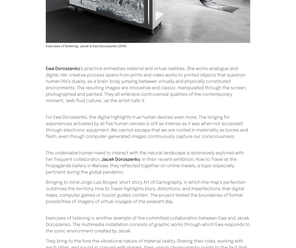
January 25, 2021

EWA & JACEK KOROSZYŃKO, capturing consciousness with sound & computer-generated image

Computing Art, Interviews, Sound

Interview by Agata Kik



Exercises of listening, Jacek & Ewa Koroszyńko (2016)

Ewa Koroszyńko's practice entwines material and virtual realities. She works analogue and digital. Her creative process spans from prints and video works to printed objects that question human life's duality as a brain-body jumping between virtuality and physical constituted environments. The resulting images are innovative and classic, manipulated through the screen, photographed and painted. They all embrace controversial qualities of the contemporary moment, well-fund culture, as the artist calls it.

For Ewa Koroszyńko, the digital highlights true human desires even more. The longing for experiences activated by all five human senses is still as intense as it was when not accessed through electronic equipment. She cannot escape that we are rooted in materiality as bones and flesh, even though computer generated images increasingly dominate our lives.

The undeniable human need to interact with the natural landscape is extensively explored with her frequent collaborator, **Jacek Koroszyńko**. In their recent exhibition, Ink to Travel at the Propagandy Gallery in Warsaw, they reflected together on entire travels, a topic especially pertinent during the global pandemic.

Bringing to mind Jacques Derrida's short story Art of Cartography, in which the map's perfection outshines the territory, How to Travel highlights blurs, distortions, and imperfections that digital maps, computer games or tourist guides contain. The project tested the boundaries of formal possibilities of imagery of virtual voyages of the present day.

Exercises of listening is another example of the committed collaboration between Ewa and Jacek Koroszyńko. The multimedia installation consists of graphic works that invite the audience to the sonic environment created by Jacek.

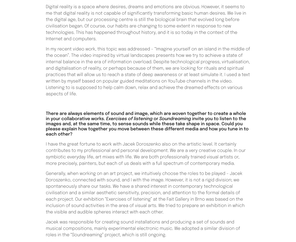
They bring to life the relational nature of material reality. Sharing their roles, working with each other, and sound in concert with images, their unison choreography points to the fact that listening does not necessarily mean hearing or that to see means to understand. It is about how to listen to images. Their collaborative experiments in sound and visual art originate from their shared sensitivity, sensitivity and discipline.

Ewa Koroszyńko has also been dedicated to in-depth research into standards of beauty. **The Promise of Sublime Words** is an ongoing series of photographic prints and GIF files that uncover the obscure subconscious mechanological hierarchy, photographic reproduction, and beauty standards by manipulating images derived from Antique or Classicism. Further investigation into beauty standards and, more specifically, into a contemporary obsession with the feminine digital image is shown by the digitally manipulated images **Body Editor**.

Even though there is no right or wrong use of technology, Ewa and Jacek Koroszyńko's work presents us that contemporary technology opens the digital doors to greater artistic freedom and potential creativity. Often discussing the negative impact of technology on the contemporary human, such as withdrawal from life in public or unhealthy habits, we should not forget that the digital is also another space for the vulnerable to reclaim their image, for women to object to the photocentric gaze and for everyone to experience the emancipatory effects of pure play.*

*Ewa Koroszyńko gave this interview on behalf of both artists

Body Editor, Ewa Koroszyńko, ongoing



How to travel, Jacek Koroszyńko & Ewa Koroszyńko (2016)

Your exhibition, How to travel explores contemporary digital technology, questioning how technological pitches and imperfections influence our everyday life. What does it mean for you to live life in a mediated reality? Has the map become more complex than the territory?

Our last exhibition - "How to Travel" - took place at the Propagandy Gallery in Warsaw, run by Jacek Sosnowski. The exhibition was the effect of our observations and research, which resulted in the production of a set of works oscillating around the topic of online travel. As part of the exhibition, we presented a series of photographs, video works and photographic objects. The sound was an important element of the exhibition - Jacek Koroszyńko's experimental sound installations, which united the exhibition's whole arrangement.

Using Google Street View, popular computer games, travel guides and other Internet sources, the project investigated how digital culture changes our perception of the natural landscape. Fascinated by modern information technologies and their incredible potential to shape lifestyles, we tried to answer the question of how to capture the rich duality of physical and virtual life authentically.

The works presented at the exhibition were created long before the pandemic outbreak. Online traveling seemed to be an exciting entertainment form, not the last option daily way to travel. Nowadays, in the face of an ongoing pandemic, life in the mediated reality has a slightly different character - we more often see the negative aspects of this form of life. We believe that contemporary digital culture, using images of the idyllic natural landscape, unwittingly draws attention to the constant longing for natural surroundings/ offline experience. A fragment of the "How to Travel" project will soon be shown at several exhibitions within the "What Next?" project organized by The Polish Cultural Institute.

Does the digital may still have the potential to fulfil the human need to be in touch with the natural environment? Do you think the digital can transform primary human desires these days?

Digital reality is a space where desires, dreams and emotions are obvious. However, it seems to me that digital reality is not capable of significantly transforming basic human desires. We live in the digital age, but our processing centre is still the biological brain that evolved long before civilization began. We can see that our habits are changing to some extent to new technologies. This has happened throughout history, and it is so today in the context of the Internet and computers.

In my recent video work, this topic was addressed - "Imagine yourself on an island in the middle of the ocean". The video inspired by virtual landscapes presents how very to achieve a state of internal balance in the era of information overload. Despite technological progress, virtualisation, and digitalisation of reality, or perhaps because of them, we are looking for rituals and spiritual practices that will allow us to reach a state of deep awareness or at least simulate it. I used a text written by myself based on popular guided meditations on YouTube channels in the video. Listening to is supposed to help calm down, relax and achieve the dreamed effects on various aspects of life.

There are always elements of sound and image, which are woven together to create a whole piece in your contemporary practice. Could you tell us about the relationship of the sound, images and, at the same time, to sense sounds while these take shape in space. Could you please explain how together you move between these different media and how you tune in to each other?

I have the great fortune to work with Jacek Koroszyńko also on the artistic level. It certainly contributes to my professional and personal development. We are a very creative couple in our symbiotic everyday life, art mixes with life. We are both professionally trained visual artists or more precisely, painters, but each of us deals with a full spectrum of contemporary media.

Generally, when working on an art project, we intuitively choose the roles to be played - Jacek Koroszyńko, connected with sound, and I with the image. We have different skills, we approach spontaneously share our tasks. We have a shared interest in contemporary technological civilization and a similar aesthetic sensitivity, precision, and attention to the formal details of each project. Our exhibition "Exercises of listening" at the Fat Gallery in Brno was based on the inclusion of sound activities in the visual art space. We tried to create an environment in which the visible and audible spheres interact with each other.

Jacek was responsible for creating sound installations and producing a set of sounds and musical compositions, mainly experimental electronic music. We adopted a similar division of roles in the "Soundseeing" project, which is still ongoing.

At the moment, we are working on a new project entitled "BodyUnless", which, like our previous activities, is a creative experiment combining sound and visual art. Next year we will release the project in the form of a unique music album and present an exhibition that is an audio-visual study of how modern technology and culture change our intimate relationships.

Your recent photographic series 'Impossible Territory' questions the blurring boundary between the copy and the original, representation and presentation, and the real and the virtual. What does it mean for the human to be present today while constantly switching between physical and virtual realities?

According to my knowledge, the brain has an incredible ability to handle a large number of different processes simultaneously. However, there are some limitations in this area - concentration. We are not able to focus on many things at one moment. Jumping between tasks, including switching between the physical and virtual realms, is less effective than concentrating on only one action.

We do not yet know how the stream of information affects our behaviour, but digitalisation may affect us more in depth than we believe. But the simple fact that some lifestyle habits are now changing and that we have the impression that technology is badly affecting our memory or attention does not mean that our brains will change the structure of their connections in some dangerous way.

The female body is a territory in itself. In the spirit of the latest Black Protests in October 2020 in Poland and internationally, do you think the digital can also pose as an empowering tool for women who fight for their bodies' rights?

On 22 October 2020, the Polish Constitutional Court imposed a near-total ban on abortion, making it practically impossible for women to end their pregnancies legally. This legislation change led to a nationwide strike in Poland, with protests following in other European capitals and worldwide. As a result of the uprise, the government has decided to delay the new compulsion temporarily, and the future remains uncertain.

The protests draw inspiration from demonstrations in October 2016, which became known as Black Monday. Thanks to the Internet and social media, it was possible to organise protests in many cities quickly. The slogans of protesting women reached many people, including those seemingly not interested in the subject.

I am very excited about contemporary technologies that enable such a fast flow of information, but at the same time, I am terrified at how they can be used. I am not against technology because its creations are only tools that can be used in thousands of ways.

But I increasingly have the impression that technology has been harnessed to build some serious utopias like, for example, the unrealistic standards of beauty. Various phone applications, photo editing tools, computer programs such as Photoshop, and the modern cosmetic or surgical techniques make it possible to implement dreamlike effects into real life. Additionally, devised photos of perfect women are shared thanks to digital interventions and modern medicine are (mostly) contained in successes propaganda.

Beautiful women are presented in the context of luxury. I have the feeling that nowadays, we are seduced by perfect images created by specialists who want to earn money using us all. As a result, women spend their dream image devote their time and money instead of focusing on personal development, social activism, creativity and skills development.

What are the ways of using the digital that bring us closer to freedom?

It is evident that digital transformation has a significant impact on economic and social development and contributes to a substantial improvement in the quality of life and the realisation of democratic and emancipatory ideals. It is hard not to notice the resulting changes in medicine, education, urban planning or communication, etc. Also, in the area of culture and art, there are massive changes. Like many artists nowadays, I am particularly inspired by the web-fluid culture.

Since the virtual world and technologies often question reality and are evolving rapidly, artistic projects are becoming more engaging and interactive, offering unique experiences. These new approaches and tools allow for even greater artistic freedom, creating entirely new production possibilities, including the opportunity to combine numerous elements that previously could not have been linked.

I often use the freedom in my work, building on various digital and physical manipulation of the image. This multi-layered approach often leads to the viewer's disorientation, who can independently decipher which elements are 'real' and created/edited.

Body Editor consists of digitally manipulated images as an inquiry into a contemporary obsession with digital beauty. In your artistic process, you often move between the physical to the digital, using one medium to expand the other. What could be the ways of using the digital as enjoyable self-expression increasing rather than depress one's physical life?

I was particularly interested in online social media and popular phone applications, so-called beauty apps in the Body Editor project. In my opinion, these platforms and tools force us always to compare ourselves with others, undermine our self-confidence and worsen our mood. There is also the so-called digital autopsy - competing with others on the Internet and being in a low position can cause a bad mood. I am curious whether future generations of women will be able to oppose the current standards of beauty, whether there will be another wave of feminism or, on the contrary, whether digital tools will contribute to even greater appropriation of the body on the market.

On the other hand, self-expression through digital media can also have a positive side, especially for women. For millennia, the male point of view was the only one valid. The history of art, which I studied at the university, is almost entirely male history. It was men who built the narratives, and created and preserved the cultural patterns with which others looked at bodies.

Today, thanks to cultural changes, the feminist revolution, etc., we know that this fixed 'male' way of seeing a woman is not objective and that other points of view are equally important. Thanks to digital media, women regain their image, but there is a long process many media up of trials and errors. In my opinion, only the search for new images, experimenting or even playing with one's image are the ways to create unique aesthetics that may replace the images of women functioning so far. In this context, experimenting with a digital image, playing with it and searching for new means of expression can positively affect us.

What is the chief enemy of creativity?

The 'reality', unless apart might sound obvious, but I believe that a lack of well-established habits, daily routine and discipline in action are the worst enemies of creativity. In my opinion, creation is, above all, an ongoing process - everyday work, not romantic waiting for inspiration.

Consistent action and broadening one's skills can eventually lead to truly creative solutions. In my case, I would say that creativity is a side effect of the whole working process. The process is never linear, but it always starts with an idea that grows into a concrete action plan. I always try to start with research - when I come up with an idea, I usually start reading and looking for a conceptual background that can support my hypothesis.

You couldn't live without...

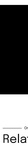
There are a few things I couldn't live without..., but to pick one, I would say I am not going anywhere without a book. My beloved writers are Stanisław Lem, Michał Houellebecq, Henry David Thoreau, Witold Gombrowicz. Indeed, I'm also a long-term fan of the work of Margaret Atwood.

Tags: Agata Kik, Body, Ewa Doroszenko, Jacek Doroszenko, Photography, Sound Art

MFA ART & TECHNOLOGY/ CRITICAL PRACTICES
Apply by January 15
LEARN MORE
Low residency
Full tuition waiver for GRADUATE
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF ARTS
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF ARTS

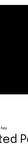
On Kay

Related Posts



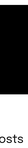
LAURE VICTOR KAY, the camera as catharsis

Interview by Kate Hogg Laure Victor Kay is a multimedia artist who does not believe in



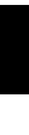
Festival: LEX 2021 Gijón, Spain - Exploring sound & synergies between art, technology & digital culture

Text by CLOT Magazine | LEX Festival Gijón has just announced the latest names for its 18th



ORGINS, a multi-faceted sonic journey that explores the planet Earth

Text by Juliette Bellecour On the 29th January, the NGB Ensemble will perform their German performance



COSMOTECHNICS, opening up portals outside of time

Text by Ana Mazzoyuca It is with a certain feeling of urgency that I take the

Insight: nyon's InConcert series, exploring the raw genesis of electronic sound

Text by Nearly Serrturn Live music performance has rather traditionally associated with the experience

©CLOT Magazine 2015 - 2021