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The title of the PHD thesis: "On the Margin of External and Internal Spaces"

The main theses of the Doctoral Dissertation are the following:

- The conciliation and the relation of the artist's external and internal spaces are reflected in his/her works of art either consciously or subconsciously.
- The work of art itself is the place or the margin of the dialogue between the external and the internal spaces that the artist perceives. During the artistic process there is a dialogue between the (internal) perception, thoughts and the (external) material medium.

The objective of this thesis is to look for different prospects by wandering on the verge of external and internal spaces, which are about justifying the expanded medium of the artist's spatial intentions. This work will also be about psychological and imaginary spaces or spatial sensations that are born in real-life scenes and how artistic intention can be linked with the real spaces. It is also going to be about the immaterial part of the creative artistic process, which is demonstrated either by the works of art as the final imprints of this process and also by the sensations evoked in the viewer of the work. About the artistic intention, which thinks, feels and acts in spatial relations and also tries to invite its visitors – the viewers – to witness these spaces. About artists who use spaces as starting points or to communicate certain ideas with spatial images, expressing certain qualities sometimes by linking them together, other times tearing them apart, organizing and rearranging them into new units – defining a new kind, an own and unique reality, which might operate with completely diverse psychological meanings.

The thesis would like to highlight the potential in different spatial connections by using the term "margin of external and internal spaces". The dissertation intends to label spaces as points or systems of reference, explores the links or the multiplicity between different spaces not forgetting to consider the possibilities, places and methods to trespass between them by examining them in the relation of psychological and real spaces, in the symbolic or geometric application of lines involving the opportunities to look at lines as associative connecting elements. As a matter of fact the aim of this doctoral study is to raise awareness of the perception of spaces as something highly individual.

The structure of the thesis is based on using various different perspectives to make its readers more sensitive and capable of understanding a topic that is not easy to grasp logically. It includes a philosophical and psychological overview of spatial sensations, the development of human attachment and relation patterns in real life situations with an emphasis on handling closeness and distance as a source of identifying categories such as “external” and “internal”. The topic of “place” will be illustrated by graphic art examples highlighting certain works of Fred Sandback and Olafur Eliason. Using these works of art makes readers capable of focussing on perceiving margins of external and internal spaces as a process. This perspective given by these works of art draws awareness on the action of perception, making viewers more sensitive to the individuality of perception putting an emphasis on the subjectivity of external and internal spaces.

In the final part the thesis is determined to give an insight to my perception of the relations between my personal external and internal spaces through my works. The reflection of spaces of the environment is going to be strongly highlighted as much as the relationship between the line as an abstract geometrical item and real spaces and human relations. By using the term “external and internal spaces” the material of the external or internal reality experienced by the artist is identified. External spaces might be anything that the artist perceives as external reality – like his/her body, objects, the studio, the place where he/she lives, his/her room, city, country, places where he/she met people, etc. Examples of internal spaces can be invisible, imaginary, theoretical, mental, psychological subjects. Spatiality is linked to possible internal and external subjects as an attribute to emphasize the point that any experience – no matter if it is an external or internal stimulus, we accept and personally perceive its existence – might have spatial significance. Any existence that one is able to register without reference to its vitality as a quality can be associated with spatiality and temporality, as perception and sensation are processes in a certain space and time. Perception and sensations – including the perception and sensations of artists – are results of an individual psychological process and these phenomena are described with psychological terms. It does not define the quality of the work of art and does not set an aesthetic standard. The sensational experience of the artists can be traced on their works of art, as well as reflections of many conscious and subconscious subjects, which artists are interested in – these are all rooted in their personal life situations.

The issue of margins of external and internal spaces and the changes in spatial theories can be observed best in contemporary graphic arts, as this field is more sensitive to spatial

sensations, especially the segment dedicated to subjects about the margins of perception. The appearance of this issue is gradual and varied in the different genres. The process started in 20th century painting by emphasizing planar imagery as an exclusive attribute of painting by getting rid of the possibility of applying illusions of spatial depth, distancing itself from other forms of expression. Later with the change of spatial theories, with trespassing between genres and materiality, three dimension spatial painting as an adjoining area of painting was legitimated. In sculpture the most important purpose is to expand the perceptive possibilities based on real spaces. There are some works of art where the recipient of the work can understand the relation between external and internal spaces if it is consciously explained by the artist. One of the best examples for this is the Berlin exhibition organized by Olafur Eliasson in 2010 in Martin Gropius Bau – its title itself “Innen Stadt Außen” directly suggests the subject of spatial relations. This exhibition creates challenging perceptive situations, which try to inspire the viewers to restructure their conventional system of orientation. The artist works on constructing special perceptive situations that are based on environmental experience but they are put into such an artistic context, which requires a more complex challenge of understanding by the viewer. His work leads the viewer back to him/herself – this suggests that the goal of the artist is to demonstrate the individuality of the perception. By giving more examples from painting the question of margins are going to be highlighted. The dilemma of external and internal spaces will be illustrated by the strong tense between positive and negative spaces, foreground and background, real and illusionary spaces. From the field of “sculpture” Fred Sandback’s works will be used to exemplify the perceptive conciliation of external and internal spaces, who intends to illustrate the phenomenon with the use of lines and lineality. The line and the opportunities of its expressive qualities will be elaborated on in more details since it offers varied layers of connotation because of its philosophic characteristics and also for the reason that it highly inspired my own works – more insight will be given about this in the chapter with the title “Coloured spaces (szín terek – it does not have a proper English equivalent) of my works”. The spatial theoretical philosophic background of the issue will be linked mostly by emphasizing the work “Spatial Poetics” written by the phenomenological philosopher Gaston Bachelard. The phenomenon of spatial relations is a topic not easy to grasp, but descriptive interdisciplinary approach can make it more characteristic and comprehensible. Theories about spatial perception can make us more sensitive to the subject of external or internally perceived spaces. According to Bachelard the application of the terms external and internal evokes the ambiguity of fragmentation, the dialectic between positive and

negative, yes or no, highlighting their opposition. A philosopher would definitely link these theoretical terms to the deeper questions of existence and non-existence. In all cases the main idea is distinction, which is metaphysically rooted in geometrics – suggests Bachelard – since it is geometry that gives our spatial way of thinking. Behind the opposition between external and internal, outside and inside the metaphors of open and closed can be found, which are able to model whole systems. The open and closed positions include geometric structures and approach. Bachelard believes that in the movements of opening and closing, humans are present as half open beings.

From the discipline of psychology the dynamics of regulating intimacy (closeness) and distance (openness) within human relations will be introduced by demonstrating the motives of individual experience and needs. Symbiosis and separation are introduced as the phenomena of regulation between two poles that dynamically change within human relationships with getting closer and farther continually – this is analyzed in details in attachment theory. According to the psychodynamic hypothesis by M. Peciccia we have a symbiotic and a separated self, which are two different expressions and points of view of the same self. According to the research by Stern the new born baby hesitates between two states: to live in a symbiotic relationship with the mother or to separate from her. These two states are two different sides of our psychological development. According to M. Peciccia's assumption our grown-up self has the same two dimensions: one is the subconscious symbiotic self dominated by intuitions and identification, the other is the separated self characterized by conscious detachment and the opposition between the self and others. If these two dimensions are integrated in our personality, we can talk about an integrated self. Every single time we meet a person we stand with our self in front of another self and we exchange pieces of information. These pieces of information are not only exchanged on the level of our conscious separated self, but also subconsciously in the symbiotic dimension – in such a situation the other becomes a reflection of our symbiotic self, so that we can find ourselves again in the other.

The extent in which the artist is inside or outside his/her own inner world or how much is it used consciously in the artistic process is not recorded here, the aim of this work is to concentrate on one subject in order to make readers more sensitive to the possibility of perception either as internal or external experience. No matter if we are artists or percipients of arts, in any situation our state of mind and relationship to the outer world will be reflected and with the help of it we get the chance to get back to ourselves. The choice of the topic referring to external or internal is only one possibility in the wide range of views in perception. The reason of choosing this very approach is that both in my artistic and

private life I had the individual drive to discover boundaries and frames – on one hand finding the symbolic boundaries of my abilities, possibilities, knowledge, subjects of interest, persistence, etc. and on the other hand in the artistic process the choice of materials, the margins of images and also the quality of the relationship between the work and me, as an artist. Thus, I allowed myself to open up to new areas, to trespass between boundaries of different genres. I tried to expand the boundaries of my painter-identity and so, by going beyond the paint and the canvas, I discovered the possibility to think in real space and to use everyday objects as sources of inspiration to my works. Having experienced the above, boundaries of real-life and artistic spaces started to merge – feeling this kind of uncertainty and the chance to get confused between these spaces still inspire me very much. My original aesthetic interest in the relation between colours and shapes developed into a curiosity of orientation in variedly perceived spaces and turned spaces into sources of inspiration. Sometimes these new experiences even encouraged me to creatively fill spaces without much stimulus with colours. Harmonizing and balancing external and internal spaces became my main subject matter – the issue of spaces, places, contexts and situations perceived by artists, poetically called “coloured spaces” (szín-terek) can be led back to the level of interpersonal relationship and can be seen reflected in works of art. I use geometric shapes for creating the spaces of orientation in my personal relationships as expressive devices about my relationships – it was a method to keep distance from inner psychological events of my life. Mostly this technique was used to express personal distance and closeness towards people in my private life.

During the course of writing the thesis the following assumptions were made:

- Drawing lines is essential just as much as the mobility of these lines to provide psychological balance and improvement. The lines are expressed in artistic act when the internal world of the artist and the external material world are confronted with each other. Thus, the artistic process itself becomes a margin and this margin between internal psychological and external material is demonstrated by the work of art.
- Lines are symbolic margins, a device of orientation in the system of relations between external and internal spaces – it is a place to divide and also to relate different spaces.