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Contextual Art in Globalisation

The article consists of three parts. In the first part, I recall the birth of contextual art, more specifically I focus on art as contextual art, and I ask the question of what contextual art was. A new trend in art? Polemics with Joseph Kosuth's conceptual art? Or perhaps, it was a call to artists to make their place in the world of art. In the second part, I describe the process of globalisation, and in the third one, I apply the concept of contextual art to the global art world. Does this mean that Jan Świdziński and the proponents of contextual art had been ahead of their time, epoch? No, but the postulates of contextual art gain a new meaning in the context of today's globalisation. Art has always been created in some context, but for a long time, we have not paid proper attention to this fact. We advocated the universal art, transcending the contexts, in which it was born. We focused on the art of delocalising its message.

The Contextual Art

Jan Świdziński (1923-2014) announced a manifesto of contextual art in February 1976 at an exhibition of young Polish art in a small gallery – St. Petri in Lund. The Manifesto consisted of fifteen short theses, a longer text serving as a theoretical backdrop entitled 'Art Models'. It engaged itself in a debate with conceptual art of a group entitled Art-Language, in particular it became embroiled in polemics with the New York's fraction represented by Joseph Kosuth and the twelve postulates of contextual art. Świdziński's statement was derived from three models in the history of art: a) a universal model that believes in the art recognising an objectively existing world, b) relativistic, assuming that the image of the world changes depending on the tools we use to describe it, and c) a model announced by conceptual art, for which Świdziński proposed the name

“contextual”.¹ In this last model, we find the famous Świdziński’s formula: “**X** is art (it has the property of being art) in time **T** in place **P** in a situation **S** for people **P**.”²

Manifesto or the Contextual Arts program was discussed in Lund and Malmö, then in April 1976, in Remont Gallery in Warsaw and at the F-ART Art School’s plein air event in Gdańsk (September). But what was contextual art? New trend in art? Although Świdziński organised exhibitions of contextual art in Poland and abroad, he did not quite know what the artistic practice of contextual art should have looked like. He did not want it to resemble the work of conceptual stylists. At one point, he was fascinated by the activities of the Lucim group and the photos of Zofia Rydet. With the artists of the Gallery of Contemporary Art (Anna Kutera, Romuald Kutera, Lech Mrożek) he ran some mysterious local activities in the Kurpie and Mielnik near the Bug river,³ but he was best at discussing art. Was contextual art an artistic tendency without its own distinctive artistic practice? Or perhaps its practice was to discuss art – a constant polemic with Joseph Kosuth’s conceptual art. This impression can be noticed while reading a discussion’s transcript that took place at the Toronto conference in November 1976. Świdziński had the opportunity to meet with Kosuth and challenge him on a strange ground for both of them – the ground of logic.⁴

Conceptualism was to close the relativist or modernist art, contextual art aimed to open a new stage in the history of art. At least this was how Świdziński saw it at the Toronto conference when he attacked Kosuth for his views in ‘Art after Philosophy’ (1969). He did not note that the American artist had in the meantime moved on to other positions in anthropological art. The announcement of this change was an article entitled ‘Artist as Anthropologist’ published in the first issue of ‘The Fox’ magazine in 1975. Kosuth was also attacked from the same point of view by Herve Fischer from the French Collectif d’Art Sociologique, who was even more aggressive. There is a third possibility. Contextual art was an appeal to artists to define their place in the global art world. The meetings and conferences organised by Świdziński were meant for that; Toronto conference already mentioned here, as well as the Paris meeting ‘Art et

» 1 I base this assertion on a publication entitled: Świdziński, J., *Sztuka jako sztuka kontekstualna [Art as contextual art]*. Remont Gallery. Warsaw 1977

» 2 As above, p. 38

» 3 See Dziamski, G. *Galeria Sztuki Najnowszej. O tych, którzy przychodzą później [About those, who come later]*, in: *Galeria Sztuki Najnowszej* (ed. Markowska, A.), Wrocław Contemporary Museum 2014, p. 142

» 4 Świdziński, J. A Record from the Conference “In the Context of the Art World” at the Center for the Experimental Art and Communication CEAC Toronto November 1976, in: *Quotations on Contextual Art.* (ed M. Gibbs), Eindhoven 1988, p. 113. Świdziński apologises to Kosuth, for using a logic terminology, which Kosuth suggested in his article ‘Art after Philosophy’.

transformation sociale' (1977, May) or Warsaw conference 'Art as action in the context of reality' (1977, July). These meetings were supposed to create a front of artists from outside New York. Artists from Poland, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Canada, Latin America, who fought with American art.⁵ It sounds a little funny, but contextual artists did not aim to take over the power in the art world. They wanted to dethrone conceptual artists from the positions of artistic leaders. They wanted to, in other words, gain spiritual leadership.

Conceptual art has led to a situation in which everything, literally everything could be art.⁶ Art became a definition of art, and the work of an artist defined art - *if someone calls it art, it's art*, said Donald Judd quoted by Kosuth. For Kosuth it meant that the artist poses a hypothesis about the nature of art, and his work is a justification for this hypothesis. Kosuth's conceptualism abolished the anti-art status of Duchamp's ready mades. An artist was no longer a rebel, who can assign to selected objects a status of an art object (objects d'art). The artist could present a practiced concept of art. The artist could pose a question, just like Duchamp, whether an urinal could be a work of art. And if it could, what needs it has - a title? an artist's signature? a date of creation? And how does the recognition of the urinal for an art object could influence our thinking about art? What will happen with it for art? What could be the consequences for art? Jacques Derrida called it 'a questioning form of thinking'⁷ What happens if an artist recognises a person X and everything this person does every day between 7 am and 9 pm for art? The artist must convince us that such a decision will bring something important to our thinking about the art or that he or she can document that decision in an attractive way. There is a clear outline of theoretical and stylistic conceptualism. Artists are challenged to find the nature of art by offering their own definitions of art. Kosuth has created a radical avant-garde vision of art in which artists, like scientists, are accounted for what they add to the existing art concept.⁸

» 5 More on that topic; Markowska, A. Trzeba przetrzeć tę szybę. Powikłane dzieje wrocławskiej Galerii Sztuki Najnowszej (1975-1980) [We need to wipe this glass. Complicated history of Wrocław Contemporary Art Gallery] in Akademickie Centrum Kultury pałacyk, in; Galeria Sztuki Najnowszej, p. 36-48.

» 6 'Wszystko może być sztuką, jeżeli galerie mogą to sprzedać, a muzea zsakralizować [Everything may be art, if a gallery is able to sell it, and a museum is able to sacralise it]' – Świdziński wrote it in *Art, Society and Self-consciousness* (1979). This quotation is taken from: *Sztuka, społeczeństwo i samoświadomość* (translated by Guzek, L.) Warsaw 2009, p.101

» 7 Derrida, *Uniwersytet bezwarunkowy* [Unconditional university] (translated by Jaksender, K., M.), Kraków 2015, p.18.

» 8 See: Dziamski, G. *Konceptualizm analityczny* [Analytical conceptualism] in; *Przełom koncepcyjny i jego wpływ na praktykę i teorię sztuki*, Poznań 2010, p.76

Calling different things art was nothing new after Duchamp. In 1965, two Slovakian artists, Stano Filko and Alex Mlynarcik in their work entitled 'Happosc' (A Sociological Happening) turned their home town of Bratislava for seven days from May 2nd to May 8th into one large, anonymous happening. The happening was participated by all people living in Bratislava (over 267 thousand people), all dogs (almost 50 thousands), all houses, squares, parks, street lamps, gas and electric stoves, refrigerators, cars, trams, typewriters, cemeteries, a castle, the river Danube, nine Bratislava's theatres. The start and the end of that anonymous happening was marked by two solemn feasts celebrated by the city – The Labor Day, and The Victory Day.⁹

The paradox of Kosuth's¹⁰ conceptual art was in the fact that everything could be art, but in the context of art. Świdziński wanted to go beyond the context of art, he wanted art not to be analytical, that is true by definition, but without knowledge of the world, he wanted art to say something about the world in which we live. Hence the idea of three contexts: art context, culture context and reality context.¹¹ and a turn towards a figure of a story-teller at the end of the 1980s. What is interesting, Kosuth in the article 'Artist as Anthropologist' saw an artist rather as an anthropologist exploring the specifics of different cultures, whereas Świdziński wanted to see in the artist a storyteller – someone who belongs to the local culture, someone who explains the anthropologists the secrets of the studied culture.¹²

Globalisation.

Globalisation was a reaction to the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the three-dimensional model of thinking about the world.¹³ It can be said that it was a frozen problem of the 20th century, which was defrosted after the fall of the East Block. It was then necessary to find a new model, corresponding to the changed political situation. Globalisation was meant to be a new model. In the three-world model the dominance of the First World seemed to be something natural and normal. The First World had the power to impose its values and thought categories on

» 9 Filko, S. *Tvorba – Works Creation – Werk Schaffung – Ouvrages* (1965-1969), Bratislava 1970.

» 10 I am writing about Kosuth's conceptual art. because I delineate several variants of the conceptual practice and theory. See: Dziamski, G. *Przełom konceptualny*, p. 55-99.

» 11 Świdziński, J. *kotekst trzeci* (1977). Quoted after *Galeria Sztuki Najnowszej*, p. 49.

» 12 Jan Świdziński in a conversation with Grzegorz Dziamski, 'Flash Art' (Polish Edition), 1993, no.: 3

» 13 See: Pletsch, C. *The Three Worlds, or Division of Social Scientific Labour, circa 1950-1975, "Comparative Study in Society and History"*, 1981, no 4. I wrote about the Pletsch's model in *Globalizacja sztuki*, in: *Sztuka po końcu sztuki*, Poznań 2009, p. 168-169.

the other two worlds. In the global model it is no longer obvious. Globalisation does not consist in the fact that the West (Western civilisation) imposes its way of thinking on the rest of the world. Globalisation is not a new version of colonisation, although some researchers, especially from Latin America, seem to think that today's globalisation is the third wave of colonisation; The first wave was Christianisation, or Portuguese and Spanish colonisation (16th and 17th centuries), the second is the civilisation mission of the white man, or French and British colonisation (18th - 19th century), the third is American imperialism, or modern globalisation.¹⁴ The difference between them is that today's colonisation is done under neo-liberal slogans, in the name of free market and capitalism, which won ideological confrontation with communism, not in the name of God, queen, emperor, or civilisation mission of the white man. This is an American-style colonisation, without subduing colonised territories - the United States never had any colonies, only zones of influence. But here we will distinguish globalisation from colonisation. Colonisation is a one-sided process - the West subordinates the non-Western world, while globalisation is a bilateral process - the movement goes both ways. The West is present in the non-Western world, but at the same time the non-Western world enters the Western world and not only in the form of cheap gasarbeiters or Islamic terrorists.

Among the various concepts of globalisation, I am closest to the multi-civilisation model presented by an American political scientist Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilisations* (1996).¹⁵ According to Huntington, the politics of the post-Cold War era was shaped by eight great civilisations. They can be distinguished on the basis of cultural similarities, because the culture of a certain community of experiences, history, language, religion, habits and ways of life gave them a clear identity. Huntington's category of civilisation was taken from Arnold Toynbee, but he made purely political use of it. He understood civilisation, in similar way to Toynbee, a group of close-knit cultures that had reached a certain level of development. Toynbee distinguished five living civilisations; Western, Orthodox, Islamic, Far Eastern and Hindu. The culture of modern-day Latin America was considered by no means original and he included it in Western civilisation, the Chinese civilisation was merged with the Japanese, and the African one in general was rejected due to the lack of achievements.¹⁶ Huntington pointed out eight modern civilisa-

» 14 Kalenberg, A. *Museum Scenarios in Latin America*, w: *The Global Art World* (eds H. Belting, A. Buddensieg), Ostfildern 2009.

» 15 Huntington, H. *Zderzenie cywilizacji* [*The Clash of Civilisations*] (translated by Janowska, H.), Warsaw 2003.

» 16 Toynbee, A. *Civilisation on Trial* (1948). Polish edition: *Cywilizacja w czasie próby* (translated by Madej, W.), Warsaw 1991. The Toynbee's history of civilisation was published in ten volumes:

tions; Western (Euro-American), Orthodox, Latin-American, Japanese, Chinese, Islamic, Hindu and African¹⁷.

Looking from this multi-civilisation perspective, we can say that the modern notion of art and the story of its transformations, or the history of art, is a product of Western civilisation, or more specifically its Western European nucleus. In the eighteenth century Russia joined this Western story of art, with its orthodox civilisation. Latin America joined it at the end of the 19th century, and after the Second World War Japan got involved .

The symbol of Russia's joining the Western story of art was St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg and the Hermitage with Catherine's large collection of Western-European paintings there. In Russia, there is an opinion that when the capital of the country is St. Petersburg, Russia is approaching the West, and when it is Moscow, the country is moving towards Asia. Russia's relations with Western civilisation are variable, ambiguous. In 1922, Lenin attempted to bring Russia closer to the West by selling out some of the orthodox church's goods. In the years 1929-1933, the Soviet government started to depart from the West and it secretly sold Western art from the Hermitage collection, treating the works of Hals, Rembrandt, Rubens, Raphael, Van Dyck, Velazques, Titian, Verones and Chardin as foreign to class and culture. ¹⁸ In 1988, on the wave of perestroika, the authorities agreed to hold a Russian auction of Russian art by Sotheby, which went beyond the opposition of official and unofficial art, subordinating Russian art to western standards and the western hierarchy of values¹⁹.

In Latin America, art imported from Europe combined with the local tradition and thus *estilo metizo* was created as well as South American versions of European Mannerism and Baroque. The local elites quickly absorbed new trends in European modernism: from impressionism through symbolism to the *avant-garde* of the early twentieth century. Surrealism was greatly acknowledged and it resembled realism (magical realism) very popular in the 1930s and 40s. Another example was in geometric abstraction, which gave rise to the art *concreto* characteristic of that part of the world. At the end of the 1940s, the first museums of modern art began to appear - Museo de Arte Moderna in Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires (1948) and Rio de Janeiro (1949). In 1951, the first Biennale of Art - the Sao Paulo Biennale - was organised outside Europe. In the

A Study of History, London 1934 – 1954. It is worth mentioning here a Polish scholar Feliks Koneczny and his book *O wielości cywilizacji* [About the multitude of civilisation], Kraków 1935. Koneczny distinguishes seven civilisations: Latin, Jewish, Byzantine, Arabic, Chinese, Brahmin and Turin.

- » 17 Huntington names further five dead civilisations, which are of no interest to us: Egyptian, Cretan, Classical (Greek-Roman), Byzantine and Central American (Andean).
- » 18 Watson, P. *From Manet to Manhattan. The Rise of Modern Art Market*, London 1992, p. 241-244.
- » 19 *Flash Art*, 1988, Oct.

1960s, kinetic and optical arts many gained supporters. Some of them had gained worldwide fame, for example Jesus Rafael Soto, or Julio Le Parc. The latter won the Grand Prix of the Venice Biennale in 1966. South American art has a secondary, imitative reputation, it is thought to be unable to promote its own specifics. This is not true. South America has been able to successfully promote the literature of magical realism and some musical genres: Samba, or Bossa Nova.

Japan opened up to Western influence in the second half of the 19th century. After the Second World War, a lot of time had to pass for the Japanese audience to see western world's contemporary art at that time. In 1956, an exhibition "International Art Today" was opened in Tokyo. At that time in Europe and America, the knowledge of contemporary Japanese art was small. The residual information about the Gutai group, which became better known in the Western world only in the 1960s, and the multimedia projections of the Jikken Kobo group²⁰, were received. In Japanese art, after the Second World War, there was a division into contemporary art and contemporary continuations of traditional Japanese art. The first one was for export, it was shown outside Japan; The second one was local and it was mainly presented at national galleries and museums, at exhibitions organised by local artists' associations. These associations have played and still play a major role in Japan. They are made up of loose groups of students who under a direction of a master study a selected artistic style, so that certain styles and related skills are passed down from generation to generation.

As far as African art is concerned, the Oxford Guide to the Art of the Twentieth Century developed by British aesthetics scholar Harold Osborne distinguishes four types; A) traditional art which is in decline; b) art inspired by missionaries; c) commercialised souvenir art intended primarily for tourists; and d) new paintings and sculpture created by artists with formal education or without it, who want to make Africa a part of modern world. Although African painters and sculptors are not as original or courageous in introducing new ideas as the avant-garde of the Western world, their eclectic and Western-inspired works are amongst the most creative in today's Africa²¹. Rasheed Araeen is more stringent in the assessment of African art. Africa is an example of postcolonial slavery. Africans have been pushed back to consumer positions. Today they have access to the same goods as the rest of the world. They do not have to invent or produce anything, they can enjoy consumption. This also

» 20 See Reichardt, J. Zapowiedzi lat sześćdziesiątych [Previews of the 1960s], in; W stronę trzeciej kultury [Towards the third culture] (ed.: Kluszczyński, R.), Gdańsk 2011, p. 86-89.

» 21 Africa, in; The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Art (ed.: H. Osborne), Oxford 1981, p. 7-9.

applies to the arts. African artists do not contribute anything at all, they intentionally exaggerate exotic feel of their works, but also they complain that the West ignores or marginalises the achievements of the artists of the Black Land. A confirmation of this thesis is to be found in Ernest Mancoby, a member of the CoBrA group, who was erased by European art critics²². The Osborne's guide, published in the 1980s, does not even mention Chinese, Arabic or Hindu contemporary art. Today, it would be impossible. Chinese, Arabic and Indian artists have become part of the contemporary art scene.

Chinese artists have been cut off from Western art for a long time. The cultural revolution, which began in 1966 and lasted practically until 1976, further deepened this isolation. In China, it was forbidden to contact not only modern Western art, but also old art, Balzac's novels and Baudelaire's poetry. When, in the late 1970s, Deng Xiaoping suggested four modernisations - in the fields of technology, education, agriculture and the army, Chinese artists began hastily catching up and absorbing Western art, dadaism, pop art, and conceptualism. They link them with the indigenous religious-philosophical tradition. The summary of this period was brought about by the exhibition "China / Avant-Garde" (1989). The show launched political pop and cynical realism, compiled willingly by Chinese critics with Russian soc-art, and at the same time it drew attention to the Chinese artistic scene. European curators, such as Harald Szeemann, became involved in the promotion of Chinese art. Chinese artists have started to appear more and more in the international artistic circuit. At collective and individual exhibitions, art fairs and even contemporary art auctions, all these projects were discreetly supported by the Chinese authorities. The interest in Chinese art grew with the strengthening of the Chinese economy. Chinese art has become a well-known name in the world market, sought after by the best galleries and museums.

Chinese artists have announced a success, but it was a rather specific form of success - related to the market success. "Contemporary Chinese art has been intercepted by the international art market, but not so much because of its artistic value, but for political and ideological reasons," writes Carol Yinghua Lu²³, who is not alone in this opinion. In this way, Chinese art became almost entirely dependent on market forces that dominated the system of evaluating artists and their works.

Most of the Arab countries are non-democracies - monarchies, dictatorships, more or less authoritarian regimes supported by the military. In Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan

» 22 Araeen, R. *The Western Grip*, in: *Modernity. Documenta Magazine* no.: 1, Kassel 2007.

» 23 Yinghua Lu, C. *Back to Contemporary; One Ambition. Many Worlds*, in: *What is Contemporary Art?* (eds Aranda, J., Kuan Wood, B. & A. Vidocle), Berlin 2010, p. 173.

or Iran the attitude towards Islam and the question of whether the state is an Islamic one is more important than the prevailing political system. Other Arab countries for example Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan or Tunisia are trying to preserve secularism, they are trying to limit the influence of Islam. In non-democratic countries, art becomes a tool of politics no matter whether the artists want it or not. Contemporary art is identified in Arab countries with Western art. This art is acceptable, but only when it can be reduced to form, formal games and pure decoration. Jean Clair recalls his conversations with Arab partners about the Picasso exhibition in Dubai. The Arab side did not want an exhibition to include female acts or portraits, even portraits of children or animals; landscapes, still life and cubist compositions were allowed, because what we consider “subversive, rebellious and transgressive, in the eyes of pious Muslims is a nice, abstract fun.”²⁴

The sign of the time, writes Beryl Madra, creator and curator of the first Biennial of Art in Istanbul in 1987, are museums funded by industrial tycoons who have become collectors valued at London and New York art auctions. Their museums are not subordinated to national narratives and republican values like earlier museums, but they present the taste of their founders and their advisers. They are not intended to modernise or criticise the country. They are meant to be performances that provide strong artistic experiences. They celebrate the financial power of local elites.

Indian art has not been as successful as the Chinese one, and it's hard to find stars like Shirin Neshat or Mony Hatoum - Arabian artists, who have been on immigration for years. The art of Indian subcontinent is just waiting for its discovery, but we already see some changes. The collapse of former state-owned art institutions, such as the National Gallery of Art in New Delhi, opened in 1954, or the International Art Triennial held in New Delhi since 1968. These institutions have been taken over by commercial galleries, art fairs and private foundations, such as Devi Art Foundation, Lekhi and Anupama Paddar, which has been operating since 2008. In the same year (2008) a large exhibition of contemporary Indian art “Chalo India: A New Era of Indian Art opened in Tokyo.

Global art

The story of art started in the western world and the artistic institutions created for it have been spreading throughout the world today. Can this process of expansion, mondialisation, as Jacques Derrida says, of European art tale be called globalisation?

» 24 Clair, J. *Kryzys muzeów [Crisis in Museums] The* (translated by J. M. Kłoczowski), Gdańsk 2009, p. 75.

Globalisation forces us to change our thinking about art, and that is perhaps the most important thing in it. To change the thinking about what we are willing to consider art, place it in the context of art and consider it in terms of art. It forces us to think about the very idea of art. Global art is an art incorporated into the process of globalisation, but this inclusion may take many forms, so it is difficult to give a clear definition of global art. Art begins to resemble an empty sign, which Jan Świdziński wrote about, it filled itself with varying meanings dependent on the cultural context in which the work appears and here we return to Jan Świdziński's contextual art program. In what sense did contextual art foretell today's global art? Firstly, by rejecting one universally valid definition of art and agreeing to multiple definitions. Secondly, by abandoning the aesthetic point of view for the sake of culture's view - art is defined by the culture in which it appears. Świdziński, as we remember, introduces three contexts; the context of art, the context of culture and the context of reality. Contextual art is related to this third context; It does not refer only to art as conceptual art, to cultural context as anthropological art, but to the reality shaping culture, ie globalisation. Contextual art deals with globalisation today, and more precisely, the tension between what is global, what works in the global artistic circuit, and what represents the local thinking of art. Numerous examples of such tensions are provided by so-called peripheral art biennale. Świdziński tried to reduce this tension by introducing local art images into the global circulation. Is it possible? Yes, if the artist is a storyteller, someone who talks about his culture, and does not study it as an anthropologist - this mistake was committed by Świdziński in Mielnik nad Bugiem.

A few years ago, a student from Lithuania told me about a film by a young Lithuanian artist during my classes at the Poznań Academy of Visual Arts. The film focused on Vilnius cinemas closed after 1989. The author found people who used to go to those cinemas and they recalled their experiences with the movies they saw in these cinemas, they talked about the role these cinemas played in their lives, about the atmosphere of the old days and the magic of watching movies on the big screen. I did not watch this film but it was easy for me to imagine film, because similar films were made by many artists from Eastern Europe. They are an example of an artists' story about their culture, their work on exposing their own culture. It is an example of a storyteller's work.

Every culture has its own way of thinking about the world, its reality, its way of thinking about art. Świdziński calls it logic - a correct, or more precisely, the correct way of thinking in a given culture. In the book "Art, Society and Self-consciousness" he distinguishes worlds governed by four logics. In a world based on the logic of norms (deontic

logic), that is the logic of orders and prohibitions, something is ordered or forbidden, it is art, or it is not. We know how art should look but we also know how it should not look like. What is in art ordered, and what is forbidden. These norms are guarded by various social institutions, the norms are rooted in some superhuman order, preferably transcendental. The world, which essential feature is variability, can not, however, be based on the bivalent logic of norms, since the appearance of the third element - time. The rule of excluded middle ground must be limited or even rejected, because something can be art at one time and place and cannot be art at another time and place. To capture change we have to go beyond the logic of orders and prohibitions, we have to open up to what is new, what can happen. Świdziński calls it the logic of freedom. The third logic is epistemic logic; I know that, I believe, I believe that, I believe that X is that and that. Epistemic logic corresponds to social constructivism, resembles the nominative definitions of Donald Judd's art. Finally, the last logic - the logic of the game - suggests associations with Bruno Latour. An individual is not looking for certainty because he knows he will not find it, but takes up a game with reality. The goal of the game is not truth, but victory. The truth is no longer the most important, because each of our movements changes reality and thus creates a new truth - one decision to join the Poznań municipality is just enough to change the population, city space, urban income and practically all the city's current parameters.²⁵

If we agree with Jan Świdziński's chronology of ways of thinking about the world, it turns out that we are living in a world ruled by the logic of the game. How consequences does it have for globalisation and the art of globalisation?

Art must give up one universal definition of art. Instead of looking for a single, universal, or hegemonic definition of art, it must accept the multiplicity and variety of art definitions, allowing it to freely transcend the boundaries and combine high art with low, elite and popular art by introducing ethnographic understanding of art and using geo-aesthetics, in which aesthetic categories gain meaning according to the geographical context. Accepting many, often mutually contradictory definitions of art, and recognising them as equivalent, leads to a situation in which art becomes something impossible to capture, an elusive thing, and the very notion of art seems to lose meaning - art is what different people do in different places, and for various reasons they consider it art. Art tells us a great deal about our culture and these are generally critical statements, because art is the spokesperson of change.

» 25 Świdziński, J. Logika rządząca rzeczywistością [The logic governing reality], in: Sztuka, społeczeństwo, samoświadomość, op.cit.

Global art breaks with an universal rhetoric; Instead of universalism, it introduces diversity. Global art, writes Hans Belting, is global in the sense the global world is the global network or the Internet is global. This form of creation is aware of the fact that it is created at the time of globalisation, but it does not have any formal, stylistic or content distinguishers. In other words, they are not the most important.²⁶

The analogy with the Internet, however, has its limits. The Internet can be a model for global art, but global art is not limited to the internet, it is not an art on the Internet, or the net art, although, perhaps, on the Internet it assumes the purest, the most idealised and selfless shape. Global art also takes on other institutional forms. The most popular and well-known forms of institutional contextualisation of global art are art festivals and large international art biennale organised in different parts of the world by curators with world-recognised art positions.²⁷ Another form of institutionalisation of global art is the form of temporary exhibitions in important museums; yet another can be found in private collections of contemporary Chinese, African and Russian art; finally there are private museums of contemporary art founded by great collectors in cities, which until now did not have museums for example Istanbul.

Global art is a postmodern art, breaking away with modernist meta-narrative, modernist language, and so worshiped European modern values such as universalism, rationalism, progress. What is more it subjects them to deconstruction, it uncovers hidden hegemony, violence, striving to subjugate others. The most important thing, however, is that global art is a global means of communication, like the Internet, which can be used to convey any information. It provides the means to bring local problems to the global information flow and perhaps even to talk about today's problems of different cultures using contemporary language. It is not about mastering a formal idiom, writes Belting, but it is all about the choice of contemporary subject matter and contemporary performance. The originality of artistic expression is replaced with the artist's original position in contemporary debates and contemporary expression. Certain formal similarities, if they occur, they are of minor importance and they result from a tradition of global art - the tradition of new media, pop art, and conceptual art.²⁸ ●

» 26 Belting, H. Contemporary Art as Global Art. A Critical Estimate, in; *The Global Art World* (eds Belting, H. & A. Buddensieg), Ostfildern 2009, p. 40.

» 27 See Dziamski, G. *Sztuka po końcu sztuki [Art after the end of art]*, Poznań 2009, p. 172-173.

» 28 Belting, H. *Contemporary Art as Global Art* p. 53 i 59-61. See also Belting, H. *Art in TV Age. On Global Art and Local History* <http://www.globalartmuseum.de/site/act>.

