and Hairy Apes) (1973). From 1975 onwards Kantor's performances represented the "theatre of death": *The Dead Class* (1975), *Where are the Snows of Yesteryear* (1978), *Wielopole, Wielopole* (1980), *Let the Artists Die* (1985), *I Shall Never Come Back Here* (1988), *Today is my Birthday* (1991, posthumous production). All the plays revolve around the return of the historical past incarnated in fragments of Kantor's personal memories. The magnified expression of the plays and their message are achieved through exposing the incompleteness and inadequacy of memory and revealing a "dead" place filled with figures of "the dead". Doppelgangers of the author and his actors appear on stage: replicas moving and set in constant motion with the aid of bizarre apparatuses and machines on wheels. In Kantor's last works the space of the stage, the space of the painting and the space of death are not reduced to objective and intrinsic relations, but intuitively skirt the realm of the "unknown". [J.M.]

Wiesław Borowski. *Tadeusz Kantor*, Warszawa 1982
Michael Kobialka. *A Journey Through Other Spaces. Essays and*

Manifestos 1944–1990. Tadeusz Kantor, University of California Press 1993

Exhibitions in Galeria Foksal:
1967 *Letter*, happening /figs 6, 7/
1967 *Emballages*, painting /fig. 12/
1967 *Panoramic Sea Happening*
1968 *Winter Assemblage – Typewriter with sail and rudder; Anatomy Lesson After Rembrandt*, happening
1970 *Multipart I*, happening
1970 *The Happening and Happening–type Activities 1963–70*, documentary exhibition
1971 *Multipart II*, painting
1971 *Designs for a "Conceptual Architecture"*
1971 *Cambriolage* /fig, 13/
1973 *Everything's Hanging by a Thread* /figs. 14, 15, 16/
1976 *The Concept of the Theatre of Death*, lecture
1976 *The Dead Class* (performance in the club room of the Association of Polish Architects)
1986 *Let the Artists Die*, exhibition of drawings
1991 *Today is my Birthday*, exhibition of drawings

Anselm Kiefer

Born 1945 in Donaueschingen, Bavaria. In 1966–1968 studied painting in Peter Dreher's Freiburg atelier, then at the Karlsruhe Akademie der Bildenden Kunst (1969). Worked in Joseph Beuys' atelier at the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie in 1970–1972. Presently lives in France.

Although Kiefer's early art shows traces of Conceptualism – seen in photographs of the artist striking poses against the background of various historic monuments (*Besetzungen*, 1969) – painting remained his principal sphere of interest. Kiefer sees painting not only as a means of artistic expression that is deeply rooted in tradition, but also as a vehicle for the contemplation of history, culture and ideas, a conveyor of meanings transcending the boundaries of art. Metaphoric titles define the epic references found in his paintings, which penetrate the realms of mythology, history and collective memory. Kiefer's subject matter is very diverse, ranging from Germanic mythology (*Parsifal*, *Nibelungenleid*, 1973) through references to the history of Germany (*Spiritual Heroes of Germany*) and Poland (*Poland has not yet perished*) /fig. 99/, to universal myths and ancient historic motifs (*Jerusalem*, *Gilgamesh*). Kiefer ascribes an important role to identification with the painter's profession, the awareness of the role of painting and responsibility for its development (*To Be a Painter*, *The Painter's Atelier*, *Tomb of the Unknown Painter*) – symbolically referring to this sphere of meaning through the recurrent motif of a palette. Since the 1970s he has been inscribing his paintings with fragments of songs, poems, place–names, names of mythic heroes and historic figures, making them equivalent, fully assimilated elements of the painting. These often ironic inscriptions, make use of homonyms and puns, expand the substantive connotations of the painting, while retaining a certain ambiguity and leaving room for interpretation. In 1974 Kiefer began producing his "scorched earth" paintings, constructed of many layers of thickly applied paint (often on photographs) whose surface is, in places, slashed or burnt. Their texture is made up to an equal degree of oils, emulsion, sand, shellac, wood, paper, stones, lead, and – since the 1980s – dried ferns, straw, poppyseed, hair and fingernails. Lead is an especially valuable material for Kiefer by virtue of both its physical and aesthetic properties and its symbolic associations with alchemy and astrology. Apart from using lead in his paintings the artist has lately been using it to make individual objects, such as an airplane (*Der Engel der Geschichte*, Galeria Foksal, 1989) /fig.100/ or a library – a collection of books with pages of lead arranged on a leaden frame. Books constitute an important part of Kiefer's output. Produced since 1969, these were originally small pieces, made by gluing photographs and other small objects onto sheets of paper and furnished with titles or inscriptions; or ironic paraphrases of "serious" publications, such as manuals, museum catalogues etc. (*Du bist Maler*). In time they evolved towards painting; made with the same technique – using burnt fragments of paintings and photographs, sand, shellac, etc. – they form a fluid sequence of canvasses, treated as film frames. Often exhibited with other works, they mutually supplement and enrich their meanings and possibilities of interpretation. [M.J.]

Anselm Kiefer – Melancholia, Sezon Museum of Art: Tokyo, 1993 [exhibition catalogue]

Exhibitions in Galeria Foksal:
1987 /fig. 98/
1989 /figs. 99, 100, 101/

Eustachy Kossakowski

Born 1925 in Warsaw. Studied architecture at Warsaw Technical University. Member of the Association of Polish Photographers since 1962. Collaborated with such magazines as: *Stolica*; *Zwierciadło*; *Polska*; *Ty i Ja* and with Galeria Krzywe Koło and Galeria Foksal. Lives and works in Paris since 1970. In–house photographer at the Centre Georges Pompidou, collaborates with Hachette and

Kantor info

Kantor, Tadeusz
(*b* Wielopole, nr Kraków, 6 April 1915; *d* Kraków, 8 Dec 1990). Polish painter, draughtsman, theatre director and stage designer. He studied painting and stage design under Karol Frycz (1877–1963) at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, graduating in 1939. After the outbreak of World War II he organized in Kraków an experimental underground theatre (1942–4), exhibitions and art discussions. He painted and produced numerous drawings and stage designs for future performances. He was influenced by various artistic movements such as Constructivism, Expressionism and Futurism, as well as by the writings of Bruno Schultz (1892–1942) and Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz (ii), whose plays he later staged. In 1947 he went to Paris, where at the Palais de la Découverte he 'discovered' the infinity of nature that he examined through the microscopic images of cells and cross-sections of minerals. As the scientific approach to this was beyond his means, he began to explore the natural world by developing the concept of inner, intellectual and spiritual space through the act of artistic creation. He called it 'the umbrellic space'. A series of abstract and metaphorical paintings and drawings followed, with the motif of an umbrella that could 'fold' and 'unfold' the space (e.g. *Umbrella Space*, a series of drawings, 1975; Borowski, pp. 27–30, figs 8–9 and 12–16).

Kantor, known foremost for his work in theatre, is without a doubt one of the most emblematic Polish artists of the century, his work being deeply implicated with recent European history.

Tadeusz Kantor
The great wizard of the theatre
Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990) is universally regarded as one of the most powerful personalities of the modern theatre and his **Cricot 2** was among the most unique theatre companies on the international circuit.
He gained his first fame internationally as a painter when his work was included in the first post war UNESCO show in Paris, and he found himself styled "the representative of non-conformist art from Eastern Europe".
This brought him immense following among the young.
Kantor was also a superb graphic artist, but became renowed world-wide as a leading avant-garde stage designer, director and producer.
Throughout his life he was tied up with **Cracow** and did not want to live anywhere else.
It was there in 1955 that he created the famous avant-garde theatre called Cricot 2, which, if read backwards, means (it's a circus" in Polish. Cricot 2 soon became a household name in Poland and abroad, operating with the same degree of efficiency in its native Cracow as in Florence and Nuremberg.
The theatre was regularly invited to France, Italy, Britain, Germany and the United States.
Over the next 35 years Kantor's unique theatre did more than 40 international tournees and won numerous prizes, awards and high distinctions throughout the world. It was a frequent performer at international avant-garde theatre festivals.
The prestigious Edinburgh Festival, for one, invited the group over and over again, which was highly uncommon in its practice.
Kantor's most "Polish" play is **Wielopole, Wielopole** (1980).
Wielopole is the village near Cracow where Kantor was born, while his father was away dying for Austrian Emperor Franz Josef.
In the play, he has been resurrected, along with a collection of aunts, uncles, nuns and priests, other soldiers and life-size puppets doubling for the characters.
The closest description of what "happens" in the performance is to call it a sort of passion play, staged in what Kantor called the "style of the theatre of death".
The dead, to him, were ideal models for actors because like them they are on the other side of an unbreakable barrier: they are outsiders.
Kantor liked this kind of sophism and considered that he was a researcher in constant movement, never alighting upon a definitive theory.
His theatre was not a theatre of words, although words were used. He did not write the plays and did not use written texts.
He did them, spontaneously, orchestrating the proceedings from onstage.
When Kantor was no longer alive to take part in plays staged by his cast, the actors turned, now and then, towards an empty chair, as if to acknowledge the lost leader who would have been normally sitting there.
His other best known plays include **The Dead Class (La classe morta)** (1976),
Where Are the Snows of Yesterday (1982) and Let the Artist Die (1985).
His last big work was I shall **Never Return** (1988), which is considered Kantor`s artistic testament.
In it the stage of a theatrical inn is filled with the characters of all Kantor's previous productions philosophically reflecting the unimportance of human existence.
Kantor himself called it the "Grand Emballage of the end of the 20th century - the Pompeii".
Unlike most theatres in Poland, Kantor's was never subsidised by the Polish government, and the artist ploughed all the money he made in art to support it.
Throughout his life he was a prolific painter and as avant-garde as in his theatre. In 1978 the Goethe Foundation awarded him its annual Rembrandt Prize for his "genuine contribution to shaping our epoch". That description also applies to his theatre work.
back / torna indietro

Tadeusz Kantor.
(Born 1915, Wielopole, Poland. Died 1990, Krakow)

Painter, Stage Designer, Film Director, Creator and Theoretician of Experimental Theater and Author of Happenings.

1933-1939 Studies painting and stage design at the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts
1942-1944 directs independent experimental theatre
1947 Vacation in Paris, acquaints himself with European avant-garde (Breton, Ernst, Miro, Klee) et se fait le relais, auprés de la presse polonaise, de l'avant garde européenne (Breton, Ernst, Miro, Klee...)
1948 Participated in the organization of the first exhibition of modern art in Krakow, in which he presented his first metaphorical paintings, was named professor at the Academy of Art in Krakow, to be revoked a year later.
1955 founded the avant-garde theater Cricot 2, with Maria Jarema
1956 exhibited informel works in Warsaw. The first play of Cricot 2: "Cuttlefish" of S.I. Witkiewicz
1957 co-founder of the artists association "II Group Krakowska";
1957-1960 Exhibits in Stockholm, Paris, Dusseldorf, New York, Goteborg and Venice
1961-1964 Stages Le petit manoir after Witkiewicz in the Gallery Krysztofory, then le Fou et la Nonne; writes a series of manifestos, Manifeste du Théâtre Informel (1961), Manifeste Théâtre Zéro (1963), Manifeste Emballages (1964).
1965-1970 Receives a Ford grant and goes to New York where he discovers Minimal Art, Pop, Happening. writes le Manifeste du Théâtre-Happening et réalise une série d'emballages (Le grand emballage) et de Happening (La leçon d'anatomie d'après Rembrandt); stages la Poule d'eau de Witkiewicz.
1970 writes le Manifeste 70, in which he defend the idea of a work quasiment impossible, without value, fondée uniquement sur l'acte créateur. based solely on the creative act
1971-1988 Conçoit la mise en scéne, la scénographie et les costumes des Cordonniers de Witkiewicz, présentée en français au Théâtre 71 à Malakoff en 72. Monte une série de spectacle : Les Mignons et les Guenons en 73, spectacle présenté à Paris et à Nancy; La Classe Morte en 75 piéce qui consacre sa notoriété notamment au Festival mondial de Théâtre de Nancy où elle est présentée au public français; Où sont les neiges d'antan "cricotage" (happening du théâtre Cricot) réalisé à Rome en 79; Wielopole-Wielopole, créé à Florence en 80; Qu'ils crèvent les artistes ! en 85 et Je ne reviendrai jamais en 88
1990 Crée le spectacle Ô douce nuit avec des comédiens français, dans le cadre du festival d'Avignon et de l'Académie Expérimentale des Théâtres; dirige les répétitions de Aujourd'hui c'est mon anniversaire à Toulouse et à Cracovie.
8 décembre 1990 Dies unexpectedly in Krakow, after une seance de répétition.
1990 posthumous premiere of "Today Is My Birthday";

Solo exhibitions, participations and happenings (selection): 1945 "1st Exhibition of Contemporary Art", Art Palace, Cracow. 1957 Gallery Krzysztofory, Cracow. 1959 documenta II, Kassel. 1960 Biennial of Venice. 1961 "The Art of Assamblage. 15 Polish Painters", Museum of Modern Art, New York. 1963 "Popular Exhibition (Anti-Exhibition)", Gallery Krzysztofory, Cracow. 1964 Alice Pauli Gallery, Lausanne. 1965 "Cricotage", Society of Admirers of Fine Arts, Warsaw. 1966 "Line of Division", Association of Art Historians, Cracow. 1967 Biennial of Sao Paulo; "Letter", Foksal Gallery, Warsaw; "Panoramic Sea Happening", Osieki. 1968 "Lesson of Anatomy According to Rembrandt", Art Gallery Nuremberg; "Hommage to Maria Jarema", Gallery Krzysztofory, Cracow. 1971 "Chair", Sonja Henje-Nils Onstadt Art Centre, Oslo. 1975 Museum of Art at üódz. 1976 "Emballages", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. 1987 documenta VIII, Kassel. 1994 "Europe - Europe. The Century of Avant-garde in Central and Eastern Europe", Art- and Exhibition Hall of FRG, Bonn; retrospective, Museum of Art, Tokyo. 1997 "Art from Poland", Art Gallery, Budapest.

http://www.cortical.org/pink/2.13.html

Michal Kobialka "Presentation and discussion of Tadeusz Kantor"
Michal Kobialka's presentation will focus on the notion of the object as defined by and used in the theatre of Tadeusz Kantor, a Polish visual artist. It could be suggested that Kantor's substitution of the real object for the artistic object in his 1944 production of Wyspianski's "Return of Odysseus" was not a manifestation of nonart/anti-art attitude or an experiment in literalization, such as those conducted by cubism, dada, or constructivism, but part of the process of the devaluation and rejection of imitation, illusion, and fiction in art. Instead, by breaking the structures of interdependence between and art, Kantor focused on that "other" reality which could no longer be altered by any traditional and existing artistic modes of presentation/representation. In Kantor's art, this reality, referred to as the Reality of the Lowest Rank, exposed the weakness of the traditional theatrical apparatus:

"THERE IS NO WORK OF ART [...]
THERE IS NO 'HOLY' ILLUSION
THERE IS NO 'HOLY' PERFORMANCE
THERE IS ONLY AN OBJECT THAT IS TORN OUT OF LIFE AND REALITY [...]
THERE IS NO ARTISTIC SPACE [...]
THERE IS ONLY REAL SPACE [...]
SUBLIME AESTHETIC VALUES ARE REPLACED WITH POVERTY!
POOR OBJECT"
- Tadeusz Kantor "The Milano Lessons" Lesson 12.

In order to substantiate this point, I will briefly discuss Kantor's treatment of the object in The Return of Odysseus, The Cuttlefish (1956), The Country House (1961, 1966, 1969), The Water Hen (1967); in the Happenings as well as in his Emballages and Informel paintings. Michal Kobialka is Associate Professor of Theatre at the University of Minnesota. His articles and reviews have been published in Assaph (Israel), Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Journal of Theater and Drama (Israel), Theatre History Studies, Medieval Perspectives, The Drama Review, Theatre Journal, Performing Arts Journal, Theatre Annual, Theatre Nordic Studies (Sweden), Theatre Research International (England), Yearbook of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Fine Arts, Slavic and East European Journal, and Soviet and East European Performance. he has presented papers on medieval, contemporary European theatre, and theatre historiography at various regional, national, and international conferences. His book on Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre "A Journey Through Other Spaces: Essays and Manifestos 1944-1990" was published by the University of California Press in August 1993. He is an editor of "Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice, and Theory" (to be published by University of Minnesota Press in 1998) and co-editor (with Barbara Hanawalt) of Medieval Practics of Space (to be published by University of Minnesota Press in 1999). His book on the early medieval drama and theatre, "This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages", will be published by University of Michigan Press in 1999.

WERKBIOGRAFIE

Zusammengestellt nach: *"Hommage à Tadeusz Kantor" (1915-1990)*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, Nürnberg, Oktober 1991, letzte Ausgabe, und *Tadeusz Kantor. My creation, my journey*, Ausstellungskatalog Sezon Museum of Art, Tokio 1994

1915
Tadeusz Kantor wird am 6. April in Wielopole bei Krakau geboren

1933
Studium (Malerei und Bühnenentwurf) an der Akademie der Schönen Künste, Krakau

1938
Gründung des Ephemerischen und Mechanischen Puppentheaters
Aufführung von *Tod des Tintagiles* nach Maurice Maeterlinck in der Akademie Krakau

1942
Gründung des Unabhängigen Untergrundtheaters in Krakau
Aufführung von *Balladyna* nach J. Slowacki

1944
Aufführung von *Rückkehr des Odysseus* nach S. Wyspianski in Krakau

1945
Mitbegründer der Gruppe *Junge Plastik* der Vereinigung polnischer Künstler (SAP) in Krakau
Erste Bühnenentwürfe und Dekorationen an Krakauer Theatern

1947
Erste Reise nach Frankreich

1948
Mitorganisator der ersten Ausstellung zeitgenössischer polnischer Kunst nach dem 2. Weltkrieg, Krakau
Professur an der Akademie der Schönen Künste, Krakau
Mitglied der *Krakauer Gruppe*

1949
Der Professur an der Akademie Krakau enthoben

1950-1955
Zusammenarbeit mit Maria Jarema in einer isolierten Künstlergruppe in Krakau
Bühnenentwürfe und Dekorationen an Krakauer Theatern

1955
Reisen nach Paris und Wien
Ausstellung der Informel-Bilder in der Galerie Po prostu, Warschau
Teilnahme an der *II. Ausstellung Moderner Kunst*, Warschau

1956
Zusammen mit Maria Jarema Gründung des Experimentier-Theaters Cricot2 in Krakau
Erste Aufführung: *Der Tintenfisch* nach S.I. Witkiewicz in Krakau

1957
Aufführung von *Der Zirkus* nach K. Mikulski in Krakau
Ausstellung *Die Ausstellung im Gang* in der Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau

1958
Reisen nach Schweden und Frankreich
Schutzumschlag und Illustrationen zu *Iwona ksiezniczka Burgunda* von W. Gombrowicz
Einzelausstellung in der Galerie Samlaren, Stockholm
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung

Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts, Charleroi

1959
Teilnahme an der *documenta 2*, Kassel
Einzelausstellung in der Galerie H. Legendre, Paris
Einzelausstellung in der Kunsthalle Düsseldorf
Teilnahme an den Ausstellungen *Polnische Kunst*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brüssel und *III. Ausstellung Moderner Kunst*, Warschau

1960
Teilnahme an der *XXX. Biennale*, Venedig
Einzelausstellung in der Galerie 54, Göteborg
Einzelausstellung in der Saidenberg Gallery, New York
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung *Expressions d'aujourd'hui*, Lunéville

1961
Reisen nach Italien, Frankreich, Schweden und in die BRD
Gast-Professur an der Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Hamburg
Aufführung von *In einem kleinen Landhaus* nach S. I. Witkiewicz in der Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau
Einzelausstellungen in Paris, Stockholm, Göteborg
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung *15 polnische Maler*, Museum of Modern Art, New York und an der Ausstellung *Die Kunst der Assemblage*, New York

1962
Einzelausstellung in der Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung *Moderne Malerei und Skulptur*, Pittsburgh

1963
Populäre Ausstellung - Anti-Ausstellung und Uraufführung von *Narr und Nonne* nach S.I. Witkiewicz in der Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau
Einzelausstellungen in Chexbres und Krakau
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung *Polnische Malerei von den Anfängen des 19. Jahrhunderts bis heute*, Folkwang Museum, Essen

1964
Reisen in die Schweiz und die BRD
Einzelausstellung in der Galerie Alice Pauli, Lausanne
Teilnahme an einer Ausstellung für Bühnenentwürfe in Zürich und an der Ausstellung *Profiles IV* in Bochum

1965
Reise in die USA
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung *Die Kunst und das Theater* in Baden-Baden
Teilnahme an einer Ausstellung polnischer Bilder in der D´Arcy Galerie, New York
Teilnahme an der *documenta 3*, Kassel
Happening *Cricotage* in der Galerie Zacheta, Warschau

1966
Happening *Die Große Emballage*, Basel
Happening *Die Trennungslinie* in der Vereinigung der Kunsthistoriker, Krakau
Aufführung von *In einem kleinen Landhaus* (deutscher Titel auch *Der Schrank*) nach S.I. Witkiewicz in Baden-Baden
Einzelausstellungen in der Galerie Samlaren, Stockholm; in der Galerie Handschin, Basel; in der Staatlichen Kunsthalle Baden-Baden und in der Galerie de l'Université, Paris

1967
Happening *Der Brief* in der Galerie Foksal, Warschau
Panorama-Happening am Meer, Osieki, polnische Ostseeküste
Aufführung von *Das Wasserhuhn* nach S.I. Witkiewicz in Krakau
Teilnahme an der *IX. Biennale*, Sao Paulo, 1. Preis für Emballagen
Teilnahme an der *II. Quadriennale*, Prag
Teilnahme an der *2. Internationale der Zeichnung*, Darmstadt
Einzelausstellung in der Galerie Foksal, Warschau
Einzelausstellung in der Galerie Pierre, Stockholm

1968
Reisen nach Italien, Frankreich, Jugoslawien und in die BRD
Verleihung des Europäischen Preises für Gemälde *Premio Marzotto*, Rom
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung *Von der Collage zur Assemblage*, Kunsthalle Nürnberg
Happening *Anatomiestunde nach Rembrandt* (1. Version) in der Kunsthalle Nürnberg
Happening *Menschliche Emballage*, Nürnberg
Happening *Begegnung mit dem Nashorn*, Nürnberg
Happening *Hommage an Maria Jarema* in der Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau
Produktion des Films *Kantor ist da* vom Saarländischen Rundfunk, Saarbrücken
Realisierung der *Stuhl-Emballage*, Vela Luca, Jugoslawien

1969
Reisen nach Italien und Jugoslawien
Professur an der Akademie der Schönen Künste, Krakau
Der Professur an der Akademie Krakau erneut enthoben
Happening *Anatomiestunde nach Rembrandt* (2. Version) in der Galerie Foksal, Warschau

1970
Ausstellung *Multipart I*, Galerie Foksal, Warschau
Ausstellungen der Dokumentation *Happening und Theater*, Galerie Foksal, Warschau
Ausstellung *Happening und Fluxus* in Köln, Stuttgart, in der Galerie Alice Pauli, Lausanne und in der Galerie Elektra 70, New York
Ausstellung *Konzeptuelle Emballagen*, Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau

1971
Teilnahme am Festival Mondial du Théâtre in Nancy (*Das Wasserhuhn*)
Ausstellungen *Multipart II*, *Konzeptuelle Emballagen* und *Cambriollage* und Happening *Anatomiestunde nach Rembrandt* (3. Version) in der Galerie Foksal, Warschau
Ausführung des *Großen Stuhls*, in der Nähe des Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter, Hovikodden bei Oslo

1972
Teilnahme am Festival of Art, Edinburgh (*Das Wasserhuhn*)
Inszenierung von *Die Schuster* nach S.I. Witkiewicz im Theater 71 in Malakoff bei Paris

1973
Uraufführung von *Zierpuppen und Schlampen* nach S.I. Witkiewicz in Krakau
Teilnahme am Festival of Art, Edinburgh (*Zierpuppen und Schlampen*)
Ausstellung *Alles hängt an einem Faden*, Galerie Foksal, Warschau

1974
Verleihung des Preises der Kunstkritiker für Bildende Kunst
Teilnahme am Festival Mondial du Théâtre in Nancy
Teilnahme am 8. Festival of Art in Shiraz, Iran
Einzelausstellungen in Paris und Nürnberg

1975
Uraufführung von *Die Tote Klasse* nach S.I. Witkiewicz in der Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau
Ausstellung *Das menschliche Reservat* in der Galerie Zapiecek, Warschau und der Galerie Desa, Krakau
Retrospektive von Emballagen im Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz und im Kulturhuset, Stockholm

1976
Teilnahme am Festival of Art, Edinburgh
Ausstellung von Emballagen im Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo und in der Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
Ausstellung *Die lebende Dokumentation - 20 Jahre Theater Cricot2* in der Galerie Krzysztofory, Krakau
Produktion des Films *Die tote Klasse* von Andrzej Wajda
Einzelausstellung *Emballages 1960-1976* in der Galerie Johanna Ricard, Nürnberg

1977
Teilnahme am Festival Mondial du Théâtre in Nancy; am Festival of Art in Shiraz, Iran; am Festival BITEF in Belgrad; am Festival d'Automne in Paris und am Carrefour International du Théâtre in Lille
Teilnahme an der *documenta 6*, Kassel
Teilnahme an der *International Art Exhibition ROSC - the poetry of vision*, Dublin
Aufführung von *Die tote Klasse* des Theaters Cricot2 in Nürnberg

1978
Verleihung des Preises *Premio Teatral Juana Sujo*, Caracas und des *Rembrandt-Preises* der Johann-Wolfgang-von-Goethe-Stiftung, Basel
Teilnahme an den 28. Berliner Festwochen
Ausstellung *Maler des Teatr Cricot2* im Pallazo delle Esposizioni, Rom und im Pallazo Reale, Mailand

1979
Verleihung des *The Village Voice Off-Broadway Award-OBIE-Preises*, New York
Stipendium des Teatro Regionale Toscano, Comune di Firenze
Einrichtung der Cricoteka - als Archiv des Teatr Cricot2 - in Florenz und Krakau
Aufführung von *Wo ist der Schnee von einst?* in Paris

1980
Uraufführung von *Wielopole-Wielopole* in Florenz
Teilnahme am Festival of Art in Edinburgh und am Festival d'Automne in Paris

1981
Verleihung des Orden *Teofilo Leone*, des 1. Preises der V. Versammlung des Welttheaters und des Preises des Kultur- und Kunstministers, Warschau
Teilnahme am II. Kongress Polnischer Kultur

1982
Verleihung des *The Village Voice Off-Broadway Award-OBIE-Preises*, New York
Teilnahme am Festival d'Automne in Paris
Ausstellung *Metamorphoses* in der Galerie de France, Paris

1983
Ausstellung aller Requisiten der Spektakel von *Balladyna* bis *Wielopole-Wielopole* in der Cricoteka, Krakau
Retrospektive *Das Teatr Cricot2 und seine Avantgarde*

und Ausstellung *Présences Polonaises* im Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris mit Aufführung von *Die Schulklasse - ein geschlossenes Werk*

1984
Einzelausstellung von Gemälden und Objekten im Maison de la Culture, Grenoble
Ausstellung *Zufällige Ausstellung Tadeusz Kantors* in der Cricoteka, Krakau

1985
Aufführung von *Die Künstler sollen krepieren*, Nürnberg
Teilnahme am Festival Mondial du Théâtre, Nancy und am Festival d'Automn, Paris
Ausstellungen *Die Schulklasse - ein geschlossenes Werk* und *Witkacy und das Teatr Cricot2* in der Cricoteka, Krakau
Einzelausstellung von Gemälden im Palais Papes, Avignon
Produktion der Dokumentarfilme *Kantor* von Andrzej Sapija, *Tadeusz Kantors Theatre* von Denis Bablet und *Meine Geschichte der Kunst* von Krzysztof Miklaszewski

1986
Verleihung des Ordens der französischen Ehrenlegion und des
The Village Voice Off-Broadway Award-OBIE-Preises, New York
Festival des Teatr Cricot2 und internationales Kritiker-Symposion, Bari
Lehrtätigkeit an der Schule für Dramatische Kunst, Mailand
Aufführung von *Eine Hochzeit* an der Schule für Dramatische Kunst, Mailand
Teilnahme an den 36. Berliner Festwochen
Einzelausstellung der Zeichnungen in der Galerie Foksal, Warschau
Ausstellung *Hommage à Tadeusz Kantor* in der Galerie Eva Poll, Berlin
Wissenschaftliches Symposion *Teatr Cricot2* in Antwerpen
Wissenschaftliches Symposion *Die Kunst Tadeusz Kantors* an der Schlesischen Universität, Kattowitz

1987
Verleihung des Preises *Targa Europea*
Teilnahme an den Wiener Festwochen
Teilnahme an der *documenta 8*, Kassel
Aufführung von *Die Liebes- und Todesmaschine. Cricotage* in Kassel
Produktion des Films *Die Künstler sollen krepieren* von Nat Lilienstein

1988
Verleihung des Staatspreises ersten Grades für das gesamte künstlerische Werk, Warschau
Aufführung von *Ich kehre hierher nie mehr zurück*, Mailand
Teilnahme an der Veranstaltungsreihe im Rahmen des Programms *Berlin - Kulturstadt Europas. Werkstatt Berlin*
Ausstellungen *Die Kathedralen von Barcelona* und *Weiter kommt nichts mehr* in der Cricoteka, Krakau
Einweihung des Museums Teatr Cricot2, Krakau
Arbeit am Internationalen Marionetten-Institut, Charleville
Teilnahme an der Ausstellung *Krakauer Gruppe* im Kunsthaus, Rzeszow

1989
Die Rückkehr. Das Theater der Liebe und des Todes Festival und Symposion des Teatr Cricot2 im Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Produktion der Filme *Rückkehr des Odysseus* von Andrzej Sapija und *Die tote Klasse* von Nat Lilienstein
Aufführung *Ich kehre hierher nie mehr zurück*, Nürnberg

1990
Internationales Symposium *Kunst und Freiheit* an der Jagiellonian Universität, Krakau
Ausstellung der Zeichnungen *Ein Reisetagebuch* und der Cricotage-Entwürfe in der Cricoteka, Krakau
Ausstellung *Werke von 1956-1990* in der Galerie Spicchi dell´Est, Rom
Aufführung von *Stille Nacht*, Theater-Festival in Avignon
Verleihung des Preises *Pirandello*
Proben für *Heute ist mein Geburtstag* in Krakau und Toulouse

Am 8. Dezember stirbt Tadeusz Kantor in Krakau

1991
Aufführung von *Heute ist mein Geburtstag*, Paris

A Journey Through Other Spaces

Essays and Manifestos, 1944–1990

Tadeusz Kantor

Edited and Translated by Michal Kobialka

with a Critical Study of Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre by Michal Kobialka

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Lesson 12

Before the End of the Twentieth Century

This lesson will be about surrealism.
But there is time to address only the highlights of surrealism.
We will travel not only to the regions of aesthetics but also to the regions of civilization, that is, of spiritual and intellectual transformations of a human being and society.
By so doing, we will stay faithful to the spirit of surrealism, which refused to be merely an aesthetic movement.
Surrealism defined the function of art in broad terms.
[Art's] influence, according to surrealism, should not be limited merely to the regions of aesthetic exaltation but should spill over and form human desires and actions,
revolutionize them
so they in turn would mould a social system
that would be grounded in ABSOLUTE FREEDOM,
the highest human value.
Surrealism proclaimed that
T H E F R E E D O M
O F A H U M A N B E I N G
IS THE HIGHEST GOAL OF ART!
This freedom is not freedom that functions exclusively within the boundaries of a system whose aim is to revolutionize artistic conventions;

nor is it freedom
that functions exclusively within the boundaries of a social system created by communism—that is, a system of equality and justice for all;
but
it is FREEDOM
that embraces A TOTAL HUMAN CONDITION
in its most profound meaning,
that embraces a side of human nature
that has never been taken into account by any of the social movements—that is,
PSYCHIC REGIONS OF A HUMAN BEING,
their depth,
their immeasurable strength, which up till now has intuitively been felt by the poets and has been probed only by the intellect (science) and the imagination (art).
This discovery is indubitably the most significant discovery of the twentieth century. It cannot be effaced or replaced by anything else.
We are its inheritors.
Yes, since the time of surrealism,
the sciences and, more important, the arts
have joined the ranks of all social movements.
Surrealism as a movement was
so fascinating and obviously necessary
for the natural development of human civilization
that f i n a l l y it had to submit
to the laws of integration and
instant availability.
At the same time, this movement was so sophisticated
and refined
that any attempt to convert it [into something] "easily available" and "accessible" would make it common and vulgar,
especially today, in a period of total MECHANIZATION.
This is why
I must begin this lesson about surrealism
with a general description and evaluation
of the situation in which
I live and create,
in which you live
and will create.
Before I get to the crucial part of the lesson,
which is shaping into a manifesto,
I would like to share with you
some of my observations and comments.

I do not feel my calling is to reform and save the world.
On the contrary,
I am carefully taking notes about its mistakes, which stimulate my creative process.
What you are about to hear are not the words of a fierce prophet from the Old Testament.
I hate to preach, command, and forbid,
especially in art.
I have a feeling, or maybe it is a (tragic) premonition,
that in this nightmarish epoch of
mundanity, holy consumerism,
production,
communication, and
all-powerful technical advances and politics,
the world is spinning at its own velocity and will continue to do so,
notwithstanding the calling of ART,
or maybe even against it;
that the power today is in the hands of MATERIALISM,
which is the enemy of art and the human spirit.
These words do not express my frustration or pessimism.
Instead, they are the voice of my deep conviction,
my subconscious; thus they are t r u e .
I cannot be ashamed of or hide them.
I want to explain their meaning and consequences
to describe my own attitude.
These words do not carry
a revolutionary faith in a "bright" and "perfect"
future;
nor do they express
revolutionary slogans of ordering the world according to the laws of reason and justice.
Despite the fact that these ideas are filled with enthusiasm, I see the shadow of a dangerous MEGA-AGGRANDIZEMENT following them and claiming its right to rule the world.
Today we know that we cannot let that happen.
At the same time, I am far removed from apocalyptic visions in philosophy and art
that are filled with eulogized suffering and indifferent pathos.
Scepticism does not appeal to me either. It cannot do much for the arts.
In the quest for the essence of this attitude, I prefer to evoke the feeling of c o n t e m p t for the forces of this world and to appeal to the spiritual condition, which, I believe, has high intellectual and

artistic standards and allows us to accept THE EXISTENCE OF E V I L when we have earlier consciously rejected the concept of GOODNESS, which was too easy, and BEAUTY, which was too conventional.
EVIL is real and material and is seen all around us.
Actually, it is worse than that: we get used to it.
To go back to my pessimistic "credo" and almost biblical judgement of the twentieth century, I do not despair.
On the contrary, I believe that this pessimistic awareness has paradoxically a certain significance for me (and for many other people).
As in the past, it creates
THE NEED TO R E S I S T
and TO ACCUSE.
Well known is a strong FORCE that is contained in these reactions:
THE FORCE OF THE WORK OF ART.

I belong to the generation that witnessed genocide
and terrorist attacks on art and culture.
I do not desire to save the world with my art.
I do not believe in "THE EASY ACCESSIBILITY OF ART."
The experiences of our century have taught me where it will lead to; I have learned who and what benefits from this "ACCESSIBILITY," which has dangerously spread all over the world.
I want to SAVE MYSELF;
not selfishly, on my own,
but together with a belief in
THE VALUE OF AN INDIVIDUAL.
I am locking myself in my little room of imagination,
WHERE
I CREATE THE WORLD
AS I USED TO WHEN I WAS A CHILD.
I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT TRUTH LIVES
INSIDE THIS ROOM OF MY CHILDHOOD.
AND IT IS TRUTH THAT IS AT STAKE TODAY AS NEVER BEFORE!

While writing these words, I realize how far I have removed myself from the spirit of surrealism.
I do feel however that I am its heir.
This is not an act of regression.
I am constantly GOING FORWARD.
I PROTEST.

I refuse to assent to conformity and adaptability.
I destroy obsolete laws of the Past.
And this is an essential feature of surrealism.

THIS IS MY FIRST "REVISION" OF SURREALISM.

There will be more.
To make my point clear, I will read here "A LITTLE MANIFESTO," which was presented when I received the PRIX REMBRANDT, 8 April 1978.

A LITTLE MANIFESTO

I wish to read to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, my Little Manifesto (I am still writing manifestos), which was written especially for this occasion.

Before I read it, however, to make it clearer I will take the liberty to remind you that the fundamental (if I could use this pathetic word) idea behind my creative work has been and is the idea of reality, which I labelled the Reality of the Lowest Rank.

It can be used to explain my paintings, emballages, poor objects, and equally poor characters, who, like the Prodigal Son, return home after a long journey. Today I would like to use the same metaphor to describe myself.

It is not true that MODERN man has conquered fear. This is a lie! Fear exists. There is fear of the external world, of what the future will bring, of death, of the unknown, of nothingness, and of emptiness.

It is not true that artists are heroes and fearless victors, as we are led to believe by old legends and myths.

Believe me, they are poor and defenceless beings who chose to take their place opposite fear. It was a conscious act. It is in consciousness that fear is born. I am standing in front of you. I, the accused who is standing in front of harsh but just judges. And this is the difference between the dadaists, whose heir I am, and me.

"Please, get up!" cried the Grand Scoffer, Francis Picabia. "You are indicted." And today I will correct this once impressive invocation: I am standing in front of you. I am the one who is accused and indicted.

I am supposed to justify myself and find evidence of, I do not know which, my innocence or my guilt.

I am standing in front of you, as I used to stand at the class desk in the past, and I am saying, "I forgot I knew, I assure you, ladies and gentlemen."

In the period of the modern Apocalypse,
when the powerful deities of our epoch appropriate the arts
within the regions in which their power is brutally enforced
(it does not matter whether they are in the West or the East);
when it seems that art is dying, there appear suddenly,
I am sure of it (it has always been the case in the past),

as if from nowhere,
people who resemble the old saints, hermits, ascetics,
artists, whose weapon will be
POVERTY
and RIDICULOUSNESS,
poverty and ridiculousness of their means.
They are the descendants of THOSE
who started the twentieth century
in POVERTY
and RIDICULOUSNESS.

Their works will become a stake for those seemingly triumphant and APOCALYPTIC symptoms of our times.
I wish to collect them and pile them
into one heap.
When isolated from life, they do not threaten or trigger alarming thoughts. They can be burnt at the stake.
At least this can be accomplished in the work of art.
The following are
diverse kinds of SYMPTOMS of our times:

ALL-POWERFUL CONSUMPTION.

Everything has become a commodity.
Commodification has become a bloodthirsty deity.
Overwhelming piles of food
that could feed the whole world;
but half the population is starving.
Piles of books that will never be read.
People devour other people,
their thoughts, their rights, their customs,
their solitude,
and their individuality.
Grand-scale slave markets
where people are sold,
bought,
bargained for,
corrupted.
Creativity—
this word has ceased to
carry any meaning.
What impact could those who will come, or who maybe have already arrived—whose names repeat the names of the GREAT:
Pablo, Chaim, Paul, Marc, Henri . . .

and their POVERTY and RIDICULOUSNESS when they started—
have
on the all-powerful PRODUCTION
of Giant Corporations,
on mile-long MARKETS,
museum-markets,
theatre-markets,
festival-markets,
gallery-markets.
And this is yet another SYMPTOM of our end of the century:

ALL-POWERFUL COMMUNICATION.

There is no place anymore
for the eccentrics who walk on foot
(they say that walking helps thinking).
The rivers of cars float through our houses and apartments.
There is a shortage of water, air, plants, and forests.
The number of living creatures, people, increases with a shocking
speed. Let us go further:

COMMUNICATION,

which we are quick to connect with
trains, trams, and buses,
was perceived as the most appropriate and redemptive concept
for human THOUGHT
and the ARTS.
ALL-POWERFUL COMMUNICATION!
and its principal attribute:

SPEED,

which in no time was turned into a war slogan of
primitive tribes.
The slogan became the ORDER.
The whole world,
all humankind,
all human thought,
and all ART
were to abide by it.
The world rushes headlong with a wild scream.
Why? Is it to catch up with the speed of light and thought?
Not at all!
There is no place for thought in this frightful race.
Light? Possibly "light eternal." After the fall!
COMMUNICATION is supported by the strength and power of

DEMOCRACY

and its soulless mechanisms;
COMMUNICATION has altered the SPACES reserved for human
thought and art (I do not want to refer to them as temples or shrines)
into COMMUNICATION OFFICES
and POSTS OF COMMUNICATION NETWORKS.
The old names were kept to mask the change.
There are no secrets,
unknown lands, or deserted nooks any more;
everything is encoded and transferred
simultaneously to all corners of the world
with an ultra s p e e d
by telephone lines,
by airwaves
by the most sophisticated apparatuses,
which erase all the differences.
Everything becomes dutifully uniform,
equal in importance,
and . . . WITHOUT ANY MEANING!

ALL-POWERFUL HOLY TECHNOLOGY.

No. I am not against technology.
I am not a firm believer in
a naive idea of a return to nature
or in a simplified lifestyle.
I do not have any confidence in attempts at resurrecting
artificially conceived,
seriously celebrated,
pretentious, and empty
rituals
that try to indicate to us, people,
a lost bond between a human being and
earth,
water,
air, and
matter.
It is high time we tore the mask from the faces of
those gloomy and limited
shamans and "gurus" of all kinds,
sorcerers,
spell charmers,
witch doctors,
ritual striptease dancers,
pseudo-biblical Abrahams who

bleed
hogs that were rented from
slaughterhouses;
who splash in and wrench their entrails and guts;
who sacrifice them, not to a biblical,
but to a cruel deity
bereft of a Human Mind, that is,
to the All-Powerful Free Market of Art
and Holy Commerce.

Those con-priests of Commerce and Free Market,
those self-aggrandizing crooks,
those thoughtless opportunists,
cleverly procure the false images of greatness
by using
nature,
mountain ranges,
and sands of the desert,
which they cover up with paint,
sculpture them with a bulldozer,
only so they are noticed
in the landscape of the world.
Behind these manifestations of
the SENSATIONALISM of our times,
one can sense
a dangerous anti-intellectualism
and a brutal elimination of thought processes.
I am all for the slogan
"Power to the intelligentsia";
for technology and knowledge
that enhance
the intellectual development of
a human being;
for metaphysics,
whose human side is manifested in
irony, a sense of humour,
and imagination;
for, heaven forbid,
human emotions.
And it is here that one can find
my opposition,
my protest against TECHNOLOGY.
Today surrealism is

uniformly vulgarized;
what is more, this is done on purpose;
it is used in a primitive manner
by anyone who wants to
SURPRISE,
COMMERCIALLY TERRORIZE,
MESMERIZE,
and finally . . . SELL a product.

It is used everywhere where
impressive and profit-making
HALLUCINATORY AND DELIRIOUS EFFECTS
ARE SIMULATED
as a substitute for vision and thought.
Well known to us are those SELF-CONFIDENT PERFORMANCE
ARTISTS,
SELF-INDULGENT CON-POETS,
QUACKS TRYING TO BEWITCH US WITH THEIR FITS OF
HYSTERIA,
WHOSE LACK OF IMAGINATION IS COVERED UP WITH
TECHNOLOGY AND ITS
SOPHISTICATED MACHINES,
WHICH EXTERMINATE ALL
THOUGHT AND EMOTION.
Well known to us are those
PAINTERS AND PRINTMAKERS WHO DISPLAY NOTHING
BUT THE EMPTY
TECHNIQUES OF THEIR PROFESSION,
WHO TRY TO CONVINCE US THAT THEY HAVE JUST GONE
THROUGH
THE MIRROR TO ALICE'S WONDERLAND;
WHEREAS IF THE TRUTH BE TOLD, THEY ARE STANDING
IN FRONT OF IT
with a painted expression of *bouche bée,* as the French would say, on
their faces.

HOLY TECHNOLOGY rules everywhere today
in THEATRES, MASS MEDIA, and
TELEVISION.
It produces this surrealistic "enchantment" mechanically by the thousands.
In visually oriented musical production,
those powerful but soulless MECHANISMS

reproduce pseudo-surrealistic effects
that are void of
the POWER OF FEELINGS
and the POWER OF EMOTIONS.
Performers run wild and make use of
those devices that were once discovered by the GRAND REVOLUTION OF SURREALISM only to reduce them to the level of
strategies used in a football game.
There are exceptions to the rule that have a powerful spiritual strength.
But the general trend, like a powerful wave, is the portent of
A DELUGE AND . . .
DESTRUCTION!

Because of the significance of the topic of surrealism, I have called this lesson "The Twelfth Milano Lesson." I would like you to get to know the "commandments of surrealism," to absorb their content and take them as guiding principles in your creative work.

This is not a traditional "school" topic; nor is it a lecture. It is something more than just an act of learning.

I want you to *discover your heritage!*

Surrealism was born at the beginning of the twentieth century, our century.
Those were the years of its a d o l e s c e n c e .
We belong to this century.
Its adolescence is our adolescence.
We share the same genes with it.
And these are the very roots of the dynamic and the strength of our creativity!
We cannot free ourselves from our adolescence.
We cannot betray it.
We cannot trivialize it.
You do not have to study it.
You do not even know that you belong to the same family.
All I can tell you is that you have to
become fully aware of
your heritage and your lineage
to be able to discern the true spirit
of surrealism from
poor imitations of it,
seductive elegance,
comfortable opportunism,
career pursuits,
and gradual entropy.
And that was the last of my warnings.

Thousands of essays and books have been written about surrealism.
Keep reading them. Learn about the lives of your ancestors,
about their victories and downfalls,
about their stormy adventures,
sins, crimes, loves, perils.
Learn about everything: about their ecstasies and passions,
their poverty, extravagance, and pride. . . .
It is crucial that you do this. It should not matter that you gain this knowledge from "books" in a school-like manner. You do not have a choice. Read these books the way one reads family letters that children discover shamefully hidden in family scrapbooks.
To have a clear conscience about my responsibility to you and this Milano Lesson,
I shall play the part of a chronicler. . . .
But do not expect from me a lecture about the history of surrealism.
When I encountered it in Paris in 1947,
I studied surrealism at exhibitions, from books, and from manifestos;
absorbed it from the air and the climate, which were full of it.
I can say that my own "path" of youth
led me directly towards the wide road
well trodden by the revolutionary army.

It is my conviction that surrealism has left deep marks in the genes of our century as well as in our own. Try to learn about it in a manner similar to mine, via an apprenticeship with the "masters of surrealism." This way I shall be freed from the function of a teacher, which is not my function here.

What you will hear will instead be a confrontation between surrealism and my personal thoughts, ideas, and "discoveries," which were moulded by our
t i m e , which is removing us further and further away from, I would say, a maternal "bond" to surrealism.

I would ask you to accept this as my personal "revision" of surrealism and, to be more precise, a revision of our t i m e . We have the right to do it because we live in the eighth decade of our closing century.
In my personal "journey" (and life),
certain "dogmas" of surrealism have lost their power
and effectiveness.

We could ask, What have we today inherited from surrealism? What elements of this inheritance can we take, keep, and use as weapons in our battle?

While discussing surrealism and the surrealists, I am also constantly thinking about dadaism and the dadaists because these two MOVEMENTS were ONE TREND at the very beginning.

When I saw the works of the dadaists for the first time after World War II, circa the 1960s, they had already acquired their collector's value and were museum pieces. The dadaists themselves either were old or had died. But I had the feeling that the spirit of their protests, scandals, and actions was still in the air.
They were the World War I generation; I (we) carried on my shoulders the burden of the calamities of World War II.
It was then that I first saw and understood that there were similarities between their attitude towards art and my own.
This attitude was defined by me and in me during the war.
Knowing nothing about the dadaists, I had created a similar pattern of artistic "conduct" and had described my attitude towards the world and art in a similar way.

I will try to compare these two EPOCHS, these two ATTITUDES, find DIFFERENCES between them due to the distance of time, and, finally, make a "REVISION" in my and your revision made at the end of the CENTURY, that is, a revision of the MOVEMENT that started this CENTURY and, one could even say, that gave life to this CENTURY.

1 9 1 4

World War I.
Millions of corpses
in the absurd hecatomb.
After the war,
old powers were abolished;
generals' ranks, medals, and epaulets,
monarchs' crowns,
were thrown into the garbage cans;
fatherlands went bankrupt;
nationalism turned out to be nothing more than
a base primitive instinct.
In the context of such a colossal ignominy in the world, which up till that time forced us to acknowledge its existence as the only judicially permissible one, the attitude of the dadaists was a healthy action and reaction:
DERISION,
DISREGARD,
MUTINY,
PROTEST,
NEGATION,
BLASPHEMY,
SACRILEGE of all the SHRINES,
QUESTIONING of all social values.

A holy concept of art was mocked.
CONSCIENCE, which according to the old order should have conditioned the work of art, was replaced by COINCIDENCE.
FORM and its perfection, which ought to have EXPRESSED important content, were replaced by crude REALNESS, which expresses nothing and simply IS.

A quarter-century passed.
World War II.
Genocide,
Concentration Camps,
Crematories,
Human Beasts,
Death,
Tortures,
Humankind turned into mud, soap, and ashes,
Debasement,
The time of contempt. . . .

And this is my (and our) answer:
THERE IS NO WORK OF ART
(later this statement would get a more intellectual label: disavowal of the work of art).
THERE IS NO "HOLY" ILLUSION.
THERE IS NO "HOLY" PERFORMANCE.
THERE IS ONLY AN OBJECT THAT IS TORN OUT OF LIFE AND REALITY
(the history of art has given it a more sophisticated name: *l'objet prêt*).
A CART WHEEL SMEARED WITH MUD became a work of art.
THERE IS NO ARTISTIC SPACE
(such as the museum or the theatre).
THERE IS ONLY REAL SPACE
(Odysseus returns from Troy to a room destroyed by the war, a railway station, a staircase).
SUBLIME AESTHETIC VALUES ARE REPLACED WITH POVERTY!
POOR OBJECT
(a cart wheel smeared with mud, decayed wooden board, a kitchen chair on which Penelope would sit).
ARTISTIC ATTITUDE IS DESCRIBED BY

PROTEST,
MUTINY,
BLASPHEMY, AND SACRILEGE OF SANCTIONED SHRINES.
SLOGAN: AGAINST PATHOS, FESTIVITIES, AND CELEBRATION!
Today I will revise my ATTITUDE from 1944.
In the 1960s, having come across dadaism, which had already become a museumpiece, I realized that my protest of 1944 was the protest of dada in 1914.
I felt that I was dada's descendant, and, as often is the case, I did not know the name of my "father."
To make a distinction between a theatre EVENT and a performance of *The Return of Odysseus,* I will refer to my artistic ATTITUDE as THE TIME OF ODYSSEUS.
A feeling of an inescapable death, which was the mark of the war and a premonition in my THEATRE OF DEATH thirty years later, covered my attitude and that time with a veil of metaphysics that was alien to the spirit of DADA.
The concept of POORNESS, which was fully explored in my IDEA OF REALITY OF THE LOWEST RANK, contained in itself a dose of LYRICAL tone and (heaven forbid!) EMOTIONS, which were foreign to dada.
These are the differences that make THE TIME OF ODYSSEUS mine.

1944 to the present.
This attitude, whose shocking, but precious to me, symptoms I have just enumerated, ought to have disappeared at the end of the war.
The 1940s . . . 50s . . . 60s . . . 70s . . . have passed.
Artistic ideas have been breaking the surface,
but all the time, as if from far beyond—maybe it was my inner voice—I have been perceiving warning signals that ordered me and dictated that I choose one action over the other—
PROTEST,
REVOLT
AGAINST THE OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED SACRED SITES,
AGAINST EVERYTHING THAT HAD A STAMP OF "APPROVAL,"
FOR REALNESS,
FOR "POVERTY." . . .

Is it possible that the time of contempt,
of bloody and wild instincts,

of absurd actions by authorities that refuse to become "civilized," has never left us since the dawn of history?
The answer to this question is indubitably given by the art of the discussed decades.
"Listen" carefully and you will hear the answer.
In 1948, the authority in power
attempts to put an end to the freedom of art.
In my little and confined room of imagination,
I begin to hear clearly in my art the liberating
"ORDERS" of those times.
They become a part of me, my own.
The only true ones.
Fascinating.
I begin to realize that I have to make them clearer, increase their energy level, and give them the power of aggression!
At the same time, I have to make quite an important "REVISION" for the spirit of DADA and the TIME OF ODYSSEUS to stay alive.

With the passing of time, other perilous symptoms of our epoch emerged and grew in strength. Those were
NARROW-MINDED BUREAUCRACY,
OMNIPRESENT TECHNOLOGY,
CANNIBALISTIC CONSUMPTION,
COMMON AND MANDATORY MATERIALISM OF LIFE THAT DEVOURS HUMAN MIND AND SPIRIT.
Nightmarish malls have become the temples of a new deity of consumption and materialism.
I am listening carefully to that "Inner Voice."
ONE HAS TO STAY UNFAITHFUL TO THIS NEW TEMPLE AND THIS NEW GOD AT ALL COSTS!
My creative work, whose roots are grounded in the subconscious, "understood" this inner voice and command much earlier and quicker.
The intellect goes through and becomes aware of a different and NEW STAGE of cognizance:
SPIRITUALISM,
SPIRITUAL IMPERATIVE,
PREMONITION OF THE OTHER WORLD,
THE MEANING OF DEATH,
THE MEANING OF THE "IMPOSSIBLE,"
"AN IMPATIENT WAITING AT THE DOORS," BEHIND WHICH THERE ARE REGIONS THAT ARE INACCESSIBLE TO OUR MINDS AND CONCEPTS. . . .
I do not have the time to speculate whether this mysterious assemblage has been rooted in my subconscious and my character for a long time.

This "revision" seems to be antidada. But it seems so only at the first glance. The dadaists were against their time and their world. This "revision" is also done to our present time. A big one! It is a correction of our world, whose strength has grown to an uncontrollable degree.
At the same time, the madness of the material world leads to other types of madness: hyperbaroque conventions in art, an unrestrained spread of ILLUSION, and a delirium of eccentricity. Surrealism and its means are used indiscriminately in impotent actions void of any intellectual power. The only purpose in art is to show and demonstrate their eccentricity.
Imagination, that dangerous and blasphemous region of the human psyche excavated by the surrealists, is turned into a mechanism producing fireworks.
Charlatans and mediocrity pretend to be the high priests of MAGNIFICENCE.
In a period of terror caused by the trend for MAKING EVERYTHING STRANGE (which has nothing to do with "magnificence" in surrealism),
one needs courage to suggest
EVERYDAY,
BANAL,
POOR,
AND UNADORNED
REALITY.
Today, it is only REALITY that can give birth to true
MAGNIFICENCE,
"IMPOSSIBLE,"
SUPERSENSUOUS.
IT IS ENOUGH TO TAKE CAUSE AND EFFECT FROM IT!
REALITY WILL BE AUTONOMOUS AND NAKED.
AND THIS IS ALSO A KIND OF "REVISION."

After many years, the war slogans of dada and surrealism are mixed together.
New forms emerge.
New forces appear that threaten human freedom.
If we want to stay faithful to the spirit of nonconformity, we must find in ourselves a NEW SPIRIT OF REVOLT, even if it is foreign to the old slogans.
This is the reason we have to "revise" constantly.
The surrealists differed from the dadaists in that they added positive, scientific, and cognitive values to the destructive slogans of dada.
They believed that the function of art is not only to provide intellectual and aesthetic stimulation but also to REVOLUTIONIZE human

awareness, which was in the grip of stereotypes and the patterns of a practical mind; to destroy a pragmatic, practical experience of the real world; to expand awareness to include new regions of the psyche previously dismissed;
and, finally, to reach a higher level of human existence.
In the context of this logical argument and this perfect train of thought, today we are distrustful, almost feeling guilty: we do not believe any more in rational arguments.
THE EXPERIENCES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HAVE TAUGHT US THAT
LIFE DOES NOT RECOGNIZE RATIONAL
ARGUMENTS.
By so saying, we are more irrational than
irrational surrealism.
And this is the first revision.
Today we also know how PERILOUS ARE SOCIETY'S MOTIVATIONS FOR THE ARTS.
And this is the second revision.
Art's didactic purpose and its utilitarian tendencies no longer provide a convincing argument.
Utilitarian arguments concerning the accessibility of art and creativity based on the principle "and you too can be an artist" advocate MEDIOCRITY!
And this is the third revision.
It is only one's world that is of any importance, that is,
the world that is created in isolation and separation,
the world that is so strong and suggestive
that it has enough power to occupy and maintain
a predominant part of the space
within the space of life!
In this sense,
"THE SPACE OF LIFE," AND EVERYTHING THAT IS CONTAINED IN THIS PHRASE,
EXISTS PARALLEL TO
THIS OTHER SPACE,
THE SPACE OF ART.
THE TWO OF THEM CONVERGE, OVERLAP,
AND COALESCE,
SHARING THEIR FATE AND DESTINY. . . .

AND THIS IS ENOUGH!
And this is the last comment. I do not know whether these comments are connected with or disconnected from surrealism. But this is irrele-

vant. These are my own thoughts, which are to serve me. I do not intend to impose them on anyone. What attracted me (us) to surrealism in the postwar period was an attempt to GO BEYOND THE MATERIAL, PRAGMATIC, AND LIMITED
REALITY.
To "go beyond," surrealists tried to appropriate the regions of DREAMS, deep layers of the human p s y c h e wherein real elements of life merge with the products of blind and uncurbed forces. The ability to draw from this experience is labelled
" i m a g i n a t i o n . "
So much for the surrealists.
Today I have certain doubts about the validity of these statements. I must try, however, to get beyond the first impression because they will shape and mould my life now.
The first heresy:
I DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF DREAMS,
where, according to the surrealists, imagination is born.
I am sure that INCREASED PSYCHIC ACTIVITIES AND
THE INTENSITY OF THE THOUGHT PROCESS PRODUCE A FREE NETWORK OF IMAGES, ASSOCIATIONS, ALLOW US TO MOVE AWAY FROM RATIONAL UTILITARIAN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN REAL ELEMENTS.
A sewing machine, an umbrella, and a dissection table could not possibly have been merged together in the Count de Lautréamont's dream. Of this I am sure. It must have been done by a newly liberated freedom of thought.
The surrealists maintained that the PSYCHE IS A STATE
THAT SHOULD BE RESEARCHED AND THAT THE RESULTS SHOULD BE USED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS.
I am full of doubts here.
These doubts, however, allow us to hear clearly
"the i n n e r v o i c e . "
ART IS NOT PSYCHOLOGY. THE CREATIVE PROCESS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.
THE PSYCHE SHOULD BE ACCEPTED, RATHER THAN RESEARCHED, IN ART!
IT SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AS A SUPERSENSUOUS CONCEPT.
THE PSYCHE—THIS IMMATERIAL " O R G A N "
THAT WAS "PLANTED" IN A PHYSICAL BODY,
NATURE'S OR GOD'S GIFT—
INDICATES ITS OWN DESIRE NOT TO GO

"BEYOND MATERIAL REALITY"
BUT TO
S E P A R A T E ITSELF FROM IT.
THE PSYCHE CONTRADICTS MATERIAL REALITY.
IT ONLY TOUCHES IT.
IT CREATES ITS OWN CLOSED REALITY, WHICH MAKES
ONE FEEL THE PRESENCE OF
THE OTHER WORLD.
IT IS THE PSYCHE THAT EMANATES THE FORCE CALLED
" I M A G I N A T I O N . "
IT IS THE PSYCHE THAT GAVE BIRTH TO GODS,
ANGELS,
HEAVEN AND
HELL,
FEARS. . . .

And now I can enter my little
room of imagination and say,
"IT IS THE PSYCHE THAT CREATES AND EXHIBITS
R E A L I T Y
AS IF WE WERE SEEING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME."

And I think this is all.
My last advice:
"Remember everything
and forget everything. . . ."

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A JOURNEY THROUGH OTHER SPACES