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Nature as Trickster. A Model of Creative Work

ABSTRACT

The starting point for production of the doctoral work is my previous artistic practice, for purposes of which I often antagonise concepts of nature and culture. As much as, contemporarily, a dualist approach to the two concepts and construction of vision in the scope of which the individual can be seen as autonomous – not influenced by one or the other – is a slightly dusted construct, a common perception of nature as ontologically distinct opposition to culture/society leads to an interesting question, from the perspective of my art practice, to which I answer in this work. Is separating the concepts of culture and nature (concepts emphasizing anthropocentric power structures) and employing them as working instruments, a creative method, making use of analogous formal language and conceptual network, produce a model that is critical of anthropocentrism?

The so-called exit strategies from the anthropocentric model are quite exhaustively worked through within the theoretical field; however, the context offers a fruitful field for my surveying the phenomenon in the domain of art.

The priority content of the dissertation is also dedicated to an attempt at a theoretical contextualization of my chosen artistic practice. Methodology of written part of my doctoral work is mainly based on interpretation or reinterpretation of visual artefacts as well as on critical analysis and examination of the phenomenon. A significant element of the thesis is an analysis of ways and forms of imaging of phenomena related to the concept of nature as trickster here proposed in contemporary art; particularly, in juxtaposition with a range of post-humanist theories. A practical part of my doctoral work involve working with a narrative of nature transformed into an ambivalent figure – a villain subverting the status quo – nature as trickster. Using kind of method that is apparently characteristic of anthropocentrism - anthropomorphisation or personification of nature, and using an apparently identical language, I attempt to construct an alternative method of critique of the anthropocentric model „from within”.

The cycle of art pieces that it includes my doctoral dissertation will stem from my previous artistic activities and is an exploration of new solutions in my work in the medium sculpture, object, and film. The artwork is based on a dystopian narrative filled with visual and theoretical references; a tale of a world that is not controlled by the human, a world where people live plunged in shadow and subjects of all conversations revolve around nature.