

The James Gallery

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Zbigniew Gostomski, *Windows Without a View (Winter Assemblage)*, 1969, site-specific installation outside Foksal Gallery in Warsaw, Poland.

Photo by J. Borowski, courtesy of the Foksal Gallery, Warsaw.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thoughts Isolated: The Foksal Gallery Archives, 1966-2016

Opening reception: Friday, November 18, 2016, 6-8 pm

Exhibition open: November 19 - December 17, 2016

Curators: Katherine Carl, Katarzyna Krysiak, David Senior.

Cooperation: Bartek Remisko and Martyna Stolpiec.

With special thanks to Anna Ficek and Jennifer Wilkinson.

Organizers: James Gallery, the Graduate Center, CUNY and Foksal Gallery, Mazovia Institute of Culture, Warsaw.

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The James Gallery

The Graduate Center, CUNY

365 Fifth Avenue between 34th and 35th Streets

New York, NY 10016

Hours: Tuesday–Thursday noon–7pm,

Friday–Saturday noon–6pm

www.centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery

Founded by artists and critics in 1966 in Warsaw, Poland, the Foksal Gallery has thrived through transitions in the realms of government, the economy, and the art world. Today, at a time when New York City’s artist-run spaces are encountering serious threats to survival, the case of the Foksal Gallery becomes ever more relevant. How does the Foksal Gallery illuminate new ways of building a sustained art community and legacy? The archives tell the story of the gallery as a model of an arts space run as a collaboration between artists and critics and engaged consistently in critical reflexive dialogue about its purpose/mission and meaning.

The exhibition opens on the occasion of the Foksal Gallery’s 50th anniversary featuring the Foksal Gallery Archive’s unique set of resources of original papers, photographs, printed matter and artworks collected since the gallery’s founding. The exhibition includes early exhibition catalogues, invitations, posters and flyers, often designed by the artists themselves. Original material such as maquettes and designs for exhibitions are also to be found, as well as a large amount of photographic documentation of performances, installations and social gatherings at the gallery as well as sound and moving image recordings of early happenings and events.

The theoretical writings of the core critics who formed Foksal’s philosophical agenda, such as Wiesław Borowski, Hanna Ptazkowska, Mariusz Tchorek and Andrzej Turowski, were provocations towards rethinking how art could be presented. This exhibition pays homage to their work and theoretical rigor which emphasized new artistic concepts that changed how art could take place and disperse itself. These key texts form the enduring legacy of the Foksal Gallery.

Thoughts Isolated, the exhibition’s title, is excerpted from a text entitled “The Living Archives” by Wiesław Borowski and Andrzej Turowski (1971), in which the artists-critics stated in bold text: “WE DO NOT PRESENT HISTORY BUT WE KEEP THOUGHTS ISOLATED.” This notion captures the Foksal Gallery’s continued exploration of role of the

archive in the gallery's program. The archive as a recurring conceptual figure is also to be found in Tadeusz Kantor's *Panoramic Sea Happening* (1967), during which a set of archival documents was submerged at sea; in Borowski and Turowski's *The Living Archives* exhibition (1971), where the entire gallery was transformed into an information exchange for international conceptual art documents; and most notably in traveling exhibitions to Edinburgh, Glasgow and London in 1979-1980. As we trace the various ways in which the archive was staged throughout the history of the gallery, this exhibition is similarly an experiment with archival practice.

In its current state, housed in same small gallery space in Warsaw in wooden boxes designed by the artist Krzysztof Wodiczko in the 1970s, the Foksal Gallery Archive demonstrates the role played by the gallery in shaping the history of contemporary Polish art. These materials give evidence of the experimental nature of the works displayed at the gallery by Polish artists like Zbigniew Gostomski, Maria Stangret, Tadeusz Kantor, Edward Krasiński, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Jarosław Kozłowski and Stanisław Dróżdż. It constitutes a singular collection of records which are of immense value in both artistic and historical terms and document fifty years of work within various political realities and in collaboration with a diversity of artists, from Henryk Stażewski, pioneer of Polish avant-garde, to an international roster of conceptual artists like Lawrence Weiner, Daniel Buren, Christian Boltanski, and Ben Vautier. (More: http://www.galeriafoksal.pl/?page_id=6&lang=en)

James Gallery Programs

Mon Nov 21, 6:30pm

Lecture and Discussion

Achieving Rapport: Art and Archives at Foksal Gallery

Katarzyna Krysiak, Pawel Polit, David Senior, Justyna Wesółowska.

Moderated by Katherine Carl

In tandem with the exhibition on view in the James Gallery, "Thoughts Isolated: the Foksal Gallery Archives 1966-2016," this evening's lectures by Katarzyna Krysiak, Pawel Polit and Justyna Wesółowska followed by discussion will focus on critical and curatorial strategies and practices at the Foksal over successive decades with continued support of the thriving contemporary art scene. Today at a time when artist-run spaces founded in the 1960s and 70s in New York City are encountering serious threats to survival, what does the example of Foksal Gallery illuminate for building a sustained art community and legacy? Starting in the 1960s from a base of extraordinary commitment to art and philosophy as well as ongoing international exchange, the gallery was self-reflective in its practices and in its documentation of activities ranging from performances and public art to strong graphic and textual production of catalogues and printed materials. Foksal Gallery introduced deeply influential artists to the international scene including Tadeusz Kantor and Edward Krasinski, and Krzysztof Wodiczko, as well as hosting an international roster of conceptual artists like Lawrence Weiner and Ben Vautier, which in turn shaped contemporary art in Poland and internationally.

Tues Nov 22, 6:30pm

Gallery Tour

Thoughts Isolated: The Foksal Gallery Archives, 1966-2016

Katherine Carl, Katarzyna Krysiak, David Senior

The archives of Foksal Gallery in Warsaw tell the story of the gallery as a model of an arts space run as a collaboration between artists and critics, which was constantly in critical

dialogue with itself about the purpose and meaning of its own mission. Now celebrating Foksal Gallery's 50th anniversary, the archive houses a unique resource of original papers, photographs, printed matter and artworks collected since the gallery's founding. The exhibition includes printed materials like early exhibition catalogues, invitations, posters and flyers, often designed by the artists themselves. Join the curators for a look at archival materials such as original maquettes and designs for exhibitions, copious photographic documentation of performances, installations and social gatherings at the gallery as well as sound and moving image recordings of early happenings and events.

Wed Dec 7, 2016, 7pm

Conversation

Object-Oriented Feminism

Irina Aristarkhova, Katherine Behar, Patricia Ticineto Clough, Ashley Dawson, Piper Marshall, R Joshua Scannell

This conversation explores object-oriented feminism (OOF), a feminist intervention into recent philosophical discourses—like speculative realism, object-oriented ontology (OOO), and new materialism—that take objects, things, stuff, and matter as primary. Approaching all objects from the inside-out position of being an object too, OOF foregrounds three significant aspects of feminist thinking in the philosophy of things: politics, erotics, and ethics. The evening's discussion centers on a new discipline-expanding volume, *Object-Oriented Feminism* (University of Minnesota Press), which seeks not to define object-oriented feminism, but rather to enact it by bringing together contributors from a variety of fields and practices including sociology, anthropology, art, science and technology studies, English, philosophy, and everyday life.

This event is co-sponsored by the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, Baruch College, CUNY.

The Amie and Tony James Gallery, located in midtown Manhattan at the nexus of the academy, contemporary art, and the city, is dedicated to exhibition-making as a form of advanced research embedded in the scholarly work of the Graduate Center across multiple disciplines. The gallery creates and presents artwork to the public in a variety of formats. While some exhibitions remain on view for extended contemplation, other activities such as performances, workshops, reading groups, roundtable discussions, salons, and screenings have a short duration. The gallery works with scholars, students, artists and the public to explore working methods that may lie outside usual disciplinary boundaries.

