

University of the Arts Poznan

Faculty of Painting and Drawing

JERZY MUSZYŃSKI MA

**In-between plane and space - selected aspects of artistic creation  
in the context of personal creative research**

ABSTRACT

In the dissertation, I analyze multi-aspect issue of experience and function of space in the process of creation and reception of art. The analysis is based on selected phenomena in the fields of art, culture, philosophy, psychophysiology and cognitive science ; I also refer to astrophysics as the metaphor of the spatiality of time, the 'artificial presence' of *image* (L. Wiesing), Maurice Merleau-Ponty's thought that 'the world overtakes every analysis which it can be submitted to' and his comparison of the sight with a stick of a blind.

At the beginning I analyze the concept of experience itself which differentiate from its understanding as 'a function of linguistic structures, prior to the subjective inside' to 'something already present in pre-reflective, phenomenologically captured existence, preceding these structures' (M. Jay). The importance of *experience* reflects in the eponymous 'context of personal creative research' which accompanies all chapters as the set of raw experiences, *cognizance* and knowledge on artistic articulation.

Then, in the context of phenomenology, I proceed to discuss the body function in the experience of space and the *dimension* of this experience which is determined by subject's identification with the body. I refer, inter alia, to the issues such as: Immanuel Kant's 'a priori form of sensuality', the immanence of ones experience, the depth as a function of subjective *perspective* and the lateralization towards space. I also raise the psychophysiological aspects of experiencing space in the context of the cultural primacy of sight and visibility, as well as the issue of experiencing darkness (blackness) embodying the space not visible in broad daylight (whiteness).

On such background, I address the issue of *the form* in the sense of Wiesław Juszczak, showing its analogy to the definition of objectively existing space by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I point out the potential of art in expanding (transgressing) everyday experience of reality ; I also speculate on the potential of sensually understood *form* in 'source experiencing of space, before its division into form and content' (M. Merleau-Ponty). In this context I discuss the relation of 'imaginative thinking' with 'conceptual thinking' and the sensual aspect of the form (layer of artistic articulation) with its consciousness aspect (word as a kind of *image*), as well as the relation between the intentionality of the body and the intentionality of consciousness.

In this perspective I try to synthetically define the subject of my own artistic interests, which source seems to lay in the awareness of 'stratification' of the subjective experience of space in relation to its objective and unrepresentational nature as well as personal experience of reality in which its representation becomes so sensually intensive that it seems surreal. For my own use, I call this experience 'the crack of the realness'. In this context, I address the issue of liquidity (boundlessness) in relation between optic and tactile qualities, as well as painting and sculptural qualities. I make a distinction between the format as a frame of the perceptual world and the image as a segment of the perceptual field. I also analyze the features of easel painting as an object, looking for the boundary between painting's representation of optical space and its (as an object) signs of belonging to the tactile space; I indicate the similarities between the suprematist 'pure feeling' (K. Malevich) and the 'pure look' in phenomenology.

Then I compare the features of the work of art in its former cultural models, e.g. nineteenth century *beaux-arts*, in which the artwork in general was adapted to particular space, with the model based on the convention of *white cube* gallery, in which the space became subordinated to the

artwork. At this point, I distinguish the space as a site from the modernistic space understood universally (contextless) in which the artwork became aesthetically and semantically 'detached' from the place. Then I try to trace the origins of the *site-specific* category, which was born in response to modernistic aesthetization of space as a background, and thus commodification (objectification and purely understood aesthetization) of artworks, especially easel paintings. After that, on selected examples of *minimal art*, I point out issues such as: contractual neutrality of *white cube* space, the 'activity' of the gallery's architecture, the function of so called 'negative space' in *installational* form of art and the problem of artwork's sensual 'interference' with the interior of the gallery, which as it gradually enters postmodernism, from being neutral background it becomes a mean of expression. I also point out the function of a gallery's floor as a section of the space continuum, enabling *nomen omen* fundamental experience of space in time. I use this stratification between place and universally understood space to indicate a different status of the artwork and its autonomy in a non-art space and context, as well as the fact that neither the *white cube* space, being a certain case of social space, nor the 'public' space which has its primal functional purpose, provide unambiguously optimal conditions for creating and experiencing the artwork. I also raise the issue of the cultural conditioning of one's perceptual structure of the world.

At the end, as a kind of open conclusion, I present my own artistic work, titled *White cube / black cube*, prepared for the occasion of the doctorate.