

Summary

SYLWIA SWISLOCKA-KARWOT (University of Wrocław) / “I wanted to win!”. Art is thinking. Jurkiewicz’s not-yet-conceptualism?

The article is devoted to the process of intellectualization and conceptualization of art of the 1960s and 1970s in Poland from the perspective of cognitive science. The subject of the study is the case of one of the most colourful figures of the Polish neo-avant-garde – Zdzisław Jurkiewicz, associated with Wrocław; an extraordinary artist combining features of a strongly emotional personality with a distanced and, in effect, almost speculative art. In the text, I reflect on the definitional heteronomies of the term “conceptualism”, relating them to the first gestures attributed to it in the history of art by Seth Siegelaub in his New York gallery, and juxtapose this understanding with the way of thinking of an uncompromising conceptualist, the creator of his own idea of continuity in art. Breaking the paradigmatic understanding of mimeticism in favour of an extremely rational postulate that was an American variant of European concrete art: “What you see is what you see”, became the overriding guideline of Jurkiewicz’s “calculated” artistic pursuits – painting and drawing. In the article I put forward the thesis that they resulted in a binary mixture of ultra-realism and conceptualism, in which the orthodox understanding of the primacy of the idea did not depreciate the work – the object. The article also reveals the results of research into the genesis of the inspiration immortalized in Jurkiewicz’s archive by artists such as Nicolas de Staël, Paul Klee, Auguste Herbin, Pierre Soulages, Willem de Kooning, Alphonse Mazurkiewicz and Jan Stanislawski, but also by writers and poets like Jorge Luis Borges and Andre Breton. The fascination with environmental art and American land art, the transgression of the topography of the so-called place of art, the expansion of the territory to include thought, but also the cosmos – observed through telescopes constructed by Jurkiewicz himself – became a milestone of the most radical, and at the same time most significantly developing perspective, processes taking place in the area of art in the second half of the 20th century. Well-known in Europe and the U.S., Zdzisław Jurkiewicz’s unique work, attitude and concepts undoubtedly had a significant impact on the area.