

Darkroom

Darkroom is a process of experiencing, with image as its starting point. What we see is not as important as what transpires within us. Using a darkroom as a metaphor, the viewers are presented with a chance to participate in creative processes of young artists - Łódź Film School students and graduates. The ability to cut across borders between forms and media is something all these authors have in common. In contact with individual works, the viewer can actually interact with them; participants can also subject themselves to states experienced by the authors, for darkness triggers a process between what is invisible, hidden, and what wants to be revealed and recognized. The multimedia space of the exhibition has been shaped to resemble cerebral hemispheres, processing information in two distinct ways. The right one symbolizes emotions, feelings, metaphors and spontaneity; the left one is logic, rules, analysis and time.

While looking at images, revealing themselves and sometimes flashing in darkness, we follow paths from subjective illuminations to intellectual musings on human condition, imprinted in cultural gestures and media networks, as well as musings on the condition of the medium itself, which is a substantial form of artistic communication.

The paths of emotion, designated at the exhibit, are an attempt to illustrate possible relations to space, time, memory and understanding the identity of the Self. It signifies shifting of borders between what's real and what's imaginary. Here - especially in darkness - our fears and desires awake. The works of **Martyna Strzelczyk** (*Kolekcjoner tożsamości/Identity Collector*), revealed from darkness with the use of a flashlight, the installation of **Agata Opalińska** (*Czarne historie/Black Stories*), with the motto: "Fear is the price of imagination", or the video by **Kamil Szopa** (*Klatka/Cage*), make up a "miniature atlas of fear anatomy" - fear of what's primal, decaying, and irresponsible, of whatever may deprive us of oxygen in a nightmare, like **Irena Kalicka's** *Trickster*. However, what is "revealed" in the process is entirely up to us, especially since the illustrated "fear" balances between honesty and irony.

The ramified branches of the Self form ambiguous, existential, and emotional landscapes, not only the eponymous ones in works of **Kaja Dobrowolska** (*Emotional Landscape*), but also those pulsating with a mysterious light in the installation by **Franciszek Ammer** (*Exclusion*), the "discovered" spaces of **Bartłomiej Talaga** (*Looking for Space*), unusually lit up by light resembling the Aurora borealis, or **Światła Północy** (*Northern Lights*) by **Robert Danieluk**, where "external views of a distant land" both hide and reflect the condition of the Self, using the poetics of the selected medium.

The Self in all the works mentioned above both "gains and loses" ground (like in the works of **Dobrowolska**), but it is also reflected - standing in front of an image, confronting it, viewing itself and submerging in it. In this "labyrinth garden with intertwining branches" hidden in darkness, we can also find the Self establishing itself in multiple "reflections" - expressed, visualized streams of consciousness or memory narrations. These are: the monologue-work by **Piotr Zbierski** (*Łódź/Lodz*); a mirage-well by **Łukasz Filak** (an object in the series *Narcyz, Daffodil*); **Dominika Truszczyńska's** lightboxes (*Mgnienie/Flicker*); **Karolina Jabcoń's** picture from *Family Album*, surprising in its simplicity; finally, *Porządek-Chaos* (*Order-Chaos*) by **Katarzyna Krakowiak**, facing us with a fundamental question of identity within a family narration. The transition zone is comprised of video works by **Alexandra Buczkowska-Przeździk** (*Marta*) and **Monika Masłoń**

(Huśtawka: Dalecy-Bliscy, A Swing: Close Ones - Distant Ones) - a man in relation to space and movement becomes an image, allowing contemplation or interaction. An examination of the perception of the world and men, of the image of nature and the nature of image, can be found in the video by **Aleksandra Chciuk** (*Archeopteryx*). Her seemingly ironic “proto-sound of a proto-bird” introduces a new dimension to examined reality. Similarly, there is one other distinctly “sounded” installation - rain sounds in an otherwise dry interior in the work of **Łukasz Prus-Niewiadomski** (*Kap, kap, kap/Drip, drip, drpi*). Impressionist, delicate in their poetry video-works of **Monika Masłoń** (*the cycle Biel, Biel, Biel/White, White, White*) hypnotize with the serenity of a monochrome image and the rustle of everyday existence and its symbols. A subtle *Isla* - the video-work by **Małgorzata Grygierczyk**, a landscape reflecting in itself - becomes a “tissue sample of the world” - a kind of lab analysis of structures of an image revealed in space.

This is where we enter the sphere of analyses and intellect. Reading (a “higher mental activity”, according to psychology books), caught in an intimate - but observed - one-on-one affair with a book is the subject of a video-installation by **Aleksandra Chciuk** (*Człowiek i jego książka /A Man and Their Book*). The author yet again reveals - or rather gives us a chance to stop and reveal - otherworlds; here, they are the micro-worlds of “gestures of an intimate language of reading”. **Filip Gabriel Pudło** in his found footage work *Operation Castle* (2013) takes up the subject of the influence of technology on image and information perception. What do we really see, hear, and understand? This experience also raises a question about contemporary and future automated analyses and their role.

These questions - on limits of our perception, media capabilities and their influence - are raised by video works presented in the small room. They are works by **Katarzyna Parejko** (*Wiatr/Oddech, Wind/Breath*), **Tomasz Wysocki** (*Etap/Stage*), **Adam Stefaniak** (*Obrazy chwilowe/ Momentary Images*), **Katarzyna Grygierczyk** (*You Are Here*), **Anna Bors** (*Moja, Twoja/Mine, Yours*), **Magdalena Kulak** (*Natural History Museum*) and **Piotr Szczepanowicz** (*XXX*). These are stories of a medium that observes and is observed (becoming a part of an image, for example), thus creating new reception contexts, transforms common gestures of everyday life and unusual metaphors. A different look at devices recording and projecting images allows on the one hand to create distance, necessary for analytical reflection of the recorded “realities”; on the other, it creates closeness, a kind of intimacy of peeking at images during their process of “becoming”.

Darkroom - and the exhibition’s intertwining paths - is an invitation to challenge our own perception and the understanding of images recorded by various media. Thus it also broadens the definition of a “viewer”, who is presented with a possibility to actively participate in their own, individual image re-construction process.

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