

# „An Essay about space and place – the ‚outer skin‘ of installation“

by Kata Adamek

In one of two streams in my Master Thesis I tried to concentrate and develop the meaning of „outer skin“ in Art, in this case in installation art. The term „outerskinness“ (as a noun, which probably can sound like a neologism, a made-up word) was found by me in the statement of Vaclav Havel in a meaning of a global behaviour of people and homogenization of the world. But under this layer appear plenty of cultures, nations, religions, historical traditions and life statements which are hidden deeper. So, although the name already existed I didn't hesitate to use it pionieeringly in the need of farther development of my ideas about chosen occurrence in installation art.

The Master thesis was inseparably connected to my practical work „Outerskinness“. It came together and permeated each other. Observing external qualities of human being outer skin I detected some similarities and joining points with installation. The perception concerns also the „outer skin“ and its dimensions, layers throughout we can observe reality. Quotes from my theoretical thesis:

„What is on the top, on the last layer of perceptible, noticeable master piece? What covers already covered? The outer skin is a part of a skin, is its outer coat. It's a translucent layer, thin and elastic. It covers the form of the object, „body“ but also „blinds“ the reality.

This reality observed through the outer skin (on the installation e.g.) is non-literal, is foggy, with the fine shadows and blurred nuances, the gradation of colour. Shapes which are behind the „outer skin“ are the announcements of ideas.

In the following I try to characterise the installation in „outer skin“ type:

- covering

Plantlike carpets of Teresa Murak spread on floors, walls, earth. Meditative spaces of Wolfgang Laib sprinkled with pollen. Structures surrounding buildings, something like scaffolding-by Tadashi Kawamata. Consequent in dotting-Yayoi Kusama.

- concealing – disclosing

Christo and Jeanne-Claude's wrapping. The object becomes more interesting by wrapping. What's inside? Increasing the meaning.

- segmental – fragmental

Some issues of Gordon Matta-Clark's works, for instance „Office Baroque“.

Fragments of outcutted ceilings and floors moved to the gallery. His interest in stratification and usually not remarkable space as the one between ceiling and floor.

Rachel Whiteread casted interiors of houses. Stretched layers of Eva Hesse's artworks. „Layers“ of Jan Berdyszak's objects.“

The writers by who I was inspired: Yi Fu Tuan, Roland Barthes, John Berger.

Why did I choose this subjects?

Because we are surrounded by space, we are in place and we observe it (place) through translucent layers of „outer skin“.

Space and place observed through „outer skins“ of reality are subjective. They place covers one on each other and dim shapes, phenomenons and ideas.