

Viktoria ZMYSŁOWSKA

Dominika WALO

Michał WŁODARCZYK

# GROWING

film by AGATA WIECZOREK

director of photography Joanna KAKITEK sound direction Jeremy LICCARDO D'ANGELA image editing Magda URBAŃSKA  
light design Maxime VELÉ director assistant Lauren OLIEL produced by LE FRESNOY - Studio national



## GROWING

short film, 17'44''  
2021



### SYNOPSIS:

Ewa takes up training in maternity nursing at medical simulation center.

In the life-like reality, pregnancy and labour are repetitively performed by artificial bodies in automatic procedures, where no interruption is allowed. Recognizing human features in a pregnancy simulation female mannequin gives a start to a series of events that makes Ewa radically question the simulated reality and maternity as a predestined experience.

### CONCEPT:

In his film, "Hospital Britannia", Lindsay Anderson (1982) makes a hospital an allegory for a much bigger structure: a country. For Anderson, the ill-functioning healthcare system reflects Great Britain with its heavily stratified class society and social clashes. Anderson's movie evokes absurd and horror as the title-hospital, gradually disconnected from the external world, is being overtaken by a mad scientist who uses it for experimenting on living bodies.

Alike hospital in Anderson's film, in „Growing” a medical simulation centre stands for an allegory. The film has been filmed in majority in PRESAGE Center for Medical Simlations in Lille, France - one the many existing, contemporary medical education units where students practice their skills in a simulated environment. Medical simulations involve role-play, humanoid mannequins and semi-automated props that perform human body's physical reactions.

With its automatic bodies and carnal props, Simulation Centers represent a bizarre, yet applied model of reality where the human body is reduced to its biological potential – such as the ability of female body to give birth. The short film adapts elements of a body-horror genre in order to, in a non-direct manner, address the recent abolition of rights to abortion for women in Poland. The film approaches the consequences of living in a bio-political regime from a subjective perspective of its protagonist: an introvert young woman whose reception of the Kafkaesque reality grows into confusion between the simulated model and experience.

Ewa's insanity might resemble the delusions female characters often suffer from in Polanski's films. Yet, while Ewa's state develops alike Carol's in "Repulsion" (1966), "Growing's" final is purportedly different to the "Rosemary's Baby's" (1968).

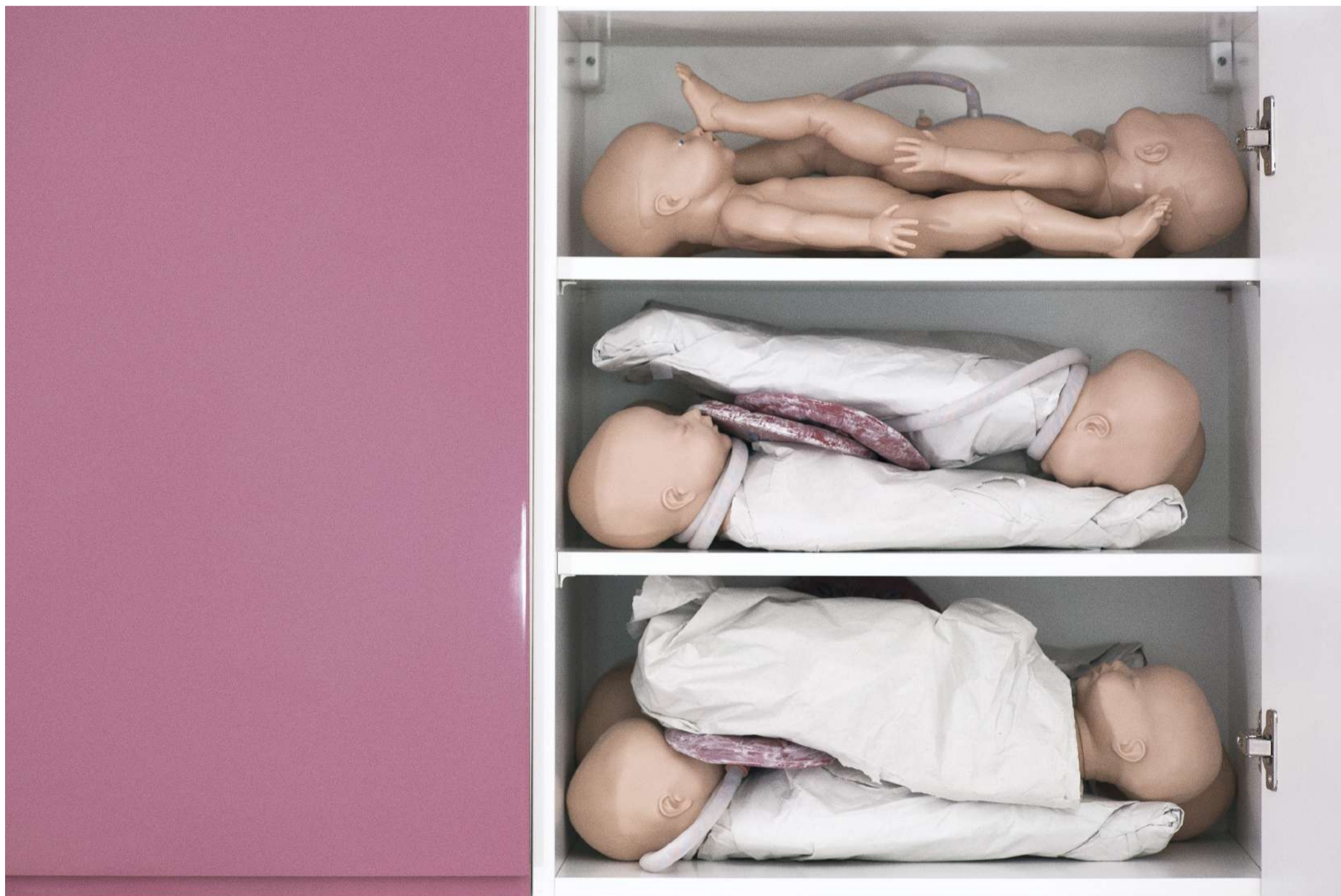
Cinema and art in Poland have a long tradition as media for a critical look and commentary on socio-political reality which violence is often illustrated through absurd and a fetishist gaze that connects psychosis, sexuality, death and historical trauma within a vicious circle of events (eg. "Dom Zły", 2009, dir. Wojciech Smarzowski; "Szamanka", 1997, scr. Manuela Gretkowska, dir. Andrzej Żuławski, artworks by Artur Żmijewski, Zbigniew Libera, Tadeusz Kantor; etc.). „Growing” takes elements of genre film in order to comment on an actual reality which proximity to fiction-film becomes disturbingly close.

## **Preparatory materials**



Simulation center, from the series *Artefacts*, photography, 2019

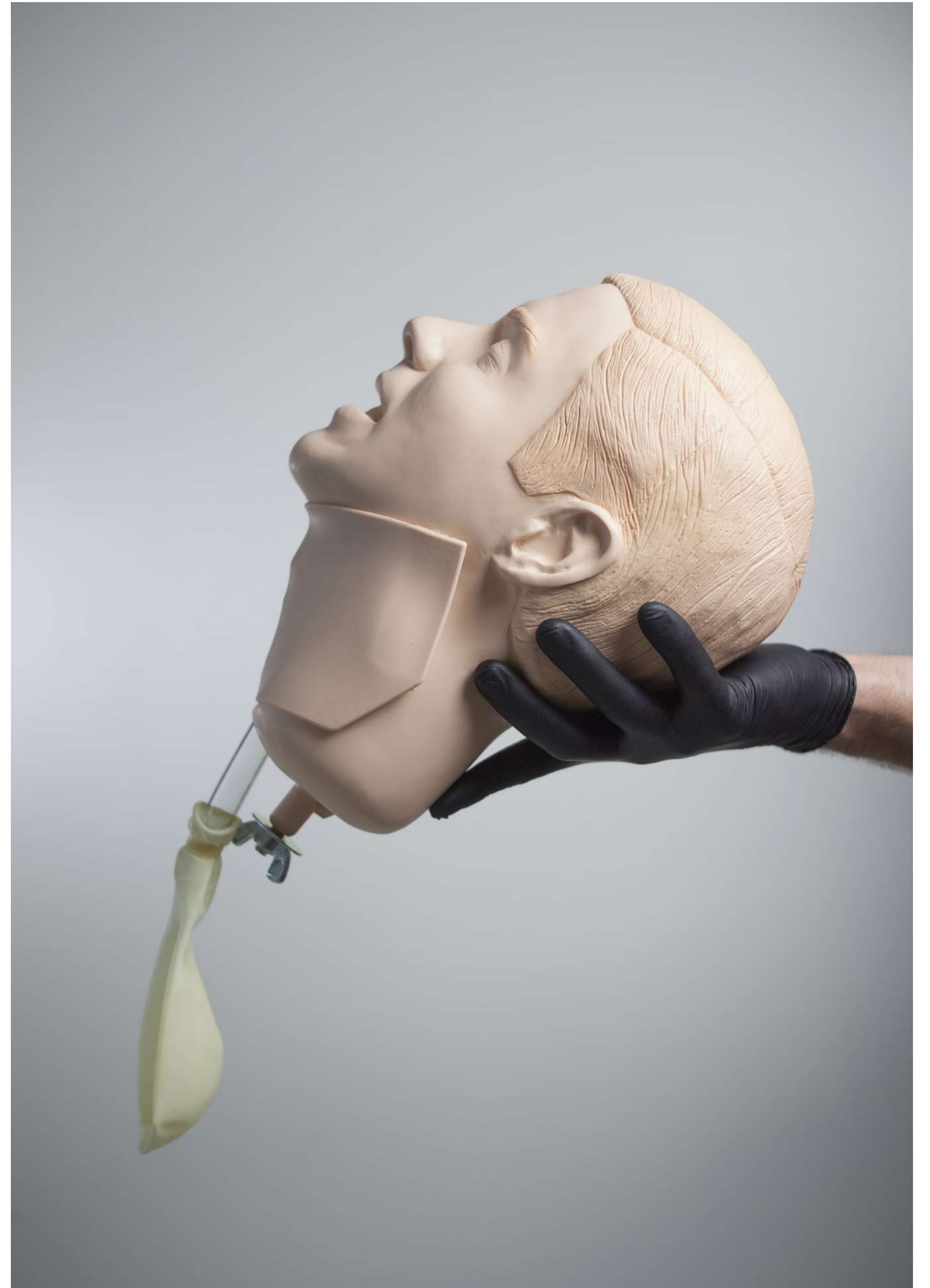
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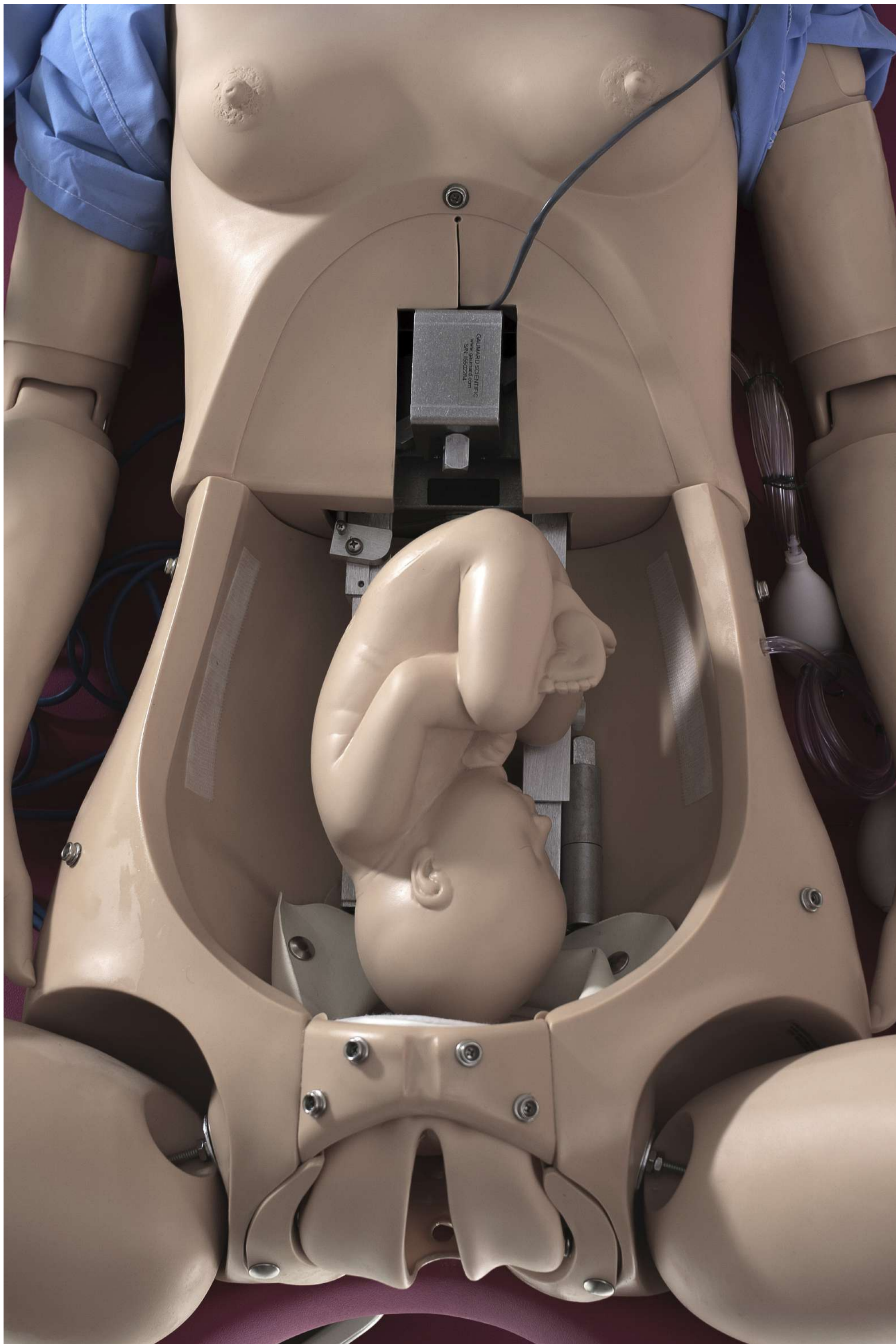
*Preparatory materials for „Growing”:  
photographic documentation of medical simulation centers*

Photography, 2019

fot. ©Agata Wiczorek



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photographic documentation of medical simulation centers  
Photography, 2019 fot. ©Agata Wieczorek



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Preparatory materials for „Growing”:  
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Photography, 2019

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# PREPARATORY WORKS

