



THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

under the patronage of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk and the Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk

SOLIDARITY IS / AS CONFLICT

Reassembling Art, the Political, and Education
for a Common World

Gdańsk

May 14-15, 2026

About the conference

The conference and accompanying artistic events bring together artists and scholars of conflict as the foundation of communal forms of life. Solidarity is at the centre of their interest, constituting a key feature of the relationships that co-create various modes of *co-vivendi*. The project is being carried out in collaboration with the research network Studies of Conflict, Art, and the Political in Education (SCAPE), in line with its traditional conference format, always engaging internationally renowned scholars and junior academics, primarily doctoral students, who often subsequently produce joint publications. The conference addresses the connections between science, culture, art, education, and politics in situations and areas of conflict, with an emphasis on the role of solidarity as dissent and the practice of social resistance. The sensitivity and language of contemporary art offer a promising perspective in the context of the current, globally and individually experienced polycrisis and the need to shape solidarity as a foundation for overcoming it. This perspective combines scholarly work with social and artistic activity, and adopting an activist stance allows us to interpret our project as an "encounter with the world". Therefore, the conference is an open, public event, inviting all interested parties. The event, supported by the City of Gdańsk, is organized by the collaborating scientific and artistic communities of Gdańsk: the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts, whose Rectors are the conference's patrons, as well as the European Solidarity Centre, the Gdańsk Scientific Society, and the Przestrzeń Sztuki WL4 Association.

Framework Program

May 13, Wednesday	18.00	Welcome evening (social / artistic) event
May 14, Thursday <u>Venue:</u> European Solidarity Centre	9.00-10.00	Welcome coffee, registration
	10.00 – 11.00	Opening: welcome and discussion panel
	11.00 – 12.00	Keynote 1
	12.00 – 14.00	Keynote 2 transitioning into a tour of the permanent exhibition “Paths to Freedom” with a keynote speaker guide
	14.00 – 15.00	Lunch
	15.00 – 16.00	Keynote 3
	16.00 – 17.00	Walk to the WL4 Art Space Gallery
	17.00 – 18.00	ART EXHIBITION "Solidarity as Conflict": Opening and discussion
	18.00	Welcome evening refreshments at WL4
May 15, Friday <u>Venue:</u> Museum of the University of Gdańsk	9.15 – 10.00	Meeting the University of Gdańsk Museum; guided tour of the exhibitions
	10.00 – 11.30	<i>Conviviality as New Solidarity: More-Than-Human Tables and Markets.</i> Discussion panel
	11.30 – 12.30	Keynote 4
	12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
	13.30 – 14.30	Keynote 5
	14.30 – 15.30	<i>Social Propaganda Workshop: the graphic symbol as a tool of indoctrination.</i> Discussion panel
	15.30 - 16.30	Round up session
	16.30 – 18.30	<i>Conflict as the main element of building a film narrative.</i> Art event and discussion
18.30	Dinner	
May 16, Saturday <u>Venue:</u> Academy of Fine Arts, 6 Targ Węglowy Street; Museum of the University of Gdańsk - 5 Bielańska Street, Old Town <u>Venue:</u> WL4 ART SPACE GALLERY building	18.00 -	Farewell events: <i>The Night of the Museums</i> in Gdańsk (including the exhibition of PhD students of the Academy of Fine Arts and the Museum of the University of Gdańsk's exhibitions)
	19.00 – 19.45	Aurora Lubos' performance: <i>Chaos</i>

Program

May 13, Wednesday

~18.00 - Welcome evening (social / artistic) event

May 14, Thursday

European Solidarity Centre building: Library, 1st floor (how to get there: <https://ecs.gda.pl/en/plan-your-visit/how-to-get-there/>)

9.00-10.00 Welcome coffee, registration

10.00 – 11.00 Opening

Welcome by the Conference Patrons and representatives of the Organizers.

Discussion panel presenting the goals of the conference (moderated by **Maria Mendel and Tomasz Szkudlarek**).

Referring to the conception of the conference, Mendel and Szkudlarek will invite participants to express briefly their ideas about solidarity and conflict.

Maria Mendel & Tomasz Szkudlarek – professors at the University of Gdańsk, engaged in studies on conflict, art, and the political in education. Recent publications: Mendel & Szkudlarek (2023) Art, democratic commonality, and the production of knowledges, *Ethics and Education*, DOI: 10.1080/17449642.2023.2281155 Free eprint:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/QAKW3COHJGSCE7PO4UBV/full?target=10.1080/17449642.2023.2281155>

Szkudlarek: *On the Politics of Educational Theory. Rhetoric, theoretical ambiguity, and the construction of society*. 2016, Routledge <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/50096/9781317495147.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
Ignorance and truth, In: *Meeting the challenges of existential threats through educational innovation: a proposal for an expanded curriculum* / Saeverot Herner (ed.), 2022, Routledge.

Mendel: Fragments and semiophores: On the educational values of monuments as ephemeral heritage, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 2025, 59(1), 108-124; Fragment: from *educatio mortis* to *educatio vitae*. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 2026, 54(1), 7–20

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/JIRBKNBSBUVBOTSTN5VA/full?target=10.1080/1359866X.2025.2597778>;

Tender public pedagogy: Being fragments in more-than-human figurations of public space. *Research in Education*, 2026, 0(0-online first: <https://journals.sagepub.com/eprint/ECYTIISQFDFFAAIGGFVN/full>).

11.00 – 12.00 Keynote 1 and discussion (moderators and discussants: students and PhD students of the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk: **Karol Drobniewski, Agata Klimkowska, Dominika Kolenda**): **SHARON TODD: Art, Relation and Pedagogical Processes in the Metacrisis**

Abstract

In this era of metacrisis, artists – like activists and educators – are grappling with a series of questions that get to heart of an existential quandary: What can art do – and its corollary what ought it to do – in the face such enormous complexity? While this question is not new, what is perhaps different for us today is the scale of the predicament we are living in, which is nothing short of planetary in its scope involving the future of life itself. A predicament that is simultaneously worsened and ignored through authoritarian politics as well as capitalist logics and values. What I suggest is that a more appropriate question in light of such complexity is, what does art do? This question seeks not to define what art ought to be (in the future), but instead frames the multidimensional processes of its engagement across different contexts as an enactment in the present. Following relational aesthetics, art is not only about form, but about the pedagogical processes through which form comes into being and the relations to others (both human and more than human) that these processes entail. As such, this focus on the relational qualities of art enables a more thorough exploration of the possibilities of solidarity, even in art that does carry an overt political message. This presentation unpacks these ideas through various artworks.

Sharon Todd is Professor Emeritus of Education at Maynooth University, Ireland. She has published widely in the areas of relationality, social justice and ethics and is currently engaged in making connections between the climate emergency, art practice, and political aesthetics in education. She is author of *The Touch of the Present: Educational Encounters, Aesthetics, and the Politics of the Senses* (SUNY Press, 2023), *Toward an Imperfect Education: Facing Humanity, Rethinking Cosmopolitanism* (Paradigm, 2009), and *Learning from the Other: Levinas, Psychoanalysis and Ethical Possibilities in Education* (SUNY, 2003). Publications also include the co-edited volumes *Re-imagining Educational Relationships: Ethics, Politics, Practices* with M. Griffiths, M. Honerød and C. Winter (Wiley, 2014) and *Philosophy*

East/West: Exploring the Intersections between Educational and Contemplative Practices with O. Ergas (Wiley, 2015). She is past President of the International Network of Philosophers of Education as well as being a Zen Buddhist and abstract painter.

12.00 – 14.30 Keynote 2 and discussion (moderator and discussant: **Kacper Kowalski**, PhD student of the University of Gdańsk) transitioning into a tour of the permanent exhibition *Paths to Freedom* with a keynote speaker guide – **JACEK KOLTAN: *Solidarity is Leaning Out to the Other***

Abstract

This lecture stems from objection and a desire for an alternative. Objection to the reductionism that has crept into solidarity idea thanks to Max Weber. And above all, a desire to escape the trap of such a reduced meaning of solidarity. I will begin with an accusation. It was Weber who contributed to the popularity of homogeneous ideas of solidarity, which in the Anglo-Saxon tradition reduce it to a feeling of unity between people of the same interests or goals, or support for another because of shared aims (popular dictionary definitions). Do such definitions really capture the meaning of the solidarity phenomenon?

In the second step, I will show that these dominant definitions overlook its key feature. It is the *heterogeneous* nature of the phenomenon, the concept of which took shape with the birth of modernity. The term ‘solidarity’ began to crystallise in the mid-18th century, when people began to populate cities on a massive scale, breaking with traditional models of life and pursuing their individual projects of better future. Solidarity was not meant to be another synonym for brotherhood as human unity or charity (*caritas*) but was to replace them with a vision of a new society, emancipated and diverse. After all, it was about individualised, unconnected people who were becoming increasingly different from one another and who had to start fighting for the realisation of modern ideals of freedom and equality. This modern origin allows us to better understand the need to define solidarity differently.

In the third step I want to propose a metaphorical definition of solidarity as “leaning out to the Other”. The key experience here is tension, confrontation with otherness, confusion associated with abandoning the comfort of “being at home” and transcending the egocentric perspective in favour of an ex-centric ontology. I will attempt to briefly characterise the most important structural meanings of the phenomenon understood in this way and, with the help of certain ideal types – references to existential experience, to the experience of social mobilisation and to the institutionalisation of solidarity – I will try to propose an alternative, heterogeneous concept of solidarity.

Jacek Koltan, PhD, philosopher and political scientist, Director's Representative for Research at the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk. He works at the Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Gdańsk. His research interests cover social and political theory, history of solidarity idea, new social movements, hermeneutics, phenomenology as well as social design and anthropology. His recent book (2025): *Solidarność i nowoczesność. Przemiany pojęcia solidarności od rewolucji francuskiej do pokojowej rewolucji 1980 roku [Solidarity and Modernity. The transformation of the concept of solidarity from the French Revolution to the peaceful revolution of 1980]*.

14.30 – 15.00 Lunch

15.00 – 16.00 Keynote 3 and discussion (moderators and discussants: **Yufei WU, Ludmiła Bečka-Sadowska, and Stefan Kornacki** - students and PhD students of the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk): **RICK DOLPHIJN: *The Philosophy of Land: Realising More-Than-Human Chains of Equivalence***

Abstract

This paper begins from Ernesto Laclau's notion of chains of equivalence and asks what happens when these chains are realised through land itself. Laclau's insight that heterogeneous demands can be articulated into a contingent “people” is translated into a more-than-human register, where swamps, deltas, and islands become nodal points that gather and connect struggles around extraction, dispossession, and ecological transformation. Chains of equivalence are thus understood as geo-material as much as discursive: they condense in saturated soils, shifting sediments, and archipelagic formations that both enable and limit possible solidarities. Against this background, the paper re-reads Marx's critique of land and property, Serres's reflections on parasitism and contracts with the natural world, and Glissant's poetics of Relation and opacity. Swamps foreground decomposition and recalcitrant wetness, deltas the continuous re-drawing of social and geological borders, islands dispersed yet interconnected worlds of relation. The paper concludes by turning to Xandra van der Eijk's artwork *Mother of Pearl*, where toxic sediments, industrial time, and marine life are materially composed, offering a concrete aesthetic practice in which more-than-human chains of equivalence are sensed, staged, and contested.

Rick Dolphijn is a writer, educator, and curator, serving as an associate professor at Media and Culture Studies, Humanities, Utrecht University. He published widely on continental philosophy (Gilles Deleuze and Michel Serres) and the contemporary arts. He studies posthumanism, new materialism, material culture (food studies), and ecology. He coordinates the Humanities Honours Program, is involved in interfaculty cooperation concerning Community Based Research, Open Cities, and COVID-19. Since 2015 he runs an undergraduate exchange with the University of Hong Kong (themed "The More-Than-Human City"), a graduate exchange (themed "The Lives of the Delta") commenced in 2021. Rick Dolphijn is an Honorary Professor at the University of Hong Kong (2017-2026) and a Visiting Professor at the University of Barcelona (2019/2020). In 2024 he is Vice Chancellors Visiting Professor at the University of Gdansk. His books include *Foodscapes* (Eburon/University of Chicago Press 2004), *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies* (Open Humanities Press 2012, with Iris van der Tuin). His academic work has appeared in journals like *Continental Philosophy Review*, *Angelaki*, *Rhizomes*, *Collapse*, and *Deleuze Studies*. Together with Rosi Braidotti he edited three books: *This Deleuzian Century: Art, Activism, Life* (Brill/Rodopi 2014/5), *Philosophy after Nature* (2017), and *Deleuze and Guattari and Fascism* (2022). He was the sole editor of *Michel Serres and the Crises of the Contemporary* (Bloomsbury Academic 2019/20). His monography, *The Philosophy of Matter: a Meditation*, appeared with Bloomsbury Academic in 2021, and was published as a trade book in Dutch (*Filosofie van de Materie*, Noordboek) in 2022. He is a PI in three international research projects: Food2Gather (HERA funded 2019-2022), IMAGINE (Norwegian Research Council 2021-2024), CONVIVIUM (EU HORIZON 2024-2027). In collaboration with the University of Gdansk, he is setting up a More-Than-Human Studies Lab at Utrecht University.

16.00 – 17.00 Walk to the [WL4 Art Space Gallery](https://wl4.pl/contact/) (how to get there: <https://wl4.pl/contact/>)

17.00 – 18.00 - ART EXHIBITION *Solidarity as Conflict* – opening and discussion. The exhibited works were selected in an open call for professional artists and art students. The exhibition at the WL4 Art Space Gallery will last until May 31. **Curator: ADRIANA MAJDZIŃSKA**, Academy of Fine Arts.

Adriana Majdzińska, a sculptor from Gdańsk, works in sculpture, drawing, artistic activities, and social initiatives. In 2000, she graduated from the studio of Professor Sławoj Ostrowski at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. She has been professionally associated with the Faculty since 2006. In 2011, she defended her doctoral dissertation entitled "The Temptation of Perfection." In 2019, she obtained a postdoctoral degree and the position of professor at the Academy of Fine Arts. From 2020 to 2024, she served as vice-dean of the Sculpture program at the Faculty of Sculpture and Intermedia of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. She currently heads the Department of Drawing. She runs the Autonomous Drawing Studio in the Sculpture program. She has participated in numerous exhibitions, plein air workshops, and sculpture competitions in Poland and abroad. She is the recipient of awards and scholarships, including the 1998 Minister of Culture and Art scholarship, the Rector's Award from the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, the Gdańsk Friends of Art Society Award for the best debut in sculpture in 2000, the gold medal at the 20th Sculpture Salon in Warsaw in 2003, and the Medal of the Mayor of Gdańsk in 2006. She has received the Gdańsk Cultural Scholarship Creative Fund five times. From 2015 to 2017, together with Czesław Podleśny, she was the originator and coordinator of Przestrzeń Sztuki WL4 – an independent artistic community located at 4 Wiosny Ludów Street in Gdańsk. Since mid-2018, she has been involved in the activities of another community, WL4 Przestrzeń Sztuki (Art Space) in the Mleczny Piotr building on the grounds of the Imperial Shipyard in Gdańsk. She is currently the president of the WL4 Przestrzeń Sztuki Association and has organized over one hundred exhibitions and artistic projects.

18.00 – Welcome refreshments at WL4

May 15, Friday

Museum of the University of Gdańsk (the museum's historic Red Hall) in a historic building of the Faculty of History (Institute of Archeology and Ethnology, Institute of Art History): 5 Bielańska Street, Old Town (how to get there: https://old.ug.edu.pl/mapy/wydzial_historyczny_instytut_archeologii_etnologii).

9.15 – 10.00 - Meeting with the director of the University of Gdańsk Museum, Marta Szaszkievicz-Sawa and student volunteers at the Museum. A short curatorial tour of the permanent and temporary exhibitions (a sculpture by Alfons Łosowski).

10.00 – 11.30 – *Conviviality as New Solidarity: More-Than-Human Tables and Markets*. Discussion panel moderated by **Irena Chawrińska** in cooperation with **Rick Dolphijn** and **Agata Bachórz**.

Abstract

In this panel, moderated by Irena Chwrińska, Rick Dolphijn and Agata Bachórz engage in a dialogue that explores conviviality as an emerging form of solidarity transcending human boundaries. Building on the Convivium NEB project's focus on food as living cultural heritage, the discussion centres on convivial tables and markets as pivotal spaces for fostering resilience and collective care through more-than-human entanglements, where multispecies relations, ecological exchanges, and shared practices flourish. Participants will explore how these spaces reimagine solidarity through gastronomic gatherings and sustainable marketplaces, promoting inclusive economies and reconnection to local ecosystems in line with the principles of the New European Bauhaus. The conversation will invite reflections on posthumanist ethics, cultural ecology and practical pathways for community-driven sustainability in diverse living worlds. Visit the Convivium project website: <https://convivium-neb-project.com/about/>

Irena Chawrińska, Director of the Academic Center for Polish Language and Culture at the University of Gdansk, coordinator of the More-than-Human Studies Lab at the UG Center for Sustainable Development; Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Polish Studies at the Institute of Polish Philology; PI in the international research project „CONVIVIUM: New European Bauhaus Solutions In Food, Living Heritage, And Conviviality” (Horizon Europe 2024–2027), visiting scholar at Utrecht University (2023), Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University (2025), visiting professor at the University of Toronto (2023–2024); author of books: *Hybrids and hybridity: from the borderland of literature and visual arts* (2020), *Polish for sustainability? Polish culture and global challenges* (2022), *LOST in Gdansk! Polish culture in the age of uncertainty* (2023). In years 2021-2024 coordinator of the Culture of Sustainable Development Programme at the Centre for Sustainable Development at UG. Her research interests focus on: environmental humanities, philosophy of the land, in particular wetlands and swamplife, literature and art in teaching Polish as a foreign language, migration experience in the process of education, the phenomenon of hybridity in culture, experimental literature, and the reception of Bruno Schulz's works in the world.

11.30 – 12.30 - Keynote 4 and discussion (moderators and discussants: **Joanna Tochman, Staśka Retmaniak, and Michał Wasiak** - PhD students of the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk): **JULIETTE BERTOLDO: *Reimagining solidarity: a pedagogy of cohabitation with alterity***

Abstract

This paper proposes rethinking the contested term of “solidarity” with nonhuman animals within an educational philosophy concerned with multispecies cohabitation—one that allows difference to endure, not through empathy, but on the more demanding ground of care. The challenge here is not to reduce everything to the human, as critical animal scholars assert (MacCormack, 2013; Pedersen, 2019, 2021), but to articulate pedagogical-philosophical approaches that can enable these nonhuman lives to become visible, and significant *as other*. This paper therefore argues that no viable form of care, and thus no meaningful “transspecies alliance or solidarity” (Braidotti, 2011), can emerge without pedagogies that provoke and sustain attentiveness and curiosity toward other modes of existence *in and of themselves*. To do so, I take up the work of Baptiste Morizot and Vinciane Despret; two key figures in environmental philosophy in francophone intellectual circles, who offer an original, poetic, and politically committed view of the world—one that urges us (in the west and global north) to unlearn our perceptual assumptions, and bring into focus what we have trained ourselves to ignore: nonhuman beings and their worlds. In developing approaches to enrich a “culture of the living” as Morizot (2021) puts it, their work foreground the extraordinary richness of life – through stories, biographies, and modes of existence that differ from, yet are no less compelling than, human ones. Both Morizot and Despret’s field-philosophy teaches that attentiveness as the art of making oneself available and sensitive toward what is other than “us,” yet shares and inhabits the same environment, is not innate but must be learned. This entails asking questions that may seem elementary but are often overlooked, such as *Who is there? Who shapes the territory? And how?* Here, drawing on Sharon Todd (2024, 2025), I reframe these questions as “worlding” gestures, where “worlding” – as that which expresses the power to experience other worlds – is the pedagogical practice of attuning to the fact that the world is already co-populated, and that we are always already living alongside other worlds that constitute who we are. In the spirit of the theme’s symposium, I also turn to art as an additional pedagogical site from which to think these question and as a way of cultivating practices of attention by drawing on the work of art historian Estelle Zhong Mengual. In her book *Apprendre à voir* (2021), Mengual shows that two dominant tendencies have shaped artistic sensibilities toward the environment: either reproducing a modern habit of treating “the environment” as an external object, or projecting human desires onto it. She proposes a third approach: attending to the perceptual and relational sensibility of artists who have learned to see the living world in and for itself. As Mengual suggests, artworks are so many keys bequeathed to us by artists, enabling us, in turn, to learn *how to see*, where giving attention is not only about apprehending an object differently, but about transforming the very modes of attention through which one relates to the world. Art can function as the “arts of inclusion” (Tsing, 2010) that address others where even small forms of knowledge “can make the difference between preservation and callous disregard.” Based on this recognition, the paper argues for the importance of a renewed perception through aesthetic encounters and narrative, so that attentiveness and curiosity may be cultivated as pedagogical conditions for learning to cohabit with alterities, fostering the emergence of solidary transspecies relationships. In this light, the friction between posthuman longings for fusion or “becoming-with” animals (as advocated

by Donna Haraway) and the imperative to attend to nonhuman ways of life is sustained; within that friction, the paper emphasizes the educational commitment to restoring a precious, often forgotten connection with the living world, while resisting forces that destroy the fabric of life.

Dr. Juliette Bertoldo is a researcher, transdisciplinary thinker, hiker, and art lover. She recently defended her PhD dissertation, further developing her engagement with philosophy of education by drawing on critical posthumanism, queer death studies, environmental humanities, and aesthetics. This work led to an FRQSC-funded postdoctoral fellowship at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, where she explores how art and ecology can reshape death education in secondary schools, while preparing a monograph titled "Death Pedagogy: Posthuman Educational Philosophy in the Anthropocene", forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan.

12.30 – 13.30 - Lunch

13.30 – 14.30 - Keynote 5 and discussion (moderators and discussants: **Yufei WU and Mariusz Borzyszkowski** - PhD students of the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk): **CARL ANDERS SÄFSTRÖM: *Thanks, but no thanks! On the nature of resistance/resistance as an event of education***

Abstract

An urgent mode of being for our times, marked by the evaporation of democratic values and an increase in nationalism, authoritarianism and outspoken fascism, is to resist such forces, not the least in and through art and education. While repressive forces might instigate resistance, they also, of course, hinder self-expression; following Deleuze here it means that while such forces deny people the right to exist as themselves (e.g., based on ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality), they also compel people to find forms of self-expression that claim their right to be, to exist equally. As the paper will explore education as invented in intellectual history by the Sophists was founded within a democratic reality. Education is a condition for democracy, and democracy is about living well with others in the everyday of life, verifying the equality of that life, rather than to reproduce a hierarchical order of an 'aristocracy'. Therefore, as will be developed further in the paper, education as well as art is necessarily in a state of resistance to all forms of inequality. In the paper, I give three examples that, in different ways, show how resistance as education and teaching works. I will identify the common thread in those three examples and expand on how they all fundamentally resist different forms of inequality by being founded in an everyday in which equality is lived.

Carl Anders Säfström is a professor emeritus at the Department of Education/Centre for Public Education and Pedagogy, Maynooth University, which he founded in 2017, and served as director until 2025. He is also one of the founding members of the Think-tank Arete (2026) supporting democratic popular education. His latest books include *Education for Everyday Life. Teaching as a Sophistical Practice* (2023), and co-edited *The New Publicness of Education: Democratic Possibilities After the Critique of Neo-liberalism* (2023), and, *Events of Art and Education in Post-climate Times* (2025).

14.30 – 15.30 – Thematic panel discussion with invited guest: ***Social Propaganda Workshop: the graphic symbol as a tool of indoctrination***. Meeting with **JACEK STANISZEWSKI and EDYTA MAJEWSKA-ROSIŃSKA**, Academy of Fine Arts (discussion moderated by the students and PhD students of the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk: **Ludmiła Bečka-Sadowska and Michał Wasiak**)

Jacek Staniszewski, a visual artist and musician. A graduate of the Faculty of Painting and Graphic Arts at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, he currently holds a PhD and DSc at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, where he runs his own Social Propaganda Studio. He has had numerous solo exhibitions (including at the State Art Gallery in Sopot, the Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, the Institute of Polish Culture in Paris, and the Polish Poster Gallery in Wrocław). He has participated in group exhibitions in Shanghai, Hanover, Nakanojo (Japan), and Göttingen, among others. He has received numerous awards: 1st prize for a poster dedicated to the memory of Henryk Górecki (2011), Grand Prix of the International Poster Biennale in Lublin (2017), the ZPAP Katowice award at the Polish Poster Biennale (2017), and the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków award at the Polish Poster Biennale in Katowice (2021). Costume and set design for W. Gombrowicz's "Operetta" and "One, Two, and One" based on F. Arrabal's "Car Cemetery" at the St. I. Witkiewicz Theatre in Zakopane. He has also designed graphic designs for Leszek Możdżer, Blizina, Apteka, Ścianka, Łoskot, and Tymon & Transistors. From 1986 to 2021, he designed over 600 posters for exhibitions, theater performances, and concerts. Leader of the musical bands *Chłupot Mózgu (Brain splash)* and *Maszyna do mięsa (Meat grinder)*.

Edyta Majewska-Rosińska graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where she studied illustration under Professor Janusz Stanny. Since 2010, she has been a Graphic Design major at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk and an assistant to Professor Jacek Staniszewski in the Social Propaganda Studio at the Faculty of

Graphic Arts. She practices graphic design. She designs publications (books, albums, catalogs), creates posters, linocuts, and her own typography. She has served as art director and designed logos and layouts for MediaArt and Filipinka magazines, as well as logos and visual identification systems for companies such as the Trilateral Commission Dialog, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and Bank Pekao SA. She is a multiple winner of the PTWK competition for the Most Beautiful Book of the Year. She was also a winner of the 3rd 30/30 Competition for the most beautiful Polish album cover in 2016. For many years, she has collaborated with the Association on the Path of Expression, operating at the Municipal Social Welfare Center in Sopot, creating social projects. Since 2016, she has created the logo and graphic designs for the "Change Your Head" Social Campaign on mental illness awareness. She actively participates in socially relevant exhibitions. She co-founded the interdisciplinary Sealencium project, which creates a sonic identity for the Pomeranian region under the patronage of the Marshal of the Pomeranian Voivodeship and the Tricity authorities. In 2016, she earned a doctorate in visual arts based on her artistic dissertation: "A Fairy Tale of the Magic Sealencium Shells".

15.30 - 16.30 – Round up session moderated by the students and PhD students of the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk: **Ludmiła Bečka-Sadowska, Mariusz Borzyszkowski, Dominika Kolenda, Agata Klimkowska, Stefan Kornacki, Kacper Kowalski, Staśka Retmianiak, Joanna Tochman, Michał Wasiak, Yufei WU.**

16.30 – 18.30 – Subjective Lecture by **VAHRAM MKHITARYAN: *The Theory of Everything – The Dramaturgy of Conflict***. Discussion moderated by the students and PhD students of the University of Gdańsk and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk: **Agata Klimkowska, Joanna Tochman and Staśka Retmianiak.**

Abstract

This lecture is devoted to analyzing the dramaturgy of conflict in film. The starting point, however, will not be social themes, but rather a reflection on the deeper, universal nature of conflict – understood as an immanent feature of the structure of reality. In this approach, conflict is not limited to human experience but can be interpreted as a principle inherent in the nature of the universe: in quantum processes, the dynamics of events, or the irreversibility resulting from entropy. Here, the world is treated not as a stable entity but as a sequence of events – tensions and transformations that find analogies in film narrative.

The lecture is essayistic and subjective in nature – an attempt at a creative dialogue between science and art. It will draw on selected theoretical concepts and film examples, demonstrating how cinema utilizes conflict as a fundamental principle of dramatic construction.

Vahram Mkhitarian, PhD, was born in Yerevan in 1977. He is a film director, screenwriter, photographer, and translator. In 2001, he graduated in feature film directing from the Faculty of Culture of the Armenian State Pedagogical University, under Professor Dmitry Kesayants. After graduation, he specialized primarily in social advertising. He first came to Poland in 2005 as a scholarship holder of the Lane Kirkland Program of the Polish-American Freedom Foundation. He is a graduate of the feature and documentary courses at the Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Directing (Wajda School). He has won numerous awards and distinctions, including the Lucjan Bokinić Award for best film in the Young Cinema competition at the Gdynia Film Festival, the Golden Apricot at the Yerevan International Film Festival, the Grand Prix of the Jury for European Short Films at the Premiers Plans festival in Angers, and others. A member of the Polish Filmmakers Association, he has been a member of the Board of the Directors' Circle since 2022, and a co-founding member of the Tri-City Circle of the Polish Filmmakers Association. He has been associated with the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk since 2012. He began working as an assistant in the "Audio and Video Space" studio of Professor Wojciech Zamiara. He independently taught classes in "Fundamentals of Photography." In 2016, he defended his doctorate in art at the Faculty of Graphic Arts, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, in the Multimedia Artistic Creation studio, under the supervision of Professor Stanisław Wiczorek. He has received several scholarships from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the International Visegrad Fund (Bratislava). He is also a scholarship holder of the Minister of Education and Science for outstanding young scientists. In 2023, he co-founded and heads the Interdisciplinary Department of Small Forms in Film and Video at the Faculty of Sculpture and Intermedia. He teaches "Elements of Film Production" and "Production of Small Film Forms" in the Photography and Intermedia departments, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Sculpture and Intermedia, Curator of the artistic section.

18.30 – Dinner in the Old Town

May 16, Saturday

19.00 – 19.45 - Farewell performance - **Aurora Lubos: *Chaos*** (the WL4 ART SPACE GALLERY building)

Chaos

Written and performed by: Aurora Lubos

Music by: Shigeru Umebayashi *In the Mood for Love*

Premiere: 2026, *Szczeliny* Festival, Laboratory Room, Jerzy Grotowski Institute, Wrocław.

Contemporarily, the word "chaos" has acquired many meanings. In everyday language, it is often synonymous with disorder, disorientation, and a sense of loss. In social sciences and psychology, chaos often describes states of crisis: moments when the previous order ceases to function and new rules have not yet emerged. This experience is particularly familiar to societies experiencing conflict, violence, and trauma, where chaos is a collection of images, sounds, and gestures that "can no longer be unseen" or "can no longer be forgotten". Chaos becomes a tool of expression. It allows us to express what cannot be organized with words: shock, pain, a sense of disarray. It transports the viewer to a state where the line between victim and perpetrator, between viewer and participant, blurs. The performance was funded by the City of Gdańsk as part of the Cultural Scholarship for Artists.

Aurora Lubos is a performer and choreographer. Her practice combines performance, site-specific activities, and interventions in public spaces. Her work focuses on humanism, empathy, and responsibility towards others, particularly in the context of humanitarian crises, migration, and systemic violence. She works with the body as a tool of experience and testimony, approaching art as a practice of presence and compassion. Her works often arise from a direct relationship with current social and political events.

For those who will stay a little longer:

The Night of the Museums will take place in Gdańsk this Saturday, May 16 (starting at 18.00), including:

- the exhibition of PhD students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, opened as part of the Night of Museums in the Academy building – 6 Targ Węglowy Street, Old Town
- the Museum of the University of Gdańsk in the building of the Faculty of History building - 5 Bielańska Street, Old Town.

Partner institutions

- University of Gdansk (Faculty of Social Sciences - Institute of Education, the More-than-Human Studies Lab at the UG Centre for Sustainable Development, and the Museum of the University of Gdańsk)
- Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk
- European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk
- The Scientific Society of Gdansk

- WL4 - ART SPACE Association

The University of Gdansk is one of largest universities in Poland. It is located by the Baltic sea in Tricity (Gdansk, Sopot, Gdynia), capital of picturesque Pomeranian region. There are 11 faculties with about 30.000 students, doctoral students and post-graduates. University of Gdansk ranks in the top 5 universities in Poland. It's also third most popular university among candidates for studies in Poland. The University of Gdansk is included in world-famous universities rankings such as Academic Ranking of World Universities, QS, Times Higher Education Young University Ranking. The University of Gdansk was ranked fifth among Polish universities in the QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2024, which examines achieving sustainability goals. In the Governance Rank category, we reached a high third place among Polish universities. University cooperates with universities and scientific institutions from all over the world. The work of UG scientists in 107 international and 293 national projects contribute to UG reputation in the knowledge network. University is one of two Polish scientific institutions that established International Research Agendas: International Centre for Cancer Vaccine Science and International Centre for Theory of Quantum Technologies, funded by Foundation for Polish Science. University of Gdansk participates in prestigious project "European University of the Seas - SEA-EU". Along with universities from Germany, Spain, Malta, Croatia, France, Italy, Norway and Portugal, creates a unique partnership of universities, focused on field studies, students exchange and creating international academic campus. More information about Faculty of Social Sciences at: <https://en.wns.ug.edu.pl/> and about the UG Centre of Sustainable Development: https://czrug.ug.edu.pl/en/en_start/ and about the Museum of the University of Gdańsk: <https://ug.edu.pl/news/en/6501/permanent-exhibition-ug-museum-making>

The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk. For more than 80 years, the Academy of Fine Arts (ASP) in Gdansk has been shaping young creators who participate in the most important events in the field of culture, art, and design in the region, country, and beyond its borders. Currently, around 900 students are studying at ASP on both undergraduate and graduate levels. The students are educated by a faculty of 150 experienced academic teachers. Locally, the university collaborates with key cultural institutions in the region, consulates, and the business community. Among the most important initiatives of ASP are the Nationwide Exhibition of the Best ASP Diplomas, International Foundry Workshops, and Art'em All at the Gdańsk Shipyard. Within the walls of ASP, there is a Sound Laboratory for interdisciplinary activities in the field of computer recording and sound design for moving images (visit: <https://en.asp.gda.pl/>). The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk welcomes all international initiatives and is keen on establishing new cooperation and participating in artistic projects and researches as well as hosting international tutors, organizations and events. Internationalization is one of the key points of our development strategy, resulting in, among other things, the systematic increase of student mobility for studying and training. Additionally, the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk offers participation in plein-air, workshops and exhibitions, both domestically and abroad. More information at: <https://en.asp.gda.pl/academy/academy.2>

The European Solidarity Centre is a modern cultural institution that perpetuates the memory of our greatest civic success – the victory of Solidarity. It is a museum commemorating the Solidarność revolution and the collapse of communism in Europe, but also an educational centre, a research and study centre, an archive, a library and a mediatheque. And finally, a public space, a meeting place for citizens who feel responsible for the development of democracy: a zone for practising solidarity and citizenship. We believe that from the experience of August '80 we can also draw social energy today, and that in the legacy of Solidarność there still beats a source of invigorating ideas for Europe.

We are happy to be here together – Europeans, Poles, Pomeranians and all those who feel connected to the Solidarność ethos (Basil Kerski, Director of the European Solidarity Centre). More information at: <https://ecs.gda.pl/en/ecs/>

Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe [The Scientific Society of Gdańsk] The Gdańsk Scientific Society was founded in 1922 as the Society of Friends of Science and Art in Gdańsk at the initiative of the Polish diaspora in Gdańsk and operated until 1939. After the war, it was reactivated in 1945 and has operated under its current name since 1956. It currently has five departments and publishes the journal "Rocznik Gdański". The Society's current president is Professor Jerzy Błazejowski. The Society has the following departments: Social Sciences and Humanities, Biological and Medical Sciences, Mathematical, Physical, and Chemical Sciences, Technical Sciences, Earth Sciences. The Scientific Society of Gdańsk collaborates closely with the scientific communities

of Gdańsk and the region. In particular, it collaborates with universities, integrating them and often acting as a link between them and science enthusiasts outside of academia. The Society's headquarters is an 18th-century tenement house at 12 Grodzka Street in Gdańsk. More information at: <http://gtn.cba.pl/>

WL4 – ART SPACE. WL4 is a group of independent artists not associated with any institution, for whom art is the overriding value. Our group includes mature artists and those just starting their creative path, working in various areas of art. Our diversity is our strength. WL4 is 14 resident painters and sculptors, graphic artists and photographers, people promoting art and working in its various areas. WL4 is the “Mleczny Piotr” building on the premises of the Imperial Shipyard in Gdansk. Our special location on the premises of the former Gdańsk Shipyard on the natural walking trail from the Old Town to the ECS gives us the opportunity to create an interesting proposition for both tourists and art connoisseurs. The space we have and the green belt right next to the new Motława promenade give us the opportunity to create an outdoor gallery of sculptures and objects also visible to yachts and ships entering the Gdansk marina. WL4 is a Cultural Space created for the implementation of partner projects and activities on a local and international level. We organize joint exhibitions, symposia, workshops, concerts, performances, etc. WL4 is an Open Space for cooperation with entrepreneurs and patrons, cultural institutions, offices and local governments in individual and group projects. **WL4 ART SPACE – RESIDENCE:** We invite residents to the place we are creating, hoping that it will be an interesting proposition for artists and artistic groups wishing to establish cooperation (Adriana Majdzińska, Ph.D., profesor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk, President of the “WL4 – ART SPACE” Association Centre). More information at: www.wl4.pl

SCAPE: the international research group “Studies of Conflict, Art and the Political in Education” (SCAPE) was inaugurated in Sweden in May 2008. The research group brings together education scholars who share an interest in the constitutive role of difference and disagreement in a vibrant political sphere. The members of SCAPE share an interest in conceptions of democratic politics as involving disagreements and struggles over the power relations in society and attendant ethico-political values. They are concerned that the more deliberative approaches see conflict only as counter-productive to democratic dialogue, and even as indicative of communicative breakdown. Instead, the participants believe that some kinds of conflict are not only inevitable but, in fact, valuable for and constitutive of democracy itself. More information at: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/scape/2015/09/13/hello-world/>