

**POLISH  
PAVILION  
IN VENICE**

***In the Darkness of the Head.***

**Wojciech Bąkowski**

curator: Maria Brewińska

Documentation (excerpt) submitted for the competition  
for the curatorial project for the exhibition  
in the Polish Pavilion at the  
59th International Art Exhibition in Venice in 2022

Exhibition project at the Polish Pavilion

59th Venice International Art Exhibition, 2022

Wojciech Bąkowski "In the Darkness of the Head"

Exhibition concept

The project "In the Darkness of the Head" by Wojciech Bąkowski is inspired by the issues of lucid dream. It is a type of dreaming in which the dreamer realizes that he is dreaming and can consciously influence the content of the dream. In an individual perspective, lucid dream is used for self-knowledge, broadening the field of self-awareness, in sciences such as psychiatry, neurology is a research tool. In art, it becomes a source of exploration, as in Wojciech Bąkowski's, who, through the observation of lucid dreaming, travels to the recesses of his own dreams.

The title 'darkness of the head' is a kind of black box, not fully explored, with difficult access, but partially possible. It points to the content of the exhibition, which is the mysterious interior of the human psyche. Wojciech Bąkowski is concerned with the observation of the self, the area around which this human sphere is organized, where information flows from the conscious to the unconscious and vice versa. If the unconscious is manifested in a dream, and potential access to it is opened by e.g. analysis of remembered dreams, then conscious dreaming goes further because it allows the conscious self to access the unconscious and, what's more, it allows to direct the 'running' of dreams, influences what is in them we will see what we will experience. From the unconscious level, the artist tries to observe his psyche. It's not easy, but possible with a little determination.

The project develops the earlier strategies of Wojciech Bąkowski, a recognized visual artist, musician and poet, leader of musical groups (KOT, NIWEA, Czykita), co-founder of the artistic group Penerstwo. It is a continuation of, for example, exhibitions such as "Lack of access radiates" (2011) and "Awakening from abstraction" (2018), in which the works and the way they are presented, their content and architectural procedures resulted in a homogeneous vision. The last exhibition, "Moon, Star and Overhead Light" (2021), portrayed dream visions in a series of intricate drawings, also significant in the design of the exhibition proposed for the Venice Biennale.

Wojciech Bąkowski quite radically and consistently rejects pragmatic rationality, moving in his work towards discovering the 'unknown'. It does this through introspection, interference

with dreams and multi-level delving into the structures of the mind. That is why the design of the exhibition is arranged in such a way as to visualize the environment of extrasensory images - the darkness of the head - together with the aura that surrounds it in the reality of a dream. The choice of media for its implementation has an important conceptual and aesthetic role to play here. The most important of them are drawings, film, sounds, audio-video sculptures, objects / assemblage, architecture and light - all integrated to achieve the effect of a poetic-oneiric spatial arrangement. The works come from different times, but the majority are new, others are yet to be created. Therefore, the project involves the transformation of the interior of the Polish pavilion in Venice into a special space consisting of simple architecture with a series of dioramas (recesses of various sizes inspired by display windows, e.g. in zoos), in which objects recreating dreamlike landscapes, imaginations and dreams as a substitute for what is happening will be housed. inside man. The works are supposed to levitate in the darkness of recesses (darkness is inseparably connected with sleep), e.g. charcoal drawings on fluffed cardboard (an expression of the artist's manual craftsmanship) - dreamlike, fleshy and grainy representations reminiscent of nocturnes: "My room, I guess" (2021), " Cathedral in the legs "(2021)," Commercial and service "(2021), objects creating the illusion of depth, such as " Inflating the artificial depth "with a simulation of a typical communist bathroom door or the model" Times II "(2021) with a block layout from the 1980s and electronic clocks shining in the dark, etc. They evoke situations from the urban PRL neighborhood / block reality. Some seem disturbing - scenes with shapes that imitate real world objects; others arouse curiosity and aesthetic delight. The audience, walking through the bright corridors, peers into the abyss of dioramas, where objects levitate, shadows of figures swell, drawings swell, a kettle button lights, you hear boiling water, etc. All this imitates the logic of dreams, but also reveals the conventions of their presentation. These, however, although they give extraordinary visual effects and an unusual perception experience, are characterized by makeshift, concise forms. This arrangement of things in space may be associated with the inside of a human skull, which becomes a gallery after turning it over. And it's a bit like in a dream.

“When designing this exhibition, I was thinking of the images and inter-sensory creations that I experience while falling asleep or in a lucid dream that I have been working on for several years. I am also trying to convey the character of the hallucinations that I experience immediately after waking up in the night or morning twilight. ego peace. Dreaminess is not a

value in itself for me. I believe that by portraying dream phenomena I can say something true about inner life in a general sense. " Wojciech Bąkowski

The exhibition design is a collection of spaces rich in visual sensations and undefined affective experiences. It combines the exceptional artistry of Wojciech Bąkowski with an exhibition approach, refined aesthetics with structural problems. But it is also a project entangled in the artist's personal experiences, which have been present in his work from the very beginning: it is the power of memories and images from the times of growing up in communist housing estates (Piątkowo district in Poznań). Apart from touching the universal issues of perception, imaginations, dreams and memory, the artist consistently moves in the world of his own experiences. If the intention of this year's Biennale di Venezia, referring to the leading text of the curator Cecilia Alemani entitled "Milk of Dreams", is, among other things, to emphasize personal mythologies, even the most hidden and unobvious, then this project fits into the general concept by exposing conscious being to which we can also aim at lucid dreaming, which definitely strengthens identity, as long as we understand the mechanisms of behavior and emotions experienced in real life. From a completely different perspective, global-political-economic, this project should be considered fascinating. She draws attention to sleep as a sphere of total freedom, an area of escape from everyday life, an activity that potentially cannot be colonized by anything, although it is partially annexed because some of us already function in a constant vigilance mode. So going back to sleep, whether conscious or unconscious, can only be beneficial for us to recognize hidden desires, fears, hopes....

Exhibition project in the Polish Pavilion  
59th Venice International Art Exhibition 2022

Wojciech Bąkowski "In the Darkness of the Head"

Short SCRIPT

Main assumptions:

- the implementation of the exhibition project will be processual, which results from the artist's way of working; the basic assumptions of the project will remain the same, the number of exhibited objects may change
- artist and curator's initial visit to the Polonia Pavilion - space, technical conditions, atmosphere of the place
- development of a detailed design; the exhibition is planned in the main space of the Pavilion with the use of simple exhibition design
- development of leaflets, promotional materials, publication concepts
- preparation of descriptions of the exhibition on the wall in the vestibule
- realization of works in the artist's studio; gathering the necessary materials
- arrangement of space before the assembly of works
- structure of architecture, setting of lights
- assembly of works

"In the Darkness of the Head"

The scenario assumes the creation of an integral space with the presented works. The exhibition is arranged in such a way as to show the environment of extrasensory imaginations, the darkness of the head, in which dream images and visions are created. The method of implementation, the room of works in a specially organized space, is supposed to evoke their aura. The exhibition is a simplification, a synthesis of experiences, giving a substitute for what happens in a human. The works levitate in the dark. Levitation is arbitrary, achieved with a simple display procedure. Through rectangular openings cut in the brightly lit plaster walls, the visitor can see objects and drawings mounted on black steel bars, invisible against the background of recesses lined with black carpet. The works are additionally cut off from the background by soft, point-like lighting. Its sources are small LED lamps or video projectors hidden behind the walls. The temperature difference between the lights in the recesses and outside creates the effect of unreal, transferring objects to a different reality. It is sometimes exacerbated by external conditions. Viewers, after entering from the strong sun, may experience problems with the accommodation of their eyesight while watching dark dioramas. Viewers will watch the works through raw holes cut in plasterboard. These difficulties contribute to the illusion and the feeling of making space unreal. The depth of the recesses varies and depends on the size of the works, e.g. the drawings float in shallow darkness, just beyond the edge of the openings in the walls (they do not have any frames). Other works take up a large space, even several meters. Some walls are drilled with small round holes from which sounds can be heard. The contrast of lights and dark dioramas plays an important role in the entire composition of the space. Viewers walk through bright corridors, between walls with many black openings, in the depths of which dreamlike objects and drawings levitate. This arrangement may be associated with the human skull, which after turning has become a gallery of visions, dreams and ideas.

The design of the exhibition was accompanied by images and inter-sensory creations that the artist experiences while falling asleep or in a lucid dream, which he has been working on for several years. Some of the works and drawings also reflect the character of the ghosts that appear right after waking up in the night

or morning twilight of the apartment. The dreamy atmosphere and the depiction of dream phenomena serve to reveal something true about inner life in a general sense.

Materials and equipment needed to build the exhibition - preliminary list

- gypsum boards, aluminum profiles for mounting boards
- black felt carpet flooring
- matte black paint for walls
- white matte paint for walls
- putty for walls
- screws, wall plugs, nails, staples
- welded steel elements for the assembly of works
- power and signal cables (audio / video)
- mini video projectors (2-3)
- speakers with a power of 25 W (4-6)
- mini LED spotlights with variable focal length (14)
- wave / mp4 digital file players (2-4)
- materials for the production of works - listed in the description of works

The general plan for the arrangement of walls and work in the recesses may be subject to minor changes.