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INTERMEDIALITY AND PERFORMATIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF PERFORMANCE ART

Abstract: Performance art is one of the most controversial trends of neo-avant-garde and one of the most difficult to characterize. Therefore, this paper will examine two notions which could prove useful in grasping some of its aspects: intermediality and performativity. The former was first used as early as 1911 by Samuel L. Coleridge, and subsequently adopted by Dick Higgins, whereas the latter gained popularity with the proclamation of the performative turn. Intermediality is discussed on the basis of the views of such artists as Dick Higgins and Artur Tajber, while performativity, among others, in the context of the work of young artists presented during the conference titled *The Aesthetics of Performative Arts* in 2012 in Kraków-Przegorzalę.

Keywords: intermediality, performativity, performance art., neo-avant-garde, performative turn

As pointed out by Rosalee Goldberg, “performance art actually defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists, and this still holds, although each emerging performance artist, and each new writer on performance, inevitably expands the scope of that definition”.¹ Such a perspective opens possibilities for surprising and paradoxical attempts to assign this term to various artistic activities between the 1950s and the 1970s. The origins of performance art are usually associated with the Fluxus group, which is elsewhere regarded as a precursor of happenings. Another artist frequently mentioned in the context of those two art forms is John Cage and his composition *4'33"*. Erika Fischer-Lichte, a German professor of Theatre Studies, cites similar examples of creative projects, but sees in them the source of the performative turn.² From this perspective, the works of both Herman Nitsch and Cage can be seen as activities capable of going beyond the conventions of, at least, semiotic aesthetics, by challenging the long-established division of roles between the artist and the audience and transcending the boundaries of a musical piece.

¹ R. Goldberg, *Performance. Live Art Since 1960*, London-New York 1998, p. 12.

² E. Fischer-Lichte, *Estetyka performatywności*, transl. M. Borowski, M. Sugiera, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2008, p. 23 and following.

Dick Higgins's term "intermediality", often brought up in the context of performance art, does not help to uphold those distinctions either. Grzegorz Dziamski argues that this concept fits all kinds of activities, including those of Fluxus³, but Higgins defined it in reference to happenings. In his opinion happening has become an intermedium, an unmarked territory between collage, music, and theatre. No rules govern it and each work determines its own mode of expression and form according to its needs. However, he also claims that the use of intermedia is becoming more common in all fields of art, as an important feature of our new mentality is continuity rather than categorization.⁴

Such reflections and views prompted me to re-examine the two notions: intermediality and performativity, which seem to work well in respect to selected examples of performance art. The word "intermedia" was first used as early as 1911 by Samuel L. Coleridge⁵, which Higgins himself noted, whereas "performativity" gained popularity with the proclamation of the performative turn.

For clarity's sake I will keep the discussion limited to the artistic context, although the performative turn⁶ goes far beyond the study of art. As for intermediality, owing to the great number of senses of the second element of the word ("medium"), it is necessary to restrict the following analysis to one of them; according to Higgins, it denotes either modes of expression or artistic techniques employing these modes (collage), but also genres (theatre, music). In the later part of this paper I will analyze the prefix "inter-".

The above-mentioned terminological confusion when defining countercultural activities or anarcho-artistic positions, as Stefan Morawski called them⁷, is by no means the fault of theoreticians or caused by their mistakes in ascribing specific activities to notional categories, especially as artists themselves purposefully aim at broadening, transcending, or completely abolishing genre boundaries between arts. Gregory Battcock (1979) claims that, as far as performance is concerned, it is not even clear whether it is a mode of expression or an artistic trend.⁸ No mani-

³ G. Dziamski, *Performance - tradycje, źródła, obce i rodzime przejawy. Rozpoznanie zjawiska*, in: *Performance*. Praca zbiorowa, ed. G. Dziamski, H. Gajewski, J.S. Wojciechowski, transl. K. Biwojno, M. Gutkowska, H. Siodlak, M. Śpik-Dziamska, M. Zamecka, Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warszawa 1984, p. 26 and following.

⁴ D. Higgins, *Intermedia*, transl. M. Zielińska, T. Zieliński, in: *Nowoczesność od czasu postmodernizmu oraz inne eseje*, Selection, edition and afterword Piotr Rypson, słowo/obraz/terytoria, Gdańsk 2000, p. 123.

⁵ S. L. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (Chapters 4, 18), www.online-literature.com/coleridge/biographia-literaria/4/ (retrieved on 21/01/2010).

⁶ I refer here to Fischer-Lichte's understanding. E. Fischer-Lichte, *Estetyka performatywności*, p. 23 and following.

⁷ S. Morawski, *Nurt główny aktualnych postaw anarchoartystycznych*, „Rocznik Historii Sztuki” 1981, t. XII, p. 228-241.

⁸ G. Battcock, *L'Art Corporel*, in: *The Art of Performance*, Venice Aug., Buenos Aires - New York 1979.

festive or artistic programme exists which would offer criteria enabling us to differentiate it from other avant-garde movements (cf. Morawski 1981). Furthermore, it can hardly be seen as a typical neo-avant-garde historical phenomenon, since it remains very much alive and constantly changes its forms. All this, however, does not alter the fact that performance poses a challenge for an aesthetician who, like Clement Greenberg, engages in the nostalgic search for resemblances among the media or some kind of basis to define their character more or less precisely, although there is no longer any hope for the purity of genres in the arts.

Initially it seemed that the notion of intermediality would be “handy”, especially with regard to neo-avant-garde activities. Performance art was also quite frequently characterized in this way. A number of other concepts were also employed in the attempts to define this phenomenon. It was described as happening “live”; as emphasizing the physical presence of the artist or a psychophysical condition; as abandoning attempts to express the artist’s mental states, choosing physical activities instead; as disregarding the material intermediary – a work of art (a charge which was refuted by Jerzy Beres⁹); as insurgent and acting against any conventions, including institutional ones.

Comparing the closely related activities of happening and performance, we see that the division tends to go along the lines set by the concept of participation – presence, creating a situation – presenting the artist’s psychophysical condition, or his or her private experience. Therefore, the theoretical framing of happening was determined by its social character, its tendency to initiate events and bring art closer to life. In the case of performance art, on the other hand, what counted most was the ambiguity of the term, with the special emphasis on the artist, the creative process, and individuality (with reference to Jackson Pollock). Thus when Wolf Vostell took people on a trip in order to view the boulevards of Paris from bus windows (*Petite Ceinture*), he created a situation in which the elements of everyday life became the fabric of art, and he united the co-creators, the participants of the one-off ephemeral event, turning them into a community. When, on the other hand, Vito Acconci in *Proximity Piece* tested the vernissage viewers’ personal space, he focused on the interaction between the artist and the audience, induced by the artist’s too intrusive presence. Similarly in *Step Piece*, when Acconci “presented” his own psychophysical condition and, at the same time, tested his viewers’ mental endurance, by jumping naked on and off a stool until he was too exhausted to continue. But the sheer diversity of performance art, as Dziamski points out, makes it impossible to define, even in approximate terms.¹⁰ If we use the criteria for the performance/happening distinction to describe creative activities, we may discover e.g. that the Fluxus group represents elements of both performance art and happening.

⁹ J. Beres, *Wstyd*, Otwarta Pracownia, Kraków 2002, p. 155-156.

¹⁰ G. Dziamski, *Happening, Performance*, in: *Od awangardy do postmodernizmu*, ed. G. Dziamski, Instytut Kultury, Warszawa 1996, pp. 352-357.

Moreover, the interpretation of intermediality does not really help us to systematize the criteria for differentiating between the two. I believe that the problem stems from the notion of medium itself, which, according to Timothy Binkley, has become aesthetics' principal tool for identifying works when the criteria based on aesthetic qualities failed.¹¹ Is it the point of anarcho-artistic neo-avant-garde to create a new medium, or rather to extend this notion to its limits until it bursts or is rejected? It is conceivable that the artists of the second half of the 20th century wanted to free themselves from this notion in the same way as they chose to abandon other aesthetic categories, e.g. the work of art as an artist's permanent creation, its form (performance art, happening), or its aesthetic qualities (conceptualism). Therefore, the question here is whether the objectives of the artists' activities are constructive or destructive.

Intermediality is typically interpreted as searching for the areas "in between" various forms of expression or media, the combination of different creative techniques or modes of expression, the lack of genre purity. This is the position shared by Grzegorz Dziamski and Łukasz Guzek.¹² Dziamski sees this term as capable of covering the works which cannot be otherwise classified as a genre, e.g. concrete poetry or calligraphy. However, he also gives examples of what he calls "unidentified messages", located in between e.g. music and philosophy, sculpture and hamburger, or life and art, which include Duchamp's *Fountain* as well as Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs*. From this perspective, most neo-avant-garde projects can be regarded as intermedial, which would divest the term of some of its practicality.

Therefore, one can argue that intermediality has gained too many senses, losing its unique character in the process. If we take Higgins's words from his essay "Intermedia" literally, he seems to have in mind some new quality which emerges as a result of a synthesis of different modes of expression and which has to be brought to light by a unifying term, namely "intermedia".¹³ However, Eric Andersen, a Fluxus artist, does not share this viewpoint. He makes a distinction between two ways of understanding an artistic performance: as multimedia, which he characterizes as faithful to the concept of the medium, and intermedia.¹⁴ Thus the concept of intermediality would only be useful to denote a certain mode of creation, and should be seen as merely a new technique or a form of expression.

Artur Tajber, one of the founders¹⁵ of the Faculty of Intermedia established in 2007 at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts, is of a similar opinion. He does not

¹¹ T. Binkley, *Przeciw estetyce*, in: *Zmierzch estetyki - rzekomy czy autentyczny?*, ed. S. Morawski, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1987, pp. 429-431.

¹² Ł. Guzek, *Przez performance do sztuki*, „Didaskalia” 2005, no 69, online: <http://witryna.czaso-pism.pl/pl/gazeta/1055/1169/1247/>;

¹³ T. Załuski, *Wstęp*, in: *Sztuki w przestrzeni transmedialnej*, ed. T. Załuski, ASP w Łodzi, Łódź 2010, p. 11.

¹⁴ A. Tajber, *Sztuka performance versus performatyka, performatyczność, performance studies*, in: *Zwrot performatywny w estetyce*, ed. L. Bieszczad, Libron, Kraków 2013, p. 46.

¹⁵ The cofounder was Antoni Porczak.

restrict the term “intermediality” to either happening or performance art. Tajber, who identifies himself as a performance artist, explains the rationale behind his reasoning, based on Dick Higgins’s visual diagram.¹⁶ He points out that the field of performance art only partly overlaps with the field of the intermedia”, i.e. not all of it can be characterized as such, while Fluxus is not only *not* connected to performance art at all, but is also “covered” by intermedia in its entirety, which means that Tajber is far from viewing intermediality as a “unifying” concept.

Why then does he choose this particular term, referring to Andersen? He mentions neither a synthesis nor a unity, but only his own concept of intermedium as possessing unique qualities, while “unique” here does not mean the creation of a new medium or genre, but, as Tajber’s words suggest, an artist’s individual activities of unique character.¹⁷ It is unnecessary to create a specific label to define the work of a given artist, since what is important is the relationship between various phenomena, exchange, or movement instigated by an artist, which are different every time and cannot be predefined.

Higgins’s diagram referred to by Tajber seems better-suited to conveying the meaning of the concept of intermediality than any previous attempt using words only. In the light of the pictorial visualization, the relational understanding, proposed by Ryszard W. Kluszczyński as a “redefinition” of the old term, appears more convincing. “Intermedia art for me means the kind of art which in any of its specific manifestations inevitably initiates relationships between different media. Understood as such, relationalism, a network of intermedial references, supplants here the sets of attributes normally used to characterize particular art genres. Intermedia art is a total field, it is neither a combination of the features typical of various arts ... nor a blend of so-far separate arts into a new whole ..., but reference, seeing one medium through another, as they activate and stimulate one another”¹⁸. In my opinion, the relational version completes the definition and at the same time opens new possibilities.¹⁹ It is important to note that on Higgins’s diagram intermedia only partly overlaps with performance art rather than including it, which leaves us with the task of looking for new definitions.

Thus the key of this interpretation seems to lie in the prefix “inter-”, usually associated with linking different perspectives.²⁰ In reference to art, however, “inter-” tends to suggest going beyond them. Neither philosophers nor artists can agree whether in the case of performance art we should talk about mixed media

¹⁶ See the visualization of the diagram in: A. Tajber, *Sztuka performance*, p. 47.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁸ R.W. Kluszczyński, *Film, wideo, multimedia. Sztuka ruchomego obrazu w erze elektronicznej*, Instytut Kultury, Warszawa 1999, p. 76.

¹⁹ See also: K. Chmielecki, *Estetyka intermedialności*, Rabid, Kraków 2008.

²⁰ This interpretation can be found in various contexts, most importantly interdisciplinarity.

(Richard Kostelanetz²¹ and Andersen), or not (Dziamski, Guzek, Grzegorz Sztabiński²²).

It is also far from clear what should be understood by mapping out the areas “in between” modes of expression, forms, or genres. Searching for the undeveloped “greenfield land” in art can involve either finding new original combinations or creating heterogeneous hybrids²³ designed to frustrate any attempts at creating a combination and to destabilize, to persistently go beyond, to be constantly on the move to avoid being ensnared by any newly emerging conventions or notions. I see the heterogeneous performance art among the latter.

Thus intermediality, understood as a network of relationships, to some extent enters the territory of transmediality. The prefix trans- (defined as ‘across, beyond, through’) seems to make a better use than inter- or ‘between’, and can be also applied to the activities in which modes of expression are not combined or merged, but still produce a new quality. Załuski asserts that ‘transmediality’ refers to the dynamics of the transfer of a given practice from the territory of one media to that of another, additionally emphasizing the internal heterogeneity.²⁴ It also covers those activities in which artists seek to conceal the medium, such as Sunrise by Tomasz Ciecierski.²⁵ Finally, it encompasses the activities associated with hypermediation or mediality, cited by Dziamski or Kluszczyński.²⁶

I will argue that, in this relational understanding, intermedia can be linked to various activities within performance art, in regard to which the formula of a unifying notion is ineffective. Another such notion, open to various interpretations, focused on the diverse character of performance is performativity.

Tajber appears to doubt its usefulness and claims that certain things are not altered “by the import of new terminology”, with which I cannot fully agree. He regards it merely as a new term for old phenomena rather than a new quality required by performance studies. Still he brings up the concept due to the conference topic²⁷

²¹ Kostelanetz, however, refers to early performance as ‘mixed-means theatre’, R. Kostelanetz, *The Theatre of Mixed Means*, in: *Contemporary Dramatists*, New York 1977.

²² G. Sztabiński, *Performatywna koncepcja artysty w sztuce współczesnej*, in: *Zwrot performatywny w estetyce*, ed. L. Bieszczad, Libron, Kraków 2013, p. 34.

²³ Grzegorz Sztabiński uses the term the “new” hybrid’ to refer to performance art with reference to Laurie Anderson and understands it as the creation of a “living whole”, emphasizing the fact that the elements in this new arrangement are energized. G. Sztabiński, *Performatywna koncepcja artysty*, p. 34, footnote 9. Fischer-Lichte also talks about energizing. Załuski interprets a hybrid in the context of „transiting” of elements which do not lead to a synthesis and associates it with transmediality. T. Załuski, *Wstęp*, p. 11 and following.

²⁴ *Wstęp*, T. Załuski, in: *Sztuki w przestrzeni transmedialnej*, ed. T. Załuski, p. 11.

²⁵ See: W. Kazimierska-Jerzyk, *Transmedialność jako poziom lektury*, in: *Sztuki w przestrzeni transmedialnej*, pp. 54-58.

²⁶ He applies to another definition of the media, different than the one in this paper, that is, interactive multimedia means of communication. R. W. Kluszczyński, *Film, wideo, multimedia...*

²⁷ The conference titled The Aesthetics of Performative Arts was organized by the Department of Aesthetics at the Jagiellonian University in 2012 under the patronage of the Polish Society of Aesthetics.

relating it to performative arts. In this context he expresses his reservations about the tools and terminology introduced by performance studies and it cannot be denied that he has a point resisting the oppressive intrusion of the trendy “p” words: performance, performativity, performativism.²⁸ Instead he proposes that the term intermediality continue to be used with regard to performance art. In my view, however, the artist, rather than seeking to detract from the achievements of performative studies, only expresses his conviction that certain issues, such as ephemerality, the process of dematerialization of a work of art, or contextualization, were analysed without difficulty before the performative turn gained popularity.

However, performativity brings a new quality to the research on performance art. I would like to offer two examples of the presentations given by the Faculty of Intermedia PhD and MA students invited by Tajber.²⁹ A young promising artist, whose aim was to involve the conference participants in a verbal-situational game, was particularly noteworthy. Her performance took place in a designated space hidden behind the steps going down from the building’s courtyard to a small wooded area. Going downstairs each participant disappeared from other people’s sight and on their own had to face an ongoing situation affecting them personally. A sense of anxiety and uncertainty resulting from the unpredictability of what was awaiting downstairs was additionally magnified by the atmosphere of the night and the darkness surrounding the trees. At the bottom of the stairs, out of the sight of the others, the participant was suddenly flooded with a spotlight reacting to their bodily movement, while another beam of light fell on three human figures directly in front of them – naked, hideously contorted in convulsions and spasms, salivating, repulsive. Above their heads on the wall large clearly-seen words were displayed, saying ‘There are four of us’. These words completely altered how the viewer saw the situation and led them to reconsider their own position. Who was the subject and who the object of the performance? Who found themselves in this frustrating and uncomfortable situation? The actual event forcing the participants to look at themselves ‘in the mirror of others’, in effect, called into question and destabilized the well-established divisions between art and life, fiction/illusion and reality, the viewer and the viewed by placing the participant in the space ‘in between them’.

²⁸ J. Wachowski, *O modnych słowach na „p” albo w obronie barona Mülhchausena*, “Dialog” 2012, no 9, p. 168-176. I use this term here as it was proposed by Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska who questioned the translation of performance studies suggested by Kubikowski. She argues that in polish *performatyka* (performance studies) is too similar to old notions such as *semiotyka* (semiotics), while its character is entirely different as it is more of an anti-discourse or anti-discipline. A. Zeidler-Janiszewska, *Perspektywy performatywizmu*. In: *Perspektywy badań nad kulturą*, ed. R.W. Kluszczyński, A. Zeidler-Janiszewska, Łódź 2008, p. 87.

²⁹ The Faculty of Intermedia PhD and MA students were invited to participate in the conference thanks to my cooperation with Artur Tajber, the associate dean of the faculty at the time.

Artur Wnuk's performance³⁰ also took place in the forest surrounding the university buildings. The artist intentionally waited until late at night so that frequent changes of direction would confound the participants and make them feel lost in the wooded area. The silence of the forest amplified noises and smells in the surroundings, which would go unnoticed in the commotion of the daylight. Lack of visibility made the participants rely on 'the eyes of imagination', which added to the tension and a growing sense of threat, relieved temporarily by conversations in the group and bursts of laughter. At one point the guide disappeared and the confused group came to a sudden halt at a loss to know what to do. The participants, left on their own, experienced what felt like an interminable wait and were not in the least ready for the unexpected touch of the warm lips having appeared seemingly from nowhere, licking each of their hands in turn. They could only know about the presence of somebody in the dark because of the muffled screams of surprised 'victims', whose clothes were marked with fluorescent green paint. At that moment nobody was willing to admit to the emotions which this warm but also moist sensation provoked. On the one hand, the experience connected the participants, but, on the other, it divided them, as none of them shared the emotions they felt deep inside with others. Thus touch, a physical contact, as Fischer-Lichte would put it, destabilized, in a way similar to John Austin's performatives³¹, dichotomous pairs of notions, such like public/private, closeness/distance, acting/watching.³²

Both of these artists prove that performance works best as an event in which the conception of the media seems less important than seeking 'the space in between' in the experience shared by participants. In the first case, the modes of expression used belong to diverse genres: the theatre gesture and the written word. In the second one, the intimately felt physical touch dominated over diversity of techniques. What they have doubtlessly in common is performative efficacy, as Fischer-Lichte puts it, the physical co-presence of an audience and performers, thanks to which an event is a result of interaction, co-created by the participants' physical presence, perception and response.³³

The notion of performativity is useful to appreciate certain aspects of these activities. In both cases, the 'presence of the artist' has to be seen from the perspective of the experience of their corporeality, which brings to mind van Gennepp's liminal experience of passage.³⁴ They take part in a real situation, and the spe-

³⁰ The artist also brings up performative themes in his paper. K. Wnuk, *Oddaję wam słowo performance*, in: *Zwrot performatywny w estetyce*, pp. 95-104.

³¹ Cf. E. Fischer-Lichte, *Estetyka...*, p. 33 and following.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 101, 105 and following.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

³⁴ Gennepp studied rites of passage in a very broad sense of the term, including any transformation of an individual's role into another in a given social group, like, for instance, the passage from childhood into adulthood.

cific relationship between the participants and the artist enables them to undergo a kind of transformation, thanks to the departure from the dichotomy between the viewer and the viewed. They feel 'bodily, volitionally, emotionally, energetically and motively'³⁵ the actual processes happening beyond the order of representation, through the immediate ('live') contact with the artist. In such events we can also find the elements of a ritual, like for example marking the people who have undergone the transformation, the 'baptism', with the brand of green paint. (The term is not new as it was also used by J. Bereś or Z. Warpechowski.)

These activities also contain certain elements of the performative turn, as it is interpreted by Fischer-Lichte, the most interesting among which is, in my opinion, the creation of a certain dynamic situation taking place 'in between' an audience and (a) performer(s) (setting up a reality), which includes ritualistic components, such as, for example, a transformation of an audience. Other aspects of significance are the experience of participants' corporeal co-presence and material means of interaction, in other words, their somatic, audio and spatial aspects.³⁶

These are not the only features associated with performativity, which could be applied to performance art, which Richard Schechner in the 5th part of *Performance studies* referred to as a blanket term covering practically every artistic activity which does not fit into boundaries of classical genres.³⁷ Following Jacek Wachowski³⁸ I would like to highlight, on the one hand, the emphasis in artistic activities on the somaticity of a subject-performer, who is at the same time a creator, material and a processual 'work', and, on the other, the effects of these activities (agency), the results which can be seen in a material (physical) sphere, like, for example, Schwarzkogler's castration, but also the way they affect participants' perception, when, for instance, the impact of the emotions they felt make them change their behaviour in everyday life. This kind of results Marina Abramović had in mind when she said that '(...) in the works which involved inflicting pain I treated myself as a sort of mirror. The audience sees my fear, pain, repulsion. And if I can go through what is a metaphor of what we face in life, the viewer will feel stronger. Rituals performed even in early communities have the same purpose'.³⁹

I also believe that the dynamics of performativity cannot be properly understood without performance and performance studies. Therefore, in conclusion I would like to underline how different this perspective is. Richard Schechner argu

³⁵ E. Fischer-Lichte, *Estetyka...*, p. 21.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ R. Schechner, *Performatyka. Wstęp*, transl. T. Kubikowski, Ośrodek Badań Twórczości Jerzego Grotowskiego i Poszukiwań Teatralno-Kulturowych, Wrocław 2006.

³⁸ J. Wachowski, *O performatywności sztuk performatywnych*, in: *Zwrot performatywny w estetyce*, pp. 19-20.

³⁹ Quoted in: http://wyborcza.pl/1,75475,12611722,Mój_pogrzeb_trzy_trumny_w_trzech_miastach_ (retrived on 11/01/2015)

es that „Performance studies is <inter> – in between. It is ingeneric, interdisciplinary, intercultural – and therefore inherently unstable. Performance studies resists or rejects definition. As a discipline, PS cannot be mapped effectively because it transgresses boundaries, it goes where it is not expected to be. It is inherently <in between> and therefore cannot be pinned down or located exactly”.⁴⁰ The case of performativity is not much different. Not only can we find as many interpretations of the notion as there are authors who use it, but even its origins seem to raise some doubt.⁴¹ Although I am unable to present here a comprehensive study of the term, one more important and interesting quality of performativity needs to be noted.⁴² It is treated as not only a feature of artistic activities, but can also serve as a tool for analysing them. Thus it is worthwhile to investigate ‘performative efficacy’⁴³ as a tool for examining both „theoretical and practical construction”⁴⁴ of performance art.

Furthermore, artists themselves are engaged in a constant debate and they keep reviewing its theoretical interpretations, the notable example of which is Abramović, a grandmother of performance, to use her own words. During the 2010 exhibition *Artist is Present* she not only cooperated with artistic institutions, which performance art was initially supposed to oppose, but also within this cooperation she arranged several events, for instance inviting Ulay, her partner of many years, to take part in the exhibition. Additionally, by showing her past works in galleries, the artist questions the requirement of presenting performance live. Furthermore, as Grzegorz Sztabiński interestingly describes, she is actively involved in a sort of dialogue with other artists, referring to their works and reinterpreting them.⁴⁵ Thus she challenges the artistic and theoretical context, calling for new analytical tools for performance art.

⁴⁰ R. Schechner, *What is Performance Studies Anyway?*, 1998, (quoted in: J. McKenzie, *Performuj albo... Od dyscypliny do performansu*, Tłum. T. Kubikowski, Universitas, Kraków 2011, p. 63, footnote 44.) Remarkably, Marvin Carlson maintains that performance art is one of the sources of performativity. This interpretation is not as commonly accepted as John Austin’s linguistic one (performative) or those derived from the variety of different meanings of the verb ‘perform’. M. Carlson, *Performans*, transl. E. Kubikowska, Warszawa 2007.

⁴¹ Performance in this broadest sense is regarded as not only the subject of performance studies research, but also an analytical tool. It is also the case of performativity, as interpreted by Bachman-Medick. D. Bachman-Medick, *Cultural turns. Nowe kierunki w naukach o kulturze*, transl. K. Krzemieniowa, Warszawa 2012.

⁴² McKenzie and Carlson believe that the feature of ‘performative efficacy’ is liminality, which is typically associated with Arnold van Gennep’s rite of passage. A. van Gennep, *Obrzędy przejścia*, Transl. B. Biały, PIW, Warszawa 2006. Victor Turner, an anthropologist, sees it as a transitional state between two other states, which he links to performance as “a border field of negotiation”. V. Turner, *Od rytuału do teatru; powaga zabawy*, Transl. M i W. Dziekanowie, Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, Warszawa 2010. See also: J. McKenzie, *Performuj albo...*, p. 46 and following.

⁴³ McKenzie maintains that ‘performative efficacy’ is a theoretical genesis of performance studies.

⁴⁴ Cf. J. McKenzie, *Performuj albo...*, p. 47.

⁴⁵ G. Sztabiński, *Obecność artysty: kto działa?*, “Estetyka.Biuletyn”, 2015, no 2 (2), pp. 8-24.

As we can see, performance art can hardly be confined to a specific time period, and each new activity means an act of expanding as well as transcending its boundaries, if any were accepted in the first place. Artists will never cease to ponder on the words of Sabine Gova, according to whom „[performance art] does not have a purpose as such, forming itself it simultaneously self-annihilates, and always remains as it was before having formed. It is at the same time an act of transcending boundaries and rejecting those boundaries”.⁴⁶ This element of self-annihilation constantly reminds us of the process of an incessant dialogue, when, to quote McKenzie, „Theory becomes performance (and performance becomes theorized) (...)”.⁴⁷

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⁴⁶ S. Gova, *Pojęcie techniki ekspresyjnej zwanej performance*, in: *Performance...*, p. 24.

⁴⁷ McKenzie spoke with regard to performance in its broad sense, not limited to the artistic one. J. McKenzie, *Performuj albo...*, p. 47.

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INTERMEDIALNOŚĆ I PERFORMATYWNOŚĆ W KONTEKŚCIE SZTUKI PERFORMANCE’U (streszczenie)

Sztuka performansu jest jednym z bardziej kontrowersyjnych nurtów neoawangardowych, a jednocześnie najtrudniej uchwytnym. Dlatego w tekście przeanalizowane zostały dwa pojęcia, które mogą być pomocne w uchwyceniu niektórych jej aspektów – intermedialność i performatywność. Pierwsze pojawia się już w 1911 w ujęciu Coldridge’a do którego nawiązuje Dick Higgins, drugie, stało się popularne wraz z proklamowanym w latach 90. zwrotem performatywnym. Intermedialność zostanie

zaprezentowana na przykładzie wypowiedzi dwóch artystów: Dicka Higginsa i Artura Tajbera, zaś performatywność m.in. w kontekście działań młodych artystów występujących podczas Konferencji „Estetyka sztuk performatywnych” w 2012 roku w Krakowie-Przegorzalach.

Słowa kluczowe: intermedialność, performatywność, sztuka performance’u, neoawangarda, zwrot performatywny.