

The aim of the project is to investigate and develop the activities of the Interdisciplinary Creative and Research Center "Pracownia" from Olsztyn, operating at the turn of the 70s and 80s, and an innovative analysis showing this group as one of the precursors shaping the Polish school of culture animation. Through the interdisciplinary examination of the legacy of "Pracownia" and granting it its due place in the history of Polish social creative activities, the research aims to fill the gaps in the history of Polish culture animation, stimulate a discussion contributing to building the consistency of this discipline and its theoretical strengthening. The activity of "Pracownia" is preceded by the disciplinary framework of culture animation, conventionally situated in 1989. It was a bridge between alternative theater created by creative groups and the professionalisation of animation in non-governmental organizations in the 1990s. Its animation specificity places it on the side of original, creative methodologies that use art as a research method.

The project will be based on two research cycles. The first is to gather and develop distributed knowledge about this group and its activities. "Pracownia" was an initiative in the field of alternative culture, functioning in the urban space of Olsztyn and Warmia by involving young people and residents in performances, workshops, and urban creative and research actions. It is a group unique in the scale of time and place, initiating projects related to current social topics absent in the dominant discourse of that time - climate, housing, migration, the political situation of the "recovered lands", propaganda, etc. Remaining on the border, it maintained contacts with the most important creative centers in Poland (Laboratorium Theater, Akademia Ruchu, Prof. Siciński's research team at IFIS PAN) and abroad (The Bread and Puppet Theater, The Living Theater in the USA). However, this is a little researched group - even though a social movement has formed around it and they were interested in researchers from Siciński's circle, little has been published about it. The nature of the work of "Pracownia" eluded contemporary researchers - it was classified as "paratheater", "alternative culture" (A. Jawłowska), "avant-garde model environment" (A. Wyka), and it has not yet been grasped as a whole and synthetically, both in a historical and methodological context.

This part will consist mainly of ethnographic interviews with living group members, their families, participants of the activities of "Pracownia" and researchers, as well as collecting scattered archives, texts, press interviews and studies in order to create a relatively complete compendium of knowledge about it. On this basis, I will develop an interdisciplinary map of culture animation as a social research and present it at a seminar devoted to "Pracownia" at the University of Warmia and Mazury, in Olsztyn, addressed to animators and members of the research team.

The second cycle is interdisciplinary action research conducted by a team consisting of a representative of three main schools within which culture animation is situated. There will be animators from the pedagogical school or social pedagogues, as well as socially engaged artists, and animators from the anthropology school. Taking the map as a starting point, the team will conduct micro-research and activities in Olsztyn, using its own methodology and specific means of expression. There will be city performances, animation activities, texts and installations which will then become the subject of a research barter arranged by the Principal Investigator. Barter assumes a three-sided methodological exchange, activating all its participants, and allows opening to various traditions and environmental discussion, creating a democratic platform for disciplinary exchange. These activities will become a new area for research on animation methodology, their analysis and interpretation will contribute to posing new research questions and developing the discipline's framework.

Animation, although taught at universities, functions simultaneously under different names (social, cultural, socio-cultural, culture). It is also practiced in various environments and understood as applied culture anthropology, a branch of social pedagogy, or a synonym for activities in the field of participatory art, socially engaged art and performance art. These environments rarely interpenetrate each other, so various "animations" function simultaneously, which is not conducive to the development of this field. This project aims to create a platform to meet different animation traditions and use interdisciplinary research methodology for the case study of "Pracownia" and, consequently, initiate a discussion leading to the development of a more coherent animation methodology, treated as an activating method of social research and initiating social change.

The stage of analyzing the collected data will be strengthened by a four-month internship at The New School for Social Research in New York under the supervision of prof. Elżbieta Matynia, who researched "Pracownia" in the 1980s as part of developing the theory of performative democracy. The project will result in English-language articles and a research monograph.