

The motif of the barrier has recurred in Mariusz Maślanka's work for many years. It takes various forms: a fence, a screen, a curtain, or a gate. These are ordinary elements of the everyday landscape, marking boundaries — between houses and families, between the individual and their surroundings. The exhibition at Galeria+ develops this theme on a personal level, becoming an attempt at an autobiographical reflection on the experience of alienation and of existing in a space suspended between being "at home" and being "a guest." It also addresses the notion of temporariness, which imperceptibly transforms into a permanent condition. This is not a story about returning to one's hometown, but about a brief stop and a visit — a moment when what was once "home" turns out to be closer to memory than to present experience.

Returns open up a space for reflection on the paradox of being both "at home" and "outside," a host and a guest, a participant in a community and someone who observes it from a distance. Drawing on this duality, the artist explores the experience of alienation and the tension that emerges between "us" and "them."

An important context for the exhibition is the experience of migration in its broader sense — not only geographical, but also spiritual and cultural. The identity that emerges from these experiences is patchwork-like. It is composed of fragments of places, languages, relationships, and memories. It takes shape at the intersection of different cultural codes and ways of understanding reality. From this perspective, boundaries cease to be merely material. They become invisible lines running through language, habits, gestures, and our ideas of ourselves.

The works presented in the exhibition can be understood as a record of the constant negotiation of distance. Proxemics — usually used to describe spatial relationships between people — is approached here in a broader, almost philosophical sense. Yet the artist does not focus solely on what separates us. Equally important are the points of contact — places where different experiences intersect, moments in which a boundary, rather than dividing, becomes a space of encounter.

The exhibition does not offer definitive answers. Instead, it invites reflection on how the boundaries already present in the world shape and define us. It is a story about living between worlds, about constructing oneself from seemingly incompatible elements, about the experience of belonging to a community while simultaneously maintaining one's own distinctness. Perhaps the most interesting things happen precisely at the threshold — in the place where one space ends and another begins.

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