

Marlena Kudlicka

the weight of 8, 2013, installation view at ŽAK | BRANICKA, Berlin, detail (front cover and next page)

one more than 10, 2010, installation view at Invisible Dog, New York, detail (page 10 and back cover)

An Encounter with Marlena Kudlicka

Marlena Kudlicka seduces the viewer of her works in two different ways. First, by means of the titles of her works, that is, the linguistic metaphors, she seeks to explain the space-consuming works. At the same time, the installations naturally materialize a physical presence that pulls the viewer into the spell of the viewed.

The exhibition at gallery ŽAK | BRANICKA is titled *the weight of 8*. If the number 'eight' were also spelled out, the rhyme would immediately be visually enlightening. Yet, as a particularity of this spelling, one must actually say both 'weight' and 'eight' out loud in order to grasp the connection that doesn't persist in the rhyme scheme. [...] The layout of the invitation card even appears to be like the floor plan of a spatial disposition; letters of the alphabet are composed of lines, while black and different shades of gray give variety to the graphic appearance. These seek to visualize the still unknown installation as guidance for a testing ground of plastic events. The code to penetrate this order remains undeciphered, but it is possible to feel the interrelation between conceptualization and the physis of forms.

In any case, this concentration on the title reveals a crucial core in Marlena Kudlicka's work. She refers to concrete poetry, a generic term, which can be ascribed to both literature and the fine arts and which, in turn, transforms the flowing transitions between the medium of language, its visualization using letters as a pictorial form, and sounds as concepts of rhythm into a complex system. The stiff guidelines of grammar turn into a new order through a playful disregard of grammatical regularity. The technique of collage used for concrete poetry is the combinatorics of opposites and elements that would not initially be thought of as going together. The vocabulary of constructions create the surprise.

At the time that this text was written, the exhibition did not yet exist. There was a sketch of the project from which it was to be deduced that Marlena Kudlicka will arrange the gallery space by installing metal rods and plastic forms that appear like a drawing in space. The architecture of the space is simultaneously shell and point of reference.

Marlena Kudlicka proceeded in a similar fashion with her 2012 installation entitled *numbers minus letters* at the CGAC in Santiago de Compostela, or with the work *I lost a minute But gained a day*. Both titles are similar in that they present an absurd calculation. Letters cannot be subtracted from numbers and a lost minute is not equal to the entirety of one day. Nevertheless, these thought games stipulate various types of dimensions that suggest conceptual spaces; numbers allow for everything to be measured and letters allow for everything to be depicted. But algorithms minus grammar send the viewer back to what he sees before him. In the case of Santiago de Compostela this was the forms and lines in the space, which were taken from the scale of the given architecture. Algorithms are a basic part of mathematics, which is itself, in the form of measurements and divisional proportions, an important aspect of architecture and its felt sense of space. The architect of the exhibition center in Spain is Álvaro Siza, who works in the tradition of the international Modern, in which abstraction is the inherent guideline. Marlena Kudlicka has implemented this into her three-part staging. An elongated rectangle that she placed in the center of the room by means of metal rods corresponds to a multi-piece wall installation whose parts look like typographic signs. The work on the floor depicts a measurement, while the work on the wall tells of signs. Common for both of them is a harmony in space that ascribes to each part its own existence. If there is a category of the Modern that distinguishes the perception of art in the 20th century from earlier

centuries, then it is the participation of the viewer, his taking part in the work, which is conceived as an opposite. This opposite, due to its all-over structure, unleashes our motivity so that we move in the space, allowing us to deduce its meaning, and thus to conceive it. In this tradition the works by Marlena Kudlicka function in a specific manner because her installations avoid a middle or center. From every position emerges a different line of sight, which, being of equal value with all of the other standpoints, allows for a composition of all parts with each other.

Not dissimilar to this is the installation composed of three chapters: *I lost a minute*, then *But* and lastly, *I gained a day*. The proportional discrepancy between the period of time of a minute (as sacrifice) and that of a day (as gain) is expressed in the interplay between fragile, often linear signs and the capacity of the space in which the viewer moves. What sounds like a kind of linguistic distortion appears as a space-consuming formation in an exactly different way since the proportions are balanced and seek harmony and comparability of forms among themselves. The plastic intervention in the space remains stronger than the linguistic intonation of its description.

Marlena Kudlicka's work, with its non-objective abstraction, is situated in a long tradition of constructivism that experienced a particular manifestation in Poland. Here, one should mention the work of the sculptor Katarzyna Kobro (1898-1951), who was the first to make the limits between sculpture and architecture fluid. Her constructions could be understood as both potential architecture and open spatial structures. Other works involve an instability that is also distinctive in Marlena Kudlicka's work. The tectonic aspect is questioned when it is understood as an expression of power. It is deployed as a balance between various forms that stop each other; the weight of one element affects the stability of the whole.

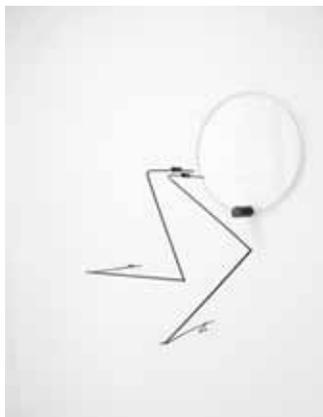
Herein lies a direct connection between the idea of a constructivism today, like Marlena Kudlicka develops it, and the predecessors of this idea in Polish art history. Concrete poetry, collage, sculpture as interaction between lines, surfaces and volumes are basic concepts of an abstraction that is still able to prompt fascination today because the promise of the avant-gardists of old have not been completely fulfilled. There still exists an open remainder of that abstraction that wants to be seen differently today and that must be seen in connection with the present. The fascination for measurements, proportions, surface and line forms in interplay with one another proves, through the transformation of these concepts, that Marlena Kudlicka owns the artistic power to exploit the potential of constructivism in a new way in order to enrich us with her abstraction.

Friedrich Meschede





numbers minus letters, 2012, enameled steel plaster structure (left page)
I lost a minute But gained a day, 2012, spatial composition, photo: Mark Ritchie, courtesy CGAC (right page)
Installation views at CGAC Santiago de Compostela, Spain



From the series *made of iron and celluloid*, 2012 (this page from left to right):
wide angle, installation, 222 × 180 × 140 cm; *focus*, object, 155 × 88 × 50 cm; *close up*, object assemblage, 26 × 24 × 17 cm; *film roll*, object, 103 × 93 × 6 cm
From the series *wool from the palm and inverted commas*, 2012 (right page): *palm*, spatial composition (5 separated elements) lack steel, glass, 210 × 200 cm



Marlena Kudlicka Born in Tomaszów Lubelski, Poland, in 1973. Lives and works in Berlin.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PROJECTS (SELECTION)

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|------|--|------|--|
| 2013 | <i>the weight of 8</i> , ŻAK BRANICKA, Berlin, DE | 2009 | <i>Difference Beyond Differency</i> , Stodownia Poznań, PL |
| 2012 | <i>wool from the palm and inverted commas</i> , Bancelos Gallery, Madrid, ES | | Void + Yamanshi, Tokyo, JP |
| | <i>made of iron and celluloid</i> , Stedefreund, Berlin, DE | | <i>18 m Swing Space</i> , LMCC, NY, US |
| 2011 | <i>Archeology of Hole. Creating an Archive</i> , Stedefreund, Berlin, DE | | <i>Mystery of L</i> , Cento de las Artes Salamanca, MX |
| 2008 | <i>O Zone</i> , Kunsthaus Raskolnikow, Dresden, DE | 2008 | 98 weeks, Beirut, LB |
| 2007 | NN Institut Glaspavilion, Berlin, DE | | Retrospective at Institute Glasspavilion, Berlin, DE |
| | <i>Bon Voyage</i> , Open Day ISCP, NY, US | | <i>Six CASYC</i> , Santander, ES |
| 2005 | <i>The Image That Emits No Shadow/Sunset</i> , Location One, NY, US | 2006 | White Box, NY, US |
| 2004 | <i>Point Of View</i> , Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, DE | 2005 | Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, DE |
| 2002 | <i>Oxygenation</i> , City Gallery Poznań, PL | 2004 | <i>Run up</i> , R Gallery, Poznań, PL |
| 2000 | <i>Condition</i> , ON Gallery, Poznań, PL | 2003 | <i>E. Geppert's Painting Competition</i> , Municipal Gallery Wrocław, PL |
| 1998 | <i>About transparency and density</i> , Municipal Gallery, Poznań, PL | 2002 | Novart Festival of Young Art, Novart, Kraków, PL |

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

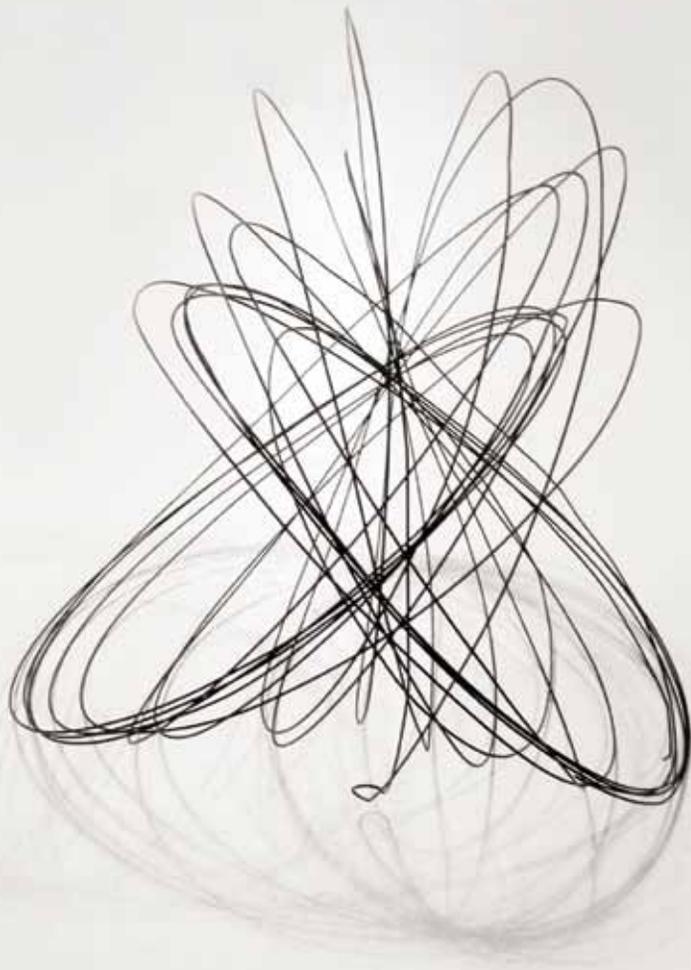
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| 2012 | <i>Gravity & Disgrace</i> , CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, ES |
| | <i>Space Release#3 what I predict to remember what I predict to forget</i> , Stedefreund, Berlin, DE |
| 2011 | <i>Navigating Darkness</i> , Tape Modern, Berlin, DE |
| | Parkhaus Projects, Berlin, DE |
| | Project 8, Berlin, DE |
| 2010 | the fourth floor on the fourth floors, Berlin, DE |
| | <i>Pseudonym Project</i> , Invisible Dog, NY, US |
| | <i>Invitation</i> , Kunsthaus Erfurt, Erfurt, DE |

RESIDENCIES & AWARDS (SELECTION)

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|---------|--|
| 2010/11 | A. Mickiewicz Institute Culture Travel Grant, PL |
| 2008/09 | Swing Space LMCC, NY, US |
| 2007/08 | International Studio & Curatorial Program, NY, US |
| | NCK Grant Polish Ministry of Culture, PL |
| 2004/05 | Trust for Mutual Understanding Foundation NY, US |
| | International Residency Program Location One, NY, US |
| | Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, DE |
| 2003 | Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation, NY, US |
| | Art Omi International Arts Center, NY, US |

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