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SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

In compliance with the formal requirements I indicate a series of works – graphics entitled **The Field of View** as aspiring to fulfill the conditions specified in 16.2 of the Act of 14th March 2003 on Academic Degrees and Titles and Degrees and Titles in the field of Art (Dz. U./ Journal of Laws, no 65, position 595 as amended).

People constantly mimic, copy and transform the nature they live in, which is a natural, visual and artistic form of activity accompanying human existence. The incredible diversity of micro-and macrocosm, perceived both in transcendental and academic categories, frequently serves as the main reason for the creation of a work of art, a story setting or a philosophical message.

A series of my graphics have been under a direct impact of the setting, often a secluded and hard to reach place. Since the 1990s the structure of the real mountainous landscape observable *in situ* (Latin: on site) has become the material which undergoes transformations in my artistic activities. The unlimited space, the diversity of geological forms, their endurance and incessant erosion constitute a point of reference for a consideration of the formal sphere, the composition, the graphic material and color as well as their invite us to enter a dialog with the phenomenon of space-time, the order of the universe or human psyche.

For centuries most cultures have been traditionally assigning particular meanings and values to the mountains due to their historical, religious and philosophical conditions. The majestic and inaccessible mountains play a vital role in the creation of the vision of the world. Thanks to their location, in the mythical cosmic order the mountains became a link between the divine and the human. *Axis mundi* – the world axis is imagined in the shape of a cosmic mountain connecting Heaven and Earth. An analogous logic of the cosmic order marks the compositional sections of the first mountain graphic - *Enrosadira* (1995). The center of the created spatial vision is occupied by an architectonic monument – a realistic picture of an actual Italian Dolomites rock formation, which links two trans-

cidental spheres: the sky and the proto-ocean. The traces of star constellations in the whirling cosmic substance mark the passing time and the rhythm of cyclical changes. The Sacrum is transgressed through the presence of the objects that epitomize the immemorial human drive for the conquer of the outer space. At the bottom of the *axis mundi*, the sphere of water, there is a giant fish, without clear symbolism, nonetheless it has multiple references to old beliefs and religions. It completes the vision of the mysterious abyss of the ocean and its driving force.

This tripartite arrangement filled with multi-layered symbolism and based on realistic representation has determined my future artistic inquiries. I repeatedly return to the motif of a synthetic mountain as the center of composition. What undergoes changes is the saturation of the graphic substance in the particular spheres that are exposed to constant transformations and they determine the state of observed phenomena. The character of my stay in the mountains has a direct impact on the formal aspects and the peculiarity of cutting the linocut blocks. Such a spectacular appearance of the mountains in my graphic works results from the changes in the acknowledgment, experience and sensation of the mountains. Above mentioned *Enrosadira* is an effect of a cumulation of powerful emotions provoked by walking the "via ferrata," iron rungs in the Dolomites, where for the first time I found myself in such an exposed rocky terrain. Though it was not an extreme challenge, the very act of climbing and overcoming one's physical and mental weakness prompts metaphysical considerations. Hiking or climbing the summit can be treated only as a sports activity or through the contact with the Sacrum it can be ascribed a mystical character, and it may become a prerequisite for the realization of an artistic project, becoming a part of it.

Richard Long in a natural way inscribes his own works into the landscapes. He employs stones and rocks, the most basic mountain area materials and creates stone circles and lines in the Andes, the Pyrenees or the Himalayas. However, the relationships between natural landscape and the arts may also become a form of aggressive interference. Hence, it is hard to accept for me the controversial works of the French artist Jean Véraime, who painted the whole surface of gigantic rocks in vivid purple, blue and red colors. The objects created in real space: objects-signs, objects-symbols are a genuine part of this space, a visual form of communication in the nature and with the nature. The construction of space on a flat surface requires a transformation of the observed spatio-temporal phenomena into a two-dimensional form. The complexity and multidimensionality of mountainous space in its physical and transcendental aspects have been for me a field of continuous formal and ideological experimentations along with a search for new technological solutions.

The shapes of space and time

In the graphic works that preceded the cycle *The Field of View*, the construction of space on a flat surface was mainly based on the characteristic elements present in the mountain landscape. The recorded view is focused on the zonal organization of the isolated fragments of ridges, rocks and ponds. The condensed zones of graphic substance juxtaposed with the colorful flat spots form contrasts and tensions between the structure of the geophysical intricacies: ruffled rock and ice mazes and the symbolic and boundless space of open areas. The frequent use of the lowered perspective results in a vertical accumulation of perspectives, representing the space from distinct angles. In order to profound the down-oriented space, the mirror-like manipulation of the picture, including also objects out of the visual frame is linked with the elevated perspective for the foreground elements. The appearance of "The Mirror Zone" is rooted in the real dangers and threats one faces while hiking a glacier or an ice-fall.

The awareness of walking on an invisible inner organism, hidden underneath the ice and full of traps – crevasses leads one beyond rational analysis into imagination. Movement, inseparably linked with physical covering the distance, is inscribed into the recurrent sets of wavy lines which mark mountain ranges. This bursting of a static rectangular form, often multiplied, stresses the repetitive character of the constant elements of mountainous landscape and contributes to a stylistic unity.

However, he applied formal actions proved to be insufficient for entering a dialog with the phenomenon of time-space, and for the indication of time-space duality: its transcendental aspect and the objectively existing nature. The nature of space has been a perennial concern for philosophical thought and one of the greatest challenges of theoretical physics and mathematics. Philosophical and scientific concepts determine the notation of the three-dimensional material objects onto the two-dimensional surface, they establish the character and relations of the axioms of space-time phenomena. The ideas of space which attributes are expressed through the language of geometry have entered artistic theory and practice. Artists have adopted elements of three-dimensional euclidean geometry as well as the four-dimensional space as described by Hermann Minkowski. Thanks to the 20th century discoveries by such scientists as Bernhard Riemann, Albert Einstein or Minkowski who introduced the spacetime expression, the universe has acquired the forth dimension.

The degree and the form of the relationship between the artistic concept of space with science and philosophy derives from the premises of artistic ideas. The use of the language of geometry in the cycle *The Field of View* contributed among others to the creation of an

individualized concept of space which points to its duality: the objectively existing nature, and a subjective construction that determines the nature's transcendental dimension. The cornerstone of formal and ideological solutions in *The Field of View* (aspiring to fulfill the habilitation procedure conditions) is the reference to realistic features of the nature with its diverse forms of existence – simultaneously elementary particles and galaxies. This “scaling” of the nature from various points of observation has allowed to locate on one surface both micro and macro scale phenomena. The language of the Universe consists of traditional geometrical shapes which possess complex meanings and fragments of the nature closed in a visual sign, yet still bearing some resemblance to the reality.

The geometrical structure makes a regular rhythm and organizes the surface, it visualizes the relationship between the physical presence in a mountain space and the inner world which encompasses a plethora of experiences, emotions, feelings, events and situations. Geometrical shapes which have been present in European and other cultures since pre-historic times contain encoded information that symbolically stands for a reciprocal imbuelement, a dualism of constant and changeable characteristics.

I have organized the space of many compositions basing on the shape of the circle so as to expose the universal values of this natural figure, frequently linked with the earth, the universe, infinity, full of energy and a metaphysical content (*Fractal Spaces I, II, III, Magic Stone*). The circle epitomizes the ideas of passing time and movement, it contains the primary elements of timespace, which mark the four-dimensional timespace. The symbolism of the circle is connected with the spiritual sphere as opposed to the rational aspect of the rectangle. The rectangle with an irregular top edge and a distinct graphic color or structure creates in my compositions isolated areas, spaces necessary for life (*Moon Ridge, First Snow, Ridge I*). The planes adjoining the rectangle topographically locate human existence in the context of the surrounding boundless space.

While walking the mountains, there is a new perception made possible by the elevated perspective. Seeing from great heights opens up the space but also blurs details. The elements of topographical reliefs lose their third dimension, while geometrical shapes become more defined. In the cycle *The Field of View* the iconic structure constructed from lines, points, arches and circles adjoins or totally substitutes graphic substance based on geological forms of the nature (*A Road through the Ridge, Twilight of the Ponds, Conversation by Czarne*). The structure of the real mountain landscape becomes fugitive, taking on the form of a topographical map perspective. (*A Change of the Field of View, The Traces of Chaos*). The visible traces of primary geometrical signs and writing are an attempt at a montage of distant in time pictures and events that occurred there, the events of time and

space. There may be found fields filled with contour lines, signs and idiosyncratic writing with characterological features which juxtaposed with the rhythm of "printed" font seem to be ample of semantic indications. It is an attempt of a verbal reconstruction of events, a recording of information where the individual and emotional borders on the automatic and anonymous. The condensation of signs and letters makes it impossible to read them in an unambiguous way.

The amplification of the function of a plate (duality of a plate)

Historical and independent development of print form and surface allows it to situate the artistic experiment in the sphere between the original record of the idea – a plate and its trace – an image. The relationship between a plate and its image in contemporary arts is polarized by ideological and formal criteria, and by the way the graphic process and the plate are considered. The status of the plate oscillates between understanding the term as a natural trace and a dematerialized form of electronic recording. If the traditional practices are followed, the plate can be possibly regarded as useless once a given number of copies has been made and it may get destroyed. However, it is not only the case of digital recording when the plate may undergo unlimited transformations and acquire new lives.

My first attempts at rejection of automatism in the process of printing took place during the diploma projects in prof. Ryszard Osadczy graphic arts studio. (Pedagogical University, currently Jan Długosz Academy in Częstochowa).

A different color rubbed into distinct parts of an etching-aquatint plate was a tool to activate and change the perception of the same artistic material. Next the plates were set in various configurations according to a given key, and they created new sources of reference. Such an exclusion of mechanical copying and an exact re-creation of the plates result in a set of new relationships between the plate and the printout. I have been departing from printing the whole plate as the final effect for the sake of a montage of smaller printouts. Cropping, the use of stencils and colors are the basis of changeable plates (blocks) mostly made in the lino-cut technique. The works are printed in long cycles and form a continuity of events, pictures – a kind of wandering point of view. In the set of works presented for my PhD degree ("Knocking to Stone's Door" - a quote from the poem by Wisława Szymborska) the plate is a tool for the analysis of the structure of a rock, its long-lasting character and the changes provoked by erosion and a search for the space in a mountainous landscape.

The technical uniqueness of graphic arts enables a continuous return to the original recording of the idea. Materialization of the graphic object is spread in time, hence it allows for

a new decoding of the plate in a distinct reality. One of the elements of a multi-functionality of the plate in *The Field of View* is a change of its identity over time. During the printing process and accompanying it technical procedures, the structure of the plate undergoes a metamorphosis creating new layers of meaning. The augmentation of the function of the plate changes the status of the printout, the printing material and the character of the printing process. The method of multiplication reserved for particular parts of the plate visualizes the process of transformation of the objectively perceived nature as well as the phenomena that are hard to analyze in a rational way. The application of open-work stencils during the printing stage and as a printout layer, causes remarkable transformations to the original graphic material. The use of transparent materials in the creation of multi-layered graphic objects, a peculiar permeation of the plate and the printout becomes a metaphor for the multi-dimensionality of the surrounding reality and a suggestion of transcendental areas.

The structure of a surface – a necessary touch of the matter

Many years ago, during a rock climbing course I experienced an unusual non-visual encounter with the structure of rocks. The exercise proposed by the instructor seemed to be oppose the idea of climbing as it denied any eye-contact with the rock. While we were climbing blindfolded, we were discovering afresh the relief of the rock. Our hands and feet could feel even tiniest irregularities which became safe places of support. The rock underwent an astonishing analysis, the association of the physical touch and visual perception activated imagination and created a completely different picture of the surface.

For me, the observed phenomenon reminded me of the dualism of a graphic plate, where the primary existence is ascribed to its surface: repetitively touched, marked with a burin or chisel, and the while the secondary existence is the plate's printed image which takes on a new, distinct form.

Since Mesopotamian cylindric seals, stone has been used as a material on which a drawing may be engraved. At the end of the 18th century stone was for the first time treated with acids and acquired a new artistic aspect in the form of lithography. I consider the reliefs, the etchings on stone surface as a natural plate, from which I obtain graphic material. I frequently visit the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, in particular old quarries, isolated residual hills and stone runs where I observe the unusual variety of shapes and textures. In Kielce, close to the city-center there is an old limestone quarry -Kadzielnia with an isolated rock called "Skalka Geologów" which became one of my favorite motifs. It appears in many compositions in a monumental form (*Encounter with the Mountain, The Mountain called OM*).

Though there is no sign of Emerald Lake that used to surround the rock, it reappears in the cycle of my works entitled *The Last Island*.

The richness of forms that create mountain landscape has been for numerous artists an object of analysis and a source of inspiration. In Chinese painting in order to visualize various rock types and the effect of erosion there were used distinct brush strokes called *ts'un*, lead like a *broken net*, a *raindrop trace*, an *ax stroke*¹. Leonardo DaVinci in *Book V* of his *Treatise on Painting* analyses the look of mountain chains dependent on the place of observation and advices on the representation of particular zones of the mountains.

Having walked the mountains for years, I distinguish two stages of their acknowledgment and representation:

Stage I: Geological Landscape

Stage II: Un-Real Landscape

In the first stage the physiological and psychological possibilities of the eye provide the basis for artistic activity, both at the stage of perception, of recording the surrounding world as well as at the moment of creation. Fair and rough limestones, layered walls of red sandstone are the main substance of graphic material. The rhythm of points and cuts in linoleum creates the geophysical intricacies of rocks and ice. Sometimes their structure is metamorphosed, besides fossils there can be found whole organisms.

I have been mostly applying the technique of color lino-cut, which offers the greatest diversity of structures. I set as points thinly cut spots with the intact surface. The final print results from the use of many plates (blocks). I print on paper of various density and degree of absorptivity depending on the number of printed layers. I occasionally use textured print, collagraphic plates and digital underprint (works from the years 2008-2009: *Masala*, *The Mountain called Om 1 and Om2*, *The Last Island*).

The other stage, linked with the cycle *Field of View* characterizes with distinct meanings and ways of artistic expression. I use a broader scope of techniques and materials: from lino-cut to drypoint, collage, engraving on transparent materials. I design openwork stencils, that in print change the original texture of the plate. In my works there are zones of collage that form the surface in a relief-like way, they juxtapose geometrical sets of repeated colorful shapes or surfaces with monochromatic uniform character.

¹ *O sztuce Japonii*, Z. Alberowa, Warszawa 1983, p. 103

This way it is possible to obtain a new surface- space relationship which discovers and creates subsequent layers of meaning. The parts with a collage, the graphic substance and geometrical elements determine and order the space. I use the form of a circle or a rectangle to delineate surfaces composed of real elements of the nature and subjective constructions. Such shapes, separate from the rest due to the structures and colors, undergo certain cyclical transformations over the time.

The structures used by me are a visual metaphor and refer to real events and phenomena. The series of black and white ponds is an attempt to face the dangerous and unpredictable force of the nature, in particular the avalanche which annually take a heavy toll on human life (I devoted this cycle to the avalanche casualties on Rysy in 2003).

A fractal look at reality

Artistically and physically I act within a field defined by mathematics as a natural fractal. New geometrical forms named fractals by Benoît Mandelbrot in the 1970s have been used to analyze irregular natural phenomena and structures which are hard to define in the language of traditional geometry. Mountains, clouds, a shoreline, a snowflake through their repetitive patterns and complexity exhibit features that make them similar to mathematical fractals which have a self-similar pattern in every scale. Thanks to the fractal theory the humanity has obtained another descriptive tool, yet is it a new one? Cennino Cennini certainly couldn't have known fractals at the end of the 14th century when he gave an instruction how to represent the mountains: "If thou shouldst paint mountains in a good style and to look natural, take some large stones full of cracks and copy them from nature, applying the lights and the dark as your system requires." Observation of the nature, getting to the core of natural phenomena had made it possible for Cennini to discover rules and relationships that were recorded in mathematical notations many centuries later. When fractals both mathematical and natural are zoomed in, the same effect is achieved: an identical or similar structure in every scale.

In the compositions from the cycle *Fractal Landscapes* and *Fractal Spaces* I refer to some extent to the fractal theory, yet not to the geometrical interpretation, but to a simultaneous existence of some phenomena in different scales. The first attempts to represent this relationship were the cycles of photographs from the 1990s in which I used the multiple exposure in order to superimpose the shape of the mountains onto other objects: stones, sand, leaves, then non-organic forms. These works were created in a mixed technique, combining lino-cut with digital print. In *Field of View* I applied means of visualization based on the

real structure of a mountainous landscape as well as geometric elements and their symbolism, thus creating 'fractal spaces' in accordance with my own rules.

Fractals enable the analysis of distinct natural phenomena. There are digitally created virtual spaces which create the illusion natural landscapes. Descriptions of the reality, both in the language of fractal geometry using computers or the traditional "Cennini method" appear to have the same genealogy - the nature. It is the author's task to decide which method is the most adequate to convey his or her artistic idea.

Workshop and fine arts education

My creation in the field of graphic arts is closely linked with my didactic activity. The participation in visual arts teaching at all stages of education has vastly contributed to my attitude towards artistic workshop and the development of plastic arts awareness. After graduation I taught plastic arts at a primary school (1983-86), and a secondary school (V Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. P. Ściegiennego in Kielce, 1986-89) and The Complex of Schools of Fine Arts (Zespół Szkół Sztuk Plastycznych im. Józefa Szermentowskiego, 1989-2005). Since 2004 I have been teaching graphic arts at the Institute of Fine Arts at Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce. At every stage of my didactic work I have been looking for new forms, methods and possibilities of using traditional graphic arts procedures in education.

I introduced with passion and determination some elements of graphic arts to school curricula. The lack of proper workshop equipment inspired me to make use of unusual tools and non-conventional but easily accessible materials or hand-print. Consequently, under the influence of that period I have started to treat the processes of creation of a plate and print in a less hermeneutic way.

My long-term efforts to popularize graphic arts (not included in the curriculum as a separate subject) at The Secondary School of Fine Arts in Kielce had their measurable outcome when there was created a graphic techniques major. I also supervised first diploma projects in graphic arts.

Teaching at various stages of education has given me a broader perspective on the issue of plastic arts. Now I also use the previously gained experience at The Institute of Fine Arts at UJK. A crucial element of the B.F.A. and M.F.A. studies curricula has been the co-existence of traditional and new forms of visual representation.

The workshop activities at the studio aimed at the students' acknowledgment with the peculiarities of graphic representation: they were able to put into practice the overall process of graphic creation. It facilitated the students the search for adequate means of artistic expression and inspired them to discover new possibilities of a given technique. The knowledge of traditional methods of image creation provides a solid basis and also prepares for the work with new tools of visual representation. A graphic image is a form of dialog with the past and the present, it is a way one reacts to important issues and struggles to convey one's own message of the universal and the immediate. Hence, such attempts were also made by the students while they worked upon their diploma projects. I have supervised tens M.F.A. and 11 B.F.A. studio diploma projects.

An obvious culmination of artistic and educational activity is a presentation of the artworks which makes it possible to exchange experiences, and to confront one's individual search for ideas and technologies. Exhibitions, shows documenting creative processes, educational outcomes are an important element in the graphic workshop curriculum. Besides a traditional exhibition at an art gallery, there have been various exhibitions which accompanied public space activities (workshops) and cultural events (symposia, conferences).

Another vital aspect of the educational process is the students' participation in educational and artistic enterprises, workshops, also open-air. Such collective activities form relationships based on mutual trust and understanding. A multilevel structure of graphic image allows for the use of means of expression borrowed from other disciplines. It is a perfect field for experiments and actions which help the students develop creative personality, and broaden the knowledge of traditional and new techniques. I took into consideration also such values while preparing a series of graphic arts workshops. The workshops had a mosaic-like character, they were based on chosen forms of artistic creativity, the peculiarities of graphic representation and currently applied methods and techniques of activation. The workshops took place in public open spaces (The Artists Square in Kielce, The Municipal Park), at art galleries (ZPAP Tycjan Gallery, Winda Gallery, The National Museum in Kielce) and also during Jan Kochanowski University open days. The workshop venue was one of the factors that influenced the choice of artistic means and techniques. Consequently, the students were able to develop their skills in the promotion of visual arts outside cultural centers.

The studio is a place where direct contact while sharing the knowledge and experience plays an essential role. Individual consultations, corrections and long hours spent together encourage personal and self-sufficient artistic attitudes.

One of the main premises of graphic arts studio is a creation of such conditions for the realization of arts projects that reach out beyond the curriculum and make the students familiar with individual work as artists. The open character of the studio, an easy access to the graphic press both for the students and the university graduates contributes to their artistic activity. A source of my personal joy and satisfaction is the fact that I meet at my studio the students I taught at various stages of my educational and artistic career.