



CONTEMPORARY CONSCIOUS ART



Exhibition

Consciousness in Hybrid Times

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Exhibition

Consciousness in Hybrid Times

A sequence of 10 works builds a shared narrative about consciousness in the hybrid era – from the fragile emergence of the “self”, through illusions of freedom, toxic consumption, enslavement by pleasure, fragmentation of perception, withdrawal into the night, up to raw, bodily presence in performance.

CURATORIAL ESSAY

Anna Mikosz

European Foundation for Art Therapy (ARTHE Foundation)

The exhibition ***Consciousness in Hybrid Times*** is the result of inviting artists to reach deep into their own consciousness, to dive into its depths. We all currently live holding our breath, on the threshold – in suspension, where the boundaries between body, screen, and ecosystem have become almost transparent, and we drift in this liminal space.

If we had access to modern brain imaging technologies – such as functional ultrasound (fUS), which today already enables real-time tracking of brain activity even in moving people, or high-resolution fMRI mapping plasticity and neural networks – we would connect them to the artists during creation and see exactly what is happening in their consciousness: how reward circuits,

mirror neurons, the default mode network, or the salience network activate at the moment when an idea becomes form. But we only had recycled materials, paint, canvas, clay, tape, and the creators’ imagination – and that was enough to create a space in which the viewer can dive in themselves.

The defining feature of this constellation is liminality – suspension as a state of being. We are no longer in the old world, but we have not yet stepped into any new one. You feel as if you are in a classic transitional space: the empty, fluorescent corridor of the Overlook Hotel in Kubrick’s *The Shining*, where the echo of footsteps mixes with menace; or on the endless Penrose stairs in Nolan’s *Inception*, which you climb forever.

Anna Zielińska opens the exhibition with the work **Dawn** – a figure on the threshold, between night and light, stillness and motion. Recycled aluminium and marble remind us: even our thresholds are already hybrid, composed of waste and geological past. The base (plinth) becomes a meeting point of two timescales and two kinds of matter: ancient, natural and today's, human, polluted. It is not only a personal or metaphorical threshold, but an ecological-civilizational one – the boundary between nature and what we have made from it and what we have thrown away from it.

The younger **Allen Mack** in **Moonchild Launcher** shows what this suspension looks like in Generation Z: a boy jumps toward the moon, but the horizon is a screen and the grass is toxic. It echoes a childish longing for flight, which in the era of feeds turns into an advertising orbit. Ecological fear – the distinct anxiety about the end, the degradation of the world, which researchers call eco-anxiety – is not only a statistic among Gen Z (nearly half report high levels), but creative fuel. Instead of paralysis, a desperate, childish gesture is born – a leap into unknown space.

Agata Sobczak delves into the toxicity of everyday life: **Still Life with Collateral Damage** is a vanitas on influencer steroids – plastic, over-the-counter drugs, foil-wrapped onions in candy colours. The colour screams to drown out the awareness that the body has become a sieve for chemistry, marketing, and unhealthy human dominance over the earth. Nature does not die quietly here.

Michał Jackowski in **Slave of Pleasure** locks the body in a digital sarcophagus of tape and pink threads. Pleasure as an algorithmic loop in which human relationships and emotions become a resource to be commercialised, and the stars are only noise. The liminality of desire: always in process, never fulfilled.

Klaudia Domagała shatters the image into **Squares** – modular tiles, hand repetition meets proto-pixel. Like Agnes Martin's grid or Rafael Rozendaal's glitch installations, but with AI in the background. The pattern soothes and programs at the same time – an echo of compulsive scrolling as a ritual against eco-anxiety.

Anna Sołtysiak in **Nocturne** withdraws into the night – painted out of frustration with AI, on reclaimed canvas. It is resistance: a space where the eye can finally stop consuming. It recalls the ending of Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* – the planet approaches, but before the collision there is silence and acceptance.

Edyta Szalewska in **Movement Soothers** examines the boundary between calming and compulsion – recycled paper, AI optimisation, repetitive gesture. Mindfulness meditation that in the climate crisis era easily turns into obsession.

Sylwester Stabryła in **Experience Intelligence** sabotages: AI generated a face, but only the human hand squeezes paint from the tube. A manifesto – the machine sees, but does not feel the weight of the material. An echo of the old painting vs. photography debate, now against the algorithm.

Clarise in **Feeding** goes into horror: consciousness forcibly fed into the machine like food. Reclaimed canvas from Mokotów, palettes from take-away containers – everything that was waste becomes the carrier of brutal identity transfer to the server. Very close here to the narrative of Garland's "Ex Machina" or Hito Steyerl's work on poor images and circulating data.

Finally, **Anna Kalwajtys** in a video performance returns to the body – sweat, breath, endurance. After all the prostheses and loops, what remains is the stubborn, mortal "I". Like Marina Abramović's durational actions, but in an era when dematerialisation seems the norm.

EXHIBITION

Consciousness in Hybrid Times

(project "Contemporary Conscious Art", European Foundation For Art Therapy / KPO 2025 grant)

The exhibition confronts the contemporary viewer with a torn consciousness – trapped between bodily presence, ecological decay, algorithmic control, technological prostheses, and engineered loops of pleasure-addiction.

The selected works form a loose, non-linear narrative:

from the fragile emergence from darkness into uncertain light, through childish illusions of freedom clashing with adult commercialisation, to toxic saturation of the body by consumption,

These works do not comfort. They show that suspension has become a permanent psychic habitat. Ecological fear among younger generations is not a "decoration on the coat", a fashionable embellishment, but fuel that drives creation despite paralysis. Instead of escape into nostalgia or tech-optimism, there is confrontation with a reality in which the old has died and the new has not yet been born. And it is precisely in this "not yet" that the last remnant of hope lies: that from the chaos of the threshold something may emerge that algorithms have not yet predicted.

A machine's looping means stop; a human's looping means courage and the leap.

entrapment in engineered desire, pixelated perception, nocturnal withdrawal, repetitive movement bordering on compulsion, ironic return of the painted human face despite AI generation, forced feeding of consciousness into machine systems and finally a raw, durational self-portrait that insists on bodily presence amid dematerialisation. The sequence is not progress – rather a loop, a crack, and a reflection, like the hybrid condition itself.

LIST OF WORKS



1. **Anna Zielińska** (b. 1985, Warsaw)

Dawn

2026

Recycled aluminium, marble

(Base 30 x 20 x Height 26 cm)

A solitary female figure mid-step, with an outstretched hand toward an invisible dawn, suspended on the frayed edge of a marble plinth. Recycled aluminium – rough, reflective, industrial – catches fleeting light, while ancient stone anchors the form in geological time. The work emerged in dialogue with AI chat interfaces that forced the artist to articulate her long-standing sculptural explorations of liminality and embodiment. In the context of the exhibition *Dawn* is the threshold: the first uncertain step from nocturnal unconsciousness into a world already saturated with artificial glare.



2. **Allen Mack** (b. 2001, Warsaw)
Moonchild Launcher
2025–2026
Oil / acrylic on canvas
(80 × 60 cm)

A young, almost teenage man in a cross-shaped leap against an enormous metallic moon filling the upper part of the canvas like a dead pixel. Below, toxic green turf meets a screen-horizon. The gesture quotes both childish play and ecstatic sacrifice – yet remains suspended, without fuel. The painting stages a generational trap: the dream of flight persists, even though the horizon turns out to be an interface. Innocence here meets commercialised transcendence – orbit becomes another scroll.



3. **Agata Sobczak** (b. 1992)
Still Life with Collateral Damage
2025–2026
Oil / acrylic on canvas
(50 x 70 cm)

Aggressively saturated pinks, turquoises and oranges saturate a contemporary still life that refuses to die. Plastic packaging, over-the-counter medicines, vegetables in foil and plant-based milk swirl in a flat-lay composition. The sweet toxicity of the palette turns influencer aesthetics into a weapon against itself – wellness as slow poisoning. The body is absent, yet present everywhere: as a permeable membrane filtering marketing chemistry and ambient trauma.



4. **Michał Jackowski** (b. 1979)
Slave of Pleasure

2025

Monotype
(100 × 70 cm)

A bound, wrapped figure floats vertically inside a black rectangular prism – a digital sarcophagus – against a grainy field of stars that resembles compressed noise more than cosmos. Crimson tapes / threads intersect in algorithmic symmetry. The one-off nature of monotype reflects the paradox: pleasure is utterly repeatable, while the trace of exhaustion is irremovable. (Paraphrased from the artist): “The body no longer belongs to itself – it belongs to pleasure that devours it from within. Affective capitalism has turned orgasm into an algorithm and the body into a resource.”



5. **Klaudia Domagała** (b. 1990)

Squares

2026

Clay, glaze

(modular tiles 10 × 10 cm)

Hand-formed, individually fired and glazed ceramic tiles arrange themselves into shifting grids of primary and derived colours. The work oscillates between painterly abstraction and proto-digital pixel. Laborious hand repetition meets experiments with AI animation, creating a hypnotic surface that asks: does the pattern soothe, or does it program? Modular logic connects the modernist grid with the contemporary interface – endless recomposition without an original.



6. **Anna Soltysiak** (b. 1980)

Nocturne

2026

Acrylic on linen canvas

(110 × 80 cm)

A nocturne reduced almost to abstraction, born from dissatisfaction with visualisations generated by AI based on the artist's written prompts. The final image reclaims the materiality of painting from an algorithmic approximation. Re-used canvas from an earlier, abandoned composition – scraped down, reinforced, re-primed – embodies ecological rejection of waste and metaphorically layers buried images beneath new visibility. Night here is not rest, but resistance – a space where the overstimulated eye can finally close.



7. **Edyta Szalewska** (b. 1995)

Movement Soothes

2026

Recycled paper, pine,
ecological glues / stains / impregnations
(approx. 22.5 x 22.5 x 2.2 cm)

Relief / medallion examining the relationship between repetitive movement and a state of calm. AI served only as a calculator – optimising negative form, volume and material reserve, which radically reduced silicone consumption. Recycled paper, non-toxic binders and finishes close the ecological loop. The work whispers: repetition can be a soothing tool or an addictive one; the boundary between calming ritual and compulsion is thin.



8. **Sylwester Stabryła** (b. 1975)

Experience Intelligence

2025–2026

Oil on canvas with incorporated object
(discarded titanium white tube with remaining paint)
(50 x 50 cm)

A classically painted portrait – whose compositional seed came from a face generated by AI – confronts the viewer with squeezed titanium white spilling from an authentic, discarded tube. The gesture is deliberately perverse: AI suggests the image, but only the human hand can squeeze paint from metal. The work quietly sabotages techno-teleology: intelligence may generate visions, but experience must still labour to materialise them.



9. **Clarise** (ur. 1983)

Feeding

2026

Acrylic on canvas (reclaimed and restored)

(100 x 80 cm)

The canvas – a street find from a Mokotów dumpster – bears traces of its previous life: stains, abrasions, structural weakness. Instead of discarding it, the artist cleans, reinforces and revives it – turning it into a carrier for meditation on what contemporary systems do to our consciousness: forcibly feeding it knowledge, identities, images of ourselves we never asked for.

In the lower part of the frame lies a curled hare – soft, suckling, archetypally infantile and at the same time helpless object of feeding. Beside it, vessel-like forms: chalice, vase/lamp head, cake dome – half-objects of abundance, half-instruments of force-feeding. They echo algorithmic plates from which content pours non-stop: recommendations, memes, micro-identities, alternative “selves” the brain has not yet had time to chew.

The creative process itself became hybrid. AI acted as a sparring partner – generating variant readings: brain as overloaded hard drive full of cache, painting studio as behavioural control cell, collective memory as distributed server farm from which fragments are pulled for re-feeding.

Recycled materials – single-use containers as palettes, discarded canvas as support – are no accidental choice. They parallel human consciousness in hybrid times: things deemed used up, expired, superfluous are intercepted, cleansed and forced back into circulation of ideas. Just as algorithms shuttle our attention and data, the artist transforms city waste – in a quiet gesture of resistance to definitive “using up”.

The painting drifts in amber-brown suspension – liminal fog where the clean division between body and screen, feeder and fed, no longer exists. The hare lies motionless, eyes half-open, as if uploading itself to the next layer. We, looking, feel the same forced infusion – content that can no longer be spat out.



10. **Anna Kalwajtys** (b. 1979, Kętrzyn)
Self – self-portrait (video performance)
2026
Video performance / documentation

A durational self-portrait that returns to the body as the irreducible place of consciousness. In an exhibition saturated with technological mediation and the second life of objects, Kalwajtys insists on live presence – sweat, breath, endurance – against dematerialised flows. The work closes the circle: after all the hybrid prostheses, loops and second circulations of things remains the stubborn, sweating, mortal “I” that refuses to become pure signal.

This constellation does not resolve
the tensions it stages.

It leaves the viewer suspended
– conscious, uncanny, perhaps for a
moment more present – right in the
middle of the hybridity it critiques.