



Still point, Monika Karczmarczyk, 2024, Open Studios at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, installation view

Monika Karczmarczyk

Visual artist based in Berlin, born in 1990, Poland.

I'm a Polish artist who utilises a variety of digital and performative techniques resulting from extensive research. At the core of my exploration lies the interconnectedness between body, object, and architecture. I delve into institutional spaces governed by specific rules, where participants are tightly controlled: hospitals, hospices, asylums, and prisons. These locations ritualise and localise behaviours that stray from societal norms. Essentially, they exist on the fringes of society, inhabited by those on the periphery or transitioning into alternative social or metaphysical states. I consider my artistic accomplishment in translating these states into a poetic visual language, embodying myself as a researcher with unique expertise.



Open studios at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, 2024, exhibition view

TANATOARCHITECTURE / REHEARSING TO MORTALITY

In this research project, I explore the impact of architectural spaces and their material and spatial organisation on the embodied experience of illness and the process of dying.

Architecture within the project is conceived as a multisensory, embodied experience rather than being limited to its physical form or aesthetic qualities. Drawing on Juhani Pallasmaa's ideas presented in "The Eyes of the Skin" (1996), architecture is understood as a bodily encounter, constantly reshaped by the interplay of human and non-human activities.

I am particularly interested in the interplay between absence and presence of the body in relation to illness. More precisely, I explore how the shift from absence to presence, from transparency to opacity, reshapes our perception and embodied experience of space during periods of dysfunction or illness.

The driving force behind this research is a personal encounter with the existential anxiety surrounding death and dying, which forms the basis for a multi-layered exploration of how architecture shapes our relationship with mortality. It represents a tender yet determined attempt to transform this anxiety into a poetic visual language that serves as a catalyst for both intimate reflection and broader cultural discourse.





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STILL POINT

three-channel AV installation, HD, loop, 2022

Still point shows a digitally rendered hand under white gauze bandages. Slowly the bandages come off, but they reveal nothing - no hand, as one initially suspects. The actual pictorial motif remains the bandage as a proxy for the process of healing, overcoming and transformation.

Animation: Sebastian Sebulec

Sound: Julia Szostek

CHOREOGRAPHY OF CARE

video, two-channel AV installation, 4K, 11'15", 2023

In Choreography of Care, two women perform a dance composition inspired by the gestures and movements of nurses in hospitals. Tenderness, care and sacrifice are the leitmotif of the dance performance. The stage is a barren room that is only open at the top. Light penetrates from above; the light source remains offstage - an allusion to the operating theatre and to a metaphysical beyond at the same time.

Choreographers: Tamara Zsófia Vadas, Júlia Vavra

Camera operator: Małgorzata Rabczuk

Cooperation: Geriatrics Clinic and Nursing Science Center



Choreography of care, 2023
stills from the video,
<https://vimeo.com/901809889>



Tanatobjects, 2024, medium format photograph, Pigment ink print on Moab Entrada Natural Rag 300gsm

THE ORDER

video, Full HD, 5'43", loop, 2017

The performance The Order shows a group of ten men who - as in a cultic ceremony - move thoughtfully with woolen blankets in their hands in a former prison and shake out their props at regular intervals. The resulting noise intensifies through synchronicity and becomes the protagonist of the performance. In its clarity, the piece makes reference to the synchronized everyday life of prison inmates and of individuals in state institutions. A clear contrast emerges between coldness and warmth, individual and collective, care and punishment.



The order, 2017
still from the video,
<https://vimeo.com/254704005>

ORZEŁEK

video, Full HD, 10'07", loop, 2018

The project explores the rich history and cultural significance of the left-handed eagles produced and sold by engravers from the Polish town of Łomża. Based on information gathered from the online forum „do broni.pl”, in particular the thread dedicated to „Eagles of the Earth Łomżyńska”, the project aims to create a comprehensive database and visual exploration of these distinctive military symbols.

A key aspect of the project is the investigation of the relationship between original and copied eagle designs. Many of the Łomża eagles were created as replicas or interpretations of earlier, iconic designs, raising questions about authenticity and the transmission of cultural heritage.



Orzełek, 2018, still from the video, 00:13:12 (loop), <https://vimeo.com/272346285>



POTENTIALITY OF AN INCIDENT

video, Full HD, 5'37", 2017

The point of departure for the project was based on FBI instructional films from the sixties on how to use fire-arms. The video work portrays the operating principles as well as instructions for using the Glock 17 model, 9x19 caliber.

The presentation is performed by a former Special Services officer. Selected fragments of the instructional video emphasizes the subtlety of the relationship the body maintains with a manipulated object. The slow movements of the hand, which gently strokes the body of the weapon, showcasing individual points, contrasts with the knowledge we have of the object's purpose. Dissonance is produced in this tenderness and certainty of movement towards the object, the tension between the choreography and the potentiality of firing/using the tool according to its application.

Potentiality of an incident, 2017, still from the video, 00:05:00, <https://vimeo.com/254704186>



Potentiality of an incident, 2017, installation view, bus depot on Włociańska street, Warsaw



KLIMAWECHSEL

performance + live streaming, 2016

A site-specific project in collaboration with Laura Grudniewska, implemented in cooperation with the Museum of Wola in Warsaw.

The concept of climate in museums is particularly significant. The basic preventive action, providing protection of collections, is to control the microclimate parameters inside the building. The microclimate is, therefore, part of the museum's structure. Klimawechsel (climate change) is the injection of Wola's climate into the walls of the museum. Imperceptibly generated, the smell of the local specialty - fried chicken liver - is pumped into the ventilation system of the museum. The work circulates inside the building's structure.



Klimawechsel, 2016, stills from the video documentation





MIMICRY

video, Full HD, 4'16", 2016

Five women take formation under the loss of their personality. Social norms and ideal concepts of femininity, etiquette and decency are the geometric parameters.

Mimicry, Monika Karczmarczyk, 2016, still from the video, 00:04:12 (loop), <https://vimeo.com/269620370>

Monika Karczmarczyk

Currently PhD student at the Faculty of Art of the Pedagogical University in Cracow (2020-present). Lives and works in Berlin.

2017 Masters in Mirosław Balka Studio of Spatial Activities, Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, PL

2014 Undergraduate degree in Grzegorz Kowalski Audiovisual Studio, Academy of Fine Arts, Wasaw, PL

Selected exhibitions:

2024 Open studio event, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin

2023 Death of the protagonist, duo exhibition, Pince Gallery, Budapest

2022 Choreography of care, art quarter budapest, Budapest

2022 Survival Art Rewiev, Wrocław, Poland

2021 New scars, Old blood, GlogauAir Gallery, Berlin

2021 Koyaanisqatsi, Studio Theatre, Warsaw

2019 Young Polish Video Art'ists, Brussels

2018 New avantgarde, The Wilson Shaft Gallery, Katowice

2018 Action Lublin! Chapter 2, Labirynt Gallery, Lublin

2017 How it is?, Labirynt Gallery, Lublin

2017 The Order, Włociańska City Bus Factory, Warsaw

2017 Nothing Happens, The Fort Institute of Photography, Warsaw

2017 Tarnów, Bwa Tarnów, Tarnów

2016 Deep water. Process, Gdańsk City Gallery 1, Gdańsk

2016 Otwock Studio, Museum of the Otwock Land, Otwock

2016 Video News, Labirynt Gallery, Lublin

2016 The waiting room, 48 Stunden Neuk Inn Agora Rollberg, Berlin

2016 Wola Warm Up, Museum of Wola, Warsaw

2015 Video News, Labirynt Gallery, Lublin

2015 Test/Exposure, WRO Media Art Biennale, Wrocław

2015 Lectures, Salon of Academy Gallery, Warsaw

2015 Paradox, Up Gallery, Berlin

2015 Paradox, Center of Culture Castle, Poznań

2015 Mimicry, National Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw

2014 Myths. Students/Artists/Teachers. A process of exchange Fondazione Pasticio Cerere, Rome

2014 Temporary Autonomous Zone / 3, Palace of Culture, Warsaw

Residencies/Awards/Grants

2024 Residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, (Recipient of Nawa Ster Fund)

2020 Residency at art quarteer budapest, Budapest, (Recipient of Visegrad Fund)

2015/2017 Recipient of Scholarship of ZAIKS — Polish Society of Authors and Composers

2015 Young wolves, Festiwal, Szczecin (shortlisted)

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