

## *The Invisible Exhibitions*, writing project

The writing project *The Invisible Exhibitions* is based on initiating, locating, inserting, (mis-)placing language based exhibitions into the text based environment while using text as both – the exhibition space and its material. Thus the exhibitions may crystallize while having a conversation, discussion, interview, while reciting, post-producing, reviewing artworks, artefacts, exhibitions, etc.

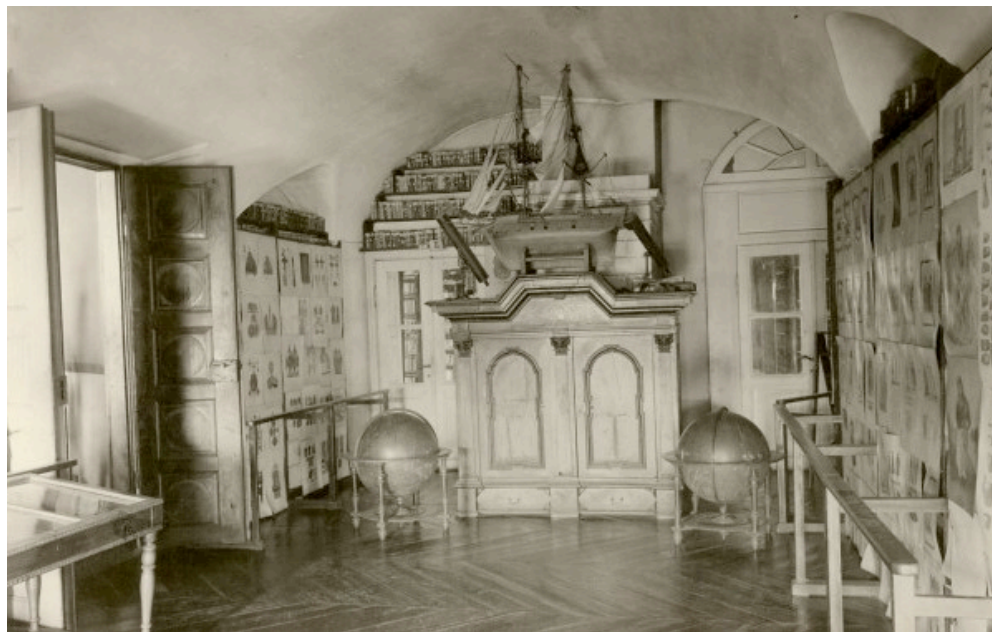
Starting with the ancestor of the linguistic turn, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and his idea that philosophical problems arise from a misunderstanding of the logic of language and moving on to Christian Marazzi's latest book "Capital and Language", we are constantly reminded that "the environment of the human language is language itself, the human animal is adapted to language, is made for and by language". Language has been a primary element in visual art since the 1960s – whether in the printed texts, painted signs, words on the wall, or recorded speech. In many of these works by the artists like Joseph Kosuth, Laurence Weiner, Robert Barry, the language has been reduced to an object nearly emptied of meaning. While removing the hierarchy of production between sketch, thought and material product, the language-based practices enable to create exhibitions by just spelling or uttering them. As the immateriality and language are tied to the practice of making art today, in the 60s the language itself became the sufficient reason, context and material to produce the artwork and the sustainable medium to disseminate and broadcast language-based exhibitions and artworks.

Since late 1950's the blurring of the separation between life and art, artist and audience was declared by many artists including Allan Kaprow, *Fluxus*, performance artists and many other art movements and individuals. This kind of art was meant to be participatory and interactive, with the goal of tearing down "the fourth wall" between artist and observers, so observers were not just "reading" the piece, but also interacting with it, becoming part of it. As the result the so called real life, the whole globe potentially may be interpreted as the art, i.e. the fiction, thus the art and exhibitions become incorporated acts of art. Argentinean Alberto Greco signed people (Ben Vautier), street walls and bathrooms in Paris as his artworks as early as 1954. When he committed suicide he wrote on his palms "Fin" thus conceptualizing his death as his final work of art. Federico Peralta Ramos (1939-92) declared that all his life was an artwork: 'My life is my best work of art'. When you see a discussion in the street it may be the piece by Ian Wilson; when you see someone meeting, it may be the work by Jonathan Monk from his "Meetings" series; if someone's phone is ringing it may be a call from Douglas Gordon; passersby may be the actors hired by Paweł Althamer; the queue may be organized by Roman Ondak—the banal and trivial acts of everyday appears to be fictionalized, part of an exhibition.

*The Invisible Exhibitions-writing project* is the series of written exhibitions or stories on real and imaginary exhibitions that were part of the process to blur the line between the life and art, incorporated into reality, did not take place, were (semi)fictitious but nonetheless possible and therefore - real.

Let's go back to the exhibition's proper space – the viewer's memory and time. The major part of the works displayed already existed (functioned) before, thus it is possible to imagine a viewer who already saw the show, since its exhibits already entered his or her memory. Therefore, it is plausible that this exhibition is a re-enactment of an exhibition that already took place in one's memory at some point. The probability that an exhibition already existed in the past, and maybe

continues to do so up to this moment, contradicts the customary mechanism of an exhibition opening (vernissage) – for one cannot announce the beginning of something that has already had a beginning. When an exhibition that is open only in one's memory gets transferred to the physical outside and assumes a tangible form, it essentially starts to act as a realisation of memory and, at the same time, exhibition closure (finissage). Thus the opening of the exhibition is rather a rehearsal of recollections, during which the accuracy of memory is tested and memory itself is activated by new connections and contexts. During and after the time of its activity, the exhibition will again relocate to the audience's memory, and will thus become a heterotopia – a memory of an exhibition, situated in a timeless time and a placeless place.



Vestibule of the Museum of Antiquities at the Vilnius Public Library with a ship on the cupboard, early 20th century, by Stanisław Filibert Fleury

The exhibitions function as a network of heterotopias (from Greek hetero, “different”, and “topos”, place) and heteroorgans (a special unit of an organism's framework, an agency or an instrument via which the heterotopia operates). Michel Foucault talks about the museum as a heterotopia of time (or heterochronia), a place that contains works belonging to different styles and epochs. The concept of heterotopia can be employed for describing not only spaces and their constitutive parts (larger heterotopias may enclose smaller ones), but also movement through time and space or relocation from one point to another in physical or immaterial form. Heterotopia is a state of flotation, which creates a possibility of being in at least two places at the same time. Foucault points out the ship to be an example of ideal heterotopia:

*“(…) if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.”*

In the 20th century, the heterotopia of the ship had been replaced by that of the airplane (this had

been marked, in particular, by the Titanic catastrophe), while the latter was, in its turn, replaced by the heterotopia of the automobile. In the present age of network culture, however, the dominant heterotopia is the delocalising network(s). Attempting to define the era we live in, Kazys Varnelis Jr. states that “our age – although other ages had their own networks – is the first modern age, in which the network, not the centralised hierarchy, is the principal paradigm of organisation.” Similarly, the viewer of the present exhibition becomes one only as soon as the exhibition emerges in his memory as a network of heterotopias and heteroorgans, rather than a binomial “work of art – viewer” loop. If the ship is an ideal case of heterotopia, then one example of a heteroorgan is the eye. When you look into an eye, you see more than just an anatomical eye – an organ of vision (defined by colour, size, iris and crystalline lens) – looking back at you. The eye functions as an organ that sends information both ways at the same time – the features of an eye looking at you can indicate its owner’s state of mind (“the eyes are the mirror of the soul”), thoughts, intentions, and so on. The works included in this exhibition resemble heteroorgans – first, they function by themselves; second, they are characters of a narrative constructed in the extended field of culture; third, they perform certain specific functions in the context of this exhibition, meeting its viewers face-to-face.”



A model of a ship in the shop window, Visby

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