

EXPERIENCE WITH THE ACTION ART IN THE COURSE OF LIFE OF PERSON: FROM EXPERIENCE TO THERAPY

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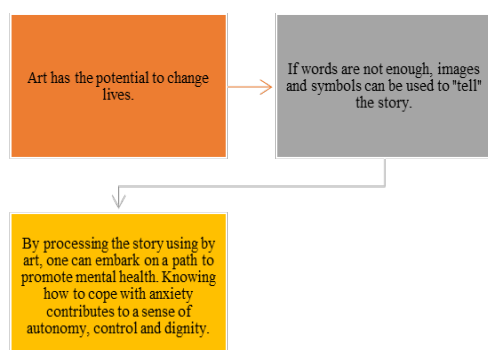
Abstract: The paper describes the real possibilities of using the action art in the course of one's life from an early age to the old age. The paper presents specific artistic outputs called situational-art-action-models designed for different age groups. These models prompt the participants themselves to action, in particular to tell (re-create) a story, regardless of whether the story was finished or not. The ways in which the participants express themselves are different, as are the different environments in which the art takes place. Unambiguous action art blurs the boundaries, breaks rules, and gives the participants the opportunity to present a person in different forms and looks. The paper is supplemented by photo documentation of art-action models.

Keywords: art action in life, space, processing, research,

1 On the role of action art in life

A person in the artistic space may face situations that at first glance carry an idea representing a consistent structure (in terms of internal logic with accompanying ways of expression in the context of emotions, activities), but in relation to the environment or another person these consistent structures may entail inconsistent ideas that are influenced by experience, or insights of a person, a group (compare Kováčová, 2020). For this reason, art action is important in every stage of one's life, in particular with regard to creative and action individual and group artistic creation of situational-art-action models. Through art, one mediates what one does not know, cannot, and often (un)consciously refuses to express verbally in everyday communication. It is impossible to divide people into "good artists and bad artists" (Kováčová, 2011). It is necessary to take into account the fact that each person has specific narration options available to express what they have or will come across (Kováčová et al., 2019). People can express these experiences using any kind of art. It is an authentic and at the same time author's statement which is manifested non-verbally i.e. through the product itself, verbally, i.e. the statement itself and through a process, i.e. it creates the opportunity to communicate with a person throughout the whole process of creation.

Figure 1: Art in the life of a person



Source: Kováčová (2017)

With regard to art, situations may arise that at first glance carry an idea representing a consistent structure (in terms of internal logic with accompanying ways of expression in the context of emotions, activities), but in relation to the environment or another person these consistent structures may entail inconsistent ideas that are influenced by experience, or insights of a person, a group (Chanasová, 2019b; Kaščáková, 2019). For this reason, art action is important in every stage of one's life, in particular with regard to creative and action individual and group artistic creation of situational-art-action models. It is action art that allows the use of various forms of art, where the participant (or several participants) use live performance / playback / or re-create a specific situation (event, problem, experience) in order to integrate into the environment at a specific time and place. Action art is the art of action. Geržová, Hrubaničová (1998, pp. 15-16) point out that a human being, regardless of age, experience, is a creative and active creature. An action which takes place in space, regardless of borders, creates individual and group images which, in turn, create reality. Geržová (1999) claims that the action itself is closely connected with the age and the very experience of the participant and their current experience. Perceived space in the art of action has many meanings. In the general context, it may be a place (area) that is not defined by specific dimensions. The authors of the paper also identify with the given definition because action art knows no boundaries, therefore the space is not strictly limited either. With regard to combining creativity and space, Biag et al. (2015) define three types of spaces in which programs for human during his developmental periods (using the art of action (Table 1) are being created.

Table 1: Division of space in the art of action

Division of space	Perception of space	Characteristics of space for human activity
Physical space for artistic creation	The given space can be perceived as an individual space in the action art space in which the boundaries are created by each participant. Participants construct their action (in the sense of holistic perception) in space on the basis of an idea which is processed individually in the context of artistic creation.	specific individual authentic delimited by the author
Space-time	The time space in terms of action art cannot be strictly defined. This is due to the fact that the action within the action art ends just when the participant decides that everything (on their part) has been said. For this reason, it is not possible to limit the process of action itself in situational-art-action models.	right here and now action boundless managed by the action itself
Intellectual space	In the context of action art and intellectual space, participants work with an idea that is alive and then "transform" the idea into the action. The given type of space can be characterized as open, lively and creative, focusing on a person in the process of creation. The space itself is created by the thoughts of a person or a group of people	dependent on one idea dependent on several ideas gradation alive creative open

Source: author's own work

In the course of the art of action, a person creates and subsequently interacts with the world or other participants using a graphic or plastic signs, which often becomes a means of authentic communication, connection or creation of a single line for communication as well as the search for solutions to a problem or stimulus (Kulka, 2008; Valachová, 2018; Kováčová et al., 2019; Chanasová, 2019b; Kaščáková, 2019; Chanasová, 2020). Art thus becomes a strategic tool for finding and discovering the answer to a placed question.

2 From experience to therapy

With regard to experience and therapy, art plays an important role in the life of human and society. By grouping several functions of art on the basis of a common feature, it is possible

to divide the functions of art into four functions, each of which has its own characteristics.

These are processed according to Spousta (1998) and at the same time offer an overview of how these functions can be perceived. Some of the functions merge and overlap with each other. For this reason, too, it is not possible to perceive any of them in their pure form (either as experience, or as therapy).

Table 2: Functions of art

Functions of art	
Basal function	Formative function
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value, • aesthetic, • magical, • communication, • informative, • cognitive, • retaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compensatory, • stimulating, • pedagogical, • humanizing
Therapeutic function	Relaxing function
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soothing, • psychotherapeutic, • cathartic, • solitary, • sociable, • relaxing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hedonistic • fun

Source: Spousta (1998)

With regard to the aspect of the therapeutic function of art, the paper will present action art (as a possibility of prevention and / or intervention) with the aim to find parallels between action art and concrete younger age pupils (Table 3).

Table 3: Functions of art in relation to action art and younger age pupils

Art functions	Characteristics of art	Actions of a younger age pupil in relation to art
soothing function	This function of art helps human get rid of a negative mood and even depressive tendencies as a result of disappointment with aim to satisfy and encourage him.	For younger pupils, this means that art supports non-verbal expression in situational-action models (it is the use of body art or simple installations). Interpretation activities may also be part of these models.
psychotherapeutic function	The psychotherapeutic function of art comes to the forefront especially in stressful life situations, when the factual part helps heal the human psyche.	It is clear that action art can support and simulate a pupil at a younger age with certain specific needs in activities that are helpful in addressing the current manifesting "difficulty".
cathartic function	History shows that the ability to reach catharsis through art helps regenerate mental powers, get rid of guilt and remorse, and relive conflict situations and were used by people with success. Pupils of younger age could greatly benefit from action art in this regard.	It is evident that participation in the experience can release tension, often offering a solution to situations that the child considers less attractive during this period, or even as stressful. Action art may help free one's mind and serve as an escape from situations one considers difficult.
relaxing function	Contact with art frees a person from everyday stress, helps forget about worries and unpleasant events, induces pleasant mood.	In the early days of action art implementation, the therapy may be perceived as a form of relaxation. Not only the space but also the motive of the action needs to take this into account.

Source: author's own work

3 From field research of situational-art-action modules

Art-based action research is usually used in the development projects of art education, applied visual art, and contemporary art

(Jokela, Huhmarniemi, 2019). The orientations of action research in art-based action research have similar characteristics to design re-search (Heikkinen, Kontinen, & Häkkinen, 2006).

3.1 Situational-art-action modules

The purpose of action art as part of situational-art-action models is to bring closer an event or story that has a beginning and end, but does not have to be told in its entirety (Human Spider I-V.).

Figure 2: Human spider I.



Source: Kováčová (2019)

This fact depends on the protagonists themselves, on their experience and individual imagination and the like. There are quite a few factors that affect this. The plot present in the situational-action model (and subsequently mediated) takes place in time and space (interior, exterior) – the plot may be tied to a specific stimulus or follow freely.

Figure 3 Human spider II.



Source: Kováčová (2019)

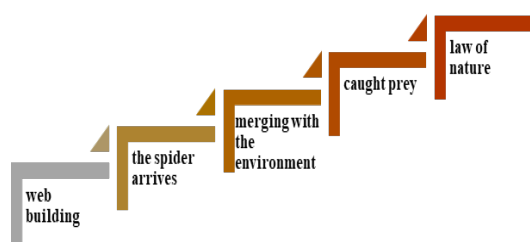
The boundaries are not set, which allows all participants to express themselves freely (authenticity and originality is green) and to keep in mind that the current situational-art-action model is flexible and supports creativity. The storyline or a section of the story does not have to serve as a basis for group action art (Chanasová, 2019a, Chanasová, 2020). There can be several short unrelated sequences which in their chaotic nature are important for the protagonists themselves, possibly also for the audience present.

It uses a story that is structured (but does not have to be), but told with the active participation of all involved. Creative expression is an essential component of a given situational-art-action model. Expression in all its forms forces its creator to reflect on essential facts, thoughts, perceptions, feelings. Expression has no boundaries, it is part of different environments (Fábry Lucká, 2018, Bergerová, 2021), it doesn't

have to be just a strictly artistic expression. With regard to art expression, Valachová (2018) claims that through art expression it is possible to know and get to know a child. As a creator, the child chooses what fits the pursued intention and strives for an appropriate form of expression (Kováčová, 2011). The choice is conditioned by the subjective reassessment and subsequent expression depends on creative (in the case of artistic expression also manual) abilities of the child. With regard to a specific situational-art-action model, imagination of pupils can also be stimulated through stories and narrations that children create (verbal expression). Expression in all its forms forces its creator to reflect on essential facts, thoughts, perceptions, feelings. The space for expression within situational-art-action models is thus a space for searching, internal definition, reassessment. The personality of the creator is deeply involved in the process of discovering both inner motives and unconscious drivers which often manifest themselves in the process of creation. Thanks to their own expression, the child has the opportunity to understand themselves more, awaken the joy of their own creativity and self-discovery.

To illustrate that, we will present a short-term situational-art-action model implemented with younger age pupils, the basis of which is the Latin "in medias res" (in media res means in the middle of the story, to the heart of the matter, without an introduction). The aim of the described short-term situational-art-action model is not a definitive artistic artifact, which Philips (2018) describes as intended, unchanging. On the contrary, the goal is the process of creation itself, which is presented in the paper through selected photos and visual material.

Figure 4: Graphic processing of action creation



Source: author's own work

Commentary: the photos capture a *large spider* on the hunt for his prey – a *small fly*. The web (created by recycling) played an important role in the process of fly hunting. Its function was also declared verbally, "move, move, jerk your legs dear lunch, nobody will release you and I will eat you, yummy, yummy ...", "I'm finally going to eat, I'm so hungry" (from the dialogue of the spider and the fly).

Figure 5 Human spider III.



Source: Kováčová (2019)

Figure 6 Human spider IV.



Source: Kováčová (2019)

Figure 7: Human spider V.



Source: Kováčová (2019)

The protagonist's movement (the spider) played an important role here. The protagonist was more experienced (especially from his position as the fly in the first part of the second phase) and his actions were more thought through. He was not verbal in his actions but rather used the movements of the body as if in a ritual. He moved relatively slowly, his steps and movements to the sides were strategically chosen, he was completely concentrated on the given activity. During the observation, the spectator could notice that he was not pursuing the fly, but instead waited for the right moment. Fischer-Lichte (2011) describes and then separates the presence of the protagonist and his character (in our case a spider who plays according to his own scenario) from the real body of the protagonist (action and events in the process). What the audience saw was present there and then (lat. Hic et nunc). The author (2011) claims that the term presence befits the described phenomenon. "The Presence can lead to the transformation of the audience present. It offers a highly efficient possibility of transformation" (Fischer-Lichte, 2011, p. 136).

3.2 Art-action models: The Way of Man

The subsequent situational art-action models were implemented in the context of processes of individual and group action creation with emphasis on art as a value in the life of an individual. The process supported emotionality, awareness and the use of protective factors in artistic creation.

Table 2: Presented projects

<p>Action: On the move</p>	<p>Movement is a fundamental life cycle phenomenon. Action art as a combination of life and art in motion.</p>
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design: N. Janeková, L. Kolenčíková	
Action: Balloon of life	Pouring and squirting paint is a gestural and expressionist way of depicting action, one's own form of expression (based on emotions). The event took place in cooperation with a group of elementary school pupils led by art students.
design: B. Danihelová, I. Bartošová, A. Sobinová	
Action: Labyrinth of life	The theme of Ariadne's thread combines artistic and historical themes. The synthesis arouses interest in non-specific artistic activity, connects various forms of art and acquaintances pupils with current concepts of art.
design: Z. Giblaková, H. Dodoková	
Action: Ordinary things	The concept was inspired by the work of Juraj Bartusz. Ordinary things become not only a means but also a process and product of action art.
design: M. Hlavatý	

Source: Valachová, Kováčová (2020)

Using the catalogue, The Way of Man 2 (Valachová, Kováčová, 2020), the researchers of the project *Embodied Experience Using Art Action* aimed at presenting and explaining the implementation of situational-art-action models in younger age pupils. In this, the child acts as an individual or group actor. A key element in the above-mentioned action art is a live performance of the story, in which not only the actors but also the spectators themselves played an important role.

Each use of various artistic stimuli in action art will support expressive and receptive education in formal and informal environments and make it more effective. When implementing situational-art-action models, it is important that the material is engaging, stimulating and at the same time motivating (those present want to implement the action). The primary stimulus of situational art-action models was nature – nature functioned as the main motivating and contextual element.

Figure 8 The Way of Man 2



Source: Valachová, Kováčová (2020)

Each use of various artistic stimuli in action art will support expressive and receptive education in formal and informal environments and make it more effective. When implementing situational-art-action models, it is important that the material is engaging, stimulating and at the same time motivating (those present want to implement the action). The primary stimulus of situational art-action models was nature – nature functioned as the main motivating and contextual element. Of the extensive number of possible meta-motivational texts, only those that have been implemented in their entirety are presented. We let the nature guide us, because we are a part of it and it is a rich source of stimuli for action art. Suggestions included: stones, bark, leaves, flowers and water.

The catalogue The Way of Man 3 (Kováčová, Valachová, 2020) aimed at participants in the preschool age.

Figure 9: The Way of Man 3

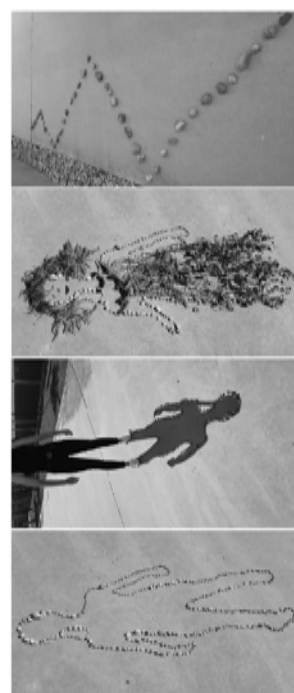


Source: Kováčová, Valachová (2020)

The action art is capable of solving problems of a young people of today. Value orientation is a serious part of every person's life, more specifically, it can be said to be part of the quality of life (Danek, 2019).

The collage called "Staying at the Top of Things" presents the basic moments from the life of a young person who retold the life story (capturing specific moments) using fragments of natural origin with the participation of spectators (also young people). The number of images is not important. What is important is the final work that is created from these images as it brings the viewer a variety of life images and the experience of being.

Figure 10 Life Story of a Young Person



Source: author's own work

Figure 11 Life Story of a Young Person II.



The whole work itself represents a synergy of three elements (body – movement – space) intersecting in the visual representation. *It is necessary to realize that the body is but a vessel for the soul, whether it is calm or not. After it disappears, only a shadow remains. Whether you want to or not, the shadow accompanies you all your life, ... sometimes hard, roaring, sometimes soft and ethereal ... life is exactly the same, once it's hard and cruel, other times it looks at you as you walk by, watches you on your journey from the place you are now to the place you are going* (from the monologue of the actor 1).

Creative activities for seniors have their own specifics. These specifics are not only related to the age of the participants. Getting old is a part of human life, it is a natural process. Old age and its quality depend on several factors. Art activities inspired by action art are a great activity for seniors. In artistic activities, the trust of seniors – participants in the lecturer who leads the activity is important. A humanistic approach should be employed, as the participants should feel accepted. Moreover, it also creates a positive and creative environment for artistic activities inspired by action art (Stadlerová, et al., 2013, Réčka, 2018).

Activities create room for joint creation, which also supports the socialization of seniors. The most suitable activities for seniors include those which they can relate to – their everyday life, past activities, current activities. The artistic creation of seniors in the context of art-action is an inspiration for participants of all age categories as it has its specifics and reflects the lived experiences, impressions and opinions of seniors.

Figure 12 Life Story of a Young Person III.



Source: author's own work

The presented outputs are not marked by events which took place before the performance itself but rather they depict the story of the participant's life through the synergy of body – movement – space, which is completed by the action of all participants. The elements of nature are symbolic as they replace the image of a person, yet the presence of a person is still being felt (some images refer to the presence of people).

4 Conclusion

The space used in the art of action has no boundaries – it can be perceived as unusual and unique. It is specific in that it makes human activity visible in a different way than it is usually perceived. It raises the profile of the institution, the people and also the awareness of the art of action in a unique and unusual way. Perception: in front of us is a vivid picture with an original story without a written script. The script is being created directly in the space by everyone who is a part of it. Through the action of the participants (each individually and at the same time all together), the space is filled and gradually merges into one space, into the space of action art *hic et nunc* (present here and now).

Note from the authors of the paper: The photos that are part of the paper were taken within the experimental situational-art-action modules and their publication is in accordance with the conditions of the GDPR.

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