

LUCK/ Do I feel lucky, do ya punk?

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Residency at MPRA Poznan (Oct-November 2012)

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If a man who cannot count finds a four-leaf clover, is he lucky? is an aphorism by the Polish Poet Stanisław Jerzy Lec, poses another question whether the awareness of one's situation can indeed change the outcome. Even if the project I have been working on is called LUCK, I will give it all away and say that, I am only using it to frame how symbols can exploit and are being exploited.

In my earlier works I have been 'juggling' with such symbols like Beauty or Truth, and I used them as thermometers to measure the current society in its variety of contexts. How do we assess ourselves and others by employing such basic concepts, seems to be bothering me, and I enjoy finding a visual language for it.

LUCK/Do I feel lucky, do ya, punk? is the result of a six weeks contemporary art residency organized by M-PRA art organization in Poznan, Poland.

It has become part of my practice, by now to constantly work in different geographical areas, subjected to a variety of factors I am trying to observe and to identify.

As my projects are involving a 'negotiations' and searching, during the years of my practice I developed a way to work within a structure but letting 'accidents' to happen, even more then this to include them in my work. My work is process related and involves experimentation.

The event of the project was to create a performative act, people from the audience had to 'play' their 'right' to see the works of art, each person had to play the Polish version of Blackjack /21¹, in case of winning they had to see one of the sculpture, if they will lose the other one.

The winning part was presenting a four clover field, an anomaly utopic situation where every clover leaf had four parts. In case of not winning the game the visitor could see the second sculpture titled "*I make the luck with my own hands*" presenting a doll holding a fourth part of a clover with 3 leaves (unlucky one). The small doll is presented into an ambiguous situation, changing the unlucky clover leaf into a lucky one, or maybe the other way around (!).

The set of cards were specially designed for the project and present different quotes related to Luck, a mixture from Pop Culture (King was Hemingway from *The Old man*

¹ In "21" player/s receives two cards at the beginning and they decide if they want to take another. The goal of game is to get 21 points. Player/s have to add points to get 21 or as close as possible to this result. If player will have two aces at the beginning, he/she win, because he/she will have a "Persian eye". *The numerical values: As - 11 points, King - 4 points, Queen - 3 points, Jack - 2 points*

and the sea, The Queen was Britney Spears and the Jack is Clint Eastwood from Dirty Harry) popular Polish sayings – To be born with a swimming cap² or Romanian saying like *To have luck like hair growing from your palm*³ with international symbols as chimney man, horse shoe, finding a penny, finger crossed, and elephant with his/hers trunk up.

Black cat (card number 9), between a luck and unlucky symbol, if it cross your path presented unluck, but there is a way to correct the destiny, ‘spit’ three times and problems are solved (!).

The same ambivalent situation is with card number 10 ‘Bird shit’ symbol, an unlucky situation is actually is twisted and 180 degree changed.

Card number 3 is represented by a quote by R.E. Shay: *Depends on the rabbit’s foot if you will, but remember it didn’t work for the rabbit* and depict a small rabbit with 3 feet (and some blood around). The image presented is chosen for the potential of questioning the belief and the systems we create around us, you have to have the knowledge to know if you are lucky as the aphorism by S.J. Lec teach us but it may be for no use.

But why to talk about Luck? Luck as a way to interpret the current society, to decipher the fear or irrational and the uncanny ability to let belief to control us. But the project is not to judge or to have a superior look towards but to find ways to understand how we, from ancient time we adapt natural events and we transform them into symbols. We are looking for patterns of behavior to rule our life and we have the need to believe in something bigger and more powerful than us is related due the lack of responsibility.

The variety of different expressions belonging to different languages and cultures shows my need to always adapt and try to understand a new context. The project demystifies and re-mystifies the concept of Luck in current society into a coherent narrative using symbols and popular belief echoing the contemporary production of discourse.

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² Could be loosely translate as : *To be born under a lucky star* or *To be born with a silver spoon in your mouth* (but this will refer to be born rich)

³ A avea noroc ca par in palma – (in Romanian)