

# OPPONENT'S ASSESSMENT OF A WRITTEN Master's THESIS

**Thesis title:** THE DRAMATURGY OF COMPANIONSHIP  
The Stories from Walking Performance  
**Thesis author:** MICHAŁ SALWIŃSKI  
**Programme of study:** Directing of Devised and Object Theatre  
**Programme type:** continuing Master's

## **Definition of objectives and their fulfilment:**

In his thesis M. Salwiński explores the idea of companionship in relationship to participatory site-specific performance installations, and the specifics of a performative format he has developed during his studies. The thesis describes the performances in extremely evocative ways. It also describes the way artists creative process and inspiration unfold.

## **Topicality of the thesis topic (and relevance of the selected methodology in the case of a Master's thesis):**

The topic of companionship, a form of co-creation is very important in the contemporary performance and Michal can explain how he builds constructions of performance that he invites the audience to, which I find extremally valuable. Building spaces of imagination, where audience is triggered to enter different layers of reality is not an easy task and Michal proves that he is very competent in building them.

## **Scholarly contribution, originality of the thesis, and its utilisation in practice:**

Main scholarly contribution comes in the form of describing artistic process, inspirations and intuition. It is very easy to understand how artist's mind works when making these participatory works.

## **Logical construction and structuring of the thesis:**

Thesis is constructed around different projects that the artist has developed over the course of the studies as well as individual topic or relationships to the reality that they explore: walking, dreaming, and so on. And it is exactly this structure that allows the reader to connect the ideas about the dreamer, the walker, the researcher, the magician and the hunter – all the roles that Michal takes on in the projects as well as proposes the audiences to try out during the performances. It is these roles and their connectedness that are most interesting to me, as they are directly connected to dramaturgy. If we understanding dramaturgy as a line or a journey as movement through space and time – one can see paralels with hunting and researching and walking. I do wish there was more conclusions in this sense. The thesis lacks some summing up on all the dramaturgical tools and methods that have been developed within the projects and described in the thesis.

**Formal requirements and requisite contents of the thesis, including its length:**

Formal requirements are all met.

**Work with information sources**

Michal's main source of information is his own work and his own experiences during the making and the performing of the work, which is of course most authentic and valuable information. I lack a bit more of documentation of the reaction of audiences, the witnesses, the companions.

**Level of language, style and terminology:**

Language and terminology are clear and up to date. Term 'companionurgy' that is crucial to Michal's writing is not the most elegant word, does not sit well in the mouth and has a undertone of absurd. But maybe this is the point – to feel the absurdity behind what we call dramaturgy... so I accept.

**Evaluator's overall summary:**

The thesis is very readable, and very informative and informed. It is a good edition to the knowledge about participatory site specific performances and installations. The methodology of including the spectator into new layer of reality by drawing, hiding, questioning, creating presences, walking, echoing, interacting etc. – is very impressive. All these performative actions help spectator join the process of thinking and see cracks in the everyday reality. The work of M. Salvinski does create possibilities of shared storytelling and while reading the thesis I have understood that the companionship is not only between the artist and the spectator but companionships across space and time, with past selves, with relatives, with the past, with hidden selves.

This is the self that is recovered in his performances – the hunter, the dreamer, the walker, the researcher, the magician – a complex self that is on the move and in constant state of becoming and redeeming.

The thesis does lack some conclusions on structuring, building and triggering audience's experiences and focuses too much on the artists perspective and inspirations.

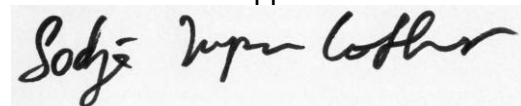
**Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:**

- Please list the main dramaturgical tools you have found during the making of the projects.
- Please list some of the most important dos and don'ts in relationship to working with audiences? What triggers and activates them and what disconnects them?
- If you would make a workshop about performative walks what would the main exercises be? What do the students need to learn?

**Recommendation of the thesis for the oral defence:** YES  
**Recommended grade:** B  
**Date of elaboration of this assessment:** 7.9.2023

doc. MgA. Sodja Zupanc Lotker, Ph.D.

name of the thesis opponent



7.9. 2023 signature