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MEETINGS: CONTEMPORARY ART AS A SPACE OF DISCOVERING ANOTHER MAN

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This article focuses on presentation of contemporary art as a space, where another person could be discovered. In the text there are three artistic project presented (Oxygenator by Joanna Rajkowska, The Artist is Present by Marina Abramović and public projections by Krzysztof Wodiczko), which could be interpreted from the perspective of relational aesthetics created by Nicolas Bourriaud. In this context, art is seen as activity, which could produce relationships between people. The philosophy of dialogue is the source of inspiration for today's pedagogical approaches that analyze interpersonal relationships. Art can open people to another person, creating specific spaces, where the audience can notice and feel another human being by a gaze, a voice and by being in the same common space.

Keywords: Art, pedagogy, education through art, relational aesthetics, dialogue.

Introduction

The relationship between man and the world, and man with other people is one of the most important topics in contemporary scientific disciplines, in social sciences and humanities. Seeking sources of inspiration for pedagogical reflections concerning importance of relationships with other people for our existence, and ways of building relationships with other people, we have to look towards contemporary philosophical thought. The concepts of M. Merleau-Ponty and H. G. Gadamer deserve particular pedagogical attention. The first philosopher situates knowledge and understanding of the Other in our body, the second one considers ways of experiencing another person in conversation. In dialogue we should reject prejudice towards the other. The most important is respect, consensus, not the will to take over, and subordination to another. At the same time, the aim of the dialogue is to have a new, common view on the subject matter, which is the result of the merger of convictions of all participants in the conversation. These points of view are very important when considering relation between art and education in order to develop our personality.

Another source for pedagogical considerations of this subject is the philosophy of dialogue. The theories of M. Buber and E. Levinas emphasize empathic understanding of the other and sensitivity to the signals coming from the others, ability and willingness to go “to the other” and be “for the others”, understanding of the importance of another person by willingness to give them attention and being open to their needs. The main elements of the philosophy of dialogue, which are inspiring for contemporary pedagogy, are: the analysis of the space between Me -You, the dialogue as a situation of conversation, the meeting between Me and You, the relationship with the Second one, as an ethical relationship based on responsibility.

Another important area that has opened the space for “another man” and extended the reflection about relationship between people is postmodern philosophy (J. F. Lyotard, J. Derrida, G. Deleuze, J. Baudrillard, M. Foucault). Postmodernism has validated in the classroom the differences (cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, etc.), questioned the androcentric and eurocentric perspectives, opened the space for multicultural and intercultural education and emancipatory discourses. Thus it breaks the bonds of stereotypical perception and schematic action, opening up to the multiplicity and variety of ways of being in the world.

Relational aesthetic

Taking into account all of the aforementioned inspirations, it is clear that the pedagogic thought of dealing with the another person comes from analyzing the relationship of a man with himself, with other people, and with the world, which he experiences and which he gets to know in so many different ways. The sphere where we meet the Other is the social sphere in which another person often appears as an alien – someone who does not fit into our familiar world, who defies our ways of interpreting and explaining reality. In pedagogical attention to the other lies enormous potential of crossing boundaries, opening new areas and the ways in which we can explain and interpret the world, entering new cognitive paths, transforming reality into a place that is friendly to all beings.

Emphasizing multiple points of view is the first step in finding an agreement, made not only by educators but also by artists. This is evident in the perspective of intercultural pedagogy. The pluralism of voices, the variety of forms, the multiplicity of narratives in art can be a challenge for an unprepared recipient. However, they are important elements of intercultural education, in which more attention is paid to the knowledge of art of other cultures. Showing how different types of art function in different societies, what needs they satisfy, what purposes they serve, how they expand their

human ability to perceive and understand the world, is an important step in understanding and dialogue leading to the agreement.

Art and its ability to build relationships between people is one of the most important educational aspects of activities of contemporary artists. Many of the artistic projects can be read in a context to the relational aesthetics of the French philosopher Nicolas Bourriaud [3]. He argues that the object of interest of contemporary artists is becoming a social interaction (relationship between people) treated as another kind of art medium. Artists create situations that allow the audience to interact, connect, make new friends, open up to another person. Thus, they oppose the today's tendency of social fragmentation, specialization, putting "I" before "We". The most important notions for relational aesthetics are interactivity, social context, interpersonal relationships and being together. N. Bourriaud emphasizes that "art is a state of encounter" [2, p. 18]. The form of relativity is present only in the meeting, in a dynamic dialogue of various artistic and non-artistic expressions. Referring to Duchamp's definition, that images exist only through spectators' eyes, N. Bourriaud's proposition goes even further, by putting dialogue at the heart of the process of creating a work of art. It is possible to negotiate, to know the Other, to know ourselves in relation to another person, only in dialogue. Thus, each work of art can be defined as a relational object, as a place of negotiations between countless propositions and their addressees.

The power of being together – Oxygenator by Joanna Rajkowska

The specificity of contemporary art can be understood as production of external relations in the field of art. Art has the power to build interactions between people. This type of art activity can be seen very well in the actions of Polish artist Joanna Rajkowska, who presents art as a sphere of meetings for different people. The art can be seen as social interaction, political discussion or the way of spending free time. Joanna Rajkowska allowed for the meeting of various personalities, by creating on Grzybowski Square in Warsaw, in the very center of the capital, a place which is like a lens, focusing on a variety of urban tales, specific space, unusual, "non-urban" – Oxygenator (2007). The project which existed for almost four months in the summer and autumn 2007, functioned as a point where many different fields of meaning converged. J. Rajkowska's artistic activity is a trend of art that refers to composition. Such artistic projects the artists point to the multiplicity of actors-elements, connected by various relationships, and create a specific and complex social composition. An important element of this composition becomes the "visibility" of actors, admitting them to the

common space, building relations between them, and coexistence. In this field the artistic strategy requires the creation of new places where the meeting and the participation of different actors in the common space make take place. Participants are not required to confront their own views, presenting their own opinions, disputes and debates. The most important thing is "being together" in the same place, creating the possibility of a meeting. Such "coincident" can lead to new connections, relationships between actors, change of power, acquaintance, and the creation of new alliances. The Grzybowski Square in Warsaw, where J. Rajkowska performed the Oxygenator, is a special area where many narratives cross. On a relatively small place there are: the church of All Saints designed by Henry Marconi, the building of the Jewish community, the synagogue and the Jewish Theater, the bank and modern glass skyscrapers. Otherwise there are concrete-slab apartment blocks from the 70s, small 19th century tenements houses (Próżna Street, one of the last remaining fragment of the city, not rebuilt after the war), small shops with laces and screws and modern apartment buildings. It's a very intense "melting pot" of personalities that go unnoticed (and never meet) in a common space, on the way home, to work, to the store, for lunch: older ladies with dogs, the homeless, artists, employees of nearby offices, groups of Jewish tourists, etc. At the heart of this diversity, J. Rajkowska created a place to stop, to rest, to be next to each other: a pond surrounded by bushes and green grass, decorated with water lilies, from which oxygen bubbles emanated, refreshing the contaminated urban air - Oxygenator. At the center of this diversity, a calm meeting place was born, which reminded of the tensions, but without the confrontation. The audience is struck by selflessness of this place. Roch Sulima compares the Oxygenator to the traditional "at the source" meeting. "In the traditions of all the cultures I know of, the place at the source is sacred, is excluded from any collisions and conflicts. This is the communion made by the "holy" water ... It is simply a neutral place, which is off, where even two greatest enemies can encounter" [8, p. 197].

The space organized by the artist gives the opportunity to be next to each other for people with different identities and worldviews. The artistic pond connects people (mutually invisible to each other), making them users of the same space. Thus, it deprives them of safe reference points, rudimentary language formulas, and tried-and-tested ways of doing things. What is visible here is the only tangible directness of the existence of others. People have almost physical contact with each other, they are very close together, physical presence becomes noticeable. Such a way of coexistence is

an incentive to create new forms of being, overcome past tensions. The Oxygenator is thus a pretext for asking what kind of community in today's pluralistic society we are creating, what can bind different personalities and groups? Does the difference exclude coexistence? Can we live with ourselves, not just side by side?

For J. Rajkowska art is the medium that has the power to create a situation of willingness to meet another person. But it is not about verbal negotiation, but completely different methods which are carried out in the artistic: non-verbal space. As the artist notes, "I am convinced that people do not have to negotiate or understand the nature of the difference between themselves. I do not believe in consensus nor in the purpose of using verbal language in establishing relationships. I think the path to coexistence leads through the body, by abandoning the ritual formulas that distort our mutual attitude" [8, p. 247]. This public art project can be seen as a field for situational game-play where it is possible (thanks to short flashes) to simultaneously participate, view yourself as a co-creator of the situation, and transgress the daily routine mechanisms of existence. This is short-lived fulfillments of Schiller's aesthetic state (K. Szreder) [9, p. 164].

The power of gaze – The Artist is Present by Marina Abramović

People by the Oxygenator can also look at one another, from the opposite sides of the pond. Many times for the first time. Such a gaze can have a big power to feel another person. The power of look we could see in brilliant performance by Marina Abramović "The Artist is Present", created in 2010 in Museum of Modern Art in New York. Marina Abramović, the artist from Yugoslavia, is a pioneer and key figure in performance art. She uses her own body as a medium of art, exploring the physical and mental limits of her being. From March 14 to May 31, 2010 in MoMa there was a retrospective exhibition of Marina's (*Marina Abramović: The Artist is Present*), where the audience could see approximately fifty works spanning over four decades of her artistic activity. There the artist performed herself a new performance, The Artist is Present, during which Abramović was sitting in silence at a table in the Museum. In front of her, on the other side of the table, there was an empty chair where everyone could sit. The form of this artistic activity was extremely simple, but the power of influence was enormous. Marina was performing daily throughout the run of the exhibition, for a total of over 700 hours. She was sitting without any movement, without any word for six days a week, seven hours a day between March 14 and May 31. She was present during her exhibition. But the most important in this activity was her being exactly for a precise person, who decided to sit on a

chair in front of her. The visitors could sit in a chair facing her and silently return her gaze. Nearly 1400 people occupied it, some for only a minute or two, some for a few hours. Some of them were crying, some smiled, other tried to create their own performance in front of Marina. The reactions were very different, but the strongest was the strength of impact of the gaze. Marina Abramović claims, that we live in the past or in the future. During the performance the artist gave possibility to concentrate, to be here and now, to snatch for a moment out of the world, to be for 100 per cent exactly here and exactly for this one person, who was sitting at the other side of the table. It was an amazing meeting. An incredibly intimate moment, when the artist was just and only for one person. Marina mentioned: "We always perceive the audience as a group, but a group consists of many individuals. In this piece I deal with individuals of that group and it's just a one-to-one relationship" (M. Akers and J. Dupre) [2]. This moment was like a confession without words. The strongest feeling of another person. The people, who were around, disappeared. The performance became the personal experience with the artist, with another person. Today's world requires from us multitasking, the speed, volatility and permanent movement. During Marina's performance the audience could be in another situation: without time, focusing only on one thing, one person, one gaze. Nothing out of this gaze did not exist. The most important in this activity from the pedagogical perspective was the focusing on another person, being whole for the second man. This performance is very close to E. Levinas theory. For him the face of the another person is an expression of pure vulnerability with an ethical command to protect it. Moreover, the Other presents themselves to us in their uniqueness and irreducible particularity. E. Levinas speaks of a "world", which possesses each of us, and how we can choose to bestow it on the Other as a gift. The only way to do this is through pure "presence before a face" (E. Levinas) [4, p. 50]. During this artistic incredibly powerful mental interaction, there was also a process of self-discovering, learning about yourself in interaction with another person. Discovering another man only by their eyes. Eyes are the mirror of the soul. I see you, I feel your presence, I read your feelings, I see myself in your eyes. The artist seemed to speak: in this big world we have this intimate moment only for ourselves. I am only for you. You are the most important person for me during this moment. It is very difficult to describe these emotions: sitting in deafening silence, exchanging energy, and just being with each other. Is that sort of intimacy can be possible between two total strangers? Marina Abramović sees the purpose of her art: "The entire aim of

my work is to elevate the human spirit. We can put the human spirit down so easily. You have to find a way to actually elevate the spirit so that it's a kind of oxygen to society. To bring concepts and awareness, to ask the right questions. Not always the right answers, but that the right questions being asked." [1]

The power of voice – projections by Krzysztof Wodiczko

Thanks to Marina's performance we could ask question about our needs to create relationships with other people, about our limits of being for another person, our capabilities to built really deep interactions in current world. Am I capable to be fully committed to the other? Can I see the second man? Can I notice another person? The others could be invisible for us or we could see them only from a utility perspective. This problem we could perceive in art of Polish artist Krzysztof Wodiczko. The artist is close to the concept of Hanna Arendt, for whom equality means visibility in public space. The most intimate confessions are visible in the public space in the form of visual presentations, displayed on buildings and monuments in various parts of the world, becoming the beginning of a discussion not only about our willingness to help another person but also visibility and response to evil. The faces, hands, and other parts of the body of speaking people, were enlarged to enormous sizes, and were speaking to their audience in random locations and buildings. In the Hiroshima Project (1999), women talked about the larvae that were in their wounds. In Tijuana (2001), the women in Mexican factories talked about harassment by employers. In the Caucasians (2005), the projection on National Gallery of Art Zachęta in Warsaw, the women talked about their problems: fears, humiliations, beatings, rapes, alcoholism: the violence of which they fell victims or the cause of which they became.

During the 53rd Biennale of Art in Venice in 2009, in the Polish Pavilion K. Wodiczko presented *Guests*. In the interior of the pavilion, on the walls, there were nine projections that created the illusion of translucent windows, from which appeared silhouettes of immigrants, performing various activities typical for immigrant status (cleaning, window cleaning, etc.). Simultaneously these people talked about their life condition. K. Wodiczko created an artistic "sound tube", transmitting knowledge about the conditions of the excluded, vegetating on the margins of social life. Usually we see them at work, we do not hear the voices. The artist gave them the opportunity to establish their own subjectivity in a performative act of speech. The stories were diverse, but they could give us (the audience) the possibility to become familiar with them. A story gives identity for the

person who speaks. The narrative identifies speaker with a specific space, which brings him out of indefiniteness, invisibility, and rootlessness in the present structure.

At the same time the projection proposed by the artist was aesthetically extremely beautiful. The hazy, high, half-rounded windows could be associated with the windows of the temple, and the people who appeared behind them looked like ghosts emanating from the fog: men, women and children. We couldn't see their faces, details of clothing. They were separated from us only by the light fog, but this fog was a barrier, which effectively did not allow them to cross to our space (the space, where was the audience). They were thus "in between" the two worlds. They were here, but they were not here at the same time. This was an aesthetic metaphor for the presence of immigrants in our space. We can see them only through the fog of utility, stereotypes and fears. Their personality is for us invisible. This sort of art encourages us to look closely at the another person, who is in our space, very close to us. This art invites us to listen to their voices, and develop our sensitivity to the suffering of others. This is a very ethical artistic action. Pain, suffering, helplessness and humiliation are the basic contexts of the theoretical articulation of moral evil, which is the most universal evil that can directly affect a human being (both in the scale of personal life and in the history of society and of the whole human race). Henry A. Giroux postulates looking at the history of human suffering, from which ethical theory should be deduced. This ethical theory puts at the heart solidarity, compassion and concern as dimensions of conscious social practice. The memory of the real sufferings of specific people becomes the support of ethical decisions (H. Giroux and L. Witkowski) [7, pp. 371-372]. The Wodiczko's art could be such artistic commemoration of daily suffering of people, who live around us. The artist in his projections gives voice to the characters of the stories and at the same moment gives to the audience the possibility to hear these narratives.

Conclusion

In the space of art we could discover another person. We could see them, hear them, feel them in a new context. We could notice their personality. We can focus our eyesight at them to pierce the barrier of indifference. The first step to this process is being itself in the common space, the gaze and the voice. The three artistic projects, which were presented above, the *Oxygenator*, the performance *The Artist is Present*, and public projections of Krzysztof Wodiczko, could open doors in direction to human existence. Pedagogical thinking emphasizes the importance of a

meeting of a man with another man. Education in the present world can be not only an area of theoretical reflections on the quality of interpersonal relationships, but it can also become a space for shaping awareness of being in relationships, of consciousness of constantly facing another person. Such education is an important impulse in the process of perceiving and understanding another human being. In pedagogical attention to the second man, lies the potential of opening up to new areas and the unfamiliar ways of explaining and interpreting the world. It is also a real incentive to enter new ways of thinking. Highlighting multiple points of view, is the first step in finding an agreement, made not only by educators but also by artists. If in space of art there is so much room for a dialogue and openness to the another person, then art can influence the creation of a social space equally open to the second man.

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ЗУСТРІЧІ: СУЧАСНЕ МИСТЕЦТВО ЯК МІСЦЕ ДЛЯ ВІДКРИТТЯ ІНШОЇ ЛЮДИНИ

Барбара Квятковська-Тубилевич

У статті розкривається сутність сучасного мистецтва як місця, в якому стає можливим відкриття іншої людини. Дається характеристика трьох художніх проектів («Оксигенатор» Джоанни Райковської, «Художник і теперішнє» Марини Абрамович і громадські проекти Кишиштофа Водічко), які можуть бути інтерпретовані з точки зору реляційної естетики, започаткованої Ніколя Борріодом. У цьому контексті мистецтво

розглядається як діяльність, яка здатна встановлювати відношення між людьми. Філософія діалогу є джерелом натхнення для сучасних педагогічних підходів, які аналізують міжособистісні відносини. Мистецтво може відкрити людей іншій людині, створюючи особливі місця, де глядачі можуть помітити і відчутти іншу людину за допомогою погляду, голосу і сумісного перебування в тому ж самому місці.

Ключові слова: мистецтво, педагогіка, освіта через мистецтво, реляційна естетика, діалог.

ВСТРЕЧИ: СОВРЕМЕННОЕ ИСКУССТВО КАК МЕСТО ДЛЯ ОТКРЫТИЯ ДРУГОГО ЧЕЛОВЕКА

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В статье раскрывается сущность современного искусства как места, в котором становится возможным открытие другого человека. Дается характеристика трех художественных проектов («Оксигенатор» Джоанны Райковской, «Художник и настоящее» Марины Абрамович и общественные проекты Кишиштофа Водичко), которые могут быть интерпретированы с точки зрения реляционной эстетики, основанной Николая Борриодом. В данном контексте искусство рассматривается как деятельность, которая способна устанавливать отношения между людьми. Философия диалога является источником вдохновения для современных педагогических подходов, которые анализируют межличностные отношения. Искусство может открыть людям другого человека, создавая особые места, где зрители могут заметить и почувствовать другого человека с помощью взгляда, голоса и совместного пребывания в том же самом месте.

Ключевые слова: искусство, педагогика, образование через искусство, реляционная эстетика, диалог.

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