

#44

Zeszyty Artystyczne

TKANINA ARTYSTYCZNA
Wobec współczesności

TEXTILE ART
In the face of contemporary times



Uniwersytet Artystyczny
im. Magdaleny Abakanowicz
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(born 1990) Works as an assistant in the Studio of Artistic Fabric under PhD Elwira Sztetner at the Faculty of Painting of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. She defended her doctoral thesis in 2020 with a work titled "Material, Process, and Idea in Painting" under the guidance of Prof. Joanna Gołaszewska. She is engaged in artistic, scientific, and pedagogical work. She has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions both in Poland and abroad, including at the Artifex Gallery in Vilnius (2022), Altan Klamovka Gallery in Prague (2021), the Polish Institute in Bratislava (2019), the International Triennial of Artistic Fabric in Łódź (2022, 2019, 2016), and the Biennial of Artistic Fabric in Poznań (2021). In her creative work, she is interested in the themes of history, identity building, narratives, storytelling, and their impact on contemporary reality. She is also the author of several articles on topics related to artistic fabric, such as "Clothing, Rags, Trash – the Secondary Use of Textile Products as the Material of an Artwork" (post-conference publication, Artist's Workshop, UMK, Toruń, 2023), and "Multiplication as a Form of Expression in the Medium of Artistic Fabric, Illustrated by Women's Creativity" (post-conference publication, Enlargement and Intensification in Culture, UKSW, Warsaw 2022).



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I Will Tell You My Story. **Textiles and their narrative** **functions in addressing** **women's issues**

The status of textile art in contemporary art continues to seem unclear and its equal treatment in the context of other areas appears dubious. Whitney Chadwick, the author of the book *Women, Art, and Society* (regrettably, the only book by this author which is yet to be translated into Polish), when addressing the art of *women*, naturally includes textiles into the history of art, or more precisely into the history of the art of women. While ultimately Chadwick concludes that despite much debate around textile art and the success of women artists such as Magdalena Abakanowicz and Sheila Hicks, important studies and texts which would include textiles into the canon of contemporary art are yet to be written¹. *Women, Art, and Society* was first published in the US in 1990 and one may wonder if this pessimistic assessment has not become outdated. It is challenged

» 1 Whitney Chadwick, *Kobiety, sztuka i społeczeństwo*, transl. Ewa Hornowska (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Rebis, 2015), 520.

by last year's principal show of the 59th International Biennale of Art in Venice, *The Milk of Dreams*, curated by Cecilia Alemani. The show gathered multiple examples of textiles (mainly by women) made over a longer period, starting with women artists from the first half of the 20th century: Lavinia Schulz, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Sonia Delaunay. Before our eyes, a certain process of rewriting "anew" the history of art of the last century is taking place; the phenomena not included in the official canon and discourse of art until a few decades ago are taken into account. In them, their role was limited to artefacts belonging to crafts, ethnographic, "amateur", and "non-professional" art.

In her *Women, Art, and Society*, the author keeps stressing the significance of textiles in the process of a woman's emancipation from the role in the home and the family to a full-fledged participant of the world of "true" art. In the following chapters, she outlines a history in which fabric, being at the junction of sculpture, painting, handicraft and applied art, has, through its fluidity and ambiguity, allowed women to gradually participate in a world which had been predominantly male. At the same time, the definition of art has changed and expanded to include works associated with manufacturing art, crafts, design, drawing on folk and amateur art. Very significantly, new content was introduced into this hermetic world and issues of current social concern were addressed. This may seem obvious today but was a novelty at the time.

The culminating moment and the impetus for change came in the 1950s, the heyday of Abstract Expressionism, when femininity and art were a kind of opposite poles. Female painters such as Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchel, Helen Frankenthaler persistently and courageously challenged the narrative that women could not paint. This view, common at the time, was expressed in the legendary quote from Hans Hoffman, Krasner's teacher: "This is so good you wouldn't know it was done by a woman"². As Chadwick observes, a fundamental principle of action and success was a complete separation of artistic practice from female experience and identity.³ At that time, art was an objectivised and hermetic enclave following its unique inner principles, and any idea of subjectivation and inclusion of one's own "non-artistic" experience into this pristine space was out of the question. Women artists of Abstract Expressionism were able to operate in this world and be unimaginably successful by playing by the rules, adjusting themselves to them, hiding if not annihilating their female identity. At the 1949 exhibition held by the New York art dealer Sidney Janis, Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock showed their paintings under the motto *Art-*

» 2 Lee Krasner. *Deal with it*, Getty. Recording Artist, Getty Institute, <https://www.getty.edu/recordingartists/season-1/krasner/> (20.06.2023).

» 3 Chadwick, *Kobiety...*, 339.

ists: *Man and Wife*. Krasner's work was unfavourably assessed, as a result of which she stopped showing her paintings in the years to come and at the end of the day decided to destroy the canvases made at that time. fully aware of the gender-based divisions in the art world, both she and Elaine de Koonig only initialled their paintings instead of signing them with their full names. As Chadwick observes: "The decision to erase their gender as an element of the creative process was an attempt not so much to hide the female identity, but rather to avoid their paintings as being labelled as those by 'women artists'. Their paintings gained recognition since they became, as it were, *manly women*"⁴.

The currents of painting at the time seemed to be particularly hostile to women and had traits generally regarded as "masculine": large-sized canvases, an explosion of power, dynamism, austerity combined with panache. Fabric represented the opposite of this phenomenon. It was a zone that almost exclusively women had "always" been interested in, so it remained a very natural and safe space for them, ideal for developing a fully autonomous expression for them alone. Identified with handicraft, domestic art, or possibly design art, for a long time it did not aspire to be something more.

Textiles and the related handicrafts of tailoring, embroidery, and knitting, the small-scale production based on skills brought from the home were a kind of collective activity structuring the time women spent at home. Women, living naturally on the margins of social life, began to use the link between femininity and crafts as a form of political engagement. It was textile art that provided an opportunity not only to finally participate in social discourse and thus influence their own destiny in civic terms but gave women the chance for artistic empowerment. In Great Britain, as part of political engagement, in the early 20th c. the Artists' Suffrage League (ASL) embroidered banners for the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, which banners were to be used during the protests furthering women's rights.

Women's first actions for systemic change in the United States were to decorate their hand-held knitting baskets with abolitionist slogans. They were then sold to charities linked to movements seeking to reform the law and to end slavery. Abolitionist ideas re-emerged in the patterns of patchwork quilts. While this tradition is virtually unknown in Poland and Europe, it is alive and well in South America, the United States, and Mexico, where dozens of museums showcase the long history of sewn patchwork quilts closely linked to the history of these lands. Quilts have become a vehicle for social and personal storytelling, and the stories and events they depict are firmly embedded in the fabric through the use of

» 4 Chadwick, *Kobiety...*, 339.

specific, carefully selected materials to create them - clothing, personal mementos highlighting moments significant for the general community and one's immediate family. The time spent designing and making the quilt was also a symbolic process of transition, where the needle replaced the pen in the process of creating the narrative.

The narrative quilts and the gradual transformation of the perception of these artefacts from a craft and folk-art object to art proper was correlated with the process of women's emancipation in the field of art. The change in the status of these objects resulted from the blurring of the boundaries between "popular" and "high" art, which phenomenon started in the early 20th century and exploded in the 1960s with e.g. pop art; it has continued uninterrupted to the present day. The bridging of differences has manifested itself, among other things, in the incorporation of non-traditional materials, techniques and processes into painting or sculpture. Fabric, thread, and needle, considered to be the domain of women, became important working tools in feminist art of the early second half of the 20th century, both as a reaction to the hegemony of "white male" art and as a way of raising the profile of women's traditional craft work.

The best-known author of quilts created still in the 19th century is Harriet Powers (1837–1911), born in the state of Georgia to a slave family. She grew up on a plantation, never learned to read or write, and learned the Bible through oral transmission and attendance at religious services. She probably learned to sew from her mother or the planter's wife and worked as a seamstress all her life. She married, had nine children and most of her quilts made while raising children were utilitarian in nature. As she approached the age of fifty, she expressed her spiritual life for the first time through a story embroidered on a quilt. Her *Bible Quilt* (1885–1886, 191 cm x 227 cm) is recognised as her first "art" work; it shows eleven scenes inspired by the Bible. It is composed of 299 bits of fabric sewn onto the pink background (now strongly faded). It is both hand- and machine sewn, with quilting around the contours of the motifs and randomly intersecting straight lines in the open spaces. Powers exhibited it for the first time at the 1886 Cotton Fair in Athens, where it drew the attention of Onetta Virginia (Jenny) Smith, a local white woman artist interested in buying the work, which the author would not sell. This is how Jenny Smith recalls an "encounter" with Powers' quilt:

I have spent my whole life in the South, and am perfectly familiar with thirty patterns of quilts, but I had never seen an original design, and never a living creature portrayed in patchwork, until the year 1886, when there was held in Athens, Georgia, a Cotton Fair, which

was on a much larger scale than an ordinary county fair, as there was a 'Wild West' show, and Cotton Weddings; and a circus, all at the same time. There was a large accumulation of farm products... and in one corner there hung a quilt – which captured my eye and after much difficulty I found the owner, a Negro woman, who lives in the country on a little farm whereon she and husband make a respectable living. She is about sixty-five years old, of a clear ginger cake color, and is a very clean and interesting woman who loves to talk of her old mistress and life before the war... Her style is bold and rather on the impressionists order while there is a naiveite of expression that is delicious...⁵.

Eventually, after a few years, Jenny Smith bought the quilt from Harriet Powers, whose financial standing forced her to sell her beloved piece for a small amount of money.

The iconography and palette of Powers' second work is far more elaborate than in the first one. The background colours differ from that of the background of the first quilt, as are most of the elements of the composition. While the first work was made up of images inspired solely by biblical stories, the second *Pictorial Quilt* (1895–1898) is a compilation of biblical motifs and histories she had heard growing up as a slaves' child. These are events remembered by her community as inexplicable natural anomalies which were then interpreted in religious terms, e.g. Dark Day in 1870⁶ and a rain of meteorites in 1833⁷. Powers applies moreover panels with moralising scenes. Adding new motifs to the scenes from the Old and New Testament seems a milestone towards the emancipation of the author's artistic expression. This is also a formal emancipation but first of all a manifestation of a very personal authorial narrative, aligned with her own experience and perception of reality. This personal perspective is seen here as a voice of Powers' native community of Afro-American slaves. The combination of past events recalled over generations with biblical iconography may indicate their importance to the artist and the community as a whole. It creates a kind of timeframe, identifying points of reference and thus building a collective memory and history. The successive sections of the quilt are not interlinked via a linear narrative and seem separate illustrations. The work as a whole, however, is indivisible, a single story which is a sort of *biblia pauperum*. This is storytelling with a tinge of mag-

» 5 <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2014/02/harriet-powers.html> (20.06.2023).

» 6 Dark Day – an event taking place on 19 May 1780, when a total darkening of the daytime sky occurred in New England and partly in Canada. The main reason were smoke from blazing forests, dense fog and heavy cloud cover.

» 7 In the night of November 12/23, 1833, a powerful rain of meteorites was observed. According to eyewitness accounts: „the stars fell as often as snow during a blizzard“.

ic realism, where the shared belief system is interspersed with elements of the indigenous tradition, the supernatural, forces of nature, and cosmos.

The making of quilts by Black people in the United States combined two traditions of textile work, African and Euro-American, resulting in the creation of a hybrid third style. The African American quilts made today retain this aesthetic which is a demonstration of the African tradition in current American society. It is central to the artistic practice of indigenous cultures around the world due to its functionality and storytelling power, not only in the form of narrative figurative representations, but purely abstract forms embroidered on quilts originally intended for strictly utilitarian purposes.

The unique features of textiles, their traditional roles and function makes it transgressive in the process of emancipation of women artists and women from ethnic minorities. Being what is “private”, it imperceptibly changes into what is “social”. During the second wave of feminism, among others thanks to women artists such as Judy Chicago and Harmony Hammond, textiles seamlessly entered the “artworld”, where it spoke as a vehicle of women’s narratives. Women artists’ strategies in the early second half of the 20th c. to their own sex varied. Some believed that gender issues are immaterial with respect to art. Other, however, started to pay attention to them and made the experience of femininity and female body a universal, political, and collective matter. As a result of the search for appropriate forms to express the female experience, body art was born in the early 1970s, and along with it identifications of femininity with biology, reproductive organs and the vaginal form. However, many women artists rejected this imagery, seeing it, as Whitney Chadwick observes, as “another token of biological determinism and a failed attempt at redefining femininity”⁸. The search for the “essence” of femininity highlighted the relevance of the social, historical, and cultural conditions of the female experience. Offering the woman a voice made her the subject narrator of her story, allowed for an expansion of the definition of femininity, moving away from biological determinism. Textiles and the exploration of weaving techniques was linked to the popularity of consciously addressing autobiographical, narrative, and identity issues through the exploration of historical, archaeological, or anthropological themes. Reaching for traditional natural materials or craft techniques, e.g. sewing patchwork quilts or creating sculptures using the labour-intensive knot tying, like Jackie Winsor, was as much about drawing attention to a forgotten, undervalued female craft, often a masterpiece, as it was about the roots of female artists, their geographic and social place of origin.

» 8 Chadwick, *Kobiety...*, 374.

The turbulent 1960s was a period of conflict that divided US society. Social issues such as racism, sexism, and militarism penetrated the art world, until then considered relatively autonomous⁹. Fatih Ringgold (b. 1930) and Dindga McCannon (b. 1947), raised in Harlem, New York, were among the first women to present in visual terms the rift between the White and Black citizens of the United States. Their work depicts a close relationship between the feminist idea shared with racial justice (intersectional feminism). Ringgold employed the tradition of making narrative quilts in the 1980s, doing away with a canvas stretched on a loom and distancing herself from the tradition of European painting. Her works are filled with figurative histories of African Americans and depict parallel experience of suffering and a rich culture teeming with life and colour. Before she started sewing quilts, she was known for her soft fabric sculptures that, performed by a narrator, were telling stories of their lives, real and imaginary, but always centred around the history of the Black community. The designs were inspired by African ceremonial masks and the figures of people and celebrities she knew. The artistic experience she gained from these works was an important step for the first narrative quilt in 1980 titled *Echoes of Harlem* (now in the Studio Museum in Harlem), in whose manufacture she was assisted by her mom, seamstress Willie Posey. The quilt depicts, in a recurrent rhythm, thirty faces of varied individual expression. The portraits were painted on fabric and incorporated into a regular decorative arrangement with fragments of multicoloured fabric. The interpenetration and free combination of painting and fabric would typify the artist's later work, as would the inclusion of influential figures of Black women such as Sojourner Truth¹⁰, Rosa Parks,¹¹ and Mar McLeod Bethune¹². In the 1990s, Ringgold made a series of quilts known as the *French Collection*, where the protagonist and her *alter ego* Willa Marie Simone, travels across France, visiting museums and studios and meeting the male and female masters of the arts and literature of the day, such as Gertrude Stein, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway, and Josephine Baker. The series consists of twelve works, each made with acrylic paint on canvas, using patterned fabrics and text written in ink on canvas. Ringgold has interpreted the artworks by placing the figure

» 9 Chadwick, *Kobiety...*, 374.

» 10 Sojourner Truth (1797–1883) – US abolitionist, born as a slave. Christened as Isabella Bomefree, she changed her name after being freed.

» 11 Rosa Louise Parks (1913–2005) – Afro-American human rights activist. She is recognised as one of the symbols of the fight against racial segregation, called the „mother of the civil rights movement“. She received e.g. the US Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

» 12 Mary Jane McLeod Bethune (1875–1955) – US educator, philanthropist, feminist, and civil rights activist.

of Willa at the centre of events, creating a metaphor for the social and cultural contribution of Black women's artistic practice.

Dindga McCannon, who represents the next generation of artists but, like Faith Ringgold, was born and raised in the black community of Harlem, takes up similar themes in her work. She mainly creates quilts, combining painting and fabric, while experimenting with collage and the use of readymade objects. She does not develop her work on quilts until the 1990s. Although she made her first ones as early as the 1970s, discouraged by the cool reception of this medium among New York gallerists, she works mainly in painting and printmaking. Vibrant, bright colours that emphasise indigenous traditions dominate her work. Since childhood, McCannon has been inspired by the traditional art form and has also copied drawings from comic books, which had its impact on her mature work. As a Black woman wishing to become an artist, she did not have an easy time, but she was very active in movements and groups for the support of her community, from which she often received the psychological, material, and financial support necessary for her artistic practice. Experiencing the difficulties of her social status, she acquired a baggage of experiences and reflections that eventually became the main theme of her art. She first presented her quilt in 1998 at the American Craft Museum in New York. The work *The Wedding Party: The History of Our Nation is Really the Story of Families* depicts a group wearing both European clothing and those evocative of African American fashion. The composition of the work is contained; the figures are tightly squeezed into a rectangular space surrounded by the blue patchwork frame. Some of the figures stare at the viewer, others look in other directions. The size of the figures and the attention to proper perspective is handled rather conventionally. The aim of the work is to convey the atmosphere of a family reunion and the interaction between family members as well as to show the complexity of social dynamics. Many of McCannon's works are dedicated to black women as a token of her gratitude for the support she has been offered by them throughout her life. One such work is the quilt *Althea Gibson, First African American to Win Wimbledon 1957* (2012). As indicated by the title, Gibson was the first Black American to win the Grand Slam, confronting the challenges of racial discrimination experienced during his career. The composition is made up of many elements, with Gibson lifting the trophy in a central position.

The process of women gradually "regaining (acquiring) their voice" in the 20th century took place on a global scale and was not limited solely to African American women. A highly similar strategy is adopted by Małgorzata Mirga-Tas. Central to the concept of her project titled *Re-Enchanting the World*, shown at the Biennale in Venice in 2022, is the au-

thor's Roma origin. Her artistic vision is contingent on the integration of motifs of Roma culture with European one. Mirga-Tas also applies the patchwork technique, using multicoloured fabrics, sewing, creating figurative worlds people by numerous figures, mostly women, animals, and symbols. The work for the Polish Pavilion in Venice was inspired by the Renaissance paintings from the Hall of the Months at the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara. In addition to borrowing the layout of the panels with successive scenes, which allowed the space of the Pavilion's walls to be efficiently arranged, the artist also adopted the iconography used in Ferrara, based on cycles and astrology, combining genre scenes with symbols¹³. The paintings freely juggle motifs and images drawn from the well-known concepts of cognition of reality at the time, distancing themselves, however, from the Ptolemaic and Aristotelian systems traditionally accepted in the Middle Ages and adapted to Christian thought. Thus, one sees symbols of the signs of the zodiac, references to Neoplatonic philosophy, astrology, and reinterpretations of Roman mythology. They intermingle with motifs of Ferrara, the d'Este court, the landscape, nature, references to the textile industry for which the city was famous. Based on a similar concept, in the upper strip of the three-level composition Mirga-Tas depicts the mythical journey of the Roma and their arrival in Europe. In her design she relied on Jacques Callot's series of engravings titled *Gypsies* from the 17th century. In the central strip, she places zodiac signs with tarot card iconography and representations of Roma women important to her, including her mother, grandmother, and the poet Papusza. On the lower level, there are images of the everyday life of the Roma living in Czarna Góra, the artist's hometown, but also of the Roma from the regions of Spisz and Podhale. The four seasons of the year and the cycle of life inscribed in them form the narrative framework for these paintings.

"Re-Enchanting the World" as a slogan may be matched to all the women artists discussed in the article. An obvious paraphrase of the term coined by sociologist Max Weber: "enchanting the world" (*Entzauberung der Welt*), it points to the need to redefine the needs of present-day humans, who are living in a reality very different from the one described by the German scholar over a century ago. The faith of that time in a society guided solely by progressive rationalisation and formalisation of relations proved illusory, and the world order liberated from the impact of irrational and supernatural phenomena seems ultimately unbearable and difficult to accept. This is reflected, as if in a tender mirror, in contemporary art. After a period of a sort of metaphysical void, there is again a time when "magical" elements are woven into reality. After the collapse of co-

» 13 Karol Sienkiewicz, "Głębokie przeszycia", *Dwutygodnik*, 05.2022, <https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/10094-glebokie-przeszycia.html> (20.06.2023).

herent, grand narratives and philosophical systems, religious, ecological, emotional, and social narratives and ways of ordering knowledge about reality that were previously marginalised are coming to the fore. Often, they satisfy human cognitive needs far better than rational arguments, which are consistent with facts and the objective verification of facts and principles. Such a simplified, fragmented vision often provides a sense of order, security and meaning and the primary purpose of communication is not necessarily to convey information, but to create a community with and to communicate with the other. The above formula can be applied to the oeuvre of Małgorzata Dmitruk (b. 1973). Born in Bielsk Podlaski, as a resident of the border region with its characteristic intermingling of cultural influence, she is heavily indebted to the locations where she was born and raised. She creates paintings, graphics, and textiles, mainly woven and embroidered jumpers. Inspired by the specific character of the region, the confluence of Polish and Belorussian cultures resounds in each of the artist's works, and the main motif of the stories she weaves is family life, indigenously, tales and stories heard at home. Dmitruk captures everydayness, the simplicity and order of life, which follows, as in the art of Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, the rhythm of the natural cycle of seasons, holidays, and religious rituals (fasting, indulgences, weddings, or mourning) experienced by the residents of Podlasie for generations. The artist's style is reminiscent of a child's drawings; it is simplified and evocative of folk art. However, in contrast to it, it exudes individuality and a subjective, very personal, even intimate mood. This is how Magdalena Wicherkiewicz looks at Dmitruk's art: "It is a praise of the local, of the here and now; of interpersonal relationships, the power of the community. Even if it is not ethnographic. Nor is it sociological. Rather, it expresses the subservience of art to life. The artist is one who lives in community and shows with his or her art the world next door. It is an art that, while remaining subjective, directs towards the supra-individual. It transforms the simplicity of everyday life into a meaningful ritual"¹⁴

Harriet Powers, Faith Ringgold, Dindge McCannon, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, and Małgorzata Dmitruk can be called fabulators, spinners of stories and tales, if not, in line with the dictionary definition of the word,¹⁵ mythmakers and liars. They compose not just individual anecdotes, but entire narrative structures, biographies and autobiographies through which, given their historical, social and cultural formation, they become some variant of the "form" of their communities. The stories they tell, thanks to their simple, figurative form, are comprehensible to any layman

» 14 Magdalena Wicherkiewicz, "Błękitność", *Małgorzata Dmitruk. Litografia. Malarstwo. Tkanina Unikatowa*, (Warszawa: 2008), 73-80.

» 15 Słownik Języka Polskiego, <https://sjp.pl/fabulator> (20.06.2023).

unaided by knowledge of the rules governing art. In his book *Colours and Psyche. Perception. Expression. Projection (Barwy i psychika. Percepcja. Ekspresja. Projekcja)*, Stanisław Popek¹⁶ observes that the viewer without special training is unable to fully understand and experience abstract art, focusing instead on the search for the content and meaning of what he or she sees. It is precisely the meaning, the simple, clear, moving message and the targeting of the largest possible audience that is the essence of these works and their great strength. Hence, narrative art can serve revolutionaries, socially engaged movements, and those intent on changing the unidimensional view of histories (Black Arts Movement¹⁷, Afrofuturism¹⁸, Feminism). It has continued to be used as a tool, although its patrons have changed over the centuries. Nowadays, under optimal conditions of creative freedom, it can flourish as a protest against a situation which the author-artist deems negative for themselves or the community, or as an intimate story of personal experience, creating a familiar image with which the viewer can identify. ●

Abstract

Narrative has been, and continues to be, one of the primary functions of art since the beginning of human artistic activity. Subject matter, manner and form have changed along with the changing historical, social, and cultural conditions. History, as the well-known phrase goes, was written by the victors, hence old art, patronised by those in power and influential figures, was often a unidimensional version of events intended to inform, articulate, and instruct society and future generations. Nowadays, living in a time of artistic freedom, anyone can be the author of their own story and give it any content and shape they wish. Furthermore, for centuries art has been predominantly the domain of men. What has changed in the last century is the participation of women in the art world. Women artists have introduced a new perspective, sensitivity, and hitherto unknown themes related to their personal experiences into art. Textiles have become a natural mode of expression because of their traditional association with femininity and the craftsmanship identified with women's hitherto functioning in the privacy of the home, on the margins of social life. The possibility of creative expression turned out to be an excellent way to tell a story not only about one's own hidden life, but by using the potential to reach a wider audience to become the voice of a larger community, to speak out about the problems of the general public, and thus to highlight certain issues, generate a change in perceptions and, as a result, work for the benefit of these groups. The protagonists of the article: Harriet Powers, Faith Ringgold, Dingda McCannon, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, and Małgorzata Dmítruk draw

» 16 Stanisław Popek, *Barwy i psychika. Percepcja. Ekspresja. Projekcja*, Lublin, 1999, 24.

» 17 Black Arts Movement – an African American movement founded by Amiri Barak in 1960, with a significant impact on the aesthetics of African American artists in the 1960s.

» 18 Afrofuturism – an artistic and aesthetic movement which emerged in the second half of the 20th century. Through literature, music or visual art, the movement redefined culture and the concept of the „black community“, incorporating elements of science fiction, Afrocentrism, and magical realism. The term emerged in 1993 in an article by cultural critic Mark Dery.

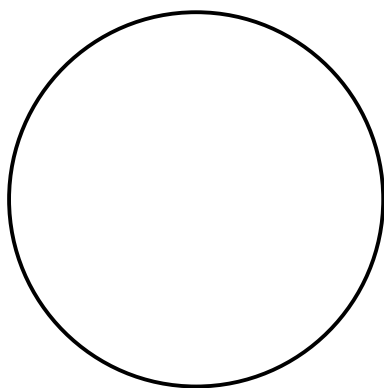
a broad picture of indigenous communities against the backdrop of their biographies. They do this using simple, figurative language, often naïve and clumsy. The form can be engaging and direct, like a child's drawings, so that their works have the power to attract and are comprehensible to any viewer. A common characteristic of the artists' work is an aura of "magic" and surrealism, which can be related to phenomena occurring in contemporary culture and art indicating a turn away from Weberian disenchantment of the world. They emphasise the natural need to create myth and the simultaneous illusory nature of modern rational systems.

Keywords:

narrative, figuration, textiles, woman, story, community

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