

# ACTION LUBLIN!

Galeria Labirynt™

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## CHAPTER 1

**JANUSZ BAŁDYGA**  
**WŁODZIMIERZ BOROWSKI**  
**ZDZISŁAW KWIATKOWSKI**  
**TERESA MURAK**  
**EWA ZARZYCKA**

**Exhibition opening: February 24th, 2017 (Friday), 8 p.m.**

**On until: March 19th, 2017 (Tue-Sun, 12a.m.-7p.m.), admission free**

**Curators: Paulina Kempisty, Waldemar Tatarczuk**

“Action Lublin! Chapter 1” is a first part of a series presenting the most significant events from the field of performance art in Lublin – actions, activities, manifestations, interventions and performances by Polish and foreign artists.

The participants of the “Action Lublin! Chapter 1” exhibition are artists collaborating with Galeria Labirynt for whom performance was or still is an important form of artistic expression. Janusz Bałdyga, Zdzisław Kwiatkowski, Teresa Murak and Ewa Zarzycka belong to the representative group of Polish artists. Each of them participated in the life of Galeria Labirynt in the times when it was a place of meetings of the newly forming circles of Polish neo-avantgarde and a one where leading artistic trends of the 70’s were presented. In the following decades the artists were regularly showing their works or performing in Galeria Labirynt and sometimes also participated in creating its programme.

„Action Lublin!” presents selected performances which constitute an important point of reference in each artist’s output. These are early works executed during the artists’ academy years or shortly after graduation. Some of them have become emblematic for the history of Polish performance art, e.g. „Lady’s Smock” by Teresa Murak from 1975. On the other hand, the reference to the works of Włodzimierz Borowski, an artist closely associated with Lublin, is vital in the context of the first action which heralded the beginnings of the new field of art which was to become performance art.

Works will be presented in a form of screenings, photos, but also new installations and objects basing on the remaining

artefacts. The background for the exposition is a review of footage materials of performances from the years 1974-2016 from the Galeria’s archives.

## Artists’ works

### JANUSZ BAŁDYGA

Born in Lublin in 1954, currently resides in Warsaw.

“POLAND! POLAND! positive-negative”, 1980-1982, object  
“Use of force”, 1984/2017, photograph: Krzysztof Kleczkowski

“Use of force”, 1984, digitalized 16 mm movie. The author of the movie was Krzysztof Klempka.

He graduated the Warsaw Fine Arts Academy in 1979, Stefan Gierowski was his supervisor. During his studies he co-created the Pracownia Dziekanka (1977-1979), an independent artistic space, which presented pieces that transgressed the curriculum of the academy. Since 1976 he has participated in the Academy of Movement, a group known worldwide due to their actions in the public sphere. He conducts the Performance Art Workshop at the Artistic University of Poznań and is a lecturer at the Theatrical Academy in Warsaw. He is an author of artistic objects, actions and performances. Janusz Bałdyga’s first solo exhibition took place at the Galeria BWA Labirynt\* in 1983 (“Polish Tatra Mountains”). In the years that followed he was often present in the gallery’s program.

Three of the artist's works from the 80's are displayed at this exhibition: artistic object "POLAND! POLAND! positive – negative" (1980-1982), a photograph from his performance "Use of force" (Galeria BWA Labirynt, 1984) as well as a movie of the same title. "POLAND!..." consists of two sheets of fabric, which look like flags, hanging from a metal frame. The "map" of Poland is shown on both of them, where the right side of it is the mirror-image of the left side. Flag-maps are artefacts, which remain after the performances, one of them was first used at the "Polish Tatra Mountains" exhibition in 1983. The symmetrical map of Poland is one of the returning symbols used by Bałdyga since the early days of his artistic career. The second important "icon" is the model of the plane displayed in graphical form, present in the movie, which was shot on a beach in Kazimierz Dolny. It is visible as well as on the flag that documented the performance from the Galeria BWA Labirynt. This symbol appeared in Bałdyga's art in connection with the controversial catastrophe of the Korean airliner shot down by mistake by Soviet warplanes in 1983. Zdzisław Kwiatkowski has guest appearances in both endeavours.

#### **WŁODZIMIERZ BOROWSKI**

Born in Kurów in 1930, died in 2008 in Warsaw.

IV Syncretic Show "Offering of the Oven", Puławy 1966, photographs: Eustachy Kossakowski

Włodzimierz Borowski studied art history at the Catholic University of Lublin from 1952 to 1955. He was one of the founders of the Lublin art group Zamek Group (1956-1960). He was among to the most important Polish post-war avant-garde artists. Between 1966 and 1971 he produced a series of Syncretic Shows which took on various forms: exhibitions, installations, environment, in which sound and light effects were blended in; space played an important role and the audience co-created its active part. Some of them included elements of the artist's live activities, thanks to which Borowski is considered to be one of the precursors of action art. The First Syncretic Show took place at the BWA Gallery in Lublin in 1966 – it was the artist's retrospective exhibition called „MANifest LUSzrzany" (Mirror Manifesto).

IV Syncretic Show was the artist's first presentation intended as a live performance in front of an audience, which had the signs of artistic action. The photographs in the exhibition were made during the artist's preparation for the exhibition "Offering of the Oven", which took place in August of 1966 during the "Art in the Changing World" – The First Artists' and Scientists' Symposium held at the Puławy Nitrogen Plant. On one of the photographs we can see the artist with open arms – in a welcoming or presenting gesture – with thick steam coming from machines in the background.

A fragment from the artist's account of what took place:

"The place – Nitrogen Plant – ovens producing urea [...]. 10.00 PM [...] All of them are grouped in juxtaposing the ovens on the designated area with amplifying columns in front of them. It's dark inside – only the ovens shed some light from below – the loud, booming, powerful gas fuelled

burners. After a moment I climb the metal steps to the platform, I'm wearing a tuxedo [...] The reflectors pointed at the ovens light up. They light up and fade out in the rhythm of the heart-beat [...] I start to speak to the microphone. I say that being amazed by the industrial landscape I cannot do anything more than to treat the object, on which I'm delivering my speech as a work of art and to return it to the board of the Nitrogen Plant. At the same time I ask for particular caution towards the object, due to the signs with »Explosive« written on them surrounding it. In order to celebrate this moment, I begin to sing a song I composed to the words »Urea, urea«, interrupting it several times in order to remind about the warning signs. At one point my enthusiasm reaches a peak and the melody transforms into the national anthem, after that I stop singing and go down the steps [...] A few of my friends approach me, congratulating me and sympathising with me. The rest of the people try not to notice me. I can feel my and their embarrassment, outrage and disregard for such a failed performance. The board of the Nitrogen Plant feels offended [...]"

[quote from: A.M. Leśniewska, "Puławy 66", Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Puław, Puławy 2006, pp. 44-45]

#### **ZDZISŁAW KWIATKOWSKI**

Born in Chełm in 1956, resides in Lublin.

"Changing the System of Forces 1983-etc.", 1983/2017, installation

From 1978 to 1983 he studied painting at the Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw. His graduation project was made under the supervision of professor Rajmund Ziemiński and the annex to it under the supervision of professor Ryszard Winiarski. He creates art in the realm of performance, installations and drawings.

"Changing the System of Forces" was first displayed in June of 1983 as a part of the artist's graduation project. Later on the artist undertook further "changes of the system of forces", in the form of a performance in the presence of the viewers, at the Galeria BWA Labirynt in Lublin and the Pracownia Dziekanka in Warsaw.

"Changing the System of Forces 1983-etc." refers to the action carried out more than thirty years ago, for the first time it was presented in such a reduced form at the inSPIRACJE 2014 International Festival of Visual Art in Szczecin.

It is possible that during the exhibition the artist shall change the balance of powers (the date and time is unknown).

"Zdzisław Kwiatkowski's artistic intentions are supplemented by captions, which indicate the presence of episodes while applying particular repetitive strategies (conflict situation) with a finite and infinite game duration (game theory). The game is on and subsequent fields with text become revealed, which define the teleological and processual nature of the piece. Above and beyond that, the time since the first (1983) to the current exhibition (2014) defines a period similar to a generational leaps, after which, as scholars notice, there are usually historically

significant changes in the balance of power – a regularity of the cyclical domination of changes is recognized in the titular “etc”. Perhaps “Changing the System of Forces 1983-etc.” conceals Zdzisław Kwiatkowski’s reflection on the role of the artist proposed by the conceptualists. One should bring to attention the fact that conceptualism (American and Western-European) when diagnosing the state (balance) of social-political forces (of the West) indicated the unavoidability of changes, starting with the cultural ones in perspective of „Art after Philosophy” (J. Kosuth) and by using the concept of the „Artist as Anthropologist” (J.K.) the artist had the role of bringing on these changes ascribed, especially the changes in the field of consciousness. Then this for the rest of the world would undoubtedly be an utopia. It’s impossible not to notice the subtle irony, hidden behind the mask of the demiurge or the ruler-strategist, when the artist says: “I have an unlimited influence on the balance of three forces and I change it when I want to” (Z.K.). Isn’t liberty an absolute category? In axiological and ethical perspective, this issue was considered by the leading Polish representative of the neo-avant-garde school of art and its successors”.

[Fragment of Jolanta Męderowicz’s text “Układ, siła, zmiana”, catalogue inSPIRACJE/Xtreme 2014]

“This piece turns out to be an ideal symbolic exemplification of such a situation where a geopolitical “demiurge” “covers one layer of truth with another” (as the artist himself describes it). Each time the artist paints over the formerly present symbol and putting in that place a new configuration, he points to a distinct characteristic of changes exposing a balance of forces in place”.

[Fragment of Jerzy Truszkowski’s text “Polityczny konceptualizm Zdzisława Kwiatkowskiego”, catalogue inSPIRACJE/Xtreme 2014]

## TERESA MURAK

Born in 1949 in Kiełczewice (Lublin region), she resides in Warsaw.

“Lady’s Smock”, 1975, digitalized celluloid movie

She studied art history at the Catholic University of Lublin and completed a course in painting at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts under the supervision of Jan Tarasewicz and Tadeusz Dominik (1976). She creates installations, sculptures and drawings as well as is an author of artistic actions, performances and interventions in the public space. Her works can be found in various collections: at the Zachęta National Art Gallery, the Museum of Modern art in Warsaw, Centre for Contemporary Art Zamek Ujazdowski, the Hoffman Collection in Berlin as well as at other important modern art centres. She has been linked to the Galeria Labirynt since 1975; the last solo exhibition of the artist – “Who are you going to” took place there in 2012.

“Lady’s Smock” is artistic action, which was carried out over several days, and took place between June 3rd and June 8th 1975 at the then headquarters of the Galeria Labirynt at the Rynek 8 street. Teresa Murak put seeds of the cuckooflower on the long and damp textile shirt. Regularly

watered, heated with artist’s body heat and with that coming from lamps, in several hours the seeds began to sprout. Teresa Murak spent the next several days at the gallery nurturing the plants. During that time the gallery was open to the public, which could observe the entire process. Ultimately the entire surface of the shirt was covered in lush greenery. At the culmination of the action the artist dressed in the cuckooflower covered shirt went out into the streets of the Lublin Old Town.

“Lady’s Smock” is a piece created when she was studying, which is connected with a cycle of “sowings” of the cuckooflower. The cycle began in 1972 (“The Fist Sowing”) in the Student’s Dormitory Dziekanka in Warsaw and was developed by the artist in the following years.

*A SEED OF A CUCKOOFLOWER*

*I LAY UPON MY DAMP*

*SHIRT, I WRAP MY ENTIRE BODY IN IT*

*AND POUR WATER ON IT.*

*I’M WAITING FOR THE SHELL TO CRACK*

*THE SPROUT TO MOVE*

*AND GROW*

*From June 3rd to June 8th 1975*

*Galeria Labirynt*

*Teresa Murak*

[The artist’s commentary published as an ephemera “Teresa Murak. Cuckooflower – Lady’s Smock”, Galeria Sztuki MDK Labirynt]

## EWA ZARZYCKA

Born in 1953 in Szczecin, resides in Lublin and Kazimierz Dolny.

“Symptoms Now”, 1980/2017, video

Untitled, 2017, installation

From 1973 to 1978 she studied graphic design at the Art State College in Wrocław (currently the Wrocław Academy of Fine Arts), where for the past several years she has been conducting the Performance Arts Workshop at the Chair of Art Mediation at the Painting and Sculpture Department. She creates artistic objects, installations, drawings, films and spoken performances. The first presentation of the artist in the Galeria Labirynt took place in 1980 and was a performative viewing of the film “Symptoms” as a part of an event called “Art accompanied”. In the consecutive decades she regularly exhibited her works and participated in the life of the gallery. Her most recent retrospective exhibition “From NO to YES. Works from 1980-2010” was organized in 2010.

“Symptoms” is a silent movie registered on 16 mm tape. The recording took place in Kazimierz Dolny in early spring with the participation of a group of friends and colleagues of the artist: Dobrosław Bagiński, Jerzy Kiernicki, Danuta Wierzbicka as well as Krystyna Kutyna-Bagińska, Anna Górecka, Wojciech Górecki, Jerzy Onuch, Zenobia Pożarska and Andrzej Szafran. The artist in an amusing way describes the symbolic death of the film and photography medium, “she examines – which she personally emphasizes – the medium

with the aid of the medium". Zarzycka refers to the feeling of satiation with "medialism", which was popular in art in the 1970's. During the exhibition at the Galeria Labirynt in 1980 two performers – Danuta Wierzbicka and Jerzy Kiernicki, were reading the dialogues out loud (which due to "technical issues" were not included in the movie), while Zarzycka commented the course of events on screen. The video presented at the current exhibition was created in a similar way – the artist decided to slightly edit the movie "Symptoms" and add to it a contemporary commentary. In the thus created "new" work based on the "old" one we find out about the story behind its creation, details referring to the place and people, who participated in it.

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\*Due to the complex history of the gallery and in order to unify the names of the institutions, the following abbreviations are used in the text:

Galeria BWA – Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych (Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions), founded in Lublin in 1956, functioning today as Galeria Labirynt. The name used in the text refers to the activities from the years 1956-1981.

Galeria Labirynt – the name refers to two institutions: the gallery directed by Andrzej Mroczek between 1974 and 1981 and the contemporary Galeria Labirynt. The change of the name from BWA to Galeria Labirynt took place in 2010 and was initiated by the new director of the institution – Waldemar Tatarczuk.

Galeria BWA Labirynt – Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych directed by Andrzej Mroczek from 1981 until 2009. 'Labirynt' was not a part of the original name, but is used here to emphasise the continuation of the programme of Galeria Labirynt within the framework activities BWA.