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SUMMARY OF ARTISTIC AND DIDACTIC ACTIVITY

Colour has always been the main focus of all my creative activities.

As I cast my memory back, I wonder how did I come to know that I wanted to paint, why did I choose to study painting? The simplest answer would be that colour was always my greatest interest. But is it enough to decide about one's own future and the choice of profession? Is it that this endearing naivete, the belief in the medium and in the strength of painting can be the driving force for the creative activity, the one that lasts for years? This I do not know, but I do know that sometimes I long for this pure feeling, for this naive belief that the painting may accomplish miracles. I remember when I went to the Warsaw Fine Arts Academy, Faculty of Painting, I thought I would only be learning to think like a painter. The visual structures studio run by Prof. Jacek Dyrzyński, and established years ago by Prof. Roman Owicki was a great discovery for me. In fact, right from the very first classes, it turned out to be my favourite place of study and work. I used to stay there for a much longer time than my fellow students, working on some more extended versions of my assignments. And thus, after completing my obligatory three-year course of study, I remained in this class for two more years, and after completing my studies I created an annex to my diploma.

But what has been happening with my painting at that time? When I was a third-year student at Prof. Jarosław Modzelewski's Painting Class, I felt a strong need of analysing the colour as such. Abstraction. For a good many months, I used to fill my paintings with abstract figures, combination of colours. After these few months of painting abstract works, I felt I was wanting in something. Working at the same time on special projects at the Visual Structures Class, I felt a strong need to go beyond the

two-dimensional thinking. The slowly arising interest in the three-dimensional medium became a way to show deeper the properties of colour. And thus, in the Visual Structures Class, within the framework of my diploma annex, the concept of special projects within abstract art arose, in which the three-dimensional medium is a form of an optical illusion achieved by means of colour. The project entitled **“The Kaleidoscope of Journey”** was a great breakthrough, it turned out to be a project that has entirely changed me as a creator. I realized that my imagination can be filled with much more things than I expected, that I can create a work that can produce a much stronger plastic effect than the classical painting. I never stopped painting, but the need for the illusory three-dimensional medium and the experiments it calls for, was, and still is the driving force of all my creative projects.

After completing my studies, I continued to search in the realm of abstraction and the three-dimensional medium with reference to colour. During my Ph.D. studies at the Graphic Art Faculty of the Warsaw Fine Arts Academy, it was natural for me to choose this topic for my doctoral dissertation. In 2009 I got the Mazovian Doctoral Scholarship granted by the Marshal’s Office. I defended my doctoral dissertation in October 2010.

The dissertation has two titles:

- **“Invention C – Colour”** (as my artistic work)
- **“The sound of colour, a multimedia spatial form as a plastic rendition of the score“** (as my doctoral dissertation).

Being a continuation of my practicing with colour, the dissertation was a quest for another ways of using the abstraction and the three-dimensional medium. The constant need for development that was dormant in me did not allow me to confine my limits to it. I decided to broaden the field of my activities by providing colour with a soundtrack. For the sake of this project, I created a kind of an author’s score, which was a record of geometric figures. I created the whole system of signs that were then interpreted by the musicians from the Kwartludium group, as well as a set of colours that corresponded to the colours of particular instruments and musical intervals. The whole visualisation, being a collection of figures, colours and sounds, was projected onto the spatial form which depicted geometric notes. The idea of combining plastic art issues with the musical ones gave rise to my creative research, and at the same

time it triggered the need to learn the musical issues. So, after defending my doctoral dissertation, I attended piano and the basics of harmonics lessons given to me by the pianist Eugenia Kwon, for a year and a half. At this time, a two-year training “Interuniversity Multimedia Major” was launched at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music (UMFC) in cooperation with the Fine Arts Academy. Courses for members of the teaching staff of both universities were conducted within the framework of this training. I was qualified to be a member of the group of participants, and I attended various thematic courses on the wide array of the multimedia issues during 2010 – 2013.

My piano lessons and the courses I attended at the UMFC allowed me to broaden my knowledge of music and it is partly thanks to them that I can now run my auteur Multimedia Workshops at the Art of Media Faculty of the Warsaw Fine Arts Academy. Their basic assumption is creating the works that would put together the creative activities relating to the plastic arts and to the music/sound.

Being an artist, I have widened the scope of understanding purely musical issues and communicating in the musical field. I got to know the world of sounds, so very different from our world of plastic arts in many respects. I have widened the field of interpretation regarding colour in the sense relating to plastic arts, and regarding the tone in the musical sense. Thanks to attending the courses, I established cooperation with members of the teaching staff of the UMFC. Now I try to make the most of these contacts as an educator, by enabling the students to cooperate with their fellows from the UMFC on various projects, but in the first place as a creator.

Both as an artist and as an educator, I feel the need to broaden my knowledge of colour. The idea of establishing the Creative Laboratory arose out of my need as a researcher. Its basic assumption was to make the students of the University of Music acquainted with the issues relating to plastic arts, and the students of our Academy acquainted with the musical issues. I asked Dr Magdalena Wajzner, a teacher of rhythmic at the UMFC, to cooperate with me in drawing up a programme and running the workshops. To create the course programme alone, turned out to be a real challenge. The most difficult issue, a contentious one, was the perception and the understanding of time, that is quite different to musicians and plastic artists. I still learn how to think musically about time. The workshops consisted of short classes

that started with presenting a specific issue. Next, the students had to give their interpretation of the topic. And thus, the musicians / students of Rhythmics were examining the influence of colour on the changed interpretation of the improvised piece of music / dance. Whereas the plastic artists were looking for the differences in meaning between individual tones of instruments or the rhythm. This was an interesting experience not only for the participants, but also for us, the instructors. The projects based on the students' of my workshop interpretation of pieces of music by both composition students and their instructors were also a part of the didactic cooperation project conducted with the UMFC. Most of the projects were presented during the concerts performed at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw. I am pleased to give my students the opportunity to see the results of their work in the concert hall, a place so different from an exhibition gallery.

Some of the works, acts of artistic creation which I had the pleasure to produce in cooperation with the faculty of the UMFC were the following:

- “**Figuraté**”, whose inspiration for the plastic and musical modes of representation was dance movement;
- “**Six looks at Paula**”, whose inspiration for the plastic and the dance movement modes of representation were my paintings;
- “**Praeter**”, whose inspiration for the plastic and the dance's modes of representation was music;
- “**Celeste, azure, cobalt blue**”, whose inspiration was time and uniqueness confined in the cycle of photographs.

All the projects were based on the principle of coinspiration. The crucial thing for us, the creators, was to be conscious of the compromises that each of us had to agree to for the sake of common creative work. So sometimes, when working on a very rich image, the music began to sound like a minimal music. When the dance movement played first fiddle, the painting was relegated to second place, and when the music led the way, the movement and the image became more quiet.

In compliance with formal requirements I indicate the Spatial Multimedia Form under the name of:

“Entanglement from the Meander series”

as aspiring to meet the requirements determined in the Article 16 section 2 of the Act dated 14 March 2003 on Academic Degrees and Academic Title, and Degrees and Title in Art.

In order to describe this work , I now need to go back to two events, without which my work would have never been realized.

The first one happened when I got acquainted with Patrycja Kujawska, a violinist and an actor who cooperates with London’s Kneehigh Theatre. It was in 2010. At that time, Patrycja acted in the play entitled “The Red Shoes”. All the actors, for the sake of this play, were shaved to bold. It was this juxtaposition of the beautiful woman’s body and the sexless bold head that inspired me to create the works depicting the entanglement of emotions that a man has to struggle with, in this case enclosed in neither female nor male body. After making a comprehensive photographic documentation which was the basis for my numerous sketches, in 2011 I created a painting series (12 paintings) entitled “**Meanders**”. These works are among the most important ones for me in my purely painting quest. Thanks to them I could reach an inner compromise between the subject matter of my paintings and their plastic form.

The second event started when Prof. Alicja Gronau, a composer and a lecturer at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music saw the “**Meanders**” exhibition. The works inspired her to write a musical composition. In the process of its creation, Alicja came up with a suggestion to expand this composition, so it could become a multimedial performance consisting of music for string quartet, the visualisation of my authorship and the dance element performed by the Rhythmics students and graduates of the UMFC.

My task was to create a visualisation based on my paintings and to set them in motion, to create an animated artwork. The paintings depicting human figures in

dynamic poses became an inspiration for Dr Magdalena Wajzner who was in charge of the dance movement. The dancers took up the poses depicted on the paintings, and the moment they started to move, they were giving life to the compositional settings captured on the canvas. The composition consisting of six parts was called by Alicja Gronau “**Six looks at Paula**”. It was performed two times by the Tesseris Quartet, in 2013, during a multimedia concert “Watching with Sound – Listening with Movement – Playing with Image in the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music and also in the Mazovian Cultural Centre.

When working on the visualisation I realized that the multimedia activities give me a great opportunity to interpret my own painting. After I finished working on the concert, I had an unsatisfied feeling. I was very moved by the sixth part of the composition. I felt I had to build up the plastic element accompanying this part. Basing on the experience I had from my previous works, I decided to create a multimedia spatial composition, in which the illusive third dimension was employed ideally to give it the effect of depth.

And thus “**Entanglement from the Meander series**” came into being.

Against the background of a white wall, I hung a silhouette, the size of 3 x 4 meters, cut out from the modelling foam, in the same pose as the figure in one of my paintings. As soon as the visualisation was displayed, the figure shown in my painting ideally inscribed itself into the silhouette hanging in front of the wall. The remaining part of the painting was projected on the wall. Additionally, there was a hand and a leg of identical shape as the ones shown in the visualisation hanging in front of the silhouette. Thus, three layers were formed on which the image had had stopped. The screen, fragmented in such a way, gave the impression that the elements of the visualisation walked out toward the audience. Alicja Gronau’s music is a record of emotions that she saw in my paintings. The sixth part of her composition entitled “**Entanglement**”, the one I used in my multimedia project, is full of these emotions. Thanks to the illusive three-dimensional form, they became even more visible and audible, almost physically sensible.

The work “Entanglement from the Meander series”, just like “The Kaleidoscope of Journey”, is a record of a surprising for me unlimited imagination.

My strong intrinsic need to search for the symbiosis between the world of plastic art and the world of sounds has not dwindled during the creation of my work “Entanglement from the Meander series”. My next long-distance project grew out of my need for doing further research. Both “The Kaleidoscope of Journey” and my doctoral dissertation “Invention C – Colour”, as well as the above mentioned project entitled “**Composition in green for Nature and Piano**” were created over the course of two years. Such a long time I gave myself for the realization of these projects resulted from my need to carefully analyse the theme and to search for its absolute form. As I was once told by Prof. Jacek Dyszyński, I am a person with extreme patience and I have the ability to consistently construct the theme, which is a very rare quality in an artist. During the project realisation phase, many persons get bored with the theme they chose to work on. For me, this period is the most important. It allows me to enter so deeply into the land of my imagination that I myself, as the viewer of my art, get stunned at it. The project was carried out thanks to the Młoda Polska scholarship granted within the framework of the National Centre for Culture programme.

The project was:

- a struggle with such a complex matter as composing a piece of music, and an act of courage to have this composition evaluated by my colleagues musicians;
- the trying of my patience when going to the forest and recording bird sounds for hours;
- the mastering of the multilayer thinking strategies during the realisation of such a complex project of my authorship embracing all its stages: starting with the conception, then the realisation and working on the material, and finally giving the work its final shape.

The project is a kind of a dialogue. The recording of two layers of sound and two layers of the image. The real world and the abstract one communicate with each other. Realism is presented in the form of the warble of birds illustrated by the composition of trees – fragments of bark. Whereas the abstraction is the music for piano, my own composition, presented in the form of strips of different colour, each of them ascribed

to the particular height of tone. Additionally, the colours change their shades depending on the volume of sound.

For the sake of the project, I had to learn not only the basics of composing, thinking of the dramaturgy of the composition by employing dynamic and articulatory changes, but I had to ,and first of all I wanted to, learn the audio editing skills, denoising, sound cleaning, and finally sound editing. While working on my dissertation, I turned to professionals, sound editor and a sound director, for technical help. In the case of this project, I decided to carry out my task from A to Z, mainly because I wanted to improve my knowledge and skills. I would not be myself if I did not take up the theme of illusive third dimension also in this project. And thus, the visualisation depicting once only a real image, and another time only an abstract one, and sometimes both of them at the same time, was projected on the two-ply sheet of fabric. The back covering ply, blue-illuminated from the back, formed a kind of a screen, whereas the front translucent ply created a kind of a haze, which made them look unreal. Thanks to this action, the work had a slightly hypnotising effect on the viewer, a magical one.

All these projects are somehow related to multimedia. What has happened with my painting? It has not disappeared. Thinking like a painter is still my driving force, and colour is my inspiration.

Why do I still paint?

It is because when I paint I do not have to share with “anything”, with sound, with space, or movement. This is where the paintbrush plays the first fiddle and the only one, since painting is pure pleasure, it is the charm of the painter’s atelier, the smells, the touch of the canvas, the physically fleshy paint. The computer or the camera do not have it. At least this is what I feel. But, first of all, I paint because the paintings have this mysterious power of entering into an intimate dialogue with the viewer. They are the sublime segment of reality, a record of forms, spots, matter.

Why do I create multimedia projects?

The painted picture is suspended in time. We watch the whole surface of it at the same moment. It is up to the viewer how much time he or she will devote to contemplating it. Whereas music does not remain the same for one moment, the whole of it, but it flows in time. It is a major difference which gets blurred in multimedia activities. A piece of music moves through time, with its rhythm and tempo. The multimedia works present the possibility of establishing a dialogue with these notions of time. The painting that is set in motion, livened up, allows for searching for some formal measures within rhythm and tempo. Thanks to contemporary media we can go a step further or it is simply easier to present the intentions of, for example, Giuseppe Arcimboldo the ocular harpsichord, or theoretical reflections of Wassily Kandinsky.

All my projects, both artistic and didactic, revolve around the issue of symbiosis of the plastic world and the musical one, a kind of synesthesia. That is why I still am looking for my students for the most adequate language, signs and plastic techniques that they can use to create a kind of an alphabet of musical forms. The questions connected with dynamics, articulation, tempo or timbre are the basic topics I discuss with them. I urge fourth and fifth year students to carry out closer analyses and to take up some more complex audiovisual projects.

In the 2014/2015 academic year I started to cooperate with a graduate of our Department who is also a sound director. We work together on preparing assignments for students, so that they can investigate the questions of sound even deeper. They are divided into typically technical tasks, slightly resembling post-production, and creative tasks as an attempt to create its own soundtrack.

In this academic year (2015/2016) together with the first year students of Bachelor studies we set up an academic science club "Circle of Sound" which gathered students willing to experiment and expand the field of their imagination. Our goal is seeking a space for a widely understood issue of sound in the world of plastic. Now we are preparing an audio spectacle – its main idea is to create a soundtrack so evocative that viewers do not need a picture. Applying Dolby Surround we want to

surround the viewers with the sounds to enable their own imagination to tell them our story. I am curious myself how it will sound.

As an educator I advise my students as to the theme and the form of working on it. The form of a dialogue changes during the thesis supervisor's work. Starting from the 2011/2012 academic year, I cooperate with students with their Bachelor diplomas. Being a supervisor, I have to accept the ideas of other people, discern the ones worth following and the ones that are a false clue. It is not an easy task to evaluate the ideas of others. During this academic year I will have to cope with the tenth Bachelor diploma.

What I intend for my personal development is to build up my knowledge concerning the timbre of a sound. As a free-lance student, I attend timbre solfège courses at the Department of Sound Engineering at the UMFC.

What am I searching for in my art right now?

I am sure it is still COLOUR. The issue of time might be an appealing form of its interpretation.

Now, together with Mariusz Wideryński, Assistant Professor, a photographer, I am working on a project concerning rhythm. Wideryński is a co-author of an interesting series of concerts entitled "Photographic Scores". During these concerts, the musicians interpret his photographs as if they were interpreting a score. Mariusz invited me to cooperate with him, and he placed his photographic essay at my disposal. These were the photographs in which the element of rhythm was the driving force behind them. I have a carte blanche on the visual issues, but I have to remember that this impression takes on the form that is possible to interpret by musicians. I decided that rhythm will be the constructing element of the whole project. I resolved that I should enter into a dialogue with it by juxtaposing rhythm with colourful geometrical forms, and then escalate the rhythm by means of symmetrical compositional schemes. The project is still being developed, it evolves, goes ahead, the talks with musicians are underway. That is why I cannot tell anything more about it.

The next issue, which I am slowly analyzing, is the notion of movement in the context of dance. All the more I am very pleased to have started cooperating with Iwona Wojnicka, a dancer and a member of the European Association for Laban / Bartenieff Movement Studies, an association dedicated to bringing together the followers of Rudolf Laban who are influenced by his choreographic thoughts. I believe it will be an interesting and promising collaboration. We get to know each other, talk about common undertakings and projects. I am glad to have made this acquaintance. A piece of “new world”, inspiration. My new idea grew out of it. It has not yet taken its final form or shape, but the starting point and the basis for it is the collection of over nine hundred photographs that are at my disposal. It is a recording of the emotions shown by Iwona through the movement of her body. How will it all develop? How will it sound? What colour will it have? Thus far, it is an open question. Let the imagination give some time to take on an appropriate colour.

Since after all, colour has always been the main focus of all my creative activities.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. YASZCZYK' with a long horizontal line extending to the right.