

Artist Statement

I hear images, I see sounds

Jacek Jędrzejczak – photographer, visual artist, audiovisual experimenter. Absorbed by video art, installation art and new media art. Fascinated by the relations between image and sound, often collaborates with experimental musicians.

Zuzanna Kowalczyk: For audiovisual artists the transition from the photographic picture to the motion picture, enriched by sound, is almost symptomatic. However, it is the individual character of this transition, which determines the form of later creativeness.

How did this transition proceeded in your case? Where did your fascination with film and intermediality come from?

Jacek Jędrzejczak: I have always found myself particularly sensitive for the associations between image and sound. And this relation is what I find mostly interesting in art. Among image (photograph), film (motion) and sound (music), the most attractive things happen between these forms, in the gap between disciplines – a movement of an image, a slowdown of a film, a transformation of a sound. Dependence between moving and stationary, pure registration and creation. There was a moment when I realized, that photography is only one of many interesting art fields; that the synesthesia of experiencing the image, intuitive associating it with sound or visual sequence, is something that I should also develop and implement into my art.

ZK: Does it mean that audiovisual techniques have provided you the opportunity (whether formal or expressive) that you had not find in any other forms of expression?

Are you able to point out what it was that seduced you in the medium of photography and video?

JJ: Both photography and video are the registration tools. Only in the later phase, conceptual or compositional, they can become a proper medium of art. In other areas I have always felt that I'm not able to fully express myself, but rather limited by the lack of manual or technical skills. I've been always strongly influenced by music and painting, but felt too inefficient to participate in them. So, after all, I found myself as an artist outside them, but still close to their spirit. For example, I feel very strongly about sounds, but I don't create them, only register them. I create later – from what I registered. Same happens with the image. Although I admit that I am fascinated by new technologies and possibilities of all kind of filming equipment – such as accuracy of recording quality, retardations or postproduction capabilities.

ZK: You talk a lot about "feeling", involuntary associations, sensitivity. How important is then your intuition in your work? To what extent the image is for you a well-thought-out creation and to what extent it is a pure action? And where, among all of these, does the category of an audiovisual experiment locates for you?

JJ: Intuition is very important to me. Actually, it is my main creative drive. I usually wait for intuition to tell me which way should I go. When silent – I provoke her. And when it finally does appear – I give myself completely into it. It plays the main role in the experiment procedure, although it really determines all of my art. The first creative phase is blindly following the intuition – theme selection, numbers of trials, totally improvised actions. Next step is an intuitive brainstorm in which everything is allowed and nothing is assumed. Because I'm lucky not to work under the dictates of any grants, I never work on a specified topic; I always get carried away and try not to limit myself at any point. As far as possible, I allow intuition and imagination to speak out. Only in the later phase – phase of realization and creation – I try to keep myself disciplined. I'm also experimenting with post-production, even though these operations are much more thoughtful and conscious. However, what attracts me the most in the experimental field, is entering the unknown, the unawareness and role of accident, which utilizes my cognitive curiosity.

ZK: And is it the intuition what persuades you to work on the border of art fields? Or maybe the intermediality in art has become a clause of keeping it current in a relation to the modern world?

JJ: I assume that we don't necessarily have to do what is contemporary or in vogue, but of course we remain constantly influenced by it. I try to think that there is nothing I have to do, and that's how I do not adjust to anything against myself. But the fact, that I see images while listening to music, and hear music while watching images, asks itself for the realization! I'm walking down the street and literally hear pictures and see sounds! For me this intermediality is natural, intuitive, this is what I feel, see and hear. I transform the excess of stimulus into the intermedia. And since the compulsion becomes the end of an art, one must act freely. If this freedom leads towards art, which by accident is being considered contemporary and trendy, it means nothing more than the fact, that this is how your intuition guided you.

ZK: But surely, besides this freedom, some areas remain more or less inspirational to you. Which fields of art influence you the most in a creative way? What artists, streams or works have shaped your way of thinking about art?

JJ: I feel mostly inspired by noises and music. Sounds produce in my head visions that I translate into visual images. That's how scenes, faces and abstracts reveal to me. But surely my visionary way of thinking doesn't exist in a vacuum – it has been shaped mostly by painting. I don't act with a direct inspiration by painting, but this discipline

undoubtedly inspires me to my own reflections and formal reinterpretations. I especially remember my first trip to London, during which I attended the exhibition of surrealists. I fell in love with Salvador Dali's paintings, Luis Buñuel's early films, early painting of Marcel Duchamp and his iconic names of works, which were an unraveled mysteries themselves. I was interested in all freaks from the art world – Klimt, Bellmer, Bosch, Schiele. Very important painting for me turns out to be Gustave Courbet's The origins of the world, which was an urgent voice on issues of social acceptance of art and as well the acceptance of creative freedom of all artists. I have also grew up in a delight over classic acts and portraits, both painted and photographed. Hence my particular devotion to nude and portrait photography. But the most inspirational thing for me is probably the person I work with. The most important is this other person, often staying in front of my camera, and our interplay, the flow of energy and thoughts.

ZK: It is understandable then that it is the man who remains the main subject of your work. However, mostly naked, lonely, defenseless...

JJ: That's right, I like to recount about man and through the man. And you can tell about people by reportage, fiction, metaphorically, through the prism of philosophy, psychology... in contemporary art these areas become mixed up. In my art – they coexist. Nowadays, art appreciates the truth and I'm also looking for it. And that's why people in front of my camera are so often naked – they are defenseless, pure, real and bare. Only after that I can keep with someone a real conversation, an honest discussion. It is only through the naked man how I can reach my truth and present it in the deepest and most truthful way. I get really irritated by the artificiality. I don't understand being ashamed of one's own body and get frustrated by all visual taboos. Hence my love to nude.

ZK: Besides the nakedness, the strong motif in your exposition of human nature is the difference between carnality, material and spiritual, emotional. Where does as important role of this dichotomy between the external and internal in your art come from?

JJ: Already in ancient Greece a special emphasis was placed on the balance between physical and spiritual development. These two issues remain inseparable. Equally important to me is as well the balance between mind's freedom and body's freedom. I get the impression that today men have lost their balance and disturbed their inner harmony. That's why, among the lost crowd, I try to find the balance and the truth – to find the human itself, who I consider to be the most intense medium of art.

ZK: A human entangled in time and space.

JJ: A human in a relation to time and space. My view at the world through art is primarily about retarding. People fascinates me, so I slow down and watch them with a special attention. I am a graduated psychologist and that's why my curiosity about humanity is not a coincidence. But to clearly see and cognize someone, first you have to stop. Therefore, I retain the time with a camera, slow down the motion in my videos. I cherish the detail and detect an essence of a world in it. When I slow down I notice the world in a way it really is, reject the illusions produced by rush and excess. I get rid of falsity and look attentively at faces, scenes, moments. And then I capture them in a form of images and sounds, noticing truth in and between them.

ZK: The camera becomes a tool to find traces?

JJ: More to observe, because traces are capable of being found hardly everywhere nowadays; you don't have to look for them, only open your eyes wider. They are contained inside the walls, broken windows, dirty sidewalks and everyday objects. Human stories are not only about humans, but also their spaces, things, inhabited and abandoned buildings. Through these elements you can not only see them, but also narrate, feel, meditate. Each detail is a trace, each trace is a story. I am only a mediator. Sometimes I report it in a totally non-figuratively way, when I turn a still life into abstraction, and sometime I do it as realistic as if the image had just been torn away from someone's memory. This is how I understand and create art.

Interviewed and written by Zuzanna Kowalczyk