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FOR/WITH. TOGETHER

Abstract: The article presents the origins of my concept of workshops and educational-artistic projects aimed at a wide range of public, as the co-participants of artistic creation processes. It depicts projects related to spontaneity triggering and imagination activation of workshops participants. In the further part of the article there are presented instances of activities focused on dreams fulfillment in artistic projects. Issues of getting to know one another better and of greater mutual understanding through creative interaction occurring in artistic activities are significant for the discussion.

The subject of activities conducted for over forty years is divided into five groups: spontaneity triggering, imagination activation, dreams fulfillment, creative interactions, and communality. All the presented projects display creations delivering symbolic products of non-utilitarian function. They direct our attention to self-confidence, optimism and achieving emotional well-being.

Keywords: artistic and quasi-artistic activities, interpersonal contact, partner existence in a creative activity, experiences in communal activity

The turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a revolution in art perception. It involved a shift in the focus from the work, a material artifact, to the creator and their inner experience gained while creating. The artifact creation process itself was becoming the aim of the creator's inner transformation. Such creators' experiences were applied and gradually transferred to the field of reflection on education and new educational concepts. It resulted in the development of theories assuming that a specific kind of creativity is conducive to harmonious development of all the personality aspects: intellect, imagination, creativity, communication abilities as well as feelings.

A crucial revolution concerning the perception of the role of art took place in the 1960s and 1970s. It was a sexual and cultural revolution that cau-

sed fundamental changes in the Western civilization. New ideologies appeared. Popular culture developed. Plenty of open events, music festivals and open-air happenings were held. Slogans that appeared on the walls of Paris in 1968, such as *It is forbidden to forbid*, *Power for imagination*, guided the activity of many young artists.

The slogans were accompanied by an in-depth analysis of works by such intellectuals as Jean-Paul Sartre or Claude Levi-Strauss, while Situationists and their ideas of construction of situations and drift played a significant role in the forming of artistic attitudes. One of seminal works in this regard was a book by Guy Ernest Debord, theoretician, artist and film-maker, titled *The Society of the Spectacle* (*La société du spectacle*, 1967). Another figure crucial for young creators of that era was Herbert Marcuse - a German-English philosopher of the 1960s students' revolution, author of *One-Dimensional Man*, 1964.

Everything that occurred in the areas of intellectual and ideological reflection and the results of 1960s and 1970s students' movements left a significant impact on the awakening of the new creative and artistic activity. Characteristic for that period is a number of new artistic activities such as *mail art* or *land art*. Yet, what interests us most here are emerging artistic attitudes concerning the use of the artistic creation process itself, affecting the consciousness of both the creator and the recipient, that is the co-creator.

Obviously, there was nothing new in the statement of that time that art is the most reliable barometer of tensions within humankind. Still, a new and significant thing was the assertion that art urges the recipient to co-create, to experience that exceptional feeling of identification with the work of art and with action, and thus also with the creator and the substance of the work of art. It was emphasized that openness of a work of art reflects the idea of self-awareness in and through art, of recognizing the world as "mine" and therefore one for which I am supposed to be responsible. That new art demanded partnership of experiences and creative activity, partnership of fate, permanently bound to our world.

A number of artistic manifestos (for instance of *pARTner Group*) stated that the fundamental characteristic of a community of people is the three-fold relationship "me - you - us". Its significance is expressed in experiencing the self, "me", and thereby coming into being in "us". It is evident even in the general principle that the rule of human existence in the world is the awareness of communication. Lack of balance in the system of intra- and inter-personal communication hinders complete social existence of an individual. Appropriate communication is always associated with awareness of the self and the ability to project it on another person or a group of people while waiting for the process to be reversed. Only then does the process of communication occur.

In 1968 it was clear that political and social phenomena, including science and culture, often divide people contrary to their creators' intentions. Our times, in response to an increasingly explicit threat to human communication system, a threat caused by people themselves, compel us to find ways to improve the situation. People create their own world projecting themselves onto it and create themselves looking into the contemporary world. Ecological and military threats, political and economic crises, social inequality – all of these bear frustration and fears. And in that constantly accelerated process the most important thing – the ability to communicate with another human being – is lost.

The above reflections and deliberations gave way to programs of overt approach to another person in both artistic and quasi-artistic activities in order to get to know and understand each other better. This was how the pARTner Group program was developed, among others. It asserted that only experiences resulting from contacts with a child allow us to experience the beauty and strength of sheer understanding, originating from a partnership that is the relationship underlying any communication. A child, while playing, designs, shapes material and does not deliberate whether it is art creation or not. Similarly, children experience artistic messages addressed to them: they identify with them – animate them themselves. An adult either already lost that sincerity of feeling or is losing it day by day, entangled in the structures of the grown-up world.

When I was observing the activities of the 1970s creators, the accompanying deliberations concerning possibilities of their reception, as well as the recipient and the creator's participation prompted me to develop something I then named *partner existence in a creative activity*. I have begun practicing art that delights, bothers, and annoys. Art that is *dla/z. (for/with.)*. My artistic activity has become a discussion on co-creation, co-existence in expressive activity and conscious constructing of artistic projects. Projects that involve the discovery of differences and similarities, from individual variations to cultural consolidations.

To present the idea nowadays known as participatory art, I have list a number of artistic creations grouped into five thematic blocks. These are:

1. Spontaneity triggering (*Art Games*);
2. Imagination activation (*Known Forms - Imagined Forms; HOUSE. Interior - Apartment. HERE AND NOW; Burnt Out*)
3. Dreams fulfillment (*Dream About Flying*)
4. Creative interactions (*Feast; Animus and Anima; DIALOGUE Wordless DIALOGUE*)
5. Communality (*THINK Positive, Pyramid 2000*)

Selected examples of workshops and projects.

1.

Art Games - art workshop

Description of the workshop

The participants of the workshop were handed out sheets with simple graphic symbols on them, supplemented with explanations on the character of the activity, the material, the location and time. In the first part, they were given instructions-suggestions: we are making an *Alphabet, a Maze, Animals*. Later on, they worked without any directions.

Aim of the workshop

To have fun playing with symbols and space. To combine provided elements. To make the participants acquainted with: simple graphic forms - making of graphic symbols, making of representational and abstract compositions. Finding out about the order in which a form is developed: unit, compilation, system, structure.

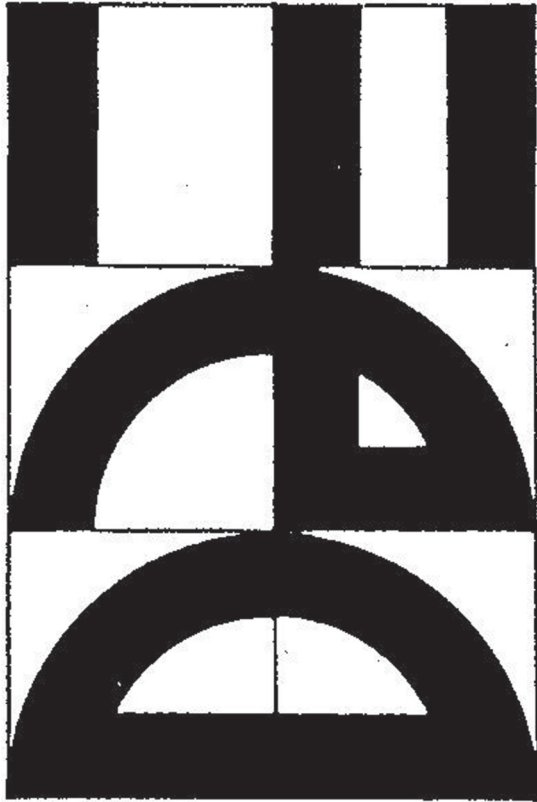
Participants: children between 6 and 14 (groups up to 15 people).

Location: room for occasional classes

Materials: thick 30x30cm cardboard sheets. Six patterns (picture 3.a.). Black print on a yellow background (500 pieces).

Carried out in

1976, Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, *Gry plastyczne [Art Games]*, series of workshops.



2.

Known forms - imagined forms - art workshop

Description of the workshop

Introductory conversation with participants. Conversation about the provided material, about the place and time of the activity. Setting the rules of conduct. Motto: *On your own, in a group, build, expand, change KNOWN FORMS - IMAGINED FORMS. Start from the beginning.*

In a situation when there was no author of the workshop, the participants could consult a text concerning possible workshop activities.

Aim of the workshop

To engage sense of sight and touch. To satisfy the need for movement. To stimulate the need for thinking and making decisions about *what can be done with it? What can it be used for?* Self-assessment of one's own task performance. To stimulate meaningful actions.

Participants: school children (groups up to 25 people).

Location: temporary exhibition rooms of the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź.

Materials: in one room: wicker sticks of different size. In the other room: planks and boards of different size.

Carried out in

1979, Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, *Formy znane - formy wyobrażone* [Known forms - imagined forms], art workshop.



3.

HOUSE. Interior - Apartment. HERE AND NOW - art workshop.

Description of the workshop

At 6.00 a.m. the author and other supervisors started the work on architectural drawings representing the southern façade of the Old Market Square in Poznań.

This was an exact representation of the whole façade (1:1 scale), drawn with chalk on the pavement and the road.

At 10.00 the participants of the workshop arrived. First they collected the script and talked to the author of the workshop. Then, they could choose a spot where they would draw their idea of *My Interior - My Apartment*. They could choose brushes and buckets with paints, and then they could start designing - painting their future apartments of their dreams.

Aim of the workshop

To create conditions for reflections on and discussion about HOME. Interior - Apartment. To stimulate meaningful actions. To enhance conscious process of choosing space, objects and colors. To give an opportunity to experience ultimate creativity, to share creativity with others in an open urban space. Self-discovery. Group integration.

Participants: school children (4 groups, 50 people in total).

Location: Old Market Square in Poznań

Materials: chalk paints (5 colors). Buckets. Brushes. Sound equipment for information communication.

Carried out in

1986, Old Market Square in Poznań, as part of the Biennial of Art for Children.



4.

BURNT OUT - art project

It's dark around...

Light in the darkness.

Candle light - flame.

Music in the silence.

Description of the workshop

This workshop starts with exercises that calm down the mind.

Exercises are accompanied by quiet music e.g. "ENVIRONMENT - OCEAN". Each participant receives a FLAME - a burning candle and a SURFACE - a white sheet of paperboard.

This activity is about finding YES and NO, about finding forms and proportions for YES and NO. In this case, the white sheet represents YES, and the holes burnt out on the white surface - the burnt-out spots - represent NO.

During the whole activity our eyes see the white surface, but at the same time they focus on the burning process, on spots that are disappearing, or that have already disappeared, on things that exists and don't exist at the same time.

Our mind should not be dealing with the artistic side of the activity, but it should be aware of the reasons for which it is doing it, and of the consequences of what it is doing, and at the same time, it should be conscious of the whole context.

So:

Darkness. White sheet of paper. Single candles - FLAME.

We are burning out holes. One. Two. Possibly dozens, hundreds of holes.

White surface begins to shrink, there are more and more holes.

There is no need to talk.

This activity can be treated as a focused visualization.

This visualization leads to contemplation - i.e. to analyzing the problem in a comprehensive way without effort or making judgments.

This way, intuitive understanding is broadened.

Finally, we combine all the works together, creating kind of an *Art book*.

Participants: adolescents and adults

Location: gallery.

Materials: (100x70cm) thick, sturdy, slow-burning paperboard in the A1 format.

Carried out in

1996, Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw.



5.

Dream About Flying - International Artistic and Educational Project

Description of the workshop

Part I. Instructions

Flight. To go up. To soar. To fly. This is an eternal human dream.

Flight - activity with no limitations. A revelation, breaking free from the reality and earthly matters.

Do you sometimes have such dreams? Do you ever have dreams about flying, going up in the air?

Do it. Don't think about daily matters for a few minutes.

Close your eyes. Think about flying. Imagine, as vividly as possible, yourself floating in the air, imagine you are going up high.

You are going up. You are soaring. You can see the world from up high.

You are light as a feather. You control all your movements.

Your arms are your wings. Your legs are rudders.

After a few minutes of your visualization open your eyes and "capture" your visions.

Position your body so that it looks as if it is flying.

Lie down in a "rising up" position (on a previously prepared paperboard sheet covered with gauze).

Ask a friend to precisely draw the contour of your body.

Part II. Instructions

Fill your drawing with dreams.

Draw or paint your *Dream about flying* - paint, portray yourself in a flying position.

Show the thoughts that accompany you when you are raising up to the air (inner world).

Also portray the World that is outside you.

Part III

Take the gauze off the cardboard sheet. Two pictures have been created. One is on the gauze, it's light and delicate, the other is on the cardboard, it is more defined and clearer. Pictures on the cardboard were displayed in the gallery. Pictures on the gauze were compiled and turned into *Art Book - Dream About Flying*.

Pages of the *Book - Dream About Flying* were displayed for many days in public places and they were being moved by wind, carrying the message far into the space.

Participants: school children, adolescents.

Materials: cardboard - thick sheet of paperboard 200x120cm, gauze (cut from a roll), paints, brushes, ropes - cords to fix the installation.

Carried out in

2000, Summer Creativity Workshop, Weimar (Germany),

2001, Kinder Atelier, Kiel - Molfsee (Germany).



6.

FEAST – International Art Project

The Book – This is who I am and how others see me, this is...

Description of the workshop

Part I. Instruction

Get yourselves into pairs. Sit opposite each other at a table.

Put your hands on the table (the table covered with a white fabric).

Position your hands so that they make a shape that represents you, that will be your self-portrait.

Ask your partner to draw the outline of your hands with a black felt tip pen.

Then, swap roles and do exactly the same for your partner.

Part II. Instruction

Swap places with your partner (sit in front of the outline of your partner's hands that is drawn on the table). Think of how you perceive it (how do you see it), what do you make of your partner? What kind of person is he/she? Draw, paint your opinion about the partner (symbolic, metaphorical representation of your partner).

Do it outside the outline of his/her hands.

Part III. Instruction

Go back to your initial place – sit in front of the outline of your own hands.

Look carefully at what your partner has created, how he/she has portrayed you.

Think about what your partner might have meant, what has she/he made of you?

Do you relate to that image?

Now, think once more about who you really are, what kind of person you are “deep inside”?

Are you good, honest, open, cheerful? Are you...?

Draw, paint your “inner” self.

Create that image inside the previously created outline of your hands – inside “your portrait”.

Part IV

Presentation: *The Book – This is who I am and how others see me, this is...*

Participants: adolescents and adults

Location: open space

Materials: tables, fabric, coloring pencils, felt tip pens

Carried out in:

2003, Łódź (Poland), Festival of Science, Technics and Art,

2004, Brixen (Italy), University of Bozen-Bolzano,

2005, Weimar (Germany), 15th International Workshop for Kids and Adolescents



7.

ANIMUS and ANIMA - Art Project

ANIMUS and ANIMA. Archetypes.

Archetypes - experiences of ancestors cumulated in the unconsciousness.

From the psychological point of view, they are the masculine and feminine traits that are present in both genders.

Description of the workshop

Part I. Day one.

The person running the workshop suggested that the participants should go for a walk around the city, in groups they had formed themselves. Their task was to carefully observe people they met on their way, and then to focus on one of them. What characterizes that person? Clothes, body shape, age, the way that person moves, gestures, a smile or lack of smile - all of those provide information and help us make assumptions about who the person we are observing might be. Each participant became a detective and created a psychological portrait of the chosen person.

After returning to the gallery, everybody made a sketch of the chosen person. On the basis of one of them the participants were expected to position their bodies to capture the resemblance. One person from each group served as a model, and the other members of the group were recreating the motionless figure in a form of a sculpture.

In order to do that, they received fifty meters of fine wire mesh netting, protective gloves, scissors and pliers. The positioned body was covered with the mesh, trapped, like in a cage. The person inside the mesh could look through the fine openings in the mesh at the other members of the group working. That person's task was to make a precise imprint of the body by denting and stretching the wire mesh.

Part II. Day two.

On that day, the mesh sculptures were perfected and small corrections were performed. Nine original wire "effigies" were created - there were no bodies inside, but did they also lack souls? Each of them was given a name or a pseudonym.

The ready sculptures were taken by the participants to the New Town Square, where the participants originally met the people whom those sculptures represented. Each sculpture was unique because it portrayed internal and external features of the given person, but also of its creators, who had become strongly, emotionally involved in its making. They emotionally related to the other person and they tried to evoke the feelings which that person experienced.

An enormous ANIMUS and ANIMA installation was created around the

Nicholas Copernicus Monument - it was a record of reflections on women and men both from the perspective of archetypes and the daily life.

Participants: students of the Middle School in Toruń.

Materials: “rabitza” netting, different tools for cutting the mesh.

Carried out in

2005, New Market Square in Toruń, 5th Science and Art Festival in Toruń, Children's Creative Art Centre and Gallery in Toruń.



8.

DIALOGUE Wordless DIALOGUE - International Art Project

Where and when do we experience a dialogue, or do we at all?

Nowadays we often talk about the dominant role of the philosophy of dialogue.

However, in real life it's quite evident that dialogue is missing – there is a lack of conversation.

However, the truth is that words, words, words – are omnipresent.

It can be said that we are attacked by speech and words. We are being flooded with information (mainly negative) – most frequently about wars, attacks, robberies, accidents. Most newspapers and magazines put texts about aggression and violence on their front pages. Radio and TV news first report about earthquakes, floods, hurricanes.

Catastrophic vision of the future is prevalent.

Is it really this way? Is the world really that gloomy and “black”?

Or maybe the world isn't that horrendous, it's not only black, possibly it's not even only black and white.

The International Art Project – *DIALOGUE Wordless DIALOGUE* – is an invitation to a dialogue, invitation to thinking. At the same time, it was the invitation to positive thinking. The invitation to express oneself through artistic, poetic, metaphoric and symbolic forms. The invitation to a DIALOGUE carried out in a visual language – the language of color, forms, shapes and symbols.

The invitation to participate in the *DIALOGUE Wordless DIALOGUE* project and specially prepared fabrics – triangles on which artwork was to be performed – were sent to numerous cultural institutions, schools and institutions of higher education. Participants were asked to do some artwork on both sides of the fabrics, using a chosen technique: drawing, graphics, painting, collage, embroidery.

Several hundred works were submitted.

The submitted works were joined together to form big, arranged compositions, books – volumes.

The works were performed in many places in the country and around the world.

Participants: children, adolescents and adults.

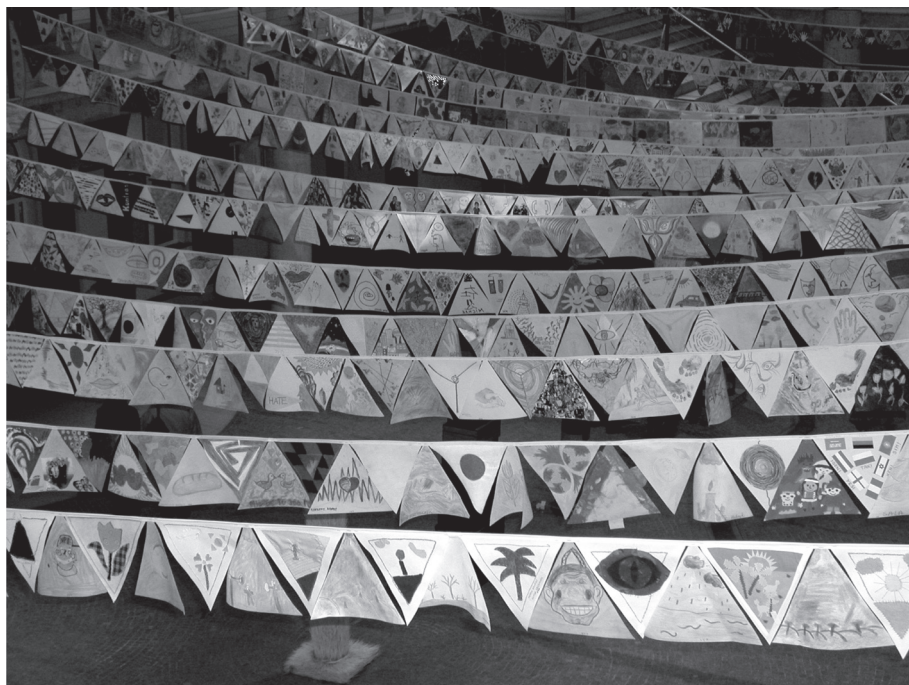
Materials: triangles made of interfacing (side length of 34 cm), pencils, pastels, paints and brushes.

Carried out in

2002, Łódź, PATIO Gallery,

2003, Weimar (Germany),

2004, Dubai.



9.

***THINK Positive* – International Art Project**

Thought is an activity, a function, work of the brain; it is a cognitive process, thinking; mental power, cognitive power, reason, brains, consciousness, memory.

Thought results from reflections, it is an effect of the process of thinking: fantasy, concept, judgment, conclusion, opinion about something, belief, guiding idea, concept.

Positively – positive: accepting, approving, giving consent for something, positively disposed toward something.

Favorable, deserving positive evaluation, successful. Positively disposed toward something. Open. Positive – valuable.

Positive thinking is a special state of mind (and/or body) that influences feelings, behaviours and efficacy of actions. Positive thinking evokes a certain type of emotions. Positive emotional experiences which repeat often enough, are interpreted by our nervous system as something real, even if those experiences actually don't happen at all.

THINK Positive – the International Art Project is an invitation to thinking. It's the invitation to positive thinking. Invitation to a creative – positive interpretation of facts, reports, events. It's the invitation to build new, positive meanings and to “transform” the existing negative ones into positive ones. Changing of unfavourable attitude. Changing of interpretation and of the perspective.

THINK Positive is an invitation to express oneself through literary, poetic and artistic forms which refer to the present and the future of the world, human beings, animals, birds, air, science and technology.

The invitation to create works as part of the ***THINK Positive*** project was sent to numerous cultural institutions, schools and institutions of higher education.

The organizers received several thousand works. In the final stage, a facility – *a house* – was built of planks. All the elements of the facility were covered with the submitted works. A ***HOUSE of positive THOUGHTS*** was created.

Participants: children, adolescents and adults.

Materials: newspapers, paper, glue; planks for construction of the facility.

Carried out in

2008, Łódź, PATIO Gallery.

10.

Pyramid 2000, International Art Project
2000 paintings for the year 2000

In 1996 the European Parliament decided that Weimar would be the European Capital of Culture. The authorities of the city of Weimar started to prepare an artistic program by contacting numerous artists from Europe. One of them was Wiesław Karolak, who was asked to develop an art project for children, adolescents and young artists from all over Europe.

Preparations to carry out the project lasted for two years. They required going through many complicated procedures, numerous meetings and talks with the representatives of the city of Weimar. Implementation of the project was divided into several stages:

Development of the concept: approval of the concept by the city authorities, politicians and the management of Weimar – the European Capital of Culture 1999 Festival; Initiating contacts with institutions, organizations, private individuals in Poland and other European countries who would like to participate in the project; creation of the PYRAMID.

A metal construction of the PYRAMID was created in Weimar. Many people supervised its design and performance. Help from architects, urban planners, qualified construction workers was necessary.

In July 1999, in the very heart of Weimar at Frauenplatz, opposite the house of Goethe, a huge, steel openwork pyramid construction was erected. It was 8 meters high and weighted 1.5 tons. The walls of the pyramid were covered with thousands of colorful triangles – pictures with a *message for the year 2000*. They were created by young artists from all over Europe.

Each side of the pyramid represented one cardinal direction. Therefore: northern wall consisted of works that were created in places located from Weimar to Nord Cap. Eastern wall consisted of works that were created in places located from Weimar to Russia. The western wall consisted of works that were created in places located from Weimar to Ireland, and the southern from Weimar to Malta.

The assembly of the pyramid lasted for two weeks and involved work of many people. Professional teams of workers with heavy equipment helped in that process. The building of the pyramid was witnessed by the residents of the town, tourists, and many people interested in the construction works carried out during the assembly.

Project: Wiesław Karolak, Łódź.

Organizer: Steffi Engelsteter, Kinderburo, Weimar.

Patronage and funding: City Hall of Weimar.

Carried out

1999, Weimar, European Capital of Culture,
2004 Soust, 2007 Graz, 2008 Luxembourg, 2009 Vilnius.

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DLA/Z. RAZEM (streszczenie)

Artykuł przedstawia rodzenie się mojej koncepcji działań warsztatowych i projektów edukacyjno – artystycznych skierowanych do szerokiego grona odbiorców – współuczestników procesów kreacji artystycznej. Ukazuje projekty związane z wyzwaniem się spontaniczności i uruchamianiem wyobraźni uczestników warsztatów. Następnie w artykule prezentowane są przykłady działań skoncentrowanych na realizacji marzeń w projektach artystycznych. Ważnym obszarem poruszanych zagadnień są też kwestie lepszego poznania się i pełniejszego wzajemnego zrozumienia międzyludzkiego poprzez interakcję twórczą zachodzącą w działaniach artystycznych. Problematyka działań realizowanych od przeszło czterdziestu lat podzielona została na pięć grup: wyzwalamie spontaniczności, uruchamianie wyobraźni, realizacja marzeń, interakcje twórcze i wspólnotowość. Wszystkie przedstawione projekty prezentują kreacje przynoszące wytwory o charakterze symbolicznym, pozbawione funkcji użytkowej. Kierują uwagę na wiarę w siebie, optymizm i uzyskanie dobrostanu emocjonalnego.

Słowa kluczowe: działania artystyczne i paraartystyczne, zdolność kontaktu z drugim człowiekiem, partnerskie bytowanie w twórczym działaniu, przeżycia w działaniu wspólnotowym.