



# Anna Konik

Fine Arts

## Warszawa & Dobrodzien

Geboren 1974 in Lubliniec, Polen

Studium der Bildhauerei an der Akademie der Schönen Künste, Warschau

FELLOWSHIP

Andrew W. Mellon-Fellow

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### PROJECT

## "One Day - A Whole Life. Irene's Story", working title for a video installation

Das Projekt, auf das ich mich während meines Forschungsaufenthaltes am Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin vor allem konzentrieren möchte, ist eine direkte Fortsetzung meiner früheren Videoinstallationen: Toys, Przewrocystosc /Transparency, In the Middle of the Way (work in progress) oder Our Lady's Forever, die das Problem der Entfremdung, differenter Sensibilitäten und der Einsamkeit berühren. Das Leitmotiv meiner jüngsten Videoarbeit wird der Begriff/die Erfahrung des Todes sein. Die Projektgrundlage bildet die Geschichte von Irene, einer Alpinistin, die einen Absturz in den Hochalpen überlebte. Sie berichtet von ihren "letzten" Gedanken, den gesehenen Bildern und über die zurücklaufende Zeit ... Eine detaillierte Beschreibung der Situation und der Bericht ihres Sohnes werden die Projektachse bestimmen.

Die reflexive Poetik der Projekte offenbart nicht nur intime Episoden individueller und gesellschaftlicher Geheimnisse, sondern rückt das Vorhandensein von Bereichen ins Bewusstsein, die einem oberflächlichen Blick unzugänglich sind. Die erzählte Geschichte verfügt über keinen festgelegten Anfangs- und Endpunkt, jedes folgende Projekt ist eine Fortsetzung und eine Weiterentwicklung des vorangegangenen. Zwei unterschiedliche Blickperspektiven kreieren einen emotionalen und einen architektonischen Raum. Dieser erzählende Teil wird mit weiteren beobachteten/ergänzenden Bildern verbunden. Die Filmstruktur wird den Charakter einer Retrospektive, einer Handlung mit wechselnden abstrakten Assoziationen haben und wird in schwarz/weiß gehalten sein. Die Assoziationen begleiten kreierte Klänge und Räume, das Bild an sich hingegen kann simultan auf mehrere Leinwände projiziert werden. Diese Konstruktion verleiht dem Projekt Eigenschaften einer Vision in Verbindung mit quasi dokumentarischen Elementen.

### Lektüreempfehlung

Our Lady's Forever. Ausstellungskatalog herausgegeben von Ewa Witkowska. Warschau: Zacheta National Gallery of Art, 2007.

Przewrocystosc/Transparency. Ausstellungskatalog herausgegeben von Ewa Gorzadek. Warschau: Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, 2004.

New Phenomena in Polish Art After 2000, herausgegeben von Grzegorz Borkowski, Adam Mazur und Monika Branicka. Warschau: Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, 2007.

Approaching the Other - Observation and Intervention, Xth Biennial Exhibition of Art. In View of Values, herausgegeben von Stanislaw Ruksza. Kattowitz: Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej BWA, 2006.

Weitere Informationen unter: [www.annakonik.art.pl](http://www.annakonik.art.pl)

## More or Less from the Outside: Video Work 2000-2007

In the Middle of the Way, work in progress 2001-2008, video stills  
Project with Thaddeus: Warsaw 2001 (9' 57")  
Project with Hermann: Berlin 2002 (9' 27")  
Project with Svetlana: Moscow 2005 (14' 42")  
Project with Cleveland 2005 (13' 21")  
Project with Gerald: Youghal 2006 (10' 28")  
Project with Hans-Dieter and Augustin Story: Vienna 2006 (13' 11")  
Project with Jenny and Pelle: Zurich 2007 (10' 41")  
Postscript-project with Anna: Dobrodzien, Warsaw, Berlin 2005 (6' 51")

Text by Sabina Sokolowska

Anna Konik creates video installations, and her technique combines video semi-documentary, installation, performance, and sculpture. What matters for the artist are people with whom she can engage emotionally and who she makes the protagonists of her works.

Her experience of alternative theatre played an important role in shaping Konik's artistic sensibility. But theatre-acting is no longer the natural element of her art-what is important lies outside acting, it is the search for genuine interpersonal connections. Konik collaborated, for instance, with Opera Buffa, where the actors are schizophrenia patients. There she dealt with people who were undergoing great mental suffering but who, at the same time, were unusually sensitive.

The realm in which Konik operates is very hard to verbalize. The material of her work is that which is invisible yet still perceptible-desires, emotions, indefinable intuitions; an inner world accessible through dreams, the poetic imagination and mental introspection; inner pain and one's silent grappling with it. Tragedy is often unseen by others, frequently unfolding backstage, behind the curtain, in a person's hidden thoughts, dreams, and desires.

Konik directs viewers' attention to those aspects and spheres of existence that they are unwilling to acknowledge: loneliness, confusion, disease, over-sensitivity. Her protagonists are people existing on the fringes of reality, inconspicuous and sometimes wholly transparent. These are the people that matter to her.

In terms of form, space plays an important role in Konik's works. "Space additionally defines and complements my works with its 'body,'" the artist says. "It also has metaphysical significance. In "Transparency", every narrative, whether it be in word, image or space, is completely isolated. In my project "In the Middle of the Way", the narratives are shown simultaneously, so that the physical and mental journey virtually never ends."

Stories told by the excluded often take the form of confessions - "In the Middle of the Way" (a work in progress begun in 2001) has the artist talking to homeless people; in "Transparency" (2004) she listens to the life stories of lonely, elderly people; in "Toys" (2001) she does her video documentation of the work in and outside a therapy centre. The dialogues, the interviews, lend her works a quasi-documentary character-with the narrative often breaking off sharply and the dialogue giving way to an individual's empathic presence.

The artist becomes invisible so that others may talk. That is the case, for instance, with "Transparency", a video installation presented at Warsaw's Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) in Ujazdowski Castle in 2004. The protagonists are elderly people, nearing the end of their days, who agreed to tell their life stories before the camera. Their names are Doris Wichmann, Mia, Tadeusz, and Mr. Brozy. The video image of each of the interviewees has been doubled, each being given a mirror image, as it were, and monologue turns into a bizarre dialogue with one's double. The whole is tantamount to an improvisation on painful loneliness. But the mirror image and the varied pace of the projection cannot overcome the paralyzing monotony of the discourse, which is filled with constant repetitions. "Only one surprise is possible," says Konik, quoting from critic Jan Blonski's essay on Beckett, "that one of the repetitions will be the last one." (1)

Konik's protagonists are eternal wanderers-homeless tramps whom the artist meets on the streets of Warsaw, Berlin, Moscow, Cleveland, and forced by life to be always on the move. Others travel in the realm of imagination, living amid memories and enclosed within the four walls of their home, outside of time. Besides the motif of loneliness, the second of Konik's main themes is that of traveling, of being constantly on the road. This is not only about traveling through the spatial dimension but also about inner time, about the spiritual journey...

Konik's most recent work, "Our Lady's Forever" (2007), is her most poetic one to date. It was inspired by a play written by a schizophrenia patient, a story of unhappy love and endless longing and . . . endless waiting. The video based on the drama was made by Konik in Cork, Ireland, in Our Lady's, a former mental hospital, whose architecture visually complements the story. The video is a seven-channel projection, without beginning or end. The protagonists are a man and a woman who never appear together but criss-cross through different scenes. Suspended in time, they are like characters from Beckett's play, moving like ghosts through the empty rooms and corridors, searching for one another. Even though they are in the same place they constitute two separate universes and they move through the empty spaces alone. The wandering shadows intensify the somnambular atmosphere, the narrative breaks off, the scenes arrange themselves into sequences of poetic images: the woman facing a white wall, light entering a room, the man sitting on a chair, smiling and hand-holding children. The changing images form a bizarre puzzle, as if intended to reflect the protagonists' emotional states, their repeated passages through the hell of the soul. The scenes from the deserted hospital are accompanied by images of a ship on a churned-up sea stretching to the horizon. Watching these sequences, we hear the roar of the sea and can almost feel gusts of wind buffeting our face.

In her dual artistic and existential journeys, most important to Konik is her interaction with a fellow human being. In her works we find neither a celebration of suffering nor the voyeurism typical of such documentaries. Konik neither humiliates nor manipulates people; indeed, it is often the case that through her work she helps them to regain their sense of dignity. Provocation is replaced by empathy and conversation eliminates distance, removing the invisible wall separating the protagonists from the world and thus reintroducing them to it.

<sup>1</sup> As cited in Jean-Baptiste Joly, "Transparency" (Warsaw: Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, 2004) p. 28.

Text by Sabina Sokolowska, published in "New Phenomena in Polish Art after 2000", eds. Grzegorz Borkowski, Adam Mazur and Monika Branicka (Warsaw: Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, 2007)

More info at [www.annakonik.art.pl](http://www.annakonik.art.pl)

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PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOWS' LIBRARY

Konik, Anna (Warszawa,2016)

A grain of sand in the pupil of the eye

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=856656313>

Konik, Anna (Warsaw,2016)

W tym samym mieście, pod tym samym niebem ...

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=856642088>

Konik, Anna (Warsaw,2015)

In the same city, under the same sky ...

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=85664059X>

Konik, Anna (Köln,2011)

Tür an Tür : Polen - Deutschland ; 1000 Jahre Kunst und Geschichte ; [Ausstellung im Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin vom 23. September 2011 bis zum 9. Januar 2012]

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=658834053>

Konik, Anna (Berlin,2010)

Projektraum DOR 28 - Video als Raum

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=640084303>

Konik, Anna (Warszawa,2007)

Anna Konik : our lady's forever ; [16.06 - 05.08.2007, Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, Warszawa]

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Katalog wystawy

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Konik, Anna (S.l.,2004)

Transparency

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Konik, Anna (Warszawa,2004)

transparency

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Przezroczystość

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Konik, Anna (s.n.,)

Portfolio 2007 - 2000 : video works

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