

# Karol Radziszewski

*Self-portrait with Grandma*



Born 1980 in Bialystok (Poland). Lives and works in Warsaw where he received his MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts in 2004. A multimedia artist, painter, curator, author of installations, photographs, videos and interdisciplinary projects. Publisher and editor-in-chief of "DIK Fagazine". Main prize winner at the 3rd Edition of the Samsung Art Master (2006) competition, three-time recipient of the stipend of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (2002, 2006, 2009), finalist of the Deutsche Bank Foundation Award (2007), laureate of Paszport Polityki Award (2009).

[www.karolradziszewski.com](http://www.karolradziszewski.com) / [karol@szuszu.pl](mailto:karol@szuszu.pl)

## SELECTED SOLO SHOWS AND PROJECTS:

### 2011

*Heal The World*, Muzeum Sztuki / ms2, Lodz (curatorial project)  
*Backstage*, Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Gallery, Krakow

### 2010

*Balance Exercises*, Arsenal Gallery, Bialystok

### 2009

*TO PEE IN A BUN*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (curatorial project)  
*Ready 2 Die*, video-performance, Muzeum Sztuki / ms2, Lodz  
*Fag Fighters in Riga*, Supernova Gallery, Riga (LV)  
*MARIOS DIK*, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw

### 2008

*Oh!*, Arsenal Gallery, Bialystok  
*Pissing Chapel/DIK Fagazine*, White Cubicle Toilet Gallery, London (UK)

### 2007

*Man, it must be great*, Hamidrasha Gallery, Tel Aviv (IL)  
*I Always Wanted*, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw  
*The Structure of an Artistic Fact*, BWA Gallery, Zielona Gora

### 2005

*Fags*, private apartment, Warsaw  
*Office*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw

## SELECTED GROUP SHOWS:

### 2011

*Spectrum. From the Zacheta Video Collection*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (A)  
*14 Media Art Biennale WRO 2011 Alternative Now*, Wroclaw

### 2010

*Peep Generating*, Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz  
*Ars Homo Erotica*, The National Museum in Warsaw, Warsaw  
*Residency Culture*, Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad (RS)  
*Working Title*, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw  
*Fancy Success*, Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Gallery, Krakow  
*Self Publish, Be Happy*, The Photographers' Gallery, London (GB)

### 2009

*Prague Biennale 4*, Karlin Hall, Prague (CZ)  
*Workers Leaving the Workplace*, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig (D)  
*New York Photo Festival*, DUMBO, New York (USA)  
*Vogue*, Laznia - Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdansk  
*Smell it!*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, (AT)  
*Live Archive (The Generational: Younger Than Jesus)*, New Museum, New York (USA)

### 2008

*The Young and Evil*, tank.tv / Tate Modern, London (UK)  
*Just Different!*, Cobra Museum, Amsterdam/Amstelveen (NL)  
*Another City, Another Life*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw  
*Red eye effect. Polish photography of the 21st century*, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw  
*Queer Zines*, New York Art Book Fair, New York (USA)  
*TIT FOR TAT, < rotor >*, Graz (A)  
*Bat-Yam International Biennale of Landscape Urbanism*, (szu szu), Bat-Yam (IL)  
*Under the Skin: New Video from Poland*, New Museum, New York (USA)

### 2007

*Consequences and Proposals*, Biennale of Young Artists, Tallinn (EST)  
*Collection of Art of the 20th–21st Centuries, Draft 2: Power of Formalism*, Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz  
*Views 2007*, The Deutsche Bank Foundation Award, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw  
*Concrete legacy. From Le Corbusier to the Homeboys*, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw  
*Catching passages*, Contemporary Art Gallery, National Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu (RO)  
*Anti-Photographs*, 5th Biennale of Photography, Arsenal Gallery, Poznan

### 2006

*Poza*, Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT, (USA)  
*MEGAZINES*, Visionaire Gallery, New York, (USA)  
*Love and Democracy*, Laznia - Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdansk  
*Samsung Art Master*, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw

### 2004

*Duty and Rebellion*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw  
*Last Few Days of Laboratory Space*, (szu szu), CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw  
*Nova Polska 70-80*, (szu szu), Maison Folie de Moulins, Lille, (F)  
*Drang nach West(end)*, compact/space, Berlin, (D)

# America is not ready for this

The inspiration and starting point for the project is the scholarship stay in 1977 in New York of the Polish artist Natalia LL, a representative of the then neo-avant-garde. Her visit, during which, inter alia, she had the opportunity to participate in the Gay Pride Parade, as well as her conversations with local prominent gallerists, curators, and artists, provoke a series of questions on issues such as: gender, feminist art, conceptual art, and queer. Natalia LL's American episode, as well as other Polish artists visiting the United States during this period, allows a fresh look at East-West relations and their impact on the world of art in the context of the Iron Curtain. "America is not ready for this" project involves research and the creation of a documentary based on interviews with a number of characters. Some recordings were made in Poland and the main material will be created in New York.

project in progress / Residency Unlimited, NYC, 2011

*PERMAFO publication, Wrocław, 1978*



Carolee Schneemann, Natalia LL/New York 1977

# Heal The World

Heal The World is an exhibition at Muzeum Sztuki with no art in it. Is this at all possible in the times of permanent aesthetisation? Joseph Beuys, treating art. as a tool for great social change, emphasised the extraartistic values. He wanted to revive the spirit. What, then, is the wooden box brought by him as a part of Polentransport 1981 today? Is a collection of pieces of paper and small items signed by the artist able to ignite a revolutionary flame in anyone? Beuys' work, particularly after his death, has been reduced to a signature, a brand name. Each piece of felt, a lump of fat, a can, a dirty bottle have been dubbed artefacts, aesthetised, priced, secured and insured. Museum exhibition cases containing shaman's objects repel with their stale feel – we find it difficult to see their original energy in them. Paradoxically, the life-giving touch of the artist-demiurge has transformed the items into dead exhibition pieces, frequently fetishised disproportionately to their potential.

The objects collected for the Heal The World exhibition are devoid of aura. Although they serve noble causes, they are just objects that will return to reality they came from. They look absurd in glass exhibition cases, pretending to be "art". Similarly, the text covering the "Rules of adjusting forest management in Białowieża Forest to the needs of sustaining its natural qualities" seems to be much less attractive than the idea of planting 7000 oaks. Indeed, who really cares for saproxylic Coleoptera?

Today, probably more than ever, that which is political becomes fashionable, aesthetic, sexy. Yet, at every turn we realise that the seeming "neutrality", "transparency" of the language of socially involved art is fictitious. On the other hand, for charities and for social activists who truly put Beuysian ideas into action, aesthetics is not a primary concern or it does not exist altogether. It is no wonder, as this is not what their actions are about; sometimes, though, it is a shame that ignorance of these aspects is so great.

Arguably, it could be said that now a majority of vital changes in social awareness take place by means of pop culture. Beuys used to say, "I have to look like a character from a fairy-tale to reach people with ideas"; would Michael Jackson not have agreed with these words?

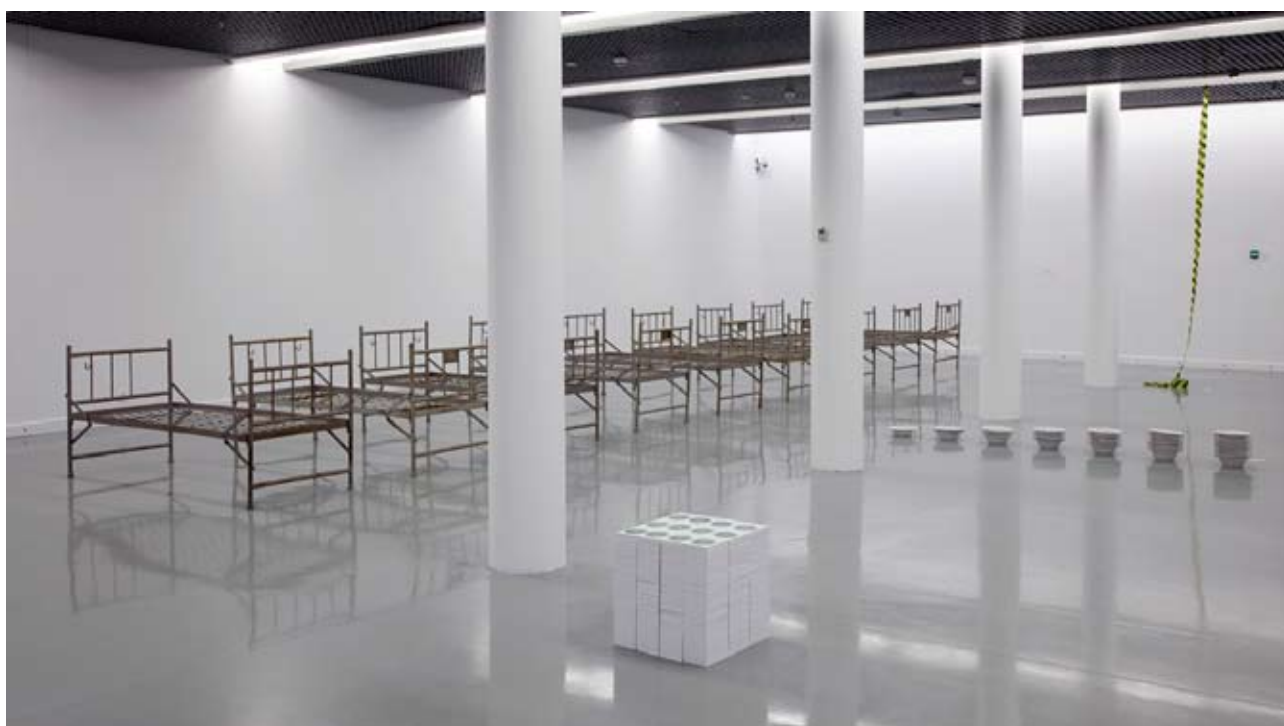
Karol Radziszewski / curatorial text

View from the exhibition *Heal The World*, Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz / ms2, 2011





View from the exhibition *Heal The World*, Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz / ms2, 2011



# HEAL THE WORLD

Karol Podjaszewski  
Museum of Art in Łódź  
14.10. - 6.11.  
2011



# Backstage

On Karol Radziszewski's exhibition "Backstage" videos and photographs are focused on the eponymous theme of the artist's backstage space, and, in particular, on his relationships with his models – recurrent participants in his projects. The work gives rise to reflections which center on such issues as media manipulation, redefining of the male nude and the process of 'dressing' the body in art.

(from the curatorial text / exhibition catalogue published by Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Gallery in Krakow, 2011)

*Radziszewski looks at his models and he preserves their physical presence via the gaze of someone who instinctively seeks a composition, while at the same time trying to free himself of it in order to access pure sensuality, rejecting all pretexts for gazing and for averting the gaze and disposing of the all-too-sentimental anecdotes and storylines.*

(from the text by Kaja Pawelek)

View from the exhibition *Backstage*, Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Gallery, Krakow, 2011





*Studio*, photographic series, 2010

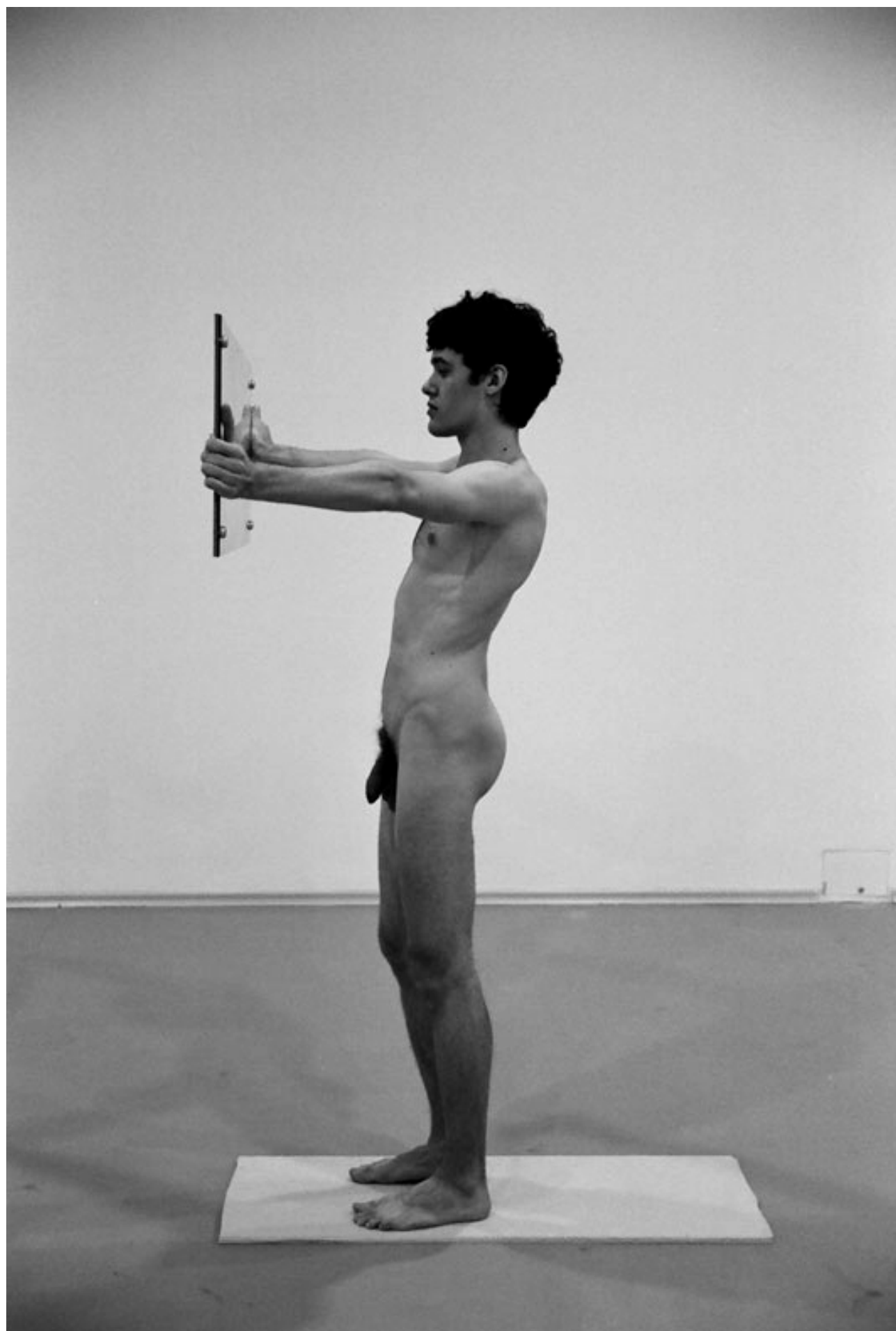






View from the exhibition *Backstage* (videos: *Study* and *Painters*), Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Gallery, Krakow, 2011







View from the exhibition *Backstage* (photographs from the MARIOS DIK series), Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Gallery, Krakow, 2011



# Ready 2 Die

Karol Radziszewski proposed a game – it is a game invariably dangerous – with desire, voyeurism and the image. The audience, minding the tradition of the male nude, was invited to watch a video performance, where an image of a naked male model posing for the artist's act was transmitted live (transformed through the 2 cameras and the tv screen) in the space of the gallery.

(from the curatorial text by Jaroslaw Lubiak / Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz, 2009)

*Ready 2 Die*, video performance at the Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz, 2009



# To Pee in a Bun

“To Pee in a Bun” is the presentation of a selection of works from the collection of Zachęta National Gallery of Art. This time as an artist Karol Radziszewski is embodying a curator, an “unfulfilled artist”. At the exhibition can be seen works either rarely or never before seen. Radziszewski has made a subjective selection and re-interpretation of works, placing them in new and at times surprising contexts. “To Pee in a Bun” is a quotation taken from a classic figure of Polish conceptualism, Edward Krasiński. The artist once wrote a short poem:

WOULDN'T IT BE FUN  
TO PEE  
IN A BUN

Radziszewski has made numerous interventions in the arrangement of the exhibition itself, establishing a playful relationship with the space of the gallery and the works on show, but at the same time posing a question as to the status and character of the collection. Radziszewski admits: “I treated the works of other artists as ingredients in a greater whole, a bit like tubes of paint from which I squeezed out colours to paint a single, composite image”.

Radziszewski's curatorial text “From A to C and back again” is also the point of entry for a very general reflection on the relation and scope of the concepts ARTIST and CURATOR.

View from the exhibition *To Pee in a Bun*, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 2009







View from the exhibition *TO PEE IN A BUN*, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 2009



*"Karol Radziszewski's exhibition To Pee in a Bun, is grandiose. It is a personal take on the collection of Poland's most renowned and respected public gallery of Modern Art (charmingly called The Encouragement for Fine Art). In it, he acts "merely" as curator, and also as one of the numerous exhibited artists. (...) his collection is a moving away from an engaged position, it is rather a questioning of our aesthetic values, of their ever-astounding relativity and apparent insignificance. Who are we to say that this is pretty, and this isn't? How are we to judge the works that a mere 30 years ago were judged outstanding, while today they're hidden away in a museum cellar?"*

Wojciech Ziemilski, *Do You Believe In Magic?*, "Obieg" magazine, November 2009

View from the exhibition *TO PEE IN A BUN*, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 2009



# The Structure of an Artistic Fact

The repetitions and travesties of historical works of art and artistic actions performed by Karol Radziszewski do not have the nature of an organised project. Rather, they should be perceived as fragments of a contemporary artist's dialogue with selected strands in the art history narrative. Radziszewski is focused above all on the classics of the Polish avant-garde: Wojciech Fangor, Edward Krasiński, Natalia LL or Ryszard Winiarski, but he has also targeted artists from a completely different (in all respects) area, such as Arno Breker. The repetitions of other artists' works, pastiches and re-enactments of historical happenings and performances are what could be dubbed artistic 'covers'. Radziszewski performs a subjective reinterpretation of tradition but, first of all, he tests it in the context of the present, exploring new meanings that arise as the result of translocating historical facts from a petrified past to the still open-ended present.

(from the curatorial text by Stach Szablowski / exhibition catalogue published by CCA Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, 2007)

*The Structure of an Artistic Fact*, BWA Gallery, Zielona Gora, 2007



# Praise the Flowery Meadows

The work, which has the form of a music video, shows Karol Radziszewski perform the religious song *Praise the Flowery Meadows* in a duo with his grandmother. Grandmother's part was recorded at her home while the artist sang in the recording studio of the Music Academy in Warsaw. The two tracks were mixed together by the artist's brother, Kamil Radziszewski.

*Praise the Flowery Meadows*, video presentation at the New Museum, New York, 2008



# DIK Fagazine

Karol Radziszewski is the founder, publisher and editor-in-chief of DIK Fagazine, a periodical that has been in circulation since 2005. It is the first and the only artistic magazine from Central and Eastern Europe concentrated on homosexuality and masculinity.

*"DIK Fagazine is the foremost queer arts magazine from Central and Eastern Europe, and not for lack of competition. Published in Polish and English in a format that moves surreptitiously between the two, DIK Fagazine addresses itself to: everyone interested in arts and men." Issue 2 is about the queerer side of Polish national pride; artist Kasia Kozyra displays her rubber dick. In the "Arty Farty" issue, Wilhelm Sasnal talks about the homophobic nationalist propaganda supported by a young generation of Poles; a photograph of Pawel Althamer's *Ballon* (2007), a parade-grade male nude, is reproduced here. Issue 4 explores the sensitive masculinity of hip-hoppers."*

(from "Queer Zines" exhibition catalog by Philip Aarons and AA Bronson, New York, Printed Matter, Inc.. 2008)

The magazine has been presented during many prestigious exhibitions and cultural events (amongst others: "Megazines", Visionaire Gallery, New York; "Colophon 2007", Luxembourg; Paris Fashion Week 2007; "Dysfashional 2008", Lozanna; "Festival of Fashion and Photography", Vienna; White Cubicle Toilet Gallery, London; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; "Fits For Prints", AMP Gallery, Athens; "Revolution Gone" magazine installation at Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw; "Smell it!", Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, "Queer Zines" at New York Art Book Fair (curated by AA Bronson), 2008 and "Live Archive" (The Generational: Younger Than Jesus), New Museum, New York, 2009.

[www.dikfagazine.com](http://www.dikfagazine.com)





*Pissing Chapel / DIK Fagazine*, installation view, White Cubicle Toilet Gallery, London, 2008

# Serbian Diary

Installation with selected issues of DIK Fagazine and pictures taken during the art residency in Novi Sad. The photos and recordings are the research material for the Radziszewskis upcoming book reflecting his impressions about Serbia.

*"Serbian Diary"*, installation view, "Residency Culture" exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad, Serbia, 2010



# Transilvania

The installation with selected spreads from the special issue of DIK Fagazine (totally focused on contemporary Romania) with artworks by featured artists Dan Perjovschi and Vlad Nanca among others. The presentation was accompanied by the photo slideshow – *Transilvania* by Karol Radziszewski and the sound installation based on the interviews recorded in Bucharest and Sibiu.

*Transilvania*, installation view, presentation at the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 2009



# MARIOS DIK

The MARIOS DIK is a collaboration between Karol Radziszewski and his DIK Fagazine mag with clothing designs by the MARIOS duo – Leszek Chmielewski and Marios Loizou. The collection's prints feature Karol Radziszewski's characteristic strong lines with fantastic centaurs, crystals and plant motifs.

MARIOS DIK is more than just a cooperation in the field of clothing design, its a creative inspiration and a foundation of an artistic project. The project involves inviting young men from all over the world (readers and fans of DIK Fagazine) to create short, amateur films, in which they creatively use briefs from the MARIOS DIK collection as a leitmotif. Together with the amateur's videos, the project also features young artists and performers (among others: Slava Mogutin, Brian Kenny, Gio Black Peter). A selection of the collected videos were presented for the first time as an installation during Paris Fashion Week (2009).

Apart from the videos, MARIOS DIK project also incorporates printed media and photography. Radziszewski himself has revisited and explored the project photographically by creating an art book inspired by the 70s performance art and its documentation.

MARIOS DIK boutique-exhibition took place in CCA Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw together with selected films.

*MARIOS DIK*, fashion show, Warsaw 2009





*MARIOS DIK*, photo art book, 28.5 x 21 cm, 48 pages, edition: 300, 2009





# Kisieland

Karol Radziszewski's *Kisieland* (a long-term project started in 2009) brings to light several hundred transparencies from the 1980s documenting an artistic event with a distinctly gay theme at the home of a friend of Ryszard Kisiel, the founder and publisher of the first communist-era gay zine called "Filo". These pictures, taken at the time of state police crackdown on homosexuals, known as campaign Hiacynth, seem strangely incommensurate with the martyrological narrative of the persecution of sexual minority. Radziszewski's project is an attempt to enable the partial appearance of an archive which – due to the lack of interest in the reconstruction of the history of the LGBT in Poland – has failed to find a place in public discourse and because it is literally being carried away from Poland. The snapshots from Kisiel's archive are also testimony of the early AIDS years, the memory of which is limited and still remains in the "intimate public sphere"; the realm in need of reconfiguring and posing questions regarding the pleasures and the risks involved in holding the event which these images document, and also in documenting it. The Kisiel archive brings us close to the quotidian 1980s and makes apparent the transnational undercurrent of the decade, which defies the surface appearance determined by cold-war era oppositions between the East and the West, pointing instead to the underlying and surprisingly cosmopolitan commonality of the sexual, political and artistic avant-garde of the day – in Gdansk, Warsaw, London, New York City.

(text by Tomasz Basiuk)





Gejowski  
Biuletyn  
Kulturalny

φίλο

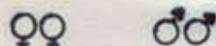
EXPRESS

1986.

12.

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WARSZAWA



PROPOZYCJE

NR 2



rys. Aubrey Beardsley

Literatura :

Zofia Kuratowska „AIDS nowa choroba” Wyd. Wiedza Powszechna  
seria Omega 1986 r. str. 136/90 zł. Doskonałe popularne ujęcie  
tematu ; opisana istota tej choroby, hipotezy dotyczące jej  
powstania i profilaktyka.

Ukazała się broszura Aleksandra B. Skotnickiego „AIDS nabyty zespół  
braku odporności” w serii „ Nauka dla wszystkich”  
Wydawnictwo Ossolineum 63 str. 60 zł.

W druku znajdują się : W. i M. Kornaszewscy, A. B. Skotnicki „Nabyty  
zespół niedoboru immunologicznego /AIDS/ w środowisku afrykańskim”  
Post. Hig. Med. Dośw.  
oraz A. B. Skotnickiego „Immunopatologia i klinika nabytego zespołu  
niedoboru immunologicznego” Post. Hig. Med. Dośw. są to naukowe opracowania.

Ukazało się też naukowe opracowanie Kazimierza Imielińskiego  
„Zarys seksuologii i seksiatrii” PZWL W-wa 1986 r. 325 str. 400 zł.

Alfred Adler „Sens życia” PWN 11 wyd. 1986 r. str. 276 380 zł.  
Wydane w Bibliotece Klasyków Psychologii. Problem homoseksualizmu  
w ujęciu psychoanalizy.

Dużo naszych problemów znajdziemy też u Zygmunta Freuda „Psychologia  
życia codziennego. Marzenia senne.” seria PWN.



The set of *Kisieland* documentary film, 2011



# Sebastian

In fin de siècle art, Saint Sebastian became one of the decadent idols of perversion, symbolizing sexuality transgressing norms. Saint Sebastian's status as a gay icon has been rediscovered in modern culture and made him the unofficial patron of homosexuals.

The video by Karol Radziszewski highlights the soldiers' violence in dealing with Sebastian and the homomilitary aura of martyrdom. The artist brings the story of the Roman saint closer to us by dressing the characters in contemporary uniforms of Polish soldiers, and the drama takes place in local scenery.

(from the curatorial text by Pawel Leszkowicz / exhibition catalogue "Ars Homo Erotica" published by the National Museum in Warsaw, 2010)

*Sebastian*, installation view, National Museum, Warsaw 2010



# Fag Fighters

Fag Fighters are a fictional urban guerrilla unit, a gay-gang operating at the margins of mainstream society, marking their territory with graffiti signatures and committing acts of violence, including sexual violence. The Fag Fighters' identification mark are their pink balaclavas. From the video *Fag Fighters: Prologue* we learn that the balaclavas have been made by Karol Radziszewski's grandmother. Poland's right wing perceives the gay community as a deadly threat for social order. Radziszewski intercepts and amplifies the stereotype-based conservative discourse and transforms it into an asocial, anarchic, subversive fantasy. He also fabricates evidence of the unit's activity—graffiti, footprints, amateur pictures taken by the gang members. The border between drama and simulation is blurred; fiction appears disturbingly realistic.

The video *Fag Fighters: Prologue* can be seen as a bridge spanning the two realities that Radziszewski introduces into the field of his art: the family and the gay subculture. Both of these social spaces belong to the realm of the artist's private life and yet they seem to be worlds apart; they are two opposite poles of Radziszewski's identity. And yet the extremities unexpectedly meet in *Fag Fighters: Prologue*. The video shows the artist's grandmother making pink balaclavas on an old-fashioned sewing machine. The caps will become an attribute of the Fag Fighters—a squad of gay anarchists invented by Radziszewski.

(from the curatorial text by Stach Szablowski / exhibition catalogue published by CCA Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, 2007)

*Fag Fighters: Prologue*, video still, DVD, 14'36", 2007





*Fag Fighters*, installation view at Cobra Museum, 'Just Different!' exhibition, Amsterdam, 2008





*Fag Fighters in Riga*, 9-channel video installation, Supernova Gallery, Riga, Latvia, 2009

