

Sopot, 14 April 2020

KOSMOPOLIS 2020

We imagined the festival rather differently last year when we chose its theme – *Kosmopolis 2020*. Nature, however, had other plans. It halted the driving rush of the everyday, reminding us how fragile a species we are. So today we have to deal with increasing numbers of restrictions, from all sides there is bad news, and we are assailed by images of widespread suffering and powerlessness. We live through endless demands, extremes of stagnation, frustrating restrictions; we are being buried in a mound of the unbearable quotidian. And nothing can be done about it. The world has changed and will never be the same again. Memories, readings, relations with those close and dear to us take on new meanings daily.

Our first reaction was to move *Between.Pomiędzy* to the autumn. We concluded there was no other way out, and hoped that we would be able to meet between 19 and 25 October. But it turns out that when you're in isolation you feel even more the need to be with others, to share in your own ways the experiences of this strange time. There's creativity everywhere. We keep bearing witness to this time of plague. In his or her own way, each of us is going through a global experience, whatever that may turn out to be in the future. *Kosmopolis 2020* has and will become something quite different, but – who knows? – perhaps something more intense, more relevant to the now we live in, than it might have been at the beginning of the year.

So, it's time to change plans. Let's meet, after all, in May – but in a virtual world. We want to share some things we've put together: films, photographs, archival material, all kinds of records. Along with the scholars and artists we work with, we ask what this experience is that we're going through. What will it turn out to be in the future? How in different corners of the world do we manage with and in the everyday of isolation? How do we see the past, not so distant after all, although unimaginable then in a Europe without frontiers?

So that will be *Kosmopolis 2020* – made up of tatters, shards, fragments. May a festival that brings together academics and the world of artists become a dynamic, evanescent laboratory, beyond categorization, a laboratory that allows free play of current experience and thoughts in progress. May our contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the University of Gdańsk take, of necessity, this very form.

We hope, of course, that we will be able thoroughly to discuss this kaleidoscope – a hurriedly composed semiosphere – when we meet in the autumn in a Sopot once more bubbling with creative ferment. In the meantime: let's stay at home but meet together in the net.

The organizers of the 2020 *Between.Pomiędzy* Festival:

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