

# Thoughts Isolated: The Foksal Gallery Archives, 1966–2016

## Exhibition & Programs

Nov 18	Foksal Gallery
Nov 21	Katarzyna Krysiak Pawel Polit David Senior Justyna Wesolowska
Nov 22	Katherine Carl Katarzyna Krysiak David Senior
Dec 7	Irina Aristarkhova Katherine Behar Johanna Burton Patricia Ticineto Clough Ashley Dawson Piper Marshall R Joshua Scannell Rebekah Sheldon

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The Foksal Gallery Archives,  
1966–2016**

**The James Gallery  
The Graduate Center, CUNY  
365 Fifth Avenue at 35th Street**

[centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery](http://centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery)

**Hours: Tue–Thu 12–7pm, Fri–Sat 12–6pm**

**Nov 19–Dec 17, 2016**

**Exhibition and Programs**

Thoughts Isolated  
The Foksal Gallery Archives, 1966–2016

Founded by artists and critics in 1966 in Warsaw, Poland, the Foksal Gallery has thrived through transitions in the realms of government, the economy, and the art world. Today, at a time when New York City's artist-run spaces are encountering serious threats to survival, the case of the Foksal Gallery becomes ever more relevant. How does the Foksal Gallery illuminate new ways of building a sustained art community and legacy? The archives tell the story of the gallery as a model of an arts space run as a collaboration between artists and critics and engaged consistently in critical reflexive dialogue about its purpose/mission and meaning.

The exhibition opens on the occasion of the Foksal Gallery's 50th anniversary featuring the Foksal Gallery Archive's unique set of resources of original papers, photographs, printed matter and artworks collected since the gallery's founding. The exhibition includes early exhibition catalogues, invitations, posters and flyers, often designed by the artists themselves. Original material such as maquettes and designs for exhibitions are also to be found, as well as a large amount of photographic documentation of performances, installations and social gatherings at the gallery as well as sound and moving image recordings of early happenings and events.

The theoretical writings of the core critics who formed Foksal's philosophical agenda, such as Wiesław Borowski, Hanna Ptaszkowska, Mariusz Tchorek and Andrzej Turowski, were provocations towards rethinking how art could be presented. This exhibition pays homage to their work and theoretical rigor which emphasized new artistic concepts that changed how art could take place and disperse itself. These key texts form the enduring legacy of the Foksal Gallery.

*Thoughts Isolated*, the exhibition's title, is excerpted from a text entitled "The Living

Archives" by Wiesław Borowski and Andrzej Turowski (1971), in which the artists-critics stated in bold text: "WE DO NOT PRESENT HISTORY BUT WE KEEP THOUGHTS ISOLATED." This notion captures the Foksal Gallery's continued exploration of role of the archive in the gallery's program. The archive as a recurring conceptual figure is also to be found in Tadeusz Kantor's *Panoramic Sea Happening* (1967), during which a set of archival documents was submerged at sea; in Borowski and Turowski's *The Living Archives* exhibition (1971), where the entire gallery was transformed into an information exchange for international conceptual art documents; and most notably in traveling exhibitions to Edinburgh, Glasgow and London in 1979–1980. As we trace the various ways in which the archive was staged throughout the history of the gallery, this exhibition is similarly an experiment with archival practice.

In its current state, housed in same small gallery space in Warsaw in wooden boxes designed by the artist Krzysztof Wodiczko in the 1970s, the Foksal Gallery Archive demonstrates the role played by the gallery in shaping the history of contemporary Polish art. These materials give evidence of the experimental nature of the works displayed at the gallery by Polish artists like Zbigniew Gostomski, Maria Stangret, Tadeusz Kantor, Edward Krasieński, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Jarosław Kozłowski and Stanisław Dróżdż. It constitutes a singular collection of records which are of immense value in both artistic and historical terms and document fifty years of work within various political realities and in collaboration with a diversity of artists, from Henryk Stażewski, pioneer of Polish avant-garde, to an international roster of conceptual artists like Lawrence Weiner, Daniel Buren, Christian Boltanski, and Ben Vautier. ([www.galeriafoksal.pl](http://www.galeriafoksal.pl))



Tadeusz Kantor, *Panoramic Sea Happening, Sea Concerto, Osieki*, 1967. Author: Eustachy Kossakowski © Copyright by: Anka Ptaszkowska, Negatives and slides owned by Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

The Foksal Gallery has been set up under the patronage of the Plastic Arts Studios. This organization, involved as it is in the applied arts, has workshops, experimental laboratories, tools, and supplies of basic materials. With the opening of the Gallery all this will become available to interested artists. Many technical difficulties which artists often face when carrying out new experiments in Poland may thus be overcome. Ideas need no longer remain unrealized, as is often the case in the private studio.

Because of the conditions inherent in such a gallery-workshop situation, the Foksal Gallery does not consider it necessary to abide by the rules which govern other galleries in Warsaw. The Gallery does not interested in

- showing a „cross-section“ of contemporary art
- bringing about confrontations between art world „personalities“
- presenting „modern“ art (the word itself has become meaningless)
- presenting the work of „stars“
- observing the much publicized and commonly accepted (but irrelevant) divisions of contemporary work into „movements“

The Foksal Gallery is more interested in finding out to what extent the availability of new materials and tools will contribute to the generation of unexpected artistic concepts.

Two aspects will be emphasized in the exhibitions organized by the Gallery. In the first place it will attempt not so much to show works as „finished“ products, but to reveal them rather as materialized ideas in process with certain particular conditions and circumstances surrounding their creation. Secondly, the Gallery proposes to treat these conditions and circumstances as *inherent elements* in the display of art works, and to do away with the traditional division between the studio and the Gallery. The success of such an idea depends in the end on the artists themselves and the use they make of the facilities offered them.

The Gallery wishes to assure those artists invited to participate that they will have the fullest possible freedom in the arrangement of the exhibitions.

Introduction to the catalogue of the first Foksal Gallery exhibition, 1966.

## What we do not like about the Foksal PSP Gallery?

To realize that we act within a HABIT!  
To find out and reveal, what is HABITUAL in our behavior!

We are a gallery whose activity is disinterested.  
We are a gallery whose existence here - in Poland - is not justified by picture trade.

Why, then, have we assumed the structure of a commercial gallery?  
Why do we imitate its rules of activity and why do we ape the ritual (exhibitions, vernisages, criticism, parody of publicity)?  
Why, anyway, do we admit any rules of activity whatever?  
Let us examine them!

### The rule of exhibitions

*What the gallery does, consists mainly in arranging exhibitions.*

Has it not, perhaps, become a convenient and drowsing HABIT, reducing the whole activity to fulfilling a program? - making us fill in the gaps, talk about "better" and "worse" exhibitions, inflicting the burden of indifferent ones.  
Let one exhibition last for a year, and then - prolong it for another couple of months! The activity of the gallery, thus uprooted out of its official stand - shall then reveal itself by other means, it shall find for itself another form.

### The rule of time

**"GALLERY FOKSAL PSP  
NOVEMBER 1966  
WEEK DAYS  
11 A.M. TO 5 P.M."**

Is it certainly this month, those hours? Is it really for artistic reasons that dates of exhibitions are determined? Or, perhaps, artists who accept such terms simply yield to what is commonly accepted, while we all give in to social manners and formal ways of distribution.

Creation is always PRESENT.

We should have no more use for the calendar with its divisions into years, months, days and nights. For artistic ends it is unnecessary and encumbering.  
Let us not waste time!  
Let us get rid of it!

### The rule of place

*Gallery Foksal PSP, Foksal 1/4, Warsaw.  
Corridor - 2 x 5, closet - 5 x 5, exhibition room - 7 x 5. Height: 5 meters.*

Why here and only here?  
Architecture? its modules? its functions? To make it the starting point - what opportunism! And how ingenious to make an idol of it!  
Address? Good for an office.  
Any place is good. The only bad place is the gallery. Why? Because it has been careless enough to DEFINE its destination.

We must take definition away from it!  
We have to look for undefined places!

### Rules of polite manners

*"Gallery Foksal PSP welcomes for a vernissage"  
The audience is informed by the press that at definite hours it may visit the exhibition.*

The audience is an unfailing, though not enough appreciated instrument. It should be remembered that the audience behaves conventionally when it is put into a conventional situation.

IT IS BETTER TO SHUT THE DOOR TO THE PUBLIC than to keep it in the sacred and irresistible half-distance.

Let us challenge it! Scare it away! Be cunning!

Be wilder!

Write letters! Cables!

Await for an answer.

### Rules of criticism

As critics managing the gallery, we respect the stale and dishonest status of art criticism - it consists in MEDIATING and MANIPULATION, or, generally speaking, in being OUTSIDE.

Thus:

*we chose*

*How dare we chose? Are we above the facts? Why do we not simply grab for it?*

*we appreciate*

*The artificial distance so attained is useless, except that it flatters us.*

*we inform and present*

*while we know fairly well that information is never true and presentation is one of the best ways of avoiding art.*

*we plan*

*as if the most important could ever be predicted. The worst thing of all is that we do perform our plans.*

*we divide, shred, portion*

*we ought but protect and record, such as it is.*

As a result:

Artistic activity - essentially unconventional - is being subject to CONVENTION. To that of the gallery itself. Artistic facts, remain facts with all their meaning and impact.

During the Gallery Foksal PSP history there have been facts strong enough to disrupt and overwhelm the REGIME ruling here. However, in the next moment the regime was there again. It persisted as if nothing had happened at all.

To the question: when? we answer: NOW

To the question: where? we answer: EVERYWHERE

Let ACTION dislodge and defame performance.

In 1965 we questioned the EXHIBITION. We postulated that "exhibition lose its secondary and indifferent relation towards work of art and become an artistically active form".

Now we question the GALLERY - in its total structure that it still has.

GALLERY FOKSAL PSP  
Warsaw, December 1966

Drukarnia Dobre Grafiki PSP s.m. 1465 n. 500 N 95

## PROGRAM Galerii Foksal PSP

### wprowadzenie do ogólnej teorii MIEJSCA

W swoich dziełach sztuka niejednokrotnie ogłaszała się sztuką wyzwoloną. Ale czyniąc to dawała wyraz nie temu czym była, lecz temu czym być chciała. W rzeczywistości jest zawsze tylko sztuką, która się wyzwala.

Wyzwała się mianowicie, jak to już nieraz w podobnych okolicznościach stwierdzano, z własnych odziedziczonych cech — zruca je i pozostawia za sobą.

Pomiędzy te wszystkie stany nienawiści, jakie w przeszłości ogarnęły sztukę na widok własnej twarzy. Jednak najwyższy czas, aby ujawnić i nazwać to, z czego obecnie sztuka się wyzwala. Najwyższy czas na ujawnienie dzisiejszego przedmiotu nienawiści. Powiedzmy sobie jednak od razu, że jest to sprawa czysto wewnętrzna. Chodzi bowiem o nienawiść sztuki do samej siebie, a prawo do tej nienawiści mają tylko ci, którzy są wewnątrz.

Co najmniej jedna strona przedmiotu nienawiści znajduje się tuż przed naszymi oczyma. Tak blisko, że dostrzeżenie jej wymaga daleko idącej zmiany — zmiany punktu widzenia. Nie patrzymy na same dzieła, ale zatrzymujemy się przed terenem, na którym się znajdują. Nie wchodzimy na wystawę, lecz stajemy przed wystawą. Oto, co stwierdzamy:

I. Naturą wystawy jest przezroczystość. Ona pomyślana jest jako coś niestwierzonego. Wobec utworu artystycznego nie wolno jej być aktywną. Stan faktyczny: Wystawa obrasta we własną materię, autonomizuje się. Wystawa, a nie dzieło sztuki — staje się faktem. Poszczególne utwory artystyczne zostają podporządkowane samoistnej już rzeczywistości wystawy. Odtąd funkcjonuje jako jej element. Dzieło pomyślone jako jedno — staje się jednym z wielu. Czy dzieło sztuki powstało z myślą o jakiegokolwiek współobecności? o tym, że wystąpi w gromadzie innych dzieł?

II. Wystawa jest operacją dokonaną po fakcie. Fakt realizacji artystycznej spełnił się w zamkniętych ścianach pracowni. Dzieło ukończone, doprowadzone do ostatecznego kształtu — na wystawie zaczyna istnieć w zupełnie nowy sposób. Komunikuje to, co już się stało. Udośćpnia jedynie ślady decydujących działań. Wystawa jest tylko komunikatem o tym, co stało się gdzieś i kiedyś. Jej rzeczywistość nie ma z rzeczywistością aktu twórczego nic wspólnego.

III. WIDZ. Widz stawia się na wystawie dla dokonania ostatecznych formalności związanych z jej odbiorem. Jego obecność ma znaczenie protokolarne. Zostawiono mu przy tym zbyt dużą swobodę, z której na ogół nie potrafi korzystać. Ta swoboda nie wyzwala żadnej aktywności, tak jak np. mogłby ją wyzwolić najprostszy zakaz.

W rezultacie wszyscy znajdujący się na wystawie wybierają jeden sposób bycia: koncepcję kontemplacji. Postawa kontemplująca jest dla widza gwarancją dystansu wobec dzieła sztuki — jemu zapewnia miejsce na wystawie, umożliwia przeprowadzenie porównań, ekspertyz, zakupów itp.

IV. AUTOR. Artysta na wystawie nie ma już nic do roboty, poza trzymaniem kwiatów. Jest teraz widzem znudzonym lub galwanizowanym wtórnymi przeżyciami, bądź ambasadorem swoich przyszłych poczynań; murzynom, któremu nie wiadomo dlaczego nie pozwalają odejść.

Osobowość artysty, która ma się jakoby manifestować i to w swojej najprawdziwszej postaci — ukazuje się na wystawie pokawalkowana, ujęta w sztuczne dawki, dozowana w rytmie niewspółmiernym do jej rzeczywistego rozwoju. Artysta wisi na wystawie jak podwiartowany wół, z którego nadaremnie usiłujemy odtworzyć sobie zwierzę. Autor, któremu znawcy wzmówili, że jego podstawową cnotą jest szczerłość — odczuwa ponadto potworne zażenowanie widząc rezultat swojej szczerości w odświeżonych warunkach publicznego pokazu.

Czemuż z tego zażenowania, najbardziej autentycznej cechy wystawy — nie czynić jej przedmiotu?

**MIEJSCE. A więc MIEJSCE. Na pewno MIEJSCE.**

**MIEJSCE** to jest obszar, który powstaje z wzięcia w nawias, z zawieszenia wszystkich praw obowiązujących w świecie.

**MIEJSCE** nie jest kategorią przestrzenną, nie jest arena, sceną, ekranem, postumentem, piedestalem, a przede wszystkim nie jest wystawą.

**MIEJSCE** jest wyizolowane, a równocześnie musi się uzewnętrznić. Jego istnienie nie jest tylko sprawą subiektywną i nie może być wywołane drogą czysto prywatnych zabiegów. **MIEJSCE** jako fakt artystyczny musi zaznaczyć się na zewnątrz, musi zobiektywizować się w świecie, a równocześnie **MIEJSCE** istnieje o tyle o ile zdoła uchronić się od nacisku świata, o ile się z nim nie utożsami.

**MIEJSCE** jest nagłą wyrwą w utylitarne pojmowanie świata. W **MIEJSCU** przestają obowiązywać wszystkie miary obowiązujące poza **MIEJSCEM**. Przestrzeń pozbawiona jest swego utylitarizmu i zostawia poza sobą swoje miary, racje, interpretacje euklidesowe i nieeuklidesowe. Jeżeli zachodzą różne zdarzenia, to odebrano im wszelki sens pochodzący z wnętrza. W obrębie **MIEJSCA** nie ma wahań, ponieważ nie ma różnicy między działaniem dobrym czy złym, wartościowym czy niewartościowym — wszystko po prostu jest. **MIEJSCE** nie jest ani dziwne, ani pospolite, wyrafinowane czy wulgarnie, mądre czy głupie. Nie jest marzeniem sennym, ani jawą.

**MIEJSCE** nie jest przezroczyście. **MIEJSCE** to jest obecność. Nie ma żadnych kryteriów lepszego czy wartościowego wypełnienia **MIEJSCA**. Ono może być puste, ale pustka musi zaznaczyć swoją obecność.

**MIEJSCE** jest jedno i tylko jedno. **MIEJSCE** się nie dzieli. **MIEJSCE** się nie rozmnaża. W **MIEJSCU** się jest. Dopiero wtedy można mówić o nim jako o jednym z wielu, można

porównywać go z innymi miejscami, gdy się jest poza nim. Tylko poza swoimi granicami **MIEJSCE** może stać się przedmiotem nienawiści.

**MIEJSCE** jest objęciem w posiadanie dowolnego obszaru w świecie. Z punktu widzenia świata nie jest to obszar szczególny. **MIEJSCE** nie można rozpoznać po jego wewnętrznym wyglądzie. Ponieważ **MIEJSCE** nie jest w żadnym stosunku do praw świata — nie jest też ich modyfikacją. W istocie **MIEJSCE** może wyglądać zupełnie tak, jak każdy fragment rzeczywistości. Jednak w świecie są obszary, które uchodzą za szczególnie predestynowane do tego, by stać się **MIEJSCEM**.

**MIEJSCE** nie jest ani konstrukcją, ani destrukcją. **MIEJSCE** powstaje jako wynik bezkarnej decyzji. W świecie nie istnieje żadna wystarczająca racja **MIEJSCA**. Racja ją istnieje w sztuce. Ona powoduje **MIEJSCE**. Ten kto się w nim znajdzie, kreuje je. Tylko w **MIEJSCU**, a nie poza nim, „sztukę tworzą wszyscy”.

**MIEJSCE** nie może być mechanicznie utrwalone ale musi być nienastannie utrwalane. Wystarczy najmniejszy moment nieuwagi, a wchłonięte zostaje przez to, co je otacza. Istnieje wiele anonimowych sił, których profesja jest niszczenie **MIEJSCA** lub produkowanie jego namiastek. Siły te wykorzystują autorytet martwego obszaru, na którym pozostał ślad po **MIEJSCU** i manipulują materiałnymi elementami wziętymi zeń — elementami przywróconymi rzeczywistym miarom i proporcjom.

**MIEJSCE** nie można kupić ani kolekcjonować. **MIEJSCE** nie można zaarrestować. Na **MIEJSCU** nie można się znać.

Ochrona **MIEJSCA** nie jest jeszcze jedną inicjatywą, której autorstwo dałoby się ustalić i nie jest wytworem czasów dzisiejszych. W dziełach sztuki występuje stale, ale ujawnia się tylko w momentach przełomowych.

Takim przełomowym momentem było przeistoczenie się obrazu w **MIEJSCE**. W świątyni obraz nie był lub nie miał prawa być **MIEJSCEM**. Obecność jego usprawiedliwiona była o tyle, o ile służył on świątyni, o ile współuczestniczył w dziele nieustającego utrwalania i utrzymania tego wyjątkowego obszaru, który po wypędzeniu przekupniów sam spełniał niepodzielnie wszystkie warunki **MIEJSCA**.

Obraz uniezależnił się jednak i przez chwilę pozostawał samotny. Rama utrzymała się jako świadek tego oderwania. Rama — naiwne ucieleśnienie bariery chroniącej przed naciskiem świata.

Odtąd obraz będzie dążył do wytworzenia własnej więzi wewnętrznej, takiej, która bez dodatkowych ostoi ocali go jako **MIEJSCE**.

Tak powstała kompozycja.

Ale kompozycja — doskonała wreszcie realizacja zamknięcia, pozostała po swojej stronie; nie pozostawiła po stronie świata. Kompozycję możemy najwyżej rozumieć jako **MIEJSCE** — zawsze jednak jesteśmy poza nią. Ponieważ jest skończona i zamknięta, ponieważ jest niezniszczalna ale i bezbronna, ponieważ nic z nią samą nie może się już stać — kompozycja została skazana na manipulacje z zewnątrz. Zawisła w architektonicznym wnętrzu, inspirowała przestrzeń użytkową. Była adaptowana i przystosowywana. Została pojęta jako niezbędny element środowiska ludzkiego, została wchłonięta przez świat. W swojej postaci wyjściowej, stosunkowo najczystszej, znalazła się na wystawie. Ale tu zgubiła znowu swoją samotność jedyne doskonałe rozwiązanie i zaczęła łączyć się w stada.

Na wystawie przenosimy się więc z **MIEJSCA** na **MIEJSCE** oddając się przy tym „nieodwołalnym” procederom: oceniamy, porównujemy, wchodzimy, wychodzimy, wynosimy, kupujemy itp.

Na próżno chcemy być gdzieś — jesteśmy nigdzie.

**MIEJSCE** stają się tu wobec siebie reprezentantami innego a więc zewnętrznego świata z całą właściwą mu siłą agresji. Dokonuje się dzieło samowyniszczenia **MIEJSCA**. Na tym wyrasta ten zupełnie nowy twór — wystawa. Wystawa, która miała być przezroczyście, wystawa, która miała być naturalnym rezerwatem **MIEJSCA** — staje się nielegalnym, samoistnym produktem. Quasi-**MIEJSCEM**. **MIEJSCEM**-oszustwem. **MIEJSCEM**-hercją. **MIEJSCEM**-zdradą.

**MIEJSCE** jest nagłą wyrwą w utylitarne pojmowanie świata. **MIEJSCE** powstaje z zawieszenia wszystkich praw obowiązujących w świecie. **MIEJSCE** jest jedno i niepodzielne. **MIEJSCE**.

Wiesław Borowski  
Hanna Ptaszkowska  
Mariusz Tchorek

Wygłoszone w Pulawach, w sierpniu 1966 r.

an Introduction to the general theory of PLACE

Art has many times in the course of its history proclaimed itself to be liberal art. But by so doing it expressed not what it actually was, but rather what it desired to become. In fact it always remains art in the process of self-liberation.

As it has been more than once stated in similar circumstances it is being liberated from its own inherited characteristics; it strips them off and leaves them behind.

Let us forget all those hatreds that used to haunt art whenever it had taken a glance at its own face. However, the time has arrived when we can no longer refrain from revealing and naming that wherefrom art is now liberating. The time has arrived to reveal the present object of hatred. Let us emphasize at the outset, however, that this is a purely internal affair. The hatred of art towards itself is involved, and only those are entitled thus to hate who are within.

At least one side of the object of hatred is readily apparent. So close at hand it is that to notice it a radical shift of view point must be made. Let us for the moment no longer look at works, but instead let us stop before the territory occupied by them. Let us not enter the exhibition, let us stay at its threshold. What shall we find out?

I. The essence of exhibition is its transparency. It is conceived as nonexistent. It must not act upon the work.

But here are the facts: Exhibition acquires flesh of its own, it becomes an independent actuality. It is an exhibition instead of the work of art that becomes a fact. An individual work becomes subject to the independent actuality of the exhibition. It functions ever since as its element. The work conceived as unique is now one among the many.

Has the work of art been made for any coexistence whatever? Has it ever been thought of as showing up in a flock of others?

II. An exhibition is a post factum operation. The fact of artistic realization had been fulfilled within the walls of the workshop. The finished, final work begins a completely new existence on the exhibition. It communicates what is already the past. What it makes available, are but traces of decisive actions. An exhibition is but a communicate about what had passed, somewhere and at a time indefinite. Its actuality has no relationship at all with the actuality of creative act.

III. The beholder. He appears at the exhibition to endorse final formalities connected with its reception. His presence has a merely legal significance. And for all that, too much freedom has been allowed him, while he generally doesn't know how to use it. This freedom releases no activity on his part, as e.g. a simplest restriction might have done.

As a result, all those present at the exhibition chose one way of behaving: they contemplate. The contemplative attitude warrants distance towards a work of art, it ascertains the legitimacy of the beholder's presence at the exhibition, it allows him to compare, to check, to purchase etc.

IV. The author. The artist has nothing more to do at the exhibition except holding the flowers. He is now a mere beholder, bored or stimulated by no longer genuine experiences, or else he is an ambassador of his own future designs; his position is that of a servant kept staying without sensible reasons after he had performed his duties.

The artist's personality, which is said to be manifested in its purest form, is revealed at the exhibition mutilated, artificially partitioned, and dressed in a rhythm that is incompatible with his actual maturing. The artist is hanging as a cut bee, while we are trying in vain to reconstruct the living animal out of the cuts. Besides the author, persuaded by the learned that sincerity is his essential virtue, feels an awkward uneasiness seeing the result of his frankness in festive splendour of a public show.

Why not to make this uneasiness, as the most genuine feature of the event, into its very object?

The PLACE then. Well the PLACE. The PLACE, for certain.

The PLACE is an area that arises by virtue of setting aside all and any principles holding in the universe.

The PLACE is not a space category, it is not an arena, a scene, a postument, a screen, a pedestal, and above all it is not an exhibition.

The PLACE is isolated and at the same time it must get exteriorised. Its existence is not a merely subjective matter and it cannot be called into being by purely private endeavours. It must be conspicuous and significantly objective, while at the same time it cannot submit if it fails to protect itself against the world's impact and against getting identified with the world.

The PLACE is a sudden gap in the utilitarian approach to the world. All and any standards valid beyond the PLACE no longer hold within it. Therein space is devoid of its utilitarian significance; all its measures, reasons, Euclidean and non-Euclidean interpretations are left behind. Events, if they occur at all, are deprived of any outer meaning whatever. There is no hesitation within the PLACE, since there is no difference between the wrong and the right, the good and the good-for-nothing, everything merely and simply is there. The PLACE is neither strange nor common, refined or vulgar, wise or stupid. It is neither dream nor wale.

The PLACE is not transparent. What it is, is the actual presence. There are no criteria of better or more valuable filling of the PLACE. It may even be empty but, its emptiness must be conspicuously present.

The PLACE is one and unique. It cannot be divided and it does not procreate. The PLACE is what we are in.

Only when we step outside, can we conceive it as one among many places comparable with it. The PLACE can become an object of hatred only from abroad.

Any area of the world may be possessed and thus constituted as the PLACE. From worldly point of view this is by no means a peculiar area. The PLACE cannot be recognized by its appearance. It does not modify the world's laws because it has nothing to do with them at all. The PLACE may indeed look exactly like any other fragment of reality. However, there are some areas in the world that are thought of as particularly fit for becoming PLACES.

The PLACE is neither a construction nor a destruction. It comes into being as a result of an indemnified decision. The PLACE has no sufficient reason in the world. It is in the artist that this reason subsists. It is he that calls forth the PLACE. It is created by him who steps within it. It is only in the PLACE, and not outside of it, that „art is created by all”.

The PLACE cannot be mechanically fixed up but it must be incessantly perpetuated. A slightest moment of inattention may be enough for it to get sunk in what is around it. There are numerous anonymous forces that professionally destroy the PLACE or produce its fake substitutes. These forces take advantage of the PLACE still left and they manipulate with elements taken up from it — with element restituted to real standards and measures. The PLACE cannot be bought or collected. It cannot be arrested. It cannot be an object of virtue.

## expositions

GALERIE DES ANCIENS 15, rue Cassini - Paris - 1<sup>er</sup> arr.  
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WIOSNA  
1967

Protection of the PLACE is not one more among many endeavours with definite authorship, nor is it a product of the present. It appears again and again in the course of the history of art, but it only emerges to prominence at moments of radical shifts.

Such was the moment of transubstantiation of the picture into the PLACE. In the temple a picture had not or could not have been the PLACE. Its presence was legitimate at all only inasmuch as it served the temple and contributed to the effort of incessant perpetuation of this exceptional area that ever since the expelling of the buyers and sellers had been by itself the one and only PLACE.

However the picture had gained independence and for a while it remained solitary. It is the frame that remained as the only witness of the event. The frame, a naive embodiment of the dam protecting against the world's impact.

Thus began the tendency of the picture to produce an inner bondage of its own that would save it as the PLACE without any additional ramparts.

This is how composition has arisen. But composition, at last a perfect realization of the enclosure, has remained shut on its own side, while it has left us on the side of the world. The most we can do is to conceive composition as the PLACE, but we always remain at the outside. Since it is finished and closed, since it is undestructible though defenseless, since nothing more can ever happen to it, composition has been sentenced to be manipulated from without. It has been hung up in architectural space, it has become an inspiration for utilitarian space. It used to be adopted and readjusted. It used to be thought of as a necessary element of human environment, it has been sunken in the world. In its initial and relatively pure form it has appeared on the exhibition. But there it has lost its solitary character of the only perfect solution and it began to assemble in flocks.

At an exhibition we thus walk from PLACE to PLACE while performing „illegitimate” procedures like those of evaluating, comparing, coming and carrying in and out, buying etc. We try in vain to be somewhere — we are nowhere.

PLACES are here representing to each other the strange outer world with all its aggressive force. What is going on is selfdestruction of PLACES. On the ruin feeds the new monster, the exhibition. Intended to have been transparent, called forth as a natural reservation for PLACES, the exhibition has turned out to be an illegal, selfsustained creation, a faked PLACE, a PLACE — deception and a PLACE — heresy and a PLACE — treason.

The PLACE is a sudden gap in the utilitarian approach to the world. The PLACE arises, when all the laws holding in the world are suspended. The PLACE is one and indivisible. PLACE.

WISLAW BOROWSKI  
HANNA PTASZKOWSKA  
MARIUSZ TCHOREK

Delivered in August 1966, Palawy



Zbigniew Gostomski 0/

## FRAGMENT UKŁADU (CENTRUM WROCLAWIA)

## FRAGMENT OF THE SYSTEM (THE WROCLAW CITY)

Galeria Foksal PSP  
Warszawa  
ul. Foksal 1/4  
LUTY 1970

W. 157/34/42

### ZACZYNA SIĘ WE WROCLAWIU (LUTY 1970 ROK)

0 / na planie miasta, przedmieściach oraz poza obszarem miasta i stopniowo obejmujące coraz większe obszary, zgodnie z założeniami sympozjum (punkt 5) „ma być realizowane w technikach trwałych”.

1. 0 — element o średnicy X, wysokości X
2. / — element o wymiarach X x X x X

#### Uwagi:

- Wielkość elementów winna być właściwa tzn. nie za duża i nie za mała.
- 0 / nie mogą być ciężkie.
- 0 / nie powinny nastęrczać żadnych trudności w trakcie realizacji.
- 0 / zawsze te same, wykonywane metodą przemysłową, z a w s z e z tego samego materiału, zawsze tej samej wielkości.

Realizacja musi przebiegać ściśle w oparciu o podany schemat 0 / przy czym nienaruszalne są miejsca, w których wypadnie zaistnieć 0 /.

Miejsca pojawienia się 0 / lub 0 nie nic znaczą, ich forma czego nie wyraża. To, że nie znaczą i nie wyrażają nie wyklucza...

Fakt pojawienia się 0 / jest konsekwencją ich pojawienia się w ogóle.

Punktem wyjściowym — początkiem realizacji — może stać się miejsce dowolnie wybrane spośród oznaczonych na planie 0 lub / bądź 0.

Przy wytyczeniu miejsc dla 0 / należy przyjąć dowolną odległość między elementami, która odpowiadałaby dość ściśle odległościom podanym na planie.

W momencie ustalenia odległości zaczyna ona obowiązywać dla całej realizacji — nie może pod żadnym pozorem i z żadnego powodu ulec nawet nieznacznej zmianie.

Raz przyjęte założenie wyjściowe determinuje dalsze postępowanie — niezależnie od terenu i sytuacji, w których 0 / wypadnie zaistnieć.

0 / należy ustawiać, niezależnie od ukształtowania terenu, w pozycji pionowej na takim podłożu jakie w danym miejscu istnieje. Wewnątrz budynków wskazane jest umieszczenie 0 / na parterze.

0 / winno być umocowane na stałe do podłoża.

Założeniem tej pracy jest jej stały i nieskończony, równomiernie we wszystkich kierunkach postępujący rozwój, który obejmować będzie swym zasięgiem coraz to dalsze (w stosunku do punktu wyjściowego) obszary.

Od tego momentu zaczyna się egzystencja 0 / w terenie otwartym: ulice, place, parki, dziedzińce, podwórza, tereny fabryczne, sportowe itd.,

oraz w budynkach, zabudowaniach, instytucjach, gmachach użyteczności publicznej itp.

W wypadkach wyjątkowo niekorzystnych dla egzystencji 0 / wolno zrezygnować z umieszczenia 0, /, 0 w przysługującym im miejscu.

0 /

Zaczyna się we Wrocławiu.  
Mogłoby zacząć się gdziekolwiek.  
Zaczyna się na danym obszarze,  
nie musi się jednak na nim skończyć.  
Jest potencjalnie nieskończonością.  
W formie jest niezmiennie,  
w sytuacjach zaś nieustannie zmiennie.

Zbigniew Gostomski

### IT BEGINS IN WROCLAW (FEBRUARY, 1970)

0 / on the plan of the city, on its suburbs, and beyond its limits, covering an increasingly extensive space, according with point 5, symposium assumptions, "it shall be realized so as not be perishable".

1. 0 — an element X in diameter, X in altitude
2. / — an element with dimensions X x X x X

#### Note:

- The elements ought to be proper in size, i.e., not too large or too small.
- 0 / must not be heavy.
- 0 / ought not to present any difficulties in realization.
- 0 / are always the same, mass manufactured, a l w a y e of the same material, always the same in size.

Realization of the 0 / must strictly follow the offered scheme, while the spots in which 0 / will exist must not be infringed upon. The spots where 0, / or 0, appear, are meaningless, and their form is expressionless.

The above by no means excludes...

The fact that 0 / appear is a consequence of their appearing at all.

The starting point for realization may be any place chosen out of those marked by an 0, or /, or 0 on the plan.

When spots for 0 / are sorted out, any distance between elements may be accepted, that would correspond fairly enough with distances stated on the plan.

The distance, once it has been chosen, will be binding for the whole realization — it must not undergo a slightest modification, under any pretence, and for whatever reason. The initial working assumption determines the whole future action, for any and all where 'oute or situations as might emerge there for 0 / to exist.

0 / must be settled vertically, in any setting and upon such ground as might ever be found.

Inside of buildings it is desirable to place 0 / on ground floor.

0 / should be permanently bound to the ground.

The present work is conceived as steady and unending, developing uniformly in all directions, increasingly extending in space. From that moment 0 / begins to exist in open space: street, squares, parks, yards, lots, factories, recreation areas, etc.,

as well as inside of houses, premises, bureaus, public building, etc.,

Only places particularly unfavorable for an existence of 0 /, if such are due for it, can be given up as 0 /'s sites.

0 /

It begins in Wrocław.  
It could be started anywhere.  
It begins in a definite area,  
but it need not end there.  
It is potentially endless.  
It is unchanging in its form,  
but perpetually changing in its situation.

Zbigniew Gostomski

Detwidzelen Oficyna Graficzna PSP



## ASSEMBLAGE D'HIVER dans la Galerie Foksal PSP, Varsovie



Tadeusz Kantor  
„machine à écrire pourde d'une voile et d'un gouvernail”



Henryk Stażewski - premier à droite



Zbigniew Gostomski - „fenêtres aveuglées”



Maria Stangret - „peinture des seuils”



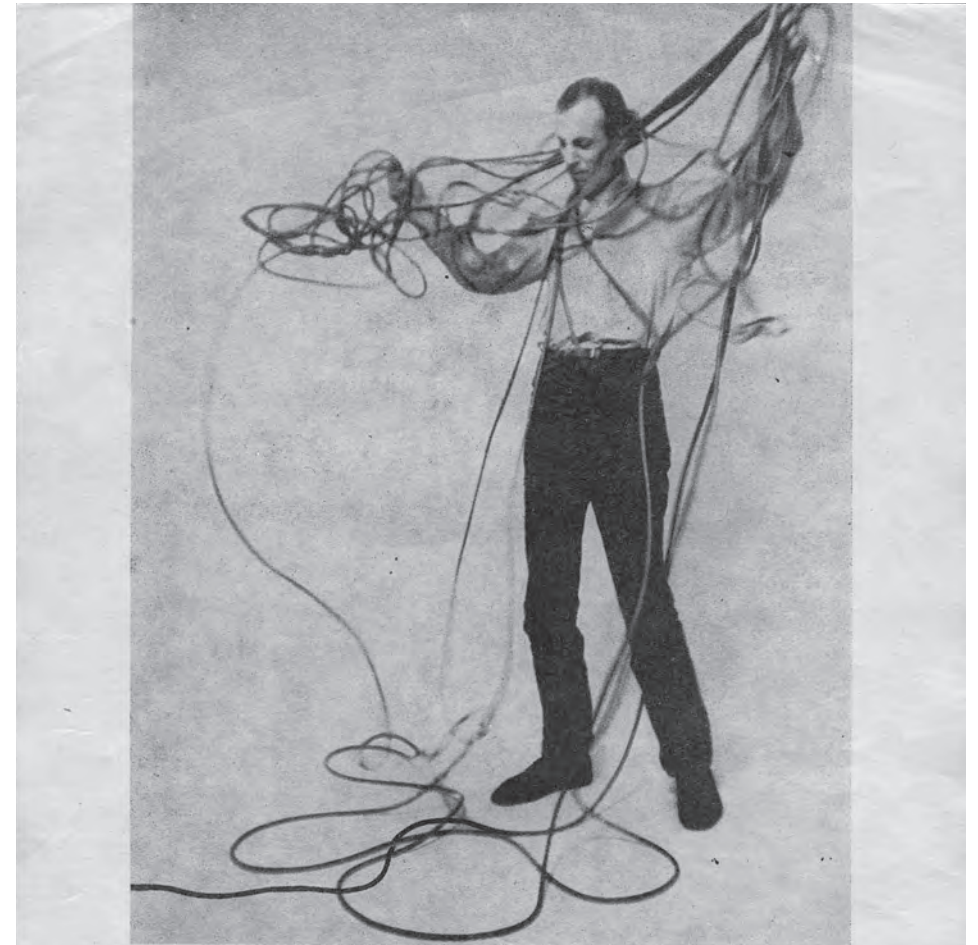
Jerzy Beres - „œufs de Paques et cravaté”



Edward Krasinski - „et cetera”

publié par la Galerie Foksal PSP Varsovie, avril 1969

“Winter Assemblage” at Foksal Gallery, leaflet, January 1969.



bleu mince longlonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglong  
nglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglonglong...

### J'AI PERDU LA FIN!!!

Je la cherche!  
Qui la trouvera  
est prié d'ECRIRE! de TELEPHONER!  
de TELEGRAPHIER!  
à l'adresse suivante: Edward Krasinski  
Galeria Foksal PSP, Varsovie, rue  
Foksal 1/4, tel. 27 62 43

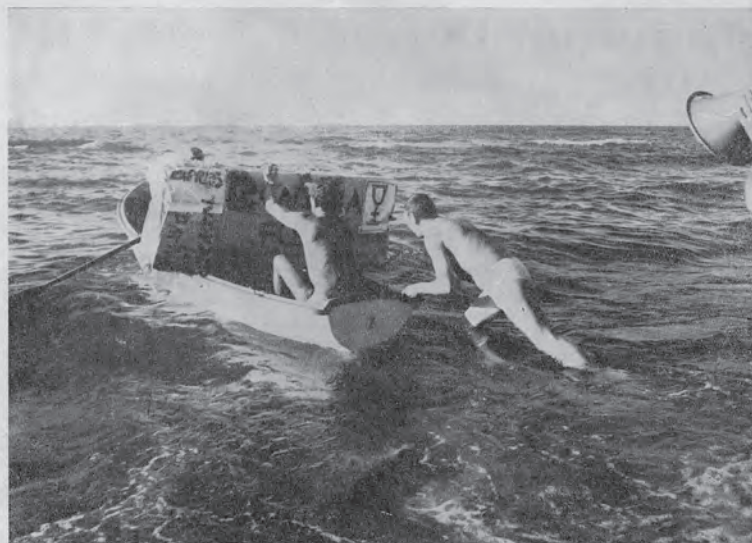
publié par la Galerie Foksal PSP Varsovie, avril 1969

Edward Krasinski, “I’ve Lost the End!!!” Foksal Gallery leaflet, April 1969.

# documentation

september 1971

galeria foksal psp  
warszawa  
ul. foksal 1/4  
telefon 27 62 43



"The Sinking" — an event from the Panoramic Sea Happening by Tadeusz Kantor, Osieki, 1967

..... a few people are busy around a large trunk. They are wrapping it tight in layers of linen and paper. They are in a hurry, they are looking around with anxiety. They are undoing some strings with much pains... They give orders to each other in a low voice. They act furtively and without anybody's permission. They try to realize their aim taking advantage of the general carelessness. To protect the trunk. ... To make fail any attempts at reaching its contents'. ... They succeed to pack it and stamp it with warnings, instructions, mail symbols: Attention, Fragile, Ostrożnie, Góra. Don't bend. By boat. The Address: GALERIA FOKSAL PSP — Warszawa ... The rumour goes among the public that the trunk contains a collection of

the Gallery's important documents: a manuscript of the pedantic chronicle of pseudo-artistic events; applications and responses to applications; longplaying records with speeches; a full file of press items with critical reviews... shorthand reports, protocols, photographs and photocopies... The crowd around the trunk is growing. At a certain moment it is brought to the very shore of the sea. There it is most carefully put aboard of a life boat which quickly sails away sea-bound, with the crowd silently watching. A rocket shot was the sign to throw the trunk into water.

(Tadeusz Kantor — from the Script of the Panoramic Sea Happening, 1967).

12/68/52/5-5

# documentation

Wiesław Borowski  
Andrzej Turowski

## documentation

The world of art has entered the epoch of DOCUMENTATION.

A work freed of its form and function appears as a single or ephemeral actualization of an idea, without any material trace being left.

It is made accessible in the form of a record which is either a document or a project. It was or it will be.

An unapprehended present state remains an ISOLATED MESSAGE.

A work is not vulnerable to anything which might be a pretext for an information, for it identifies itself with the information about it.

A work of art has lost its permanence. Only formal systems, monuments and institutions endeavor to prolong its existence.

The museum-archives of DOCUMENTATION try to fix and keep the memories of works in the form of various kinds of records.

**Thus we want to have everything documented! In a more thoughtless, pedantic and massive manner than the collectors or the maniacs of scientific collection used to collect their collections.**

We set up an illusion of survival of artistic ideas, while what we have actually got is a muddled magma of artistically useless and commercially useful „traces“.

**We are putting the matters together again for unlimited manipulations!**

We give ourselves up in the hands of the mass media functionaries.

We are performing a huge-scale exchange of DOCUMENTS and incalculable linked transactions.

DOCUMENTATION is an artificial prolonging of durability of what is essentially VOLATILE. It keeps in store and reproduces what **used to be** an object of perception, experience and action. It is more difficult to destroy the DOCUMENTATION than to burn down the museums and collections. The self-reproducing documentation including everything and accessible everywhere is more imperative than all the expositions in the world.

Without our notice, the DOCUMENTATION became identical with the museum and collection, assuming their forms and manners.

But the DOCUMENTATION as the final link in the process of transmission becomes a FORM of a work of art.

It cannot be destroyed — it must be denied!

GALLERY FOKSAL PSP

# głos na taśmie HENRY GALY CARLES



sprawozdawcy z trasy listu:

Wiesław  
**BOROWSKI**

Zbigniew  
Gostomski

Edward  
**KRASIŃSKI**

*mariusz*  
Tchorek

## LISTONOSZE

Marian Gęgniewicz  
Henryk Jurczak  
Marian Książek  
Piotr Kucharenko  
Bolesław Nowak  
Wacław Nowakowski  
Henryk Wójcik

### LIST

Trzeci happening-cricotage  
"L'événement" — tekst Henry  
Galay-Carles — Paris  
"L'empallage" — Tadeusz  
Kantor — Kraków  
Egzekucja — Galeria Foksal  
PSP — Warszawa  
dnia 27 stycznia 1967  
godzina 18-ta  
Galeria Foksal PSP

czytający listy:

MARIA  
STANGRET

ZBIGNIEW  
Gostomski

Mariusz  
*tchorek*

Hanna  
Ptaszkowska

EDWARD Krasinski

WIESŁAW  
Borowski

**CZŁOWIEK  
W CZARNEJ  
SKORZANEJ  
KURTCE**  
*tadeusz kantor*



Henryk Stażewski 1969

**9 rayons de lumière  
dans le ciel**

publié par la Galerie Foksal PSP Varsovie

# the living archives

september 1971

galeria foksal psp  
warszawa  
ul. foksal 1/4  
telefon 27 62 43

Artistic activities, when they are under way, remain invulnerable to their showing off; they also set in doubt the reasons to be perceived.

An active thought wishes to exist beyond the manipulations of:

- artists themselves
- display managers
- the greedy audience.

A new work, since it is identical with its message, lasts as long as its process of isolation continues. Its real existence is hooked up in the time span between its broadcasting and its reception.

If the limits are encroached upon from either side, the autonomy of the work is threatened:

- persistent stroking of his thought by the artist contaminates it with the author's lyrical Ego
- when received, a thought is introduced into the circulation of the schematic cultural values

A letter put to a mailbox is no longer subject to any manipulations until it arrives where it is bound to. Its objectless, shapeless, impersonal and necessary authenticity is equivalent to the length of the mail channel.

The time of transmission is the only neutral ground of an artistic work. Even if reduced to a minimum, it determines the occurrence of the fact.

Artistic facts call for an establishing of the LIVING ARCHIVES as a possibility to apprehend the transmission.

The LIVING ARCHIVES make it clear that a thought is past when it is accessible.

The LIVING ARCHIVES define a work when it is neutrally present — when the artist has quit it already — when the mill of schematising interpretations has not started yet.

The LIVING ARCHIVES are expected to be a channel in which the works remain in their own state of readiness — already beyond the stimulating thought of their maker, but before the audience distorts them. We step in to give a work its frame, we seize the transmission — we don't care for the broadcasting and the reception.

An exposition, as a place of reception of a work and the last phase of the flow of information, has been the point from which it's been consumed and introduced into the institutional pattern.

A Laboratory of Art used to provide hothouse conditions for the breeding of ideas, it was a local center allowing for exhibitionist advertising of an artist in ways prepared in advance.

By establishing the LIVING ARCHIVES we deny:

- the Laboratory of Art
  - the workshop for artistic ideas
- as well as WE DENY ANY AND ALL FORMS OF PRESENTATION OF A WORK.

WE ALSO DENY ALL THE ARCHIVES, since any archives present history.

WE DO NOT PRESENT HISTORY BUT WE KEEP THE THOUGHTS ISOLATED.

The LIVING ARCHIVES offer the frames which are not institutional or cultural for any artistic activity.

We do not collect materials in a scientific or methodic way. Our objective are not archives endeavoring to make its files complete. We've got no use for archives as a collection of documents which "are not actual, but are worth to be kept".

A rich collection in the LIVING ARCHIVES is a necessity, but it cannot be used for any purpose.

We are establishing the ARCHIVES THAT ARE FUNCTIONING CURRENTLY.

The LIVING ARCHIVES set forth a model for a working, work maintaining its neutrality.

The LIVING ARCHIVES, by suggesting a changing but always sharp borderline of desistence, become a new context for creative activity.

The LIVING ARCHIVES are subjugated to creation.

The LIVING ARCHIVES are a current reaction to the

- artistic
- nonartistic
- antiartistic phenomena.

Wiesław Borowski  
Andrzej Turowski



Foksal Gallery Archive, Warsaw

Mon, Nov 21, 6:30pm  
Lecture and Discussion

## Achieving Rapport: Art and Archives at Foksal Gallery

Katarzyna Krysiak, Pawel Polit, David Senior, Justyna Wesołowska.  
Moderated by Katherine Carl.

In tandem with the exhibition on view in the James Gallery, “Thoughts Isolated: the Foksal Gallery Archives 1966-2016,” this evening’s lectures by Katarzyna Krysiak, Pawel Polit and Justyna Wesołowska followed by discussion will focus on critical and curatorial strategies and practices at the Foksal over successive decades with continued support of the thriving contemporary art scene. Today at a time when artist-run spaces founded in the 1960s and 70s in New York City are encountering serious threats to survival, what does the example of Foksal Gallery illuminate for building a sustained art community and legacy? Starting in the 1960s from a base of extraordinary commitment to art and philosophy as well as ongoing international exchange, the gallery was self-reflective in its practices and in its documentation of activities ranging from performances and public art to strong graphic and textual production of catalogues and printed materials. Foksal Gallery introduced deeply influential artists to the international scene including Tadeusz Kantor and Edward Krasinski, and Krzysztof Wodiczko, as well as hosting an international roster of conceptual artists like Lawrence Weiner and Ben Vautier, which in turn shaped contemporary art in Poland and internationally.

The James Gallery

Tues, Nov 22, 6:30pm  
Gallery Tour

## Thoughts Isolated: The Foksal Gallery Archives, 1966–2016

Katherine Carl, Katarzyna Krysiak, David Senior.

The archives of Foksal Gallery in Warsaw tell the story of the gallery as a model of an arts space run as a collaboration between artists and critics, which was constantly in critical dialogue with itself about the purpose and meaning of its own mission. Now celebrating Foksal Gallery’s 50th anniversary, the archive houses a unique resource of original papers, photographs, printed matter and artworks collected since the gallery’s founding. The exhibition includes printed materials like early exhibition catalogues, invitations, posters and flyers, often designed by the artists themselves. Join the curators for a look at archival materials such as original maquettes and designs for exhibitions, copious photographic documentation of performances, installations and social gatherings at the gallery as well as sound and moving image recordings of early happenings and events.

The James Gallery

Wed, Dec 7, 2016, 7pm  
Conversation

## Object-Oriented Feminism

Irina Aristarkhova, Katherine Behar, Johanna Burton, Patricia Ticineto Clough, Ashley Dawson, Piper Marshall, R Joshua Scannell, Rebekah Sheldon.

This conversation explores object-oriented feminism (OOF), a feminist intervention into recent philosophical discourses—like speculative realism, object-oriented ontology (OOO), and new materialism—that take objects, things, stuff, and matter as primary. Approaching all objects from the inside-out position of being an object too, OOF foregrounds three significant aspects of feminist thinking in the philosophy of things: politics, erotics, and ethics. The evening’s discussion centers on a new discipline-expanding volume, *Object-Oriented Feminism* (University of Minnesota Press), which seeks not to define object-oriented feminism, but rather to enact it by bringing together contributors from a variety of fields and practices including sociology, anthropology, art, science and technology studies, English, philosophy, and everyday life.

The James Gallery

*This event is co-sponsored by the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, Baruch College, CUNY.*

**Curators:** Katherine Carl, Katarzyna Krysiak, David Senior.

**Cooperation:** Bartek Remisko and Martyna Stołpiec. With special thanks to Anna Ficek and Jennifer Wilkinson.

**Organizers:** James Gallery, the Graduate Center, CUNY and Foksal Gallery, Mazovia Institute of Culture, Warsaw.

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