

Marta Maliszewska*

The Road Monument by Oskar Hansen— Critical Narration and Commemoration Discourse¹

Abstract

In this paper I will analyze a project of a monument titled *The Road* by Oskar Hansen addressing Walter Benjamin's and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theses. I have presented it as an attempt to establish a discourse about Auschwitz-Birkenau beyond monumental history within the account of Friedrich Nietzsche. This example illustrates how monuments exemplifying the Open Form have been attempts to use the critical micro-narration in the field of sculpture. I refer to it through my presentation of how such a strategy makes preservation of individual postmemory possible and resists the use of history as a tool of propaganda.

Keywords

Oskar Hansen, perception experience, micro-narration, *The Road* monument, sculpture in the expanded field

[...] it would thus be necessary to *dialecticize the visible*. That is, to make other images, other montages; to look at them differently; to introduce into them division and movement combined, emotion and thought combined. In short, to rub one's eyes, to rub the representation with the affect, the ideal with the repressed, the sublimated with the symptomal.

Georges Didi-Huberman, *To Render Sensible*²

* Warsaw University, Poland
The College of Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities
Email: ptaszekpliszek@gmail.com

¹ Among the people who have helped me develop my ideas for this paper I would especially like to thank Piotr Schollenberger PhD, Krzysztof Wolański PhD, Doug Angelosanto and Adam Klewenhagen. I would also like to thank Jakub Matysiak for the translation.

² G. Didi-Huberman, "To Render Sensible", trans. J. Gladding, [in:] *What Is a People?*, ed. A. Allen, New York 2016, p. 70.

The Road

In 1957 the International Auschwitz Committee announced a competition for a monument for the victims of fascism, which was to be erected at the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. The jury, headed by sculptor Henry Moore, awarded first place to a Polish group consisting of Oskar and Zofia Hansen, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Julian Pałka, Edmund Kupiecki, and Lechosław Rosiński for the design of *The Road*. The theoretical premises of the design were created by the team's leader, Oskar Hansen, who is associated the most with the work. The project was an 80-meter wide and 1000-meter long asphalt road that would run across the camp symbolically crossing it out. The road would begin near the main gate (through which there would be no entrance) and end by the ruins of the crematoria. The camp buildings would not be renovated, so that as time passes nature would take over the slowly decaying buildings.³

The theoretical foundations of *The Road* were comprised of the Open Form concept of Zofia and Oskar Hansen. As an "open work," the monument was designed to invoke individual reflections in the viewer up against historical testimonies of the Holocaust. Its creators assumed that the road would be covered with stones, votive candles, and flowers left by visitors in the process of time. The Open Form architecture should establish a matter of "passe-partout" for life, and not a "monument to the ego" of its creator (as Hansen called modernist buildings). The building becomes a blank canvas, which the inhabitants can fill with meaning. It allows for the "inclusion of INDIVIDUALITY IN THE COLLECTIVE"⁴—"FINDING THE INDIVIDUAL'S PLACE IN THE COLLECTIVE, MAKING IT ESSENTIAL FOR FORMATION OF ITS SURROUNDINGS."⁵ Hansen wanted to make "SEEMINGLY OPPOSITE ELEMENTS PERMEATE EACH OTHER"⁶ "BETWEEN OBJECTIVE, SOCIO-COLLECTIVE ELEMENTS AND SUBJECTIVE, INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS."⁷ By retaining the creative potential of the viewers, the Open Form made it possible to express individual perspectives, differentiating them from the Closed Form and its strategies of subjecting experiences and needs of individuals to the official discourse.

³ The project has never been realised due to the pushback from some members of the International Auschwitz Committee.

⁴ After: O. Hansen, "Forma otwarta w architekturze. Sztuka wielkiej liczby", [in:] *Wobec formy otwartej Oskara Hansena. Idea—utopia—reinterpretacja*, red. M. Lachowski, M. Linkowska, Z. Sobczuk, Lublin 2009, p. 15 [trans. J. M.].

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 16 [trans. J. M.].

⁶ *Ibidem* [trans. J. M.].

⁷ *Ibidem* [trans. J. M.].

The Road is difficult to classify as purely an architectural or sculptural object. It combines the two fields, and exemplifies what Rosalind Krauss calls the sculpture in the expanded field. According to her, the classic definition of sculpture "A is B characterized by C" is no longer possible. Krauss places it on the Greimas diagram:

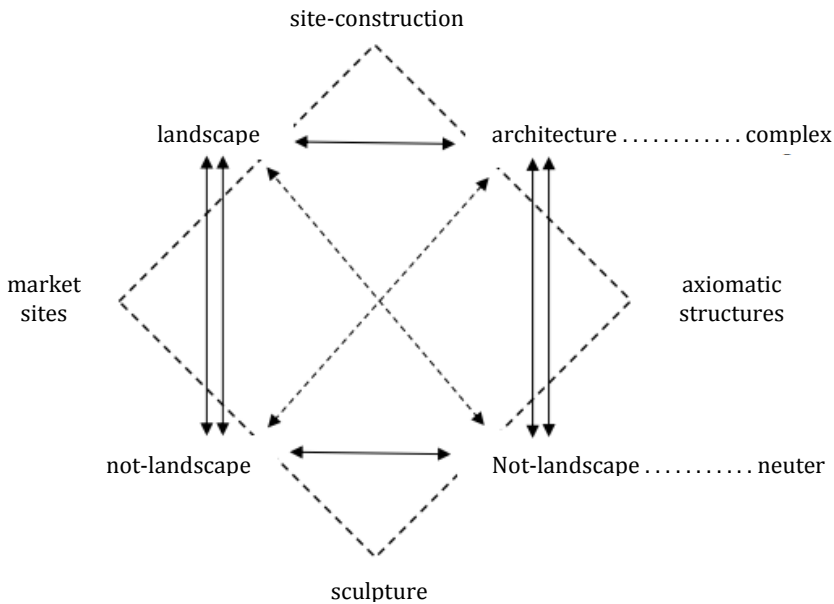


Fig. 1. Rosalind Krauss's diagram representing the sculpture in the expanded field
Source: R. Krauss, "Sculpture in Expanded Field", [online] <http://www.onedays-culpture.org.nz/assets/images/reading/Krauss.pdf> [accessed: 20.06.17].

It is hard to say which of the four corners (sculpture, signified place, place of construction, axiomatic structure) of the diagram is closest to *The Road*. Nonetheless, it can be clearly located within the "expanded field" of Krauss, similarly to many later works by minimalistic and land art artists, on which she constructs her theory. One of the already mentioned artists, Robert Morris, created his own definition of sculpture, which also corresponds to Hansen's project:

Sculpture. For want of a better term, that grouping of work which does not present obvious information content or singularity of focus. It is not dominated by the obviousness of looming scale, overly rich materials, intimate size, didactic ordering. It neither impresses, dominates, nor seduces. Elements of various focuses are often in it, but

in more integrated, relative, and more powerfully organized ways. Successful work in this direction differs from both previous sculpture (and from objects) in that its focus is not singularly inward and exclusive of the context of its spatial settings. It is less introverted in respect to its surroundings.⁸

Use of the term “sculpture” in respect to *The Road* may be counterintuitive, especially since Hansen himself is associated mostly with architecture. Nevertheless, in light of the cited definitions it seems correct and allows one to look at the project in a broader context of changes in art initiated by *minimal art* and continued by *environmental art*.

With any luck they might forget all about it⁹

The *Modi memorandi. Leksykon kultury pamięci* [*Modi memorandi. Lexicon of Cultural Memory*] dictionary defines “monument” as: “A monument, in a narrower sense, is a work of art consciously designed to be displayed in the public space, to last and commemorate persons or events. It has characteristics of an illocutionary act, which appeals to the potential viewer with “do not forget.”¹⁰ Therefore, monuments are one of the visual tools used in the construction of historical narrations. Friedrich Nietzsche differentiates three types of historical narration—monumental, antiquarian,¹¹ and critical—I would like to examine the first and the last of them. The aim of the monumental model is to create a cohesive cause and effect sequence, so that „the great moments in the struggle of the human individual constitute a chain, that this a chain that unites mankind across the millennia like a range of human mountain peaks, that the summit of such an ancient moment shall be for me still living, bright and great.”¹² The monumental history does not need to reflect truth, it is designed to blend and unify particular events, so they would fit into the accepted framework of narration. “[I]t will

⁸ R. Morris, “Notes on Sculpture, Part 3: Notes and Non Sequiturs” [in:] idem, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris*, Cambridge 1993, p. 26.

⁹ The title refers to a Adam Adach’s video. The video shows members of a Swiss family sitting with their backs to each other. They talk about their grandparents who during World War II had to hide for two years in a dugout shelter in the Polish countryside because of their ethnicity.

¹⁰ W. Bałus, “Pomnik” [in:] *Modi memorandi. Leksykon kultury pamięci*, red. M. Sarysz-Wolska, R. Traba, Warszawa 2014, p. 387 [trans. J. M.].

¹¹ According to Nietzsche, the antiquarian model is characterized by a reverent attitude towards the past. It is demonstrated by overt attachment to the past, and in result, reluctance to changes.

¹² F. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1997, p. 68.

always have to diminish the differences of motives and instigations, so as to exhibit the *effectus* monumentally, that is to say as something exemplary and worthy of imitation, at the expense of the *causaue*,"¹³ writes Nietzsche. Traditional monuments, which "manifest values important to the group that erects them, to its identity and legitimacy"¹⁴ are also used to construct this kind of narration. They memorialize in the solid form what authority wants to preserve.¹⁵ Fluidity and multiplicity of perspectives, events, and experiences become mummified in an officially accepted form, and in time, the only remaining vision of the past.

The opposition to the described model is the critical narration, which relies on an analysis and assessment of past events. It is a constant process of "putting history on trial." The verdict, as Nietzsche writes, is always guilty, because history is a sequence of injustices and suffering. This sentencing allows to recognize the current situation and attempt to change the source of violence. While monumental history emphasizes the martyrial aspect of the Holocaust and mythologizes events, in effect making them more unreal, the critical narration demands to confront them with the "banality of evil"¹⁶ and discards the martyrologic vision.

In that we are "touched by the same breath of air which was among that which came before,"¹⁷ and that the air is steeped with injustice is for Walter Benjamin the source of the messianic mission of the historian, whose task it is to rescue the history of ancestors from the clutches of the monumental narration. Therefore, commemorating is both an attempt to give justice to the dead, and demands from us to remember that the history of camps is part of our history. In *On the Concept of History* Benjamin writes:

There is a painting by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. An angel is depicted there who looks as though he was about to distance himself from something, which he is staring at. His eyes are opened wide, his mouth stands open and his wings are outstretched. The Angel of History must look just so. His face is turned towards the past. Where *we* see the

¹³ Ibidem, p. 70.

¹⁴ W. Bałus, op. cit., p. 387.

¹⁵ See: P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, trans. K. Blamey, D. Pellauer, Chicago 1988.

¹⁶ In this context by the phrase "banality of evil" I mean its non-spectacular and everyday character, which contrasts to the metaphysical evil associated with monumental history. See: H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*, London 2006.

¹⁷ W. Benjamin, "On the Concept of History", trans. D Redmond, [online] <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm> [accessed: 20.06.2017].

appearance of a chain of events, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet. He would like to pause for a moment so fair, to awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise, it has caught itself up in his wings and is so strong that the Angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high. That which we call progress, is *this* storm.¹⁸

Benjamin proposes “to brush history against the grain.”¹⁹ This approach is based on liberating events from the cause-effect continuum, placed there by the monumental history, and to replace it with the dialectical image. This image occurs within the collision of that which “was” with that which “is” now. The critical model “leaves it to others to submit their will to the harlot named ‘Once upon a time’ in the brothel of historicism. It remains master of its powers: strong enough to shatter the continuum of history.”²⁰

When history becomes a series of images it is impossible to mummify it. Benjamin understands historical truth as something that flashes in unexpected moments, just to disappear again. Therefore, constructing a coherent, unified narration of the past becomes impossible. It is replaced with the strategy of micronarratives, also known as “micrology,” which is an assemblage of subjective and particular flashes of truth. This way the all-encompassing and objectivizing history is replaced with an assemblage of dialectical images, which complete each other, problematize, and most importantly, do not claim to lock the past in rigid narrative bounds.

Despite the seeming simplicity, and maybe even lightness of the described strategy, the threat, which Benjamin tries to escape using it, is very serious. In the mentioned essay he writes: “The danger threatens the stock of tradition as much as its recipients. For both it is one and the same: handing itself over as the tool of the ruling classes.”²¹ This diagnosis relates to another pair of opposites existing in the philosopher’s theory—the opposition of the myth and the allegory. The nature of the myth is repetition, “it is a domain of beautiful illusions, totality, limitation and an aura [...] with which the allegory brakes.”²² Allegory is, therefore, a kind of an antidote to the myth. It tears the guise like the dialectical image tears the monumental vision of the history.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² A. Lipszyc, *Sprawiedliwość na końcu języka. Czytanie Waltera Benjamina*, Kraków 2012, p. 529 [trans. J. M.].

The equivalent of micrology in the visual representations is a “counter-monument,” also known as an “anti-monument.” The term was coined by James E. Young who in the definition emphasizes that the anti-monument challenges the accepted strategies of commemorating and the “logic of monument” itself (described by Rosalind Krauss).

Traditional monuments often do not commemorate events to which they are dedicated, but ‘bury them under a thick layer of national myths.’ In monuments Young sees a fight with the material form of memory, which in a way replaces the living memory or the perpetual work of the memory. A monument, as Young sees it, closes, simplifies, generalizes.²³

The anti-monument is a strategy which preserves the “living memory” and does not close it in the boundaries of the official narrative. Monuments of this kind, exemplified by the *Monument against Fascism* by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz in Hamburg or the aforementioned Eisenman’s *Memorial of the Murdered Jews of Europe* in Berlin, instead of attempting to visually represent the Holocaust in the spatial form, appeals to the experience of viewers. It is, as Jean-Luc Nancy writes, a representation which “does not want to be “of the camps” but rather brings into play their (un)representability as such.”²⁴ Those artists are called architects-deconstructionists, promoters of the Jacques Derrida’s thought in the field of architecture. The aim of their work is to “create space, which aesthetically pulls the viewers from the routine perspective and reflection about the past. It serves to break the habitual familiarity with the world, which in this case refers to being accustomed to the traditional—which, as Adorno argues, are used to forget—modes of commemorating and invoking the perceptual and intellectual curiosity.”²⁵ Those monuments discard the monumental tradition, which Hansen talked about in Otterlo:

Monuments [...] are passive toward changes in time. They become antiques in the moment they are born. [...] The Closed Form—[is] a decision made in my name—I stand beside the process. There is no way to find your identity here—your own self. One cannot find one’s own self there. All these are somebody else’s memories, feelings [...].²⁶

²³ A. Janus, “Zapełnianie pustki. Muzeum i paradoks upamiętniania”, [in:] *Inne przestrzenie, inne miejsca. Mapy i terytoria*, red. D. Czaja, Wołowiec 2013, p. 263 [trans. J. M.].

²⁴ J.-L. Nancy, “Forbidden Representation”, [in:] idem, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. J. Fort, New York 2005, p. 48.

²⁵ M. Borowska, *Estetyka i poszukiwanie znaczeń w przestrzeniach architektonicznych*, Warszawa 2013, p. 148 [trans. J. M.].

²⁶ After: K. Murawska-Muthesius, “Open Form, Public Sculpture and the Counter-Memorial: Encounters Between Henry Moore and Oskar Hansen”, [in:] *Oskar Hansen*

The Road opposes the logic of closed form and monumental narration. It is an attempt to find an alternative representation of the Holocaust, which would not be a part of the official historical discourse. Although the literature on the subject, as well as the examples which I have mentioned in this essay were created later than Hansen's design, the cited definitions would suggest that *The Road* is an anti-monument, rather than a monument. It is placed in the context of the Berlin monuments by Magdalena Borowska, who writes that "*The Road* was supposed to constitute [...] the anti-monumental *iunctum* between the past and the future."²⁷ It demonstrates the uniqueness of the discussed project and that it can be interpreted as one of the first anti-monuments.

Creators of *The Road* did not assume what feelings and emotions the viewers would experience. Their goal was not to dramatize the space of the camp and the reactions connected with it. The monument was supposed to be a completely "open" work, devoid of attempts to manipulate the viewers' experience or provoke particular thoughts. One of the most crucial elements was the titular asphalt road. Visitors would not be allowed to stray from it and "tour" the entire premise. It symbolically marks that the experience of a "pilgrim" is not synonymous with the experience of a prisoner. The monument emphasized that it would also not allow to feel what it meant to be a victim of the Nazi death machine. It indicated that the only thing left for the future generations is the memory. Nonetheless, famous examples of anti-monuments often assume other strategies. The *Memorial of the Murdered Jews of Europe* or Jewish Museum in Berlin created by Daniel Libeskind are examples of creations which are supposed to invoke fear, the feeling of unfamiliarity and of being lost. In effect, the artists oppose the assumptions of the Open Form by confining the bodily experience within a designed discourse—a petrification of the multiplicity of interpretations in one reading. Those projects can even be classified as very aesthetically sophisticated examples of the closed form. This is how Ewa Domańska reads them. She claims that the Libeskind's museum is a "monumental anti-history," showing that in reality it rewrites the history from the perspective of the victims, but nonetheless, retains all characteristics of the monumental narration—"created in the interest of a particular group and reinforcing a vision of history desired by it."²⁸ Those examples show how easily the ideas of the anti-

Opening Modernism. On Open Form Architecture, Art and Didactics, eds. A. Kędziorek, Ł. Ronduda, Warszawa 2012, p. 205.

²⁷ M. Borowska, op. cit., p. 151 [trans. J. M.].

²⁸ E. Domańska, "Niechaj umarli grzebią żywych", *Teksty Drugie: teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacja*, 2004, 85/86, p. 95 [trans. J. M.].

monument can be intercepted and integrated into the official discourse leaving an empty shell of intricate form filled with history. Simultaneously, the aesthetic power of such projects “makes the architectural representation of the past [...] more dangerous than representation of the past in historiography, where aesthetization of trauma happens at more intellectual level.”²⁹ This way “evil becomes a more appealing, aesthetic experience within the horror aesthetic; it becomes [...] more unreal,”³⁰ and the projects of the pseudo “anti-monuments” become counterproductive in respect to their own assumptions.

Innocent eye does not exist³¹

Traditionally sculpture is a form subjected to the hegemony of sight. Touching it, smelling it, listening to the sounds it makes, or tasting it are forbidden. The entire aesthetic experience is concentrated in one sense.

The hegemonic eye seeks domination over all fields of cultural production, and it seems to weaken our capacity for empathy, compassion, and participation with the world. The narcissistic eye views architecture [and art] solely as a means of self-expression, and an intellectual-artistic game detached from essential mental and societal connections, whereas the nihilistic eye deliberately advances sensory and mental detachment and alienation. Instead of reinforcing one’s body-centered and integrated experience of the world [...] it disengages and isolates the body, and instead of attempting to reconstruct cultural order, it makes a reading of collective signification impossible. The world becomes a hedonistic but meaningless visual journey.³²

This hegemony is strongly connected with the discourse of power and sovereignty. Gaze has “a very strong tendency [...] to grasp and fixate, to reify and totalize; a tendency to dominate, secure and control.”³³ The distrust for visible images, treated as false appearance, have evolved from antiquity to “an ocularcentric metaphysic of presence.”³⁴ The contemporary world is a place where people can and want to see everything, especially if they are to come to believe anything. This “frenzy of the visible” is also true for the

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 96 [trans. J. M.].

³⁰ Ibidem [trans. J. M.].

³¹ The title refers to a series of photos by Wojciech Wilczyk, which illustrate how buildings of synagogues built before World War II are currently “used” in Poland.

³² J. Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin. Architecture and the Senses*, Chichester 2005, p. 22.

³³ Ibidem, p. 17.

³⁴ Ibidem.

Holocaust. In *Images in Spite of All*, Didi-Huberman describes a history of four photos made in 1944 by members of the Sonderkommando. The photos, taken in secret and with great risk, are blurry and uncropped. Didi-Huberman describes how they are currently retouched to fit to almost tabloid standards of precision. In this process the testimony they give is lost and subjected to the regime of sight. These “fixed” versions of “images in spite of all” are exhibited in Auschwitz. This understanding of gaze relates to the monumental historical narration. “Taken together” is a tool which petrifies fluidity and the multiplicity of perspectives. The museum created in the death camp, with its ambition to show as much as possible, in any way possible and if it cannot be done to reconstruct certain aspects of the Nazi death machine is also subjected to its power.

The growing dominance of the gaze results in a gradual decline of stimuli other than visual. This intensifies the separation between the subject and the world in which we were originally immersed. The “objectifying” gaze separates us from it and, at the same time subordinates all experiences to the official discourse (scientific, social, aesthetic...). Juhani Pallasmaa writes: „The eye is an organ of distance and separation, whereas touch is the sense of nearness, intimacy and affection. The eye surveys, controls and investigates whereas touch approaches and caresses.”³⁵

Nonetheless, David Michael Levin distinguishes two types of gaze: “the assertoric gaze,” and “the aletheic gaze.” “[T]he assertoric gaze is narrow, dogmatic, intolerant, rigid, fixed, inflexible, exclusionary and unmoved, whereas the aletheic gaze, associated with the hermeneutic theory of truth, tends to see from a multiplicity of standpoints, and perspectives, and is multiple, pluralistic, democratic, contextual, inclusionary, horizontal and caring.”³⁶ Therefore, contrary to what Pallasmaa argues, gaze does not always distance and separate. Sight understood as a bodily organ, which “touches” the surrounding world, and not as a “scanner” registering information, can also be “aletheic,” but first it needs to be liberated from the compulsion of hyper-visibility.

An attempt to diverge from the understanding of experiences in oculo-centric categories is his phenomenological analysis based on work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. According to him, the motoric experience is the most basic way of reaching the world we inhabit. The assertoric gaze is reapplied on this basic perception and blurs it. “My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my ‘symbolic’ or ‘objectifying func-

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 46.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 36.

tion.”³⁷ The world understood this way is an “open” and subjective being full of mysteries. It does not belong to “the order of objective thought in which there are solutions.”³⁸

This multiplicity of perspectives made *Phenomenology of Perception* a crucial text for artists from the minimalism circle. They wanted to provoke „disorienting art experience.”³⁹ Through confusing experiences, they attempted to divert viewers from accepted designs by showing the possibility of solutions beyond the official discourse. Therefore, the task of an artist was to ask open questions with no right (or wrong) answers. *Minimal art* was also the first art movement, in which, as in the work of Merleau-Ponty, the emphasis laid on spatial bodily experience. Reading texts of Robert Morris leaves an impression that *The Road* realizes their theoretical postulates. The monument would engage every sense to a degree that did not appear in art until the *environmental art*. Nonetheless, both the minimalism theoretical essays and first works of the movement were created after the Hansen’s design. His project was a kind of visionary anticipation of what was to come several years later.

Another important characteristic of Morris’ theory is the differentiation on a “subjective me” (“I”) and an “objective me” (“me”). According to him the “subjective me” is the domain of the past, memory, static images, and the “objective me” is responsible for the present and the imageless perception of space. “Spatial experience, requiring physical movement and duration, invariably puts a stretch between the modes.”⁴⁰ In Benjamin’s critical model of narration the division on two temporalities can also be found there—the past and the present—which have to collide in order to create the dialectical image, because “the historical truth shows only when our isolated present collides, enters the constellation with the past, with certain equally isolated, out of context, monadically separated epoch which reaches the threshold of higher readability in our present.”⁴¹ The “subjective me” would then be the equivalent of the image of the past, which collides with “the present”—the “objective me.” This collision results in the creation of the dialectic-

³⁷ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith, London–New York 2005, p. 162.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 389.

³⁹ R. Morris, “Some Notes on Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated”, [online] <http://lingualeo.com/pt/jungle/robert-morris-some-notes-on-the-phenomenology-of-making-154086#/page/5> [accessed: 20.06.2017].

⁴⁰ *Idem*, “The Present Tense of Space”, [in:] *idem*, *Continuous Project Altered Daily...*, op. cit., p. 182.

⁴¹ A. Lipszyc, op. cit., p. 515 [trans. J. M.].

tical image or Morris' perceptual experience. As in Benjamin's theory, the monumental historical narration is torn. The theory of the American artist also allows for bodily experience, which stands in opposite to the assertoric perception. The spatial experience understood this way is a strategy of constructing a critical narration and it can become the foundation for creating micronarrations.

The Road, as many later anti-monuments, was supposed to be an invitation to go on a journey on a designated route. At the same time, in opposition to traditional sculpture, it would not have a center or one, "correct" perspective of reception. One of the ways of participating in the monument was motion. In an "answer to the call," it would engage the entire body and let the visitor experience the space of the camp with all their senses. It would be a "gut" perception—"a somatic, automatic, subconscious experience of the viewers corresponding to their knowledge, consciousness, and memory."⁴² For every person the performative forms of postmemory would assume an individual, the subjective form, because "[i]t is not enough for two conscious subjects to have the same organs and nervous system for the same emotions to produce in both the same signs."⁴³ There would exist a kind of collision between "then"—imposed, intimate images of memory—and "now"—bodily and subjective experiencing of the surroundings—which would allow every visitor to create private micro narratives about Auschwitz corresponding to their individual experience.

Our song-book⁴⁴

The described strategy is like Didi-Huberman's concept of "the Render Sensible." When we are confronted with "what our senses, like our intelligences, do not always know how to perceive as 'making sense.'"⁴⁵ the only possible expression is to retreat to bodily experiences as "multiple, pluralistic." It is not about the metaphysical inexpressibility. They are endeavors to commemorate, which are not mimetic, but still remain representations as "a presence that is presented."⁴⁶ The goal is to preserve a living memory about the traumatic events.

⁴² M. Borowska, op. cit., p. 150 [trans. J. M.].

⁴³ M. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p. 218.

⁴⁴ The title refers to a film by Artur Żmijewski, who in 2003 in Tel Aviv found Polish Jews living there and asked them to sing songs they remember from their youth.

⁴⁵ G. Didi-Huberman, "To Render Sensible", op. cit., p. 85.

⁴⁶J.-L. Nancy, op. cit., p. 36.

The creators of *The Road* discarded the monumental narration and wanted to create a space to produce postmemory in its place—an active form of memory based on the construction of individual micro narratives rooted in subjective experiences and recollections. Instead, a museum was built on the premises of the camp. Its founding act (1947) states that it is “a memento for the nations, societies, politicians, indicating the purpose, possibilities, and morale of Germany.”⁴⁷ The history of the Holocaust was and still remains a tool of political propaganda. The space of the camp is now also included in “the phenomena of tourism, the most voracious form of appropriation and naturalization of the world.”⁴⁸ This is exactly what Hansen and his colleagues wanted to avoid. The infrastructure of the museum imposed on the space of the camp makes the commemoration outside of the official narration a challenge. Despite the entrance gates, audio guides and gift shops, the dead deserve justice and the challenge must be taken, remembering that walking in Auschwitz is “walking on the world’s biggest cemetery.”⁴⁹ In answering the appeal to “never forget” it is important to “be able to look as an archaeologist does,”⁵⁰ to see “in spite of all,” because “thanks to that gaze, which asks questions about what is seen, things begin to look back at us from their buried spaces and buried times.”⁵¹

Bibliography

1. Bałus W., “Pomnik” [in:] *Modi memorandi. Leksykon kultury pamięci*, red. M. Saryusz-Wolska, R. Traba, Warszawa 2014, pp. 387–389.
2. Benjamin W., “On the Concept of History”, trans. D Redmond, [online] <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm> [accessed: 20.06.2017].
3. Borowska M., *Estetyka i poszukiwanie znaczeń w przestrzeniach architektonicznych*, Warszawa 2013.
4. Didi-Huberman G., *Kora*, tłum. T. Swoboda, Gdańsk 2013.
5. Didi-Huberman G., “To Render Sensible”, trans. J. Gladding, [in:] *What Is a People?*, ed. A. Allen, New York 2016, pp. 65–86.
6. Domańska E., “Niechaj umarli grzebią żywych”, *Teksty Drugie: teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacja*, 2004, 85/86, pp. 78–108.
7. Hansen O., “Forma otwarta w architekturze. Sztuka wielkiej liczby”, [in:] *Wobec formy otwartej Oskara Hansena. Idea – utopia – reinterpretacja*, red. M. Lachowski, M. Linkowska, Z. Sobczuk, Lublin 2009, pp. 14–19.

⁴⁷ After: P. Piotrowski, “Auschwitz versus Auschwitz”, [in:] idem, *Sztuka według polityki*, Kraków 2007, p. 134 [trans. J. M.].

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 135 [trans. J. M.].

⁴⁹ G. Didi-Huberman, *Kora*, tłum. T. Swoboda, Gdańsk 2013, p. 79 [trans. J. M.].

⁵⁰ Ibidem, pp. 77–78 [trans. J. M.].

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 78 [trans. J. M.].

8. Janus A., "Zapełnianie pustki. Muzeum i paradoks upamiętniania", [in:] *Inne przestrzenie, inne miejsca. Mapy i terytoria*, red. D. Czaja, Wołowiec 2013, pp. 261–277.
9. Krauss R., "Sculpture in Expanded Field", [online] <http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/reading/Krauss.pdf> [accessed: 20.06.2017].
10. Lipszyc A., *Sprawiedliwość na końcu języka. Czytanie Waltera Benjamina*, Kraków 2012.
11. Merleau-Ponty M., *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith, London–New York 2005.
12. Morris R., "Some Notes on Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated", [online] <http://lingualeo.com/pt/jungle/robert-morris-some-notes-on-the-phenomenology-of-making-154086#/page/5> [accessed: 20.06.2017].
13. Morris R., *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris*, Cambridge 1993.
14. Murawska-Muthesius K., "Open Form, Public Sculpture and the Counter-Memorial: Encounters Between Henry Moore and Oskar Hansen", [in:] *Oskar Hansen" Opening Modernism. On Open Form Architecture, Art and Didactics*, eds. A. Kędziorek, Ł. Ronduda, Warszawa 2012, pp. 199–211.
15. Nancy J.-L., "Forbidden Representation", [in:] idem, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. J. Fort, New York 2005, pp. 27–50.
16. Nietzsche F., *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1997.
17. Pallasmaa J., *The Eyes of the Skin. Architecture and the Senses*, Chichester 2005.
18. Piotrowski P., "Auschwitz versus Auschwitz", [in:] idem, *Sztuka według polityki*, Kraków 2007, pp. 123–138.