



Me, Jadzia, 2000, stills from the video.

## **EXCHANGING BIOGRAPHIES**

Video Communication Project  
Laznia Center for Contemporary Art Gdansk Poland 2000

The video "Gdansk Dolne Miasto" (56 min.) was created during my "Exchanging Biographies" project which took place in the neighborhood of the Downtown Gdansk, Poland. The neighborhood has been known for many social problems (high rate of violence and crime, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, and illegal immigration from the former Soviet Union). I wanted to offer a possibility of creative expression to the children from the neighborhood. Together with organizers, we hoped to initiate a community platform that would start dealing with some of the problems children are facing there. Eleven girls took part in a weeklong session. Our theme was autobiography: past, present, future. We were writing, reading and talking about our experience and wishes. Then, we were filming for three days, and in that period we were assaulted and robbed in the street..

The video was recorded on the places chosen by the girls, according to their judgments and feelings. Some of them used the camera themselves. The video "Downtown Gdansk" was presented in several public screenings in the Laznia Center of Contemporary Art, situated in Downtown Gdansk as well. The screenings attracted relatively big audiences of school kids and their parents. "Me, Jadzia" is my favorite story from that longer videotape made in Gdansk.