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## **Social fields of visual artists in the Podkarpackie Province**

The subject of the dissertation is the process of constructing the concept of an artist and art in the field of activities of visual artists living in the Podkarpackie Province. Its main goal is to answer the question of how the process of social construction of art, artist and artistic community proceeds in the field under study. The work provides answers to a number of questions regarding the specific aspects of this process, namely:

- Which actors and in what capacity participate in the processes crucial for the field?
- Who is authorised to construct valid definitions of an artist and art in the studied field?
- What values are involved in these processes?
- What actions and interactions do the actors take then?
- What meanings do they attribute to these activities and interactions?

The dissertation is the result of nearly four years of research conducted among visual artists living in the Podkarpackie Province. The choice of research issues was dictated by my professional interests and was closely related to my previous experience as an art historian. It resulted from the discovery of a variety of, often mutually exclusive, definitions of the artist and art, functioning simultaneously in different communities.

The work's structure reflects the directions and stages of the searches. The dissertation begins with a theoretical chapter, the purpose of which is to provide information about theoretical inspirations during research and the difficulties encountered by researchers dealing with art issues. In this chapter, as an introduction to the studied phenomena, I present how (and concerning what values) definitions of an artist and art were constructed over the centuries. Then I introduce the theories that I find helpful when the goal is to look at the art world from an optimally broad perspective. The theoretical concepts of Victor Turner, Jeffrey Alexander, Pierre Bourdieu, and Niklas Luhmann were used in the dissertation.

The methodological chapter describes the methodology adopted in the research; justification of the choice of the research methods and techniques used to collect empirical material. The assumptions of symbolic interactionism, constructivism, and the methodology of grounded theory are discussed here. This chapter describes in detail the research itself and the process of theoretical sampling. The chapter ends with a discussion of Victor Turner's

concept of the social field as a framework for presenting empirical data in the following chapters.

The first of the empirical chapters (third chapter) is devoted to activities undertaken by social actors in the local field of art. What was distinguished as crucial and discussed in detail in it is: the education process, the creation of works of art, the organisation of exhibitions, participation in open-air art, and participation in competitions.

The next, fourth chapter presents the resources that actors have at their disposal within the studied social field. They are both institutional and symbolic resources. The chapter discusses the institutional structure (as well as the activities related to it and relations between artists) and the factors influencing the position of actors in the field.

Then, in chapter five, there is an analysis of the values in the hierarchy of the field that motivate actors to act. They also form the basis of formulated judgments about art and influence the definition of who the artist is.

The final conclusions are presented in the sixth chapter. It includes a detailed description of the process of constructing valid definitions of the art and artist in the social field under study. I also present definitions of the art and artist recognized in the field.

The ending is a summary of all research in the context of the paradigms that dominate the art world.

**Key words:**

visual artists/ social fields/ the Podkarpackie Province/ constructing the definition