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In Memoriam Ilya Kabakov, Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven, 16 March 2024

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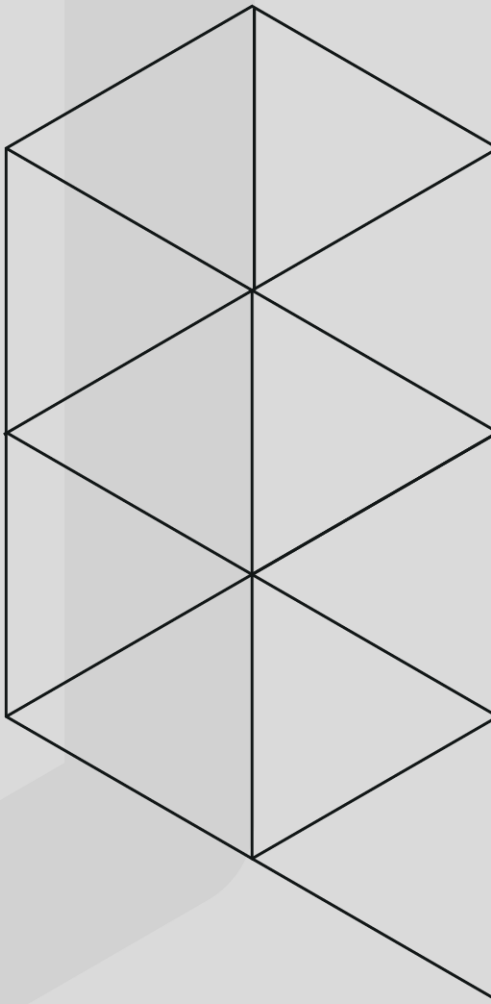

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SPACEX Work Package 4: Archives
Secondments: Sirius, Mayday Rooms, Project Art Centre, Prague City Gallery

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I'm grateful to the Van Abbemuseum, the organizers (my student Marjolein Ossewaarde) and particularly Emilia Kabakov, for allowing me to be part of today's event to honour the memory of Ilya Kabakov. Charles Esche wrote to ask me to reflect on Ilya and Emilia Kabakov's works, suggesting particularly the installations, from a vantage point of someone who spent formative years in the Soviet sphere of influence, East Germany in my case. I was asked to speak from this experience about Kabakov's relevance today in the West. I am glad do this, but would also like to suggest two things: the Kabakovs have done this mediating of the East in the West for quite some time themselves, not just addressing the East.[1] As an art historian, I may have to name things that, as their work shows, maybe shouldn't be named, in order to be effective. And, secondly, I also think that there is greater awareness of comparable experiences in the West now than many of us might have thought years (or months) ago, certainly since the recent elections in the Netherlands and the restrictions on what can and cannot be said, in Western cultural, even academic, institutions, since October 2023. An increased affective understanding of the Kabakovs' work and the strategies employed is *not* something to cheer about.

It is thus right that the Van Abbemuseum is contextualizing the present exhibition of work by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov through reference to decolonisation and demodernisation, naming the "Russian imperialist urge", manifest in the war on the Ukraine, directly.[2] There is a comparative anti-authoritarian perspective here. It coincides with Piotr Piotrowski's call for a horizontal art history. I subscribe to it broadly and would like to illustrate it with Piotrowski, who relates a parable that Ilya Kabakov told to Igor Zabel: Kabakov noted an [I quote]

> permanent tendency to criticize, provoke and even destroy within [Western] culture. He compared his experience of this tendency to the experience of an orphan living in a children's home who is visiting the family of his friend. This friend is sick of his home and his behaviour is aggressive and insulting, while the visitor himself sees a totally different picture: a nice

> home, kind and intelligent parents. But […] the friend's family is strong enough that it is not in danger because of the boy's outburst. The same is true of Western culture, says Kabakov, and continues: Western culture is so vital, its roots are so deep and so alive, it is so productive that it, speaking in the language of the parable, absorbs, recasts and dissolves in itself all destructive actions by its own 'children', and as many believe, it sees in these actions its very own development – what is elegantly referred to here as 'permanent criticism'. But I would like to add a footnote [Kabakov continues]: this criticism, like the destruction itself, is permitted … only from its own children. That same mom described above would have behaved quite differently if I had started to act up at the table the same way as her son. Most likely she would have called the police.[3]

Piotrowski interprets: "the West continues to play the role of a master, and any dialogue with [a] master cannot be a dialogue of equals."[4]

I have strangely not so far directly written about Kabakov's art, but it and its concerns have been present in ways that make me take on the challenge of contributing today eagerly, but also with considerable trepidation: it's not a given that two orphaned children will feel and think the same. It's a personal matter that operates via associations and the serendipities of experiences. I also notice that the themes of an analytical (researching) art practice (not to say art(istic) research), installation (most often in public or semi-public space) and uses of the archive map rather well (too well?) onto the research themes for the EU-funded project in which I, together with the Van Abbe am a partner, and which has let me spend time in Dublin, London and Prague recently. That project is called SpaceX: Spatial Practices in Art and Architecture for Empathetic Exchange.[5] I'm, therefore, flagging my Western institutional identity cheerfully – before delving into some of the more personal associations and experiences made in these cities recently, which, hopefully, will return us to the question Charles Esche was asking of me.

To begin close to home: while in Prague in the last weeks, I found out that the University of Amsterdam, where I work, has apparently hosted in 1999 an installation by Ilya Kabakov, entitled *The Old Reading Room* in the Doelenzaal of the University Library. For nearly

ten years, I've been trying to attend to how my own university appears visually and in terms of how it shows the art that it owns and commissions new works. Some colleagues and I have become somewhat frustrated e.g. with the Doelenzaal's current appearance referencing "het Oosten". The Kabakovs' work tells me that I've done many things wrong, i.e. too directly. But the initial atmosphere was so positive, nearly 1968-like or Prague Spring-like. Within a few weeks of arriving, demonstrations took place, the Senate House (Maagdenhuis) was occupied and exciting things happened, such as Charles Esche speaking to the students in the occupied building. My students and I added an exhibition to the visual culture of the occupation, showing university history, namely images from the dozen previous occupations, which were often rather successful.6 Museums and partner universities we admire showed this self-perpetuating *Strijd* ∞ (transl: struggle infinity) exhibition. And then came the reaction: not Eastern European style: the Humanities Faculty itself wanted to be diverse – and commissioned a portrait to add excellent female scholars to the many male professors' portraits it has in important rooms – but it showed it alone, one frame for five women, painted by a man etc etc. In the essay I felt compelled to write to counter any public impression that the professor of modern and contemporary art history does not exist, I likened the painting's colour scheme to works by Kabakov.[7]

The institution's intention was all too clearly (in my view) to draw attention to itself, its power and rituals (the mirror á la Velazquez, the composition á la Rembrandt), rather than the work of the women, or real inclusivity (of e.g. at least including, or appointing one female Professor of colour), despite the frame hanging just outside the still-so-called "VOC zaal": one image to counter all past and present exclusion. For me the women were in their eternally smiling demeanour trapped in a Kabakov-coloured corridor, where West meets East all too overtly. Re-engaging with university history again now, but differently, possibly honouring the 1999 installation in some form now sounds like an inspiration. Yesterday, I proposed this to Els van der Plas, director of the Allard Pierson at the UvA and the chances are good. The Kabakovs have mirrored the university with its old (and colonially implicated) rooms to itself with *The Old Reading Room*, "re-installed" the institution in itself – and added their magic. This is rightly referred to (e.g. by Jackson) as a Borgesian map.[8]

Re-reading and overlaying an ossified reality with a different one that works in the interstices and through the dis-junctures between word and image: that makes viewers and readers think. And what better thing to do in a university located in the centre of a city, where over half of its inhabitants have not been born in the Netherlands? We, the majority of orphaned children, need the Kabakovs' gentle institutional intervention. I'm glad that they were there before me.

Another scene or vignette takes me to London's South Bank, where Mike Nelson's *Extinction Beckons* retrospective took place at the Hayward Gallery a year ago.[9] He is a British artist in his late 50s and Turner Prize nominee, so he occupies a central position in that Western country (also with a colonial history). The show featured *Coral Reef*, a decade-old work consisting of a succession of rooms that he explains as standing in for different ideologies. One could perform an iconographic analysis and call some of the work indebted to Kabakov to a rather large degree. This is not my intention here and Nelson acknowledges his debt to Kabakov, but the question arises why a practice that is so much "of the West" as Nelson's would analyse society in a way that operates via absences, debris, and ostensibly "normal" items, such as machines taken from defunct UK industry. To return to and adapt the wording of the parable from above, "Western culture is apparently [not] so vital, its roots are [not] so deep and so alive, [Brexit land is not] so productive that it absorbs, recasts and dissolves in itself all destructive actions by [even] its own 'children'.

And more: I was working at the time of my visit to the Nelson show with both the SpaceX partner MayDay Rooms, an activist art archive, and The Warburg Institute, founded in the early years of the 20th century by Jewish scholars in Germany who wanted to analyse through images the safety or otherwise of potential scapegoats in different societies and different places. The library and research centre managed to flee to London in 1933. With a gaze sharpened by these institutions, I came across what appeared to me as Kabakovian notice boards in the Nelson exhibition. There were not just institutional accoutrements like pigeon holes, but institutional notice boards with glass in front and without. They were part of the works, sometimes incomplete (cut off), but they also sometimes carried the labels for the artworks, i.e. they were used by the curators and Hayward staff to display information on the exhibition. Maybe the artist played with this uncertainty about who is speaking as an

institutionally critical move, maybe the curators did it themselves, maybe the brutalist building inspired this slip. It seems to me a gesture that is silently, in a sense that the viewers of Kabakov's work might appreciate, a little bit too revealing about the state of UK institutions.

I proceed to scene number three: a museum that is very much aware of its building's colonial past is the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin. It's recent *Self-Determination* exhibition had an ambitious historical mission.[10] The installation that addresses the former, i.e. colonial Royal Hospital Kilmainham for British Army veterans most directly is the Kabakovs' *The Mysterious Exhibition from the Children's Hospital,* 1998. The gallery spaces are difficult, as they are still hospital room-sized. Here, viewers are allowed to use the chairs and visit. The title clarifies that there is now not a British soldier, but a child occupying the bed notionally – but one has to read the title for that first. There are more double-takes involved: the gallery visitor is a hospital visitor, who, through the patient's perspective views a populated gallery as a model-in-a-box, where two minimalist works are displayed, a broken-off, cylindrical sculpture and an Arp-like, wall-mounted assemblage that has a dot (in 3D) in the middle and a square, frame-like structure around, both in red: a bulls' eye would be one association. Children's books are lying on the bedside table. Anyone in a hospital bed loses some agency, becomes child-like. They are also observed (others can enter through the curtain at any time) and they want to be elsewhere, e.g. in a gallery, where they can do the observing. The installation is characteristically complemented by a story, displayed on one of those institutional notice boards. Art therapy is the theme – but of course it is unclear to what degree what is written there is fictional. Suddenly, the visitor to the hospital that is a gallery comes to reflect on the possibility at least that what they are doing is in some way healing. A continuum is established between the original and the current use of the building – and it isn't too far-fetched to think of the two as being connected: a healing, a decolonizing moment of agency and (as the exhibition title says) self-determination.

This work to me beautifully illustrates what Ilya Kabakov has written – in *Third Text* no less – about public sculpture:

> A public project for me is not a sculpture at all, but rather a kind of installation object that functions as an element of an already existing installation; it transforms even the most banal

> environment into the space of culture. Hence, what occurs is a transformation of the banal environment that surrounds the installation into a public project that reworks [the context.] Although many components of our installation have been sculptural, what is important is that these sculptures do not draw attention to themselves. this environment and imparts to it another level of existence […] They invite us to consider ourselves part of the environment
>
> You are all the time looking at something that is slipping away, moving away from centre. It is a centrifugal and not centripetal movement.
> The question then arises: where is the centre of the project that is supposed to be in the middle and meant to attract our attention? This centre is actually nominal. The viewer him/herself forms a centre by concentrating on his/her own personal […] reaction […] All the public projects that we have undertaken are aimed […] to contain calming qualities. All of them are aimed at a principally positive meaning, owing to the fact that it is culture that 'supports' and will 'support' any work of art.
>
> This is the ethical 'platform' that was clear to us during the entire time we were realising these projects.[11]

To me, this insisting on what is there, on the recipient as active and even central agent: I need to call it an open work, in the sense of what Umberto Eco theorised in 1962 on the basis of – and since the installation is in Dublin, I shall mention it: James Joyce's literary work.[12]

What has been observed about Kabakov's oeuvre in relation to word and image relations and voids or absences, meaning deriving from the discrepancies between word and image,[13] and the double takes in addressing both the benign art viewer and the institutional actor (e.g. the police interrogator): this is exciting to me and I hope to continue working on this. My recent writing (if it's permitted briefly to say) has been focusing on recouping Joyce for the margin, to follow Luke Gibbons in considering the writer as a force in the cultural construction of a thinking that is other than imperial or authoritarian.[14] I see Kabakov as a kindred spirit, similarly mythologizing everyday experiences of society's "others". My work on the *indirect* efficacy of

Joyce's work and that of artists responding to him should have kept me from making the mistakes to which I referred earlier. That kindred thinking and standing together I think amounts to what Tina Campt, in her book A Black Gaze, calls *adjacency*.[15] It is a kind of standing with a victim and refusing the expected averting of the gaze. Not much needs to be said. Adjacency is expressed with the circumspection that Tania Bruguera has called political timing specificity. To be there and hold ground in a kind of solidarity that is not triumphalist. I think the rituals at Kabakov's Moscow studio, showing albums to friends, that is this kind of bearing witness. Piotr Piotrowski has applied Giorgio Agamben's term "bare life" to Kabakov. That insight also has affinity with Campt's more recent coinage – and Warburg's older work, on which Agamben has written.[16]

Moving on to my next scene or work: I understand the hesitation that Emilia and Ilya Kabakov expressed about showing at documenta IX, 1992. *The Toilet* is a work that takes further a central theme: the critique of forced communal living, presenting quite a harsh and literal analysis of the state of the Eastern Bloc that had just literally gone down the toilet. Maybe it's a little too triumphalist a work? What I appreciated about it was that it made the refined audience of the art event, having paid a fairly hefty entrance fee, wait: as we did in front of the Konsum, for (rarely) bananas, or toilet paper. At Documenta IX, one had to stand in line to see something quite dramatically conflated: the living space and the door-less communal loo. Most Western visitors, unused to slum or tenement living, would have gazed at each other as voyeurs of an uncomfortable space, lacking privacy, likely relishing their own advancement. What is a shame is that more Eastern European work from artists other than the Kabakovs only made it to Documenta 12 in 2007, a whole generation after 1989. Even in 1992, there were surely Eastern visitors, migrating West for their first Documenta. It was a feature of the 90s that they stuck out like sore thumbs and did not want to be recognized. That it took so long for Eastern Europe to feature strongly in Kassel is certainly something that could put a dampener on what Ilya Kabakov has called his "lofty, ecstatic attitude toward European culture".

But it is also what I recognise from my early-ish days in the West, e.g. when demonstrating as an undergraduate against a census in Germany that wanted to ask too many questions. The GDR still existed – and still listened in when I was talking to family in the East

on the phone. Qualms about the privacy of data has seemingly all but vanished. A belief in European culture may sound strange today and incompatible with the *Relinking* theme mentioned earlier, except for when seen through the eyes of e.g. Achille Mbembe, who speaks about the postcolonial project:

> It invites us to an alternative reading of our modernity. It calls on Europe to responsibly live what it says are its origins, future, and promise. If, as Europe has always claimed, the goal of this promise really is the future of all of humanity, then postcolonial thought calls on Europe to constantly open and restart this future, in a singular manner, responsible for itself, for the Other, and before the Other. That having been said, Europe is no longer the center of the world.[17]

He asks Europe to do what it always said – and what, therefore, people behind the Iron Curtain (or nylon curtain as it's sometimes called with good reason) would of course cling to, hoping that European culture was realized somewhere.

The point that makes me address the question or task for today most directly is that there are (at least) two sides to that belief in European culture, when considered via the Kabakovs' practice: there is the ruthless and destructive Russian regime, and then, after emigration in 1988, the West, already referred to as always critical and destructive, even within culture. Ilya Kabakov:

> [Among] many American artists, […] ignorance and suppression of the surrounding space seem to be axiomatic and are posited as goals from the outset. This tradition of the artist by which it seeks victory over the surrounding environment is, of course, a consequence of modernism […] every place is absolutely empty for the modernist, a blank page on which he/she can write his/her immortal lines.[18]

Having just returned from Prague (my last vignette), Franz Kafka is on my (and everybody else's) mind: the centenary of his death is being celebrated. His restraint to the point of vanishing (expressed in his wish for his manuscripts to be burned) and his focus on the small words in the sentences, the ordinary people's experiences in front of stifling, bureaucratic apparatuses… all that of course predates the Soviet era. And yet, there is a sensibility linked also to Joyce's (or Beckett's) anti-authoritarian work: modernism that doesn't do what Kabakov just ascribed to American (high) modernism. It's work that

Deleuze and Guattari called “minor” and that is – in Kabakov’s parable – the experience of the orphaned child.

I wish that one of the several Kafka exhibitions in Prague had included *Labyrinth (My Mother’s Album)*, 1990. A little heap of dust and debris at the point where the journey culminates. I find this incredibly moving. There was much absurdity in the Kafkaesque show, but unfortunately lacking Kafka’s restraint, born from authoritarian experiences in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There are differences, and yet it is recognizable what Boris Groys wrote about Kabakov:

> [He] has discovered something here that is even more absurd than the Absurd itself: the Absurd isn’[t] recognized as absurd. Taboos are violated, boundaries transgressed, risks taken--and no one notices. […] I find it relieving, even liberating[19]

Everyday absurdity to a large extent – and across geographic or historical boundaries – speaks of the difference between an apparatus, institutions, a state and so forth addressing the needs of people – or, on the other hand, working to serve their own interest, engaging in rituals that purport to address real life issues but don’t. Those on the receiving end are thoughtful and sharp in their analysis, but must not speak the truth, as the regime has ossified to such an extent that it rather choses to mete out violence instead of correcting its ways. What a reviewer calls [I quote]

> the drab and oppressively decrepit details of quotidian existence in Russia [where Kabakov] made an art practice of conversing about it with brilliantly indirect, disengaged methods that result in an oblique but trenchant analysis. […] The double official/unofficial life as artists, the contrast between the Soviet state as described and the experience of living it, the gap between knowing and being created a strange alienation from immediate experience”[20]

It’s the kind of experience that can have the psychological effects of which Frantz Fanon writes in *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952. One could add the double take of which Luce Irigaray speaks in relation to women faced with the normative male gaze in cultural production. That affective layer makes it stringent, as I said, that we speak of Relinking in relation not just to decolonial work, but also to Kabakov’s practice.

And here is the point where ordinary people in Western countries (say the victims of the *toeslagaffaire* or child benefit scandal) find themselves recognizing not just the absurd just described, but also in more and more scenarios, more and more countries the unfortunate need to adopt strategies in their dealings with those in power that are recognizable from Kabakov, Kafka and others. When those working in many contexts, where civil rights activism is needed, get together, and, say, they do it at Documenta, as happened in 2022, much goes down the toilet, but much is also revealed and established.[21]

Prague is not just the city of Kafka, but also that of Wáclav Havel: in *The Power of the Powerless* from 1977, Havel sketches a picture with the help of two semi-fictional characters, not ten, like in Kabakov's albums. Havel's villain is the shopkeeper, who puts up a sign "Workers of the World, Unite" in his grocery shop window. Not that anyone really reads it, or thinks that he did it out of conviction. The purpose is clear: to signal compliance. And because he does, he helps to create and uphold a situation where others have to follow suit. Havel's hero is a brewery worker, who knows his trade better than the manager. He tries to make suggestions for improvement and eventually writes a letter about what to do for better beer. He is of course dismissed, penalized etc. Havel's book's introduction summarises: [I quote]

> The system is totalitarian not because some individual has total power, but because 'power is shared in conditions of total irresponsibility. There is no clear line between evil and good, power and servitude, Party and people, because 'this line runs de facto through each person, for everyone in his or her own way is both a victim and a supporter of the system.' Freedom is not doing the things that you are inclined to do. It is reflecting upon what you ought to do, as your unrepeatable self, and just occasionally taking a risk and doing that thing.[22]

Havel, who in 1977 by the way talked about ecology, too, meant for his book to address the West as well: any "normalized", thoughtless, technologized life.

Responsibility, humility and thoughtfulness? Yes, but not because I say so, but because you've done the work in and with Kabakov's art yourself: the work of bridging the gap between word and image, of distinguishing between an emptiness that is stifling and ossified and one that is open and activating, between what Havel calls "being

within the truth" of your life and "living a lie" as the normalized state of affairs. When we recognize from this vantage point the scary closeness of the Kabakovs' work to where we find ourselves today, that's when it really begins.

So, Charles, it is not just on the basis of my having been born in East Germany that I want to contribute here. A socialization into critically thinking circles was certainly important – and that's what you meant, of course, not identity. So, nearly a decade in the GDR helped, but so did nearly a decade in the North of Ireland – as did a decade in Amsterdam. All and any of us who have been faced with the question whether to say the blatantly obvious, logical, empathetic and caring thing and be a killjoy, or whether to let that hollow, irresponsible "joy" continue that in the Eastern Bloc was called normalization and that is here, today our ecocidal, genocidal and differential norm. All of those with this experience know that other strategies are needed. Strategies, where the dissidence (if I can call it that) lies in working with the discrepancies between what word and image communicate.[23]

And that cuts to the core of art history – and I for one have to grapple with the strengthening realization that supposedly transparent, academic prose is not a universal, not even the best vehicle. For the moment, for me, there is a SpaceX project that enables me (and many others) to counter the spirit of Elon Musk's Spacex (if at least in a small way). Like Kabakov's *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment*, 1985, it catapults me to partners in all the art places that matter more than what I'm saying, such as the Van Abbemuseum. Here I can, spending EU money of course, try to ask Europe to do what it always said it was doing. Here are kindred spirits, especially in the ever more embattled art and academic sectors, who attempt to go beyond identity-based solidarities. I already mentioned Tina Campt's beautiful term adjacency.

And thank goodness, there are the works of the Kabakovs and a number of other artists, not too many. Their works, the exhibition here, are not just installations. They literally transport us into another world, into this gathering of different but adjacent people, together facing what we don't know yet – and also know all too well already – if only from the fact that these works were, are and, unfortunately, *will* be the appropriate response. The next question, subtly, with open eyes and suitable restraint, has again to be: what is to be done?

Notes

1. Ann Komaromi, “Soviet Trash. The Reception of Ilya Kabakov’s Art Beyond the USSR”, Le culture del dissenso in Europa nella seconda metà del Novecento, Eds. T. Spignoli, C. Pieralli, Between, X.19 (2020), www.betweenjournal.it, 188-222: The work “reminds us that the lived Soviet experience was real, and that its reality resists our attempts to wrangle and organize it with narratives about a lost utopia or a triumphant liberal order. It shows us that the memory of the Soviet Union is part of our shared collective imagination.”
2. https://vanabbemuseum.nl/nl/zien-en-doen/tentoonstellingen-activiteiten/archief-2023/dwarsverbinding-kabakov-kabinet?utm_source=MailingLijst&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=21-02-2024
3. Piotr Priotrowski, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, Chicago: Chicago University Press 2010, 21-22.
4. Ibid.
5. https://www.spacex-rise.org/ This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) project number 872561. I thank the SpaceX community for great collegiality, solidarity and collaborations.
6. See: Ezra Benus, Tamara Breugelmans, Cristina Buta, Sepp Eckenhaussen, Astrid Kerchman, Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, Emily Rhodes, Jeroen de Smalen, Frederike Sperling, “Strijd ∞, a Performative Exhibition” in: *Sztuka i Dokumentacja / Art & Documentation: Art for the sake of democracy*, Lukasz Guzek (ed.), nr. 16 (Spring / Summer 2017), pp. 133-141, http://www.journal.doc.art.pl/pdf16/sid16_strijd.pdf
7. Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, “Art and Research: A Portrait of a Humanities Faculty as an Inclusive Workspace”, *Krisis: Journal of Contemporary Philosophy* 1/2020, pp.180-202. https://krisis.eu/issue/view/4732
8. Harlow Robinson, “Review of Matthew Jesse Jackson, *The Experimental Group: Ilya Kabakov, Moscow Conceptualism, Soviet Avant-Gardes.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010”, *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, Volume 48: Issue 4, 513-514. https://brill.com/view/journals/css/48/4/article-p513_13.pdf.
9. https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/mike-nelson-extinction-beckons/
10. https://imma.ie/whats-on/self-determination-a-global-perspective/

11. https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=f66b7851-8ebe-4ee4-9db0-a7028b35136b%40redis *Third Text*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, 2003, 401–407.
12. Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press [1962] 1989. The original Italian publication included a large section on Joyce (*Finnegans Wake*).
13. Mikhail Epstein, "Emptiness as Technique: Word and Image in Ilya Kabakov" in: idem, Russian Postmodernism, Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books 2015.
14. Luke Gibbons, Luke, *James Joyce and the Irish Revolution: The Easter Rising as Modern Event,* Chicago: Chicago University Press 2023. My essay is entitled: "James Joyce and Art Writing: Indirect Efficacy, Potential (Art) History and Adjacency*", Joyce and the Arts*, Keith Williams, Cleo Hanaway-Oakley (eds), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (forthcoming).
15. Campt, Tina M. *A Black Gaze: Artists Changing How We See*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press 2021.
16. Giorgio Agamben, "Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science" [1975], in: *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, transl., ed. by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999, 89-103.
17. Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization*, New York: Columbia University Press 2021, 76.
18. Ilya Kabakov, "Public Projects or the Spirit of a Place", *Third Text*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, 2003, 401–407: 402.
19. Boris Groys, "Ilya Kabakov: 'Answers of an Experimental Group'", *Artforum International*, vol. 33, no. 1, Sept. 1994, 76.
20. Jonathan Fineberg, "Review [untitled]", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Fall 2011), 716-719: 717.
21. See the conference: (*Un)Common Grounds: Reflecting on Documenta Fifteen*, FramerFramed, KNAW, Amsterdam 23 September 2022, https://vimeo.com/showcase/9917537 The venues, together with the Van Abbemuseum and the UvA organized and funded it. I contributed remarks on Documenta history.
22. Václav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless*, introduction by Timothy Snyder, London: Penguin Vintage Classics, xiv, xv.
23. See Piotrowski, 379-390. E.g. 383: "Kabakov's need for cultural bilingualism and a constant over-laying of verbal sequences over visual sequences thus becomes understandable. This bilingual procedure is analogous to a pair of scissors, cutting out emptiness from the artist's surrounding world. What emerges between text and image is a culturally shaped emptiness."

Citation

In Memoriam Ilya Kabakov

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