

Exhibition history

Monika Jadzinska – Iwona Szmelter

Grass just Grass – Krzysztof M. Bednarski

Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie, Warszawa, Poland

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Previous installations



Test – version 1

The first version consisted of one wooden box with sand and green coated barbed wire had included neither small red balls nor peat and was treated by the artist as a kind of test version.



Test – version 2

In the second, final version Bednarski set up twelve boxes on the field full of poppy flowers nearby the workshop in San Silvestro, Pascara, Italy. He described the situation like a landscape in the very early morning, with the drops of dew on the real grass and the red dots on the green ground expressing the average painting effect of color contrast. According to him that formal painting effect started pulsing and dazzling his eyes as needles and became the emotional effect introduced in different associations (dots of blood, bloody dew, fresh dew, red poppy flowers from Monte Casino - the symbol of extremely bloody battle during the World War II, where Poland lost many brave soldiers in the name of international freedom). That was the moment that he decided to add small red balls into his installation.



First exhibition: the forest



The first exhibition had happened in the middle of the forest in the empty fire basin made of concrete, that was sunk into the ground. Twelve boxes full of natural peat with green coated barbed wire, took place in it. The “grass” grew slightly below the level of the ground and real grass in the forest. There was no artificial lighting effect as the natural, sunny light Bednarski regarded

the best. The expression of new, bright wooden boxes with the intensive scent of fresh wood was unrepeatably any more. The scheme of two rows of six boxes setting up there turned out the classic scheme for that installation (but not the only one).



INEDITOOPEN'96, Latina, 16 artists Italiani inedita – Premio Boccioni' 96; 16 artisti internazionali; eventi multimedia, via Don Minzoni 13, Latina 1996

Benito Oliva organized Premio Boccioni for young artists as the kind of *aperto* to the Venice Biennale that was suspended that time. It took place

in a prewar abandoned hangar split into small parts and Bednarski had got a white, sterile, not big but three-meters high room to display the work. There was dark inside and the idea of greenhouse's warming lamps was taken into consideration. He installed four working light bulbs on the long lines hanging above, in a small distance to the grass. According to him the space and that

kind of lighting allowed to focus viewer's mind on the subject. The scheme of boxes: 2 row of 6 items. The additional effect took place: a scent of the watering peat, that became a classic element of that installation (existed all the time, except for the permanent exhibition in The Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw).

- the scheme of boxes: two rows of six boxes;
- the sound of whispering *missenti* (which means: do you hear me?) from the other room;
- the peat regularly watering to obtain the scent and dampness

House of artist's friend Wojciech Bruszewski (for 55 anniversary of W. Bruszewski), 1996

No photos survived. According to artist it was an excellent space of old, abandoned, ruined house creating completely new context. He added the sound of word "*missenti*" recorded on the type and played from the distance, not in the same room. That word was whispered by his friends: adults and children as well, completed the task in a delicate, ephemeral matter.

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- the sound of whispering *missenti* from the other room;
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Daugiakalbiai peizazai –, 4th Exhibition of the Soros Center for Contemporary Arts - Lithuania, The Contemporary Art Centre of Vilnius, 22 November 1996 – 5.01.1997

The Soros Center for Contemporary Arts organized the exhibition in Wilno

inviting representatives from the countries of the former USSR and former Yugoslavia. The last few years following the fall of the Soviet Union have changed every part of this region to a greater or smaller extent. *Grass just grass* was discerned in more political and symbolic context as the brutalization an idea of oblivion, transformation of loss and a sign of memory, as the conflict and drama condensed through a somewhat both suggestive and commonplace iconography in an ironic level.

The main problem for Bednarski was connected with the given place that was open, big, with the aggressive (in color and structure) floor. The only possible place for his work was situated at the entrance with the impression of the draught that made contemplation of the work impossible. He arranged the work in the classic scheme (2 x 6). There was no sound although the artist testified it's existence, he decided to resign of using it. The scent of the watering peat still existed.

- the scheme of boxes: two rows of six boxes;
- no sound of whispering *missenti*;
- the peat regularly watering to obtain the scent and dampness



Krzysztof M. Bednarski, *Trawa tylko trawa (Grass just grass)*, A.R. Gallery, Warsaw, 31.01.1997 - 26.02.1997

The place was defined by a glass wall and a black wall opposite, that created long, narrow corridor. A new element was hung on the black wall – it was a small picture with a red word *GREEN* painted on a red surface. Bednarski

revealed his work to the public at a happening form. He mentioned the vernissage as a crowd of people observing a gardener who had taken care of his grass by watering it with a watering can (actually bottle of water). The space forced people to come into close, sensual contact with the work. To provoke them to rub against the object the artist set it up not parallel to the walls situating

all twelve boxes in one row. The light bulbs were hung height because of the character of the place so there was no greenhouse only esthetic effect.

- the scheme of boxes: one rows of twelve boxes;
- no sound of whispering *missenti*;
- the peat regularly watering to obtain the scent and dampness;

There was a small picture with the word GREEN painted red on red in a close distance of the work (hanging on the wall)



Permanent exhibition in The Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Al. Ujazdowskie 6, 00-461 Warsaw, Poland (as a deposit), 2002-2006

The work was a part of permanent exhibition in Ujazdowski Castle. At the very beginning of 2002, in the newly renovated Gallery 2 of Ujazdowski Castle, the Centre for Contemporary Art opened a permanent exhibition of its International Collection of Contemporary Art. It was a review of the trends, attitudes and practices in the modern art of recent years. The exhibition acquainted visitors with the work of 76 artists, representing the various media.



In Ujazdowski Castle the work was displayed with no scent of peat that existed as an integral element in previous exhibitions. There was no permission to watering the peat in the museum

because of the considerable risk of microbiological infection. There was no possibility to use the sound – there was no additional room for it. Because of curator's concept and technical/local circumstances *Grass just grass* was installed in the middle of the big hall, with the impression of

the draught, surrounded by other artist's works - strong and aggressive in their colour and meaning. The space of contemplation was ruined by the context connected with that surroundings, disturbing the "aura" of the work. The viewer seemed to feel lost and confused what was not the intention of Bednarski.

- the scheme of boxes: two rows of six boxes;
- no sound of whispering *missenti*;
- no watering the peat to obtain the scent and dampness

In 1997 it was the deposit of The Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle.

The date of purchase: 23.06.2004.

Erba, solo erba; Istituto Polacco de Roma, March - April 2004, In collaboration with The Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle



Segheria Carlo Telara di Massa Carrara, June - August 2004

The work was exhibited in two places in Rome. In the Istituto Polacco de Roma it was displayed on the occasion of the *honoris causa* award given to a Polish filmmaker Roman Polanski. Bednarski dedicated the work to his friend, a poet Elio Fiore, an orphan whose nanny was a person of Polish descent from Red Cross

Society. He spent his life in ghetto in Rome. When Bednarski showed him Warsaw Ghetto, Fiore dedicated him his poem connected with the subject. It meant a lot for Bednarski as the history of an child, orphan involved in the wheel of cruel history.

- the scheme of boxes: two rows of six boxes;
- there was the sound of whispering *missenti*;
- the peat was regularly watering to obtain the scent and dampness

**Permanent exhibition in The Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle,
Al. Ujazdowskie 6, 00-461 Warsaw, Poland, 2002-2006**

(See above)

Creator: Monika Jadzinska & Iwona Szmelter

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