

Justyna Wencel

Artist Statement

I am interested in the questions of female identity, magical rituals in art, human relationship with Nature, personal and public memory. For several years, I have explored home as an archive and dealt with social roles of woman. I work with installation, objects, performance, video art and public art.

Bio

Visual artist working with video art, installation, objects and public art. Graduate of the Faculty of Painting, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and the Institute of English Studies, Warsaw University. Awarded the scholarship of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (2006, 2009 and 2014), and the scholarship of the Podlaskie Voivodship (2011). Received her Phd in 2012, at the Faculty of New Media and Scenography, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

Author and co-author of many public art projects devoted to the 'architecture of transformation', public memory, site-specific city area mapping projects. The latest realizations: Exercises with composition / Warsaw Under Construction Festival (2021), Labyrinth, Wrocław (2016), 0.5 km of colour, Warsaw (2015), Immersion, Gdańsk (2014), Architecture of transformation, Warsaw (2013), Skarpa! Reactivation POWER CULTURE ENTERTAINMENT, Warsaw (2011).

From Robin Levy's blog (about the exhibition in Łódź): (could it be used in the third edition?)

The video "Hereditary Traits" ("Cechy dziedziczne") embodies the ambivalence of the heritage women take over from other women. In the series of actions, the female protagonist questions the message on the role and position of woman in the house and the world. She plays with the common attributes of femininity – destroys and manipulates the meanings. False codes of femininity have to be discarded. Additionally, the music by PJ Harvey ("The Pocket Knife") seems to be particularly significant in the context of the mother-daughter relationship. The mosaic character of the film, deprived of linear narration, and the ironic configuration of female identities enhance the protagonist's imperative to follow her own way.

The year of production: "Hereditary Traits" (2012) 3:50 min

Justyna Wencel – a multimedia artist working with video, installation, objects and public art. In her works, she utilizes the history of her old family house. Uninhabited at the moment, the building and the garden became an archive full of overt meanings and moments of silence to explore. Intimate actions made into a film or metamorphosed objects speak of journey into her deep self, taken to define her own place in relation to what one calls "home". Searching for the identity of female relatives made her proceed from the personal experience to the more general perspective. In this context, her film "Hereditary Traits" embodies the ambivalence of the heritage women take over from those women who came before them.

"Hereditary Traits" is based on a rich documentation of intimate performance events conducted in my family home, garden and town. The video elaborates the story of my early adult life and identity as an artist, as a woman and as a daughter. There is no linear, organized narrative. The mosaic coverage is edited as a music video and reveals glimpses of a disturbing and sometimes grotesque constellation of clashing feminine personalities.