

Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice
The Art Department

Michalina Wawrzyczek-Klasik

SELF-AWARE IMAGES

Direct experience of the image in the context of personal creative searches

summary

promoter: Associate Professor (dr hab.) Tomasz Chudzik
tributary promoter: PhD Piotr Kossakowski

Katowice 2016

INTRODUCTION

Everything I do comes down to think about the image. But this is not the image understood in a stereotypical manner (mimetic, aesthetic, assigned only to painting). It is for me an autonomous entity, a kind of process. I am still looking in it something which is beyond the words.

- The freedom of looking and thinking (seeing and knowing). This perspective on art, the image, has led me to the term "self-aware image," which became the subject of my written work.

"Self-aware image" is a term related to the period of "triggering" the image, which took place in the second half of XXth century. It was recently (2005) used by dr. hab. M. Smolińska-Byczuk as the title of an exhibition of some Polish artists: J. Berdyszak, T. Ciecierski, P. C. Kowalski, P. Łubowski and K. Kuskowski in the City Gallery Arsenal in Poznan. This exhibition was about to show the „meta-painting” in Polish art, which consistently for many years has been developed and undertaken by other artists, and which seems to be often unnoticed and overlooked.

These artists ask the question about what is the picture? They wonder about the relationship in between the picture and recipient. They are characterized by their open attitude which allows to cross successive borders.

Almost 50 years ago in her essay "Against interpretation" Susan Sontag wrote: "we do not need hermeneutics, but the erotics of art"¹. She paid attention to how we move away from the "direct experience" and want to name everything and classify, and because of this we forget how important it is a sensual and intuitive reception of art, and how important it is to develop sensitivity for this type of art. In today's reality with flooded rubbish, multiplicity and randomness of the image, while we are more and more mechanical looking at an art - it seems that Susan Sontag's words have never been so up-to-date.

In my dissertation I want to think about the phenomenon of the modern, self-aware, affecting "beyond words" work of art. I would like to trace selected examples of art and get to know its history and try to extract its features. I want to discover how it evolved and how the function of this type of the image is today. What is the relationship between the artist and the image, and the image between the receiver. The last stage of my work is to determine my own position on this type of image. I hope that my attempt to describe this phenomenon with the position of the person who is "expressing" throughout an image, representing the younger generation, will be interesting voice during the discussion about the "self-aware image".

FORMATION OF SELF-AWARE IMAGES

The way toward the self-aware image lasted several hundred years. V. I. Stoichita discovers its origins during reformation movements in northern Europe, which took place in the sixteenth century. The second half of the twentieth century is the time, when the image reaches its awareness. Paradoxically, it happens in an atmosphere of the end of painting. "The crisis of representation"³, the time of great change, asks more questions. G. Boehm noted then: "Learning about art will be changed. Not only in the quantitative sense, broadening historical material (...) will need for example ask thoroughly and answer what are *the images*, what constitutes them, what are their functions. After the crisis of representation status >>image<< can no longer be understood by itself "².

J.-J. Wunenburger considers helpful in understanding the image, analysis of the origins of its name. Carrying the analysis shows the image as a visible form, relating to some past, present or future experience. J.-J. Wunenburger also notes that images elude unilateral definition and stuck in the "in between." - In the state of suspension, which allows them to combine what is real with what is supported only by the imagination sphere. He criticizes the perception of the image in the crafts criteria - as only an aesthetic object.

1 S. Sontag, *Przeciw interpretacji*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Karakter 2012, s. 26.

2 G. Boehm, *Die Krise der Repräsentation. Die Kunstgeschichte und die moderne Kunst*, Stuttgart 1985 s. 113, cyt. za: M. Smolińska, *Otwieranie obrazu*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe 2012, s. 64.

Encourages to reject stereotypes and reflect on the issue anew. As a summary of his argument, relies on the definition made by M.-J. Mondzain: "The image (...) has nothing to do with Being nor non-being; It is a special version of the manifestation of Being, which is not here. The image introduces a relationship of present absence; What's more, it is what brings us to this absence and what makes it visible under the sign of relationship."³ Somewhat similar thought wrote in his notes Catalan artist A. Tapiés: "A Picture is nothing. It is a door leading to another door."⁴ M. Smolińska perceives it as a "heterogeneous phenomenon, variable artifact that interacts with the environment and gains various layers of interpretation."⁵ Perhaps there is no one way to describe such a multi - dimensional phenomenon. Perhaps it would be wise to stick to the words of S. Morawski: "Painting is like destiny (...) but always remains unfulfilled possibility. Because it is unclear, what really is the reality, and also it is uncertain what the painting is."⁶ It is safe to say that one definition does not exist, due to the volume and volatility of that concept, but mainly because it goes beyond verbal sphere. Perhaps its definition should serve sensation - unnamed feeling of recipient? - This elusive awareness of communing with the image. The perception is illusory, everyone sees the world differently. Reality is changing its face by the individual, emotions colored reception. But perhaps the image - seen in the context of art, is what unites us in a common, archetypal, timeless perception?

SELF-AWARE IMAGE, THE OPEN IMAGE

If there are still asked so many questions about "image" so how to speak of "self-aware image"? Perhaps it is impossible to define this phenomenon, but it is worth a try.

I propose a partial separation of the term "self-aware image" from "meta-painting". The term "meta-painting" is limited to the area of painting. Although it is today a wide area, "image" seems to be more extensive problem. It's a being which certainly goes beyond one field of art. You can venture to say that every "meta-painting" is "self-aware image", but not every "self-aware image" is painting. This separation seems to be necessary in the context of the continuous evolution and expand the boundaries of the image (as a work of art). Today, when all the divisions in art are blurred, and the medium is often the only way to end, considering the term in the old way, would introduce too much restriction. It would also exclude many artists, who have contributed and still contribute the development of the phenomenon.

Continuing this thought, I propose to make a distinction between the word "meta-image" and "self-aware image". - "Self-awareness" seems to be deeper and multidimensional term.

There is, however, a term determining the concept of self-awareness presentation and indicates its characteristics. This is the "open image" - it constitutes a development of the term "open work" proposed by Umberto Eco. He described "open work" as the "possibilities of interpretation, as a system of incentives, which the main characteristic is their indeterminacy, making the recipient forced into a series of ever-changing >>interpretations; as a structure, as a constellation<< components subjected to various kinds of mutual relations"⁷.

Continuing this thinking, Anegret Jürgens Kirchoff, indicates the characteristic elements of this problem. These are the "indeterminacy, ambiguity, inability to bring the work to a specific meaning, work with emptiness and empty places and fragmentation."⁸ E. Franz adds also that "the open image opens the self-awareness of a viewer, and allows him to new understanding of history of art."⁹

3 M. - J. Mondzain, *L'image naturelle*, Paris: Le Nouveau Commerce 1995, s. 22, cyt. za:

J. - J. Wunenburger, *Filozofia obrazów*, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz/terytoria 2011, s. 153.

4 A. Tapiés, *From Within*, Barcelona: Fundacio Antoni Tapiés 2013, s. 100.

5 M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 82-83.

6 S. Morawski, *Przedmowa*, w: M. Smoczyński, *Czas przeszły*, Kraków: MOCAK 2013, s. 89.

7 U. Eco, *Dzieło otwarte. Forma i nieokreśloność w poetykach współczesnych*, Warszawa 2008, s. 48, cyt. za: M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 82.

8 M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 79.

9 E. Franz, *Die zweite Revolution der Moderne*, s. 18, cyt. za: M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 81.

THE SENSE OF ABSTRACTION

Abstraction is derived from the Latin word "abstractio" - discovering, separation, retention. The features of an abstract image, understood in terms of "discovery, separation and retention," put it in a new light, guiding it to the right way of understanding. Aristotle claimed that "we use abstraction to create types of concepts of higher order. Abstraction removes more individual characteristics and creates the concept more general, poorer in content, but with a greater range"¹⁰.

Abstract art refers to images both real and "internal". It allows to extract the "essence", to get a picture - a synthesis of the thoughts, things and emotions. By detachment from the real world and functioning as a separate entity, it can combine the features of a variety of performances, reject the rule, pave their principles. This way of treating art lets us create images-archetypes, understandable only in the field of view, bringing the synthesis and universal concepts.

The mere abstraction, however, for the image of the self-awareness is not all, in its perception "sense of abstraction" is also very important. It seems obvious that it shapes the imagination - "the primary expression of freedom"¹¹ which Sartre wrote about.

The sense of abstraction, released through the imagination, is the key to the "understanding" and - perhaps more accurately - "intelligent experiencing" - both: the real world and art.

SEEING AND KNOWING

To read the self-aware images, you need a sense of abstraction. Receiving this kind of art also requires an appeal to empathy, emotions, intuition and sensitivity.

Empathy allows to share experience, to read universal, non-verbal messages. It allows the viewer to find a new reality created by the artist, to feel it with him.

Emotions give the possibility of individual, spontaneous and deep reading of self-conscious art.

Intuition opens the realm of feelings, unnamed images that exist in our common archetypal tradition.

The sensitivity opens the person for the information provided by the senses, allows fuller and intense experience.

These are all types of ways leading to understanding, feeling, and not necessarily "naming" words that the art consists. "Sensuality and sense" as these elements are called by J.-J. Wunenburger lead to direct visual experience. The experience, which for many reasons is underestimated and undervalued, still functioning in the shadow of the tradition of verbal, rational, logical interpretation. As R. Arnheim wrote in "Visual thinking" - "someone who paints, writes, composes, or dance, thinks by his senses." In examining this topic, he came to further conclusions and showed, on the basis of his research, the thinking goes beyond the senses of art. As he wrote: "domain really creative thinking in every sphere of knowledge is that of the imagination."¹² It is also the first he said firmly, that man is made in their own world of artificial division of the senses and the mind. Fission, which produces in our perception deficiencies.

Even the opening of the self-awareness of the image in the second half of the twentieth century and

10 R. Arnheim, *Myślenie wzrokowe*, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz/terytoria 2013, s. 17.

11 J.-J. Wunenburger, op. cit., s.148.

12 R. Arnheim, op. cit., s.5.

a wave of abstract art, requiring his direct experience, have not changed this thinking permanently. Therefore, the impression that this kind of art is undervalued and slowly, even though it is still dealing with new artists, more often overlooked and underestimated. M. Poprzęcka writes: "Contrary to commonly adopted opinion on the visuality of the contemporary culture, I share the view expressed half a century ago by Rudolf Arnheim, that >> we demote our eyes to the role of measuring instruments and recognize-hence the scarcity of ideas that can be expressed vividly, and inability to detect meaning in what we see <<. Inexorably expanding city of secondary art accompanying comments and any kind of mediation more and more effectively eliminate the ability to contact with art as a real presence."¹³

Probably, the reason for this state of affairs is, as Arnheim wrote, omitting skills of perception in the education system, resulting from the denial of perception as comprising thoughts. We forget how essential the art is for the development of thought and imagination. It should finally be admitted that this division was unnatural and even harmful for the image. Instead of talking about "seeing" and "knowing," we should put an equal sign between them and treat it as one area. G. Didi-Huberman called this way of receiving "dialectical thinking." He writes: "The images do not owe their power merely transmit knowledge (...) Their power is intertwined and entangled with the transmitted and displaced knowledge produced and transformed ignorance. Therefore requires a gaze that does not come just to distinguish and recognize, by all means call (...), but which moves away slightly and stops of explanations. As for (...) the suspension until the conclusion so that the interpretation can develop in other directions (...) This alternative has its dialectical stage (...) which is, not to try to capture the image, but rather let it be caught by it-let deprived us of our knowledge about it."¹⁴

"The artist thinks, seeing"¹⁵ and that's why the recipient must start thinking in this way too.

AGAINST INTERPRETATION

"(...) We will never know how to watch the picture. Knowledge and sight are completely different way of being. (...)"¹⁶ wrote G. Didi-Huberman. You have to allow for this ignorance." Impossibility to name it does not mean "not being able to understand." Interpretation is aware usage of a code.

"In a culture whose main problem is the excessive growth of the intellect at the expense of making the freshness and the ability to feel the interpretation is the revenge of the intellect on art. (...) The world, our world is already quite exhausted and poor. Get rid of the duplicates to the time when we will again be able to more directly experience what it is."¹⁷

We must understand, finally, that we are all the key to understand the art. Each self-aware image invites to such meeting. An attempt to bring the work only for its content and describe it by its means, S. Sontag explains not only by a centuries-old tradition and the wrong exaltation of "knowing" and the "vision," but also hidden anxiety. Fear of what is not possible to analyse by mind, what is out of the rules and logic. Precisely what is the most valuable in self-aware painting. "(...) The interpretation results from the philistine objection, to leave a work of art itself. True art makes us feel anxious. The work can be reduced to its content and interpret precisely its content. Interpretation makes art becomes more submissive."¹⁸

Rejection of interpretation in its common meaning - as finding content in a work of art, the use of dualistic thinking, equal admission of senses and reason, should be the legacy of the last century. Century, which through its art should make a revolution of perception. But the revolution did not come. Perhaps because the reception of art requires courage and self-confidence. It needs an open attitude and again a trust for the senses.

13 M. Poprzęcka, *Inne obrazy*, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz/terytoria 2008, s. 16.

14 G. Didi-Huberman, *Przed obrazem*, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz/terytoria 2011, s. 16.

15 M. A. Potocka, *To tylko sztuka*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Aletheia 2008, s. 168.

16 G. Didi-Huberman, op. cit., s. 155.

17 Susan Sontag, op. cit., s. 16-17.

18 Ibidem, s. 17.

CHANGE (image as a kind of process)

Self-aware image is not a "dead" object, but kind of being, a separate existence. Therefore, one of its main features is changing. The phenomenon related to life and all natural processes. It allows to function on a variety of levels. Thanks to it, is a kind of open, never-ending process. In the context of self-aware image, of the object, is only a fragment of its existence. What really constitutes it is the entire process of its formation and the process of reception. They are diverse and multi-stage.

Sometimes the formation of self-aware image is equivalent to the final work. Some artists depend on the participation of third parties in this stage. This happens, for example, in the paintings of Anna Panek.

But more often it happens that the recipient does not participate actively in the real process of creation, but watches it through the same image. Elements of the show present the process of its creation. So it is in all the work of Nicholas Smoczyński. Just recall his "Photos" - projects carried out for many years in various galleries.

Different treatment of the image as a process is suggested by Roman Opałka. Small numbers, covering another and another canvas with more and more brighter paint, completed recordings of the artist's voice, counting down the monotonous, and the same manner. And a series of self-portraits executed by means of photography, every day at the same angle and light, until the last days of life. All of these work together outlined, having no precedent in the history of art, multi-layered, self-aware project.

Sometimes the "recording process" is shown by the very structure of the image. Matter stops its footsteps. As in the work of Antony Tapies, where traces caused by expressive gestures keep their energy.

The next stage, the next process triggered by the self-aware image, and existing only through intuition, imagination and emotional audience is imaginative, which urges image, gives it beginning, makes and develops the one who sees and experiences the work.

The viewer is no longer only a "spectator" the one who only looks at hung on the wall, mimetic canvas. The process of reception of the work reaches the last stage, when it passes to the highest level of its existence - the existence in the realm of the imagination of the recipient. Recipient, which give the image self-awareness, becomes part of it. The image is already self-aware only in him and through him. It is a final, fleeting and most complete stage of creating the image. Image - process.

FRAGMENTATION (the image as a whole made up of fragments, the image as a fragment)

Processual nature of the self-aware image can also be seen clearly in the works consisting of pieces or as a whole being "only" fragments. Elements that the recipient can see variously and connect, which bring into your world surrounding space. For this type of projects, in the context of the opening image indicates M. Smolińska-Byczuk: "In the case of images made of parts, separated by a spatial interval, the wall becomes a unifying factor, whose function is to view bonding together and triggering the effect of unity. That virtual coherence is initiated so during the perception of the viewer's imagination, which draws attention to the processual nature of this type of work."¹⁹ Special attention researcher draws on the work composed of fragments arranged in such a way that can not be seen together (in different rooms at obscuring each other walls, etc.) Then, after seeing one fragment, the recipient must keep it in mind to be able to see again, and in his head look for relationship between them. This work clearly shows the need for the image to continue functioning in the sphere of recipients imagination.

19 M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 319.

However, we should ask first of all what is the fragment? How did it happen that it is in the discussion about the image so important?

If, following the words of D. Folga-Januszewska, for centuries in the history of art creator sought to ensure that his work was perceived as a whole. Today "aware fragment is almost as highly regarded as unattainable whole."²⁰ The most valuable in this topic are for me the observations made by S. Sontag, who wrote about the passage in relation not only to the visual activities, but also to literature: "It seems that it is the main kind of art of our time. Anyone who thought about art had to deal with this problem. (...) I think that the form of the fragment has a very momentous function - indicates the gaps, spaces, and the silence between the phenomena. (...) It is also a form of decadence, since it refers to a lot of events, so you can make allusions and comment on things without having to explain each of them. This is not a form of art, or thoughts of young cultures that need to be expressed specifically. But we know a lot, and we are aware of the possibilities from different perspectives - the use of the fragment is one of the method to emphasize."²¹

Writer separated the fragmentation of the notion of incompleteness. She recognized the piece as a modern way to reach "full" thoughts, images, ideas.

Linear, logical thinking in the context of self-aware image fails. Thinking fragments, introducing them to the way of imaging expression, indicates the possibility of a fragmented perception, freedom of movement and joining associations. Self-aware image is received by the fragmentary associations, combining various elements, conjuring mental images, but it physically can also consist of parts, or "all" be part of it. - Fragment, which develops and becomes full of being on a plane of the recipient's imagination.

EMPTY SPACE

(working with emptiness and empty seats)

To rethink and understand silence is needed. Whiteness, emptiness, which clearly distinguishes itself dealt with the issue. So free from everything area has an extraordinary power to strength meanings, allows any "content" explode fully. Norwid already introduced to his work "the poetics of silence" by using ellipses, clipped sentences, pauses understatement. Silence was to complement words. Similarly happens with the image. Emptiness is a place for imagination, is an invitation to an individual creation. "Empty" completes the picture, interacts, allows it to reach a higher dimension.

Self-aware images comes into contact with the void in different ways. This may simply be a need for this kind of environment, "cleared" of any stimulus area- like in the case of works of M. Rothko, A. Tapies and R. Opałka, who need a "white cube" gallery. Many artists works with the emptiness and empty seats, treating them as an equal footing part of their implementation. Still further follow artists who, through experimenting with the format of work and introduce it divisions, use empty background to become the whole show. This happens precisely when discussing fragmentation.

Emptiness is the opposite creation by the man of the modern world. Self-aware realizations combine opposing values, functioning through opposites. They are a bridge between what is ancient and what is contemporary. Jan Berdyszak wrote: "Space, time, energy, relativity are also primary values at the present moment. POINTED PLACE IS AN EMPTY PLACE as in other artistic contexts, and enables the automatic linking NOW with a sense of primordial. This communication is especially important in the art of issues encompassing - linking: I know, and I do not know, and there is no, yes and no. Only context of emptiness can reveal the full both in art and in life."²²

Emptiness incorporates into a self-aware realization, gains also self-awareness. It becomes a place of "highest" creation.

20 D. Folga-Januszewska, *Słownik pojęć Jana Berdyszaka w: Jan Berdyszak*, exhibition catalogue, Katowice: Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej BWA w Katowicach 1996, s. 8.

21 S. Sontag, J. Cott, *Myśl to forma odczuwania*, Kraków: Karakter 2014, s. 68.

22 J. Berdyszak, *Retrospektywa Wybranych Problemów z lat 1962-1995*, Katowice: Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej BWA w Katowicach 1996, s. 61.

CROSSING IMAGE

Self-aware image constantly exceeds its limits. It is no longer limited neither the format nor the medium of painting, or even a wall. Its proportions, shape, two-dimensionality does not constitute a barrier.

Going beyond the traditional rectangular canvas allowed to reach new expressive possibilities and ways to communicate with the recipient. Many seek the beginning of the "open image" in a gesture of crossing canvas by Lucio Fontana. Thanks to the flat plane of the incision and the opening of the center on what beyond, the artist symbolically made the first step towards a new way of thinking about the image. Another was called "Shaped canvases". Shaped canvas is a term that was used to describe the work of an unusual format in the 60s and 70s of the twentieth century. However, since then the image crossed another barrier, this also seemed to be, the border of one genre. Self-aware image crosses boundaries by size, scale, medium, diverse material, through the "appointment of place." Moreover, crosses physical boundaries - functioning finally in the mental realm. Reaches not only through sight. Depending on their objectives, they use a variety of senses. As in the work of Christian Boltanski "In the blink of an eye", realized in Cracow Cricoteka. It is an image that becomes a whole, only after "joining" by the recipient all its various elements, including the sound and smell.

Crossing borders so, as it had been already mentioned, was crossing any image barriers. The most important step is to exceed their physicality and coexistence in a common awareness - the artist, the image and the recipient. As wrote in his notes Marc Rothko: "A picture is not a color, form, or its anecdote, but an intent entity idea where implications transcend any of these parts."²³

INDETERMINACY, AMBIGUITY

Crossing the borders of the image is directly connected with the concept of its indeterminacy and ambiguity. Indeterminacy is characteristic for self-aware image. It is caused by constant change and crossing its borders.

The issue of uncertainty hinders the classification in the context of genres and techniques.

Mikołaj Smoczyński noticed in his notes: "The image among other things is undoubtedly a phenomenon, as well as being subject, in a deep and proper sense is not the subject. It is because of the reasons it is made and metaphysical quality it expresses. (...) Violating the structure of the image - its substance is violated, the image will lose the function of the object, but would still have the properties of a >>perfect being<< (author Jerzy Nowosielski), and this makes it an image."²⁴

Self-aware image is much more than a presentation made in a specific technique. It is a BEING. The notion of operating in a common imaging awareness of the artist and the audience.

The image is self-aware of the ambiguity oriented. Through its complex structure of objects and ideology. Perhaps the ambiguity - analogous to fragmentation - is currently the only way to reach the fullest issues. Using fragments of different references, associations, self-aware image refers to the individual relationship with the recipient. The relationship links the awareness of the individual with the collective awareness. Paradoxically, the construction of works of art based on the principle of ambiguity is based on faith in the existence of a common perception.

23 M. Rothko, *Writings on Art*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2006, s. 34.

24 M. Smoczyński, op. cit., s. 36.

FOLLOWING TOWARDS THE OBJECT

What is an object?

It is the presentation which requires a turn for the reception of the surrounding space and interacts with it.

Affects more senses than the image.

It goes beyond two dimensions.

The object is more BEING than traditional painting.

It is not only associated with painting, it refers to a variety of techniques and media.

It combines the arts.

It is free from frames, two-dimensional and stereotypical format.

It is free (if it wants) from the wall surface.

It has the ability to create space.

- These features are also the qualities of self-aware image that emerges from the previously discussed issues. M. Smolińska - Byczuk, wrote about "liberation of the FORM," recalls the words of Roberta Bernstein, declaring the issue of image transformation in the direction of "objectivity" as one of the most important issues raised by the art of the second half of the twentieth century. ²⁵ ">> The image<< is an object that can be divided, which can be broken down, which may be in parts."²⁶

"Painting comes down to objectify the work as an object, directly affecting the viewer in a shared space with him."²⁷ Self-aware paintings follow "the subject." "These are the images - premises or - transitional objects"²⁸ as wrote, according to the work of Ellsworth Kelly, Gottfried Boehm. This is a major breakthrough insight on their forms. It allows to "release" from any formal boundaries that the painting has been previously involved.

THE NEED TO RETURN TO THE "0"

The image went a long way of its awareness. It became free from restrictions that have been imposed on it since centuries. Paradoxically, at the end of the journey it reached its beginning. The days when it was functioning outside of the theory, beyond words, when it was so close to the man, it seemed to be a part of him. When the prints of hands, images of animals, appeared at the surface of the rock like the vast meadows. The man was medium, the creator and the recipient, and the form " became itself".

XX century brought the rejection of albertine tradition - moving away from the frame, and illusion, it was back to the matter, kind of imitation of the natural processes, opening up space, and so on. Features of cave painting can be seen in the works of many artists associated with arising abstraction art trends around. We may recall here the work of Jackson Pollock and Antoni Tapies.

"Opening" forms of the image, back to its original matter, allowed to express things previously impossible to express, touching the "topics" previously unreachable.

Modern, self - aware image makes such an attempt. It becomes a link with the past, which allows you to "find yourself" in the present tense. It is a source of knowledge about man and the world. Evokes the timeless energy. It allows you to specify your location. "The man has a fantasy and imagination that has the characteristics more than individual that have accumulated for generations in the subconsciousness in the form

25 M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 196.

26 R. Mangold, wypowiedź z 1987 r., w: *Robert Mangold*, London - New York 2004, s. 176, cyt. za: M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 268.

27 M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 252.

28 G. Boehm, *Form und Grund*, w: *Ellsworth Kelly. Yellow Curve*, Ostfildern 1992, s. 10, cyt. za: M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 196.

of existential experience."²⁹ - Lucio Fontana wrote. This axis, linking the image of prehistoric and contemporary image is the backbone of its self-awareness. This allows for the treatment of seeing the image and leads to true freedom in dealing with it. The phenomenon of the original, affecting the recipient "beyond words" image is an exceptional achievement developed by modern world. The phenomenon, which lets you get closer to "that thing", which is unnamed, but the most important. The actual presence of the image.

THE RELATIONSHIP ARTIST <-> IMAGE <-> RECIPIENT

It has already been said here how important it is the meeting of the image and the recipient. The recipient introduces the image in the last stage of awareness, lending his or her intuition, sensitivity, imagination, empathy. However, there remain questions about the role of the artist.

Despite the openness of the modern show and the undeniable position of the recipient, the role of the artist in this system should not to be underestimated. The artist brings the picture to life and he is its first recipient.

M. A. Potocka concludes this topic in interesting way, she says that only the artist is really the recipient of his work. This view of this relationship allows us to understand its character.

The image is not the message, it is a private statement. Private, individual and the most distinct way of expression. And yet "third parties" are also its recipients. M. A. Potocka convinces us that the artist like no other watches closely selected fragments of the world. And he present something according to his observations, sets his own language made from "word-image-object-sound"³⁰, very often not fully understood by himself and used intuitively. In the context of self-aware images, it is an abstract opinion, multifaceted, non-literal and ambiguous. So how it is possible to be read by someone else? In my view, the image is an artist's expression that the recipient lets through his whole body and mind. The reception is individualized, enhances the image of the new "shades". However, I think that perception, "feeling" - on these important levels - is common, and basic elements of the imaging media, should be "visible" for both parties.

M. A. Potocka formulates thought: "This is due to the similarities between humans and the inevitable shared experience."³¹ Self-aware image will never be the result of a compromise. His strength is his uniqueness. This relationship does not diminish the importance of the recipient. It has only to show him that he has to "open". The open attitude of the recipient and not prone to influence the attitude of the artist, form the core of an authentic relationship artist - self-aware image - recipient.

AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE

Self-aware image is no longer limited area of painting. It is an autonomous being. Moves towards the object and installation, and above all is a kind of a unique process. For the operation it needs a common awareness of the artist and the viewer. It requires from them an open attitude. Use of imagination, empathy, intuition, appeals to the emotions. Overcoming the cult of reason and verbal interpretation. It requires sight, a sense of abstraction. Its important features are indeterminacy and ambiguity. Thanks to them can build multi-threaded speech, variously and without unnecessary restrictions. It combines what tangible or intangible, refers to the whole image tradition draws from the history of art, at the same time setting new values. It's is a child of its time, and therefore it opened for the space and adapted to its language a fragmentation, abstraction and new media. Uses all the elements of its "speech" freely and vari-

29 M. Smolińska, op. cit., s. 240.

30 M. A. Potocka, op. cit., s. 34.

31 Tamże, s. 34.

ously. It operates in the realm of timeless, common archetypal perception. It exhibits strong interactive features. Still exceeds its successive boundaries. Its most important feature seems to be that finally works in the realm of imagination of the recipient. Self-aware image overcomes function of the nice objects which is hanging on the wall, directs toward the pure idea. It is a process that is subject to change, and hence, is subjected to constant redefinition.

This is the conclusion drawn from the discussed issues. This is not a clear - cut definition, but also for this type of problem it is difficult for different definition.

To talk about self-aware image must be add one more topic. Needless to say what is its base, without which it cannot exist - for the TRUTH. Truth at every level - the transition, form, artists posture, recipient relationship with the image and the artist. Nicholas Smoczyński wrote about "honesty," which seems to be called differently, with the same issue: "One of the most important, and perhaps even the most important feature of the work of art is - in my opinion - honesty. Honesty towards reasons, the work results; honesty to the way in which it was made, and honesty attitude how we see it."³²

The truth is in the self - aware image the most important. Without it, it is just another aesthetic object. Self-aware image does not "fail". Is an independent entity, separate value. It is not made to appeal to a specific audience.

Courage, sensitivity, self - confidence and openness is needed to reach to it - not only in relation to art, but also to the world. This challenge allows (borrowing the definition of Maria Anna Potocka) - "wipe out own entity."

DETERMINATION OF MY OWN POSITION

An attempt to clarify the subject arises from the need to clarify and name the area of own research. To determine my PLACE. The term "self-aware images" now appears to describe the phenomenon that interests me. However, I am convinced, that someday a new term will appear and will consider future changes.

I am looking for images:

open

multi - faceted

intuitive

exceeding the conventions and the media

which follow toward an object or installation

use abstraction as a way to get to the essence

which are process

real (honest)

that refer to the knowledge about the world "not-to-forget" that we all have.

ARTIFACTS

For me artifact is the original and truly deep form of art. This title refers to the definition understood as an "object made with human hands." It has also arouse associations with archaeological discovery. And then - metaphorically - with the work of art which is mined out, discovered "from the inside".

I want my realization be a kind of bridge between what is primary - the first images, objects and what is modern - new, self - conscious image. Creation with the intention to give it the ancient, but unspoken

32 M. Smoczyński, op. cit., s.11.

function. With the shape and combination of elements on the wall "Artifacts" refer to the forms of ancient obelisks, that were set in circles, or other simple systems. But they do not reflect any of them. Their form is inspired by them, but was created in my imagination, as well as personal trace which is covering and constructing them. They are an expression of the need of being individual part of the whole. With people, with nature - with the world. They are an expression of longing for a common "innocent" perception.

Because this is a contemporary statement, I chose to make them modern graphic technology, allowing for quick duplication of the same elements, for using rhythmical mirror images of the same matrix. The largest of them have a height of 250 cm (width approx. 30 cm), the smallest height 100cm. The works are flat, which produce the illusion of convex object. Their systems are closely linked to existing gallery space, they use the "empty" space, organizing and including the implementation of the entire surface of the walls. These illusive paintings - objects have an impact on the recipient in the "direct" way. Acting as an independent, self-aware image. New BEING.

Jaromil Jedliński wrote about Andrew Szewczyk: "He is looking for formal art imbued with solemn rituals."³³ This seeking is close for me.

This work will have different shape in any interior. The amount of diverse combinations, systems modules is large. I hope that the implementation of Artifacts give a new value of existing space. Will interact with it and repeal impossible transition. Will surround the receiver, engaging his imagination, intuition, appeal to his ability to empathize. Encourage participation in the creation of something NEW...

CONCLUSION

Self-aware art lets fully experience and receive the world. Therefore, it cheered me an exhibition organized by Marta Smolińska-Byczuk. The more that it showed works of Polish artists. Its guidelines review repeated statement that this exhibition shows how alive is a trend. Still present, although often unfairly marginalized. It is forgotten how the "meeting" with this kind of art is needed. Krystyna Pasterczyk, sculptor, works out the problem in a text about "thinking and / or workshop". She introduces the concept of "poor art" points and calls it a phenomenon. "In the epoch of okularcentrism we lose multisenses / bodily contact with reality, our thinking also becomes poorer, and maybe even comes to atrophy. Relationship between our carnality of thought processes - the subject of neuroscience - has been extensively tested and scientifically proven, and the latest results are not good. Adequately in contemporary philosophy the concept of >>weak thinking, poor truth, weak ontology<< appears as a consequence of the failure of metaphysics, and the arts. This last, however also is presented in a >>weak version<<".³⁴

The awareness of this process leads to counteraction. The question is, what can be done in this direction? That is why I take part (together with M. Klasik and A. Masternak) in a series of exhibitions titled "Directly." This title refers to the contact between the picture and the recipient, which is done "without the mediation", unnecessary ideology and imposed interpretation that requires self-awareness from the image and the viewer.

My research shows that I am not alone in this belief. Despite all the obstacles it faces, the self-aware image is an important phenomenon, current and subjected to evolution.

33 J. Jedliński, *Bardzo wrażliwa materia*, w: *Andrzej Szewczyk*, exhibition catalogue, Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki, 1988, s. 5.

34 K. Pasterczyk, *Myślenie i / czy warsztat*, w: *Dydaktyka przestrzeni*, Cieszyn: Uniwersytet Śląski 2014, s. 50.