

**SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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**BARBARA KACZOROWSKA**

**Diplomas, academic or artistic degrees held:**

**PhD degree**

2010: doctorate in the field of visual arts, discipline: fine arts at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, supervisor: M. Stępak, painter artist, NCU professor, dissertation title: "Baedeker (z) Ziemi", "Bestiariusz" ["Baedeker (from) Earth", "Bestiary"] - art objects and books as examples of art in interaction.

**Master's diploma**

2000: master's degree at the Faculty of Visual Education of the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, single degree MA studies with honours, diploma in the studios of painting - supervisor: Prof. K. Zieliński, PhD; intermedia – supervisor: prof. W. Karolak, PhD; theoretical work - supervisor: I. Kawecki, PhD.

**Information on previous employment in scientific/ artistic units:**

Since 1 November 2012 - the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Chair of Visual Education and Research on Art, academic assistant professor

1 October 2011 - 31 October 2012 - the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Chair of Visual Education, academic assistant

1 October 2010 - 30 September 2011 - the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Chair of Visual Education, academic assistant, contract for specific work

1 October 2001 - 30 September 2010 - Academy of Humanities and Economics in Łódź, International Institute of Education Through Art, Chair of Art Therapy, ul. Rewolucji 1905 r. nr 64, 90-222 Łódź - academic assistant

1 October 2000 - 1 October 2001 - Academy of Humanities and Economics in Łódź, ul. Rewolucji 1905 r. nr 64, 90-222 Łódź - academic teacher, contract for specific work



## Overview of achievements

### *De Terra. Relations with Earth*

This overview of achievements refers to selected artistic realisations created between 2011 and 2020; it was entitled De Terra for the needs of the post-doctoral thesis. *Relations with Earth*. Works and activities were selected whose essence lies in the reflections on the relationship with a place, origin, identity and metaphorical meaning of the terms "from earth", "on earth" as well as the use of specific substances as artistic materials, including but not limited to natural earth, soil.

The works included in the artistic achievements (a detailed description can be found in the *List of artistic achievements that constitute a significant contribution to the discipline development*, item I.3):

#### 2020

1. *Ziemia w niebie* [Earth in Heaven], in-situ installation
2. *Czoła Awangardy* [Fronts of the Avant-garde] painting series
3. *Mazurki z Polskiej Ziemi* [Eurasian Tree Sparrows from the Polish Soil] painting series

#### 2019

4. *Ziemia i Kobiety z Zuli* [Earth and the Women from Zula] painting series
5. *Ziemia z ulicy* [Soil from the Street] painting series

#### 2018

6. *Z Ziemi Polskiej do Getyngi* [From the Polish Land to Göttingen] painting series
7. *Z Ziemi Szczekocińskiej do Izraela* [From the Szczekocin Land to Israel] painting series
8. *Kamienny Kadisz - Reinstalacja* [Stone Kaddish - Reinstallation], in-situ installation
9. *Flaga z ziemi matecznej* [Motherland Flag], object

#### 2017

10. *Z Ziemi Polskiej i Ukraińskiej* [From the Polish and Ukrainian Land] painting series

#### 2016

11. *Kamienny Kadisz* [Stone Kaddish], installation artwork and an artistic action

#### 2015

12. *The Earth from Poland*, object
13. *From the Italian Land to Poland*, object
14. *Macierz (Macierz kwadratowa 1)* [Matrix (Square Matrix 1)]
15. *Why White On White?* painting series

#### 2012

16. *Tożsamość miejsca* [Identity of the Place], installation artwork and an artistic action
17. *The Baedeker from Szczekociny*, unique book object

#### 2011

18. *The Baedeker from Polesie*, unique book object and an artistic action



### **De Terra. From earth and on earth**

The term **de terra** comes from Latin and allows different, ambiguous translations into Polish. It is like a tricky pun, which is not meaningless for the artistic objectives I want to achieve in my realisations. **De terra** means, e.g., from earth, on earth and made of soil. All the above-mentioned terms, individually and collectively, represent the desired interpretations and contexts that I recall in this paper. The presented selection of works includes those **from earth** in the most objective, material sense because the material or materials used to create the works come from there - they are literally **made from earth/made of soil**. Even if I use other materials in my art pieces, soil and elements of natural origin dominate and determine the execution method. At the same time, many of my works refer to the relationship with earth in a territorial, topographic or geographic aspect - they come from a specific place **on earth**. Finally, nearly all of them explore the metaphorical area of the abovementioned prepositional phrases, transferring the meanings onto the human history of being in a particular place, biography and identity, and they seek relevant visual representations for this purpose.

The works created between 2011 and 2020 can be interpreted in three ways: material - in reference to the technique, contextual - coming from a specific place builds a content analysis, and metaphorical - the meaning potential of the material (soil) and lexical means of its expression make the interpretation complete.

I would also add a fourth aspect - contact with the viewers, using means of expression to create an artistic message that would become a subjective dialogue about a shared place and lead to co-creation in many realisations.

The term **de terra** was used in the title of an individual exhibition in 2020<sup>1</sup>. According to the exhibition intention, in a dialogue with another artist, Beata Marcinkowska, I was telling women's stories through paintings and installations in a local raw material. Thus, the references to earth are omnipresent in the titles of my works, actions and exhibitions.

### **The origins of earth**

The beginnings of my work involving the abovementioned concepts date back to the times before the presented *De Terra. Relacje z ziemią* [De Terra. Relations with Earth] works. Numerous previous experiences were necessary for them to gain their current dimension. Since the beginning of my creative work, the area of my interests and experiments covered searching for media, in addition to standard artistic techniques. It was one of the reasons for choosing the Intermedia studio chaired by prof. Wiesław Karolak PhD, at the Władysław Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź for my diploma. It provided me with the opportunity to take inter and mixmedia actions within the broad scope of the studio's

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<sup>1</sup>De Terra. Barbara Kaczorowska. Sub Rosa. Beata Marcinkowska, Bałuty Gallery, City Art Gallery in Łódź.



operation. My first challenges of this type took place in 1998 and 1999 under the Children's Art Centre projects in Poznań<sup>2</sup>.

These cultural events were intended to develop a benchmark "artist and child" collaboration<sup>3</sup>. Renowned creators and art students at Polish and European universities conducted meetings with children. In the meetings, in practice and face-to-face contact with the participants, the concepts of the art workshop were developing as a spontaneous artistic activity equivalent to other types of art pieces and artistic activities. In addition to innovative artistic and educational practice, these experiences and the scientific reflection on them resulted, e.g. in the publications by Prof. Wiesław Karolak, PhD<sup>4</sup>, Prof. Jan Berdyszak, PhD<sup>5</sup>, and Prof. Eugeniusz Józefowski, PhD<sup>6</sup>. These outcomes formed a theoretical foundation for my workshop activities at that time.

During the art workshop I conducted then as a student, we used simple, natural materials: clay, stones, plant seeds and different kinds of sand<sup>7</sup>. My idea behind was to use the simplest means possible, which are suited to small children's manual skills and safe for them. I invented the original soil painting technique during the preparation for the Biennale: a method of fixing bulk elements to the surface; the method was intuitive, non-toxic, did not require precision and rendered durable results. It posed an equal challenge to participants with different skills, capabilities and experience in using artistic tools and materials. The 12th Biennale of Art for Children was the first time I had tested the technique in large groups of demanding participants. Over one hundred paintings were created, and I participated in over one hundred meetings with viewers. Many years later, I brought students to *Vincent's Pocket Workshop of Creative Anxiety*<sup>8</sup> and told them about the significant influence of the workshop meeting experience, both in the area of asking questions on the type of contact with the viewers I am interested in as an artist and how significant the technique I had discovered then became for me.

Moreover, the technique turned out useful in an individual artistic practice. I used it some years later during my doctorate as a many-year, ongoing project, executed in various places

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<sup>2</sup> *Skarbiec dla dzieci przyszłości* [Treasury for the Children of the Future], Children's Art Centre, Zamek Culture Centre, Poznań 1998 and the *12th Biennale of the Art For Children. An Artist and Child Meeting*, Children's Art Centre, Zamek Culture Centre, Poznań 1999.

<sup>3</sup> More in: "Katalog Warsztatów Artystyczno-Ekologicznych Skarbiec dla dzieci przyszłości" [Catalogue of *Treasury for Children of the Future* Artistic And Ecological Workshops], Wydawnictwo Centralnego Ośrodka Doskonalenia Nauczycieli, Warsaw 1998. "Katalog XII Biennale Sztuki dla Dziecka, Spotkanie Artysty i Dziecka" [Catalogue of the 12th Biennale of Art For Children, An Artist and Child Meeting], Wydawnictwo Centralnego Ośrodka Doskonalenia Nauczycieli, Warsaw 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Karolak W., *Warsztaty twórcze – warsztaty artystyczne* [Creative Workshop - Artistic Workshop], Wydawnictwo JEDNOŚĆ, Kielce 2005, Karolak W., *Projekt edukacyjny – projekt artystyczny* [Educational Project - Artistic Project], Wydawnictwo WSHE, Łódź 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Berdyszak J., *Warsztaty, kreacja, edukacja* [Workshop, Creation, Education], [in:] Olinkiewicz E., Repsch E. (ed.), *Warsztaty Edukacji Twórczej* [Creative Education Workshop], Wydawnictwo Europa, Wrocław 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Józefowski E., *Edukacja artystyczna w działaniach warsztatowych* [Artistic Education in Workshop Activities], Wydawnictwo Akademii Humanistyczno-Ekologicznej w Łodzi, Łódź 2009.

<sup>7</sup> More information about the workshop can be found in Kaczorowska B. (1998) *Warsztat plastyczny – "Rymowanka wizualna"* [Visual arts workshop - "Visual Nursery Rhyme"], [in:] Katalog Warsztatów Artystyczno-Ekologicznych *Skarbiec dla dzieci przyszłości*, [Catalogue of the 12th Biennale of Art For Children, An Artist and Child Meeting] and Kaczorowska B., *Spotkanie w piaskownicy* [Meeting in a Sandbox], Wydawnictwo Centralnego Ośrodka Doskonalenia Nauczycieli, Warsaw 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Since 2001, the workshops organised by the Children's Art Centre are called *Vincent's Pocket Workshop of Creative Anxiety*. More information about the project can be found in the part devoted to didactic achievements.



in Poland and Europe. A part of the project, The Baedeker from Earth<sup>9</sup>, included artistic book objects created owing to the meetings in which the participants were making the book pages using the soil painting technique. I made the object - a sculpture myself afterwards in response to the participants' paintings and reflections they shared during the workshop/action, and certainly in response to the unique character of the place for the particular project part<sup>10</sup>. The dialogue with the participants turned out to be pivotal for identifying my relation to the place where I work as an artist and the objects created afterwards. Topics related to a general presence in the particular place became more specific, from the way of getting there, a journey, a travel and touristy adventure through to the issues of origin and identity. Continuing my work using the described technique, I addressed the issues consciously. The Baedekers series was extended to involve subsequent realisations, even after I was awarded a doctorate. I still approach it as an open series. It is both a way of creating an artistic work and a method of working with different viewers, evoking personal though often difficult emotions in the participants. In 2010-2012, I fine-tuned the technique, extended it with a sand preparation stage (drying, refining and preparation) and looking for soil, this way adding the meaning of independent an artistic action to the latter one.

### **Group portrait. Relations with earth - relations with humans**

The Baedeker experience evoked the will to investigate sensitive, hushed topics and retrieve history. Consequently, a decision was made not to close the series, so I returned to it, including the necessary transformations and modifications of the original idea, which I will discuss further in the paper. The other topic is related to using the original technique differently. For some time now, I have painted portraits of humans with earth, soil and sand from the person's place of origin or a place they are related to.

The title inspires a few interpretations. The word "macierz" ["matrix"] carries numerous meanings in the Polish language. It stands for a mother, mum, reference to motherhood. The other meaning is fatherland, however it refers to the feminine aspect and equivalent of fatherland – "motherland"<sup>11</sup>, the place on earth you come from through the female line, the mother's legacy. A square matrix is used in mathematics to describe a data system arranged in a square table. The works in the *Macierz* [Matrix] cycle are painted on square substrates (100x100 cm), divided regularly into nine square fields (ca. 30x30 cm), each containing a fragment of a person's portrait. The *Macierz (Macierz kwadratowa 1)* [Matrix (Square matrix 1)] painting shows various faces that of the author's mother, a fragment of a recognisable icon - a spiritual mother's figure, a portrait of a female scientist - a symbolic scientific mother, and an artist (Katarzyna Kobro) - a figure of an avant-garde's mother. They form an inexhaustible resource, a set of female role models, impossible to be implemented

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<sup>9</sup> The name refers to Baedeker guides (named after their creator, German traveller, Karl Baedeker) - popular tourist guide books. The project was meant to be of exploratory and touristry nature.

<sup>10</sup> More information about the project can be found in Kaczorowska B., *Projekt artystyczno-edukacyjny „Baedeker (z) Ziemi”*, ["Baedeker (from) Earth" artistic and educational project] [in:] E. Józefowski, J. Florczykiewicz (ed.), *Arteterapia jako praktyka oddziaływań artystycznych i terapeutycznych* [Art Therapy as a Practice of Artistic and Therapeutic Interactions], Wydawnictwo UAM, Poznań 2012, p. 84-93.

<sup>11</sup> The linguistic and culture implications of this term have been broadly discussed recently, for instance during the conference accompanying the exhibition entitled *Ojczyzna w sztuce* [Homeland in Art], 27 April 2018 - 30 September 2018, MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow



in a single person - portrait. That is why the faces were defragmented and the portraits mixed. At first glance, the created collage appears to be a mixture of abstract elements, none being more important than another. Only after looking carefully, the details of the faces can be recognised. This way a group portrait is developed, composed of an endless and - intentionally - endlessly continuable number of elements. In mathematics, a matrix is an orderly system of an endless data series, and in the reference case - of biographies of women being ancestors, social and cultural role-models and authorities. The author's current identity (myself in 2015) stems from their multitude and intertwining. I used soil from my place of birth - Zgierz, a town in central Poland - to paint the portraits. I collected the soil near my family house, refined and mixed it.

The work was presented in the *Raport 2015* [2015 Report] exhibition, an anniversary exhibition of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Toruń. In this context, *Macierz (Macierz kwadratowa 1)* [Matrix (Square matrix 1)] became a personal report on myself, a summary among the summary voices of other artists - lecturers. This piece of art inspired some activities accompanying the exhibition. I approached it as a symbolic development of the matrix - motherhood into the future. Students of the Nicolaus Copernicus University were the authors and participants of the activity. I was the substantive supervisor of the students who also prepared educational and artistic events accompanying the exhibition, dedicated for the viewers of the Znaki Czasu Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń. Educational props - artistic objects were developed, whose operation explained the idea behind the pieces of art. The multitude, equivalence and inexhaustible resources of the students' ideas expanded the *Raport 2015* [2015 Report] (of the Faculty of Fine Arts) into the future<sup>12</sup>.

In a situation when it could not be closed and all components counted, the group portrait concept became a sense-making and formal order for many other works.

In 2017, the *Z Ziemi Polskiej i Ukraińskiej* [From the Polish to Ukrainian Land] series was created, dedicated to the *Look east* collective exhibition held in the Academy of Arts and Design in Kharkiv (Ukraine). The exhibition was the result of collaboration between artists from Toruń and Kharkiv. It was meant to inspire mutual openness, exchange of experiences and artistic outlook on the partner in a creative Polish-Ukrainian dialogue<sup>13</sup>. I presented a series of 24 pieces of art, including portraits of artists and personalities significant for both Polish and Ukrainian culture. It subversively recalled artistic identities that could be ambiguously interpreted in the national code. The portrayed persons included *Ivan Vahylevitch – Greek catholic priest, Ukrainian activist of the "Russian Trinity", romantic poet (writing in Ukrainian and Polish), historian, ethnographer, folklorist, translator, and custodian of the Ossolineum library. Kazimir Malevich, born in Kyiv, painter, educator, philosopher, art theorist of Polish origin or nationality. A leading avant-garde artist, the creator of suprematism. Bruno Schulz born in Drohobych, a Polish Jewish writer, fine artist (graphics, painting, drawing) and literary critic. Sonia Delaunay born in Hradyzk, of Jewish origin, painter and costume designer, representative of the Orphism art movement. Debora Vogel, born in Burshtyn, a bilingual Jewish writer, philosopher, literary and art critic, writing*

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<sup>12</sup> A report on the project can be found in the *Raport 2015, wystawa środowiska akademickiego Wydziału Sztuk Pięknych Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu* catalogue [2015 Report, Exhibition of the academic milieu of the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń] Cieślukowska J. Skrzypczyk K., Adaszewska K., Majewska A., Chilińska D, Wydawnictwo UMK, Toruń 2016, p. 112-113.

<sup>13</sup> See more in the *Look East* catalogue, curator: Aleksandra Sojak-Borodo, Wydawnictwo UMK, Toruń 2017.

in Polish and Yiddish. Marija Revakovych, born in Lidzbark Warmiński – literature scientist specialising in Slavic literature, and a translator<sup>14</sup>. Soil from Poland (the author's homeland) and Ukraine (collected by the partners from Kharkiv) was the painting material. The works were arranged into a regular square. Fragments of the portraits were displaced against one another to create a mosaic of human faces. The right bottom corner of the layout remains empty, suggesting an unfinished process and possible extension of the collection.

I used a similar concept as a base for a portrait collection created for an exhibition called 3–2–1–ö // *Wystawa artystów toruńskich w Getyndze* [3–2–1–ö // *Exhibition of the Toruń artists in Göttingen*] held in Germany. The creation of two group portraits in a short time, for the viewers beyond Poland's eastern and western border, was a beneficial and complementary experience. The *Z Ziemi Polskiej do Getyngi* [From the Polish Land to Göttingen] series consists of 16 parts, being fragmented portraits of scientists and artists related to Göttingen and Poland. Göttingen is famous for scientific achievements and many Nobel prize winners. Many distinguished creators from Poland used to live and work in the city. I intended to remind people of these links. I selected the following personalities: Zofia Kowalewska, mathematician, the first Polish woman to be awarded a PhD degree - it took place in Göttingen; Stefan Banach, a mathematician from Lviv who studied in Göttingen; Leon Chwistek related to Göttingen and Lviv in the field of mathematics but also famous for his avant-garde artistic activity; Piotr Michałowski, painter, who spent some of his career in Göttingen, mathematics lover. The series is grouped into three sets expressed by numbers 3, 5 and 8 (they stand for the number of painting compositions in a particular series). They are consecutive numbers in the Fibonacci sequence, the golden ratio. It refers to the exhibition title as a scientific and mathematical history of Göttingen and the presented persons. The art pieces were created using the soil painting technique. The painting substance's significance is both material and metaphorical. The soil used for painting comes from different places in Poland and Germany. The mixed images are supposed to create tension between the representation and abstraction.

The group portrait was also presented in an exhibition in Amsterdam. *Czoła Awangardy* [Fronts of the Avant-garde] shows fragments of portraits, their upper parts, and literary portrayed human foreheads. The title is also a pun - *avant-garde* means the front guard, and according to the PWN's dictionary<sup>15</sup>: *a troop of soldiers who secure the front of a marching column, but also a group of people whose creations or work in a particular area are innovative and unconventional*; and the third meaning: *all diversified trends in the c. 20th art, characterised by radical innovation*. That is why personalities significant for the Dutch and Polish Avant-garde (so-called First Avant-garde) were portrayed. They included Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg. The De Stijl ideas were implemented in the Polish art owing to, e.g. Władysław Strzemiński. The Neoplastic Room of his design (in the building of the Museum of Art) implemented the rules of neoplasticism in practice and was the place where the works of avant-garde artists were exhibited. The a.r. group (with Władysław Strzemiński and Katarzyna Kobro being its members) contributed to the establishment of the International Collection of Modern Art in 1931, which included the paintings by Piet Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg, Sonia Delaunay, and Leon Chwistek. The artists kept up an

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<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Access to the online version: <https://sjp.pwn.pl>





extensive correspondence, exchanged ideas and inspired one another's creative work. I decided to add Debora Vogel to this group - an expert and critic of the Avant-garde - naturally followed by Bruno Schultz and Kazimir Malevich. Additionally, motivated by personal reasons, I included the portrait of Krystyn Zieliński, my mentor, and Władysław Strzemiński's student (according to his testimony). The portraits were arranged in a series. Such a layout was determined by the conditions in the Poolse Bibliothek gallery - the works looked better presented in a single horizontal row because of the long walls and low ceilings in the exhibition rooms.

In 2018 I created another portrait collection entitled *Flaga z ziemi matecznej* [Motherland Flag]. I used 1.5 x 1.5 m canvas as the substrate, and the final object had a form of a march flag. The realisation was dedicated to *100 flag na 100-lecie praw wyborczych kobiet* [One-hundred Flags for the Centenary of Women's Suffrage]<sup>16</sup>, a bottom-up initiative of an art collective, established for the particular occasion. The work was created during a workshop in the Museum of Art when artists together or in the presence of others prepared flags and banners for the march. The 100 FLAGS MARCH took place on 24 November 2018. I participated in the undertaking carrying not only my object but also the other authors' banners. My work became a component of many events following the *100 flag na 100-lecie praw wyborczych kobiet* [One-hundred Flags for the Centenary of Women's Suffrage] project. It was exhibited, e.g. in the BWA Gallery in Warsaw, Modern Art Museum in Warsaw, Awangarda Gallery in Wrocław and the Central Museum of Textiles. In the *Flaga z ziemi matecznej* [Motherland Flag] I developed the idea initiated in the *Macierz* [Matrix] series in 2015. I portrayed the faces of women important to me. Independence, postulated in the action assumptions, was the selection key. I intended to create a personal catalogue of the heroines of the previous century. So I included the faces of my biological great-grandmothers, grandmothers, mother and daughters, and the metaphorical ones who were my authorities in pursuit of social and individual emancipation. I used mixed soil from the places of birth and residence - called the motherland - to paint the portraits.

The *Z Ziemi Szczekocińskiej do Izraela* [From the Szczekocin Land to Israel] series of 2018 was exceptional for me. At that time, it became a summary of many years of handling the topic of retrieving the remembrance about the former inhabitants of Szczekociny, the town's history and identity. It was presented as a part of an individual exhibition called *Barbara Kaczorowska. Identity-Earth-Coincidence*, in the Petach Tikva Cultural Hall in Israel. The trip was organised upon the project partner's invitation - Organisation of the Jews from Szczekociny in Israel, actively supported by cultural managers from Szczekociny, and financed from the statutory funds of the Department of Art Education of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. It is worth mentioning the exceptional hospitality of the Israeli group, far beyond the project's formal framework.

Since 2011 I have participated in various projects related to the history of Szczekociny. I took on biographies of the former inhabitants of Jewish origin on numerous occasions<sup>17</sup>. I always

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<sup>16</sup> You can read more about this action in the Szum magazine <https://magazynszum.pl/100-flag-na-100-lecie-praw-wyborczych-polek-w-centralnym-muzeum-wlokiennictwa-w-lodzi/> na fb wydarzenia: <https://www.facebook.com/100flagkobiet/>

<sup>17</sup> You can read more about the projects in Yossi Bornstein, Agnieszka Piśkiewicz, Mirosław Skrzypczyk, Anna Wieczorek (ed.) 2017, *Szczekociński Festiwal Kultury Żydowskiej „Yahad-Razem”. 10 lat* [The "Yahad-Razem" Szczekociny Festival of Jewish Culture. Ten Years], Szczekociny, (p. 103-130).



avoided literalism, simple mimetism or direct holocaust references believing that understatement, metaphor and imagination act in a more sophisticated and stronger way and carry a change potential. However, back then, I used a portrait strategy and the consequent recalling of specific images and tragic personal stories. The exhibition context mattered as well - the opening took place on the Israeli national holiday - Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). The exhibition guide reads as follows: *The Barbara Kaczorowska. Identity-Earth-Coincidence exhibition is presented on a very special day - Holocaust Remembrance Day, and in an exceptional place - the Land of Israel. A coincidence occurs - the Szczekociny Land meets the Israeli Land. The Szczekociny Land is a metaphor for the beautiful, positive and sometimes traumatic and painful experiences of its inhabitants. The soil from the Szczekociny Land is the primary material used by Barbara Kaczorowska to make her art pieces*<sup>18</sup>. Forty works were presented, being separated portraits of specific persons, recalled with their full names, including those who survived the Holocaust and those who died. All the people were somehow related to Szczekociny - a place of birth, family origin, residence or work. I found the information and illustrations for the portraits in the publication entitled *Pinkes Szczekocin. Księga Pamięci Szczekocin (Życie i zagłada żydowskiego miasteczka)* [Pinkes Szczekocin. Szczekociny Memorial Book (The life and extermination of the Jewish town)]<sup>19</sup>. The publication fits the post-war tradition of the survivors' writing memorial books (often in Yiddish) as a collective effort. It was of invaluable help for me in recalling the facts, telling the stories and offered inexhaustible visual archives. The portrayed persons included Cela Szwarzbaum - survivor, I managed to meet her in person and listen to her unique story about escaping, as a little girl, from the Nazi in a bus full of Jews from Szczekociny<sup>20</sup>; Jadzia Cukerman, whom I remember as a short, positive and vigorous person, who survived still being a child, and did a lot to maintain the bonds with the contemporary Szczekociny, despite her ambivalent feelings; Izyk Mendel Bornstein - as a result of unbelievable coincidences and tremendous willpower, he managed to rescue his teenager's life<sup>21</sup>; Alter Kanał, social activist, member of the Dozór [Supervision] religious group, did not survive, similarly to his wife and their five children; Awrum Miodowa from the large family of the Miodowys, died just like his wife and two children; Hilel Grajpnel - representative of the Zionistic Kehilla; Cyna Szwarcbojm, the daughter of Majer Szwarcbojm - she died, like most of his family; Jochawed Sobczewska – was hiding in Częstochowa, denounced by a peasant, shot in the village of Słupia. Soil from Szczekociny was the material used for the works, and so the series was called *Z Ziemi Szczekocińskiej do Izraela* [From the Szczekociny Land to Israel]. Combined portraits of the former inhabitants created a multi-

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<sup>18</sup> The original text was published in the exhibition promotinal materials, e.g. בהיכל התרבות פתח תקוה יום הזיכרון, e.g. ליסוף ולגבורה 2018 תערוכות לציון תשע"ח leaflet, Petach Tikva Cultural Hall.

<sup>19</sup> Szwajcer Isroel (Ben-Awrom) (ed.) (2010), *Pinkes Szczekocin. Księga Pamięci Szczekocin (Życie i zagłada żydowskiego miasteczka)* [Pinkes Szczekocin. Szczekociny Memorial Book (The life and extermination of the Jewish town)], Wydawnictwo Ziomkostwa Szczekocinian w Izraelu, Tel Awiw 1959; Polish issue: Polish issue's ed. Mirosław Skrzypczyk, Marek Tuszewicki, Anna Wiczorek, translated from Yiddish and Hebrew by Marek Tuszewicki, Szczekociny 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 11-13

<sup>21</sup> The biography of Izyk Mendel Bernstein inspired many an artistic actions and art project. I derived the knowledge about him from Bornstein I.M., Piśkiewicz A. (2011) B-94. Siła ocalałego, opowieść prawdziwa [The Power of the Survivor. A True Story], Wydawnictwo Szczekociny.

element collage, intended as a presentation going beyond the enumeration of its components and turning into portrait archives of human identities of all inhabitants lost. They make individual experiences universal. Therefore, the collection kindled the interest of many viewers. The members of the portrayed persons' families travelled from various parts of Israel to see the exhibition. Meeting them in front of the art pieces was of supreme importance for me. I was curious about their reaction, but I also heard many new stories about their near and dears' experiences.

Petach Tikva, the exhibition place, was no incidental at all. The town lies close to the capital city of Tel Aviv. Many people who come from Poland settle here, and it is also strictly related to the biography of one of the portrayed survivors, Izyk Mendel Bornstein. His recounts<sup>22</sup> often inspired an artistic action in Szczekociny. The collaboration with his family, nurturing the memory about their ancestor and other survivors in Szczekociny, must not be underestimated.

Szczekociny is a small town in south-central Poland. A shtetel established before World War II, with a traumatic history of the War and the dreadful post-war memory. It is also a story about being together - "Yahad-Together-Razem"<sup>23</sup> of those who used to live there and those who live there now. An artistic action events are among the ways used by the community (in a broad sense) to deal with the past, the present and the future. Art serves as a carrier, a medium for seeking social relations.

The exhibition materials read as follows: *Coincidence means concurrence of unexpected events, things or persons. Identity is a complex notion, an aspect of human personality, which is given voluntarily but also laboriously constructed. Earth in Polish stands for the planet and soil. The Earth as ground under our feet often results from our choice, but equally often, a unique sequence of past occurrences determines our presence here and now.*

An exhibition presented at the beginning of 2020 in the Bałuty Gallery, *De Terra. Barbara Kaczorowska* was a multi-aspect encounter with soil as a material. The Gallery is one of the City Art Galleries in Łódź. The exhibition was accompanied by another one called *Sub Rosa. Beata Marcinkowska*, forming a duo and mutually complementary. Dominika Pawełczyk, the curator, wrote: "*De Terra. Sub Rosa*" is an encounter, in a gallery space, of two artists who refer to a woman's position in the current reality from different perspectives. Despite using different techniques (based on nature and developed by humans) and emphasising different aspects of cognition (transparency and obviousness on the one hand and the hidden and intimate on the other hand), they tell a story about a woman's living space, her body, personality and emotions"<sup>24</sup>. *De terra* – the bright part of the exhibition space at the entrance showed the works where earth, soil is the idea behind and the material used for their making. It included the series created in 2019 *Ziemia i Kobiety z Zuli* [Earth and the Women from Zula], the *Ziemia w niebie* [Earth in Heaven] in-situ installation of 2020 and three Baedekers from previous creation periods - as a supplement. The idea that brings the works together is a story of erasing a specific woman's biography - inconvenient, unworthy and not particularly meaningful - an artistic strategy of retrieving its memory. The herstory,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>23</sup> The name of the Festival of Jewish Culture in Szczekociny referred to this name.

<sup>24</sup> From the critical text by Pawełczyk D. (2020) *Barbara Kaczorowska. De terra – nietatwe relacje z miejscem* [De terra - Uneasy Relationships with a Place] [in:] *De Terra. Barbara Kaczorowska. Sub Rosa. Beata Marcinkowska Exhibition Catalogue*, Bałuty Gallery, City Art. Gallery in Łódź.

the biography of the woman of interest - Zula Pacanowska, is related to the Łódź district of Bałuty. It has always been a poor district, with a notorious reputation, inhabited before World War II by Jews and stigmatised by the ghetto reality; after the War, it became a Łódź synonym of poverty and crime. The street where I live was named after Zula Pacanowska by 2017. Only a few streets in Łódź have female patrons. It seems to take much bad will to find something negative in the biography of Zula Pacanowska, true name Rachela Róża Pacanowska-Krengel<sup>25</sup>. Social activist, girl scout, actress, who worked as a paramedic in the ghetto hospital during the German occupation. According to witnesses' testimony, she did not want to leave her patients and voluntarily joined the transport to the concentration camp in Chełmno upon the Ner, where she was murdered with all other people.

Unfortunately, the de-communisation act forced a decision to see her only as a communist, unworthy to be a patron of a street. In 2016 an informal movement was established to undermine the proposed changes in the street names. In the case of Zula Pacanowska, the decision was irreversible. In 2019, with this story in mind, I was looking for protagonists for my *Ziemia i Kobiety z Zuli* [Earth and the Women from Zula] series. In addition to Zula Pacanowska, the women portrayed were those who lived, worked or came from this street - in the past and present. They included women of different professions and ages: a hairdresser, teacher, student, academic lecturer and pensioner, and in different roles: a daughter, granddaughter, mother and grandmother. I derived the material from the street named after Zula Pacanowska. For a few months before the exhibition, I had been exposing the soil at the roadside. I used mixed soil with the prevailing surface fraction to make the images.

In another work, called *Ziemia z ulicy* [Soil from the Street], I used all fractions with varying colours and grain size. A series of five works in a horizontal arrangement was created. The geometrised shapes represent the bird's eye view of the street, as seen in a map. The soil was placed in the adequate parts of the art piece, corresponding to the places of their collection. A record of matter and from the matter derived from the particular place of the reality was created. In order to make the *De Terra* exhibition context complete, it was essential to orient the works according to the cardinal directions. The series was displayed on the gallery's eastern wall, while the actual street was 100 m behind the wall, parallel to the building. The exhibition method was also significant for the accompanying *Ziemia w niebie* [Earth in Heaven] in-situ installation. The representation and elements of visual art forms were either neglected in this work or subordinated to the principal value subjected to the viewer's perception - the material, soil. The material and symbolic orders were reverted. The substrate, soil that is typically found under our feet, in a position described as "on the ground", was placed above the viewers' heads, at the ceiling. The earth/ soil to which non-sacred, human, corporeal, real and practical meanings are assigned<sup>26</sup> was placed in the zone that symbolically belongs to heaven and corresponds to the spiritual, sacred, metaphysical, imaginary, and fictional opposite to the terrestrial. A mirror, symbolising knowledge, introspection, thesis and antithesis, was the prop reverting the orders<sup>27</sup>. The mirror was

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<sup>25</sup> Information about Zula Pacanowska can be found at <http://miastol.pl/zula-bojownicza/>.

<sup>26</sup> I refer to the meaning of symbols presented in Kopaliński W., *Słownik symboli* [Dictionary of Symbols], Wydawnictwo Wiedza Powszechna, Warsaw 1990, p. 494-495.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 206-207.



placed on a small plinth at the viewers' feet, which provoked looking into it, seeking the hidden image and hence the reason and meaning of such its placement.

### **Relations with earth. Relations with aesthetics**

Earth is a neutral material. Earth, soil always comes from somewhere. It has its history in a geological sense, being the record of the Earth crust transformation over different aeons counted in hundred thousand years. There are only a few places in the world where the soil is not modified due to human activity. It provides information about human history, traceable on a species and individual scale. The place of origin, an individual and unique history of coming from particular places, is a part of human identity. Metaphorically, we call it one's place on earth, the Land you originate from, commitment to the Land. The place of origin determines one's belonging to a family, local social groups, nations, minorities and supranational majorities. Sometimes I write Earth with a capital letter in the titles of my works. This way, I express my respect to it as a planet, the motherland of all humans, as well as a small piece of Land significant for a particular person. Earth (soil), due to its specific origin, has a unique composition and characteristics: colour, depending on the content of minerals and organic matter; and grain size and viscosity resulting from soil-forming processes. The features can be assigned to selected elements of a visual arts form and aesthetically validated. However, I tend to avoid such practice. I cannot prevent such interpretations by the viewers, though. I choose material from a specific place, as the only one making sense in my works - the aesthetic aspect is secondary to these choices.

### **Relations with the form**

Although the material is not aesthetically evaluated, the form of the works is deliberate. Its layout is often geometrical; regularly arranged series of squares or rectangles on a plane or spheres of cuboid objects in space. The substrates, group portrait planes, pages of book objects are square. Apart from references to mathematics that apply to some of the abovementioned art pieces, it is justified in my biography as a painter.

I realised a part of my master's diploma in the painting studio of Prof. Krystyn Zieliński, PhD. In addition to being a progressive and practising painter, the professor was a theoretician who appreciated a reliable analysis and responsible selection of the form elements in constructing the paintings. He described himself as Władysław Strzemiński's student (he studied when Strzemiński was a lecturer at the State School of Visual Arts), and in his didactic work, he used theories of the consciousness of vision derived directly from Strzemiński's dissertations. Therefore I can say that I was much inspired by Strzemiński's oeuvre, owing to Prof. Zieliński.

I consciously choose and prefer a square as a plain for my paintings. This is because a square shape offers the most equality and does not pre-determine any arrangement of the elements inside. I arrange group portraits on square substrates, despite them being intrinsically representing, to give an impression of abstraction; this way, no single composition is privileged. It is realised by Strzemiński's concept on a certain level:

*Constructing a painting according to the rules of organic construction, we must strive for its collective uniformity rather than division or extending the form tension in each part of the*



*composition*<sup>28</sup>. I used this technique for the first time in the *Why White On White?* series, composed of forty works painted with luminescent paint, which also draws on Strzemiński's another concept - afterimages. It is the only work included in the habilitation *De Terra. Relacje z ziemią* [De Terra. Relations with Earth], a collection which is not made from soil. Still, it is a progressing stage, an experiment that directly affected the way of constructing the portrait series. The participants of an artistic action in the Accademia di Belle Arti in Palermo tried to arrange portraits like a jigsaw puzzle, finding the right composition (as negotiated and agreed collectively), always presenting internal uniformity and cohesion. This way, they implemented the assumptions of the Unism theory intuitively and practically. The observation of the process led to my successive realisations, which I described above. The references to Unism are therefore fully authorised and intentional.

### **Relation of pathos and (hidden) humour**

I am fully aware that most of my realisations evoke strong reactions in the viewers, while the art pieces, though not monumental, bear some pathetic qualities. Occasionally, driven by common sense, I include realisations with a lighter emotional load or add some pathos-reducing works to my series. I hesitated whether to emphasise it in the description of my achievements but decided that my creation's image would be incomplete without it. Sometimes these are minor things, such as presenting an image - on the title page of Baedeker from Polesie - of a favourite football club (the only acceptable one in the Łódź district of Polesie) poured by a participant.

Occasionally, there are larger realisations. In 2015 I was invited to participate in *The Eagle Has Landed: Apollo 11 – 45 Years Later* exhibition series devoted to the human presence in space in a broad context. I proposed spherical shining objects made of soil, whose idea referred to conquering and colonisation of the space, following the example of nation-states. *From the Italian land to Poland* and *The Earth from Poland* reference the Polish national anthem, which is actually a military march summoning to reclaim the land. I used Italian and Polish soil in the work.

The *Mazurki z Polskiej Ziemi* [Eurasian Tree Sparrows from the Polish Soil] series, presented in an individual exhibition: Artistic Books. Painting Made of Soil. Barbara Kaczorowska in the Poolse Bibliotheek in Amsterdam is a different example. It was presented there next to the *Czoła Awangardy* [Fronts of the Avant-garde] series (described above). It seemed to me that the exhibition viewers needed a kind of facilitation to understand the concept; that in order to appreciate the concept of the other series, they should have been encouraged with something recognisable and relatively simple in imaging. Since the exhibition was to start soon before Easter 2020, I played a language trick and used a word with two different meanings as the Polish title of the works. "Mazurek" is the name of a popular Polish Easter cake and a name of bird species (Eurasian Tree Sparrow) that used to be popular in Poland and whose population has dramatically decreased recently. The viewers appreciated my concept. The Eurasian Tree Sparrows and their lot became a vehicle for the issues of Avant-garde and the artists' situation. The exhibition opening was organised in a then unusual and now popular way. It took place the day before the national borders were closed because of

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<sup>28</sup> Strzemiński Władysław, selected by Sztabiński Grzegorz, *Wybór pism estetycznych* [Selected Papers on Aesthetics], Universitas, Kraków 2006, p. 41.



the COVID-19 pandemic. I decided to leave Amsterdam earlier than planned, and I joined the participants of the exhibition opening online from my car parked somewhere on my way to Poland. A nomadic lot of creators became even more evident in the new and gloomy perspective.

### **De terra. Relations with land art and environmental art**

The material I used in my works is an argument for assigning my creation to the land art area. Still, it seems superficial to me, and it is not about the time shift of my works versus the classical art pieces of this art trend. My creation does not intend to change the landscape, and even if it does in some cases, the intervention is not durable, and the earth is a carrier of work with a human, a viewer and not with the landscape. If I were to find references and inspirations in this art trend, I feel close to the strategies used by Richard Long<sup>29</sup>. It applies in particular to the paintings made with mud from the Avon. Although there are some workshop and conceptual differences (and remembering that Richard Long is a doyen and indisputable authority of this art trend), I have a similar understanding of the essence of the material and its unique feature - origin. I also appreciate the temporary and ephemeral nature of the realisations that remain in nature, and I accept their strive for annihilation, the inevitable destruction, scattering and dispersion. Similarly to Long, I reject monumentalism and the durability of a piece of art.

From the other viewpoint, using natural material is an argument for classifying me as an environmental artist. I am concerned about using authentic soil, and I do not add any admixtures to improve the visual aspects. When collecting the soil, I respect the place where I do it. This is the least interfering method possible, taking care of the animate and inanimate elements of nature and human developments. I notice some utopia in the search for "environmental purity". It is not possible, and I cannot do it either, to produce art pieces with no negative influence on the planet's environmental balance. The substrate I often paint on (PVC foils) is produced in a technologically advanced process. The realisations and exhibitions are held in different localities, distant from my place of residence, and getting there generates a carbon footprint. My works constitute a reflection on the Anthropocene aspect of the natural environment's processing by humans and soil in particular. Showing a certain paradox - working with natural material - earth actually means working with its human colonisation, histories of societies and individual biographies. Following these assumptions, I participated in a project having the word "ecology" in its title *Ekologie miejskie* [Urban Ecologies]. As the project information materials explained, the term was meant in a broader context: "*Ekologie miejskie*" [Urban Ecologies] investigates the environment in which a contemporary culture institution functions, from the perspective of a specific city's conditions - Łódź. "*Ekologie miejskie*" [Urban Ecologies] is an expression of self-awareness of an institution that fulfils itself through continuous updating of its fundamental ideas, namely an avant-garde concept of art as a laboratory testing alternative ways of functioning in the world. Hence they function as prototypes of spatial and social

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Long uses river mud in his works. More information can be found on the author's website <http://www.richardlong.org>.



*solutions that turn towards places considered abandoned and derelict. Open to the Łódź inhabitant's co-participation, they develop an ethical bond with the city*<sup>30</sup>.

I proposed an action - a walk around the Łódź district of Polesie to the visitors of the Museum of Art. The district's name makes reference to the area's history, as not a long time ago, it used to be a forest (Polesie in Polish means "after the forest") and currently is a highly urbanised piece of land close to the very heart of the big city. The participants of the walk were looking for forest substrates, its remnants in the modern urban tissue. Soil and sand were collected, necessary for future work with the Baedeker method. Children attending the Polesie community centres and the district inhabitants participated in a painting action. Together with them, I created the pages for the Baedeker from Polesie. The project information reads: *"Ekologie miejskie" [Urban Ecologies] is a way of thinking about the surroundings that assume the awareness of other organisms' presence - plants and animals. It challenges the division between nature and culture, which involves promoting awareness of the complex relations between the worlds of the animate and inanimate matter. The metabolistic community does not let anybody remain indifferent to the complexity of the links with the environment. "Ekologie miejskie" [Urban Ecologies] is a tool of collective production of knowledge about a place, promoting a concept of bottom-up urban designing, reflecting upon and criticising the anthropocentric and economy-driven approach to culture*<sup>31</sup>.

### **Identity from earth**

Earth is then treated as a vehicle of human stories. A critical aspect of identity comes to the foreground - the place of birth, originating from a specific human community or tension of a sense of belonging - being separate. Art, treated as an identity investigating medium, has been used by artists on numerous occasions. It enables telling own story, stories of the groups that the author identifies with or people who remain on the margin of social interest - stories that cannot be heard. The language of art becomes an alternative to conventional language.

Identity as a scientific category is investigated against and within many science areas, including but not limited to sociology, philosophy<sup>32</sup>, psychology and anthropology. To me, it matters that identity is created through confrontation and interaction. I propose such interactions in the field of art to my viewers. The experiences with the Baedeker strategy turned out a breakthrough, which I emphasised on numerous occasions. The theoretical part of my doctor's dissertations presents the scientific aspects of the subject matter. Its essential part was devoted to art in interaction. In order to avoid elaborating on the already presented theses, I only want to recall a conclusive change of optics towards the artist and viewer's figures. It seems necessary to deprive the first one of the dominant role and invite the other not only to participate but to co-participation and co-creation. Both the author and the addressee of an art piece or action are responsible for its final shape.

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<sup>30</sup> Based on the information published on the Museum of Art in Łódź website: <https://msl.org.pl/ekologie-miejskie->, curators: Aleksandra Jach, Katarzyna Słoboda.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> According Zygmunt Bauman, *Tożsamość: Rozmowy z Benedetto Vecchim* [Identity: Dialog with Benedetto Vecchi], Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2005





The artistic action involving the audience during the *Festival of Jewish Culture in Szczekociny* should be analysed from such a perspective<sup>33</sup>. They take place upon the invitation of the inhabitants of Szczekociny, as a result of multi-aspect and continuous work of the local teachers and cultural managers on the issue<sup>34</sup>. The Museum of Art expressed massive interest in such actions<sup>35</sup>. Being concerned about the history building its own identity - the fact that the Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński, the Avant-garde artists, used to live there<sup>36</sup> - for many years, the Museum supported actions aimed to retrieve the other history of the city's Jewish past. The meetings followed a pre-planned structure. Previously, my original ideas and proposals were discussed with the cultural managers from Szczekociny and the community of Survivors and their successors in Israel. The idea developed this way, which I provided with an art form, was communicated to the youth from the Complex of Schools in Szczekociny during a workshop lasting several days. The formula of joint participation and the course of artistic activities during the Festival of Jewish Culture was also discussed. The action which took place in the Jewish cemetery, or actually in an empty square left after the cemetery, was open to the public. Thus, an artistic action became a shared experience for the current and former inhabitants from Szczekociny and Israel. Let me recall two actions: *Tożsamość miejsca* [Identity of the Place] under the 6th Festival of Jewish Culture in Szczekociny, in 2012 and *Kamienny Kadisz* [Stone Kaddish] under the 9th Festival of Jewish Culture in Szczekociny in 2016.

The first one developed the Baedeker strategy. Looking for soil, young people were following the biographies of the Szczekociny, particular inhabitants of Jewish origin<sup>37</sup>. Finding the places related to the people's everyday life, the youth visited the places they knew - indispensable and vital in their lives. The places became common ground, sharing the same space and identity. Not only the sand samples they brought were important, used for making the pages of a unique book object entitled *The Baedeker from Szczekociny*<sup>38</sup>, but also the deliberations and reflections accompanying the search. The words used for describing the experiences were translated into Hebrew and cut out as templates in sheets of white paper. The pieces of paper, regularly arranged all over the former cemetery area, created a temporary installation artwork. During the Festival, after the official part (Kaddish, formal addresses), all participants were asked to pour the soil (not used during the workshop) into the letter holes. Soil, which is crushed stone, was placed in a cemetery, according to Jewish tradition. The perishability of the record emphasised the perishability and futility of any actions against the history that happened there.

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<sup>33</sup> More in: Yossi Bornstein, Agnieszka Piśkiewicz, Mirosław Skrzypczyk, Anna Wieczorek (ed.) 2017, *Szczekociński Festiwal Kultury Żydowskiej „Yahad-Razem”. 10 lat* [The "Yahad-Razem" Szczekociny Festival of Jewish Culture. Ten Years], Szczekociny, p. 103-130.

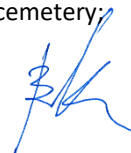
<sup>34</sup> I would like to emphasise the role of the teachers from the Complex of Schools in Szczekociny, with the animating, engaged and initiating roles of Mirosław Skrzypczyk and Anna Wieczorek.

<sup>35</sup> Between 2012 and 2020 the employees of the Department of Education of the Museum of Art participated and were involved in the workshop organisation and conducting.

<sup>36</sup> More in: Skrzypczyk M., Wieczorek A. (ed.), *Awangarda w Szczekocinach* [Avant-garde in Szczekociny], publication financed from the *Power industry for south Poland* funds, Szczekociny 2012.

<sup>37</sup> The investigations included Cela Szwarcbbaum, Jadzia Cukerman, Zelik Majzler, the families of the Honiks and Rychs, and Izyk Mendel Bornstein

<sup>38</sup> I made a book object in reference to the presented events. Its body is sculptured from the original paving slabs from Szczekociny and is meant to recall the histories of matzevas from the currently empty cemetery; they became a street pavement.



*The Kamienny Kadisz* [Stone Kaddish] of 2016 problematised the way of commemorating. What type of material expression of remembrance is relevant for the Holocaust and the past of the Jewish inhabitants of Szczekociny? In a situation when not a single Jew lives in Szczekociny nowadays. How should young inhabitants honour the memory (what memory? whose?)? These questions accompanied the workshop with the students. The creation of sculpture-like objects and stones - words was the answer. The word collection was by no means incidental - they came from the Kaddish prayer text. On a customary basis, in the religious part of the Festival, the prayer was sung, preceding the an artistic action events in the cemetery. Its message, though perhaps sensed, was completely non-understandable for the Polish community. Kaddish does not remember or mourn the deceased person but praises and cherishes God. During the an artistic action event, the participants from Szczekociny and other parts of the world, speaking different languages, arranged a stone installation - two Kaddish texts in the Hebrew and Polish language versions. I returned to this work several times. In 2018, I made *Kamienny Kadisz - Reinstalacja* [Stone Kaddish - Reinstallation], placing the original elements in the exhibition space of *Barbara Kaczorowska. Identity-Earth-Coincidence*, Petach Tikva Cultural Hall in Israel. The Hebrew-speaking viewers could see a visual translation into Polish of a prayer well-known to them. In the end, I would like to quote a critical text authored by Prof. Aldona Pobojevska, PhD, a philosopher and ethicist, to the exhibition *Barbara Kaczorowska. Identity-Earth-Coincidence* in Petach Tikva Cultural Hall in Israel: "*Such a dialogical communication is not conducted in any general or commonly understandable language. Its successive steps-messages do not fit the order of simple questions and answers. Therefore it becomes indispensable to involve different levels of human existence. Means to express individuality are looked for, and none of them is entirely relevant. Although speech is used in the dialogue, words are not supposed to refer to what they directly and customarily mean but to what was not and cannot be marked in them because of being individual. Accepting the Other's Truth does not involve intellectual understanding but is an ENCOUNTER. In her artistic activities, Barbara Kaczorowska creates a place for such an ENCOUNTER between the Jews and Poles, between the former and the current inhabitants of Szczekociny*<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> The text comes from the review of *Barbara Kaczorowska. Identity-Earth-Coincidence* exhibition in the Petach Tikva Cultural Hall, Israel 2018.



**Information about demonstrating the essential scientific or artistic activity, executed in more than one university, scientific or cultural institution, especially abroad**

In this part of my Summary of Accomplishments, I would like to emphasise numerous local and international contacts, participation in foreign collective and individual exhibitions (a complete list is included in the *List of artistic achievements making a significant contribution to the discipline development*, Section II.6.), active participation in international conferences (Section II.7) and European programmes (Section II.12). My development as an artist means confronting different types of audiences. The preparation of exhibitions for the Poolse Bibliotheek, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2020); The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC Canada (2019); Künstlerhaus Göttingen, Germany (2018); Petach Tikva Cultural Hall, Israel (2018); Academy of Art and Design in Kharkiv, Ukraine (2017); *Ausstellungszentrum Piramide* Berlin, Germany (2017); and Accademia di Belle Arti, Palermo, Italy (2015) was a considerable challenge.

Before being awarded a PhD degree, I took part in exhibitions in Germany, Italy, Slovenia and the USA. In addition, a part of my doctorate, the abovementioned *The Baedeker from Earth* project, involved actions and workshops in different parts of Europe.

The scientific field is, for me, an important forum for exchanging ideas. Scientific conferences fulfil such a role. Throughout my career, I participated in numerous conferences addressed to researchers in various fields (art sciences, philosophy, educational science, art therapy and medicine). I particularly favour the opportunities to act through different expression forms, including a conference presentation, exhibition, workshop and an artistic action.

Over the years, I participated in European projects involving short stays in the inviter's locality and executing artistic and sometimes didactic goals. It included my participation in Erasmus+, teaching mobility, in 2015 and a stay in Accademia di Belle Arti in Palermo. I gave students classes and prepared the *Why White On White?* an artistic action and an individual exhibition. My trip to the INHolland University of Applied Sciences, School of Education, the Hague - Rotterdam, in 2009 followed a similar scheme. However, my participation in the Internationale Sommerakademie Laas, Balance, Bolzano, Italy, in 2008 was different. It involved workshops in a studio of marble sculpting and preparation and participation in a collective exhibition called *Balance*.

The membership in InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) offers a vital inspiration and is a source of contacts, including international ones. The Society brings together creators for whom action in art and education is of equal significance, which enables a dialogue with Polish and foreign milieus who so define their artistic goals.



## Information about didactic, organisational and science or art disseminating achievements

### Classes conducted and didactic achievements

Since the beginning of my work, i.e. since 2010, I was teaching an original subject called *Art and Education Projects* at the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. In 2017, after restructuring, it became a studio of *Creative Situations Designing* for the year III students of the Media Art and Art Education. I developed a formula to share my artist's experience with the students, simultaneously using art as an educating medium. The subject description reads: "*Creative Situation Designing*" aims to prepare students for an independent realisation of any forms of artistic expression which blend art and education (projects, visual art workshops, social campaigns, events, etc.). Through consultation with the teacher, the students select a form, formulate the topic, carry out an in-deep analysis and develop an operating scenario (semester I). A concept developed this way is implemented in an educational or cultural institution as a group activity. The classes end with a review (exhibition) of all student projects (semester II)<sup>40</sup>.

Students' realisations often reach spectacular dimensions. Not only do they require my being a teacher but also going beyond the teaching activity - becoming a curator who supervises the students' creative situations: exhibitions, actions, workshops and activities. At least a few of them are presented every year outside the university, in educational and cultural institutions. About 15 - 25 people performed such actions in a public space in 2011-2020. They are summarised in detail in the *List of Achievements*, Section III.7.A.

Between 2010 and 2013, I conducted classes in *Visual Art Techniques* for year I MA students of the Art Education field. The subject was oriented to looking for original techniques and technologies. The students were encouraged to experiment with natural materials, retrieve old and environmentally friendly formulas, and handle modern materials not included in the traditional tools and materials employed in art.

Another original subject that I have been teaching nearly since the beginning of my work at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń also changed its name and position in the curriculum (*Creative Project Methods*, classes, year I (MA studies) for the Art Education field between 2012 and 2017, and *Creative Projects and Workshops*, classes, year II (MA studies) for the Art Education field, between 2012 and 2013). At present they are classes on *Participative Methods of Working with a Viewer* for year IV students of Media Art and Art Education fields. *The students attending the classes are encouraged to explore their relationship with the audience, seek and build an artistic message that would be inclusive and cohesive with the type of their creation, including their level of openness in contact with others. Participation is meant as a continuous value of varying intensity. A piece of art or action can be planned to allow the viewer's active participation only to a small extent or*

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<sup>40</sup> The text was derived from the USOSweb of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.



*executed in a way allowing co-creation. The artist decides how much they open to the viewer's participation. The students are supposed to design six realisations: acting in a direct (as close as possible) contact with the viewer and when the contact occurs through a piece of art and education. Two selected scenarios are piloted and evaluated in the students' group and executed as a work of art or participative action.*<sup>41</sup> Making an art and education prop, a participative and educating object art is among the subject outcomes.

In 2017-2019 I ran my original MA Diploma Classes - Educational Project Studio for year II Media Art and Art Education MA students. I have been the subject coordinator ever since. The students voluntarily decided to participate in the classes and formulated their diploma topic responsibly, treating it as an extension of the experiences learnt during previous classes I taught. I supervised the following diplomas in art:

- 2019 Dawid Lewandowski, title: Farbiarz [A Dyer]  
Julita Reder, title: Moim obrazem [With My Painting]  
2018 Aleksandra Karbowska, title: Linia [The Line]  
Monika Balcerak, title: Zielnik - art book [Herbarium - Art Book]

I also reviewed some art diplomas in the Media Art and Art Education field. In 2017-2019 they included:

- Katarzyna Kukułka, title: Wieloznaki [Polysigns]  
Dominika Majewska, title: Tu wszystko polityką jest [Everything is Politics Here]  
Klara Skórska, title: AV-izo [AV-Ailable]  
Łucja Januszko, title: Pod nierównym sufitem [In Your Belfry]

I taught other subjects for non-art fields outside my home department. For example, in 2013-15 and 2018, it was an Art and Therapy Workshop laboratory for year II Cognitive Science MA students. I shared my experience in art therapy there. The students were provided with scientific fundamentals of this scientific field and gained practical experience in sample sessions, including methodological discussions.

The lectures on Interactive Art, which I have given since 2019 for different years students of Cognitive Science, are highly demanding. It is based, e.g. on the concept of the Polish researcher Prof. Ryszard Kluszczyński, PhD, but goes beyond the described and well-established concepts simply because it requires regular updating to include the latest Polish and international realisations. In order to prepare well for teaching the subject, I have to follow the literature (often published in languages other than Polish) and participate in events, exhibitions and public presentations of interactive art pieces.

Before being awarded the PhD degree, I worked at the Chair of Art Therapy in the Academy of Humanities and Economics (previously: College of Humanities and Economics) in Łódź. I conducted classes for non-art students, including Art Therapy, Creative Actions, Methodology of Creative Projects and numerous Educational Workshops. It provided excellent grounds for my original and independent teaching at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.



**Other didactic achievements:**

Since 2016 I have been a tutor of the *Visual Education Art* students' scientific club, which associated from 12 to 24 students in different years. Study visits to cultural and educational institutions, art workshops and organisational assistance in arranging exhibitions were offered as part of the club's activity.

Since 2017, I have been preparing students for the art workshop scenario competition for the "*Vincent's Pocket*" *International Workshop of Creative Anxiety*, held by the Children's Art Centre, Zamek Culture Centre, Magazyn association in Poznań. All winner realisations are summarised in the *List of Achievements* Section II.14. Every year, students organise one or two workshops during the event, which I participate in, offering substantial and organisational assistance.

**Other organisational achievements:**

I get involved in the current activity of the organisational units I work for - the Chair of Visual Education and Studies on Art and the Faculty of Fine Arts.

I participate in the meetings, develop the minutes of the Faculty Council's meetings and sessions (once a year); similarly to other staff members, I draw the schedules and develop the curricula and syllabi.

Moreover, I am in charge of social media. Since 2014 I have been the administrator of the Chair of Visual Education and Studies on Art website (previously the Department of Art Education), and since 2011 I have run the Department of Art Education blog.

I was one of the administrators of the Facebook profile of the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (from 2017 to June 2019), and the Facebook profile of the Media Art and Visual Education since 2017 (among other administrators).

**Disseminating achievements:**

Disseminating the knowledge of art, modern art in particular, and the strategies of current artists constitute my crucial professional experience. The border between artistic action and art disseminating activity tends to be fluid. An art workshop/an artistic action juxtaposed with art pieces of other creators turns into an independent and original expression.

I included such realisations in the *List of Artistic Achievements* Section II. *6B. Public realisations - original actions of a creative, educational, and art and social workshop nature*. Here, I would instead quote activities with the actual servient role of "explaining" the art.

Certainly such a role can be assigned to popular science lectures devoted to modern art in the Museum of Art, which I delivered in 2011-2020 (the topics are enumerated in *The List of Achievements* Section III.4A) and original art workshops for the museum visitors of different ages and experience (also enumerated in *The List of Achievements* Section III.4A). They were an accompanying programme for regular and temporary exhibitions. I delivered the lectures in person, or other people were presenting them according to my scenarios.

Some of the presentations became starting points for the scenarios of a TV programme devoted to modern art: *KulturaneK* (directed by A. Frątczak, scenario: B. Kaczorowska, L. Karczewski) and an input for the exercises in Kaczorowska B., Karczewski L., Mądrycka Adamczyk K., Pawlikowska M., Wiktorko M., Wlazeł M., Wojciechowska-Sej A., *Książka do*



*zobaczenia* [A Book to See], Łódź Association for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, Łódź Art Museum, Łódź, 2015.

In the abovementioned period, I conducted regular classes for the Museum of Art in Łódź, called *Poszukiwania, Otwarta Pracownia Rysunku* [Quest. Open Drawing Studio] for adults. According to the studio assumptions: *The meetings are not aimed to teach drawing or painting traditionally. We will draw and paint to try to understand modern art. Visual art activities will be a language, a communication platform that will help us explain vital issues tackled by artists. The developed creations will be records of deliberations rather than independent art pieces*<sup>42</sup>. During the pandemic (April - September 2020), the classes were delivered as an *Online drawing workshop*. My classes were appreciated by the participants and constituted a valuable contribution to the Museum's educational services. Other disseminating activities of mine include some conference presentations (a complete list is available in the *List of Achievements*, Section II.7), such as lectures and activities for the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections, (post)ART Students and Post-Graduate Students' Science Club, Centre for Educational Practices, ZAMEK Culture Centre in Poznań and the Polish Association for Creativity.

I participated in exhibitions whose essential component included disseminating their core ideas through meetings with the audience, principally in workshops. As an example I can mention all *Biblioteka wyobraźni* [Imagination Library], *Książka Artystyczna* [Book Art] workshops, on *Scena Wspólna* gallery [Shared Stage Gallery] organised by the Children's Art Centre in Poznań and *Magazyn* Association for Art and Education.

I approach exhibitions and public presentations of my art pieces in a holistic way. I often plan programmes accompanying individual exhibitions: workshops, guided tours and lectures. Such was the case of the *De Terra. Barbara Kaczorowska. Sub Rosa. Beata Marcinkowska* exhibition in the City Art Gallery in Łódź. I conducted an educational workshop for children called *Tajemnicze ślady* [Mysterious Traces] and a meeting with the author for adults. A workshop series was also planned for the *Cykl Otwarty* [Open Series] exhibition in Galeria Działań in Warsaw.

Art dissemination among the underprivileged audience includes audio descriptions which describe modern art pieces. I have authored over sixty studies of such kind on the oeuvre, e.g. of Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro, Joseph Beuys, Witkacy and Mirosław Bałka.

**In addition to the issues mentioned above, the Applicant can give other information on their career, important from the Applicant's point of view**

It is worth emphasising that my artistic experiences are often accompanied by a scientific reflection in the form of reviewed publications. The chapters I published in scientific monographs are summarised in the *List of Achievements* Section II.2, while the membership in scientific editorial teams is listed in Section II.3.

I am an active participant in numerous scientific conferences. The list of my presentation titles is given in Section II.7. To me, it matters to voice my opinions among the scientific

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<sup>42</sup> The text was derived from the information materials on the Museum of Art in Łódź website: <https://msl.org.pl/poszukiwania--otwarta-pracownia-rysunku-i-malarstwa2/>.



milieus, to cross the borders of disciplines, operate in several science fields and persuade that scientific practice and artists' activities can provide mutual context.

**Awards granted for scientific or artistic activity:**

I received the following awards for my merits:

DISTINGUISHED CULTURAL SERVICE AWARD, 2016, awarding body: the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland, for a person with distinctive achievements for creating, disseminating, and protecting culture.

BRONZE MEDAL FOR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE, 2013, awarding body: President of the Republic of Poland.

REGIO KULTURA, 2013, Award of the Łódź Province Marshal for the achievements in artistic creation, dissemination and protection of cultural assets and exceptional involvement in the work for culture, for the Museum of Art in Łódź in the educational project category, for "KULTURANEK" educational programme on modern art (directed by A. Frątczak, scenario: B. Kaczorowska, L. Karczewski).

SYBILLA, 2012, Award of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, category: educational project (granted in 2013) for the Museum of Art in Łódź for "KULTURANEK" educational programme on modern art (directed by A. Frątczak, scenario: B. Kaczorowska, L. Karczewski).





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