

***The Open House of the Deaf.***

**Marek Sobczyk**

curators: Jagna Domżańska, Mateusz Falkowski

Documentation submitted for the competition  
for the curatorial project for the exhibition  
in the Polish Pavilion at the  
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***The Open House of the Deaf***  
***[Fears of the Paintress Goya]***

**MAREK SOBCZYK**

*Fears are the proper substance of the human psyche, the building blocks  
which it uses for its formation and development.*  
[New Dictionary of Psychoanalysis]

*When they tell you: Do not be afraid! beware  
that they are not already preparing more terrible things than those you fear.*  
[Writings of the Fathers of the Church]

*The worst is behind us. It is now safe to be afraid.*  
[inscription on the wall].

**The idea (concept of the exhibition and the authorial core theme)**

If art becomes unnecessary in the best of all possible worlds (Glenn Gould), then today it is actually indispensable, first of all as a tool, a universally accessible apparatus of analysis, expression, protest and culture-building. In a world of omnipresent fear, how to create such an art-tool and make it available to others?

*Open House of the Deaf* is an exhibition of Marek Sobczyk's paintings created in a dialogue with Francisco Goya's *Quinta del Sordo*. It is a place where art becomes a *language*—not an exposition, therapy or a way of life, but a means of culture-building work: the artist (Marek Sobczyk) and a two-person curatorial team, the people involved in the project at the project's initial stage and those visiting the exhibition work together on the "fears of paintress Goya".

Fears constitute the psycho-social-political substance of the present. The paintress G. is the figure of a collective—multiplied—subject, who works using the tools of art: on themselves, on culture and on the means of art.

**The context**

The Open House of the Deaf represent an elaboration of several earlier projects by Sobczyk: (1) the attempt to grant sovereignty ("human and civil rights") to the means of art (beyond any possible modes of their exploitation); (2) painting as psycho/somo/socio-analysis (a critical study of each instance of the present: cerebral, bodily, collective); (3) the establishment of New Social Movements as works of art (coupling goals art with community interests); (4) finally, the "museum in inverted commas" (a long-term undertaking involving the performance of the works of other artists, previously taken in inverted commas, i.e. reduced to the role of an instrument).

## Description and rationale

*The Open House of the Deaf* is directly inspired by Francisco Goya's Quinta del Sordo with its fourteen (or fifteen) *pinturas negras* on its walls—a harrowing testimony to the emerging modern era and existential experience; created in the confined space of the villa to which the artist fled from court life, an individual expression of inner and external anxieties.

200 years later, when it became clear that perhaps “we have never been modern” (Bruno Latour), the artist opens up his working space. No longer does he abandon the world, nor does he run away from the court but, together with curators, creates the institution of a counter-court and a commission-based procedure for making art tools available.

Sobczyk has prepared several hundred graphics works-sketches, on the basis of which the gradually expanding curatorial team will place orders for 15 large-format paintings to become the backbone of the exhibition. The ordering system will continue to operate, while further, smaller format works, will appear as paintings propped against the interior walls of the pavilion. The final commissions will originate with the visitors. Nothing will be purely individual, thanks to which the elaboration of fears will assume the form of a game, a sabbath, a gregarious undertaking. It will be a collective response to the present, to what is inquisitorial, overpowering, imperious and all too resourceful about it.

The postulate for the paintress Goya (paintress Goya painter who is afraid) to exist will be implemented in several areas: (a) the space of the pavilion divided into three interiors (drawing on F. Goya's villa): the kitchen (preparation-planning-process), the dining room (eating-devouring-cruelty), the sitting room (contemplation-culture-rest), (b) the space of the vestibule (display of the video questionnaire *What are you afraid of?*), (c) the experimental book *A Record of the Fears of the Paintress Goya*.

*The Open House of the Deaf* does not so much create (in accordance with the traditional paradigm of creation) as draw attention to what is shared; this time, these are *fears*.

## **Scenario synopsis**

1. Arrangement of the space of fears or the opening of the House of the Deaf Away from the court, Francisco Goya the ground and first floors of his villa as the backdrop to the so-called black paintings, in which the topicality of a pessimistic diagnosis is combined with (self)psychoanalytic expression. *The Open House of the Deaf* project is based on the desire to propagate artistic tools and go beyond the individualized model of empowerment. *The Open House of the Deaf* indicates several means: faced with the widespread fears today, how could one shape a relationship between artistic activity, the means of art, curatorial effort and the community. In its essence and nature, the undertaking is an *optimistic* one.

### **1.1 The letters descending from the paintings (in front of the Pavilion)**

Along the stairs and in the entrance area, letters (made of galvanized steel) will be affixed to form three words (as an introduction to the vestibule and the interior of the pavilion): LUNA, HOUSE, MARS. The eponymous opening—applicable to the institution of art itself, the people and the related objects—is almost cosmic (just as our fears reach ever farther horizons; locality today begins at the global level).

### **1.2 Fears uttered (in relation to the Cosmos) (vestibule)**

The transition from *letters/words* to *images*: projections of the Moon and Mars on the ceiling, visible already prior to entering the Pavilion. Downstairs, in the side walls of the vestibule—*voices* the first testimonies to the fears of painter Goya: two screens displaying a film that draws on Kieślowski's *Talking Heads*. This time, people answer the question: *What are you afraid of?* The statements create an ever-present background: a noise-complaint.

### **1.3 Kitchen - dining room – sitting room – the leaning paintings (Pavilion interior)**

Francisco Goya's two rooms – the ground floor and first floor - turned into the three spaces of a one-storey pavilion, separated and labelled KITCHEN, DINING ROOM, SITTING ROOM.

*Kitchen*: the area of production, making ready, planning, preparation, but also the space of matter from which one cooks, something raw and organic that ceases to be so.

*Dining room*: the area of consumption, ingesting, eating, being devoured.

*Sitting room*: the area of relaxation, rest, leisure, entertainment, contemplation.

As part of the curatorial commission procedure, 15 large-format paintings will be created.

*The leaning paintings*: small-format paintings spaced along the walls throughout the Pavilion, painted in part while still on display, commissioned by an extended curatorial team (including the visitors).

## **2. The counter-court and the commission procedure: social broadening of the curatorial team**

While Francisco Goya left court life in favour of individual effort, the opening of the House of the Deaf tantamount to a turn towards the community, towards the artistic empowerment of the collective. Working together does not result in a hodgepodge of individualized expressions (so far it has been the artist who has expressed themselves, now let each person do it). Hence the commission procedure, which mediates, orders and denaturalizes the whole process (don't express yourself, expose yourself to the risk, commission that).

For the present, the counter court consists of the original curatorial team and the artist. Sobczyk has made several hundred sketches-graphic works, on the basis of which the team has so far placed orders for 3 of the 15 large paintings (as well as commissioned design of the exhibition space).

The team will be expanded to include those who express their willingness to join (information on the possibility of contributing to *Fears of the Paintress Goya* and the commission procedure will be announced in autumn). The paintings thus commissioned will then be included among the leaning paintings. The final orders will be placed by the visitors (the project provides for one additional shipping during the exhibition).

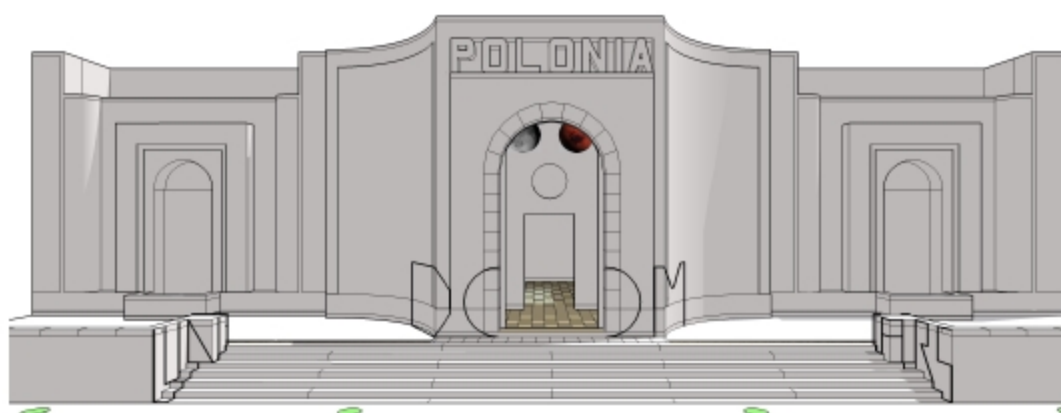
## **3. A Record of Fears**

*A Record of Fears of the Paintress Goya* (a) documents the development of the collaboration formula of cooperation, (b) discusses the successive issues that make it up (counter-court, social broadening of curatorship, fears of paintress Goya...), (c) constitutes the sequence of fears written down by the consecutive contributors to the publication.

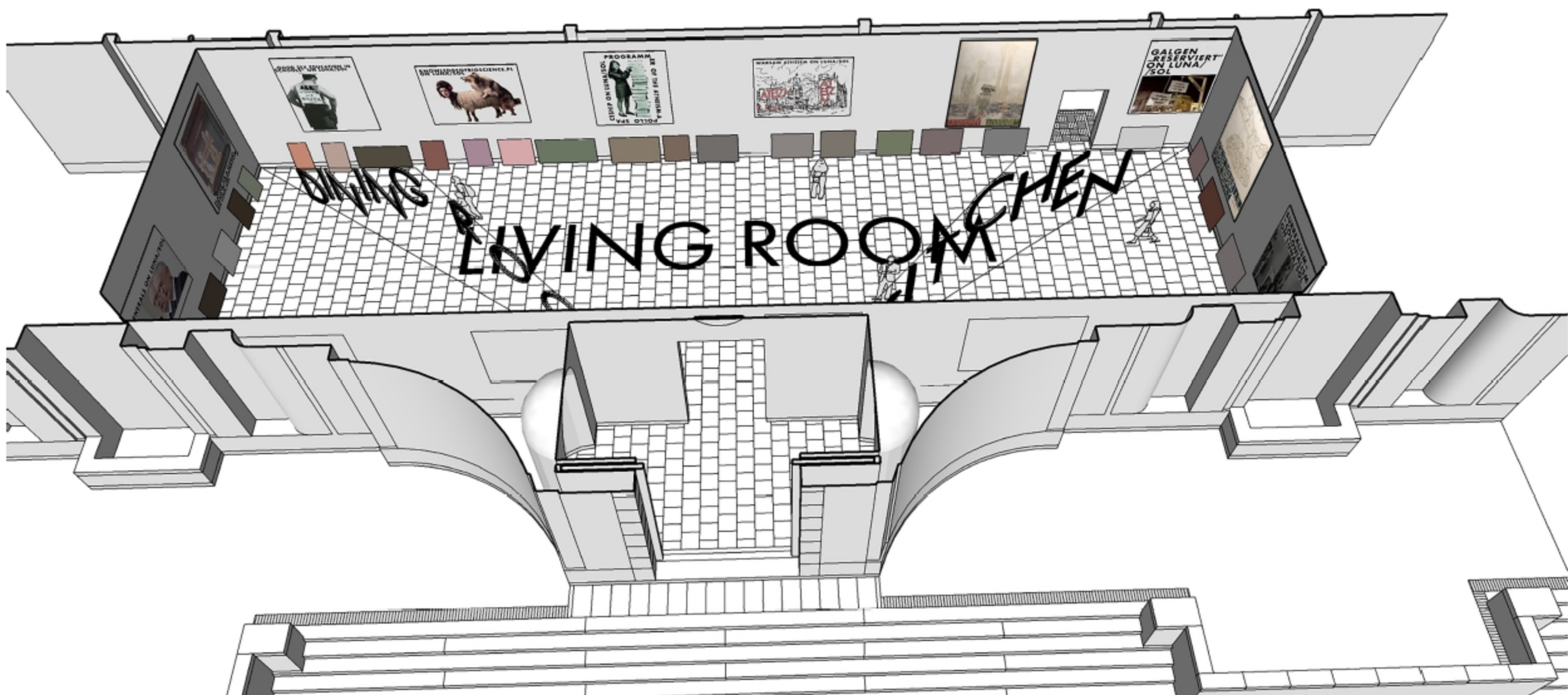
Circulation: approx. 3,000 copies in approx. 300 versions of 10 copies each.

The book comprises the unchangeable core contents and, each time, a different, several-page insert, whose originators would be people from outside (the procedure for joining the counter-court is yet to be announced).

Authors/authors of the core of the publication include J. Bednarek, T. Żuchowski, I. Kurz, A. Leder, K. Pobłocki, M. Poprzęcka, W. Baraniewski, approx. 10 persons in total.



1. OTWARTY DOM GŁUCHEGO - przestrzeń przed Pawilonem (LUNA, DOM, MARS)

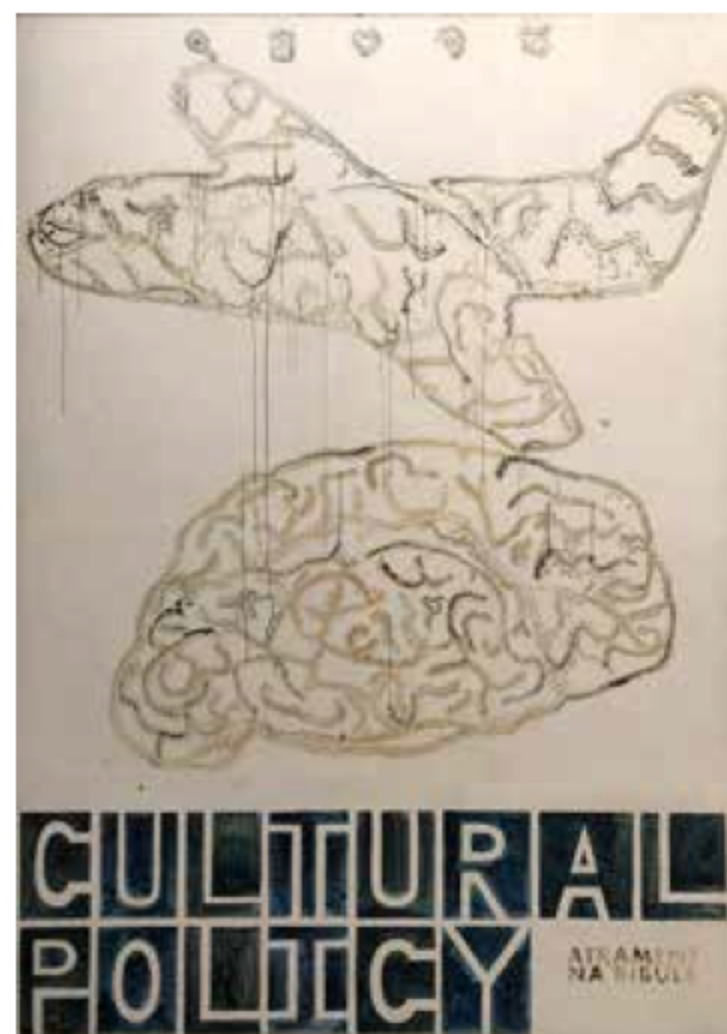


2. OTWARTY DOM GŁUCHEGO - wnętrze Pawilonu  
(KITCHEN, DINING ROOM, LIVING ROOM)



3. OTWARTY DOM GŁUCHEGO - widok wnętrza Pawilonu od strony jadalni (u góry) i kuchni (u dołu)





4. Obrazy do Otwartego Domu Głuchego - od lewej:  
Polityka kulturalna (jadalnia), Ludowy ateizm (salon), Krytyka polityczna (kuchnia)