

**Józef Robakowski**

**Art Is Power**

**1986**

**black & white photography**

**9 photos, each: 38.5 cm x 50 cm**

**Collection of Galeria Labirynt**

A series of photographs – self-portraits of Józef Robakowski. In each of the photos, the artist is in a similar pose: he is standing upright with his head slightly raised, he is holding an object in his right hand. The man is naked, so you can clearly see his proudly protruding torso. The artist's posing in photographs is reminiscent of portraits in ancient art, for example of kings or scholars. In their portraits, they usually held objects that testified to their wealth or power – regalia or astronomical devices. Józef Robakowski holds ordinary household items in his photos.

The work was created at a time when Poland was under martial law and access to everyday necessities was limited. The artist's playful gesture is a voice of criticism towards the socialist system and a reference to the ways in which the media are used as a propaganda tool. The artist points out that the person taking the photo or video has an influence on the way of recording and preserving a given situation. In the case of the work "Art Is Power", ordinary everyday things gain the power of art being recorded by the artist on the photo camera's film.

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