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INTERFERENCE PATTERNS

ARTIST STATEMENT AND CREATIVE PRACTICE IN THE
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THESES

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„The image of the artwork and the commentary of the artwork – it is a clear formula. However, commentary is a strange thing, one would think that it is about what it was written about, but then, just like a boomerang, it returns to its sender. Namely, commentary bypasses the image of the artwork, and although it started as a text – a deepgoing explanation, a strict description, a playful lyrical transcription or a highsounding protest [...] –, it becomes an image, a self-portrait of the artist.”¹ As Ágnes Ivacs writes about Lea Vergine’s classical book (1974), in which she asked sixty artists to select one of their works, and write a short commentary to it.

The doctoral research starts from the fundamental statement that – due to radical changes in the 20th century – art is today mostly interpreted through attitudes, therefore the artist’s pure visual communication is not enough anymore, but it must be also strengthened with verbal context. Taking into consideration that verblivity has become an essential element of the entire artistic field, as the publication interfaces and of the different forms of canonisation, the contemporary artist – by virtue of his or her tasks – necessarily verbalizes. The dissertation thus reflects on the dialogue between the verbal and the visual, which is at the basis of the everyday practice of visual art and which, according to my argument, has therefore become an inescapable part of contemporary art practice. The research brings into focus those paradoxes and coincidences which

¹ Ágnes Ivacs: Art as psychoanalysis. Lea Vergine: Body Art and Performance. The Body as Language. Skira Editore, Milan, 2000. Book reviews, *Balkon* 2011/05/05.
www.balkon.hu/archiv/balkon05_05/11ivacs.html

have been generated by the anomalies experienced during the creative practice of art. Thus, in a certain extent, also coincides with the tensions that naturally follow from the correspondence of science and arts, from the art doctorate itself.

From the artist's point of view it highlights the dynamics in the fine art texts between word and the image – without its total (hence impossible) synopsis –, emphasizing those points which indicated by the artist's inner dialogue through during the experience of creation. I use the special, "dazzling" like exciting patterns of the physics term interference as a symbol of the phenomenon full of paradoxes, like a visual metaphor representing that diverse new quality joining at the meeting points of the two, seemingly absolutely different methods of communication in the tension that arises from their coincidence.

The research aims to contribute to the fundamental dilemma of the role of the highly relevant text during the visual art praxis, and its subject is their substantive relationship to each other. The simultaneous layers, the contradictions and interferences, the resonances of the two branches stand in its focus, and the question of whether and how "transparency" between verblability and visuality can become a relevant part of the practice.

Therefore, the dissertation does not deal with the artistic commentary in the general sense, neither with the text formulated by an art expert and attached to the artwork after its creation (textual bikini²), but specifically with that commentary that the artist himself adds to his own work, and with which he expands the space and visual context of the work's creation.

I begin to justify my claims by eliminating the separation the vision as an active behaviour from theorising as an intellectual activity with nuancing the concept of theory, taking the inherent link between theory and practice as a basic premise. After explaining the topic and rationale of the research and briefly its basic concepts I complement the introduction with my personal motivation, to which I will return as the master artwork's possible creative response in the second half of the research.

² The term is adopted from Boris Groys. In: Boris Groys: A művészeti kommentár helyzete ma. Balkon 2000/12. www.balkon.hu/archiv/balkon_2000_12/groys_text.htm

The explanation of the theme begins with a brief historical overview and the premise that the dialectic of *logos* and *eidos* (word and image) has been a struggle for primacy not only within contemporary visual art, but since the first myths of man's self-regarding, describing the stories of the creation of the world. This struggle irrevocably begins when the most ancient and complex marker, the hieroglyphic, the pictographic writing that comprises the two, is separated and literacy is born. By becoming a discipline in its own right in the 18th century, art history has created its own peculiar approach to art, and through its system, categories and critical attitude – which is inevitable to build up its own values –, it has established a canon and a distinctive narrative of art that has been long accepted as unique. The subsequent crises of this narrative, which still dominate today, have been fuelled by turns in history, philosophy and science, as well as by immanent processes in art, which have transformed the entire language of visual art and led to fundamental changes in the way of art's communication, and in the practice of art today just like in the new paradigms of the artist's role.

I review the comparison between theory and practice, their mechanisms, their effects on each other, and their interactions in creative work through an examination of psychological research on creative processes. Creativity – as the most fundamental aspect of the creative process – has a large literature in psychology with tens of thousands of researches published since the second half of the 20th century, and although there are many different approaches to its interpretation, the stages of the creative process, such as the specific information processing of the intellect (divergence, which plays a major role in creativity) and the associated characteristic abilities, are fairly well distinguished on the basis of various tests. According to this, thinking in terms of text or image has not only functional and basic structural differences, but also mental differences, representing opposite poles of mind functioning. However, the metacognition as a certain feedback function of the mind – representing reflection on intellectual activity – can play a prominent role in the specific creative model that seeks to respond to the challenges of the age by creating a multidimensional framework of interpretation of the work.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation examines the artistic aspects, references and connections between visuality and verbality, reviewing the role of verbality and its position in contemporary art. It focuses on the structural differences, contradictions, permeations and resonances of the two modes of representation, from the emergence of the need for commentary in works of art to the further dialogue between verbal and visual representations of the practice of information culture, linked to the visual arts, through textual types of dialogue. Through the characteristic phenomenons of the contemporary practice such as project-based applications, and the paradoxical "visual context" or "verbal representation" back-and-forth feature's challenges, I point to the specific genre of works with commentary as a possible alternative approach to the problems explored.

Since the theme in a broader perspective could in fact touch not only on the entire written history of art but also on the history of aesthetics, as well as on thinking about perception and interpretation itself – which could divert from the concrete subject of the examination with infinite ramifications, that is the creative practice –, for this reason the dissertation refers only to some points indicatively, without showing the different philosophical approaches (structuralism, post-structuralism, hermeneutics, phenomenology). The fifth chapter, in a short bypass, brings three very different philosophical approaches to art into the research as reference examples, with the explicit aim of representing those radically different perspectives one can speculating about art today. W. J. T. Mitchell approaches the concept of the image from the perspective of semiotics, H. G. Gadamer looks at the turning point of pictorial representation of painting from the perspective of hermeneutics, and T. de Duve, by examining the disintegration of the fundamental notions and the dissolution of the boundaries of art, arrives at the characteristic anomalies of contemporary art life and the illusions of its artistic pluralism, as well as the relative nature of its realised freedom.

I examine the comparison between art and research from the perspective of the creative practice, the artistic experiment, which is problematised by the challenges of zeitgeist and the doctoral research itself. The artistic pluralism of our time considers artworks as mainly technical and intellectual experiments, with novelty at their heart,

and for this constant renewal reflection seems essential. Although science and art are different in the manner of questioning and in the methods of the experiment, innovation and its verification are fundamental in both fields. Generating the necessary resources, designing the creation, justifying and proving its relevance, and the coincidence of these all create a complex and paradoxical model of operation in which reflexivity plays a prominent role. This leads us to art models based on reflectivity, for which I present some relevant examples from the recent domestic art scene. I conclude my comparison of art and research by returning to my personal motivations and listing some of my previous work that I find relevant to the research.

All artists originate their place in contemporary culture from their own activity, so that artistic research/experimentation is a conscious and, in a certain sense, emotional but also sensual complexity specifically based on subjectivity, which finds itself in its own uniqueness. The explanation of the dissertation concludes with a presentation of the master artwork, which in this case is a thematic exhibition entitled *Concurrence for No Apparent Reason*, presented in Budapest in the Hermann Hall of the Fészek Gallery between March and April 2022. This work (the exhibition) appears as a personal experiment, as a possible creative model to "proof" what is unfolded in the dissertation, in which the artist statement (commentary) is not an interpretation of the visual and not a "substitute" for visuality, but rather a living dialogue between its elements, whether it is visual or linguistic. It invites the spectator to a circular understanding, an integrative contemplation and discovery of certain resonances by creating a relational space, that can mostly opens up to the visitor as a possibility-field, which offers a kind of poetic freedom of reception rather than a definitive interpretation. During the simultaneous experience (interference) of different types of elements, the intellect involuntarily tries to synthesise, to create relational connections and constructs between seemingly unrelated things, and the hidden projections of the mind can thus reveal themselves to create "special patterns" of coherence. In a virtual net of analogies generated "randomly" on several layers, contradictions (concurrences for no apparent reason) generate a cycle and a continuous movement of ideas that stimulate, spurs the thinking imagination to efforts. In this case, the cross-mediality of the exhibition is a strategy

that engages the viewer, but also destabilises him in order to enhance and enrich the visual tension of the works through the different levels of reflection that emerge in the inter-media relations, aiming to make an impact not only on an optical or conceptual level, but also on an emotional and intellectual level.

The thesis closes with a conclusion summarising the theme of the research, by summing up its statements by reviewing the chapters, highlighting the potential answers through the questions raised in the dissertation. I claim that since the work is necessarily involved in a verbal discourse, the question for the artist is how to control it so that it can become his own message and how to use the linguistic system in a way that does not eliminate the imaginary. My aim is to point out the tensions between the somewhat contradictory mediums of image and text, and to highlight a possible form of artistic practice today that emphasises the interaction, the intermediality between the two, rather than the transmission of images. I emphasise that both the research and the presented artwork are based on the consciousness recognised and understood by both viewers and the artists, bearing in mind that through art we equally desire and hope the empathy of the unexploited, unconscious, visceral and bone-deep experiences.

Research has proved that theory and practice merge at the intersection of our active observation in the first gestures of our infant's awareness of the world, and that we live in a complete unity of theory and practice at the beginning of our existence, that is, seeing and theorising are inherently interconnected in experience. The writing of the dissertation, from the point of view of the present creative practice, was induced by the intention to synthesise *theory*, *praxis* and *poesis*. Its objective is to review interwoven phenomena that can bring us closer to the immanent dialogue between visuality and verblity that takes place hypothetically in the artist.

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