

'SHadō

Marta

Dziedziniewicz

Mathilde came to Wrocław thanks to Witold Gombrowicz. She got interested in Poland in the last few years after she read *Opętani [Possessed]* and *Kosmos* by this author, and as a result she came to the European Capital of Culture 2016 for two months long residency.

Mathilde got here with an open mind, vague idea of how our country looks like (see: the backyards of Na- dodrze neighborhood, definitely before the revitalization) and little information about the socio-political situation. Armed with a camera, a notebook, Gombrowicza, Jacques Bergier and Louis Pauwels's *The Morning of the Magicians* and a *life is being wrong* motto.

When she started exploring, letting the short and log trips set the rhythm, she learned the strange, post-war history of Wrocław and Lower Silesia – meaning the year 1945 and the complete "exchange" of the German population for Poles, and therefore lack of rooted identity of it's new citizens. That gave her the idea of Wrocław as a city of ghosts, shadows, waiting to scratch it's surface and see what's hiding underneath. During the expeditions – organized together with the curator of her residency, Marta Dziedziniewicz – she visited haunted, mysterious places radiating extraordinary energy, like Wzgórze Partyzantów or Sobótka, where even now it's possible to find the remnants of pagan cults and one of the strongest chakras in Poland. And right there, on the mountainside of Radunia, Mathilde met a shaman from Guatemala (!) who set up a Mayan horoscope for her.

From place to place, from subject to subject, from conversation to revelation – Mathilde was guided by Gombrowicz's leads – signs, strange, inexplicable correlations of words, events, happenings and seemingly insignificant details. The artist decided to follow them, get behind the scenes of cosmos, that is Wrocław. The exhibition is a record, an evidence and a mental map of this ritual of exploration driven by Gombrowicz's search of meaning and peculiarity in a free, intuitive, spontaneous, selective way. Convinced that the peculiarity lies not in paranormal phenomena, but in people, things, places and ordinary events.

It's not decided whether this project is finished, complete. Perhaps the trail of signs and leads awaits Mathilde in a different part of the world and wasn't supposed to end here? But no doubt it's her story – or at least a part of it – that she found in Wrocław and we can explore it following the leads that are visible only to us.