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THEATRE PHOTOGRAPHY AS A COUNTERFACTUAL REPRESENTATION OF AESTHETIC REALITY

Summary. The article is an attempt at applying the concept of counterfactuality, typically employed with reference to narrative forms, to the analysis of visual culture, particularly to theatre photography. The material for case studies is provided by the works of Polish photographers who redefine the function of this form of photography. Typically, photography is seen by theatre historians as the prime form of theatre documentation, and therefore treated as subservient to the needs of theatre studies as an academic discipline. Contrary to that, the photographic projects analysed in the present paper (particularly those of Ryszard Kornecki and Magda Hueckel), although made in theatre during performances, have been produced and distributed as autonomous art forms which neither represent nor document theatre productions. In the analysis of these projects, I employ Margaret Olin's concept of "performative index", which describes the relationship between the image and the viewer as a dynamic creation of meaning. With reference to this theoretical framework, I argue that counterfactuality of theatre photography is a strategy of turning this medium into an autonomous form of art.

Keywords: theatre photography, counterfactuality, speculative gesture, documentation, theatre reception, performative index, theatre studies, theory of photography, Polish theatre, Ryszard Kornecki, Magda Hueckel.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THEATRE

It might seem that theatre photography cannot be counterfactual. After all, it is supposed to document reality—in this case, a theatrical performance. After all, theatre is an ephemeral form of art which tends to evade all attempts at recording it, even by technologically advanced media, but at the same time requires registration to become part of historical narratives. Polish theorist, curator, and critic of photography, Wojciech Nowicki, succinctly highlights the relationship between theatre and photography, pointing out the tensions and differences that arise between the two:

> Despite all attempts at avoiding them, openness and changeability lie at the core of the theatre, which ultimately dies a sudden death. Contrary to that, photography, is typified by an unchangeable stone-like duration. Arguably it is here that we come upon the ontological difference between a theatre performance and its photographic registration.[1]

Nowicki's description is indicative of a serious difficulty in achieving correspondence between a performance and its photographic representation. As he stresses in the above-quoted passage, photography differs from theatre with respect to its relationship with time. Photography freezes a moment of the temporal flow. Theatre, on the contrary, is extended in time until the end of the performance, when the curtain falls in the literal or metaphorical sense. As long as a play remains in the repertory, it may reappear in front of a different audience. Photography might seem to counteract the ephemerality and changeability of theatre by registering a given moment from a performance. Nowicki comments on the imperfection of repetition in theatre:

> A theatre performance is based on duration; a photograph is given instantaneously in its entirety. Theatrical repetition is never full; a photography is created so as to endlessly and faithfully reflect events and objects.[2]

Hence, a photograph as a repetition should be identical to the moment it represents, which is virtually impossible in theatre, where an iteration is never perfect.

It is not Nowicki who introduced the division between arts experienced in time and those experienced "instantaneously" in their entirety. This typology echoes Michael Fried's seminal and often criticized essay "Art and Objecthood", published in *Artforum* in 1967. Fried, trying to grasp the essence of minimalist— or, as he calls it, "literalist"—art, seeks recourse to the notions of theatre and theatricality. He opposes theatre to painting and sculpture, both of which generate temporal experiences although they themselves do not have a durational character. As Fried writes:

> The literalist preoccupation with time—more precisely, with the duration of the experience—is, I suggest, paradigmatically theatrical, as though theater confronts the beholder, and thereby isolates him, with the endlessness not just of objecthood but of time; or as though the sense which, at bottom, theater addresses is a sense of temporality, of time both passing and to come, simultaneously approaching and receding, as if apprehended in an infinite perspective...[3]

Therefore, according to Fried, the fundamental difference between theatre and fine arts lies in the way they are experienced. The same difference can be identified between a theatre performance and its photographic record.

Nowicki's observations, which refer to Fried's article, provide a ground for suggesting that theatre photography has a counterfactual character. However, it needs to be noted that counterfactuality has been typically connected with narrative but not with visuality or photography. Counterfactuality primarily refers to creative fiction that verifies the actual state of knowledge about something. Such a verification, however, does not have to be carried out by means of a narrative.

COUNTERFACTUALITY

An attempt at describing counterfactual practices in theatre photography requires introducing a few fundamental notions and, particularly, defining the relationship between theatre photography and counterfactuality. First, I should draw a link between counterfactuality and visual representation. As already mentioned, counterfactuality is typically associated with narrativity, which photography lacks. Counterfactuality is a critical examination of that which is commonly accepted as "true", "actual", and "documented". It is a revision of a narrative, based on a speculative gesture. As Małgorzata Sugiera argues with reference to Isabelle Stengers's studies, this gesture does not separate truth from falsity but, rather, makes it possible to simultaneously develop multidirectional lines of reasoning. As a result, it does not undermine facts but, rather, the assumptions and methodologies prevalent in a given discipline. The relationship between the actual and that which is possibly true or false is conditional. It is not by accident that the phrase "what if" has recently appeared in titles of several publications on counterfactuality, which suggests that their aim is to put existing knowledge into question. Suffice it to mention Jeremy Black's *What If? Counterfactualism and The Problem of History* or *What If? The World's Foremost Military History Imagine What Might Have Been*, edited by Robert Cowley.[4] Black and the authors of the articles gathered in Cowley's volume focus exclusively on counterfactuality in narrative genres. Does it make sense to look for counterfactuality in theatre photography, which does not employ the "what if" rhetoric, prevalent in those cultural texts which fulfil the counterfactual function? It would be problematic to justify the narrative character of photography. Narrativity could be identified in cycles and photographic reportages but not in individual photographs. In the latter case it would be justified to speak about narrative when it shows a fleeting but dynamic moment when many things happen simultaneously. However, are these the only instances?

Common phraseology connects photography with the verb "to look at", which suggests a passive perception of a stable image. A fable or a narrative might appear as a result of active reception on the part of the viewer only when an image is "read"— another verb sometimes used with reference to

photography.[5] Reading photography is an active process which yields fictionality and narrativity, but their appearance can be proven only in a meticulously described context of reception. Texts of visual culture are currently very widespread and thus also require analysis in the context of counterfactuality which, as Jeremy Black argues, significantly contributes to production of historical knowledge. If we take a cue from Black and treat counterfactual strategy as a stage in the process of knowledge production as well as consider today's popularity and critical cultural role of visual culture, it turns out that counterfactuality is practiced in various visual representations. It is present not only in narrative forms such as film, for example, Karol Radziszewski's and Dorota Sajewska's *Książę* (2014) about the renowned Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski. This staged documentary shows the director through the prism of his most famous performance, *The Constant Prince*, based on the play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca. The film does not recreate critical events from Grotowski's life and artistic career but questions the received knowledge about his personality, the legend of the actor Ryszard Cieślak, and the place of women in Grotowski's theatre. Counterfactuality can also be identified in non-narrative artistic forms such as painting (take Michał Bylina's *Lenino*, which misrepresents reality for purposes of propaganda and, contrary to historical sources, shows excellently equipped Polish soldiers) or theatre photography which can present performances in a counterfactual way, putting into question the common knowledge about their structure and themes. The documentary character of theatre photography conditions its counterfactuality. Viewers expect representation but are very often confronted with counterfactual presentation. Representation is based on a mimetic relationship, whereas presentation is a much wider notion and allows for non-mimetic relationships, therefore, it does not imitate that which is shown. The dominant view that a theatre photograph refers to a single performance, particularly its structure and theme, enables an effective verification—viewers can doubt the received understanding of the theatre or the account

of a stage production and take a different version into account.

THEATRE PHOTOGRAPHY

What is theatre photography? The answer is far from obvious, particularly in the context of my argument, based on the assumption that theatre photography has a great artistic, creative, and performative potential, rather than a purely documentary function, which, however, should not be foreclosed. I treat theatre photography as a medium which, on the one hand, documents theatre but, on the other hand, creates its image, especially that of particular performances. It represents performance outside of theatrical context, in a place from which theatre cannot speak for itself. Theatre photography is situated across boundaries—it is located not only at the border of document and art but also of theatre and photography.[6] In this peculiar situation, one type of art presents another. The transboundary character of theatre photography also influences its possible counterfactual function.

Cultural theorists, theatre scholars, and other theorists who took interest in theatre photography did not focus on its aesthetic qualities or composition but, rather, its documentary and artistic functions, and the ontological tension resulting from its transboundary character. It is around this transboundary status of theatre photography that, for example, philosopher of culture Michał Markiewicz[7] or the aforementioned Wojciech Nowicki[8] construct their reflection. Theatre photography no longer serves the purpose that Agnieszka Wanicka ascribed to it in *Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego* (Encyclopaedia of Polish Theatre). She treated it as "documentary photography which should record the set design, stage situations, and the actors playing characters in a given play so as to accurately render the atmosphere and the course of the performance" and as "portrait photography of the actors in their roles and privately."[9] Today, theatre photography has broadened the scope of its functions and very often advertises theatre as an institution or a particular stage production. However, in the academic and artistic context, the popular belief seems to be that it

is chiefly a theatrical document. For example, theatre critic Anna Szymonik, although appreciative of the artistic quality of theatre photography, attaches more value to its documentary function:

> Theatre photography is hardly ever recognized by spectators as autonomous art. We tend to perceive it as a document that records a fleeting theatre performance. It stands to reason, because this branch of photography is primarily documentary.[10]

This view is shared by the director of Theatre Institute in Warsaw, Dorota Buchwald, who, as she herself stresses, is mainly preoccupied with documenting theatre productions. She makes an even more decisive claim:

> Having been documenting theatre (from the point of view of both theory and practice) for over twenty years and having seen tens or maybe even hundreds of thousands of photographs and negatives, I have no doubt, or even, I am deeply convinced that photography—despite the development of other, seemingly more effective means and technologies of registering and preserving theatre productions—is a document which maybe is not perfect, because no medium is, but renders and preserves the essence of the art of theatre in the best way.[11]

Buchwald insists that photography is the most effective form of documenting theatre. For this reason she denies it the right to be a domain of artistic practice and disapproves of creative ambitions of photographers: "Its aim is not a noble act of non-interference, 'arresting' the ephemerality of theatre, grasping its spiritistic nature, reaching its core."[12] Buchwald adds that contemporary photographers "try to be on a par with the directors of the stage production as co-creators."[13] She criticises any attempts of photographers to go beyond the purely documentary function, chastising their arrogance and their creative and artistic ambitions, incommensurate with the task which they should fulfil. However, since the turn of the 21st century, the expectations of audiences and critics towards theatre photography keep getting higher. It is no longer supposed to solely document theatre performances. Suffice it to note the popularity of theatre photography, the new ways of presenting and using it: it can fulfil an aesthetic (producing an effect on viewers) as well as a critical function (providing evidence for the critics' claims). The latter came to prominence, for example, when *The Curse*, directed by Oliver Frljić, premièred in Powszechny Theater in Warsaw in 2017. Right-wing critics tried to prove that the production is sacrilegious, referring to photographs from the performance, published in reviews. The production had a political agenda, was full of vivid metaphors, and critically employed national symbols and dogmas of catholic faith. All that was regarded by right-wing media as unjustified controversy. Functions other than documentary do not have to be a by-product of a photographer's work, because he or she very often has a different aim in view than to produce a picture which can be archived. At the same time, theatre photography is never bereft of documentary value—it is always a trace of that which happened in front of the camera and points at the one who took the picture.[14] This, however, does not exclude its performative and counterfactual features. Michał Markiewicz, in an interesting way, wrote about creativity as a necessary condition for counterfactuality in theatre photography. He argues that a theatre photographer can only record only a fragment of a performance, a single scene or situation, "but taking a moment out of movement or isolating a gesture can produce spectacular and symbolic effects, even though it does not inform about what actually happened."[15] Therefore, theatre photography works with symbols and metaphors so as to extract meaning from an isolated fragment of a performance. Markiewicz notes that this "isolated fragment" cannot carry information about an entire performance, which viewers could easily read: "such a degree of reduction and symbolization allows us to treat the photographer as 'creative.'"[16] A photographer cannot present an entire performance but must creatively show its fragments. His or her creativity is implied by the impossibility of a perfect registering of a stage production. Theatre photography has other functions besides documentary, and its creativity

can be associated with counterfacuality, because a photographer, as an artist who looks at the theatre from the outside, provides new vantage points and reflections.

Photography is a sign which results from a previous event (the taking of the picture). In this case, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is close or even causal, just like an imprint of a shoe sole in soft ground testifying to someone having walked there. It was Charles Sanders Peirce who introduced the notion of photography as an indexical medium, a concept subsequently borrowed by Roland Barthes in his book on photography.[17] What has been appropriated from Peirce by literary theory and cultural studies is the typology of signs divided into indexical, iconic, and symbolic.[18] Margaret Olin, professor of art history from Yale University, lucidly explains the notion of indexicality of photographs, at the same time emphasising their iconicity:

> In Peirce, as in most discussions of photography, the index is opposed to the icon, which represents its object through resemblance. In relation to photography, similarity generally means visual resemblance: a photographed portrait, like a painted one, is an icon. An index, however, represents its object through contact: it points at its object, or it is itself a trace of, or mark made by, that object. A thumbprint is an index. Because the item had to be there for an indexical representation of it to exist, it is often thought that an index is inherently more persuasive than an icon. A photograph is both an icon and an index; it is like an icon with a seal of approval, or, as Barthes calls it, a "certificate of presence."[19]

Olin concurs with Barthes that a photographed object must be in front of the camera. For this reason, indexicality is a more significant aspect of photography than iconicity, understood as similarity between the signifier and the signified. Theorists of theatre and photography tend to believe that photography is necessarily indexical as an outcome of a meeting of the photographer with the photographed, a trace of an event or someone's presence behind the camera. This applies to theatre photography too and

undermines the binary opposition between creativity and indexicality, introduced by Markiewicz. As he argues, "theatre photography does not refer directly to its object. It is a creation, not an imprint."[20] Peirce's index originates from a passive "imprint", a "trace" of reality, but it is typified by a performative potential which has fundamental significance for the counterfactuality of theatre photography. This becomes particularly evident if we follow in Barthes's and Olin's footsteps and assume that even when theatre photography has an artistic quality, it does not lose indexicality. An object represented in a picture has had to exist in a given space and time, which guarantees the indexical nature of photography. Consequently, a photograph is a trace of the existence of a person, thing, or situation. As Barthes argues, "in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there.*"[21] Treating theatre photography as deprived of indexicality seems unjustified in view of Margaret Olin's concept of indexicality of photography. Commenting on Barthes's essay, she argues in favour of the performativity of index:

> A reading of *Camera Lucida* suggests that the most significant indexical power of the photography may consequently lie not in the relations between the photograph and its subject but in the relations between the photograph and its beholder, or user, in what I would like to call "performative index" or an "index of identification."[22]

Olin posits that, while researching photography, it is worthwhile to shift emphasis away from the relationship between the image and the object towards the relationship between the photograph and the recipient. As she admits, Barthes's book, which inspired and informed her writing, is focused on the close relationship between a photograph and its object, with little space devoted to the question of reception.[23] She points out that indexicality does not necessitate passive reception of a photograph—instead of a recipient, she writes about a user of photography, to stress the active reception of the image. Therefore, performativity of an index results from the fact that a photograph exerts a different impact on every user who has free access to any

cultural artefact. From my point of view, the counterfactuality of theatre photography results from the relationship between a photograph and its user. Photographs gain meaning only in a relationship with a recipient, as a result of a process of establishing the meaning of an image—a process which may yield counterfactual interpretations.

Photography easily yields itself to semiotic analysis and semiosis. However, semiotics does not fully account for the emergence of the meaning of a photograph, because it is primarily concerned with conventional denotation. As the examples which I analyse below demonstrate, in the context of theatre photography, the relationship between photographic signs and the recipient is highly unstable and depends on a variety of contextual factors which can influence the process of reception. In other words, in the process of reception, photographs lose the indexical link with their context of origin and gain a counterfactual character.

COUNTERFACTUALITY OF THEATRE PHOTOGRAPHY: KORNECKI

I would like to discuss some examples of photographs which fulfil counterfactual function and thus prove the possibility of counterfactuality in photography. A few photographs by Ryszard Kornecki, which evince counterfactual qualities, document the staging of *Odprawa posłów greckich* (The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys) directed by Michał Zadara. The performance, based on the first Polish drama written in 1577 by Jan Kochanowski, premièred in Helena Modrzejewska's Stary Theatre in Kraków in 2007. The play tells the story of the arrival of Greek envoys to Troy to take away Helen who was captured by Alexander (Paris). It is one of the envoys who informs Helen about the meeting in which her fate has been decided by Trojans. She has no influence on her future and can do nothing but wait. Ultimately, Helen is not allowed to leave, and the Greeks start to prepare for the war foreseen by Cassandra.

Zadara remained faithful to the play on the textual level. Set design was ascetic and austere, neither literal nor clearly metaphorical. It was described by Beata Guczalska in the following way:

The spectators sit on the stage, the performance space is a small white rectangle on the floor. But this space is also open to the empty auditorium. At some point, in the last rows, quite far from the audience, the actors appear. However, at the start of the performance, they stand very close, right in front of the spectators.[24]

The audience sat on the stage and seemed to be an integral part of the set design. As a consequence, the performance space acquired an intimate quality. The dominant element was the white floor, contrasted with stains of red paint and bodies of actors—naked or wearing dark clothes. The reinterpretation of the play offered by Zadara thrived on the tension that arose on stage between the characters. As Guczalska argues:

The arrangement of roles as a set of contradictory, clashing individual sequences and fragments—where each line, the dominant atmosphere, and aesthetic quality are immediately undermined, reflected in a distorting mirror—thwarts the audience's expectations towards the playtext, whose content and message seem all too obvious. Setting the text delivered so beautifully and with utmost precision into a system of mutually contradictory stage actions allows the spectators to listen to it and discover it anew.[25]

Zadara produced a performance based on a classical text without intervening into the dramaturgical fabric of the text but verifying its meaning and message by means of other solutions, particularly by manipulating the stage-audience relationship.

Even though Kornecki's photographs cannot refer to the textual layer of the performance, they show the stage figures and the tensions between them. Interestingly, both the performance and its photographic recording focus on the same aspect—relationships between the characters. The effects, however, are entirely different. Kornecki's images show the performance from a point of view unavailable to the audience. The spectators watched the performance from the stage, where they were

seated, whereas the auditorium became an element of the set design. Sitting on stage, one can see the world from the actors' point of view. This reversal of traditional theatrical conventions had crucial consequences for the reception of the performance. In his photographs, Kornecki did not show the performance through the spectator's eyes, from the stage, but took photographs from the auditorium, at various distances from the set design proper, that is, from the white square located downstage, right in front of the audience (Fig. 1). He also shows the performance from the sides and from above (Fig. 2). Kornecki differently emphasises the tensions between the characters, thus verifying the common knowledge about the performance spread by descriptions and reviews (not only by Guczalska's review published in the oldest Polish theatre magazine but also by Paweł Sztarbowski's text[26] from the same issue, as well as essays by Monika Kwaśniewska and Ewa Miodońska-Brookes which came out in the popular theatre magazine "Didaskalia"[27]). His photographs show the performance from a perspective which is alternative to the point of view of the audience. The images distort the spatial relationships of the actual stage design by creating an impression that the action took place in a small, intimate space. Kornecki encloses the space of the performance in narrow frames, thus obliterating the auditorium with empty chairs as a key element of the set design. He prefers close-ups to wide angles, which makes it impossible to see the playing area and all spatial relations. The viewer's attention is directed to the characters, their emotions and relationships. However, contrary to a stage production, photographs cannot influence the audience's understanding of the playtext. They bring the emotional layer to the foreground, while the montage enables viewers to imagine an alternative plotline of the performance. Any arrangement of selected moments from the performance obliterates large chunks of the actual course of events, and it is entirely up to the viewers to fill those gaps and provide them with meaning. Therefore, the plotline constructed on the sole basis of photographs must be different from the actual one. Kornecki's images show the actors within the white square as if stage actions took place only there, although large parts of the performance took place between empty seats. The photographs do not document the actors' expansion onto the auditorium.

Fig. 1. Photograph from the performance "Odprawa posłów greckich", dir. Michał Zadara, fot. Ryszard Kornecki, 2007

Kornecki was also responsible for a photoshoot during which he produced pictures used on the poster and in the performance programme. These photographs feature the actors in their roles but in a setting markedly different from the one on stage, because the photoshoot took place at an unidentified railway station or an airport (Fig. 3). The photographs verify the performance on both semantic and aesthetic levels. This verification is conducted by the photographer who asks questions about the performance and looks at it from a new vantage point. His pictures do not recreate the performance but, rather, interrogate or even subvert that which the theatre audience might take for granted. Kornecki poses questions about the problems taken up by the stage production, for example, by placing the Greek envoys in a modern railway station which can be read as an attempt at suggesting interpretative clues. Also, the pictures taken at a station shift the action of the play to present times, which is not particularly salient in the performance. The viewer can accept the challenge of the photographs and try to answer the questions that the images pose: Why are the envoys at a railway station? Does the performance explain it? Perhaps, the motif of a journey

has particular significance for the performance? Kornecki's photographs, taken from positions unavailable to the audience, are counterfactual in so far that in the situation of reception they can gain various meanings, often contrary to the actual performance, its spatial organization, and the way the characters were portrayed. In individual reception, theatre photography gains the performative indexicality that Olin wrote about.

COUNTERFACTUALITY OF THEATRE PHOTOGRAPHY: HUECKEL

Another example of counterfactuality of theatre photography is the album *Hueckel/Teatr* (2015) with photographs by Magda Hueckel. The title contains the name of the photographer, which suggests that it is not theatre as such that is significant but, rather, someone's subjective point of view. Typically, photo-books of this kind, such as, for example, *Jarzyna: Teatr/Theatre*[28] or *Staniewski-Gardzienice-Antyk*[29], do not foreground the photographer. The former volume contains images by a number of artists (Stefan Okołowicz, Bartłomiej Jan Sowa, and Kuba Dąbrowski, among others), while the latter is composed of works

Fig. 2. Photograph from the performance "Odprawa posłów greckich", dir. Michał Zadara, fot. Ryszard Kornecki, 2007

Fig. 3. Poster picture for Odprawa posłów greckich, dir. Michał Zadara, fot. Ryszard Kornecki, 2007

by Krzysztof Bieliński. Undoubtedly, theatre is the protagonist of both books—directors' names appear in the titles and each photograph has a caption with information about the performance and its makers. In Hueckel's book, it is the photographer's perspective which is more significant than a director's point of view or a stage production. The photographs do not have captions and all essential information about performances is listed only at the end of the volume. The book has been designed to make the reader appreciate the photographs, regardless of what performance they document. The lack of descriptions or even titles which could suggest an interpretation of images strengthens the counterfactuality of these photographs. The viewer can only associate them with a given performance if he or she has watched it or knows it from other visual representations (other photographs or video recordings). However, watching these photographs in a new constellation, together with those representing other stage productions, can make the viewer verify the memory of that which he or she has witnessed in theatre. Just like in Kornecki's

works, individual reception creates the performative index. Faced with the difficulty of identifying photographs with performances, the viewer must grapple with a new interpretation, considering this particular photographer's perspective. In an interview with the photographer, Agata Adamiecka-Sitek asked about the criteria for the selection of photographs, adding that typically we think of theatre "in terms of performances and directors." Hueckel answered:

> I wanted to create my own narrative, dissociated from performances… I had to reject a number of good stage productions and many photographs significant to me and then order the chosen ones in new configurations so as to build surprising connections and construct a story which would be invisible if I concentrated on performances, directors, and chronology. It was the montage that fulfilled a critical function in creating a new story.[30]

Hueckel did not define the topic of this new narrative but, later in the interview, declared that she was interested in "the relationship between the body and visual projections so emphatically present in contemporary theatre", as well as in "the problem of the passage of time, transformation, the circle of life and death, alienation and loneliness."[31] The counterfactuality of these photographs results from both their ambiguous relation with memories from performances and their position among other images in the book which provides an immediate context for their viewing. Therefore, Hueckel's works are counterfactual on two levels: that of individual reception and that of the arrangement of photographs. As a result, the photographer constructs a new narrative about the body in theatre, the passing of time, and loneliness.[32] At the same time, she represents stage worlds from within, often registering that which the human eye cannot perceive because it is impossible to see all the details when watching the performance live from the auditorium. As Wojciech Nowicki comments:

> Looking at Magda Hueckel photographs, I cannot help thinking that I perceive incomparably more. That is to say: as a theatre

spectator I have never seen so much and so thoroughly from up close. I was never part of the stage action. After all, Hueckel, together with the actors, circulates there where I will never be—in the centre of events.[33]

Nowicki notes that Hueckel very often uses close-ups. She shows details which theatre spectators cannot see and interpret. She directs the viewer's attention to the background or to those elements which initially might seem insignificant.

CONCLUSION

Kornecki's and Hueckel's works exemplify various counterfactual strategies used by theatre photographers. Kornecki explores the potential of changing perspectives, often destabilizing the point of view of the recipient. Hueckel, in her photo-book, employs a montage strategy. These two photographers, through their creative strategies, produce different effects whose common denominator is their counterfactual function. Their pictures, already in circulation, do not represent theatre but, rather, provide an opportunity to reassess the performances which they present.

The examples which I analysed prove that it is justified to speak about counterfactuality of images, which can verify or question ephemeral, time-bound performances. Perhaps this approach provides an answer to a long-standing debate about the possible role of theatre photography and overcome the binary division between artistic and documentary functions that it purportedly should fit. Kornecki's and Hueckel's photographs exemplify counterfactuality which stems from performative indexicality as defined by Margaret Olin. Such counterfactual photographs, although different fromnarrative forms of counterfactuality, have the potential to displace and verify other cultural texts and phenomena.

My aim was to capture new forms of theatre photography, which acquires a counterfactual function, critically verifying the dominant view of performances. Theatre and performance, because of their temporal character, have limited existence and impact. Therefore, to enter historical narratives, they require various forms of registration, which, however, cannot render a performance in a faithful

way. Theatre photography should thus be treated as a form of creative transformation which produces new meanings, often quite different from the meanings of the original performance. In this respect, theatre photography remains in a counterfactual relationship to the performative event.

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Notes

1   Wojciech Nowicki, "Obnażanie," in Magda Hueckel, *Hueckel/Teatr* (Warszawa: Instytut Teatralny im. Zbigniewa Raszewskiego, 2015), 22.

2   Ibid.

3   Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood", in *Art and Objecthood. Essays and Reviews*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998), 166–167.

4   The significant frequency of the conjunction „if" in the titles of historical works has been noted by Małgorzata Sugiera. The conjunction stresses the speculative character of counterfactual narratives. Małgorzata Sugiera, "Kontrfaktualność," in *Performatyka. Terytoria*, ed. Ewa Bal, Dariusz Kosiński (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2017), 101–108; Małgorzata Sugiera, "Praktyki kontrfaktualne w narracjach naukowych i fikcjonalnych," *Teksty drugie* 1 (2017), 176–186.

5   The possibility of reading photography is suggested by Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1979).

6   André Rouillé, *La Photographie, entre document et art contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005).

7   See Michał Markiewicz, "Czym jest fotografia teatralna?" *Teatr* 5 (2012), http://www.teatr-pismo.pl/przestrzenie-teatru/157/czym_jest_fotografia_teatralna/ (accessed 10.10.2017).

8   Wojciech Nowicki, "Obnażanie."

9   Agnieszka Wanicka, "Fotografia teatralna," in *Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego*, http://www.encyklopediateatru.pl/hasla/59/fotografia-teatralna (accessed 18.09.2017).

10   Anna Szymonik, "Teatralny kolaż," *Teatr* 12 (2016), http://www.teatr-pismo.pl/czytelnia/1587/teatralny_kolaz/ (accessed 18.01.2018).

11   Dorota Buchwald, untitled, http://www.teatr-pismo.pl/archiwalna/index.php?sub=archiwum&f=pokaz&nr=959&pnr=47 (accessed 10.02.2018).

12   Ibid.

13   Ibid.

14   Margaret Olin, *Touching Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 77.

15   Michał Markiewicz, "Czym jest fotografia teatralna?".

16   Ibid.

17   Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980).

18   Charles Sanders Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. J. Buchler (Nowy Jork: Dover Publications, 2011).

19   Margaret Olin, *Touching Photographs*, 76.

20   Michał Markiewicz, "Czym jest fotografia teatralna?".

21   Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 76.

22   Margaret Olin, *Touching Photographs*, 85.

23   Ibid., 75.

24   Beata Guczalska, "Śmierć postaci albo powrót V-effektu," *Dialog* 10 (2007).

25   Ibid.

26   Paweł Sztarbowski, "Performatyka staropolszczyzny. Kilka uwag o Odprawie posłów greckich w reżyserii Michała Zadary," *Dialog* 5 (2008), http://www.e-teatr.pl/pl/artykuly/183662.html?josso_assertion_id=4A951ED-D7F47816A (accessed 27.03.2018).

27   Monika Kwaśniewska, "Teatralny (nie)byt," *Didaskalia* 77 (2007), 41–46; Ewa Miodońska-Brookes, "Po premierze," *Didaskalia* 77 (2007), 42–46.

28   *Jarzyna: Teatr/Theatre*, ed. Agnieszka Tuszyńska, Dorota Wyżyńska (Warszawa: TR Warszawa, 2009).

29   Krzysztof Bieliński, *Staniewski-Gardzienice-Antyk* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2015).

30   Magda Hueckel, *Hueckel/Teatr*, 5.

31   Ibid., 8.

32   Ibid.

33   Wojciech Nowicki, "Obnażanie," 26.

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TEATRO FOTOGRAFIJA KAIP ESTETINĖS REALYBĖS KONTR(A)FAKTINĖ REPREZENTACIJA

Santrauka

Šiuo straipsniu siekiama gilintis į kontr(a)faktiškumo* koncepciją, kuri dažnai siejama su naratyvinėmis formomis, vizualios kultūros analizėmis, tarp jų ir teatro fotografija. Šio tyrimo objektas – lenkų fotografų darbai, kuriais menininkai iš naujo formuoja kontr(a)faktinės fotografijos formą ir funkcijas. Teatro istorikai teatro fotografiją dažnai klasifikuodavo kaip pirminę teatro dokumentacijos formą. Taigi teatro fotografija buvo suvokiama ne kaip savarankiška akademinė disciplina, bet kaip teatro studijų priemonė. Priešingai tokiam požiūriui, šiame straipsnyje

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*   Tai, kas prieštaringa, netapatu tikrovei ir jos realybei, tačiau veikiama santykyje su ja.

aptariami fotografų darbai (ypač Ryszardo Korneckio ir Magdos Hueckel), nors ir padaryti teatre spektaklių metu, vis dėlto sukurti ir išleisti kaip savarankiška meno forma, kuri nei reprezentuoja, nei dokumentuoja teatro produkciją. Šių fotografijų analizei pasitelkiamas Margaret Olin's performatyvaus indekso konceptas, kuris santykį tarp žiūrovo ir įvaizdžio apibūdina kaip dinamišką reikšmės kūrimą. Remiantis nuorodomis į šią teorinę prieigą, straipsnyje teigiama, kad teatro fotografijos kontr(a)faktiškumas yra strategija, kuri fotografiją kaip tarpininką tarp teatro ir žiūrovo paverčia autonomine meno forma.

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