

# Franek Warzywa – Market Robbery 2

25/02–1/05/2022

“I also have no bad aim, but I have an empty stomach” and “I’m shooting leek, bro / give me the fucking tomato” are lines appearing almost alternately in the newest song by Franek Warzywa (Franek Vegetables). Is waving a dummy pistol and aiming a leek-gun an external compulsion (hunger resulting from poverty) or some kind of darkness coming from within, a (so far) symbolic manifestation of a tendency to violence?

Franek himself tries to assure the audience that it is the latter. “I have no bad energy / I have no bad intentions,” he sings in “Market Robbery”. And it is the fact, Franek Warzywa is apparently a cheerful and funny guy. It is pleasant to chat, party, and joke with him, and his works, embedded in the aesthetics of TikTok shorts or coarse, memetic 3D, captivate with their lightness and specific wit. However, humour can be deceiving. I remember that during the discussion during the 1st Kick Off Perfo Competition at the UL Gallery, I suggested that Franek’s performance – a lecture devoted to the results of the investigation into an alien dog – was a stand up, the artist was a bit indignant. He stated that it was all for real, and he was not pretending, he was not trying to amuse anyone by force. It seemed to me then only a mask, putting on an act till the end, even if only in front of himself. Now, I think that Franek’s actions are actually not so calculated, that perhaps making a “good perfo” and getting in touch with the audience is not as important here as I thought.

The dog-alien, coming from the vastness of heaven, the mysterious progenitor of “man’s best friend” is a really twisted, truly cranky mutation of Däniken’s theories about the beginnings of civilisation. Cranks do not represent so much alternative science as anti-science – a rebellion against the established intellectual order; iconoclasm aimed

at idols such as tradition and system – both scientific as well as political and economic. Thus, already in its early stage, the seemingly light work of Franek Warzywa was under the latent influence of Syriusz, the Dog Star, ordering him to leave the beaten paths of thinking and follow the wolf, lonely trail of independent thinking towards liberation from the oppressive order of worldly lies and the conspiracy of the mighty.

I am being stylistically facetious, of course, but... first of all, this old cycle devoted to an alien dog – a series of lectures with which Franek travelled around Poland like an apologist for some new faith – was permeated with descriptions of unusual, even miraculous, coincidences (from speech to speech newer and newer); and secondly, when talking to the artist about the latest project at Galeria Labirynt, the exhibition “Market Robbery 2”, on the occasion of which I am writing this text, we quickly came down to the topic of hidden emotions and energy transformation. Hence the straight path to Jung, and whether you like it or not, despite the apparent lack of any esotericism in the work of Franek Warzywa (maybe except for the video entitled “Hermit”), we are back in the sphere of astrology and zodiacal-spiritual transformations.

The song “Market Robbery” itself directs the listeners to the subject of substitute forms, emotions seeking an outlet and the mental clash of opposites. So, we have a gun, but it is just a replica, which was borrowed by the way; we have verbal aggression, but also assurances that nothing will ever happen to anyone. “‘Market robbery’ is for me a model of the attitude that I strive for [...]. I am fascinated by the unrestricted freedom and opposition to the imposed restrictions that are associated with entering the criminal path. [...] I do not want to hurt anyone. I just want to eat a fresh tomato,” says Franek in the exhibition trailer. The vegetable becomes here an ambiguous fetish, an object of desire and a weapon in hand. The tangled psyche of Franek Warzywa (!) is tossed here between the desire for himself, for total freedom, at the same time fearing to pay the price in the form of harm done to others,

fearing punishment from the system's embarrassing order. Under the guise of funny scenes with vegetables at the market, entertaining, musical circumstances promoting healthy eating, we have a classic psychoanalytic play.

The plot of the attack was first realised by Frank at the end of 2020 at Galeria UL, which I am co-hosting with Piotr T. Mosur and Natalia Dopkoska. The action called "Gentlemen, Let's Commit a Market Robbery" referred to the monologue of the streamer, Rafonix – a statement known on the Internet as "Fucked-up Life". In despair, Rafonix feels sorry for his numerous failures, repeatedly alluding to suicide, and as a person with nothing to lose, he dreams of the final libertarian uprising – a bank robbery. Similarly, overwhelmed by the pandemic and lockdown, Franek decided to rob the market at the end of 2020. However, it was an online scam – a performance, promoted as a real-life event, did not take place physically. Franek collected the profile pictures of people who clicked on Facebook and pasted them as avatar faces into a 3D animation, which he later published as "performance documentation" with acknowledgements for coming. So, no one was hurt in the robbery, but no real vegetables were won either. Everything took place in virtual space, in a substitute, imaginary gallery, the wall of which suddenly disappeared revealing the space of the market square; the animation itself, without going into details, suddenly stopped when Franek removed the deadly leek.

And all indications are that I have become an element of the criminal intrigue again. I am writing a text not so much for an exhibition as for an event. As it is during an event, and especially during a robbery, anything can happen – it is known for now that there will be a stage, there will be a concert – this is what we could learn from the announcement. But what will happen next – in parallel in the gallery space and on the Internet – is associated with the element of surprise and the risk of failure. Any robbery may be interrupted by an ex-policeman who happened to be among the market's customers, or

a sober market seller holding a solid truncheon under the counter. And me, even though I play for the same goal with Franek Warzywa, contributing to the organisation of the Robbery, I am only an element of the plan whose master mind is Franek. I don't know which Franek – a nice boy from a greengrocer's or a shadow that never leaves him, a doppelganger singing "Fuck Franek"? And the final result depends not only on Franek / his alter-ego, but also on the "audience" and external circumstances. Let's hope the whole plan won't go wrong and there will be enough bell peppers and tomatoes.

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