

## Cognition through montage and mechanisms of individual memory in Bogusław Bachorczyk's art on the example of the artist's apartment-studio

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### Abstract

The present text discusses Bogusław Bachorczyk's apartment-studio in Krakow. The decorations he has been making there since 2003 have transformed into a kind of work-in-progress. These decorations, just like Bachorczyk's art, are related to the issues of memory and identity. In 2013 he started the transformation of his apartment by "lacing up the wall" with polychrome in the library room, later to embrace also other rooms. He installed into existing polychromes new elements according to the rule of montage, which has recently constituted the basic strategy of his work.

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### Introduction

- [1] In the introduction to the book published on the occasion of the exhibition *Memory. Registers and Territories* that took place at the International Cultural Centre, Jacek Purchla writes about the expanded understanding of the notion of cultural heritage and refers to Pierre Nora, who noticed that "heritage has brought an end to the age of history, nation, and monuments in favour of the age of memory, society, and identity"<sup>1</sup>. Bogusław Bachorczyk (b. 1969), one of the participants for whom memory and identity are very important, constantly creates himself as a process, constructing himself anew. The work of this artist of middle generation, transferring us to an existential and emotional dimension, is an autobiographical project of personal or even intimate nature. For Bachorczyk, his biography is the most important impulse for his work, a foundation of his art. Personal memory is artistically reworked by him. Writing about his work, which is thematically dominated by memory, Mateusz Borowski noticed that it is closer to artistic

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in: Jacek Purchla, "Rejestry i terytoria 'epoki upamiętniania'", in: *Pamięć. Rejestry i terytoria/ Memory. Registers and territories*, ed. Paulina Orłowska, Kraków 2013, 7.

creation than to the truth of the past. The essence of Bachorczyk's art is "the act of making up his own past, constructing it from available material traces, blending it together by means of open and wishful fantasies"<sup>2</sup>. A strong autobiographical element appeared in Bachorczyk's art to a large extent due to the art and essays by Józef Czapski fascinated with the work of Marcel Proust, who have influenced Bachorczyk in his youth.<sup>3</sup> Through Czapski's essays Bachorczyk became familiar with the words of Stanisław Brzozowski, whom Czapski often cited: "What is not biography, is not at all"<sup>4</sup>. After the era of Structuralism and the death of the author, there has been a shift to autobiography and cultivation of individual memory in art related among others to the career and reception of the art of Louise Bourgeois. Recently, in Bachorczyk's apartment-studio there appeared an enormous spiderweb, as if weaved by the famous *Maman*. The issue of identity and memory concern, of course, his main work, the often transformed apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street, the place where he lives and works. Bachorczyk tells through it most of all the story of himself, his life, his friends, and anything that is related to him. Just as he did almost anywhere he lived, he marks there his own "sovereignty", which is being constantly verified.<sup>5</sup>

[2] In his work in his apartment-studio Bachorczyk refers also to the memory of the place, the function of Krakow as an artistic centre in collective memory, and the changing shape of the memory of contemporary citizens. Over a hundred years ago, around 1900, Krakow was the main centre of Modernist and early avant-garde art in Poland and one of the most important artistic centres in Central Europe, with artistic capitals in Vienna and Berlin. Krakow was among the slightly smaller centres, such as Dresden and Munich. I am bringing forward this fact to emphasise not so much the qualitative context, but a topographic and historic one, through which one should regard Bachorczyk's apartment-studio, reminiscent of the tradition of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and located near Krakow's Old Town in the quarter of Piasek. It is in the vicinity of Krupnicza Street, where Stanisław Wyspiański, one of Poland's most renowned Young Poland artists was born, where Jan Matejko, Poland's greatest history painter had his studio and where Henryk Rodakowski, one of the greatest Polish portraitists lived for some time, as well as the renowned Young Poland painter, Jacek Malczewski. Also two other great Young Poland painters had lived there: Józef Mehoffer (his museum is located here) and Wojciech Weiss, whose house without any bigger changes has been preserved in the hands of his family. Two years ago on the wall of Mehoffer's house there has appeared a mural of contemporary artist

<sup>2</sup> Mateusz Borowski, "Przeszłość do wielokrotnego użytku", in: *Bogusław Bachorczyk. Pocałuj mnie w pierścioneł*, ex. cat., Kraków 2011, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Janusz Antos, "Dzienniki Józefa Czapskiego, szkicowniki Stanisława Rodzińskiego, szkicowniki Bogusława Bachorczyka", in: *Quart* 28 (2013), 115-125.

<sup>4</sup> Józef Czapski, "Romantyczność w Grand Palais", in: Józef Czapski, *Patrzac*, Kraków 1983, 343.

<sup>5</sup> Elżbieta Grabska, "Dom twórcy – weryfikacja własnej suwerenności", in: *Pracownia i dom artysty XIX i XX wieku. Mitologia i rzeczywistość. Materiały z konferencji IHS UW i SHS w Warszawie*, ed. Andrzej Pieńkos, Warszawa 2002, 21.

Mateusz Waras titled *M-city 658*, where he presented a utopian old-fashioned city-steamboat, which shows Krakow as a conservative place. Bachorczyk's apartment-studio located in the symbolically- and historically-invested texture of the city is a living and constantly changing artwork, continuously constructed like the artist's identity and open like memory, which makes it possible to identify with the past, in contrast to the usually inauthentic museum reconstructions of artists' homes, monuments of historic heritage.

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### **Bogusław Bachorczyk's apartment-studio as a house of art**

- [3] These reflections on Bachorczyk's Krakow apartment-studio work as a pretext for a research on artist homes understood a bit more broadly, following Andrzej Pieńkoś's postulates, as a territory of life and creativity, a research very much neglected by art history.<sup>6</sup> In his research, Pieńkoś did not go beyond the period of the first avant-garde movements of early 20th century. Bachorczyk's apartment-studio remains at present one of the most interesting works of this sort in Krakow. What is quite rare nowadays, the artist covered in a *horror vacui* mode the majority of walls of his apartment-studio with murals (tempera polychromes) with decorations made in various techniques, sometimes for many years, since 2003. These decorations, with their genesis and tradition close to the spirit of aesthetization of life dating back to over one hundred years ago, are characterised by a slightly provincial nature. Bachorczyk described his move to the apartment-studio in the following way:

I moved to 17 Czysta Street in winter 2003. From the very beginning I attacked the space of the new studio. Windows, doors, ceilings, and furniture were gradually covered. In the following years there was gradually less free place for art, I began to lack space and empty walls. The studio was saturated [...].<sup>7</sup>

- [4] After Romanticism we have observed the phenomenon of sacralisation of the artist's house.<sup>8</sup> When the house becomes the expression of the personality of its inhabitant we are dealing with a phenomenon of Romantic origin. In his apartment-studio Bachorczyk continues in a way the total Romantic project. However, this work is also made a hundred years after the breakthrough Hanoverian *Merzbau* by Kurt Schwitters, who made his home and his studio into a work of art. The apartment and studio in Czysta Street constitutes a recording of Bachorczyk's artistic journey, a kind of work-in-progress. As the artist noted: "The entire studio is one continuous happening"<sup>9</sup>. Possibly, his apartment-studio will be changing continuously, and the time when the artwork is made, just like in case of Schwitters's *Merzbau*, will be marked by the scope of his life. The end

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Andrzej Pieńkoś, *Dom sztuki. Siedziby artystów w nowoczesnej kulturze europejskiej*, Warszawa 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Bogusław Bachorczyk, "Apteka, biblioteka, kiosk Ruchu, telewizor", in: Bogusław Bachorczyk and Anna Bujnowska, eds., *Czysta 17. Bogusław Bachorczyk*, Kraków 2013, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pieńkoś, *Dom sztuki*.

<sup>9</sup> Bogusław Bachorczyk, *Czysta 17. 2003-2013*, typescript of habilitation dissertation owned by the artist, [2013], 3.

of autobiography is marked by the end of creation, and this end is mobile, always moving. The autobiographic art of the artist and his apartment-studio are in concord. The apartment allows one to take a closer look at his practice, to get to know his creative process. Significantly, one shall not find there any easels (the artist usually makes his work on the library floor), but there are craftsman's tools. One can also find a collection of curiosities purchased on flea market in Krakow's district of Grzegórzki, gathered and used in his works, as well as used as parts of collages installed into the walls of the apartment-studio and creating the language of his works. To make the long story very short, Bachorzcyk has gone through an evolution from *peinture de la matière* to *bricolage*. The use of authentic objects and the way they are being processes, aesthetization and artistic reworking make them testimonies that inspire our memory. The artist described the objects he collects in the following way: "I like the moment when the object loses its function. [...] In a peculiar abstract manner it activates memory, with completely no relation to its original function"<sup>10</sup>. Anna Bujnowska, the researcher of his collections and works, noted that the physicality of the objects he collects and uses creates situations that activate collective memory, bring back individual memories in every viewer. As Bujnowska suggested, collecting objects has been cumulated in "the work of the studio, the synthesis of collection and elements"<sup>11</sup>.

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### **Bricoleur**

- [5] Władysław Hasiór, recently regarded as the European Rauschenberg,<sup>12</sup> and his art had a great impact on Bachorzcyk when he was young. In particular, these were Hasiór's assemblages created from objects he bought on flea markets. Bachorzcyk was never Hasiór's student, yet he got to know the great artist and his art when he came from Stryżawa in Beskidy to Zakopane, where Hasiór lived and work. Bachorzcyk came to Zakopane to attend the Antoni Kenar High School of Visual Arts, where almost half a century earlier Hasiór studied as well. Hasiór's assemblages, created from objects sold at Indulgence celebrations with rural and small-town poetics, recall the atmosphere and memory of the past Galician province. It was through Hasiór's art that Bachorzcyk learnt how to combine objects that activate mechanisms of our memory, which would never have met in other circumstances, a method he saw in Hasiór's art before he got to know the history of 20th-century art, including Duchamp's *ready-mades*. Bachorzcyk creates his art from old and dispensable objects bought for little money from impoverished people who take them out of their homes, or from degraded waste of the big city, marked

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<sup>10</sup> "Realna fikcja. Z Bogusławem Bachorzcykiem rozmawia Anna Bujnowska", in: *Mrówkojad* 55 (2011), not paginated.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Bujnowska, "Elementy i zbiory", in: Bachorzcyk and Bujnowska, eds., *Czysta 17. Bogusław Bachorzcyk*, 81.

<sup>12</sup> Józef Chrobak, ed., *Władysław Hasiór. Europejski Rauschenberg? = European Rauschenberg?*, ex. cat., Kraków 2014.

by the memory of their owners. Recently, writing about Bachorczyk's art, a critic from Warsaw noted: "This wardrobe smells like Freud. It is the smell of Krakow [...]"<sup>13</sup>. Among the objects purchased by Bachorczyk there are often old photo albums or journals and magazines from around a dozen years ago, coming back at present through a fashion for everything *vintage*. Harrowed with hunger for images, the artist does not hesitate to rework (destroy) his findings for the purpose of his work. The act of *bricoleur* and *bricolage* that make use of mechanisms of memory are close to the strategy and technique of collage used increasingly often by the artist, who subjects various forms of expression to the technique of artistic recycling.

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### **The changes of Bogusław Bachorczyk's apartment-studio**

[6] The apartment-studio described and photographed in *Czysta 17. Bogusław Bachorczyk*<sup>14</sup> published in summer 2013 has undergone significant changes in the course of the last half a year (Fig. 1). The book, whose emergence, as it seems, has precipitated these changes, documents in a way an already historic state. It would seem that in the subtly nostalgic apartment-studio owned by Bachorczyk right in front of our eyes there took place the process of "museification" (which would contradict its very essence) and that it changed into yet another Krakow museum, in this case an expression of nostalgia for safety and a camp idea of "familiarity"<sup>15</sup>. The artist himself was to some extent reminiscent of the protagonist of Adolf Loos's essay *The Poor Little Rich Man* from 1900. With the significant difference that it was him who created the house where, as Loos ironically noted: "When he turned a door handle he grabbed hold of art, when he sank into a chair he sank into art [...]". At one moment, to his terror, in this house where "before he realised art was captured, petrified in forms", just like Loos's protagonist "He felt: Now is the time to learn to walk about with one's own corpse. Indeed! He is finished! He is complete!"<sup>16</sup>

[7] For the motto for the changes taking place in his "total studio" Bachorczyk chose the words of the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé: "Nothing takes place but the place"<sup>17</sup>. Change, which is a generative rule of Bachorczyk's art, has begun with "lacing up the wall" in the library on 11 May 2013 between 8.00 am and 9.00 pm within the framework of the project *Thirteen Hours*, run by a group of students of the Ludwik Solski Academy

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<sup>13</sup> Jan Gondowicz, *Muzeum (utraconej) Niewinności*, unpublished text from 2014 from the artist's archive.

<sup>14</sup> Bachorczyk and Bujnowska, eds., *Czysta 17. Bogusław Bachorczyk*.

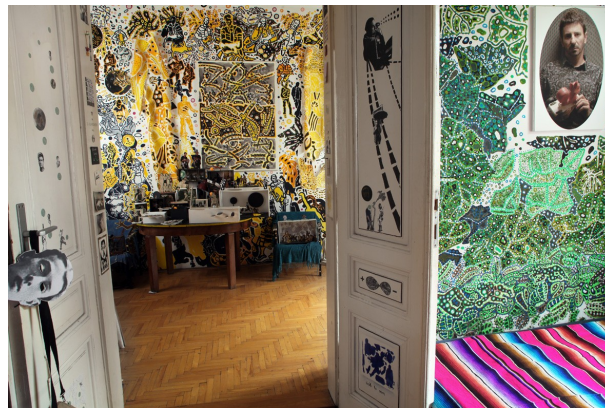
<sup>15</sup> Cf. Janusz Antos, "Mieszkanie-pracownia Bogusława Bachorczyka", in: Bachorczyk and Bujnowska, eds., *Czysta 17. Bogusław Bachorczyk*, 7-16.

<sup>16</sup> Adolf Loos, "Poor Little Rich Man", in: August Sarnitz, *Adolf Loos, 1870–1933. Architect, Cultural Critic, Dandy*, New York 2003, 18–21.

<sup>17</sup> Bachorczyk, *Czysta 17*.

of Dramatic Arts in Krakow under the supervision of Szymon Czacki, an actor of the Stary Theatre (Fig. 2).

It was – Bachorczyk wrote – an over ten-hour-long physical work which integrated the group very much. Like spiders, the actors put on the wall over a dozen of kilometres of black thread. I dedicated the entire event to Alfred Kubin, the author of the novel *The Other Side*, to Louise Bourgeois for her *Spider* sculptures and Odilon Redon for his dark and oneiric paintings.<sup>18</sup>



1 A view of the library from the bedroom in Bogusław Bachorczyk's apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street in Krakow, before changes introduced in 2013 (photo by Grzegorz Wójtowicz and Jacek Ura – Squeeze Dreams Studio)



2 Participants of "lacing up the wall" with Bogusław Bachorczyk (second from the right) on 11 May 2013 in his apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street in Krakow (photo by Wilhelm Bielawa)

- [8] "The laced up walls", the covering of mural in the library, was meant to help repress the past from memory, to forget it. As psychology teaches, repression is one of usual unconscious defence mechanisms that let one to deal with internal conflicts to protect one's personality. Both remembering, as well as repression/ forgetting require constant redefinitions and search for the best space for existence.<sup>19</sup> Repressed memories still exist, yet they are not accessible to consciousness. This process requires continuous effort and is anything but one-time only. As Aleida Assman argued, "individual memory is

<sup>18</sup> Bachorczyk, Czysta 17, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Traba, "Konieczność zapominania, czyli jak sobie radzić z *ars oblivionis*", in: *Herito* 13 (2013), 22-29, here 23.

a dynamic medium of subjective working through experiences"<sup>20</sup>. The transparency of the weaved "spiderweb" enhances a kind of game between remembering and forgetting, for memory is open. Memories, just like histories, are constructs that become transformed in time, serving the changing needs, as well as being adapted to new circumstances.

"Lacing up the wall" with a weaved "spiderweb" of rhizomatic structure can also be interpreted as a guarantee of safety, as protection of memory. Covering up the mural with "the web of memory" provides its ultimate shelter. As Ewa Domańska noted, postmodernism considers memory a tool for liberating groups that history deprived of voice. "Memory became a useful tool for analysing diversity and difference especially in the field of postcolonial studies, as well as gender studies [...]"<sup>21</sup>.

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### **The change of the library at Bogusław Bachorczyk's apartment-studio**

[9] The first one to be changed and subjectively reworked was the initially decorated living room which hosts the artist's library with a large-scale painting made during a scholarship in Nuremberg in 2005, titled *Korniki Wita Stwosza* [*Veit Stoss's Bark Beatles*] (Fig. 3). At each side there are two Madonnas made of perforated paper. Painted in yellow and black with acrylic on canvas and enriched with round perforations and collages, the painting addresses the issue of the passing of time and it had determined the colours of the interior. Previously, this room was dominated by a huge philodendron, whose leaves inspired the tempera mural of autobiographical nature. Between the leaves of the philodendron there were multiple representations of the artist's close friend and his cat (cat is a symbol of sensuality and desire). As Tomasz Maruszewski noted: "autobiographic memory stores a peculiar kind of experience – these are experiences relating to oneself and experiences of the relations with other people"<sup>22</sup>. During the transformation, into the centre of the "laced up" mural there was installed the figure of a "communist" often used by Bachorczyk (cut out from the continuously reworked photograph-souvenir of the artist's First Communion), a photograph of a SS-soldier and figures transforming into salamanders, appearing also on the margins of the decorations, where there are also pictures of figures transforming into pupas and a spider from the time-lapse films made in this space in summer 2013. Recently, the artist has begun to make this kind of time-lapse films. The installed representations constitute a media intervention into the mural executed in traditional techniques. The recurring figure of the "communist" is reworked by Bachorczyk (made smaller or enlarged) and mediated, thus activating multiple frameworks of reference. Montages, through which the artist creates his own past and narratives about his life, are aestheticised, "pleasant for the eye". They

<sup>20</sup> Aleida Assmann, "Cztery formy pamięci", in: Aleida Assmann, *Między historią a pamięcią. Antologia*, ed. Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska, Warszawa 2013, 39-57, here 43.

<sup>21</sup> Ewa Domańska, ed., *Pamięć, etyka i historia: anglo-amerykańska teoria historiografii lat dziewięćdziesiątych (antologia przekładów)*, Poznań 2002, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Tomasz Maruszewski, *Pamięć autobiograficzna*, Gdańsk 2005, 73.

are a part of the peripheral struggle of the artist with a modern form (the best example of this is, as the artist defined it, his "rural Modernism" inspired with Constructivist sculpture). The works made with the technique of montage have undergone "museification" long ago, which in this case (through installing them into the mural) brings them closer to a traditional technique of wall painting, and moves further from politics and mass culture.<sup>23</sup> In Bachorczyk's work one may trace a sort of anti-Modernist feature (present in Polish culture in general). The "laced up" wall (Fig. 4) has become a background for the following photo shoots and films: *Salamander*, *Cocoon*, *Spider*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Housework*, *Bad Education*. The figures from photo shoots and time-lapse films installed in it open the access to the optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis.<sup>24</sup> It also provided a set for the shooting of an ironic film *Housework* with Szymon Czacki as the artist's double, who uses a duster to clean the dust gathering on the "spiderweb" that laces up the mural. The soundtrack is provided by a sentimental and kitschy song about love that will never die, Céline Dion's *My Heart Will Go On* from James Cameron's *Titanic*. We are not fully certain whether this is just the dust covering the apartment, or whether it also covers the artist's memory together with precious memories.



3 Bogusław Bachorczyk, wall decoration and painting *Korniki Wita Stwosza [Veit Stoss' Bark Beatles]* from 2005 in the library at the artist's apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street in Krakow, before the changes introduced in 2013 (photo by Grzegorz Wójtowicz and Jacek Ura – Squeeze Dreams Studio)

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Stanisław Czekalski, *Awangarda i mit racjonalizacji. Fotomontaż polski okresu dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, Poznań 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility", in: Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, transl. Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone, Howard Eiland, and Others, Cambridge MA 2008, 19–56, here 36.





4 Bogusław Bachorczyk, mural in the library at the artist's apartment-studio at 17 Czysa Street in Krakow "laced up" on 11 May 2013, as seen in 2014 (photo by Sławomir Bobola)

- [10] In *Instincts and their Vicissitudes* from 1915 Sigmund Freud argued that repression and sublimation is just one of several possible mechanisms.<sup>25</sup> Freud's writing should be born in mind when reflecting on Bachorczyk's work.

Image matters to me – wrote Bachorczyk – at the moment when I am ashamed to show it. I often need to work through for myself this field of shame which stems from my upbringing, tradition, culture, and the ways of the world. I need to wait, to tame it.<sup>26</sup>

- [11] As far as "lacing up the wall" is concerned it is about covering-up ("lacing up") an already disclosed work. It is a kind of reversal. What also comes to mind is the myth of Arachne, a weaver, who called Pallas Athena to compete with her and presented in her work the loves of gods, which made the goddess so angry she tore the fabric apart. Arachne, who hanged herself, she turned into a spider, and her thread into spiderweb. In June 2013 the apartment-studio underwent a redecoration. "The studio got new windows, balcony doors, repainted walls and floors while preserving the layers of memory of the preceding periods"<sup>27</sup>. It needs to be noted that the layers of memory from Bachorczyk's previous apartment-studio at 27, Koletek Street in Krakow, where he lived as a student, including the ceiling painting inspired with Matisse's *Dance*, were partly preserved. The artist, when leaving the place, fetishistically transferred parts of the paintings onto two canvas. From Koletek Street he moved to the apartment-studio at 17 Czysa street, where they are stored at present, like in a museum storage room.

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<sup>25</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Instincts and their Vicissitudes", in: *The Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 14 (1914–1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, ed. James Strachey, London 2001, 126.

<sup>26</sup> Bachorczyk, Czysa 17, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Bachorczyk, Czysa 17, 5.

### The transformation of the bedroom in Bogusław Bachorczyk's apartment-studio

[12] Other rooms have also undergone some changes, they include new elements on the wall, floors, and ceilings. The bedroom is decorated with a emerald-green-blue tempera polychrome with a motif of burdock leaf (a memory and a return to childhood) (Fig. 5).

The bedroom received printouts with elements of a photo shoot dedicated to Nijinsky, and in particular to his figure of Faun danced by Mateusz Wojtasiński. There is also a new wall, which is a collection of my favourite motifs – wrote the artist – that I collect in my computer archive (people – writers, actors, models, artists, soldiers, sportsmen; objects – jewellery, arms, toys; animals – insects, dogs, birds), while the whole constitutes a portrait of a man living at the turn of the centuries.<sup>28</sup>



5 Bogusław Bachorczyk, wall decoration over the bed in the bedroom in the artist's apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street in Krakow, as seen before the changes in 2013 (photo by Bogusław Bachorczyk)

[13] Older painted decorations are gradually filled with montage, which becomes the artist's basic strategy. Among the burdock leaves painted over the bed there is installed a figure of a lewd Faun, an old Italian god of fertility, an alter ego of the artist, embodied by Mateusz Wojtasiński (Fig. 6). Faun was also a god of free nature and mountain forests. Over burdock leaves Bachorczyk (the catcher of butterflies) stuck cutout butterflies (the symbol of ephemeral beauty), which can only be found in Beskidy, where he comes from. Over the bed there is his photographic portrait by Michał Sosna, where the artist made corrections, showing his gender-inspired personality. The remaining walls include a photographic dossier he collected, creating narratives about contemporary men of different status, usually found in the chaos of the Internet, printed by him, traditionally cut with scissors or a razor blade, and stuck onto the wall to create a montage of images. He juxtaposes these images by means of analogy (mysterious resemblance), and not chronology, which brings them closer to poetry. As a visual artist he found it easy to apply Wittgenstein's suggestion that what cannot be said or proved should be shown.

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<sup>28</sup> Bachorczyk, Czysta 17, 5.



6 Bogusław Bachorczyk, wall decoration over the bed in the bedroom in the artist's apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street in Krakow, as seen after the changes in 2013 (photo by Sławomir Bobola)

[14] In his bedroom Bachorczyk has tens of his sketchbook-diaries, dating back to his early school sketchbooks (Fig. 7 and 8). He started making them in the High School for Visual Arts in Zakopane. It is this archive of memory where one can find the beginning of Bachorczyk's work as a permanent work-in-progress. His sketchbook-diaries, characterised by additive and discontinuous nature, reflect the "organised chaos" of his oeuvre.<sup>29</sup> As he wrote:

I made a decision that I would like to expand my world to include stories, memory, and culture, the so-called exterior elements, to expand it, complete it, to direct a real fiction. I really love – he declared – to tell stories. I need to disclose stories of other people, places, objects that I collect around me; whatever I remember I gather, I collect. [...] Perhaps it is the act of finding links between things that do not match, that are incompatible, yet linked through a mysterious resemblance that is my true task.<sup>30</sup>



7 Bogusław Bachorczyk, wall decorations in the bedroom at the artist's apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street in Krakow, as seen after the changes in 2013 (photo by Sławomir Bobola)

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'oeil de l'histoire: Tome 1, Quand les images prennent position*, Paris 2009, Polish edition: *Strategie obrazów. Oko historii 1*, transl. Janusz Margański, Warszawa – Kraków, 2011, 20.

<sup>30</sup> Bachorczyk, *Czysta 17*, 1.



8 Bogusław Bachorczyk, wall decorations in the bedroom at the artist's apartment-studio at 17 Czysta Street in Krakow, as seen after the changes in 2013 (photo by Sławomir Boboła)

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## Montage

[15] Montage, displacement, and re-composition constitute Bachorczyk's artistic strategy. In *Quand les images prennent position* Georges Didi-Huberman analyses cognition through montage, which is an alternative to the standard historical knowledge. Poetic composition, which actually is a decomposition, reveals an infinite number of previously unnoticed motifs<sup>31</sup>. The strategy of montage is a mechanism which in Bachorczyk's art stimulates the game between various forms of memory (individual and collective). The art of montage rests its effectiveness upon memory,<sup>32</sup> becoming a tool of liberation of otherness and difference.

"I am being submerged" – the artist stated – in my accidental findings as long as I manage to make them complete each other somehow. Bricoleur is a person who uses his own hands, using whatever he has at hand, "readymade", already existing elements that he adapts for his own purposes, manipulates them, and invests them with a new meaning in a new arrangement. And because nothing is really given to us, we have nothing at our disposal, and through no direct experience are we able to get to know ourselves – everything is made possible only through montage, which constructs the object in its temporality, physicality, materiality, as well as cognisability. And if this is the case, then it means that any object has to be made up of some elements – for example assembled or deprived of the narrative of the victors – these fluid, spontaneous, linear, perfect, complete narratives that actually serve only the falsification of reality, rendering impossible any emergence of an image as such.<sup>33</sup>

[16] Bachorczyk floods us with images that are increasingly often found in the Internet rather than in flea markets. He does so in accordance with Jan Działkowski's collage's title: *Everything belongs to me because I'm poor*,<sup>34</sup> which in general can be seen as the governing idea behind his art. Peter Bürger, a theoretician of the avant-garde, noted that

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<sup>31</sup> Didi-Huberman, *Strategie obrazów*.

<sup>32</sup> Didi-Huberman, *Strategie obrazów*, 33.

<sup>33</sup> Bachorczyk, *Czysta 17*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Jan Działkowski, *Kolaże*, Kraków 2007, 34.

the refusal to create a coherent meaning inherent in the technique of collage and montage is received as a shock, whose result should be a change of the way one behaves. At the same time, he noticed that nothing works as briefly as shock, which is a one-time experience, later only "consumed"<sup>35</sup>. When creating his aesthetic, assimilated collages, Bachorzcyk works relatively fast, although sometimes the montage he makes can be time-consuming. It is because he never ceases to search for missing elements or to expand the limits of cognition, refusing to accept easy and simple solutions. The space of his apartment-studio, as Patrycja Cembrzyńska suggested, becomes a space for the de-assembly of the world.<sup>36</sup>

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## Conclusion

[17] The incessantly changing apartment-studio of Bogusław Bachorzcyk is an autobiographical project of personal and intimate nature. It is only at first glance that it seems to be a contemporary version of a *Wunderkammer*, for the hidden goal of every autobiography is an attempt to find order of life in a labyrinth of memories. In his work, Bachorzcyk tries to find, create, and verify his and others' past, which, as Borowski noted, has become "the past of multiple use – it has lost its final shape, yet it has gained the ability to adapt to yet new contexts and situations"<sup>37</sup>. Both in his apartment-studio, as well as in individual works Bachorzcyk uses montage (especially collage), whose essence consists in activating the mechanisms of memory. The transformation of the apartment-studio in 2013, starting with "lacing up the wall" in the library, moves towards the increasingly intense dis-assembly of the past, towards its representation as discontinuous montages, mediated collage images linked through analogy (mysterious resemblance) that refer us to our memory. At the same time, Bachorzcyk invites the viewer to create from all these elements our own narratives, activating through his artistic means a series of our recollections and associations.

*Translated by Karolina Kolenda*

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, transl. Michael Shaw, Minneapolis 1984, 81.

<sup>36</sup> Patrycja Cembrzyńska, "Nieśmiertelniki", in: Bachorzcyk and Bujnowska, eds., *Czysta 17. Bogusław Bachorzcyk*, 163.

<sup>37</sup> Borowski, *Przeszłość do wielokrotnego użytku*, 20.