

# Provocation as Art

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## Ritual – Provocation – Dialogue. Aspects of Nudity in the Art of Jerzy Bereś

**Abstract.** The aim of this paper is to present the *manifestations* of Jerzy Bereś, in the context of body art in East-Central Europe and the practices of Western artists. His actions, in which the artist usually performed naked, are also reconsidered in reference to the ritual theories. The term had been willingly borrowed from anthropology by art critics in order to describe performance art. As regards provocation, the question is about the provoking artist and the audience being provoked. Many works of art were perceived as scandalous, provocative or blasphemous at the time they had been created. My argument primarily focuses on the importance of a specific dialogue between Jerzy Bereś and his audience, that underlies such performance act.

**Keywords:** Jerzy Bereś, Polish contemporary art, body art, ritual, performance.

The history of using the body as means of artistic expression and materials within the art works dates back to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It can be linked to Sigmund Freud's theory of the unconscious mind, which "*affects behaviour in ways that the subject is not necessarily aware of*" (*The Artist's Body* 2003: 11). Dada artists during the 1910s and 1920s incorporated the physical body as an irreverent and performative strategy against traditional representation in art, which was further developed by Surrealism. Dating back to 1960s, the human body, usually naked, became a tool in a special way, a material or an object of art. Using the body as an art medium capable of replacing traditional content carriers, limited strictly to reflections upon corporeality, the question of endurance of the human body and its involvement in various orders and prohibitions remained unsolved. It emerged in artistic activities as an engaging technique of performance, demonstrating the freedom of expression of the artists. Provocation always accompanied the activities of "body artists".

Many actions performed on the body might be seen as having common elements with a ritual. Such formula strengthens the message and makes the reality

more condensed, while the rituals present in the "body art" represent a total experience. An unusual bond is created between the participants of the ritual and this extraordinary state. Of one of the most important contributions to the theories of the ritual is provided by Victor Turner, who described this type of community as spontaneous *communitas*. "There is something magic about it. Subjectively speaking, there appears a feeling of boundless power in it" (2005: 75). By participating in the ritual, the community of recipients gains mutual understanding and shares the illuminating experience. Under the power of spontaneous *communitas*, its members become frank and open-minded (Turner 2005: 75). Referring to this aspect, Roy A. Rappaport made similar remarks on the ritual. According to his theory, it was the ritual, the non-verbal character of such acting that guaranteed the truth and protected the artwork from possible misinterpretations (1999: 26). Despite that, he provided a rather general and terse definition of the ritual as "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers" (Rappaport 1999: 24). With respect to art-related matters, the observation by G.C. Homans seems even more interesting: "ritual actions do not produce a practical result on the external world – that is one of the reasons why we call them ritual", but this is not to say that ritual has no function. It is related to "the internal constitution of the society" and gives its members confidence, while dispelling their anxieties (Homans 1941: 172). The form and effectiveness of ritual communication are other important aspects thereof. The more postures and gestures are distinguished from "ordinary technical acts", the more easily they "may be recognized as a signal and not a physically efficacious act". The existence of a special time and place is also very important. Words and acts take on special meaning (Rappaport 1999: 50).

Jerzy Bereś (1930-2012), considered as the forerunner of performance and body art in Poland, had denied such classification of his work. He did not think of himself as a performer or a happening artist. He called his actions *manifestations*. This sculptor, educated in Kraków, devoted himself to an art domain that was quickly dominated by wood as the basic material for creating archaic, totemic and metaphoric structures, like *Zwidy* (*Phantoms*) or *Ołtarze* (*Altars*). To better understand the essence of his *manifestations*, we must take a look at his other works, created since the end of the 1950's. His first sculptures made after he graduated the Academy of Fine Arts were distinguished by geometrisation and a simplicity of form. They revealed the influence of his Cracovian teacher, Xawery Dunikowski. Bereś exhibited these works in 1958 in Dom Plastyków (House of Artists) in Kraków. Sculptures like *Kołysanka* (*Lullaby*), *Do słońca* (*Towards the Sun*) and *Idylla* (*Idyll*) were still made of plaster and reinforced concrete, but he stopped using these materials quite soon. After this exhibition a breakthrough occurred in the artist's thinking. Bereś was not attracted by "art informel", very popular at that moment, nor did he admire the works of Henry Moore, a master for young



*Cheering Altar*

Manifestation, November 14, 1975,  
Labirynt Gallery, Lublin, Poland  
Photo by Andrzej Polakowski  
Courtesy of Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

sculptors. He also denied the pre-war constructivist idea of sculpture proposed by Katarzyna Kobro who wanted to liberate sculpture from the closed, solid materials: for Beres it was just solid, pure mass in space, that mattered.

The artist turned to crude and coarse materials: wood, stone, ropes or hemp canvas. At the end of the 1950's, he created *Rzepicha* (1958) and *Bart* (1959), anticipating human figure constructions intended to be exhibited in open space and watchable all-around. Precisely elaborated surfaces quickly gave priority to the simplification of moulding, going towards exploring the natural qualities of matter. Simple form was accompanied by equally simple techniques. Axe and saw were the tools used, coming from a woodcutter's or carpenter's workshop, rather than a sculpture workplace. The choice of utensils determined the form of the monumental *Zwidy* (*Phantoms*), which dominated Beres's work in the first half of the 1960s. Roughly cut logs of wood, tied with ropes or chains, sometimes connected to stones resembled gigantic amulets and totems at the same time (Kostołowski 1995: 27). While creating these raw constructions, the author did not hide the provenance of the materials; quite the contrary, he used their natural shapes, as modelled by nature. There is an intentional archaisation included in the title of the cycle *Zwidy* (*Phantoms*). Names of particular pieces of the cycle may be contrasted with industrial civilisation products, for example: *Zwid Kamienny II* (*Stone Phantom II*, 1962), *Zwid – Wiatrak* (*Phantom Windmill*, 1965), etc. These sculptures criticized the abuse of nature as a consequence of the expansion of industrial civilisation (Kemp-Welch, *Radykalna ekspansja...*, 2007: 44). His *Zwid Wielki* (*Great Phantom*) placed on the premises of the Azoty (chemical manufacturer) plant in Puławy during the Symposium of Visual Artists and Scientists in 1966, also acquired similar connotations. Beres engaged in a dispute with the surrounding world and the Symposium's slogan – "art in a changing world" (Leśniewska 2006: 41).



*Dialogue with Marcel Duchamp*  
 Manifestation, November 6, 1981,  
 BWA Gallery, Lublin, Poland  
 Photo by Andrzej Polakowski  
 Courtesy of Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

At the beginning of the 1970s, Bereś introduced the aspect of motion into his sculptures, which he merely suggested before. He expected the spectator to operate them and the spectator was supposed to make them move. They appeared to be neutral, semi-abstract sculptures, but in fact they were transformed by the artist into ironic and critical commentaries. *Klaskacz* (*Clapper*, 1970), capable of producing mechanical, hollow wooden applause and *Lizak* (*Lollipop*, 1971), in a shape resembling buttocks with a leather tongue stuck to the movable pole, reveal a criticism of the false applause of society for the actions of communist authorities. It alluded to the 1970s reality in Poland when some part of Polish intellectuals were deceived by the demagogy of the new First Secretary of the ruling Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), Edward Gierek.

However, the artist felt the most comfortable outside the gallery, where he was closer to the spectator. He was convinced of the necessity to physically enter "the stage" in his own work. Consequently, at the end of 1960s, Bereś initiated the so called *manifestations*. *Manifestation* was the author's term to describe the activity combining the technique of performance and the body art, in which the artist used wooden structures and his own naked body. The courage to expose his nude body in the communist Poland bore the characteristics of scandal and provocation, usually intensified by the political thrust of Bereś' manifestations, often censored in the real world by the political *régime* in Poland. However, his nudity was not erotic or sensual – in contrast to that of Western artists. In the mendacious reality it was natural, somehow primary, just as the wood or fire which Bereś used as well. His body exposed to public viewing was losing its corporeality / sexuality and took on a mystic character; as Piotr Piotrowski noticed, it became instrumental against the spirit (Piotrowski 2005: 407). The naked body became the subject as well as the object of artistic ritual. The artist painted it or sacrificed it ritually, demonstrating his frankness, honesty and vulnerability.





*Dialogue with Marcel Duchamp*  
 Fragment of the exhibition, November  
 1981, BWA Gallery, Lublin, Poland  
 Photo by Andrzej Polakowski  
 Courtesy of Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

In order to present the peculiarity of Beres's art, I will concentrate on some of his particular *manifestations*. His first actions were *Przepowiednia I (Prophecy I)* and *Przepowiednia II (Prophecy II)* in 1968, culminated in *Przepowiednia II Spełnia się (Prophecy II Comes True)* in 1989. *Prophecy I* took place on 6 January 1968 in the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw. A tree fell in Łazienki Park, it was cut and transported to the Gallery. The artist used Polish national colours: he wrapped white canvas and a rope loop around his neck. He also tied red canvas around his waist, hiding under two wooden coverings. Then, with the help of the audience, he picked up the pieces of timber and created a "work" crowned with a white-and-red bow-string made of the sheet of canvas he was wearing. Instead of the arrowhead, he fixed a hemp sheet with a painted inscription: PROPHECY. The artist kept on working in silence, accompanied only by a person reading Beres' manifesto THE ACT OF CREATION. At the end of the action, he painted an inscription on his front covering green, and left prints of both his palms at the back. Then, he took off these coverings and left the stage totally naked<sup>1</sup>.

Andrzej Kostołowski notices that the artist used completely outdated requisites. Therefore, his acting consisted of simple operations, typical for a carpenter (1995: 26). His involvement and concentration made the audience regard him as the subject as well as the object of the artistic activity. Additionally, in THE ACT OF CREATION Beres defined three essential elements of the creation act: liberation, independent work – action, and its permanent mark (Kostołowski 1995: 26).

The fact that the *manifestation* entitled *Prophecy I* was derided by a journalist from *Kultura (Culture)*, a weekly that supported the regime, provoked Beres to create his next work *Prophecy II*; this time the work was presented in Krzysztofory Gallery in Kraków on 1 March 1968. Beres used copies of *Culture* magazine to light a couple of fires. Again, he was "wearing" white-and-red sheet and wooden covers and he brought a cartload of firewood<sup>2</sup>. Then the audience built a pyre at the



*Altar of Wisdom*, 1980-81

Wood, rope and bell, fragment of the exhibition *New Content*,  
December 1986 – January 1987, BWA Gallery, Lublin, Poland

Photo by Andrzej Polakowski

Courtesy of Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

top of which the artist again installed a bow and his own covers. For a moment he included his own body as part of this work. Making an inscription with the carbonated tip of the chip was his last gesture.

This unintended “trilogy” ended with *Przepowiednia II spełnia się (Prophecy II Comes True)*, presented at a very special historic moment, in April 1989, the day after signing the Polish Round Table agreement which finally brought about end of communism in Poland. The artist used the drama already known from *Prophecy II*. This time, however, he ended his ritual with painting an inscription on his own body SPEŁNIA SIĘ [COMES TRUE], thus by implication: the PROPHECY, while making a white-and-red dot on his penis (for description of this action, see *Manifestacje* 1995: 143).

In the *Prophecies* the author raised questions not only about independent Poland, but also about the artist’s place within this process. He formulated his original idea of prophetic art focused on the artist who was expected to be a careful observer of social and political changes, and then used a special medium to reveal in advance future circumstances (Hanusek 2007: 16). The prophecy of Bereś’s actions cannot be understood literally and did not concern future events. His manifestations generated a specific air enabling the artist and the audience to participate in a mystery that revealed real, but not external, changes of time (Kostołowski 1988). In his *Prophecies*, *Masses* and *Rituals* he was not only a master of the ceremony, but first of all a ritual sacrifice. According to Jolanta Męderowicz, this conscious offering of oneself is explicit in the artist’s statements (2014: 97-98). Also, Piotr Piotrowski emphasises its particular context, referring to the white and red colours of his garment and the paints used to create marks on the body. It referred



*Eye*, 1983

Wood, stone and fabric, fragment of the exhibition *New Content*, December 1986 – January 1987, BWA Gallery, Lublin, Poland

Photo by Andrzej Polakowski

Courtesy of Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

to a Romantic tradition of Poland itself as ‘Christ the Redeemer’ who resurrects when the sacrifice has been finished (Piotrowski 1995: 44).

Referring to the symbols and terms inspired from Christian iconography in the titles of his *manifestations: Msze (Masses)* and *Ołtarze (Altars)*, they meant breaking another taboo. It provoked controversy and it even attacked the Catholic church. Beres defended himself arguing that he referred to Christ’s sacrifice which “*is being continuous, it has been consummated again and again*” (cited in: Kostołowski 1995: 29). The artist sacrifices his own body which is not an ideal male nude inspired from Ancient Greece (Kowalczyk 2002: 60). Izabela Kowalczyk, following Kenneth Clark, mentions a few conventions characteristic for male nudes: *Apollo* – the embodiment of calmness and power visible in the proportions and harmony of the human body; *Energy* – represented by an athlete and a hero with victorious body. Another convention accompanies *Suffering – Pathos*, signifying body defeated by pain, the victory of spirit over matter, like in representations of the Christ’s body (Clark 1972, cited in: Kowalczyk 2002: 60-61) – clearly the latter was used by Jerzy Beres in his *manifestations*. Piotrowski, in turn, distinguishes between nudity and nakedness. He defines the first term as “*a conventionalised clothing of nudity*” and the second the absence of form, as “*non-artistic state*” (2011: 195). A nude expressing a conventional beauty might be interpreted in the context of power and sex relations. The nude – which is female by default – objectifies the model presented to a male spectator<sup>3</sup>. Linda Nead sets the art of women artists against the nude understood as an ideal. She refers to female artists who refused to fit into the conventional frames of “*nudity on stage*” and revealed a real “*ob-scene*” nakedness (cited in: Piotrowski 2011: 196). However, the nudity of Beres – a male artist – was nev-

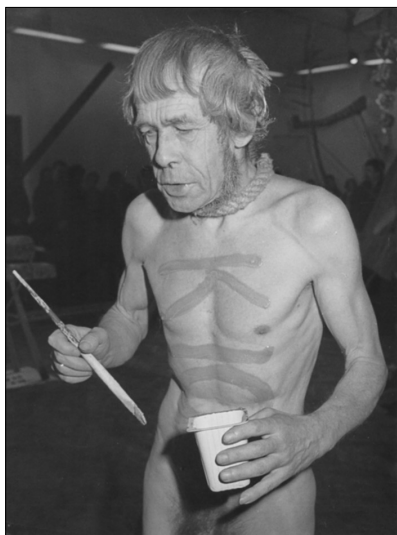
er a beauty nudes nor obscene nakedness. In his nudity the artist perceived “purity” and “honesty” (Bereś 1978: 51). His non-erotic body revealed a romantic hero, who became a symbol of resurrection and renaissance of the spirit.

Bereś’ own explanations of nakedness describe his actions as quite simple. According to his own words, he wanted to express:

- *an endeavour designed to keep the activities performed during the action as pure as possible. When I use very simple means (e.g. a piece of canvas or wood), the garments become something complicated. For a highly sophisticated, industrial object, I always try to use the simplest tools available.*
- *the endeavour to be honest. Significant nakedness is honesty and a manifestation, as it were, of no falsity. It excludes any kind of disguise.*
- *An almost practical necessity. In many actions, I make distinctive marks on the body with paint. And that could not be done on clothes.”* (Bereś 1978: 51, cited in Piotrowski 1995: 41-42)

This auto-commentary is permeated by clarity and the frankness of artistic declarations, guaranteed by the uncovered, naked body. The simplicity of media – in his sculptures accentuated by raw wood – is compulsory for every artistic message. The body is crowned with a set of natural objects – *requisites*. Bereś’s attitude towards the body – presented in his actions over his lifetime – differed fundamentally from the body practices of artists coming from Western Europe or the US (Viennese Actionists, Gina Pane, Chris Burden), and – much later – from the body games of younger generation performers, like those from the circle of Polish Critical Art of the 1990s<sup>4</sup>. The artist’s attitude was determined by his long-standing experience of communism, hence the traces of the Romantic battle for freedom against an imposed ideology were clearly visible in the artist’s works for the Polish spectators. Thus, a variety of aspects of corporeality from Jerzy Bereś’ art, present in his “manifestations” and “masses” should be presented in a broader context of East European art phenomena. In East-Central Europe under the restrictions of political repression of the 1960s, 70s and 80s the body art practices were often forbidden and their authors arrested by the police.

Marina Abramović, a Serbian (and former Yugoslavian) artist based in the US, began her career in the early 1970s. Sometimes described as the “grandmother of performance art”, the artist focused on the theme of “*confronting pain, blood, and physical limitations of the body*” (Demaria 2004: 295). Piotr Piotrowski notices the physicality of the experience (2005: 385). In her performance *Art must be beautiful, artist must be beautiful* (1975), that she created just before leaving Yugoslavia for good, the author subjects her body to a peculiar process of “*beautifying*”. Abramović is seen naked, combing her hair violently with a metal brush and repeating the mantra: “*Art must be beautiful, artist must be beautiful*”. She’s inflicting pain to her body and the tone of her voice reveals all the suffering she experienced.



*Untitled [Kitsch]*

Manifestation during the opening of the exhibition  
*Phantoms, Prophecies, Altars*, February 16, 1990,  
 BWA Gallery, Lublin, Poland  
 Photo by Andrzej Polakowski  
 Courtesy of Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

That simple act was open for many interpretations. It was often seen as a feminist critique of the expectations towards women to be beautiful. The artist is naked, but her nudity has nothing to do with the objectification of the body in the context of the presence of a male gaze. Male or even female spectators are forced to concentrate on the violence that the artist uses against herself. From this perspective her nudity becomes as asexual as in Bereś' *manifestations*. This bizarre grooming also has a quasi-ritualistic character. It might be cathartic, setting the body and soul free from cultural limitations. However, this feature gives up in front of the desire for corporeal auto-recognition, available by reaching its limits. Bojana Pejić also points to Abramović pushing her body over its mental and physical limitations (1998: 78). Pejić noticed that "*she did not use the body as a vehicle of socialization, and in this sense she was oriented toward the "inside", toward exploring corporeal and mental energies*" (1998: 78).

In many countries behind the Iron Curtain, where tolerance was enjoyed to a much lesser extent, any activity going beyond the officially accepted frameworks of art gained a political dimension. Women artists searched for woman's identity through the body, which was conventionally subordinated to the domination of the male gaze as its object, and was related to desire and pleasure. The male body was a different case. The exposure of a male body in the European culture usually was connected to manifesting power and heroism (Piotrowski 2005: 401). Some clear changes in the manner of perceiving the body had been introduced in Western art by the public appearance of sexual minorities. As in the works of Robert Morris or Robert Mapplethorpe, the male body that is to be examined and desired objectively. Similar phenomena could be observed in East-Central Europe.

Ion Grigorescu, a Romanian artist who was postulating a radical consolidation of artistic activities with ordinary life, introduced religious and spiritual motifs to conceptual art (Mytkowska, Dziewańska 2009: 10). Similarly to Jerzy Bereś, he performed naked, evoking quasi-ritual and quasi-religious associations. From the beginning of the 1970s, he experimented with film and photography during the difficult realities of Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime and the oppressive actions of the Securitate. Grigorescu referred to the language of Western conceptual art, as interpreted through the local traditions of representation and the Orthodox liturgical rituals (Schöllhammer 2009: 50). In a series of photographs entitled *Delivery* (1977) the artist directly addressed the question of a naked body – a forbidden area for the Romanian society at that time. The photographs present male genitals equipped with basic requisites, suggesting the presence of female attributes: ovaries and an umbilical cord. In his poses, the artist is pretending to give birth. Such experiment of switching the common roles of a man and a woman opens the male body to a biologically impossible experience. The artist raises the question of sexual transgression. Ileana Pintilie underlines the artist's attempt "*to transpose himself, through imagination, and to recompose the lost unity of the world, echoing the figure of the androgynous*" (1998: 136). As for *Delivery*, Piotr Piotrowski draws attention not only to the female attributes and poses, but also to solitary posturing, usually ascribed to the woman's body (2005: 408). These photos reveal a conventionality of sex roles as well as a conventionality of authority – the degradation of phallus as the symbol of power. The authoritarian, phallogocentric system is the basis for any totalitarian system. In this context, the work of Ion Grigorescu is questioning the conservative social model, it might be seen as extremely radical also in its political aspects (Piotrowski 2005: 410). Jan Verwoert follows a similar interpretation. In the *Delivery* series, he noticed a psychological analysis of the megalomania of Ceaușescu, the "*usurpatory super-creator*", capable of "*giving birth*" to his nation in order to compensate for the obvious fact of being unable to conceive, which is a characteristic of women (2010: 47).

The main difference between Bereś and Grigorescu results from the fact that the activities of the latter had not got public. The artist was working in an Eastern Block country with one of the lowest levels of personal freedom, and was able to present his performances only in the secrecy of his own atelier in front of the camera lens.

A Croatian (former Yugoslavian) artist, Tomislav Gotovac, also dealt with a variety of media and pioneered happenings and performances. He began in 1960s with taking photographs of himself (for example *Heads*, 1960). His interest in exploring his own body later spread to short film sequences, performances and other conceptual projects. His renowned streaking actions, which he started to create from the beginning of the 1970s, presented the naked artist in the public space of the cities of Belgrade and Zagreb. It should be mentioned that Yugoslavia was a lit-

tle bit more liberal than the other socialist countries, however in order to be accepted in the public space, any performances were expected not to touch upon political matters and to keep sexual elements at a moderate level. Gotovac disrespected these unwritten rules and his public actions usually ended with interrogations at a police station – yet he was never jailed (Stipančić 1998: 58). Gotovac first appeared as a streaker in 1971 (*Streaking*, 1971) which was part of the film *Plastic Jesus* by Lazar Stojanovic. The naked artist ran down Sremska street in Belgrade, then he repeated this action 10 years later in Zagreb, within his performance entitled *Lying Naked on the Asphalt, Kissing the Asphalt*, better known as *Zagreb, I love you!* (1981)<sup>5</sup>. In reviewing these actions, Ješa Denegri referred to the artist's body as "ready-made", a body as both subject and object of the artistic event (2003: 272-273). His body was self-sufficient as the material for Gotovac's art, it was the primary substance, the way nature created him. Piotr Piotrowski referring to Gotovac's own declarations (cited in: Stipančić 1997: 16-22) and focuses on the artist's intimate, nearly amorous attitude towards the city. Nakedness emphasises this relationship: by exposing his body, the artist strengthens his connection with reality (Piotrowski 2005: 399).

According to Zdenka Badovinac, the curator of the *Body and the East* exhibition (Ljubljana 1998), performative practices of body artists from Eastern and Western Europe in the 1960's and 1970's did not differ much in their appearance. The difference lies in something invisible and undefined. For example the visual impression of naked bodies in the works of Gotovac or Grigorescu, apparently bore no direct political connotations. Not until we knew the context in which they had been created, only then we could state the political dimensions of the presence of a naked artist in a public space. Therefore, the basic difference between East and West artistic expressions lies in different readings of similar gestures placed in various spaces (Badovinac 1998: 16).

### Conclusion

The *manifestations* of Jerzy Bereś are different from the conceptual art and other ephemeral actions like happenings and performances in one major aspect: the fact that Bereś developed his idea of "material documents". The artist built the narrative of his actions around objects that were necessary to fulfil the artistic "ritual". However, the rituals performed by Bereś were not typical. He did not try to act as some uncommon shaman, emphasising his own uniqueness and salutary power of his creations – like e.g. Joseph Beuys (Kemp-Welch, *Zrozumieć manifestacje...*, 2007: 28). Quite on the contrary: for Bereś the dialogue with the audience was a significant element of his "rituals". Of course, he provoked his audience, but the source of the provocation was not his nudity. It was neutral. Bereś provoked the audience not only to political reflection, but also by making references to Romantic motifs. He put into question contemporary conceptual actions, denying the material art world. His "material documents" were in opposition to the

evanescence of performance and happening. And his simple, unobtrusive nudity was far from intending scandalous effects, commonly associated with body art. However, regardless of the artist's intention, the introducing of naked male body into a public space had a deep provocative dimension in the socialist culture of 1970s and 1980s, not only in Poland (see Leszkowicz 1995: 467).

### Endnotes

- 1 For description of *Przepowiednia I* [*Prophecy I*] manifestation, which resulted in the exhibition *Ślady wydarzenia* [*Traces of the event*], see: *Manifestacje* 1995: 98-99. Bereś's commentary from 1994 makes an interesting *pendant* to this action and the exhibition that followed it, in the context of the provocation. He mentioned the reasons for censoring his exhibition by the director of Fine Arts Workshop, financing Foksal Gallery: "Answering a question from the Gallery manager about this censorship [...] he said: Such a day! Such things! That's impossible! Still, nobody in the Gallery knew what it was about. When insisted upon, he said: on the day of the Manifestation, Dupczek seized power in Czechoslovakia" (cited in: *Manifestacje* 1995: 98-99). The talk was certainly about Aleksander Dupček, the initiator of the "Prague Spring", who was famous for his slogan "socialism with a human face". The point lies in a linguistic association of his surname, Dupček, with the last gesture of Bereś – leaving of his palm prints on his buttocks. The name "Dupček" is associated with the Polish word "dupa", meaning a vulgar equivalent of the English "arse".
- 2 *Prophecy II* proved to be prophetic in the most literal sense: it preceded (with a couple of days) student demonstrations in Poland during which they made a fire from newspapers and shouted "papers lie" in public. Political events of March 1968 became a consequence of the situation exacerbating since January as the protest against censorship of *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*), a drama written by the national Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz and directed by Kazimierz Dejmek. Bereś mentioned that the authorities tried to accuse him of setting an example of burning newspapers. Moreover, some participants of the meeting with writers during which the censorship of *Dziady* had been condemned were also present in Krzysztofory watching *Prophecy II*; see: *Manifestacje* 1995: 100.
- 3 Linda Nead (1992) argues with the famous book by Kenneth Clark (1972) and pays attention to contemporary art by female artists, which try to deny canonical representations of the female body.
- 4 Compare, for example, works of Katarzyna Kozyra, Zbigniew Libera, Alicja Żebrowska or Artur Żmijewski, analysed by Izabela Kowalczyk in the first treatise devoted in its entirety to the subject; Kowalczyk 2002.
- 5 There were also some others, like: performance *100* (Zagreb, 1979), *Artist Begging* (Zagreb, 1980) or *Haircutting and Shaving in Public* (Zagreb 1981).

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