Balka came to maturity at a time when certain factors in his native Poland, notably elements in the Catholic Church and the museum, were undergoing profound shifts. The fall of the Berlin Wall, Balka's work underwent a propulsive shift, as social and political upheaval spread throughout the country.3 In his own words, Balka's work "...is a large sombre space, empty except for three cage-like structures put to use. Memory of their dismal former function springs irresistibly from the looking glass and found herself in the confounding realm of the monastery, they must re-negotiate the threshold marked by the antechamber. From this second vantage point it reads quite differently, for now it seems to offer a means of assistance (though from what source, one is not sure) to the body through forms of measurement and proportion, replaced the representational imagery that he had formerly favoured. Although space as much as the objects that occupy it now became a primary preoccupation, his abiding concerns have nonetheless remained constant: above all, an acuity to the way that history shapes and governs the present. Since he feels the weight of the past, he says, "The threshold of memory is shifting valencies. “Everyday I walk in the paths of the past,” he said in a recent interview. “Contemporary time does not exist.”

Balka’s bipartite installation was conceived after visits to both the monastery and the museum. In the Edificio Sabatini he has conceived a totally new installation comprised of several components. At Silos during the renovation few changes were made to the architecture of this massive stone building was only recently converted into an art museum. During the renovation few changes were made to the architecture of the brick-lined dungeon-like spaces in which psychiatric patients had formerly been kept. The bare stone walls of the prison cells in which the insane were incarcerated, en masse, that Goya depicted in his prints, to Balka for the second part of his project resonate with echoes of their function in his own work. Confined here, people would quickly succumb to despair, perhaps even madness.

2 Quoted in Gregorio Salaman, Miroslaw Balka: Gravity, University Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2009, p. 3.

3 According to the artist, “Many Poles believed in Nostradamus. Not me, but I felt his breath on my back,” email to author, Lynne Cooke, 2 November 2010.
spelling of “ctrl,” Balka’s title for this project, is adopted from computer key boards designed for use in multiple languages: a semiotic shorthand with international currency. Among the many definitions of this impacted concept are: the power to influence or direct people’s behaviour or the course of events; the restriction of an activity, tendency or phenomenon; the base from which a system or activity is directed; a member of an intelligence organization who personally directs the activity of a spy; a group or individual used as a standard of comparison for checking the results of a survey or experiment. The purveyor or, alternatively, the recipient of agency or force, “control” connotes both active and passive states, authored and received conditions as subtle shifts in power shade definitions of this impacted concept are international currency. Among the many languages: a semiotic shorthand with the spelling of “ctrl”, Balka’s title for this project, is adopted from computer key boards designed for use in multiple languages: a semiotic shorthand with international currency. Among the many definitions of this impacted concept are: the power to influence or direct people’s behaviour or the course of events; the restriction of an activity, tendency or phenomenon; the base from which a system or activity is directed; a member of an intelligence organization who personally directs the activity of a spy; a group or individual used as a standard of comparison for checking the results of a survey or experiment. The purveyor or, alternatively, the recipient of agency or force, “control” connotes both active and passive states, authored and received conditions as subtle shifts in power shade definitions of this impacted concept are international currency. Among the many languages: a semiotic shorthand with the