



# Artists Speak: Krzysztof Wodiczko

**Born**  
1943, Warsaw, Poland

**Education**  
MFA, Academy of Fine Arts,  
Warsaw, Poland

**Lives and Works**  
Cambridge, MA

**Media & Materials**  
Performance, video,  
installation

**Biography**  
Since 1980, Krzysztof Wodiczko has created large-scale slide and video projections of politically-charged images on architectural façades and monuments worldwide. By appropriating public buildings and monuments as backdrops for projections, Wodiczko focuses attention on ways in which architecture and monuments reflect collective memory and history. In 1996 he added sound and motion to the projections and began to collaborate with communities around chosen projection sites, giving voice to the concerns of heretofore marginalized and silent citizens. Projecting images of community members' hands, faces, or entire bodies onto architectural façades, and combining those images with voiced testimonies, Wodiczko disrupts our traditional understanding of the functions of public space and architecture.



*Bunker Hill Monument, Boston, September 24, 1998. Public projection at Bunker Hill Monument, Boston, Massachusetts. © Krzysztof Wodiczko. Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York*



*"When I first began this type of work in Krakow, I didn't have any experience in filming or projecting motion images on buildings. I'd been working on still slide projections. So the shift was radical. The projections might look similar in photographs and documents, especially photographs, but they are completely different. In the slide projections, I was animating the monuments with icons and images that I produced in order to actualize them so they could speak on contemporary issues. Now, I create a situation for others to animate monuments and project themselves. So the process of filming is a situation for them to learn what to say and how to say it—because I don't tell people what they should say. I don't know what they will say. They don't know themselves.*

*Hirshhorn Museum, October 1988. Public projection at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. © Krzysztof Wodiczko. Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York*



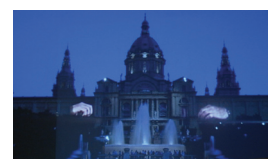
*"I started working on my Hiroshima projection with the assumption that we were going to 'reactualize' the A-Bomb Dome monument (one of the few structures that survived the bombing—just underneath the hyper-center of the explosion) and reanimate it with the voices and gestures of present-day Hiroshima inhabitants from various generations, starting with those who survived the bombing, who witnessed it; their children, who may still remember; their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. So all those generations somehow connect through this projection, not necessarily in agreement in terms of the way the bombing is important and the way the meaning of that bombing connects with their present experiences. The fallout of the bombing is physical and cultural, psychological."*



*The Hiroshima Projection, August 7-8, 1999. Public projection at A-Bomb Dome, Hiroshima, Japan. © Krzysztof Wodiczko. Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York*



*"I don't like to explain my own work in terms of my biography and geography and historical context. Not because there is no good reason to build links between what one does and where one comes from—but because I don't want people to delegate and relegate responsibility for more risky and ambitious work only to those who went through some hell or turmoil in the early part of their lives. But it is important to mention who I am. The fact that I was born during World War II, and my childhood was on the ruins of war, both physical and political and perhaps moral, and definitely psychological is probably a sign that I am qualified to understand at least a little bit of what survivors have gone through—my mother being a Jew who survived the war, whose entire family was killed during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and who gave birth to me in the midst of all this. I would not like to think that one must go through the horrors of war or have heroic parents to create something that makes a difference, goes against the grain, or has a larger social and ethical ambition.*



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