

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Spectral entities made up from neutrinos in Stanisław Lem's novel *Solaris*, improbable landscapes in abstractionists' paintings, happenings and performances in the 1960s randomizing aesthetic experience or computers analysing spectators' movement in art galleries – those are only few examples of phenomena, motives and artistic practices which prove that probability theory had its impact on culture in 20th and 21st century. At a first glance they seem pretty distant, but they are all connected – one way or another – by their probabilistic appearance. Probability theory in 20th century was not only a mathematical tool, but also shaped the way scientists understand physical, biological, social and technological phenomena. When scientists faced the challenge of investigating more and more complex systems (for example on subatomic or global levels), useful analytical and cognitive tools were delivered from statistics and probability theory. Inevitably, the probability itself became a category of a great importance, but – what should be emphasized – no one yet analysed its significant impact on culture. Taking into account the epistemic significance of probability theory, I will investigate different phenomena in culture of the last century, especially avant-garde actions that can be read as “artistic operations”.

My research would aim at looking at some of the well-known (and some less-known) cultural phenomena from probabilistic point of view. From such a perspective the spectral entities in *Solaris* can be seen as attempts to create a new, probabilistic and relative ontology, and abstract paintings of avant-garde painters can be understood as creative depictions of the improbable and impossible worlds. I would not only like to re-interpret such phenomena, but mostly create a theory and categories, which will enable reflecting on the notion of probability in culture. The significance of my project will reveal itself, when we realize that probability theory is in fact a very important factor in shaping the experience of humans today, as it is the operating logic of new technologies (of communications and measurement) and governing strategies (of global flows of money and moods). But we need to rethink the cultural and epistemological consequences of this new emerging worldview, to take it to our advantage.