

TRANSPARENT SYMBOLS, "ORONSKO", 3/2002; page 43-46, quarterly published by Center of Polish Sculpture In Orońsko, Poland. Translation of the text by Adam Kalinowski.

" Cannot disasters like earthquakes, cyclones, tornadoes and so on be imagined as the most perfect form of art?"

Walter de Maria, the sixties.

A good form is like a spirit, which does not hold any tights, is like particles of smoke traveling crosswise of time.

Let's try to use the open space as a lens through which we look at culture.

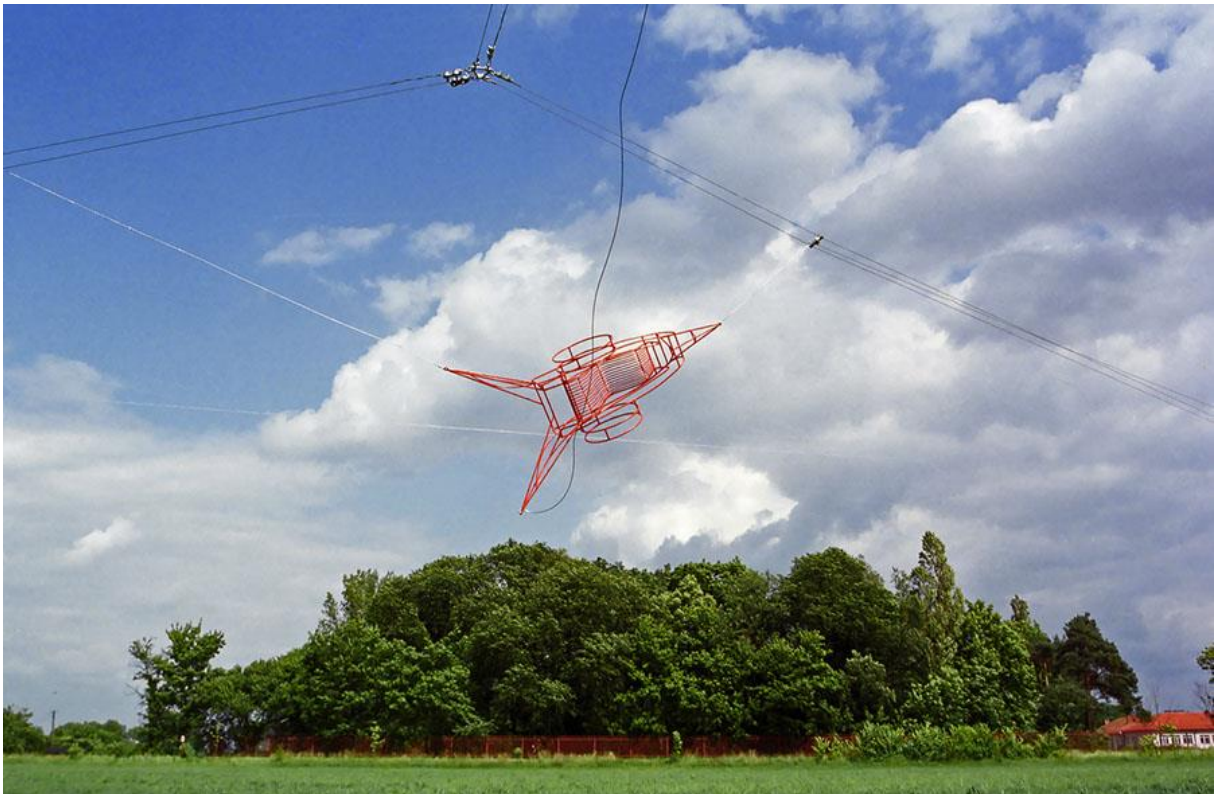
I. Open space is an immemorial sphere of man's free exploration, i.e. activity, whose results one cannot entirely predict or control. As far as the spiritual matters are concerned, the open, not urbanized space can mean liberation or even salvation. It can also be a metaphor for art, which must be independent of the past, but also of the "actuality". Art should once again confront us with the situation in which the art habits will turn out to be relative and unnecessary. It must evoke a pure, uncontaminated mind which would be ready for foreseeing the changes. The task of art is to stimulate our mind to unite with broadly understood cosmos. I believe that as a result of this union we free ourselves from Ourselves and open up to "the Whole".

An important aspect of my outdoor projects is nature that is being used in the way as it normally is, showing its constancy, and - to a certain degree - its fortuity and consequence. I believe that the equilibrium of nature can be a base for obtaining our own human equilibrium. Changes in nature are slow and non-dramatic, only exceptionally more impetuous events like tornadoes or earthquakes take place. Does not the equilibrium of nature, which we are part of, make us feel like being balanced inside? On the other hand, we need deep refreshment of the mind so in my opinion that's the reason why some kind of paradox should be involved in the project. In general my idea about outdoor projects is that they are left for themselves in natural context, left for nature's activity and powers so they respect their powers in a way that they are powered by them, literally and metaphorically, too. Isn't that so that the model of a sculpture or other architectural realisation like shouldn't be living organisms? Should not their ability to self-regulation be treated as most important? An architectural or sculptural object as a dynamic, self-regulating organism, co-operating with nature. Lets shape the external form the way as to expose it to the influence of nature. The self-regulating sculpture or architecture - we have here practical aspect; co-operation with nature, can bring only advantages. Ethical one; we must care about the world, the recourses of which are much more smaller and restricted than we have thought up to the present, and also cognitive one: we get deeper knowledge about the environment we live in. There is an option nowadays to treat design of external projects, no matter whether more complicated systems or simple forms as a self regulating structures, co-operating and finally becoming similar in the manner of operation to nature's activities. Objects in space without unequivocal purpose, powered by the wind, changing under the influence of the temperature or light, joining us with space in direct and more remote dimension. Nature, the regulating environment, forming to a certain degree the object which interacting with the environment, establishes and conducts with it a kind of dialogue either because of technical and practical reasons, as in the case of e.g. architectural or other objects, or because of symbolic reasons, as in the case of artistic facts. In general sense, each external form must interact with the environment because open space as a dynamic system forces particular states on the objects contained in it. *1 This external form should rather be the opposite of the Machine *2. Each part of this form can be the centre of it (as in the case of living organisms or clouds). The form treated not as an object but as a kind

of representation (embracing) of space, pointing to its dynamic and energetic character. We have here to do with simple transference of an artistic metaphor to the world as a whole. *3 Whether the sphere of art shouldn't be a field of undetermined activity, for example working of nature in a clear form? Symphony of chance, showing order of cosmos. Why nature? Nature is a puzzle, still half-magic, half-impenetrable scientifically space. Here important aspect of external form is a fact, that is left to nature, devoted to it's rule, and not belong to us anymore.

II. The Transparent Symbol suits to the form, devoted to and living thanks to space. This form does not fix attention on itself; more often its functioning depends on natural processes or can activate perception of them. The external realisation is meant to be a lens, a place of concentration of meanings, which refer to our being-in-space, experiencing it and consequently opening up to it. The matter of form, being an incarnation of transparent symbol, is used in such a way that what is used as symbolizing is simultaneously symbolized. "Knowledge" of nature spread out in infinite space is, as it were, "what" is symbolized. A work of art wants to refer to this knowledge, make it visible. It seems obvious that every artistic fact refers to the natural spatial context for which it was created and in which it exists. For example a musical performance must cooperate and interact with natural sound system of the environment, in which it is performed. An object of sculptural or architectural type the more perfect cooperates with the context of environment - with simultaneously intensively symbolic interaction - with the more distinguished artwork we have to do. This interaction with the environment can present itself in different ways. It could be a realisation almost in the spirit of mimicry, but it could also be a sort of antibody in space. Transparent symbols appear to be an important choice in the face of nature. We can assume that transparency, as a metaphor referring to human mind is a certain cultural value. Not literally contained in Buddhist removal, loss of an ego, as an unnecessary filter distorting our relation with the Reality. Similar examples we can find in Christian tradition (medieval mystics). Transparent symbol suits to the form devoted and living the space. The form is not focusing on itself, more often it's functioning as a dependent on natural processes or can activate their perception. The form being an embodiment of a transparent symbol does not change the settings in which it is placed but is integrated with them. Not disturbing these settings it shows their whole symbolic power - as it was supposed to. The wisdom of nature spread out in the space is what is symbolized. An artifact wishes to relate to this wisdom and to expose it. To expose "through" the context of natural space the philosophical aspect of our being-in-the-world as the world of natural process that we are part of. The part originated in a long cycle of filo- and ontogenetic evolution. The question arises here: could not the external form relate to (join) the long evolutionary dance that takes place during ontogenesis?*4

"Sky Reaching Hammock"



"Sky-reaching Hammock", Poznań, Poland

Project of kinetic outdoor form. Proposed whole dimensions: 2200x7200x7200 cm, steel, steel line, propellers with reducer, clutches.

Model in a scale of 1:9

The project was awarded at 10th International Design Competition, 2001, Osaka, Japan, (Place 3)

The form of orange color hangs loosely between three masts. On each of them there are windmills, which are directed towards different wind directions. Thanks to the system of reducers, they rise or put down particular sides of hung form so that it is turning very slowly almost in every surface and also slowly walks up and down, left or right in the determine space between the masts. This space could be imagined in the form of a equilateral triangle with [of] sides more or less 20 m long and height 15 m. The form hung between the masts is designed only for one person who staying inside it (that is he/she would have to be tied with safety belts) could experience the change of position towards horizon and the surface of earth. The direction and intensity of slow, however, incessant movement of the form is unpredictable because it depends on the power and direction of the wind.

The point is not to disturb the stream of time and space by reckless activity, but to join with it. We should not create forms or situations interfering in Nature, instead we can try to discover her mysteries, as it were, to knock at them. Commonness, fleetingness, kinesis (variability) - these are the most important features of time and space where any element is not more important than any other, the tiniest piece is equally valuable to any other being. Giving sense is only the fact of existence of the Whole, Life, in all its appearances and variations, which is meaningful for the very fact of existence. "The Sky Reaching Hammock" makes possible dynamic meditation, embracing heaven and earth, during which the feeling of unity and simultaneously independency from surrounding space joins with the celebration of what

means nothing and has no purpose, like for example flowing clouds, the shining sun or falling rain. *5 A slow, simultaneous change in time-and-space is meant to create the state of timelessness (giving oneself to time and space without a priori accepted intention; everything is of the same value) *6, "resetting consciousness" whose vectors are directed towards feeling of space, spreading from inside of our body into infinity and vice versa. Our "positioning" in real space thanks to the wind, a phenomenon of nature, gives dimension our action towards Her. *7. Nature factually and symbolically directs us towards herself so that we could discover that may have been experienced by primal man wandering through the boundless spaces of Africa, Eurasia or America. *8 In this case the purpose of this "zero state" is putting aside for a moment the culture equipment in order to refresh the mind as it happens in every free change of consciousness. "Timelessness", psychological appropriating the whole world, feeling of endless becoming is the result of influence on us of every eminent artwork. In this project, mentioning the category of timelessness has more direct reference because the module in which the passenger is placed indeed is suspended in the middle of time" and "space", and this is not only a psychological feeling of the person taking part in the event. Important is the factor of lack of control, at least momentary one, over intensity and direction of changes, in which will be directed the "crew module".



*"Sky-Reaching Cube" 2002, Sculpture Space, Utica, USA
Wooden sticks, latex balloons, helium, 380 x 380 x 380 cm.
The loosely released form behaves like a balloon in the air.*

III. Can we consider personal inner change in the present-day world without taking account of the natural environment, strongly transformed by civilizing aspect of our culture? (It refers above all to the American culture which especially emphasises the pragmatic and

technological side of life). Such questions were put as well by the creators of great, monumental realisations of Land Art. Often the material used in these realisations was of organic origin. The use of raw material as a work of art is itself something symbolical. Let's take Robert Smithson's "Spiral Jetty": the piled jetty on which we walk is a kind of technical mechanism which enables us stepping "inside" a lake, without dipping our feet. At the same time when stepping into the physical world we travel across time, where time, at least in the millennium scale, co-creates the symbolic dimension of work. "Spiral Jetty" of Robert Smithson refers to the primeval symbol of spiral which from time immemorial occurred in many cultures of the world. Simultaneously the galaxies arrange themselves in the spiral shape or, closer to us, in this shape are concentrated clouds seen in the earth's atmosphere from the space. This pre-symbolism of organic character suggests precedence of nature over human, artistic enterprises. Like other realisations of this kind, it also is, or rather was *9, placed in the wilderness, in the Great Salt Lake in Utah (USA). The open, not urbanised space and the primeval symbol of spiral, piled of sand in the lake, take us into the journey, into temporally indeterminate mythological moment. The familiar shape evokes immemorial human desire of expressing the eternity and changeability of existence, which is connected with evolution of the whole nature, and referring to the forms occurred in it. This realisation is designed to make such an impression as if it has been existing for thousands years, or it could be a relic of unknown culture (!?). On the other side, the communicative energy of this form, emerging as if from the abyss of time, and placed in beautiful in its uselessness place, directs us into the future, which is to be governed by the spirit of dialectical entropy. This is an example of realisation, which is to be defined by long temporal intervals - at least in the millennium scale. The other realisations Smithson places in the regenerated areas in Holland, remains of a mine or a rubbish dump where important is the aspect of metaphorical "recycling", because according to his conception of entropy, in principle, nothing in fact can be recycled. The sites polluted by human exploitation of nature and such are mines or rubbish dumps, they have at themselves already possessed something metaphorical, they are sites, non-sites in the same time. This, and his other realisations, are beautiful in its simplicity and the unsentimental examples which symbolically balance all that is good in an artwork against that is bad, and that makes up the wasted land. Affirmation of that what is devastated, desolate or waste helps us once again to "recycle" the Earth. Other projects were made in Holland, a country where the transformation of landscape has gone pretty far - "Spiral Hill" and "Broken Circle". The former project has probably eroded and transformed long time ago. Similarly, stylish "Broken Circle" refers to hydro-geological tradition of the Dutch struggling against the water element. They are perhaps a commentary on very sophisticated European culture, which however nowadays looks like a neatly maintained cultural reserve in which the main occupation is tearing off the coupons of the past *10. "Amarillo Ramp" was built in Texas, the country of big spaces, in the year of the untimely death of the author. It is a kind of ramp piled of sand, in the form of circle, in which we can walk further, ahead... or having stopped embrace the whole space in which the earthwork is placed.

The important factor giving sense to these realisations is the awareness of their transformation - like every object existing in the space they are also transforming and eventually they will be disintegrated*11

Another example can be Walter de Maria's "The Lighting Field". Here the artefact is minimise to the smallest degree; it is a set of steel poles arranged regularly in the rectangle shape, whose area is one mile by one kilometre and where the main hero of the event remains the forces of nature - lightning, the view of the sky before and after the storm, thunders, etc. This realisation does not have any particular semantics; the nature is here the main actor and director of the show.

The important aspect of the work is its isolation from civilized places and culture centres. It is

placed in the desert in New Mexico and getting there takes more or less two days. Its being, far away is the crucial matter, it simultaneously touches our being far from Nature, from her causative energies and its enormous infinite scale. In other realisations of Land Art we have to do with similar situations. Staying far away, especially for the city man, opens up before him an unknown spatial-temporal scale, which could possess the advantage of spiritual concentration, necessary for discovering art. At the beginning of the sixties, Walter de Maria wrote: "Cannot disasters like earthquakes, cyclones, tornadoes and so on be imagined as the most perfect form of art?". What overgrows us, on which we are dependent, is important because it defines the horizon of our dwelling on the Earth in every possible meaning of this word. Such the most important factor was nature, the open space in which human population develops]. However, although our relation to the open space has been changing gradually from the Stone Age, through ancient times, the Middle Ages, the first industrial revolution, and from more or less the interwar period up to the present time this relation has changed essentially, yet most of our vital conditionings on psychological side or in relation to the cosmos has not changed. We are in similar situation as far as the perception of our life is concerned, regardless if we look back 100, 1000 or 10 000 years. Another constant thing is for example the awareness of the fact that day by day the universe is coming closer and closer to the nothingness, non-existence.

In monumental realisations Land Art its romantic origin is characteristic. This origin underlines dependence of man on nature which appears to be the personification of casual as well as everlasting mythological energies whose catalyser are meant to be the earthworks. What do we place a sculpture in the open space for? In order that it could embrace the open space joining with it, at the same time symbolically radiating around. The same refers to time. The sculpture must be the place of concentration of time and space, and simultaneously a filter through which the spatial-temporal surrounding is passing. If it does not satisfy this condition, it is a needless object littering the landscape. The question of responsibility of artist who creates outdoor realisation is very important. We are not allowed to litter the world which is also the realm of collective imagination - it belongs to all of us. We have to take care of the Earth, because we and She is one.

*1 The form which to a high degree would be receptive to influence of nature: light - sun batteries, (photosynthesis), temperature - thermal batteries, wind - windmills or quasi-practical objects built out of foam - ephemeral etc. As a result we would have the form performing a continuous, ceaseless dance in space (as then when about 3,5 milliards years ago life on earth was arising). And what if one had added to it the biological processes? Would we not then have a symbolic form which would behave as a living organism and in such a way would become the part of ecosphere? Could the external form not refer to the long evolutionary dance which takes place during ontogenesis. Such a realisation placed e.g. in a desert, isolated place, but also urbanized one, could have an interesting civilized context. Perhaps the future of designing belongs to treating, especially external forms, according to needs and possibilities, as self-regulating structures, cooperating and consequently becoming similar in the way of acting to organisms or natural systems. We would have here the situation in which an artificial structure is so designed that partially it becomes similar in action to a living organism.

*2 Whose equivalent is The Closed Model and whose reverse is a living organism remaining in free interaction with the environment and being embodiment of The Open Model towards Nature.

*3 Should not every fragment of a form be its centre? (As is the case with living organisms or

clouds?) The form treated not as an object but as a kind of representation (embracing) of the space focusing on its dynamic and energetic character. (We have here a simple metaphor of the world as a whole). Could not any point of the space or cosmos be its centre point? (Thousands years of civilisations and cultures from various parts of the globe have a positive answer to this question.)

*4 Can a realisation placed directly in nature be different from it, or should it rather be a whole with it? Being a whole with the real space it must valorise it. (Perhaps, like in immense ancient buildings we should mark the proportions of the object?) Great metaphors and grass on the meadow, or from nature to symbol and from symbol to nature. Maybe the only significant symbols in contrast with nature are transparent symbols (?!?). In this case we have a spirit or a phantom of the form that does not hide or pollute the space. Do we have a right to hide anything? We must act as if we were transparent guests on earth, which in fact we are. In other words, we should pervade and embrace the space in which we live. It is strange, that anything can be done and is travelling. (There are main tracts and smaller paths. Everything is of the same value.)

*5 See my text in: Rocznik Rzeźba Polska (The Polish Sculpture Annual], vol. IX: 1998-1999, TEATR MIASTA, UTOPIA I WIZJA (Theatre of the City, Utopia and Vision). (more at <http://free.art.pl/adamkalinowski> as "Sky Reaching Hammock, The Room of Clouds".

*6 Compare my text: "Mitologia Fluxusu" (Mythology of Fluxsus), Obieg 7-8/1991, p. 14-19, CSW, Warszawa (available also at <http://free.art.pl/adamkalinowski>).

*7 Kinesis of the external form is natural. It results from placement in the natural environment which is variable, dynamic. Kinesis in this sense is the change of states of energy, a kind of fluctuation of energy or redistribution of quanta of energy, but not only the matter of aesthetic side of process.

*8 In this case, people living naked in nature such as survivors of Aborigines, Bushmen or Amazonian Indians have advantage over us, people living in a state of advanced technological civilization. Through their bared skin they remain in direct contact with the space and time of their ancestors. They could offer us vast experience in the area of "direct" existence. (We could learn a lot from them about "direct" existence")

*9 At the present this realisation once appears on the surface of water, once disappears in water. It depends on the level of water in the lake which in 2004 has similar height as in 1972.

*10 Eurosorrow (my term, expression from 80 ties)

*11 Another contribution to "the culture of rubbish", but not only to it, could be the Gordon Matty Clark's realisations - injured structures of buildings with cut-out holes which are the results of funny - as it were - will to destroy, and in which there is something of child curiosity, but also a compulsive passion for demolition, which accelerating disintegration of these "used-up", outdoor applied realisations becomes also the personification of Smithson's Entropy.

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2002