

# MARLENA KUDLICKA

# one more than 10

## Animation' (\*ane – to give breath to) (motion)

(\*ane-Proto-Indo-European root, meaning "to breathe." It forms all or part of: anemo-; anemometer; anemone; anima; animadvert; animadvert; animal; animalcule; animalistic; animate; animation; animatronic; anime; animism; animosity; animus; Enid; equanimity; longanimity; magnanimous; pusillanimous; unanimous. It is the hypothetical source for a wide variety of words whose existence is evidenced by: Sanskrit *aniti* "breathes;" Greek *anemos* "wind;" Latin *animus* "rational soul, mind, life, mental powers, consciousness, sensibility; courage, desire," *anima* "living being, soul, mind, disposition, passion, courage, anger, spirit, feeling;" Old Irish *anal*, Welsh *anael* "breath," Old Irish *anim* "soul;" Gothic *uzanan* "to exhale," Old Norse *anda* "to breathe," Old English *edian* "to breathe;" Old Church Slavonic *vonja* "smell, breath;" Armenian *anjn* "soul.")<sup>2</sup>

*Don't count on me, I engineer  
On every move we make from here  
I'll take the lead  
You take the pain  
You see, I engineered this game*

[...]  
Animation, I Engineer, 1986

When is a regime no longer a regime? When is it no longer struggle? When is it no longer constraint?

There is fear of punishment if one does not meet the expectations of others. Losing and not retrieving oneself; giving up control; dissolving. War zone; under fire; expectations; being directed.

I am allowed to be authentic, make mistakes, be different, have various, changing feelings.

A secret garden: I am receiving impressions of a different nature—something unforeseen is then acting upon me which is located outside the regime in power.

MARLENA KUDLICKA explores mathematical and linguistic structures in her work, focusing on the mechanics of spatial and semantic relationships that concern communication, language, and space. Her carefully crafted, often rigorous sculptural and relief-like constructions, for which she typically uses materials such as steel, glass, and enamel, reflect the thought processes behind patterns, systems, equations, and formulas. She is questioning to what degree "precision tolerance" is allowed in order to transform thoughts into physical form. On her journey between precision and error, Kudlicka draws from the tradition of the historical avant-garde, particularly Russian Constructivism, including Suprematist painting, as well as the utopian architecture of Constructivism, and the legacy of Constructivist film experiments.

For the Kestner Gesellschaft Kudlicka developed a massive and filigree looking, elegant wall sculpture titled *one more than 10*. It is located on the front wall in the area of the Tender Buttons Café. On a connecting line of about 17 meters, three large circles in the colors dark red, black, and pearl white are arranged at different distances from one another, accompanied by smaller characters like brackets, quotation marks, percentages, numbers, and letters such as an inverted 1, a capital A, and a lowercase t.



MARLENA KUDLICKA, *one more than 10*, 2023

Just as El Lissitzky believed that space should be simultaneously movable and basic as well as possess an inner balance ("We no longer want space as a painted coffin for our living bodies"<sup>3</sup>), the sculpture *one more than 10* is entering a mobile, lively interrelationship of things, hereby expanding our own perceptual space.

In their joint work *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have included a chapter entitled "November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics" which is describing the events in Germany around that date, among other things. In their view, these events demonstrate how the fixed regime of signs on the levels of content and expression was brought to dissolution and reassignment: It was "the deterritorializing inflation of the monetary body and the semiotic transformation of the reichsmark into the rentenmark, making possible a reterritorialization."<sup>4</sup>

1 Name of an American new wave and synth-pop band founded in 1983 in Los Angeles.  
2 <https://www.etymonline.com/word/animation>.  
3 El Lissitzky in: exhibition catalog *El Lissitzky*, Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover: 1966, p. 57.  
4 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: Athlone Press, 1988, translated from *Tausend Plateaus: Kapitalismus und Schizophrenie*, Berlin: Merve, 1997, p. 118.

In semantics, as can be seen in great literary works such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and Franz Kafka's *The Castle* (1922) and *The Trial* (written in 1914/15 and published in 1925), it becomes clear that content is no longer a signified and expression is no longer a signifier, but both are variables of a structure. Consequently, every perception is a sign of what is part of the *beyond*; there is no ultimate referent (signified) hidden *behind* the sign. In their joint writings, Deleuze and Guattari start from the approach of Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), who understands the content and expression levels as being in interaction. However, there is no relationship of similarity governing archetype and image (Plato). Hjelmslev understands the levels of expression and content as being separate from one another, with each level having its own independent form and substance.<sup>5</sup> According to Deleuze and Guattari, the form of a specific expression or content level (of any substance, whether tonal, lexical, electronic, etc.) is determined by a "sign regime" (a collective arrangement subject to certain culturally normed codes).<sup>6</sup> Although there is interaction between the two levels, it is neither a relation of representation nor of causality: "The independence of the form of representation and the form dictated by content does not establish parallelism between them and certainly not representation of one by the other. In the contrary, fragmentation of both is happening, meaning the ways how expressions penetrate into content. This is a process during which they constantly 'jump' from one register to another, and while the signs are 'working on' the things, the latter simultaneously expand or spread through signs."<sup>7</sup>

"Things" can thus "expand and spread through signs"—an expansion of the spatial spectrum—which is etymologically described by the verb *\*stere*, a root of the words *abstract* and *construct*:

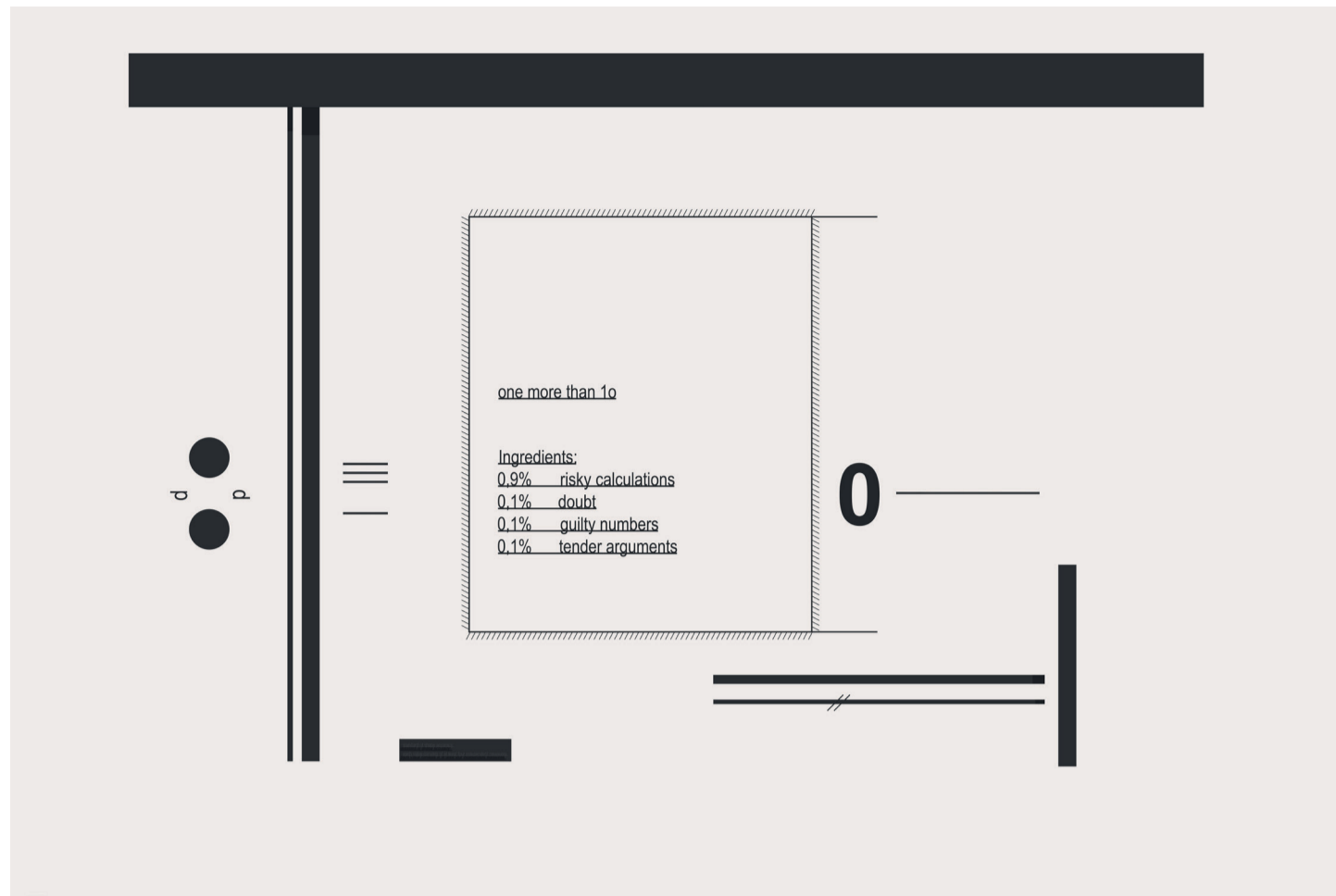
*Abstract, construct* have a common meaning in relation to the root of the verb *\*stere*-.

(\*ster -, also \*ster-: Proto-Indo-European root meaning "to spread". It forms all or part of: constermate; constermation; construct; construction; destroy; destruction; industry; instruct; instruction; instrument; obstruct; obstruction; perestroika; prostrate; sternum; sternocleidomastoid; strain "race, stock, line;" stratagem; strategy; strath; strato-stratigraphy; stratosphere; stratum; stratus; straw; stray; street; strew; *stroma*; structure; substrate; substratum. It is the hypothetical source of evidence for its existence is provided by: Sanskrit *stroti* "strews, throws down;" Avestan *star-* "to spread out, stretch out;" Greek *stromyni* "strew," *stroma* "bedding, mattress," *sternon* "breast, breastbone;" Latin *sternere* "to stretch, extend;" Old Church Slavonic *stira*, *streti* "spread," *strana* "area, region, country;" Russian *stroji* "order;" Gothic *straujan*, Old High German *strouwen*, Old English *streo-wian* "to sprinkle, strew;" Old English *streon* "strain," *strew* "straw, that which is scattered;" Old High German *stirna* "forehead," *strala*, "arrow, lightning bolt;" Old Irish *fo-sernaim* "spread out," *srath* "a wide river valley;" Welsh *srat* "plain." An ellipsis of *via strata* ("covered, stretched path"). Latter element from *stratus*, perfect passive participle of *sternō* ("spread out, extend").<sup>8</sup>

But how can the mobile forms of content and expression find a new hold after they seem to have gained a certain degree of freedom by having escaped a given fixed pattern of meaning? The potential for this lies in the development of our own coordinate system, which recognizes and includes the reference points of our own natural sensations, rhythms, and dynamics—the supposedly "erroneous" references deviating from the regime. The "precision tolerance" that the artist MARLENA KUDLICKA explored would, in this sense, be our own ability to physically and psychologically endure the tension of this system divergence.

It is interesting to note that especially in abstract art, nature is an important energetic reference point. Thus, one could say that perfection and desire for pure or truthful means of expression of a complex level of sensation take on the quality of nature as a support point. As early as 1528, Albrecht Dürer made clear, among other things, the high value of a sacred geometry found in nature in his work *Four Books on Human Proportion*: "Truly, art is embedded in nature; he who can extract it, has it." "As I grew older, I realized that it was much better to insist on the genuine forms of nature, for simplicity is the greatest adornment of art." "Geometry is the right foundation of all painting." "Help us to recognize your voice, help us not to be allured by the madness of the world, so that we may never fall away from you, O Lord Jesus Christ." "He that would be a painter must have a

5 Ibid., p. 118.  
6 Cf. Ibid., p. 118.  
7 Ibid., p. 122  
8 [https://www.etymonline.com/word/\\*stere-](https://www.etymonline.com/word/*stere-).



MARLENA KUDLICKA, *one more than 10*, Ingredients, wall sculptural composition, 2023

natural turning thereto. Love and delight therein are better for the Art of Painting than coercion."

El Lissitzky (along with Kurt Schwitters around 1924 in Hanover) is also interested in the "manifold formal structure" of nature, the creative power of nature, which they called "Nasci," although everything organic seemed to be considered superfluous.<sup>9</sup> However, the creative power of nature (and the perception of it) is the real secret of Constructivism. At one moment in time El Lissitzky observed a group of nuns in "the geometry of their starched bonnets" as well as "the heavy folds of their habit strictly divided into black and white".<sup>10</sup> Watching them walking as if pushed forward by a driving force he recognized an underlying irrational mechanism of movement inherent to an abstract machine.

Thus, in bringing together the thoughts described above, one could say that this is the perception of the essence of a movement or spirit of movement in its simultaneous reciprocal driving and execution form. The representation of the nuns' bonnets becomes the presentation of a "secret" dynamic of movement. This has its "natural" (sacred geometric) intrinsic value. It seems to have a secret code inherent in it. But who is its actual initiator? If one considers the coincidence—the passing by of the nuns and El Lissitzky's fleeting but incisive perception of a movement mechanism manifested at that moment, one could suspect that a "natural" connection point was created in this complex oscillation between El Lissitzky's power of observation and the coincidentally passing power of movement of the "nun formation." Subsequently, the true equilibrium is created via this "marking"—a fleeting point in the space-time structure, being generated by the seemingly coincidental but still "enlightening", knowledge-generating encounter of two different currents of movement / forces.<sup>11</sup> In the words of El Lissitzky: "The [ . . . ] space must be movable and elemental, [herein lies] the real movement [ . . . ] for our living bodies."

Or, as explained in the words of Deleuze and Guattari: "[A] proper abstract machine refers to the entire structure. It can be defined as a diagram of this structure. It is not linguistic but diagrammatic and supralinear."<sup>12</sup> Diagrammatic thus means an inner correspondence structure or, in the words of El Lissitzky, an "inner balance" of a space that is corresponding to a "higher" law of order.

Paul Klee is describing the process of the creative which is leaving the earthly 'stance', as follows:

"[...] that the artist begins by looking around himself, into all milieus to grasp the trace of creation in the created result, the *natura naturans* in the *natura naturata*, and then, after he has settled within the 'limits of the earth', he becomes interested in the microscopic, in crystals, molecules, atoms and particles, albeit not for scientific

9 Cf. Kate T. Steinitz, "El Lissitzky in Hannover," in: exhibition catalog *El Lissitzky*, p. 65 f.  
10 Ibid.  
11 Cf. the mystical meaning of the cross symbol: "The two crossing lines create the meeting of two unique, often contradictory, principles like the meeting of heaven and earth or of God and man. As a symbol, the cross holds many meanings. The intersecting lines form a center, from which radiance or life itself is seen to flow outward. The cross of Christ, like the tree of life, becomes the center of the world." <https://symbolsproject.eu/explore/crosses.aspx>.  
12 Deleuze and Guattari, translated from *Tausend Plateaus*, p.127.

accuracy but for movement, exclusively for the immanent movement [...] finally he opens himself to the *outer space*, the *cosmos*, to capture the forces in a manifested piece of work, and for such a 'work' only very simple, pure, almost childlike means are needed."<sup>13</sup>

The "immanent" movement that the viewer can detect in MARLENA KUDLICKA's work is reminiscent of Klee's interest in small particles, which are lovingly coordinated by Kudlicka into a complex structure according to her own inner arrangement. They are delicate resonances that arise from rhythmic counterpoints: cold steel, softly polished; an A in a small white circle clinging to a thin rod; a lowercase e in a black circle to the northeast of it. As part of this complex movement structure one might describe these resonances as the elegantly filigree leaping of a deer in a forest clearing.

13 Paul Klee, *Über die moderne Kunst*, 53, translated from *Tausend Plateaus*, p. 460.

MARLENA KUDLICKA, born in 1973 in Tomaszów Lubelski, Poland, received her Master of Arts degree in painting and drawing at the Faculty of Painting, Graphic Arts and Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Pozna, Poland (1993–98).

Her works have been shown at various international venues, including Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart Berlin, Weserburg Museum für modern Kunst Bremen, Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Zacheta National Gallery Warsaw, Museum of Art Lodz, Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art Budapest, CGAC Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Kudlicka's works are in numerous museum collections including CGAC Santiago de Compostela Spain, ARCO Collection Spain, Museum of Art Lodz Poland, Wrocław Contemporary Museum Poland, and in many private collections including Barbara and Aaron Levine, Washington DC.

Kudlicka completed artist residencies at the Residencia Al Lado Lima, Peru, 2016; Cité Internationale des Arts Paris, 2014; ISCP NYC, 2008; as well as Akademie Schloss Solitude Stuttgart, Germany, 2005. She lives and works in Berlin.

*one more than 10* is dedicated to Aaron Levine.

Curated by Adam Budak  
In a collaboration with Robert Knoke

Text Julia Meier  
Glossary Adam Budak and Marlena Kudlicka

Design ITyT, Hannover

Front side  
MARLENA KUDLICKA, *one more than 10*, wall sculptural composition 2023, powder coated steel, 1900 x 400 x 40 cm

Back side  
MARLENA KUDLICKA, *one more than 10*, wall sculptural composition 2023, powder coated steel, 1900 x 400 x 40 cm

MARLENA KUDLICKA, *one more than 10*, Ingredients, wall sculptural composition, 2023, 240 x 160 x 10 cm

