

Andrew Przywara, Interview with Mirosław Balka, *Flash Art*, n°160, October 1991.

MIROSLAW BALKA

FOKSAL

Q: *Why have you titled your exhibition "April My Body Cannot Do Everything I Ask"?*

A: The title is directly linked with the works, and these are about the body.

Q: *Your body?*

A: Yes. The body and the traces it leaves that testify to its presence.

Q: *What do you mean by "traces"?*

A: As a result of physical existence, a human being leaves traces. The body leaves traces. Blood is sweet. Tears and sweat are salty traces. And so is urine.

Q: *Hence the salt water and the salt in your latest works. Does the size of your works refer to your body?*

A: The size of my body is the module I use to construct my works.

Q: *Therefore, the sizes of the individual works, which also act as their titles, are not accidental.*

A: Exactly. And neither are the specifically human dimensions of a coffin or a bed accidental.

Q: *There is an intriguing object at the exhibition, in the form of a white bunk bed.*

A: The upper level is two old floor boards that have a story ascribed to them. The lower, soft level is what the story tries to conceal. It is the weak point, the embarrassing sweat.

Q: *This object introduces something of a hospital room atmosphere to the exhibition. Is this your intention?*

A: This is a possible interpretation, since the bed, being horizontal, brings in the problem of sickness and the sweat that goes with it.

Q: *Does a horizontal arrangement imply sickness to you?*

A: In this situation, yes. And the infirmity of the body.

Q: *You also present two steel pipes by the wall. You have filled them with salt water. Why?*

A: Salt water is a purely sensual expression to me. There is nothing alchemic or mystic about it. In this case, the implication is the salty tear. In ancient Rome, there was an extremely cynical custom of collecting the emperor's tears in a specially prepared container to emphasize his despair. My work is an attempt at quantifying how many tears an individual can leave. Traces.

Andrzej Przywara