

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

in the field of art in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation

ARTIFICIAL PARADISES.

Hybridity in fashion photography

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Abstract

The aim of the dissertation is to outline the background to issues of identity construction in the digital world. The 'artificial paradises' of the title refer us to a technological world that is increasingly interconnected with the human being expanding its cognitive and communicative capacities. Analysing photography in this context, we can observe the relationship between fashion, identity and corporeality.

Identity is presented as an open project in which the digital image plays an important role. The function of photography is no longer to record a moment, but to create an image. Hybridity makes it the basis for further transformations. In this sense, photography has become a design tool. The above discourse is extended by the artistic works that are an integral part of the PhD:

The *Monoculture* series consists of photographs that tell the story of the clothing market in Kenya. It is flooded with counterfeit products from luxury brands that displace traditional forms of clothing. Neo-colonialism in the sphere of fashion is realized in the area of building an individual's identity based on Western patterns.

The installation *Contractual Reconstruction* refers to the visual language of ethnographic set designs, which have developed a certain convention for the representation of foreign cultures, thus imposing a certain line of interpretation on exhibitions. My reconstruction of the village is transformed into a form of fossil which is combined with images representing Nairobi generated by artificial intelligence. The training of the AI is done on closed data sets. I compare it to the excavation site where the generated images are created from archived and outdated photographs.

Imposter is an analogy of a mask and a digital avatar. Their common denominator is the function of imposing a new identity on the user. In my work, this interesting relationship of being yourself and someone else at the same time is realized using a digital image. In the exhibition, I transfer an example of a mask generated by AI into a physical area. Based on photographs of high school students from Szczecin, new images are generated based on the preferences of the young generation. The media for the works are stickers applied to electronic equipment.

Polish Paradise is a series of photographs showing Polish tourists in a looping slide show. It shows the cultural context of ideas and refers us to sunny places, exoticism, summer, holidays and the biblical Eden. The constructed scenography in the form of an island uses Polish cultural codes of paradise imagery.

Dirty Data is an object resembling a mattress. Its surface was covered with a print created from a photo database of several dozen photos of a real model. Artificial intelligence, which is in its early stages of development, deforms the human body. It is a tool that tries to imitate life, but fails.

The hybridity of the photography in the above examples illustrates the instability of the image and its dynamic matches the fluid identity of contemporary man. Fashion is distinguished from other phenomena by its dual nature: it builds individualism and at the same time provides a sense of belonging to a given group. The dissertation shows a broad spectrum representation of fashion as a social phenomenon. New identities are created, perhaps no longer just of humans, but of new digital entities.