

Ewa Doroszenko

Biographical Note

I am a Polish intermedia artist, holding a doctorate in fine arts. I graduated from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (PhD defended in 2012) and completed postgraduate studies in Cultural Marketing at the University of Warsaw. I live and work in Warsaw. I have received scholarships from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland (2019, 2024) and from the European Union's NextGenerationEU programme (2024, 2025), and I am a laureate of numerous international competitions, including Preview – Fait Gallery Brno (2016), Debuts – doc! photo magazine (2018), and Debut – Lithuanian Photographers Association (2018).

I define my practice as the creation of “visual situations” – combining physical objects, painting, photography, and digital works, through which I conduct artistic research into the relationship between the human being, technology, and nature under the conditions of contemporary image-based civilization.

Photography occupies a special place in my practice. I grew up in a family of traditional photographers who ran a photo studio and darkroom; as a child I became well acquainted with analogue photographic techniques, and in later years I observed, from the perspective of a craftsman-photographer, the transformation brought about by the advent of digital photography. Playing as a child with the waste materials of the photographic production process had a significant influence on my later work – including the pieces shown at the exhibitions *Impossible Horizon* (Foto Forum, Bolzano, 2023) and *Nieвозмоżliwy horyzont* [Impossible Horizon] (Fort Institute of Photography, Warsaw, 2024): objects from the series *How to Travel* (2019) and *Ghost Island* (2023). These objects were created using photographic, sculptural, and digital techniques. I built three-dimensional representations of non-existent landscapes out of fragments of photographic prints depicting places of natural value around the world that are threatened by expansive human activity.

The ecological thread in my work goes beyond a reflection on the perception of landscape – it addresses directly the condition of ecosystems and the relationships between species. In this, I draw on the tenets of Arne Næss's deep ecology, which calls for a move away from anthropocentrism toward an ecocentric stance, in which the human being is an integral part of nature rather than an entity superior to it. This philosophy has accompanied me since my youth, when I was active in the “Ruch na rzecz Ziemi” [“Movement for the Earth”] association, founded in the Suwałki region and involved in the protection of the Rospuda Valley – one of the most widely publicized environmental disputes in Poland's history, which in 2007 led to the halting of construction of the Augustów bypass through valuable peat bogs.

The projects and exhibitions I have realized together with Jacek Doroszenko are often hypothetical scenarios of a future in which uncontrolled civilizational development leads to ecological collapse. The installation *Puls ostatnich ekotonów* (*Pulse of the Last Ecotones*), presented as part of the exhibition *Nieвозмоżliwy horyzont* [Impossible Horizon] at the Fort Institute of Photography, draws on the concept of the ecotone – a transitional zone between two neighbouring ecosystems in which organisms from both biocenoses coexist (such as a forest edge or a shoreline). Ecotones are characterized by particularly rich biodiversity, yet they are also among the places most vulnerable to disruptions of balance – in our installation they function as a metaphor for the fragility and disappearance of natural systems under the pressure of human activity. I develop this thread further in the sound installations *Symbiotyczne ślady* (*Symbiotic Traces*) and *Wzdłuż milczącej fali* (*Along the Silent Wave*), based on field recordings from areas where wildlife meets urban infrastructure.

In other experimental photographic works concerned mainly with the contemporary perception of natural landscape – including the photographic series *Impossible Territory* (2019) and the photographic objects *Impossible Horizon* (2019) and *Phantom Territory* (2019) – I raise questions about the shifting boundaries between the domains of nature and technology. The *Impossible Territory* series was created by repeating the same process many times over: building three-dimensional collages from fragments of photographic prints depicting landscape, photographing the resulting collages, and subjecting the photographed scenes to digital intervention. Through this multi-stage process, I arrive at a situation in

which it becomes difficult to distinguish the elements of the photographic image produced through analogue means from those resulting from digital manipulation.

In the series of large-format photographic prints entitled *Overlooked Horizons* (2023), shown at the exhibitions I created together with Jacek Doroszenko – *Overlooked Horizons* at Pragovka Gallery in Prague (2023) and *Polifoniczny krajobraz* [Polyphonic Landscape] at the BWA Art Gallery in Olsztyn (2024) – I once again explored the theme of landscape perception. The works were made from photographic views I had collected – unused photographic leftovers that I had rejected during the selection process while carrying out projects as part of international Artist-in-Residence programmes, including at Kunstnarhuset Messen Ålvik (Norway), the Klaipėda Culture Communication Center (Lithuania), The Island Resigned Lefkada (Greece), and Pragovka Gallery (Czech Republic). These overlooked landscapes – originally unnoticed or considered unattractive – drew my attention to my own limiting expectations regarding contact with the natural landscape.

Art historian and curator Natalia Barczyńska provided the following commentary on the exhibition *Polifoniczny krajobraz* [Polyphonic Landscape], complemented by sound installations by Jacek Doroszenko:

*"The visual frame of the entire exhibition is provided by Ewa Doroszenko's simultaneously continued series Overlooked Horizons (2023), in which the horizon is understood not only as the line where the sky meets the surface of the Earth, but above all as the range or limit of our perceptual capacities in an age of information overload. The constant documenting of natural landscapes makes them derivative and stale. Despite this, we increasingly feel the need to escape from civilization into nature, expecting it to offer soothing appeal. The focus on continuous economic growth has made a reset in a forest by a lake into a new definition of luxury. The works of Ewa and Jacek Doroszenko form an artistic duet in which the authors undertake intermedia interventions in the natural landscape, examining the relationships between the individual and the landscape."*¹

Another thread that I have explored for many years, both in painting cycles and photographic series, concerns the image of women in contemporary reality, in which the latest technologies shaping expectations toward the body play a significant role. Drawing on the idea of collage, in the photography and GIF series *Body Editor* (2018–2020) and *Radical Beauty* (2021), I subversively engaged with the content and images that women share on Instagram in shaping their digital image. Modelling my approach on the strategies used by female users of popular beauty apps, I repeatedly distorted photographs depicting the faces and bodies of the models I photographed. I reinforced these prolonged analogue and digital deformations using software that generates file errors, thereby commenting on today's accelerated machine of digital self-creation.

The *Body Editor* project has been recognized in numerous international competitions; it has been presented, among others, as part of FIF BH – International Festival of Photography, Belo Horizonte (Brazil, 2020), the Inaugural Der Greif and World Photography Organisation open call (Germany, 2018), the Landskrona Foto Festival Open Call (Sweden, 2018), Debut 2018 / Lithuanian Photographers Association (Lithuania, 2018), New Chic – Riga Photomonth (Latvia, 2018), and Self-Reflection – NIDA International Photography Symposium (Lithuania, 2018).

I am a painter by training and return to this medium on a regular basis. In 2013, in the painting installation *Future sex according to Francis Picabia's Parade amoureuse* (Starak Family Foundation, Warsaw), I entered into a dialogue with the early-twentieth-century avant-garde, transposing its visual vocabulary into the context of contemporary reflection on the body and technology. The fullest development of this thread is the series of oil-and-acrylic paintings on canvas *The Girl and the Machine* – several dozen works of various formats in which I examine the relationship between femininity and technology, set within the context of cyberfeminism, futuristic visions, and a dialogue with literary tradition. In my paintings I give material form to Donna Haraway's metaphor of the cyborg, juxtaposing female forms with mechanical elements reminiscent of industrial machinery. The open, multi-element compositions of this cycle, which extend beyond the frame of a single canvas, serve as a formal counterpart to the thesis that contemporary technology cannot be enclosed within any fixed, permanent structure.

Since 2014 I have been creating audiovisual projects together with Jacek Doroszenko, realized as part of international Artist-in-Residence programmes in, among other places, Barcelona, Linz, Klaipėda, Lefkada, Gdańsk, Ålvik, and Prague. Our joint projects focus on selected aspects of the acoustic layer of reality. We have presented them at numerous exhibitions, including *Exercises of Listening*, Fait Gallery in Brno (2016), *Double Speaker*, Exgirlfriend Gallery in Berlin (2018), *Partytura nowych gestów* [Score of New Gestures], Wrocław Contemporary Museum (2022), *Unstable Oscillations*, the Witold Lutosławski National Forum of Music in Wrocław (2023), *Gesty akustyczne* [Acoustic Gestures], BWA City Gallery in Bydgoszcz (2023), and *Parallele Schwingungen*, the Polish Institute Gallery in Düsseldorf (2023).

At the exhibition *Exercises of Listening* at Fait Gallery in Brno, the visual layer of the exhibition that I prepared resulted directly from the sounds recorded by Jacek Doroszenko – it constituted a visual representation of the field recordings. Through this sequence of actions, we drew attention to the need to restore the sense of hearing to its proper standing within a culture dominated by visuality. At the Polish Institute Gallery in Düsseldorf, I presented the series *Układy melodyczne* [Melodic Arrangements] (2022) – a kind of graphic score written in my own original visual language, intended for its performer, Jacek Doroszenko. My graphic scores suggestively illustrate the distribution of sound energy, making them legible not only to the performer of the piece but also inviting interpretation by exhibition visitors. I applied a similar strategy in the large-format graphic works *Structures of Listening* (2016), *Neutralising Sonata* (2023), *Parallel Tones* (2023), and *Unstable Oscillations* (2023), shown at the exhibitions *Gesty akustyczne* [Acoustic Gestures], BWA City Gallery in Bydgoszcz (2023), *Unstable Oscillations*, the Witold Lutosławski National Forum of Music, Wrocław (2023), and *Parallele Schwingungen*, the Polish Institute Gallery in Düsseldorf (2023).

Kama Wróbel, curator of our exhibition at the Polish Institute Gallery in Düsseldorf, described this part of our joint practice as follows:

“There are several clearly outlined threads that help in understanding the artists' intentions – I think that terms such as digital reality, score, determinism, language, sound, data, sign, or relativism and the distortion of a message could serve as keywords here. Following in the footsteps of the avant-garde, Ewa Doroszenko and Jacek Doroszenko intuitively allow themselves to be led by art into its various nooks and crannies, thereby experiencing new stimuli, sometimes not yet discovered even by themselves. (...) This concerns attempts at integrating the arts, but also – and perhaps above all – at transcending the determinants of the instrument, the performative possibilities of a musical instrument in the classical sense, of which the performative actions of the aforementioned Charlotte Moorman or John Cage seem to be an excellent example, as are the musical works of such creators as Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Luigi Nono, and, closer to home, Włodzimierz Kotoński, Krzysztof Penderecki, Andrzej Dobrowolski, Bogusław Schaeffer, and Eugeniusz Rudnik of the Experimental Studio of Polish Radio, with so-called sonorism at the forefront. And while the Doroszenko duo does not refer to these categories in a literal way, they certainly carry avant-garde observations and attempts to expand boundaries into our new, contemporary reality – meaning that, using the tools available to them, the artists investigate how the currently dominant technology influences or even determines our behaviour.”²

More about my work: <https://ewa-doroszenko.com>

¹ Natalia Barczyńska, excerpt from the text for the exhibition *Polifoniczny krajobraz* [Polyphonic Landscape], Ewa Doroszenko, Jacek Doroszenko, BWA Art Gallery, Olsztyn, 2024.

² Kama Wróbel, excerpt from the text for the exhibition *Parallele Schwingungen*, Ewa Doroszenko, Jacek Doroszenko, Polish Institute in Düsseldorf, 2023.