

Institute B61 - Spectacular performances, on the edge of art and science.



The Institute B61 was created in 2009 and premiered during UNESCO International Year of Astronomy 2009. The B61 gathers scientists and artists from Poland, who periodically present performances from the intersection of science and contemporary art. The Institute stages unique and intimate performances and produces artistic films, both inspired by modern science, and involving the best Polish musicians, actors and visual artists. Performances consist of complex visual and audio metaphors depicting the concepts associated with modern science.

To experience the non-existing, *a symbiotic team is needed*

Each spectacle is an ephemeral experience in an intriguing space (museums, factory, fort, tenement-house – always prepared as a site-specific event), which often makes it possible for the spectators to re-discover their own city. Groups of spectators, numbering a few dozen persons, under the supervision of the actors embark on a mysterious journey. Viewers visit several interiors, installations, attend performances and concerts. The characters of the professors of the Institute B61 are played by artists and actual scientists who create a symbiotic team and jointly prepare performances on scientific subjects. The researchers present the given topic to the artists; then the group works together on the script at meetings and during art residency in order to present a

dedicated and original performance. The artists invited to participate in performances are presented in completely new, often intriguing situations. As a result, the spectators remain constantly engaged, not knowing what will happen next. All this makes the activities of the Institute B61 unique in Poland and Europe and each performance is an ephemeral but memorable intuitive and sensual experience.



The topics of the performances and the scientific disciplines change, however, all events take place within the same fictional scientific institution – the Institute B61 - a common reference point for the sciences and art. Our spectacles do not make the assumption that there are certain things that ‘one should know.’ Were it not for the language of art, which allows for laughter and freedom, the activities of the Institute B61 would not make sense. We treat the vast majority of our spectators as laypersons, we do not adopt the omniscient pose, and we smile to the newly initiated. The Institute is distinguished from other projects by close contact between artists and spectators and the form of the performances. The activities open up a whole new chapter in the dialogue between science and art in contemporary culture. New works are created, inspired by modern science, closely related to the most recent scientific models of the world.

So we create a space – inspired by science, but making a place for the collaboration of the artist and scientist. The art is the platform for the communication of scientific content, which, first of all, eliminates the fear of the unknown among the spectators. Sometimes it seems that knowing certain things is *de rigueur*. The performances of the Institute B61 do not make such assumptions.

More than seven years of existence,
more than fifteen premiere performances

The reach of the Institute is unlimited since the issues it raises are not locally, culturally or religiously determined. The problems explored by the Institute are topical and understandable in Warsaw, Lisbon or Panaji. There is no language barrier as the communication is multimodal.

Throughout the years several artworks were created, inspired by modern science and closely related to the most recent scientific models of the world. For the last seven years the Institute B61 has been conducting intensive experimental research which has resulted in the formulation of over 100 multimodal metaphors of scientific phenomena. Multiple sample groups made from 20,000 randomly selected volunteers from 5 countries have been involved in interacting with the findings of our interdisciplinary team. It seems that universal and commonly accessible performances of contemporary scientific phenomena can be presented as multimodal artistic metaphors. Even if some of them are not fully understandable, all of them are a spark to introduce a scientific problem that for many people, before meeting the Institute B61 activities, has never even existed.



So far, the most important activity of the Institute B61 has been the series of spectacles Cosmic Underground, co-financed by the European Commission. The spectacles took place in a special train consisting of 10 freight carriages-installations, which travelled from Estonia to Portugal. During the journey, which lasted more than two months, 40 artists travelled on the train and participated in 90 spectacles. In a number of different performances Institute B61 among others collaborated with Tomasz Stańko, Organek, Kortez, Stanisław Tym, Michał Urbaniak and Bartek Waglewski.

The concept of science communication with art, *curatorial statement*

In the era of digitization and computerization the scientific world seems to be completely alienated and unfathomable. Scientific language becomes hermetic and comprehensible only to a small group of the society. To this day, the image lingers of a mad scientist, absorbed in visionary research. Scientists, increasingly delving into niches delimited by narrow specialization, are often

able to exchange comments on their work and daily life only with a small group of 'professional colleagues'. This results in a decrease of interest in science in the society, especially in natural and exact sciences, which in the long run may lead to a technological and intellectual collapse. There is a need for a form of visual communication between scientists and the general public, which would make it possible, for example, for astronomers to talk about galaxies and black holes, for nuclear physicists to present ion implantation process, and for quantum chemists to share observations on the Born-Oppenheimer approximation.



The main objective of the Institute B61 is to show that even the most complex phenomena and intricate issues in science can be presented in a very accessible way with the use of images, words and sounds. The Institute B61 tackles the above mentioned stereotypes in order to meet the problem of alienation of science.

Jan Świerkowski

The Evolution of the Stars, *a proposition of a performance*



The Evolution of the Stars¹ is a codename of a site-specific performance during which visitors trace the evolution of a star from the moment of its birth from the chaos of interstellar matter, through its peaceful journey on the main sequence, to the great catastrophe – the energetic explosion of the supernova! Moreover the participants get to know the daily lives of the employees of the Institute B61 which is a part of the global Linear Conglomerate responsible for the entirety of the research on the Cosmos and its components. The concern incorporates Institutes of the types A, B, C and D. In the world, there exist 80 facilities of the B61 type. The number of type A facilities amounts to 13 units, C – 120, and D – 541. The research personnel of the Institutes consists of the select, outstanding individuals, in particular, persons characterized by exceptional interdisciplinary abilities. Most of them avoid any involvement in public life. Renowned for his extraordinary intelligence – Albert Einstein – found employment in a type D unit merely.

In order to illustrate the subsequent stages of the evolution of stars, the employees of the Institute B61 make use of the innovative method of the telluric metaphor. Because of the high confidentiality level, the only exhibits shown to the public during the peculiar ‘open days’ are those based on the technology used in the B61 unit dozens of years before. In spite of this fact, the technologies presented are still well beyond the reach of even the most advanced communities.

¹ Stellar evolution is the process by which a star changes over the course of time. Depending on the mass of the star, its lifetime can range from a few million years for the most massive to trillions of years for the least massive, which is considerably longer than the age of the universe. It is not studied by observing the life of a single star, as most stellar changes occur too slowly to be detected, even over many centuries. Instead, astrophysicists come to understand how stars evolve by observing numerous stars at various points in their lifetime, and by simulating stellar structure using computer models.

Artists are invited, installations are set up, a performance in ultraviolet light begins. The time of a single excursion into the Institute is precise and according to atomic clocks equals to 80 minutes. Intelligence agents of the Institute report that it is normal that the participants will vividly remember the unforgettable sensation of experiencing an extraordinary and mysterious space of the Institute. Some of the participants will never return to reality. Actually, only three will.

During the Evolution of the Stars we encourage our spectators to an interactive and creative perception through the use of the form of communication which is most effective for contemporary people, i.e. through a theatrical performance with elements of performance art, live music and visualization. In the case of the Evolution of the Stars, the language of art tames the world of mathematical equations and numerous visual metaphors help understand the schemata that govern the scientific world. Using innovative cognitive methods we arouse the spectators' interest and stimulate reflection.

All this makes Evolution of the Stars an ephemeral, intuitive and sensual experience unique in Poland and Europe.



Critique

„If we were a festival, the first prize would definitively allow to the Institute B61 ”

Konrad Imiela, the director of the 37. PPA in Wrocław, European Capital of Culture 2016

„The Evolution of the Stars was the hit of the festival!”

Dziennik Polski, about the Evolution of the Stars during the 40th Reminiscence Festival in Cracow 2015

MUSIC KORTEZ



Łukasz Federkiewicz, a composer and vocalist, who recently stormed his way to the pedestal of the polish music scene. During the spectacle he becomes the Red Giant.

MUSIC ŁĄKI ŁAN



Łąki Łan is one of the most energetic funk bands in Europe, established by the vanguard of the polish musicians. They are responsible for the Main Sequence Star installation in which they are trapped in a small room (4x5m) with the spectators.

MUSIC MARIUSZ LUBOMSKI



Mariusz Lubomski is a singer, musician and composer, known mostly for his lyrical songs, as well as for characteristic expressive performances. Songs of Lubomski are mixture of free-jazz, bossa nova, blues and funky. During the spectacle he becomes the Blue Straggler.

MUSIC MAJA KLESZCZ I WOJTEK KRZAK



Maja Kleszcz is one of the most important contemporary polish folk singers, best known for her work with Kapela ze Wsi Warszawa and Incarnations. Along with Wojtek Krzak they become the Supernova.

MUSIC MAŁPA



Małpa is a rapper, who over the recent years received a variety of most important polish awards. He enigmatically represents the Interstellar Matter.

PERFORMANCE STEFAN KORNACKI



Stefan Kornacki is a performer and a visual artist, best known for his inScription project shown in Lisbon, Kiev and Tallinn. He created three installations for the Evolution of the Stars.

PERFORMANCE DOMINIK SMUŻNY



Dominik Smużny is an artist and a performer, one of the founders of the Institute B61. During the Evolution of the Stars the visitors experience his 3 performances.

PERFORMANCE DAGMARA POCHYŁA



Dagmara Pochyła is a visual artists, interested in video art and performance. She is a receiver of a YACH Film Award. She creates the White Dwarf.

PERFORMANCE HUBERT WIŃCZYK



Hubert Wińczyk is a sound artist, who focuses on the everyday life sounds which he then transforms into art. He is responsible for the Size of the Universe installation.

INSTALLATION KASIA KOSMOS



Kasia Kosmos is a graphic designer, photographer and a performer. She prepares the Hall of Fail of the Institute B61.

INSTALLATION JUSTYNA KĄCKA



Justyna Kącka is a set designer and a video artist responsible for the Space Continuum installation.

INSTALLATION WIESŁAW SMUŻNY



Wiesław Smużny is a profesor of art at the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń. He creates the Magical Numbers installation.

SCENARIUSZ I REŻYSERIA JAN ŚWIERKOWSKI



Jan Świerkowski is a curator, astronomer and a PhD Candidate in the humanities at the Lisbon Consortium established by the Catholic University of Portugal, University of Copenhagen and University of Gissen. He is a receiver of many awards and scholarships among them the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland and The Foundation of Science and Technology of Portugal.

Full Cast

Script and director

Jan Świerkowski

Performance/Installation

Dominik Smużny, Stefan Kornacki, Dagmara Pochyła, Hubert Wińczyk, Katarzyna Stępień, Justyna Kącka

Music

Kortez, Łąki Łan, Mariusz Lubomski, Małpa, Maja Kleszcz i Wojtek Krzak

Actors

Radosław Smużny, Łukasz Ignasiński, Mateusz Kaczmarek, Maciej Cegłowski, Wojciech Krawczuk

Production

Jan Świerkowski, Krzysztof Wachowiak

Technicians

Michał Krawczyk, Wojciech Krawczuk, Marcin Czarnota, Łukasz Kaźmierczak

Sound and lights

Łukasz Milewski

Design

Wiktor Konopacki

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FEE

Discussed separately based on the amount of the exhibiting days

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Technical Rider

Based on the site chosen

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Security

3 – 4 people, 3 days before the show

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Volunteers

Up to 5 people, 3-4 days before the show

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Hotels

Discussed separately

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Duration

90 minutes

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Max amount of performances per day

8

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Age restrictions

8 years old

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Inappropriate language

No

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Nakedness

No

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Strobe

Yes

CONTACT

Jan Świerkowski

CEO

kontakt@instytutb61.pl

0048509646484