

Katarzyna Józefowicz

Katarzyna Józefowicz explores the realm of excess, but in its humbler, pauperised incarnation. She uses found materials of zero value – scrap paper, sheets of cardboard, ‘outdated’ newspapers, and clippings from glossy magazines, and touches areas that are sidelined and somehow worthless while creating her own economy and models of work. One example of this approach is her use of advertising leaflets left on people's doorsteps to build thousands of tiny cubes arranged in crumbling geometric formations (*Gry* [Games] 2003-2004). The passage of time, tenacity and focus are components of her method and prerequisites for appreciating her work. *Ever since I started making these works, Józefowicz says, I have changed inside, my reactions have grown slower, life has taken on a different pace.* Her multi-storey ‘cities’ and ‘magazines’ built out of paper modules test the tensile strength of the material as well as its capacity to create monumental forms absorbing the viewer's attention. In one of her early works (*untitled*, 1996) layers of paper sheets created ‘geological’ strata. Impermanence was the foundation of an ostensibly solid structure. In the second half of the 1990s Józefowicz made works requiring even more effort and patience; stretched out in time, and in a sense devoid of form. Her projects were not planned in advance, their completion being left to the artist's subjective decision to abandon work on it after several years. Theoretically these works could go on forever, based as they are on a hypnotic repetitiveness which never lapses into mechanical replication. Other works such as *Miasta* [Cities] (1989-1992) and *Habitat* (1993-1996) can also be read as inquiries into the functions of residential space seen in the context of the legacy of Communist architecture: uniform apartments, and anonymous housing estates. By virtue of their chaotic expansion and mutable nature, these works can be exhibited in an endless number of ways: they are, by nature, a negation of the priorities of urban planning, resembling instead homespun rituals and craftsmanship of stunning scope.

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