

Jerzy Rupik
Abstract of Ph.D. dissertation
Transpolis - affordances of the place

The Ph.D. dissertation is a discussion about the attitude of man towards the inevitability of evanescence: building of a 'place' and the need to roam - expanding their own space, as well as specific mutual relations between man and place. The aforementioned attitudes found a place in the proposed title of the paper, referring to the thought of Yi-Fu Tuan - the place is a pause in motion. This work is also an attempt to create a definition of a place using artistic means. The axis of the search is the reflection on the area of the now-defunct Murcki Mine, which is one of those places that, due to historical and landscape reasons, are not easily defined.

The space of the former Murcki Mine, although the oldest one in Upper Silesia, patiently awaiting changes, now attracts enthusiasts of post-industrial spaces and often lovers of motor sports with its specific terrain features. The space rating changed with the height that is travelled. A truncated cone of heaps, towering over the surrounding area, reminiscent of a plateau, while being accessible, works exceptionally well as a viewpoint. It shows diversity and emphasizes the processual nature of the landscape. You can see both the development of the metropolis and the disappearance of subsequent industrial landscape elements. The place seems to be at a turning point in its history, but it emanates the possibility of a more conscious, culture-generating use, different than before.

The word Transpolis used in the title - is a combination of Latin trans (through, out, through) and Greek polis (city, state). Trans can also be described as a different state of consciousness, resulting in altered sensitivity to stimuli, as a result of which people involved in it perform certain activities in a subconscious and uncontrolled way. Trans is also a state of non-contact with the environment, combined with losing oneself in some activity.

The considerations about the place contained in the first chapter focus on the search for the definition of an objective reference point. While infinity by definition has no limits - it is the opposite of everything that is 'finite', you can ask a question about the beginning of infinity here. Infinity exists in relation to the beginning of the system. The beginning is the common point of infinity, being at the same time its opposite. Looking towards the horizon - the exemplification of infinity, we involuntarily become the beginning of the personal coordinate system. Subjective perception of space can be found in the considerations of Yi-Fu Tuan, who develops the anthropocentric theory of space perception. In his theory, man is not only the center, but is also a being that decodes the world. Man is a measure. Because the perception of the scale requires references, the human body becomes a reference point or a set of points. We can call it an autonomous center.

The next stage of the considerations included in the second chapter is the issue of the relationship between man and place. The discrepancy, between the phenomenological and the empirical approach, on the one hand shows the inability to unilaterally describe, on the other hand, discovers various, complementary aspects, allows for a broader view and selection of own research model. In the analysis of Maria Lewicka, humanistic geographers point to the existential character of the human-place relationship. However, psychologists and sociologists point to the residents' attachment to the place as a variable differentiating people. A place according to the definition of Yi-Fu Tuan is a space marked by human presence. It means that a man, when he learns space, defines it simultaneously, and defining space transforms it into a place.

The third chapter is an attempt to account for the human-place relationship in the normative framework. It leads to the title concept of affordance. Defined by Gibson as a wealth of the environment, offering the entity the opportunity to act. Affordances, acting as the interaction of living beings and inanimate objects, create a specific "permission" and "invitation" to act and as a result become a condition and at the same time a *spiritus movens* of change. More on the issue of affordance is suggested by Erik Rietveld and Julian Kiverstein. The authors develop Gibson's concepts, emphasize the importance of exercising abilities in a specific context. They argue that the affordability of the environment depends on the skills available in a given ecological niche. It is important that an observer - an individual may, but does not have to, perceive or deal with affordances in accordance with his



needs, despite the fact that affordance is always available to perception. In a slightly different way, the problem of affordance is taken by Don Norman, emphasizing the importance of the relationship. He proposes to move away from thinking that properties are related to objects. Affordance is not a property, affordance is a relationship. Whether the affordance exists depends on the properties of both the object and the participant - the recipient.

The reference to affordances is also found in Ingold, who points to the analogy between the perception of an object through the prism of value and usefulness and the distinction of terrain concepts - having real use value, and the landscape in which useful values are deposited - affordances. Following Ingold's considerations, the term affordance can also be applied to the perception of landscape - the space of coexistence.

Considerations on the subject of variability inherent in the nature of the universe are contained in the fourth chapter. The pervasive variability introduces us to a specific type of addiction, in response to the expectations of others and our own. In some sense, the 'dictatorship of novelty' constantly commands 'to discover' and to set new goals. Getting intoxicated with the 'new', in extreme cases, inevitably tends to a satiating state. Beata Frydryczak points to the reasons for this attitude, quoting Zygmunt Bauman that the 'postmodern individual' tries to fill the inner void with a collection of sensations.

The sixth chapter is a development of the theory of Manuel Castells, the author of the thesis which says that the contemporary globalizing world is a "space of flows" - the space of communication networks, not specific, tangible and physical locations, or "space of places". The above vision coincides with the definition of 'non-place' created by the French ethnologist and cultural anthropologist Marc Augé, which is exemplified by airports, petrol stations, shopping centers, spaces where no new communities are formed. 'Non-places' are not a place of human residence. The title of Transpolis referring to Castells 'space of flows' is an attempt to define both the 'fluidity' of space and the phenomenon of co-creation and participation of people in this process. It is what Tim Ingold describes as "work in progress" defining the space around us, emphasizing its processual character.

The seventh chapter is an attempt to answer the question of what the choice of the way and the place is. The key is the search process, often imposed by fate. Implifying the burden of choice, between seeking durability and trying to change through the road, resolving a dilemma - to go or to stay. The order of events over time, in the individual assessment loses the features of randomness. Alternative solutions seem obvious (possible) when they concern the future. However, comparative verification of decisions is impossible, as it is impossible to stay in several places at the same time. Only a subjective and impermanent rating is possible, dictated by the fleeting 'here and now'.

Chapter eight emphasizes the possibility of man's creative attitudes towards material fragments of reality, which, once they are redefined, create a new life, gain a new meaning. In the opinion of Beata Frydryczak, in the technique of combining fragments, Walter Benjamin sees the possibility of giving an allegorical object a new sense. Benjamin from the fragments of reality makes creative material. At the same time, it allows us to cross the boundary between physicality and metaphysics, and literally transforms into symbolism. Finding sense in 'inconspicuous objects' corresponds to what Yi-Fu Tuan calls 'anchoring time'. This feature of the object lets us partially recreate a non-existent space in our imagination.

The ninth chapter deals with the issues of exploring areas that cannot be represented. The attempt to cross the borders of the visual representation of reality, through the category of sublimity, indicates to art the path to imaging infinity.

The ninth chapter deals with the issues of exploring areas that cannot be represented. The attempt to cross the borders of the visual representation of reality, through the category of sublimity, indicates the artistic way to present infinity.

The tenth chapter is a description of artistic work resulting from the creative "learning" of the space around the inactive Murcki Mine. Experiencing a place depicted in the objects of the Route of Remembrance and the film and photography cycle is an attempt at a broader reflection on the transience, impermanence of anthropogenic works, as well as dialogue with the selected space, its history and present significance. In the project, which is an extension of the Miners Disaster Memory

Route project, a participant whose presence is a condition of the existence of a place of remembrance, co-creates and symbolically defines the space. The Route of Remembrance is also an attempt to answer the question whether memory needs materialization?

Film Transpolis - is a subjective look at the everyday life of the place, where hundreds of thousands of cars pass every day. However, the Postproduction - Reserve series focuses on the process of change - and as a result - disappearance of the utility meaning of the object - the work of human hands. Art installations from the series Postproduction - Reserve, combining the found fragments with a white pedestal, pose a question of what values man brings to nature, whether objects of anthropogenic origin should be protected? At the same time, they gain the importance of objects that create the story of the place. The space of Murckowska Heap becomes for a moment the space of the gallery, defined by the surrounding landscape.

Photography series Reserve - Postproduction is closed the photographs that complement the story about the "place". They describe a meeting with a former miner who chose to live alone in the foot of the heap. For several years, he has lived in a space he created, limited to the necessary minimum. A resident of this peculiar hermitage seems to live against the rhythm of modern civilization. By his attitude, he simultaneously reveals its illusory value.

