Academy of Fine Art in Gdańsk

Department Sculpture and Intermedia

Summary of the PhD thesis

„The Art of Closeness. Visual strategies".

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The art of closeness is expressed in the work by introducing in the author's aspect the notion of closeness as a tool in art and embedding it in the existing theory and tradition of contemporary art, and the humanities. And visual strategies will be presented through selected relations that can occur between proximity and particular phenomena such as the viewer, space or time.

Closeness as a tool in art belongs to actions with (and) towards the viewer, in structure (assumed) having an ephemeral character. It is most often realised through the encounter (in the meeting), which is a process, a becoming. The art of closeness, on the other hand, as well as visual strategies, are discernible ex post. Most artistic activities in connection with closeness as a tool are realised through micro-narratives, migro-gestures very often also in a broad off-centre perspective.

In the process of creating and analysing the project in question, the following concepts emerged:

Closeness in the context of artistic practice is a tool for possible change, understood both on an individual and collective level.

Meetings based on closeness ('closeness art') have the potential to achieve a genuine and lasting impact on the creator_artist and those who_are participating in the meeting, thus transcending the boundaries of the traditional understanding of the reception of art.

The tool of closeness is not static but dynamic - it can be transformed in the process of interaction with the viewer, the space (and other relationships in which it occurs) and be subject to constant transformation as the creator evolves.

In light of the above, the aim of my work can be formulated as a quest to understand and explore the possibilities of closeness as a tool in art, in the context of individual creativity and in a variety of relationships. I also wish to show how these transformations affect the nature of the works (visual strategies).

In addition to presenting the basic relationships identified in the work "The Art of Closeness. Visual Strategies.", it is important to include here features that, due to the complexity of the problem, may not be described in individual chapters. I am aware that the approach and practice presented, combine equally utopian and perhaps naïve premises, stemming from an idealistic treatment of closeness as a tool in art. The relationships presented, and thus the visual strategies, are for me a personal act of hope, an attempt to regain agency and an opportunity to break out of an impasse. It is not a romantic elation, but rather an attempt to describe the experience of moving in the world, framed from the perspective of participant and observer at the same time.

For me, closeness complements the tools that can be used in art. It can also be a response to uncertainty and insecurity. It is my response to the dominant centre dictating conditions and generating prevailing narratives. It is also an attempt to seek, those elements that can support the counteraction of burnout and fatigue, by turning to proximity and engaging with the 'Close Person'.

In summary, I have tried to 'structure' the work in such a way that the complexity of the subject of 'the art of proximity' and its visual strategies is presented in as accessible and comprehensible a manner as possible, while not sacrificing the requirements of scientific precision and comprehensiveness. The work is divided into seven chapters, each devoted to a different issue. Chapters 2 and 3, 'Method' and 'Determining central concepts', are central to the basis of the work, introducing the main research terms and methods. Chapter 4, 'Closness - Contexts', is already a concrete insight into proximity as a concept and as a tool in art. The individual chapters are a consideration of the different dimensions of closeness, starting from the philosophical context, through theoretical aspects and a reference to a chosen moment of contemporary art - performance. Chapter 5, 'Relationships of closeness', is an important complement to chapter four, focusing on the relationship between closeness and other concepts such as audience, space or time. In both chapters, selected artistic works - by other artists_women and by the artist's own - provide both reference points and practical illustrations of the concepts presented. Chapter 6, 'Contributions to Practice. Artistic dissertation, visual strategies', provides a concrete example of the application of theory in practice. I show six works in a variety of forms and media, which are an integral component of the PhD as a whole. The realisations relate to the relations of closeness discussed in Chapter 5 (they are also interpreted as actions within a given relationship). Directing particular attention to the interaction with space as an integral part of the artistic process, inseparable from the discussed phenomenon of proximity, I have included at the beginning of Chapter 6 "Visual entanglements, realisations in space: "a room of memories", "a room within a room", which aims to illustrate, to visualise the doctoral works in the different rooms of the UL Gallery. This is followed by a selection of screenshots from the video material, and lastly the 'notes of everyday life', i.e. graphic designs of the author's prints, are presented.