
ZOFIA KULIK: FROM WARSAW TO CYBERIA

Warsaw-based Zofia Kulik, with her partner Przemyslaw Kwiek, as the duo KwieKulik, were among Poland's most prominent performance artists in the 1970s and 1980s, playing constantly with national symbols, such as the national flag.ⁱ Yet by the time the show *Idioms of the Soc-Ages* opened in New York in 1990, at the Postmasters Gallery, she had abandoned performance, abandoned Kwiek, and was making large photopieces, based on the designs of both oriental carpets, known as *polonaises* in Poland, and the arched structures of stained-glass windows, referenced in works such as *The Guardians of the Spire* (Fig.1), which she called, ironically, 'Inter-National Gothic'.ⁱⁱ These post-Stalinist works, often dominated by kaleidoscopic images of the Soviet Palace of Culture in Warsaw were 'Sots-art' productions; the New York gallery show was typical of the popularity of post-Soviet and Eastern European postmodernism in the West at the time. In the international exhibition 'Wanderlieder' held in Amsterdam in 1991, Kulik felt herself to be 'a "quotation" from the East' involving all the problems of 'double identity' as she took her place among a constellation of Western artists.ⁱⁱⁱ At the 57th Venice Biennale of 1997, Kulik represented her country in the Polish Pavilion. There the postmodernism/postnationalism equation was epitomised by the epic frieze *All the missiles are one missile* of 1993 (Fig.1) Like all Kulik's work this was highly political. Much of its imagery relates, in a deliberately arbitrary way, to television images culled from Western European sources. Subsequently, Sots-art as socialist-realist memory, rather than piquant, post-Soviet kitsch, combined with the broad sweep of Cold War history within the context of globalised media 'infotainment', was presented in the vast photo-mural, *From Siberia to Cyberia*, shown in Kulik's Poznan retrospective, and in Stockholm and Berlin, in *After the Wall. Ten Years of Creation after the Fall of Communism, 1999-2000*.^{iv}

If postmodernism and postnationalism may be equated, to what extent does it follow that can equate modernism and nationalism? As a Europeanist fascinated by the cosmopolitanism of the so-called School of Paris before and after 1945, I would contend that the concepts are indeed linked, but are

passionately antithetical. The crystallising moment of modernism, hermetic cubism, witnessed the coming together of Picasso from Spain and Braque from France, working together and renouncing their signatures; more pertinently, the avant-garde consensus around grid-based cubist painting and sculpture was shattered almost immediately not only by war but the eruption of the Central European and the performative, with Tristan Tzara's Parisian Dada movement (significantly the Romanian pseudonym 'Tzara' referred in exile to Tzara's *patria* or homeland). And as a way of returning, circuitously, to Kulik, let us consider a major source which she ironises: the dynamic imagery of pioneer photomontage artists within modernist, revolutionary Russia.

Modernist photomontage, in itself the origin of the modern political poster, celebrated the construction of nationhood, national myth, and glorified impersonality: see the photomontages of Rodchenko, El Lissitzky and particularly Gustav Klucis, with his duplicated, miniscule Lenins, the characteristic repetition of heads in a crowd, of gymnasts, strikers, soldiers, bayonets. The oblique camera angle captured a peopled fragment which stood for the masses at large, the entire Soviet collective. Number under socialism was therefore celebratory, a sign of the will to power. Yet the nationalist message implicit in the formula Sovietisation = modernisation was disrupted by the performative: the repeated gestures of the leader as mannequin were too obviously linked to propaganda. Too soon, patriotic photomontage would come to signal the rhetoric of the lie: not hope but despair, not life, but liquidation of the 'enemy' within. Modernist tropes as a form of control thus preceded both the slippage towards socialist realism and the *Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin* in the U.S.S.R. and generated the 'reactionary modernisms' confronting nationalist realisms and the internationalist modernism of the 1930s.^v

Before using and perverting Soviet photomontage motifs in her critical photopieces, Kulik made sculpture, photographs, mail art and then, as KwieKulik, turned to performance, using art as a critique of a regime in which nationalism as a concept was totally bewildered - made wild, made savage - not only by the status of Poland as a Soviet satellite, but as a country whose borders had been unstable since 1795. Occupied by both Nazis and subsequently the

Soviets, with over six million war dead, Poland's boundaries had radically shifted once more as it became a one-party, Stalinist state by 1946. Yet the 'Polish October' of 1956, and the subsequent liberalisation, allowed the accommodation of postwar existentialism with Eastern regimes, giving rise to an 'absurd' so recognisable in the work of a Jann Kott or a Tadeusz Kantor. In the context of the 1970s 'dematerialisation of the art object', performance provided the perfect arena for a critique of totalitarianism, both discourses focussing on the body as metaphor; and as the exhibition *The Body in the East* held in 1998 in Ljubljana demonstrated, performance art was a widespread if covert phenomenon all over Eastern Europe.^{vi}

'I am an artist of the 1970s... For us 1981 started in 1974.'^{vii} Kulik's childhood and artistic youth under Communism preceded the performance years, in this freer, but still politically repressive Poland: what she called, to use the title of a rayogram made with dust and her hair, *Alice's Adventures in Fucked Wonderland*. From the outset, Kulik's art was resolutely antipatriarchal.^{viii} Her first sculpture was a copy of a stone Aztec snake goddess Coatlicue, her skirt a braided plaiting of live serpents; she worked in stone as her mother had worked with needle and thread; conversely, her ironic pastiche of Michaelangelo's Moses at art school in the year 1970-1971, duplicated the noble marble copy with a version in exuberant patchwork cloth.^{ix} Her diploma piece comprised five hundred slides, very many of a naked woman in academic poses - sometimes wearing or playing with a red sash. Taken over a year, these constituted the first of her subsequent photo-archives. The red sash, 'sign of official celebrations', that appears in photographs draped upon her drawings and on or with her model - seems to exemplify *à la lettre* what Renata Salecl calls 'the red thread' running through her own, 'post-Socialist' analyses: 'the notion of fantasy, not as a supplement to 'actual' power relations but as an agency that always already structures these relations... the structure of power is inherently fantasmatic'.^x Kulik's photographs of a model whose white swimsuit is covered with the red sash (Fig.2) demonstrates an eroticised, female body fantasmatically displacing the totalitarian State: see Kulik's own photographs of May Day in Warsaw (Fig.3), showing State buildings similarly decorated with

vast red banners .

By 1971, Zofia was working as an artistic couple with her partner Kwiek as KwieKulik. With the film *Open form* which involved group activity - five people - Kulik experienced a release from traditional art objects. She described the experience as a new 'opposition to officiality, building a private base for independence.' But the freedom of expression signified by *Open form*, was both compounded and belied by disturbing images of silencing: the film stills they labelled *Activity on the actress's face* involve blobs of clay stuck on to the skin; another shows a bay leaf – one thinks of the poet's laurels - glued to the actress's mouth by a hand in a glove. Even the extraordinary experimental pieces with their baby son Maksio (Maximilien-Dobromierz), created within their apartment from 1972-4, and constituting, remarkably, over two hundred images, obtained highly emotional effects via images of containment.^{xi} Far from psychologically-based – they make an extraordinary comparison with the psychoanalytically-informed work of Mary Kelly at the same time in the West - these works were, according to Kulik, mathematical and abstract in conception.^{xii} Despite their inadvertent comedy and pathos – Dobromierz, a name which means 'a good measure', is surrounded with onions, knives and forks, blocks of ice from the nearby Vistula river (Fig. 4), - they anticipated KwieKulik's later performance pieces, with devices such as the bucket on the baby boy's head, and the use of sharp instruments. Overtones of potential sadism held at bay - or at least a disturbing spectacle made of the bewilderment of innocence - mirror KwieKulik's adult political critiques. Constructed situations symbolising imprisonment and suffocation continued as the work of KwieKulik became more public and then international: international by default when, refused passports to participate in a behaviour workshop in Arnhem, Holland, they performed *Monument without a passport in the Salons of Fine Art*, at the Biennale of Young Artists in Sopot in 1978. Kulik first put her head through a table top, supporting a surface upon which slides of postcards sent from Arnhem were projected; Kwiek plastered her legs to the floor, symbolising her now 'double imprisonment'. A declamatory banner was

revealed at last, as Kulik, in a quasi-triumphant gesture, brandished her portfolio *Projects for Arnhem* (Fig.5).^{xiii} The photographs commemorating the piece demonstrate why KwieKulik preferred the term *dzialania* 'activities', to performance; the relationship to documentation – still photographs – what KwieKulik called 'aesthetic-time-results' was all-important.^{xiv} The *dzialania* have been appropriately called 'tableau-pieces'.^{xv}

At *Body, Performance*, Lublin, 1978, where the public entered the hall with little red flags stuck behind their ears - a parody of May Day behaviour - both image and action became unexpectedly violent: the spectre of State interrogation and torture was parodied and echoed by the brutality of relations between the sexes: KwieKulik thrust Kulik's head into a bowl, threatening her with a knife and shouting *Say something you whore, come on say something!*

(Fig. 6). The action ended with the powerful image of their heads being suffocated in buckets of garbage. Brown paper curtains were used to conceal and reveal the *tableaux*. At this point, the images of doubling and the work of KwieKulik as partners coincided with an international interest in 'artist-couples'.^{xvi} Yet, significantly it was during *Body, Performance*, with many significant *dzialania* ahead, that Kulik first experienced feelings of rebellion against the 'process-like quality' of the actions and was tempted to make an art object^{xvii}

By 1981, with the coming of Solidarity, KwieKulik achieved the status of cultural pioneers.^{xviii} The ninth Cracow festival, held that year, heralded a completely international East-West dialogue: KwieKulik performances joined those of Mary Kelly, Stuart Brisley and a host of by now well-known Polish contemporaries such as Jerzy Beres, and powerful female artists - Ewa Partum or Christine Chiffun for example.^{xix} Again, the most striking image of KwieKulik was that of an abject and uncanny twinning; clay stuck over their duplicated, smothered heads, as they shuffled around on chairs, and blindly attempted to sculpt their own and each other's faces – ending up with heads stuck together on the floor: the monstrous *Activities for the Head*, signified a Polish term for indoctrination. Concurrently with this greater

internationalism, their work with the old Polish national flag intensified. Kulik's own words most eloquently describe *A Polish Duet* performed at the Dziekanka Gallery, Warsaw in 1984:

White and red flags attached to the heads of two performers are fluttering in the wind produced by a fan. / The fan blows only for one of the performers, the other must run to have her flag fluttering. / Both performers must run to have their flags fluttering. / She and He connected with the white and the red. They bend over backwards and two white and grey [flags] appear...^{xx}

An element of the conjuring trick intensifies an absurd which is always pragmatic, despite its existentialist residue. While *A Hammer, a Head, Ice, a Sickle, a Hook, A Shadow*, performed at the same venue in 1985, played with Soviet insignia and metaphors of glaciation and shadowplay, *The Semantic Monster*, performed abroad in Banff, reverted to the Polish flag, as did *Banana and Pomegranate [hand grenade]: Reistic Theatre*, back in Warsaw in 1986. This involved a tableau-piece in which the seated performers held a Polish flag and white and grey flag - while half a dead pig's head was placed on the bucket which covered each head (Fig. 7). In different *tableaux*, they also held mirrors, scales, stones, books, with, on their heads, cubes, more buckets, even a Golgotha arrangement of crosses on the bucket-head pedestal. Just as Czeslaw Milosz analysed language's function within the grey universe of Eastern doublethink in *Zniewolony umys (The Captive Mind)*, 1953, so Kulik has reflected upon the 'greying' of Poland, the destruction of the Polish language under Stalinism, the brutal excisions and simplifications, creating 'a surrounding fog which also you have in you'. 'I was so silent, I could not speak. I needed someone (Kwiek) to be between me and the world' said Kulik retrospectively.^{xxi} Yet, strangely, she explains that these images of personal repression, stifling, suffocation, were part and parcel of a passionate critique *engaged with the State*, a critique that aimed at reparation in the face of 'events, especially bad events'. Kulik spoke to me of her desire to to 'test' Communist Party dicta at a time when both artists were still positioned against notions of personal subjectivity, and had not completely rejected Communism as a system of ideals

and aspirations.^{xxii}

The Soviet eradication of the introspective, post-Romantic, post-Freudian individual - a shared European heritage before 1939 - was one of Eastern block's greatest tragedies: 'The psyche under Communism didn't exist.... We were trained to be scientists' Kulik says. Personal motivation, or the driving force of a private relationship, were inadmissible in terms of a Communist epistemology which transmuted desire into abstract nouns, *Slawa*, *Milosc*, *Nadzieja* (Glory, Love, Hope) The abject antitheses of these ideals, were worked through in the performance pieces, in situations exemplifying abjection and humiliation, hatred or despair, created concurrently, at one period, with the couple's daily labour as conservators in the Lenin Museum, Warsaw ! In the later photopieces - not photomontage, but black and white multiple exposure photographs^{xxiii}, Glory, Love and Hope are transmuted, ironically (nostalgically?) into emblems of swords, medals and aureoles: 'a traditional art object, always accepted by official power, became a better weapon against those who were regularly armoured with metal and mass media.'^{xxiv} Hence my essay 'Discovering the Psyche' for Kulik's 1999 Poznan retrospective, which was premised upon poetry (in particular the impact of T. S. Eliot in Poland) and the image. It aimed specifically to respect the *pre-psychoanalytical* nature of Kulik's experience.^{xxv}

There is a certain ironic pathos - as well as incisive justice - I believe, in the fact that now, younger theoreticians such as Renata Salecl, coming from Central Europe - in her case Slovenia - have reinscribed the experience of pre- and post-Communist woman, *post-facto*, within a psychoanalytical framework; see her *Spoils of Freedom. Psychoanalysis and Feminism after the Fall of Socialism*, of 1994. And Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, a Polish woman, like Kulik, and also from Warsaw, offered a penetrating psychoanalytic and indeed feminist reading of Kulik's photopieces for the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston's 1998 show *New Histories* - a brilliant 'performance' on Lajer-Burcharth's part, within the recognised paradigms of American art history. Significantly, Zofia Kulik, who is interested in schizophrenia and melancholy (the works of Antoni Kepinski) but claims not to have read psychoanalytic texts *per se* - despite

experiencing an inchoate feeling of 'lack' in this area, she says -deliberately omitted to mention Lajer-Burcharth's text to me when I visited her in Lomianki. The central point of this text applies as much to KwieKulik actions as to Zofia's photopieces:

*This feminine (and feminist) perspective on Communist culture reveals masochism as the central psycho-cultural mechanism in the formation of an Eastern European subjectivity: the logic that shaped the dominant ideal of the subject as a **man avowed to a system**.*^{xxvi}

The ephemera of the performance events became the archive of performance events, named the PDDiU (Action, Documentation and Propagation Workshop). Kulik needed a rebirth as an artist. Moving out of Warsaw under martial law, and abolishing partnership and reciprocity, 'man' became subject to her artistic will, as she constructed the elements of her huge photopieces. Yet similar motifs, similar gestures continue through from the *dzialania* into this new work, such as the Polish flag (both as ensign and shape), or motifs such as Kulik's raised arm from *Monument without Passport*. And now Kulik working with the model Zbigniew Libera plied his body to *her* system, as she, the artist, became the demiurge, controlling representation.^{xxvii} Libera, Kulik's model, was photographed, for example, with arm outstretched, rather pathetically parodying, in his limp nakedness, the rhetorical gesture of the Roman, Aulus Metellus. as adapted by countless sculptures of Lenin: typical is G.D. Alexeyev's sculpture of Lenin, *The Commander Calling*, 1924. This socialist body became demonstrably interchangeable with the fascist body, when Libera parodied Arno Breker's sculpture for Hitler's Reichschancellery. The caprices of arrangement were exercised after the pleasures, strains and frictions of the posing sessions: Libera naked under strong lights in a bare room; Libera as a tumbling figure from Memling (Fig. 8); as a kneeling figure from William Blake; Libera as swastika, as Catherine wheel, as fallen angel, Libera dragging an inordinate amount of drapery knotted in a huge bulge over the genitals, then rucked in a crustacean's tail; Libera holding swags of cloth aloft, while the negative imprint of spearheads conjure a giant erection, or, with his body multiplied into a circle around the great patriotic, socialist-realist sculpture

from Magnitogorsk, making a series of cogs in a wheel, pleats of ribbon around an old, discarded medal.

Significantly, Renata Salecl does not consider the case of Poland in *The Spoils of Freedom*; while Polish Lajer-Burcharth develops the psychoanalytic case for the body under Communism at the expense of any investigation of the structures of Catholic religion. Kulik, however, plays each repressive structure against the other. And curiously, her own most 'masochistic' statement relates not to the State - derided yet essential for the fostering of a certain avant-garde - but to the Church:

'But in front of whom is one to be humiliated nowadays?

There is no god, no leader, no mystery.

So whom is one to serve?

That's it.

*I am afraid of myself - I am scared that I can feel **subordination** so perfectly and can visualise it.'*^{lxxviii}

This statement is surely challenged by Kulik's saucy, self-exultant self-portrait with a red flag or the extraordinary placement of Kulik herself, rather than the virgin, within the luminous flares of a mandorla – become obscene vaginal lips. Here, in *Self-Portrait with the Warsaw Palace of Culture, (mandorla)*, 1990, where Kulik grasps an inverted Soviet Palace of Culture (Fig. 9), she is as 'blasphemous' towards the latter as much as toward the repressive, misogynistic Catholic Church. She is tempting Providence, surely. Kulik claims to see her model, as 'a scientist, doing gesture after gesture'. Yet there is evidently a certain delight, in this sporting with the male body; at will doubled, trebled, multiplied, depersonalised, inverted and distorted into strange symmetries, monstrous chimera, destroyed even: 'Man is a splinter I can crumble at my own will.'^{lxxix} Kulik's position as 'preposterous dominatrix' (Ewa Lajer-Burcharth) is the obverse of her putatively 'masochistic' position.^{xxx} But Libera's body first and foremost evokes the body of Christ; Kulik's work with its darkly Gothic evocations, and arching, pointed structures, is framed by the eschatological: fluctuating, visually flickering between the blasphemous and an acknowledgement of power and tradition that evokes the cry of the unbeliever -

Christ Himself: 'Why hast Thou forsaken me?'

While the personal is evidently the political for Kulik, it is of course more problematic to apply psychoanalytic categories such as the 'return of the repressed' to larger socio-cultural phenomena - in particular as psychoanalysis, like Soviet communism, like Catholic Christianity, is a totalising discourse which 'masters' its objects. In speaking of a past always 'unmasterable', Dominic la Capra, reflecting upon the links between history and trauma has left the psychoanalytic link with the larger framework of things as 'a mooted question'.^{xxxii} Does Kulik's practice aim to exemplify a paradoxical answer?

Kulik questions, through parody and replication, all systems of ordering, of hierarchy, of discipline and punishment, of control over minds, over bodies (of women, especially) together with the demand for self-sacrifice and self-repression. As *May Day Mass* of 1990 demonstrates, the religious was inseparable not only from the political but the technological : in the rose window structure, Kulik's own photographs of May-Day, 1971 are combined with images at the base of the work of Pope John Paul II celebrating a contemporary, televised mass in front of the Palace of Culture.

It is this Communist, May Day Poland whose memory brings 'the pang of an exile's nostalgia' to Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, at her first 'Western' May Day parade in Copenhagen, in 1982. It is with this recollection, and - despite herself? - with the tears of the author, that she begins her 1998 text on Kulik. But Eva mourns also her former self. 'Mine eyes dazzle, she died young'... In Elizabethan English (the dazzle phrase is from Webster's Duchess of Malfi) for the eyes to dazzle means to fill with tears.^{xxxiii} Ewa's authoritative, psychoanalytic commitment to Kulik's post-communist body precludes an investigation of the fact that her own work, like Kulik's is above all a work of mourning. Structurally, the kelim-like photo-fragments in Kulik's work dazzle and disturb; the images have the crystalline fragility of a moment held in a kaleidoscope image. In English the current meanings of 'dazzle' - 'to confound with brilliancy, beauty, cleverness' have also the military dimensions of deception and camouflage: the 'dazzle-painting' on the sides of ships: dazzle which conceals identity and number.^{xxxiii} The body as sign and ensign exists in

dazzling tension on the splintering photographic surface. Dazzle represents the manichaeian power of the dialectic between light and dark, good and evil, redemption and damnation, creation and destruction, exposure and hidden identity – and masculine and feminine - continually haunting Kulik's work, whose very basis, from a technical point of view depends upon light itself, upon illumination and its withdrawal, on the 'positive' and the 'negative'. The psychoanalytic dimension of this unresolved dialectic accounts for the feelings of both violence and impotence that Kulik has expressed

'In the form of my mother I put the content of my father'. Zofia has described those different male and female universes, perceived at home as a child; her dressmaker mother's domestic space, a 'soft' world of carpets, kelims, textiles, embroideries and printed cottons in the apartment within a military barracks, looking out to the parade ground where her father organised and participated in countless military exercises. *Who Conquered the World?* She asks in a photomontage of 1994.

Yet Kulik's kaleidoscope principle turns number into madness; her obsessive use of bilateral and rotational symmetries dissipate all linear rationality. The all-Seeing eye of Christian humanist perspective has abandoned the scene; mad implosions and explosions negate any remaining remnants of a 'logic of history' or 'truth of images'. Indeed, the reference to madness becomes explicit in figures such as the draped female figure (Ursula Kwiek, Kwiek's mentally unstable sister, Fig. 10) from *All the missiles are one missile* (Fig. 11)^{xxxiv} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1972 is inverted; we confront 'Totalitarianism and Schizophrenia' in which dissolved, pixellated, repetitious motifs, seemingly arbitrarily miniaturised or blow-up: 'women's crotches, camera in water, shot from underneath' (Fig. 12), become a counterpoint texture to foci of military episodes, Soviet war-time assassinations (Fig. 13), equally arbitrary of course – within the logistics of the rationalisation of slaughter.^{xxxv}

How, finally, does one move from carpets to genocide, and from Siberia to the Cyberia of cybercafés, the title of Kulik's most ambitious 'postmodern/postnationalist' photopiece? The history of ornament is a history of

conquest and the rise and fall of empires. At the height of the British Empire, Owen Jones' *The Grammar of Ornament*, 1856, demonstrated the structures and motifs of a history extending from 'The Ornament of Savage Tribes' to 'Italian Ornament' within an implicitly Hegelian and Darwinist framework of evolution: no place here for the concept of genocide. ^{xxxvi} The conjunction 'ornament and crime' was made by the modernist Adolf Loos in 1909, with specific reference to the Viennese Ringstrasse. He could not possibly envisage the atrocities of the twentieth century - nor Austria's role therein. After Auschwitz, André Malraux, in *Le Musée imaginaire* of 1947 traced the stylistic passage of a smile from a Cambodian Buddha to the cathedral of Rheims - a passage, he proclaimed, that 'transcended' millions of deaths. Just so, Kulik demonstrates, is the saga of the transmission of ornament, from the Turkish carnation in the carpet to the Polish national costume (a wholesale Turkish import)^{xxxvii}; and in *From Siberia to Cyberia*, from the prehistoric zig-zag - the first sign for a man - to the repetitive dazzle of our T.V. scenes, where historical atrocity lives atemporally and in promiscuity with the pornographic.

From Siberia to Cyberia (Fig. 14), was Kulik's final twentieth-century epic. Relatives of her family were sent by the Soviets to Siberia; she explained to me how Polish 'enemies' were coopted for a Polish army in the USSR after 1942. Siberia evokes camps, slave labour, incarceration, the long histories of a barbarous Other, the two million Polish civilians deported to Arctic Russia, Siberia and Kazakhstan during the second world war and occupation.

Kulik has shown me the depiction of groups on their way to Siberia depicted by Malczewski; the history of Poland's uprising in lithographs by Artura Grottger from an old book belonging to her father; she spoke of the *November Night* play by Wyspianski on the insurrection of 1931, and the poetry of Adam Mickiewicz. Siberia itself is an old theme in Polish art. 'Cyberia' the pun, already spawns a thousand websites. Poland's new cyber-elite shuns the Soc-ages, accessing sites in a cyberspace light years away from Kulik's darkroom where at home she wove together her Siberian fresco like a Penelope. Yet Kulik's pixellated surface of grey TV images serves as both warp and weft, as grid rather than content, the support of a meaning becoming ever more

ghostly, the simulacrum of a simulacrum. Here, the heroic tradition joins the stitch: the zig-zag signs of prehistoric man, abstracted points of 'heads' and 'phalli' lace together her surfaces, visually linking up with the crochet pattern books, the *Robotki reczne* of a thousand Polish hearths.^{xxxviii} The positive or negative electronic impulse equals the stitch; 'to keep or lose eyes' (to 'drop stitches' in Polish) so often equates with losing lives, losing souls. Each trace stands, metonymically, for the acts and moments and utterances which left no trace - what the modernist Adolf Loos called 'ins Leere gesprochen', spoken into the void. The East/West story is one of delayed reception; so is the transmission of both ornament and technology. Working in Britain or America, Kulik would be working on a screen; *From Siberia to Cyberia* would be displayed on a video screen or at least with light boxes or real television.

'The disasters which mark this end of millenium, are also *the archives of evil*' (*les archives du mal*) writes Jacques Derrida in *Mal d'Archive*, translated as *Archive Fever*.^{xxxix} Derrida reminds us that 'archive' derives from 'arkheion' (a house, in Greek), that archives take place within a context of 'domiciliation', that 'the pain of the archive' is the necessary double of this 'archive fever'.^{xl} Kulik's house in Lomianki, outside Warsaw, restored after 1982 (Fig. 15), is a house of memory, reflection, and the site of her archives of the century. From a Soviet ideal of revolutionary, nation-building modernism, acknowledged in her photomontage, to postmodernism and postnationalism: concepts which cannot exist, perhaps, without their dark side of mourning. Out of what Derrida called 'the burning evidence' of the twentieth century archive, Kulik has dazzled us with tears as well as postmodern irony: 'I am organiser of the plenitude which attacks me'. Forever caught between the sickle and the cross, her ironic self-referentiality nonetheless links up with mandelas of healing and of our archtypal memory.

*Zofia Kulik is currently preparing two exhibition for 2003: **In Front of the Camera** for the Bunkier Sztuki, Cracow, travelling to the Kunsthalle, Rostock and the Bochum Museum, Bochum, and **World as Adornment**, for the National Museum, Bydgoszcz.*

Notes

- ⁱ See the comprehensive study by Jerzy Truszkowski, *Sztuka Krytyczna w Polsce, (Critical Art in Poland), I, Kwiek. Kulik. Kwiekulik. 1967-1998*, Poznan, Galeria Miejska, Arsenal, 1999
- ⁱⁱ 'People want spires!' (Stalin). See Andrzej Oseka, 'Lud chciat iglic'. *Polityka*, 30, 1999, p. 54.
- ⁱⁱⁱ. See *Doppel Identität. Polnische Kunst zu Beginn der neunziger Jahre*, Wiesbaden, Landesmuseum, 1991, and *Wanderlieder*, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1991-2.
- ^{iv} *Od Syberia Do Cyberii [From Siberia to Cyberia]*, Poznan, National Museum of Art, (English and Polish); *After the Wall Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*, Bojana Pejic and David Elliott eds., Moderna Museet Stockholm, 1999. Kulik's work also featured in *L'Autre moitié de l'avant-garde, mémoire / histoire / biographie; Réalité sociale / existence / politique; énigme, secret, ésoterisme; / projet / utopie/ construction/*, Paris, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, 2000, with a CD -rom edited by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux.
- ^v Consider the confrontations suggested by *Abstraction-Création*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1978 (Paris-based international abstraction c. 1930-1938); Jeffrey Herf's *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1984 and Boris Groys's *The Total Art of Stalinism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992.
- ^{vi} Zdenka Badovinac ed., *The Body and the East*, Ljubliana, Slovenia, and Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1998.
- ^{vii}. Unsourced quotations by Zofia Kulik are comments made to the author in Lomianki, November 21st - 23rd, 1998.
- ^{viii}. See Jerzy Truszkowski: 'The structure of Kulik', *Magazyn Sztuki* 10, 1996.
- ^{ix} The Michaelangelo piece was reconstructed by Kulik and Kwiek (one colour copy, two white copies) for the exhibition *Sorcerers and Mystics*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, 1991.
- ^x Renata Salecl, *The Spoils of Freedom. Psychoanalysis and Feminism after the Fall of Socialism*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 7.
- ^{xi} Unframed slides presented in strips were mounted in a window frame as *Logical window*, 1973; forty-eight black and white photographs were 'framed'

with crumpled brown paper - this work was shown several times. Large cibachrome images of the series are a new development, shown in *The Missing Link*, Arsenal Gallery, Poznan, 1999.

^{xii} From 1972-4 both artists attended 'logic-humanistic' seminars, and chess theory seminars at the University of Warsaw and in 1975, seminars at the Studio of Design Methodology, Polish Academy of Science. Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-9 was shown as a book project with slides and a discussion at the ninth Cracow festival of performance in 1981. See *Spotkania Krakowskie IX, 1981*, Cracow, BWA Contemporary Art Gallery, 1995, pp. 30-1.

^{xiii} Linda Novak, 'The "Dzialania" of Zofia Kulik and Przemyslaw Kwiek', *High Performance*, 38, 1987, pp. 54-8. The juxtaposition of Zofia and Polish plaster eagle, captioned 'Commentary art: a bird of Plaster for Bronze in the Slums of the Fine Arts' together with a phallus sculpture labelled 'Commentary Art: 'Man Dick' in the Malmo Konsthall catalogue *Seven Young Poles* in 1975, provoked the prohibition to travel for four years.

^{xiv} The full name for our Actions is: documented Actions of material-time-space-life' from *Action with "Tube"*, 1976, in 'KwieKulik', *Exit, New Art in Poland*, 5, 1991, p. 152.'

^{xv} Cynthia Carr, 'Poles Apart', in *Village Voice*, March 31, 1987, p. 93.

^{xvi} See *Artistic couples*, Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; Michael Schwarz's catalogue appeared as a special issue of *Internationales Kunstforum*, no 28. See also Eva Kuryluk 'Journey to the Limits of Art', *Projekt*, 4, 1979, pp. 35-38, and for a brilliant comparison with the more body-conscious and less political work of Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Katarzyna Michalak: 'Performing Life, Living art: Abramovic/Ulay and KwieKulik', *Afterimage*, Nov.-Dec., 1999, pp. 15-17.

^{xvii} See 'Being nothing but an obedient psycho-physical instrument', interview with Ryszard Ziarkiewicz, 1992, (typescript) tr. Marzena Beata Guzowska from *Magazyn Sztuki*, (Sopot) 1, 1993, p. 6.

^{xviii} A special issue of *Sztuka* (the Polish *Artforum*), juxtaposed their work with Joseph Beuys and Sue Coe - but only 100 copies were saved by Kwiek from subsequent censorship and destruction.

^{xix} For the performance context involving major Polish figures, see also *Jerzy Beres. Zwidy wyrocznie oltarze wyzwania*, Poznan, National Gallery of Poznan, Cracow, National Gallery of Cracow, 1995, and Zbigniew

Warpechowski, *Zasobnik*, Gdansk, Slowo/Obraz terytoria, 1998. For women artists, see also *Artystki polskie*, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1991, (Wroclaw, Warsaw, Krakow) im Zaklad Narodowy Ossolinskich, 1991 and *Voices of Freedom. Polish Women Artists and the avant-garde*, Washington, National Museum of Womens' Art, 1991.

xx Kulik's description in the hand-made brochure accompanying the slides she sent me – an inestimably precious labour of love...

xxi. Fax, March 9th, 1999. See Piotr Piotrowski, 'The Grey Zone of Europe', in *After the Wall*, op. cit., vol. 1., pp. 035-038.

xxii 'They want to include such Actions in the conceptual and administrative system of the official Polish art, fighting for it organisationally...' (biographical note), *Exit*, op. cit., p.150.

xxiii 'I expose image after image according to cardboard stencils which I do earlier in daylight, but in a darkroom I am totally determined by stencils.' Kulik, letter of October 5th, 1999.

xxiv '...The avant-garde stance became a paper mock-up in the context of martial law' precedes this statement, interview with Ryszard Ziarkiewicz, 1992, op. cit., p.7

xxv Sarah Wilson: 'Discovering the Psyche', *Od Syberia Do Cyberii*, op. cit., pp. 53-73.

xxvi. Ewa Lajer-Burcharth: 'Old Histories. Zofia Kulik's ironic recollections', *New Histories*, Boston, Institute of Contemporary Art, 1997, pp. 119-136

xxvii Zbigniew Libera is now notorious for his *Lego Concentration Camp*, 1996, shown in *After the Wall*, op. cit.

xxviii. Zofia Kullik, 1989, in *Idiomy Socwiczca / Idioms of the Soc-Ages*, Lomianki, 1990

xxix. Ibid.

xxx Lajer-Burcharth, op. cit., p. 126.

xxxi. Dominic La Capra: 'The Return of the Historically Repressed', *History, Theory, Trauma. Representing the Holocaust*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1994, p. 169, ff.

xxxii 'Cover her face. Mine eyes dazzle: she di'd young', *The Duchess of Malfi*, Act IV, Scene 2, in *John Webster. Three Plays*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1972, p. 260

xxxiii. *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, Edinburgh, Constable, 1973, p, 330.

xxxiv Significantly, the title itself is a parody of T.S. Eliot's phrase 'all the women are one woman' in his notes to the 'Fire Sermon' from *The Waste Land*, 1922.

xxxv Kulik's work provides *the* exemplary gloss to Daniel Pick's *The Rationalisation of Slaughter in the Modern Age*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1993.

xxxvi. Owen Jones: *The Grammar of Ornament*, London, Messrs. Day and Son, 1856; reprint Studio Editions, 1986.

xxxvii. See *Ubiory w Polsce* (Costumes in Poland), Warsaw, Stowarzyszenie Historykow Sztuki, 1992, 1994.

xxxviii. See Carl Schuster and Edmund Carpenter: *Patterns that Connect. Social Symbolism in Ancient and Tribal Art*, New York, Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1996 (in Kulik's library).

xxxix . Jacques Derrida: 'Prière d'insérer', *Mal d'archive. Une impression freudienne*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995. The title *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996) conveys both enthusiasm and illness.

xl. Jacques Derrida: *Mal d'Archive*, op.cit., p. 12.