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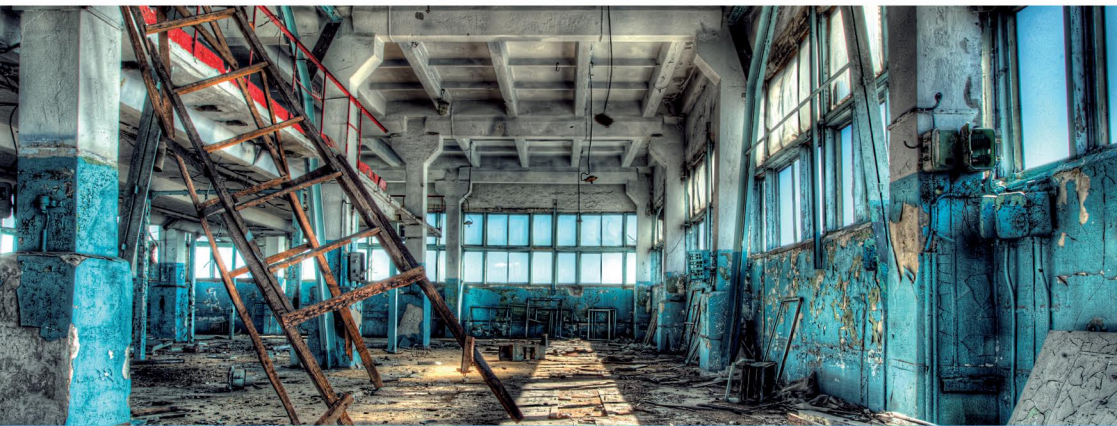
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Ministerstwo Nauki
i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

POST INDUSTRIALAB

Practicing
a Post-Industrial Place



EDITED BY ALEKSANDRA KUNCE

KATEDRA
WYDAWNICTWO NAUKOWE

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WYDZIAŁU NAUKOWE

Scientific reviews by prof. Joanna Szydłowska, prof. Dionizjusz Czubała

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Practicing a Post-Industrial Place. Introduction

The project of the National Programme of the Development of Humanities: “Development” 2.b entitled *Post-industrial Places as the Subject of Transdisciplinary Studies. From Design to Rootedness* stems from the need to both develop a transdisciplinary research path and to show how a post-industrial place is practised in culture. And it is the sphere of *praxis* which is the subject of this volume. A view combining perspectives of culture theoreticians and practitioners as well as designers is crucial in the study of phenomena related to post-industrial heritage. For the humanities it is important to capture the moment of transition from design issues to cultural reflection upon designed places/things/concepts. The retreat from industrial production as “manufacturing things” to producing and processing the ideas is marked with a trail of technological transformation and the emerging service industry. A departure from the planned and mass towards the individual, at least potentially, opens us towards design practices which transform what is unrooted, abandoned, ancient, degraded. Analyses of cities, design, economics, social environment open to research domestication of the explosion of design in the inherited post-industrial space. A place, no matter how overexerted today, is still a challenge in humanistic thought.

The problem, especially in the case of Polish achievements, lies in the fact that creative activities aimed at transforming post-industrial space, which are connected with designing and using new technologies in the process of constructing the identity of a place/city (using mobile media, social media, online applications as well as interdisciplinary projects at the intersection of art, design and new technologies. social actions, network initiatives, etc.) are burdened with insufficient cultural sensitivity to a place. On the other hand, however, one cannot accuse them of a lack of creative impetus and thus, owing to the creative potential, they initiate reflection upon too solidified images of a place. Exploring the ways of using new technologies in order to shape the identity of post-industrial places, with particular regard to activities in social media as well as interdisciplinary projects implemented at the intersection of art, design and new media, seems crucial in constructing understanding of a multidimensional post-industrial place. It is particularly important in view of the fact that these tools – often associated with cultural globalisation and universalisation – may really serve the purpose of creating places and rooting. Artists' design ("semantic design," "responsible design" and "design of services") is interesting in this context as a tool for building the identity of a post-industrial place when creative activities aim at rootedness, domestication and responsibility for a place. Design activities in the scope of semantic design (objects, gadgets, fashion, games, publications, street art) and design of services (activities, workshops, services, meetings, initiatives, actions) aim at constructing an identity of places in cities which are especially marked by post-industrial landscape.

In a number of places around the world a bottom-up defensive reaction to the increasing globalization and unification of material culture products can be observed. After the wave of industrialization, mechanization and standardization the value of crafts and local products increases once again. This phenomenon does not concern only production of items, it also refers to creation of places, events, activities adjusted to specific communities and places. A picture of the activities

can be a region or a city, but it is often a smaller unit – a residential district, surroundings, a street, a yard, a park, a building, post-industrial space (e.g. a slagheap, a former production plant area). The language of design understood as a process of deliberate designing may meet the needs of a local community and help in rooting in a given place. The proximity to a place, a sense of being at home initiates citizenship, greater responsibility, desire to cooperate, to introduce positive changes and improvements in the functioning of given space. Responsible design, which is open to human re-settlement, may serve the purpose of creating bonds with a post-industrial place. To what extent can a man settle in a post-industrial place which has been designed anew and created? What is the awareness of a designer in creating experimental reality written on a former layered cultural reality? Where does the designer leave empty places which will be later filled by the receiver? Is it possible to design an identity in which both an individual man and a cultural community will later exist? Is it actually possible to artificially create an identity from the outside? The questions we find while exploring post-industrial places are closely linked with the questions about a post-industrial identity. They develop in the course of recognizing the relationship between a former well-established place – post-industrial space – creative activities – an attempt to settle in. Recognition of the phenomenon of post-industrial places exploitation leads to a certain extent to understanding of their ideological and material heritage. It is a particularly strong experience in communities whose geohistory is marked by expansive development of industry, where the sense of being doomed to post-industrial stigma affects development and future. By relating post-industrial design to the idea of settling in a place we establish good practices combining the humanities and life, that is a responsible inscribing in a place.

Reflections of design practitioners and theoreticians as well as culture theoreticians and practitioners have so far existed apart. They have often ignored each other or have only slightly referred to achievements and accomplishments of others. Design theory, which constitutes a basis

for practitioners' activities, is not sufficient. The attitude of the humanistic reflection nowadays also has to relate to available effects of designers' works. It is important to constantly re-pose a question about a possibility to combine those perspectives and their parallel functioning, cooperation and their current confrontation with social needs as well as social and cultural effects of such ventures. Separating theory from artistic practices, creative activities and life practices seems difficult to maintain. It is worth paying attention to the very moment of designing – not only the physical preparation of a project but also cultural preparation to designing. Opening up to a place is not only a desire to cope with post-industrial design, similar in various parts of the world, but it is extraction of the original in an identity story about a place and a community. Implementation of the effects of a designer's work becomes replaced by “settling” in the idea of a place. Designed reality cannot be “invented” or unrooted in the memory of a place, in its signs and identity narratives, in axiological choices of a community or in the metaphysics of individual and collective experiences. Responsible design, opening up to or closure to a cultural place mark the trail of design achievements in the cities of Poland and Europe. We do not assume the creation of Polish or European case studies, yet the selected *exempla* demonstrate the struggle with post-industrial space, which is so difficult to deeply domesticate in terms of culture in Poland.

An important lead is methodical pointing at recognition of the cultural potential in industrial heritage in the form of both post-industrial objects and civilization achievements and know-how in the scope of manufacturing items. Hence the need to explore in culture the design of post-industrial places and creative activities undertaken by the creators of grassroots culture of cities – such as authors of websites, guides, profiles in social media, culture commentators, bloggers. The methodical challenge is to recognize and map the above mentioned activities because of the digital tools used in “building” a post-industrial place. In order to achieve this we want to suggest enrichment of tools and methods going beyond a traditional academic apparatus: various forms

of space mapping, research on the Web, automatic data processing and data visualization. In this regard we use research tools and methods (using elements of the digital humanities apparatus, e.g. automatic analysis of website content) developed in Medialab, a cultural institution of “The City of Gardens.” In interdisciplinary teams the participants (young designers, cultural practitioners and theoreticians) of specially arranged research workshops applied methods of acquiring and analysing data from the internet, mainly related to activities of social media users, while preparing material for further studies and then, at the intersection of thinking orders, made an effort to develop a path linking design, new media, urban practices with cultural rootedness in an “inherited” place. Cooperation of the representatives of humanistic academic circles with the representatives of art schools and practitioners of “creative urban culture” made it possible to view the problem of identity of post-industrial places from various perspectives, but, at the same time, it enabled development of an open model of research which resulted in combining practice with theory in order to elaborate research tools linking design, new media, urban practices with cultural rootedness in an “inherited” place.

* * *

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Aleksandra Kunce



Paweł Paszek

Invitation. Towards Another Experience of the Place

None mimesis, but dynamism.¹

Topical History: places remember events.²

Writing and the Place

Writing (by its nature) implicates a promise. It is the motion in the direction of what is being described, the motion which resembles some kind of cognitive *palpatio* – an unskilled touch of someone who suddenly found themselves in utter darkness. No matter what is being described – a thing, a place, a feeling, an event, a phenomenon – to write means to approach, to reach, to come closer, to embrace, to feel, to examine. For this reason, writing bears resemblance to the promise

¹ K. White, 'Poeta – kosmograf. Rozmowy,' in: idem, *Atlantica. Wiersze i rozmowy*, trans. K. Brakoniecki, Olsztyn: Centrum Polsko-Francuskie Côtes d'Armor-Warmia i Mazury 1998, p. 19.

² *Joyce's Ulysses Notesheets in British Museum*, ed. P. F. Herring, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1972, p. 119.

as its result, effect and consequence are never known in advance, but they are about to occur, are anticipated; just as the realization of a promise.

The type of writing represented by this text obviously demands a proper investigation in the first place. However, certain autonomy of the act of writing cannot be forgotten. Writing implicates the reflection coming afterwards on the one hand, on the other it can also be seen as an autonomous cognitive act which emerges all of a sudden on scrupulously prepared grounds. Thus, the author approaching their aim still remains in the sense of anticipation. The said act of approaching should mirror openness, friendly intimacy, creation of bonds, an embrace but also readiness to step backwards, a margin or rather emptiness which should be kept not for safety but rather so that the author and above all the subject of writing could preserve their freedom.

Nevertheless, most of the time an attempt to embrace and capture the subject of interest results in a conclusion that said subject has shifted, slipped away and escaped the embrace. The subjected constantly escapes the act of writing as its inherent realness is so to say untouchable. In other words the described subject, against the odds of the language, the semantic and syntactic structure of differences and repetitions, reveals itself as impenetrable, elusive, intransitive and unique.

The work of cognitive writing has to be undertaken from the very beginning. This is the tribute without which the creative and epistemological power of writing could never come to existence. In this manner the promise which is bound to the act of writing is being fulfilled: approaching and loss are inseparable.

Writing about the place, bearing in mind what has been said about the promise, means finding cognitive and creative relationship with it (the place). It also means to allow the described place to reveal its the other, chthonic, intrinsic meaning. However, the places themselves seem to remain silent (and if they are not, their speech is actually beyond the register of people's chatter and disputes) – *principium individuationis* of the places is the mystery of them.

The truth is that the typical to humankind relentless urge to capture the subject to describe as many events and things as possible, is in fact an illusion of a perfect archive. The space unveiled within the perception transformed into an ecumene, a place, a home – all of it can be a subject of the story. It is actually being done in the hope that through this act a *imaginarium* of a constant identity is being created – a reservoir of myths describing the relationship between humankind and the dwelling world. Thus, man experiences an urge to describe observed fragments, the experienced events, the places, especially those of significant importance in his history and life. Nevertheless all that belongs to the external world remains silent. The reason we talk so much is all of beside us is unbearably mute – the universe is speechless. What we need is thus the story which establishes the contact with this silence – to write about place in the manner that will make silent invitation of the place audible. The invitation in question should be understood as an invitation to the area of life.

To write the place means to search for the principle of the place, to await the unveiling of spirit of place: “[...] *genius loci* assumes making the space the partner of my existence, and even more – in this silent “talk” it often comes to light that space does not need me and my order. Now, I am becoming a background and hinterland of the space. This “talk” belongs to the category of imagination: the silence of the world is that what to transfixing me.”³ However, the universal meaning of the place is not a subject here. *Genius loci* in the understanding of Tadeusz Sławek is always bound to the specific place, is assigned to that place or, to be more precise, inscribed in it.

Design and the Place

The fundamental question is how far the creative power of writing goes. Does the writing of the place suffice to furnish it with a new feature,

³ T. Sławek, ‘«Genius loci» jako doświadczenie. Prolegomena,’ in: *Genius loci. Studia o człowieku w przestrzeni*, ed. Z. Kadłubek, Katowice: Wydawnictwo FA-art 2007, p. 5.

a *novum* of a responsible story? Is it possible for the story not only to inform but also to perform: to form, to change, to create and to impact?⁴

The innovative and radical solutions/movements in the field of public space design, specifically/especially critical and responsible design come to us as kind of revelation. The first, critical design is much closer to socially engaged art – the projects involved in critical design serve a very specific purpose; to change awareness. The latter, responsible design refers to the projects concentrated on social problems which can be affected by aesthetically configured space recreation facilities, or creating spaces which are attractive for the society. The same situation can be encountered when it comes to designing the objects of everyday use. The simple interference in the space, such as brightly painting the facades of blocks of flats, creating beautiful furniture or smart kitchen equipment is actually not the point here.

The above mentioned movements (critical and responsible design) are supposed to encourage us to reflect on the human condition. First of all, it should be pointed out that design has grown into a communication platform which completely changes the quality of the narrative.

Our culture is no longer one of pure representation or narrative where visual culture conveys messages. Instead, design culture formulates, formats, channels, circulates, contains and retrieves information. It is all around us. Design is more than just the creation of artefacts. It is also about the structuring of systems of encounter within the visual and material world.⁵

The reorganization of the sensory background but above all the meaning of the specific place, which rewritten – both the meaning and

⁴ “In other words, interpretations do not so much *inform* as *perform*.” See B. Latour, S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life. The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1986, p. 285.

⁵ G. Julier, *The Bigger Future of European Design*, [accessed: 07.03.18] <http://www.designculture.info/reviews/ArticleStash/GJBiggerFuture2004.pdf>

the places – lead to the change of the awareness are possible thanks to the critical potential of some designer's practice intervention in the visual environment of the place, or the well-thought, balanced and applied in sensible manner esthetical alteration of the specific fragment of the space.

Responsible design means responsible creation, which simultaneously gains on critical potential which can lead not only to an attempt to retrieve and give back the meaning to the space and objects but also to create the story about them, so that their new meaning would not just be given to them, but would be a result of the human presence and the relationship between this space (or the object) and the human. It is thus about the design, which would encourage the relationship, provoke curiosity, demand certain portion of engagement and participation and make the viewer, or rather the participant, to seek for its meaning.

Then, how can design projects benefit from writing and how can writing benefit from design, what good will happen if we combine imagination with a turning windmill? Design is indeed becoming a signature element of contemporary culture: "The era of the culture of appearance is strongly connected with the post-enlightenment period (so modernity and industrialization). The era of design culture is currently on and connects with the post-industrial information society."⁶

An attempt of transdisciplinary view on the place through the hybrid prism of the writing/design can result in revival of the discussion on the concept of narrative call for rooting. This thought, associated here with the idea of homesteading, refers extensively to the concept of the practice of presence which is materialized through the relationship with the place.

Introducing this peculiar combination of writing and design for the research purposes brings us closer to the lastly popular tendency in research practice referred to as arts-based methods.

⁶ G. Julier, 'Świetlana przyszłość europejskiego designu,' trans. J. Mrowczyk, 2+3D, no. 19, 2006, p. 66.

[...] contemporary methodologies, anchored in a moving field of reference and criticism [...] they are created as a result of an alliance between the humanities and traditional and new fine arts – their character is reflected by such terms as “techné” or “crafts.” [...] Practice as research, arts-based methods, creative projects use innovations in art and transfer them to research projects. [...] Arts practice as the production of knowledge: creative writing as research, dance as research, ethnotheatre, painting as research, photography as a social document – all this is more than just a philosophy in action.⁷

“The field of reference and critique” (Rewers associates this notion specifically with the authors of cultural and speculative turn) seems to be a clever formula, which can be used to take a look at the writing of places through the prism of design and designing places through the prism of writing, and vice versa. It may also seem that this in a way impossible combination can have miserable results in designing and creating of the space in a sensible manner. Just like the written story about the place can be an inspiration for the responsible design, also design, projects and real life solutions can trigger the writing about the place or the writing of the place.

Palimpsest of Periphery

Me parece muy humano el suceso de quien,
desesperado, fué a ahorcarse de un árbol, y cuando se echaba
la cuerda al cuello, sintió el aroma de una rosa
que abría al pie del tronco, y no se ahorcó.⁸

⁷ E. Rewers, ‘Praktyka jako badanie: nowe metodologie w humanistyce,’ in: *Teoria – literatura – życie. Praktykowanie teorii w humanistyce współczesnej*, eds. A. Legeżyńska & R. Nycz, Warszawa: IBL 2012, p. 58–59.

⁸ J. Ortega y Gasset, *Meditaciones del Quijote*, Madrid: PUBLICACIONES DE LA RESIDENCIA DE ESTUDIANTES 1914, p. 47.

The post-industrial sites, out of use, abandoned, neglected – the provincial towns in the Silesian industrial machine existing on/beyond the periphery of central life and main interest (apart from few exploratory of falling apart reality, or initiatives in the spirit of *ALTERNATIF TURISTIK*)⁹ can be designated as such, moreover they can go on functioning like that in the same time turn into the fading signs of the past, in the ruins *in statu nascendi*. It might as well be right to let at least some of those places to remain in this state and observe the processing disappearance, annihilation, to let them turn into peculiar means of narrative of time lost and never found, fading away phantoms. However, this consideration will not be continued here. In most cases such places should be supplied with some other type of narrative – the narrative in its effective form, so to say the narrative-in-action.

The post-industrial spaces placed in the margin ought to be retold in the attractive and responsible manner. It could be feasible if we engage for some specific design solutions, which should be applied according to regional history and local cultural patterns. Preserving the physical and mental accessibility of those places, they could become co-protagonists of the individual stories, turning into unfinished piece of work, which needs to be complemented by human activity. This complementation, the relationship constantly being established between people and places can be called the dwelling.

Following this direction, we can also say that writing about the places or to write the places would mean to dwell and rooting in those places on according to the laws of language of some specific narration. But we must know that all the language structures that only have a character of promise. This is also an actual moment when the written text and piece of design gets different and various – designing the place in line with the concept of responsible design would implicate efficiently narrative realized in the place, accessible to senses, vision and even touch – in other words it would be a real-time and real space narrative. Considering the

⁹ See <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/Alternatif-Turistik-213289525368819/>.

gap between this two mentioned fields of creative activity it is surprising to find out that they something in common. Writing as well as design, in order to function as an invitation to cognitive and creative contact/ encounter with the place, its history and nonverbal persuasion, they both have a very specific story to tell which in case of writing will be more verbal and in the case of design – sensual. Not to forget about the principle of responsibility, the story has to be told in ethically and esthetically conscious way. It should neither be naïve nor finished. It ought to be each time completed by the one who happens to read and experience the place. Straight-talking – by the person who at least for a moment has dwelled in it and encountered its silent persuasion.

Stefan Szymutko in his volume of essays *Nagrobek ciotki Cili* points out that he actually was unable to (re)create a story of his own identity, to organize it into a coherent, neat plot which would (let him) consolidate, preserve and unequivocally reckon with his own past. It can be seen as an evidence of maturity and self-awareness, but also a universal truth about a nature of human existence. It is thus difficult not to notice that Stefan Szymutko telling his very Silesian and in the same time very intimate story simultaneously reveals some vital facts and truths about the human existence. In other words the life of the author is tied tightly connected with the fate of Silesia. The store of the individual has evolved into the story of the human experience as such, resembling pieces of a shattered mirror which we try to collect and put back together, to recollect a picture we once saw for a moment.

The struggle begins when, following the text of Szymutko, we try to define Silesia and hoping to find a perspicuous plot and a clear outline of identity we come across something in a shape of a shimmering tree of different meanings with plenty of sick and dead twigs among those healthy and living. The metaphoric and very descriptive expressions such as Silesia-palimpsest, the polyphonic Silesia, a mosaic or a fractal, express really well the complexity of Silesia as a whole, the unity consisting of many fragments/smaller parts/even points. It is thus not easy to speak. To write about or to express and clarify the notion of *conditio*

silesiensis because “[...] the fragments of the history [of Silesia] are happening and melting together in the way they only know themselves.”¹⁰

Without a doubt, the post-industrial heritage is the most frequent element of the Silesian palimpsest. The abandoned places which once were busy industrial sites are now rusting away and falling apart. Wrecks of former industrial splendor are an evidence of what used to be there before. The closed mineshafts and mines, empty production halls, extinguished foundry furnaces ages ago, ruins of factory building are irremovable, fixed elements of the Silesian landscape. The space once taken away from the nature is now being retrieved by it – the indu-scenery is now becoming indu-nature.

The abandoned warehouses, spoil dumps, slag heaps, dried waste chemical ponds are being overgrown with varied types of plants: “[...] from herbaceous plants – bluegrass, coltsfoot, rapeseed willow, yarrow, sand reed, wild carrot, white clover, melilot, and among trees – birch, aspen, willow, pine, maple, sycamore, pedunculate oak²¹¹ – the post-industrial ruins are being taken over by a new order, they are being entwined and in fact *rewritten* by the botanic *regnum*.

However, the revitalized places are not the subject of our consideration. We are not thinking here about the post-industrial sites which has been transformed into parks, readapted and put again into recreation service. Our aim is to look at the places which have been abandoned – among those, the outskirts, the sites and enclaves in the middle of towns and cities but also the whole small towns – an thus are a prominent element of the experience of Silesia. The complexity of the last mentioned is based on its multidimensional character – Silesia as the region of the borders that constantly cross and intertwine in the geographical,

¹⁰ K. Piekarski, ‘Miasto-ogród czy Miasto Ogrodów,’ *Opcje*, no. 2 (79), 2010, pp. 88–91.

¹¹ B. Ziemer, ‘Różnorodność biologiczna terenów przemysłowych,’ *Dzikię życie. Miesięcznik*, no. 7–8, 2013, <http://dzikiezycie.pl/archiwum/2013/lipiec-i-sierpień-2013/roznorodnosc-biologiczna-terenow-poprzemyslowych> [accessed: 05.01.2018].

topographical, historical and cultural context is now becoming a very peculiar biological and technical hybrid, transitional space, a topo-sign of the ongoing and endless cultural transformation. This very significant phenomenon can actually become a basis or a principle of the symbolic reorganization of the regions, provinces and periphery of Silesia. It can become a foundation for the narrative on the identity, the presence closely corresponding with the experience of the wounded environment and dismantled industrial machine. The Silesian habitat is a peripheral/boundary and hybrid homestead which demands a hybrid story.

Czechowice-Dziedzice the Archipelago

Being with space means the reconstituting of a place, or more precisely: archipelagos of individual places.¹²

It is thus not the main cities and central parts of Silesia what is considered here, but actually the outskirts, the peripheries, the post-industrial sites situated far from the arterial roads and beyond the horizon of the main interest, which the scattered archipelagos of abandoned places consists of. To be more direct – we are speaking here above all about the peripheries of Silesia. In the peripheries, the outskirts, close to the borders the picture of the “dismantled” Silesia is the most vivid. What we get to see there are actually not the elementary fragments of the whole image, but actually the spare, redundant, forgotten, excluded elements. They are already out of use, or perhaps not yet reused, readapted.

A perfect example of the described phenomenon is Czechowice-Dziedzice, a town situated in the south of Silesia Voivodeship. Its southern areas are part of the Silesian Foothills, and the northern are the Upper Vistula River Valley. As far as we try to define the geomorphologic

¹² T. Sławek, ‘Mapa domu,’ in: T. Sławek, A. Kunce, Z. Kadłubek, *Oikologia. Nauka o domu*, Katowice: SIW 2013, p. 139.

characteristics we do not encounter any problems, on the contrary to the cultural, historical and geopolitical background and affiliations. The town is located in the south of Silesian Voivodeship, but in the same on the north-eastern border of Cieszyn Silesia. The area around estuary where Białka River flows into Vistula River, which on the map resembles an arrowhead pointed in the direction of the central parts of the country – is the northeastern ‘cape’ of Cieszyn Silesia and the borough of Czechowice-Dziedzice. One of the oldest settlements in the region called Żebracz was once located in this area. Nowadays the mining company “Silesia” is situated there. One of the town’s contemporary districts has been named after Żebracz.

Czechowice-Dziedzice can thus be referred to as a town in the borderland, or to be more accurate, the borderlands – situated on the border between Poland and The Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, Silesia and Lesser Poland, Silesia and Galicia and finally Silesia and Silesia (the topographical border where three mountain ranges; The Little Beskids, The Żywiec Beskids, Silesian Beskids cross could also be mentioned here). It will not be an exaggeration to say that Czechowice-Dziedzice is a town somehow put aside, almost postponed for some later time. If we would like to establish some kind of a demarcation line from the north to the south of Silesia Voivodeship and divide it into two roughly equal administrative areas it would turn out that Czechowice-Dziedzice has also been bisected.

The town of Czechowice-Dziedzice fulfills thus all the requirements introduced before – it is situated on the periphery of the region and filled with more or less vivid examples of the post-industrial infrastructure. For years Czechowice-Dziedzice functioned as prominent industrial and economic centre being a part of the Industrial District of Bielsko-Biała (Polish: Bielski Okręg Przemysłowy). From the early 20th century after the railway junction has been extended (in 1855 the station on of the lines of the Emperor Ferdinand Northern Railway was built in Dziedzice) the factory plants of remarkable size were built in this area. Czechowice-Dziedzice was granted a town charter in 1950

– the boroughs Czechowice and Dziedzice were then merged. As in the case of many other similar Silesian towns the impact of heavy industry has remarkably run down in the previous twenty years creating a so to speak spatial and social gap, depopulation, a certain decoding of the space and disorganization of the public facilities.

The similar conclusions can be made based on a few projects aimed at the revitalization of public spaces carried on in Czechowice-Dziedzice. One of the most attractive initiatives of the last years was the project planned for the years 2013-2014 *Dizajn na pograniczu. Re-kreacja miast na pograniczu polsko-czeskim*¹³ (as part of the program: *Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej 2007–2013 Republika Czeska – Rzeczpospolita Polska*). During the preliminary identification of the problems the Town struggled with the following issues have been raised:

[...] lack of connections between places of social activity, chaos in city space, lack of sense of identity, lack of the flow of information between organizations and groups organizing life for citizens.¹⁴

The mentioned issues appear to be typical for the majority of the provincial towns, not only in case of Silesia. Nonetheless, the issues raised define the scope in which further actions are needed. One of the last parts of the project *Dizajn na pograniczu* were the workshops organized in Czechowice-Dziedzice (similar activities were done in Orlova), which were aimed to recognize the key problems and eventually to attempt to find a solution. In effect the following problems have been identified: lack of sense of identity of the inhabitants, who do not

¹³ Analyses and conclusions from project activities are included in the publication: *Dizajn na pograniczu. Re-kreacja miast na pograniczu polsko-czeskim*, ed. W. Gdowicz, Katowice: ASP 2014.

¹⁴ W. Gdowicz, *Dizajn na pograniczu*, <https://wgdowiczpublikacje.wordpress.com/2016/10/18/dizajn-na-pograniczu/kalnym-potrzebom> [accessed: 06.01.2018]. Cf. A. Harazin, O. Kącka, *Moje Czechowice-Dziedzice. Projekt działań zachęcających do poznania gminy*, Katowice: ASP 2015, p. 18–19.

feel connected with the local space, an architectonic chaos, lack of coordinated spatial narrative, lack of communication resulting in lack of social debate and experienced by the inhabitants alienation. All those issues define the social condition of Czechowice-Dziedzice and its so to say spatial negligence.

The described initiative was followed by two other projects which were launched as a part of restoration plan: the first with an interesting title *Dizajn ze sznurka: projekt elementów przestrzeni publicznej wykorzystujących potencjał sztuki ludowej* (created as a part of the program *Dizajn na pograniczu*, authors: Magdalena Zawieja, Magdalena Kamińska lead by: dr Justyna Kucharczyk, dr hab Wiesław Gdowicz, dr Andrzej Sobaś) and the second one named: *Miejsce Spotkań* (a part of the graduation project of Aleksandra Harazin i Anny Kącka titled *Moje Czechowice-Dziedzice. Projekt działań zachęcających do poznawania gminy* promoted by dr hab. Andrzej Sobaś and reviewed by dr Paulina Rojek-Adamek).

The main aim of the project *Miejsce Spotkań* (*The Meetings Place*) is according to the authors: “[...] creating the space that will be an excuse to stop and will enable a open ‘talk’ and it will also create the opportunity to spend time together and take a closer look at and get to know your place of dwelling and share your knowledge and reflection with others.”¹⁵ The core work of the project namely the set of benches organized in the shape of the borders of Czechowice-Dziedzice, should also embody this idea. Furthermore, the benches are covered with pictograms and short pieces of text informing about the most interesting places in the town, according to the opinion of the authors.

The work, presented on the plan above, was contracted and situated in the “Północ” city park, which is not very close to the town center. The project seems to be a good example of responsible design – the idea of *The Meeting Point* (Polish: *Miejsce spotkań*) embodied in the segment bench has grown on the grounds of a certain type of spatial narrative corresponding partly with the historical and cultural

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 39.

backgrounds of local area and partly with the natural resources and heritage. The post-industrial heritage, however, was actually almost merely mentioned – only the still working mine was included. The town Czechowice-Dziedzice – just like the entire Silesia – is an example of hybrid space of industrial scenery and natural landscape – the described installation does not contain any reference to that. It ought to be though pointed out that the project book, *Dizajn na pograniczu* publicized alongside the installation actually raises this problem. This imprecision may as well be seen as an encouragement to discover the history and topography of the town according to our own preference – the places described on the surface of this story-bench are functioning as landmarks, creating sort of a map or a music score, which should be read in a very subjective way. Next to the first presented story of so to say ‘sitting’ nature, there is also a place for another one, the ‘wandering’ story. After all, the bench-*The Meeting Point* – probably not by accident formed in a shaped of an archipelago or an atoll – paying with suggestion and encouraging to action, triggers the unfinished narrative about the place and in the same time invites to discover the secret of the local homestead/habitat, invites to the interior, to enter.

To the Towards of Language and Experience of Place

In this space was the mood of a room where someone is hiding,
or better (since there was certainly nothing frightening here),
where a guest must have moved in without one’s knowing it.¹⁶

But there was a fragrant scent of herbs, the low humming of bees,
And he fell asleep with his cheek on the sun-warmed earth.¹⁷

¹⁶ E. Bloch, *Traces*, trans. A. A. Nassar, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2006, p. 127.

¹⁷ Cz. Miłosz, *Orpheus and Euridice*, trans. R. Hass, in: Cz. Miłosz, *Second Space: New Poems*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers 2014, p. 102.

One of the most important problems of Czechowice-Dziedzice raised during the realization of the project *Dizajn na pograniczu* is the process which until this moment has been only implied, namely the so called 'osteoporosis of the town.' This very accurate term, a peculiar medical metaphor, refers to a few aspects which can be (roughly) divided into three categories – space, society and experience. The last mentioned aspect is actually related to the two previous ones and links to more general problems of the provincial town.

[...] citizens do not feel the bound with their city and they do not know “what is it,” they do not see anything attractive in here, the city’s potential lies on its outskirts, “city osteoporosis” – points of activity in the city are very scattered, no places that people would consider as characteristic and important, lack of reasons for pride, many residents speak with fondness about places important to them and now missing in the city.¹⁸

There have already been made some references to the chaos in spatial organization, the visual *mélange*, lack of esthetical coordination and an actual town center. All of that results in the proceeding disintegration, even decline of social life. Unused spaces, a wasteland in the middle of the town, public squares used in an inappropriate way, abandoned places and undeveloped yards – all those places create the empty, stagnated space which not only defaces appearance of the town but also deform the projections, devaluated the images of saved in the memory, undermining the dwelling, the creating of the relationship between inhabitants and the place. The town lacks the places which would unleash the process of the identification or empower it by encouraging to (re) discover. The absence of this kind of places-prospects, places-promises results from the fact that they neither have been designed nor described. Czechowice-Dziedzice, just like many other similar to it towns, are still

¹⁸ W. Gdowicz, *Dizajn na pogracczu*, op. cit.

waiting for their story to be written or designed. Apart from many other aspects which have not been mentioned here, the problems that have been discussed before have a significant impact on the mass migration to other towns and cities.

The raised issues are forming in a way a critical symptom of the contemporary and factual plan of Czechowice-Dziedzice. Another example of it is the empty space where the demolished halls “Dziedzice” Rolling Mill, called by the locals “the old rolling mill.” This place is situated in the geometrical town center, opposite the railway station; we could actually say that the industrial history of the town began in that place. The place of birth has thus become the place of agony. To describe precisely the whole picture, an empty space of the few hectares spreads in the very heart of the town, like a vacuum in the spatial structure. Sticking with the descriptive metaphors we could also say that this post-industrial, post factum space is a kind of visual metonymy of what have been discussed before.

The described space, if one put a little effort in organizing it, could become a very significant part of the city. From several dozen buildings only two historical industrial halls have been left – they were built in the late 19th century and were regarded as valuable pieces of architecture. The halls were built as the first two buildings of “Dziedzice” rolling mill, referred to as “Cynkownia” (zinc rolling mill) back then. These halls and their surrounding, nowadays a monument of the long time forgotten past, on the verge of nonexistence, could gain a significant value in the historical and cultural spectrum of the town. In fact this value already exists within these buildings, *in situ*, although it may not be properly exposed. However, this value, if brought to the light, could enable this merely geometrical center to become the mental center and in the same time function as a sort of portal through which the inhabitants and the visitors could enter the Czechowice-Dziedzice from the past and rediscover the meaning and the essence of the town as it is in the present – the common meaning of all the local peculiarities, which allows to identify with them.

However, the view of the vacuum in the middle of the town, surrounded by the buildings, evokes a nostalgic reflection, like a view of a trembling, crummy household, the image of which is in a way still rooted in the times when it flourished. We do not speak here about the disintegration, disconnection with the present, but the principle according to which the meaning of the present depends on the past. Furthermore, the described perspective allows to examine or rather discover a specific phenotype of the local landscape and to delve into its particularity. In other words we do not aim to shape the surrounding, the local ground so that it would fit the requirements of the typical post-industrial narrative adapted to the common language which is understood everywhere. This peculiar wound in the visual tissue of the town reaches deeper and is a signature element of this part of the world, succinct and distinct.

There is one more perspective, which cannot be left aside, although it is not so closely related the previous ones; in relation to the two mentioned before it plays a role of a sort of gloss or parergon. This perspective, a view through an oligoptic, which is in a sense limited by calibrating a narrow horizon, defines the uniqueness of a particular space. In this case the global, national perspective is left out of consideration. Instead of that we try to take a closer look at the intimate and private character of the place and its particularities.

[...] next to the places of remembrance – that remembrance which we will call “common remembrance,” next to *topoi*, which everyone remembers more or less for the same reason (monuments or places commemorated by historical events) – the tissue of space consists of places of “oligoptic” memory, that is the memory which “sees too not much, but he sees well.” Those are the places of private “remembrance” related to important for someone for some reasons events; these places are minor elements of space but really necessary for the space to gain meaning for the individual person.¹⁹

¹⁹ T. Sławek, *Mapa domu*, op. cit., p. 136.

The places of the private memory create/are creating a peculiar hipo-geographical net in the space. In other words, those are the places where the very private story of the entity closely related to the self-discovery and the hermeneutics of the self. In this case the places resemble in certain way points in a coordinate system within which the process of the self-discovery and understanding takes place. This places have a very individual character; they are marked delicately, engraved with private watermarks which defining the space as a deeply human element of existence, within which the human experience gains an utterly mundane meaning – by being in the closest relationship to the homestead.

It seems that the use of the first two perspectives – one of which translates the place to the common language and the other cultivates the specific character of the language of this place – can enable the creating of the story of the (provincial) place, located on the periphery, where everything seems to already have happened and taken place.

The last perspective is the way through the curiosity and idiosyncrasy which leads not only to living or being present in the place or in the space, but to being and functioning and also entering with relationship with the place or the space, according to the words of Tadeusz Sławek. This is the way back to home – the way to the very particular experience of the world. The metaphor of the watermark, which has already been used before, highlights the need of correlation between *the self and the place* and its inevitability. The places addressed/sealed with this private watermark are becoming an element of the substantial presence and define the life caught *in flagrante*. Being present in *these* places, marked in *this* way, naturally by ourselves, gives us a sense of their mystery, their silent persuasion, we feel as if we inhabit in “[...]in a room where someone is hiding.”²⁰

²⁰ E. Bloch, *Traces*, op. cit.



Photo 1. *Forum post factum I* (Paweł Paszek)



Photo 2.
Forum post factum II
(Paweł Paszek)

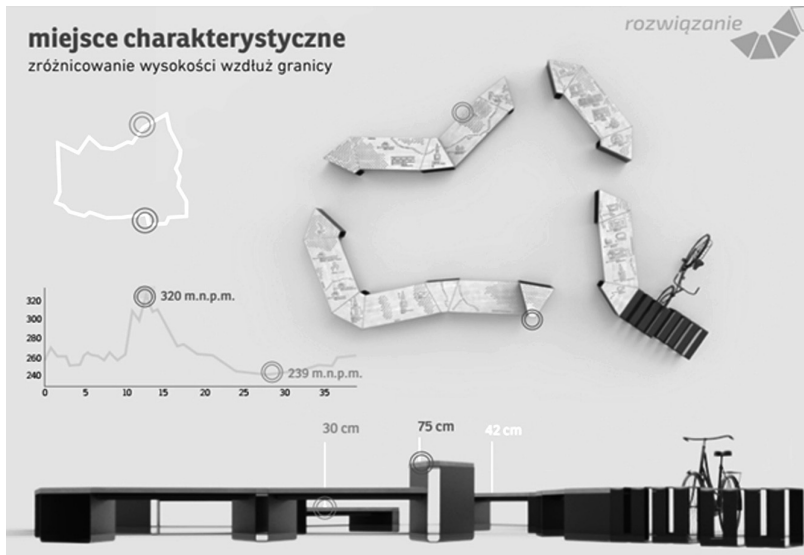


Photo 3. *The Meetings Place* in Czechowicach-Dziedzicach
(http://pobierz.czecho.pl/2014/07/dizajn_na_pograniczu_ulotka.pdf)



Olga Topol

From Function to Palimpsest. Faces of Post-Industrial London

By approving of a *place* we are familiarising and accepting a space, semantically turning it into what can be sensorially recognised, near: a shelter/home/hideout. The actual location of a place is not of importance. Whether it is a closet under a staircase, a room, a garden or a city, they all localise themselves for us, and within us, through a given meaning and sensation of place. Within such a framework a place is not only a notion understood dimensionally but also a cultural, sociological, psychological and even a biological phenomenon. Surely, an intrinsic sense of place is not alien to species other than human. This sensation also becomes an area of interest of memory studies. When a place – understood as a zone which can be occupied or filled – is saturated with memories, it gains a dimension of cultural meaning. Aldo Rossi follows a similar path of thinking, identifying a city with a collective memory of its people.¹ Post-industrial places inhabit landscapes of such cities/places.

¹ A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, Cambridge: MIT Press 1982, p. 130.

The term 'post-industrial' has a chronological dimension to it. 'Post' follows something which is gone, no longer there. In other words, it points to a lack of something, to discontinuation. However, it does not pertain to a lack of meanings which nostalgically remain present. Through abandonment and cessation of industrial activities a former place can become a post-industrial space. When thinking about what is industrial we conjure images of human activity, movement and racket. All of which stops in a deserted post-industrial space. Contemporary cities, full of these discontinuations and absences, call up past lives and senses. Chronologically inadequate, those meanings can either become forgotten, eradicated or preserved through renewed occupancy. That theoretical model of thinking translates to day-to-day operations of urban fabric, not only a memory-saturated area of settlement, inhabitation and hopes, but also that of uprootment and abandonment. Modern attempts of urban planning and redevelopment often lead to a sprawl of unification and stylistic monotony which frequently exterminates or conceals the past. On the other hand, there is a celebratory approach to historical areas which, wrapped in folklore, boosted by design and nostalgia, repeatedly become caricatures of these places' memories.² At the same time a post-industrial urban space turns into a battleground between political planning and history on one side, and collective memory and subjective sense of place on the other. A broadly understood bond of cultural experiences allows us to recognise these combat zones and post-industrial forsakenness from Upper Silesia through Ruhrgebiet to London.

London's scenery is filled with ruins of memory. Places that are abandoned, unruly and startling because of their broken angles and their lost, discarded form bring to mind the passage of time and engrave themselves into an urban landscape's memory. A reclaimed post-industrial ruin reconstructs and aids remembering. In cities such as London,

² M.E. Farrar, 'Amnesia, Nostalgia, and the Politics of Place Memory,' *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2011, pp. 723–735.

full of social contrasts, multicultural, battling with present and future, a ruin gains the potential to be reborn. A tale of a past becomes a new narrative creating a place from what was merely a space. A place that can be re-inhabited and rooted again into local community but, likewise, it can also be rejected, deemed unnecessary and cast aside, depending on new meanings given through a process of re-examination and the nature of a project.

A functional project

The modernist tendency to categorise and order the world according to a concept of organisation and disorganisation is reflected in designs that conform to prerequisite needs. This is a functional approach to design, stemming from a pre-established plan rather than from an elemental understanding of a place which assembles and reassembles itself. Initiated at the beginning of the eighties, the revitalisation of London's Docklands, thought to be one of the biggest regeneration undertakings in Europe, is one of such projects. The Docklands, situated in the East and South East London and spanning several of the city's boroughs, used to be part of a port and its linked industrial area. The Docklands stopped operating as a result of technological advancements and adoption of mass container transport which the traditional docks could not accommodate. As a result, a huge area of land neighbouring Central London became abandoned. The loss of the docks and the relocation of the port's operations subsequently led to a degradation of this part of the city. A government-initiated regeneration programme, managed at the beginning by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), resulted in a spectacular reconstruction of this area with the famous Canary Wharf opening the list of prominent projects. This large-scale investment envisioned a long-term development consisting of construction of new objects, modernisation of existing buildings and setting up new services. Former docklands were to become London's showpiece.

LDDC objectives were set as: “bringing land and buildings into effective use, encouraging the development of existing and new industry and commerce, creating an attractive environment and ensuring that housing and social facilities are available to encourage people to live and work in the area.”³ In the end, the Docklands’ reconstruction, planned mainly at the economic and political level, touched the locals in many ways that cannot easily be captured in financial reports.

The monumental scale of this project as well as its top-down directives resulted in the Docklands becoming a battlefield for many years. The visions of the government and LDDC had little in common with the locals’ needs. The conflict around the revitalisation was largely portrayed as a class issue. Old walls and building sites were covered in slogans reflecting community anxieties: “Local land for local people,” “Big money is moving in. Don’t let it push out local people.” In 1988 The New York Times quoted Peter Turlik, one of the developers involved in the project: “We have turned this area around (...) We have changed the perception of it from the backyard of London to a city of the future.”⁴ Turlik’s words echoed one of the typical narratives of post-industrial space. A story where a ruined place becomes alienated, burdened with pejorative connotations through a *termination* of operations. In this interpretation a place is perceived only via its functionality. Its value is interlinked with its purpose, now absent. Such conceptualisation of reality, free of noneconomic significance, stood in direct opposition to the locals’ vision. Local people, largely a traditional community with strong values concentrating around the concepts of family and kinship felt left out from the vision of the developers, who were literally raising walls between the old and the new, separating luxurious apartment

³ ‘London Docklands Development Corporation 1981–1998. An Overview,’ <http://www.lddc-history.org.uk/other/lddcprepresentshort.pdf>, [accessed January 09, 2018].

⁴ S. Rule, ‘LONDON JOURNAL; At New Docklands, a Tale of 2 Cities,’ *New York Times* 10/1988, accessed January 09, 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/10/15/world/london-journal-at-new-docklands-a-tale-of-2-cities.html>.

complexes from council housing. “To build the Berlin wall over there is not smoking the pipe of peace. It’s provocative stuff.”⁵ The symbolic and, at the same time, very real conflict generated by the new vision of a post-industrial area reached much deeper. The land of the former wharves was covered with a network of relations reaching far beyond a simple dichotomy of economic failure and regeneration. The simplistic vision of revitalisation did not take into account the issues of inhabitation or the emotional relation that people have with a place, betting instead on economic development.

There are many approaches to dealing with a post-industrial place. Tim Edensor stresses that a viewer’s gaze frequently transfers negative meaning onto it. A post-industrial place marked with its capitalist factory’s past is associated with degradation, neglect, ugliness and demoralisation – a ruin. While contesting this way of thinking Edensor suggests a new reading of ruins, not through economic concepts of deficiency, uselessness and disorder, but via a prism of altered meaning. Here a post-factory ruin becomes a backyard, playground, space of artistic expression. A place where one can manifest their creativity. In Edensor’s line of thought a ruin is not a gaping wound, but instead it is new tissue.⁶ Contextualisation of ruins within the dichotomy of life and death limits the ways one can read a city and place, it escapes the possibility of recognising its new sensual quality. On the other hand, Edensor’s concept, in a way similar to that of a romantic notion of a picturesque ruin but lacking the gothic gloominess, gives a ruin a nostalgic quality. Such a ruin does not require to be redesigned; it is an inhabited place, with meanings rooted in the past and supplemented by a new purpose. Within such a conceptual framework there is no need to question the ‘quality’ of living – it does not matter whether a post-industrial ruin, or any ruin, is occupied by nature, artists, explored by children or giving

⁵ S. Rule, ‘LONDON JOURNAL; At New Docklands, a Tale of 2 Cities,’ op. cit.

⁶ T. Edensor, *Industrial Ruins. Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*, New York: Berg 2005, pp. 1–17.

shelter to a drug addict. From this point of view, we can disregard propriety, a moral aspect of inhabitation, and middle-class notions of a 'nice' and 'pretty' neighbourhood. What matters is the sensual quality of a place, the process which a ruin undergoes, the non-traditional aestheticisation of space.

The reconstruction of the Docklands, necessitated by economics, opposed such a reading of ruin. The derelict quays in the view of the project's creators were a symbol of degradation, deprivation and poverty. In the government's opinion turning this land into a useful area again was meant to serve national rather than local interests. The deserted, idle port was to gain economic value again.

The new development plan followed this line of thinking. The Thames's embankment came to be covered with designer lofts, spectacular conversions of old port infrastructure. Built on the Isle of Dogs peninsula, Canary Wharf is the crowning achievement of this project. A distinctive tongue of land that cuts into the river, it used to serve as an execution site where perpetrators' remains were displayed to the public. The so-called Killing Fields, cattle slaughter grounds that provided Londoners with meat, were located at the very top of the peninsula. During the industrial era the Isle of Dogs turned into a vibrant port hinterland used for reloading fruits and sugar, only to become deserted in the second part of the 20th century. Today Canary Wharf and the Isle of Dogs are perceived as a symbol of economic achievement and associated with the aftermath of Thatcherism and its dramatic legacy of division between 'have' and 'have nots'.⁷ A characteristic photo of Margaret Thatcher taken in 1990 depicts her standing in a helmet at the 39th floor of One Canada Square skyscraper (sometimes also referred to as Canary Wharf Tower) reminds one of the then prime minister's vision for the East End – an area stretching east from the city centre and

⁷ P. Bernstock, 'London 2012 and the Regeneration Game,' in: *Olympic Cities: 2012 and the Remaking of London*, eds. I. MacRury, G. Poynter, London: Routledge 2009, p. 204.

former city walls of Roman Londinium, today's City of London.⁸ Before the East End was swallowed by a sprawling London it was separated from it by a vast open space of Moorfields. The division resulted in an uneven pace of development and was one of the factors that contributed to the East End – largely covered by docks – being one of the poorest parts of the growing capital city. What made this area unique along with its poverty and social issues was its multicultural richness boosted by subsequent waves of migrants coming here to work from all over the world. According to the then prime minister's plan the dying East End's industry was supposed to be replaced by business. Former docks were to conceptually become a hub of neoliberalism

The result of the reconstruction that started over thirty years ago can be seen today in the hinterland area all along the eastern embankment of London's Thames. The narrative of the river was rewritten by apartment developments, office spaces and high rise buildings stretching over many miles. As is the case with every story, this new narrative is full omissions and ruminations. Each square mile of the Docklands is a testimony to what was either intentionally preserved and stressed to historicise the place, or eradicated to cover the less attractive past. Architects' and developers' efforts became a way of cultural and historical interpretation. As explained by Manuel de Solà-Morales, "*to draw is to select, to select is to interpret, and to interpret is to propose.*"⁹ To propose a new reading of a place.

Silent and motionless, the quayside cranes stand wedged in between skyscrapers and luxurious housing developments. Burdened with cultural memory London Docklands came a long way from waste to a keepsake. Parts of demobilised port infrastructure create archipelagos of traces. Objects scattered around the peninsula, trapped by

⁸ G. Ruddick, 'Will Canary Wharf be Baroness Thatcher's greatest lasting legacy?', *The Telegraph*, January 13, 2013, accessed January 08, 2018, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/constructionandproperty/9981618/Will-Canary-Wharf-be-Baroness-Thatchers-greatest-lasting-legacy.html>.

⁹ M. Solà-Morales, 'The Culture of Description,' *Perspecta*, no. 25, 1989, p. 18.

ethnographisation, bring to mind an open-air heritage museum. In this view, that of the past becomes confined within a cage of forgone spacetime. Restrained by a traditional understanding of time, dating, and chronology. It is visible, but incomprehensible, exposed but alien, hampered by contrasting surroundings.

Attempts to build purpose-designed areas and contact zones are made in an effort to eliminate the semantic dissonance, to close the gap between new and old and to bond space-users with a place. The Museum of London Docklands (part of Museum of London), opened in 2003, is an example of such an endeavour. As a section of West India Docks it is located in the northern part of the Isle of Dogs. The museum is housed in a Georgian sugar warehouse built in 1802. Situated on the embankment, the beautifully restored old storehouse is reflected in the water where a long time ago sugar was being unloaded.

The museum's permanent exhibition explains chronologically the history of London as a port city, beginning from the Roman times and ending with the Docklands' redevelopment. In 2016 a display on the history of the building was launched. It was a part of a larger project telling a tale of docklands in their Golden Age. The museum's narrative also deals with the problem of the port's notorious history of a business founded on slave labour. The *London Sugar and Slavery* exhibition confronts and accepts the Docklands' perception through the lenses of its dark past.

The museum, which, according to its creator's vision, tells the story of the Docklands, the Thames and of London itself as one of the world's biggest commercial cities, by its mere existence places itself within the context of its commercialised surroundings. The neighbouring shopping and entertainment developments, a landscape full of glass skyscrapers suggests a certain perspective that creates a distance between visitors/passers-by and the place itself. Various initiatives engaging locals and visitors alike aim to bridge this gap. Organised walks, workshops for families and schools, historical performances. An oral history project offers the possibility of crossing that intimate line between a space and

a place. The local elderly, who remember the Isle of Dogs from before the regeneration, now work as a part of the museum's voluntary staff. Despite the fact that the narrative created and offered by them is part of the institutionalised storytelling the ever-changing nature of memory causes the tale to become more familiar, smooth and personalised. Another narrative project aims to generate such a feeling of familiarity by changing the tone and the scale of a story.

Storytelling

Led by the Eastside Community Heritage, the *Hidden Histories* project is located in the Internet's virtual space. The website allows access to recorded conversations with the former workers of the docks and factories placed along the Thames Gateway.¹⁰ The area stretches along the river on both sides from the eastern boroughs of London down almost to the English Channel. In the past it housed many now-abandoned manufacturing works. The stories collected by the Eastside Community Heritage construct a polyphonic, rich and subjective picture of the past, giving a taste of a world that has already been transformed into something else. The tales give depth to post-industrial places, offering a possibility to look past the glassy and steel surfaces of the new developments that frequently leave out what is deemed needless or socially unacceptable. Visualisations of new designs are often rid of any individuality portraying a postulated vision of a neighborhood vibrating with middle-class bliss without taking into account a cultural context. They are social manifestos, leading way towards changes that are facilitating the investors' ideal. Thanks to the tales spun by locals a past that is invisible in an architect's design can be brought back to reduce the cognitive dissonance perceived in post-industrial places. Storytelling allows

¹⁰ *Eastside Community Heritage*, <https://www.hidden-histories.org/archive-1/>, [accessed: January 12, 2018].

magical encounters with the subjective sensations of the remnants of a world, which are frequently omitted by designers and historians.

A new quality which transfers the tale into the realm of *lieux de memoires* is created on the grounds of the recorded stories. The London Bubble's Community Company took the opportunity to create *From Docks to Desktops*, a performance shaped from the memories of forty people and woven from the threads of their words.¹¹ The work was shown at an old biscuit factory in November 2013. The gathered stories were published at a website where they can still be found. Some are tragic, some are funny – nostalgic memories of the local people who worked in factories, pubs, and small shops immortalised in virtual space are satiated with emotions and meaning. The cold and once incredibly modern silhouette of Guy's Hospital, located not far from the river, gains a human dimension thanks to a tale shared by one of the hospital's builders. Many years after the building's completion Dave still visits his old worksite, now as a patient. Aesthetically striking, the brutalist-modernist structure is located in Central London at the southern side of the river Thames, in a zone once filled with port warehouses and light industry. Recently, due to the vicinity of the City, this area became a popular site among international corporations and it is still undergoing rapid restructuring and redevelopment. Completed at the very beginning of this process, a new wing of the hospital once enjoyed the status of the tallest building in London. Dave explains to the hospital's personnel that he knows what is hidden under 'this floor.' His relationship with the place is very strong and personal: "we fitted all the timber in between that, then it's plaster boarded and that is the screen the separation between the two bays or three bays, whatever, cos it runs quite a way down. Yeah – I'm kind of proud I was one of the men that was up there doing that – and it hasn't changed it's still the same that and that's since let's say middle of seventy-one to seventy-three I was working on

¹¹ 'From Docks to Desktops,' London Bubble, <http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/from-docks-to-desktops-performances/>, [accessed: January 12, 2018].

it year and a half. It's all intact – I'm proud of that really.”¹² For Dave the physical dimension of this place is interlinked with its emotional reception. A memory of a job well done intensifies the connection with one of the few places around that resisted change. The former hinterland surrounding the hospital has already lost its character. A neighbouring structure of the Shard – formed to resemble a glassy spike – currently the tallest building in London and Western Europe is a vivid reminder of this. Inspired by church towers, ships' masts and railway tracks, the Renzo Piano design hovers over the Thames, adding a new piece to the memory puzzle. A piece which has already become a part of a new docklands' tale.

Owing to stories such as Dave's we have the opportunity to enrich this new narrative, perceive our surroundings in a different way. More sensually, empirically, with less distance. Words allow us to recall memories of routine and of everyday life, opening us up to the past. Simultaneously they let us see the forgone traces and draw us nearer to the place. This topography of memory creates a new map of places. Adopting the role of an absorbed listener and walker, we are offering ourselves the possibility to see the sacrificial offering of post-industrialism on which the new visual and emotional substance is founded.

Palimpsest

An archaeological and post-industrial object that evokes a hecatomb is at the same time aesthetically nostalgic. Coupled with an oral tale, pinned against a contrasting background, an artefact – whether a quay-side crane or a chimney of a power plant which today houses the Tate Modern gallery – guides us towards Michel de Certeau's palimpsest: “Beneath the fabricating and universal writing of technology, opaque

¹² ‘Dave Fisher's Story,’ London Bubble, <http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/page/stories/>, [accessed: January 12, 2018].

and stubborn places remain. The revolutions of history, economic mutations, and demographic mixtures lie in layers within it, and remain there, hidden in customs, rites, and spatial practices. The legible discourses that formerly articulated them have disappeared, or left only fragments in language. This place, on the surface, seems to be a collage. In reality, in its depths it is ubiquitous. A piling of heterogeneous place... The place is a palimpsest.”¹³ Palimpsest opens us to experience *the outlandish* that is hidden within a space.

Similarly, in the direction of a more in-depth reading of a design process by linking it with the concept of space, goes the initiative of the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. Initiated in 2016 the project oscillates towards participatory urbanism and was inspired by the changes brought to the centrally located borough of Camden by the construction of UK’s High Speed Rail 2. The foundation stone for John Rusell Beaumont’s concept of ‘Palimpsest’ is a conviction that despite being continuously in the processes of modifications and revitalisations cities and buildings retain traces of their past lives. Beaumont’s initiative conceptualises opportunities for urban palimpsest in the digital era. 3D scanning and Virtual Reality is utilised to capture local people’s memories and images to create a virtual world by subsequently projecting sounds and visuals onto the town’s body in a 1:1 scale.¹⁴ The produced palimpsest becomes a postulated starting point for the future design. The author’s intention was to create a platform of communication between a local community, developers and the council. The product of this effort simultaneously serves as a cultural artefact and a historical document accounting for the *place* itself. Ironically, virtual reality reflects a sensual, tactile character of a place as perceived through experience of an occupier. It reveals another order

¹³ M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkley: University of California Press 1984, pp. 201–202.

¹⁴ ‘Palimpsest,’ Bartlett School of Architecture, <http://www.interactivearchitecture.org/lab-projects/palimpsest>, [accessed: January 17, 2018].

beyond what is traditionally perceived as real. This living project due to benefiting from its incorporation of memory during the conceptual stage can be perceived as an anti-museum. A visual and intellectual concept of an architectural palimpsest can be understood as a dialogue with memory, a process of thinking about things in their absence. Due to its entanglement into palimpsest a design emerges as a part of the cycle of remembering and forgetting.¹⁵

At the moment of its very creation an architectural design concept becomes, just as in literary fiction and art, a represented world, a subject of interpretation. Should we postulate for design to originate from the memory of a place rather than a spatial vision? For it to be concerned emphatically with conceptualisation that takes into account not only its physical aspect, but also an inconspicuous network of connections between a non-verbalised but present landscape of cultural baggage. It is not easy to reach beyond the superficial reinterpretation of a *post-factory*. A conscious design, surpassing the shallow layer of semantic references, perceived as a hermeneutic exercise, is crucial for all post-industrial places. Opening up to the being of a post-industrial ruin allows us to break up with the simple dichotomy of decline and regeneration and reach toward a more familiar relationship between a place and inhabitation. An interdisciplinary approach to post-industrial design requires for the creative process to be saturated with a certain empathy. It needs to recognise the liminal character of a place, to see the quality in its being ‘in between.’

¹⁵ P. Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,’ *Representations*, no. 26, Spring, 1989, pp. 7–24.



Photo. 1. London 2018 (O. Topol)



Photo. 2. London 2018 (O. Topol)



Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach

Post-Industrial Spaces in Saxony (Leipzig, Dresden)

Globalization and deindustrialization have caused profound changes in the way European cities function on a practical and symbolic level. These changes have gained full speed in Poland and the eastern parts of Germany only after 1989/1990, and post-industrial spaces are their unique expression. Huge building complexes spread across vast spaces, usually deserted and decaying, became a problem and a subject of discussion regarding their future and the possibilities of their development. Final redevelopment strategies – from visual design, through aspects of financing and the nature of activities that currently take place in these spaces – are an acid test of the degree of integration and rooting of the local community in its city or neighborhood. In this respect, it is worth considering to what degree the post-industrial artistic, social and revitalizing projects are inspired by the earlier history of these places and in what ways they help build the local identity of their new users.

Such activities in Saxony are special because of their diversity. Revitalization is here the central cultural category, understood as “not

only a capitalization process of the cultural resources present in the neighborhood, but also a complex set of institutional and grassroots cultural practices, aiming at implementation of often competing values, interests and visions of the urban development.”¹ Sharon Zukin defines two types of revitalization practices: modern reconstructions and late-modern regenerations.² This article concentrates only on “late modern regenerations – it is interventions engaging culture (...) in a role of a revitalizing tool.”³ Culture is understood here as a “source of images, memories and architectural themes.”⁴ It is prominently materialized in the post-industrial spaces of interest in the shape of huge factory workshops, steel constructions, or remnants of transportation infrastructure. The past of these former work places, with their former employees still alive, is very important in the communicative memory of the families and city residents, and it also becomes an integral part of the cultural memory.⁵

History of the industrialization and deindustrialization of Saxony

Saxony belonged alongside Upper Silesia to the first centers of early industrialization in East Central Europe, evolving around the cities of

¹ W. Maćków and J. Zimpel, ‘Rewitalizacja dzielnicy jako zestaw taktyk kulturowych,’ in: *Kulturowe studia miejskie*, ed. E. Rewers, Warszawa: Narodowe Centrum Kultury 2014, p. 459.

² Modern conversions are understood here as “revitalization interventions of an infrastructural and technical nature, implemented without taking into account the cultural value of the urban space,” *ibidem*, p. 460.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 460.

⁴ S. Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*, Oxford: Blackwell 1995, p. I, cited from: W. Maćków and J. Zimpel, ‘Rewitalizacja dzielnicy jako zestaw taktyk kulturowych,’ in: *Kulturowe studia miejskie*, *op. cit.*, p. 460.

⁵ In addition to the small factory museums, it is worth mentioning a main Saxon museum of industry in Chemnitz, see: <http://web.saechsisches-industriemuseum.com/> [accessed December 15, 2017].

Leipzig, Dresden, Chemnitz and Katowice. A cotton mill – first Saxon factory and second in Europe – opened in Harthau, near Chemnitz, in 1798.⁶ Metallurgy, machine and paper production, and textile industry were the most important industrial branches in Saxony.⁷ In the past two hundred years, factories and workshops opened in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were consecutively reconstructed, destroyed during wars, and demolished due to cities' development and the need to win space for new projects. Remaining buildings were still in use in the GDR, and some of them serve the industry to date, although most of them were deserted after 1989. For the inhabitants of the eastern German states, i.e. the former GDR, these vacant buildings were an expression of these changes: destruction – in their opinion – of the economy of eastern Germany and the takeover of property by trust funds which closed the plants in 1990s. Empty factories corresponded to the fate of their former employees, who often became permanently unemployed after the factories' closure. The scale of changes over the last hundred years is well illustrated in numbers: while in 1914 more than half of the region's population in working age was employed in Saxony's industry, currently less than twenty percent works there.⁸

For several years now, we have been observing growing interest in these buildings and the industrial history dating back to the nineteenth century. Various initiatives are created, varying adaptations of post-industrial architecture to contemporary needs are implemented. They partly refer to modern forms of design. At the same time, elements referring to industrial heritage play an important role. In some cases these two approaches establish a dialog and join forces in redesign.

⁶ *Industriekultur in Sachsen. Neue Wege im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. J. Feldkamp & R. Lindner, Chemnitz: Sächsisches Industriemuseum 2010, p. 8.

⁷ R. Karlsch and M. Schäfer, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte Sachsens im Industriezeitalter*, Dresden-Leipzig: Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung 2006, p. 8.

⁸ R. Boch, 'Die Wirtschafts- und Unternehmensgeschichte Sachsens als Basis der heutigen Industriekultur,' in: *Industriekultur in Sachsen. Neue Wege im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. J. Feldkamp, R. Lindner, op. cit., p. 16.

This article examines ways of giving new meaning and purpose to abandoned post-industrial sites. Three places in two most important cities of Saxony – Leipzig and Dresden – exemplify the quest for integrating them into the urban space and making them home, undertaken by various actors.

Three models of transformation and use

There are various ways of developing, transforming and the functioning of post-industrial spaces in the discussed area. Different forms of ownership and legal-formal constructions are conditioned by the history of individual cities and specific objects, and cause differences (significant or subtle) in their functioning. They also have an impact on the level of integration of the post-industrial object with its users – or vice versa.

Model 1: “Kraftwerk Mitte” – Dresden initiative (photo 1–3)

The name of this place can be translated to English as “Power Plant – City Center.” This huge area is very close to the Dresden-Mitte train station, on the west bank of the river Elbe and just a few minutes from the historical center of the city, with its Baroque monuments. A heat and power station, which in the last period of its use was called “Heizkraftwerk Mitte,” operated in this place from 1895 to 1994. Older residents of Dresden called this place “Aurora” because of the huge smoking chimneys resembling a Russian cruiser – the symbol of the October Revolution in Russia.⁹ Brown coal was burned here, providing electricity to the entire city. The area, a total of 39,000 m², has not been used since

⁹ B. Honnigfort, ‘Dresden. Alte Stadt mit neuer Mitte,’ *Berliner Zeitung*, <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/kultur/dresden-alte-stadt-mit-neuer-mitte-25301060> [accessed December 15, 2017].

1994, becoming a huge empty space in the city center. In 1998, Dresden artist Holger John organized “Filmball Titanic” there and, in 2010, an exhibition of the Terracotta Army from China took place there.¹⁰ But it was only in the years 2014–2016 that a huge revitalization was carried out by its owner, the municipal utility provider DREWAG. Funds for the implementation of the project – almost 100 million euros in total – came mainly from the city budget.¹¹ In December 2016, the newly rebuilt (although only partly so far) complex was officially opened under the new name “Kraftwerk Mitte.”

On its website, it is presented as an “impressive industrial monument from the 19th century but in a modified form. Dresden enjoys a unique place where art, culture and creativity meet. Excellent location, unusual architecture, innovative ideas: a new magnet in the heart of Dresden.”¹² The renewed buildings serve, among other things, the Dresden operetta and theater which moved here from makeshift premises outside the city center. The Dresden operetta (“Staatsoperette Dresden”) and the Theater of the Young Generation (“Theater Junge Generation”) received new spaces in the former engine room and are now most visible in this newly arranged space (photo 4–5).¹³

“Kraftwerk Mitte” is also interesting because it is possible to get to know this place and experience it in many different ways, depending on the entry used to this particular, mostly brick-walled area. During my visit there, I asked a random person, a young girl, for the road, and

¹⁰ “Filmball Titanic,” <http://www.holgerjohn.com/events.html>; “Terracotta Army,” <https://terrakottaarmee.de/bisherige-stationen/> [accessed December 15, 2017].

¹¹ B. Honnigfort, ‘Dresden. Alte Stadt mit neuer Mitte,’ op. cit.

¹² Original: “Das ehemalige Kraftwerk Mitte Dresden, ein imposantes Industriedenkmal aus dem 19. Jahrhundert, hat sich verwandelt. Dresden freut sich über einen einzigartigen Kunst-, Kultur- und Kreativstandort. Exzellente Lage, beeindruckende Architektur, innovative Ideen: Ein neuer Magnet mitten in Dresden.” <http://www.kraftwerk-mitte-dresden.de/> [accessed October 24, 2017].

¹³ ‘Kraftwerk Mitte. Neues Zuhause im Kulturtempel,’ <http://www.mdr.de/sachsen/dresden/kraftwerk-mitte-eroeffnung-in-dresden-100.html> [accessed October 24, 2017].

she answered only after she inquired: “Do you mean that club?” When I went in the indicated direction, I saw a large banner informing about the opening hours – evening and night – of that club. As I learned later, it prided itself on its uniqueness resulting from its location in a post-industrial building, as well as from ornamental elements such as an artificial waterfall in the middle of the club room.¹⁴

The area of “Kraftwerk Mitte” is partly still used by its owner DREWAG (“Stadtwerke Dresden GmbH”), a company that supplies the city with utilities (electricity, heat, gas and water).¹⁵ Additionally, since 2006, DREWAG has maintained a small museum here, where it shows the history of the whole area, the utilities supply in Dresden in the last hundred years, and the company itself, which can be understood as an element of advertising, building social trust and maintaining good image.¹⁶

In addition, the site has practice rooms belonging to the Heinrich Schütz Conservatory, where 450 children learn playing various instruments.¹⁷ Also, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, associated with the German Green Party, has its Saxon branch located here.¹⁸

In this rather luxuriously designed and decorated complex, an odd looking small café in the former doorman room stands out, decorated in a rather hipster-post-industrial aesthetics.

Thus, we have a huge variety of institutions with various forms of modern design in this post-industrial space. All of that has been enabled by generous financing from the city budget and general renovation of the object. The central motivation seems to be the desire to revitalize this part of Dresden, to restore it or give it a new glow.

¹⁴ <https://kraftwerk-club.de/> [accessed November 6, 2017].

¹⁵ <https://www.drewag.de/wps/portal/drewag/cms> [accessed November 6, 2017].

¹⁶ <http://www.kraftwerk-museum.de/schuelerfuehrung.html> [accessed November 6, 2017].

¹⁷ https://www.hskd.de/index.php?entry_id=336 [accessed December 3, 2017].

¹⁸ <http://www.weiterdenken.de/de/kategorien/buero-vorstand> [accessed December 3, 2017].

It is necessary to pay attention to all aspects of revitalization, including in this case both modernization (“renovation supplemented with the introduction of new, better, more efficient elements improving the building’s standard”) and restoration (“restoration of lost architectural and utility value through renovation and modernization of buildings of special historic value. It requires additional research and implementation works aimed at exposing this historic value”).¹⁹ Moreover, revitalization projects undertake actions aiming at “the social and economic revival of the urban area. Linking social, economic and technical issues in revitalization processes is (...) the essence of the issue that, unlike traditional approaches, refers to the whole of the city’s life, not just its form.”²⁰ Revitalization is a remedial action and, by definition, it must be planned from above, by the city’s administration. Authors of a collective work on urban revitalization in Germany distinguish four types of revitalization processes, including “revitalization of degraded city centers and multifunctional pre-war urban areas, [and] revitalization of post-industrial, post-railway and post-military areas.”²¹ In the case of “Kraftwerk Mitte,” we are dealing with a mix of these two processes. The authors also note that the majority of post-industrial areas revitalized in Germany are those located in city centers.²² This is closely connected with the need to supplement the insufficient cultural infrastructure and with the attractiveness of post-industrial spaces resulting from “a depletion of contemporary visions of cultural architecture.”²³ Post-industrial architecture provides a sense of novelty and freshness of such projects.

¹⁹ T. Markowski and D. Stawasz and D. A. Sikora, *Polityka mieszkaniowa obszaru – cele i instrumenty. Zintegrowany Program Rewitalizacji Obszaru Centralnego Łodzi*, 2005, after: <http://www.forumrewitalizacji.pl/artykuly/16/38/Rewitalizacja-na-tle-innych-pojec> [accessed December 3, 2017].

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Eds. M. Bryx, A. Jadach-Sepiolo, *Rewitalizacja miast w Niemczech*, Kraków: Instytut Rozwoju Miast 2009, p. 9.

²² Ibidem, p. 114.

²³ Ibidem, p. 139.

The revitalization of the object “Kraftwerk Mitte” is also an attempt to overshadow the perception of Dresden as a center of Pegida activities; an attempt to become a place open to the world again, which since the end of 2014 has been rather associated with demonstrations propagating anti-Islamic, racist and xenophobic slogans.²⁴ City authorities try to oppose this xenophobic image of their city. Thanks to the rich city budget, art and culture have become means of counteracting the populist slogans. The goal is also to become the “European Capital of Culture” in 2025.²⁵

The satisfaction with the effect achieved in “Kraftwerk Mitte” is clearly seen in texts and comments devoted to it, such as: “now, **in the end**, from the center of Dresden.” (emphasis M.A.-D.)²⁶ This is also evidenced by the booklet presenting the whole complex “Dresdens *neue Mitte*,” i.e. “*New center of Dresden*.” It visualizes the redeveloped part of “Kraftwerk Mitte” against the background of a silhouette of the old Baroque center (seen above), shown also on the last page. After unfolding the flyer, both the new and old are located next to each other. All that suggests intent to replace the current center with something new.²⁷ The city of Dresden also issued a separate brochure indicating the location of “Kraftwerk Mitte” in the city and the ways to reach it, underlining its central position and convenient connection with the rest of the city.²⁸ This leaflet also informs the reader, for instance, that a ticket to the

²⁴ PEGIDA (abbreviation, full name of the association: Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, English translation: Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West).

²⁵ B. Honnigfort, ‘Dresden. Alte Stadt mit neuer Mitte,’ op. cit.

²⁶ Prolog by Dirk Hilbert, mayor of Dresden: ‘Im Zentrum zu Hause,’ in: *Sol! Lasst uns feiern! 70 Jahre Staatsoperette Dresden. Jubiläumsspielzeit 2017/18*, p. 2 (leaflet). Original: “(...) jetzt endlich im Dresdener Zentrum zu Hause (...)”

²⁷ “Dresdens neue Mitte” published by Dresden Marketing GmbH in cooperation with DREWAG and the Office for Culture and Heritage protection (Landeshauptstadt Dresden – Amt für Kultur und Denkmalschutz), November 2016.

²⁸ Flyer “Kraftwerk Mitte Dresden. Verkehrsanbindung und Erreichbarkeit” published by Office of City Planning in Dresden (Landeshauptstadt Dresden – Stadtplanungsamt), October 2016.

theater or operetta entitles one to free transit with public transportation to and from the venue for four hours before and after the show. Of all the promotional material is full of enthusiasm:

“The admiration of our new site with a beautiful red theatre room are as intense as the applause after the show and the number of tickets sold. It is genuinely a wonderful feeling that we want to share with you.”²⁹ Meanwhile, “Kraftwerk Mitte” has vacant space and struggles for its place on the cultural and tourist map of Dresden. It still remains a novelty address in 2017.

Model 2: “Baumwollspinnerei” – from cotton to culture

The “Baumwollspinnerei” in Leipzig is in its today shape due to the initiative of investors from western and eastern Germany in cooperation with renowned art galleries from around the world. In 1994, current owners visited the former cotton mill for the first time: “We were amazed by the unique atmosphere of the place, the art galleries and workshops open here along with the decreasing industrial use.”³⁰ In 2001, they purchased this object from a Cologne resident who had bought the mill from a fiduciary (German: Treuhand) in 1993 and had no idea what to do with it: about 10 hectares, or 100,000 m², of space, 20 buildings with a total usable area of 90,000 m². Investors recalled: “We

²⁹ Original: “Die Begeisterung der Besucher über das neue Haus und den schönen roten Zuschauerraum ist ebenso groß wie der Applaus für unsere Künstler in den ausverkauften Vorstellungen. Das ist ein wirklich tolles Gefühl, das wir gern mit Ihnen teilen wollen,” Wolfgang Schaller: ‘Ein wirklich tolles Gefühl,’ in: *So! Staatsoperette Dresden. Operette. Musical. Oper. Spielplan. Spielzeit 2017/18*, p. 1.

³⁰ Original: “Wir waren begeistert von der besonderen Atmosphäre des Orts und von den neu entstehenden Ateliers und Werkstätten, die sich parallel zur auslaufenden industriellen Nutzung allmählich ansiedelten.” Florian Busse, Tillmann Sauer-Morhard, Karsten Schmitz, Bertram Schultze, ‘From Cotton to Culture,’ in: *ibidem*, p. 110.

had something fantastic: an authentic factory city, mostly in the original state from 1884 to 1907, with adjoining employee housing (...), factory kindergarten and community gardens (...).³¹ Already back then, sixty artists, craftsmen, engineers used the space, some of the former employee housing was turned into apartment buildings. This usage of factory space developed spontaneously from 1994 to 2001, without any particular concept or financing. Four investors – from Munich, Berlin and Leipzig – decided to create a unique place which would be both a place of work for artists and a huge gallery showcasing contemporary art. A trip to New York served as inspiration, where, for example, the Armory Show, Whitney Museum of American Art, MoMA PS1, and Dia:Beacon (as well as MASS MoCa in Massachusetts) showed them how attractive post-industrial spaces were for contemporary art presentations. Inspired by that journey, they organized the first open “WERKSCHAU” in summer 2004, a joint exhibition of all artists working in the former cotton mill. In the same year, EIGEN + ART, a gallery of the legendary Leipzig art dealer Judy Lybke, and “Dogenhaus” owned by Jochen Hempel moved to the cotton mill.³² On May 1, 2005, first guided tour was organized, and, in one weekend, the area of the cotton mill was visited by more than 10,000 guests. It was a breakthrough moment. From one day to another “Baumwollspinnerei” became a tourist attraction, an international tourist destination. To date, the owners have pursued this dual goal: creating supportive place for creative art work (but also for other industries) and opening the object to general public.³³

³¹ Original: “Wir hatten etwas Fantastisches: Eine authentische Fabrikstadt, die weitestgehend im Originalzustand ihrer Entstehungszeit zwischen 1884 und 1907 erhalten war, mit angegliederten Arbeiterwohnungen (...), einem Betriebskindergarten sowie einer Schrebegartensiedlung (...).” Florian Busse, Tillmann Sauer-Morhard, Karsten Schmitz, Bertram Schultze, ‘From Cotton to Culture,’ in: *ibidem*, p. 110.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 112.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 113.

The success of this project is due not only to private initiative, but largely to supporting and co-financing of those initiatives by the city and federal state, as well as through European funds. After the absorption of the former East Germany by the West German political and economic structures, not only the eastern industry collapsed, but also city centers depopulated. Therefore, revitalization projects began already in 1990s. In Leipzig, the city council developed a strategy based on two main objectives: “strengthening the housing and service function of the inner city zone in Leipzig” and “creating and implementing marketing strategies promoting Leipzig as a European economic and cultural center.”³⁴

The current district of Plagwitz in southwest Leipzig was incorporated into urban structures only at the end of the ninetieth century. It developed as a place of industrial investment, mainly due to Karl Heine, in the second half of that century. The number of inhabitants increased rapidly –from 134 in 1834 to 13,045 in 1890.³⁵ Plagwitz was further developed as an industrial district during the GDR period. In the 1990s, however, factories were closed and inhabitants lost their jobs. “Buntgarnwerke,” a former textile factory, became a target of one of the early revitalization projects in Plagwitz. In late 1990s, factory buildings were redesigned and turned into apartments, offices, shops and restaurants. The object became particularly known for its lofts.³⁶ Parallel with construction works, the company Atrium GmbH ran a promotional campaign, making the project famous. The success of this project translated into raising the value of the whole district in the eyes of potential investors which undoubtedly contributed to the decision to invest later on in “Baumwollspinnerei.” Today, there are many projects using former industrial spaces throughout the entire district.³⁷

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 155.

³⁵ [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagwitz_\(Leipzig\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagwitz_(Leipzig)) [accessed December 4, 2017].

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 168.

³⁷ It is worth noting the purely artistic project KUNTSKRAFTWERK located in the vicinity of “Baumwollspinnerei,” <http://www.kunstkraftwerk-leipzig.com/> [accessed December 4, 2017].

Aesthetics of neglect – Cinema “LURU”³⁸

In more than a century of cinema history, film screenings have been organized in various places – from smoky pubs to sophisticated halls equipped with the latest technology. Over the decades, local newspaper announcements of the opening of a new cinemas have informed about the color of the walls, the softness of armchairs, and the existence of a wardrobe (especially in the 1950s, when theaters aspired to be places of high culture). The entrance alone and the impression from the street were very important.³⁹ The small cinema LURU breaks with this tradition (photo 6–7). When I visited it on an early afternoon and tried to find out what movie was to be screened in the evening, the fact that the cinema operated at all was indicated only by a glowing decorative red light snake at the door and a hastily printed piece of paper pinned to the door with the current date and time of the screening. Otherwise, it looked like a deserted place. In order to reach the actual cinema door, I had to go down to the basement, passing concrete walls with scratches of old movie posters pinned to them. Old boards and debris lay all around. When I returned in the evening, shortly before the show, the door was open, and I was friendly greeted by the man selling tickets. The cinema’s foyer was cozy, furnished with randomly collected used furniture. A small table with a portable cash box, a few drinks and snacks served as a box office. The screening room – probably a former coal depo – with visible industrial elements, such as pipes under the ceiling, was very small. The chairs, which came from another movie theater, and which had the names of the donors engraved, were comfortable. The picture and sound quality was sufficient. Boards and debris lying around the entrance both belonged and did not belong to the space design.

³⁸ <http://www.luru-kino.de/> [accessed: November 9, 2017].

³⁹ See: M. Abraham-Diefenbach, *Pałace i koszary. Kino w podzielonych miastach nad Odrą i Nysą Łużycką 1945–1989*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo ATUT 2015.

Model 3: “Zentralwerk” in Dresden – former ammunition factory in the hands of young people

The repurposing of former industrial spaces by a grassroots community is the most direct form of making them home, making them their own. Supporting such initiatives was placed first among recommendations regarding the heritage of Saxony’s industrial culture formulated in 2009.⁴⁰ Authors, scientists, and practitioners dealing with industrial culture, assessed that “projects repurposing industrial buildings with small investments mostly turn to be a success in the long term.”⁴¹ In addition, it is important to remember about large population groups of the former GDR, who lost their jobs in industrial plants as a result of the changes in 1990 (photo 6–7). For them, participation in industrial culture and engagement in post-industrial spaces or simply visiting them has a special, personal character. Memory of this past part of their life should be preserved and passed on to future generations.⁴² “Zentralwerk” in Dresden is an example of such a grassroots initiative. Initially, it was a project of an association, and then of a cooperative, where users of this post-industrial space could acquire shares and become members.

The building complex in the Pieschen district of Dresden, currently used mostly as “Zentralwerk,” was built at the turn of 1940/1941 as an ammunition factory “Goehle-Werk.” Bomb fuses, ignitors, grenades and

⁴⁰ Industriekultur in Sachsen. Aufgaben und Handlungsempfehlungen, in: 6. *Ibidem*, p. 128. A list of recommendations created during the the Conference “Industriekultur in Sachsen. Neue Wege im 21. Jahrhundert” (Industrial culture in Saxony. New ways in the 21st century) held in Dresden in March 2009.

⁴¹ Original: “(...) Vorhaben mit Kleininvestitionen zeigen bei Umnutzungen von Industriegebäuden langfristig großen Erfolg,” ‘Industriekultur in Sachsen. Aufgaben und Handlungsempfehlungen,’ in: *ibidem*, p. 128.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 128.

missiles for anti-aircraft guns 12.8 and 8.8 cm were produced there.⁴³ The factory was used by “Zeiss-Ikon AG”, which produced photographic and film equipment before the World War II, and, during the War, it partially shifted its production to specialized equipment for German aviation. Unskilled forced laborers, mainly women and Dresden Jews, worked in “Goehle-Werk.” In October 1944, a branch of the Flossenbürg concentration camp was established in the factory which hosted several hundred women, mainly prisoners from Poland and Russia. They worked and lived in terrible conditions, receiving inadequate food rations. In the middle of April 1945, the camp was “evacuated.” The surviving prisoners were liberated by Allied units.⁴⁴ After the war, the first cultural events in Dresden were held in the auditorium located in the factory complex. In the GDR, several publishing and printing houses operated in the factory buildings.

In 1996, the last printing houses were closed and the complex was abandoned. After ten years, the association “friedrichstadtZentral e.V.” (later renamed to “Zentralwerk e.V.”) started to operate there (photo 8–9). The association founded a cooperative “Zentralwerk Kultur- und Wohngenossenschaft eG.” They both aimed to create a space for housing, work, culture and art. They wrote: “Artists, humanists, architects and craftsmen meet here in one place, which consists of common elements. Different disciplines and different age groups shape their life and professional environment.”⁴⁵ Joint cultural projects, taking place mostly in the auditorium, allow for wider outreach. Project participants also deal with the history of this building complex. They record witnesses of the past, and organize discussions with historians. All that is part of

⁴³ Eds. Wolfgang Benz, Barbara Distel, *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, vol. 4: Flossenbürg, Mathausen, Ravensbrück, München: Verlag C.H. Beck 2006, p. 88.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 90.

⁴⁵ <http://www.zentralwerk.de/wordpress/ueber-den-ort/> [accessed December 5, 2017].

the Dresden residents' dealing with historic sites of extermination from the World War II.⁴⁶

The initiative to redevelop the old factory and printing house sprang among Dresden artists seeking a new home. Its implementation, however, would not be possible without support of the Foundation "trias" operating throughout the country. The goal of the Foundation was to "work out solutions enabling the implementation of idealistic goals (...) and projects, and their long-term security."⁴⁷ In 2015, the Foundation bought a part of the former factory and transferred it to "Zentralwerk Kultur- und Wohngenossenschaft Dresden eG" under a 99-year lease agreement (photo 8–9).⁴⁸ The cooperative uses that object in a variety of ways. It hosts galleries, maintains space for cultural events, rents apartments. As a part of the project "Artist in Residence," there is also space for artists who, up to three months, can live and create in "Zentralwerk," use its contact network and infrastructure.⁴⁹ A revitalization of the whole building complex with involvement of the city council is planned. Additionally, donations towards this revitalization are being collected.

Summary

Post-industrial heritage is multi-layered. An abandoned factory fascinates not only with its alienation and mystery as a *lost place*, but also provides opportunity to discover its many historical layers. Old factories have been scenes of events shaping our cities and regions for

⁴⁶ It takes place mainly as a part of the project "VORHIN – Erinnerungskultur im Zentralwerk," <http://www.zentralwerk.de/wordpress/projekte/vorhin-erinnerungskultur-im-zentralwerk/> [accessed December 5, 2017].

⁴⁷ <https://www.stiftung-trias.de/zivilgesellschaft-sichern/> [accessed December 5, 2017].

⁴⁸ <http://www.wohnprojekte-portal.de/projekte-suche/projektetails.html?uid=21174> [accessed December 5, 2017].

⁴⁹ <http://www.zentralwerk.de/wordpress/artist-in-residence/> [accessed December 5, 2017].

the last two hundred years: from the beginning of industrialization, through the two world wars, through the nationalization of industry, to the transformations in late 1980s and early 1990s. Industrial facilities, as cathedrals or palaces, shape regional and local identity, being important orientation points or former work places, and become heritage sites.

Revitalization projects refer to this heritage in various ways. “Kraftwerk Mitte” in Dresden is a huge area belonging to a municipal company. Revitalization preserving industrial elements and combining them with modern design is linked to far-reaching plans to revive the city center and its cultural importance. “Baumwollspinnerei” in Leipzig – with an equally large area – is in the hands of private investors and is developed thanks to good marketing and hosting brands and galleries recognized in the art world. Here, post-industrial buildings are not transformed or refurbished, and embrace elements of neglect and abandonment. “Zentralwerk” in Dresden is an example on a much smaller scale. A foundation owning the former ammunition factory leases it to a cooperative, which wishes to enable young artists.

There is a very visible reference to the history of these places in all three examples: through the creation of a museum or a memorial room; through issuing commemorative postcards; through using names of buildings from the industrial period or through projects involving witnesses of the past. It seems, therefore, that post-industrial objects inspire both modern architecture and meetings with the past. This combination constitutes their uniqueness. They become attractive stages for modern art. From being empty and abandoned spaces, they turn into centers giving impetus to the development of whole districts. The processes of establishment refer to different groups – artists, residents, investors. Everyone can participate in their own way.

Translated by Małgorzata Szajbel-Keck



Photo. 1–3. The whole area of the former power plant is marked with boards with the new name “KRAFTWERK MITTE” and sketches facilitating orientation, containing the new KRAFTWERK MITTE logo, September 2017 (Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach)



Photo 4. Common foyer of the operetta and theater: modern design with elements of the former power plant, September 2017 (Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach)



Photo 5. Functional details of the former power plant become decorative elements in the new space, September 2017 (Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach)



Photo 6. Cinema LURU on the premises of “Baumwollspinnerei,” Leipzig 2017 (Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach)

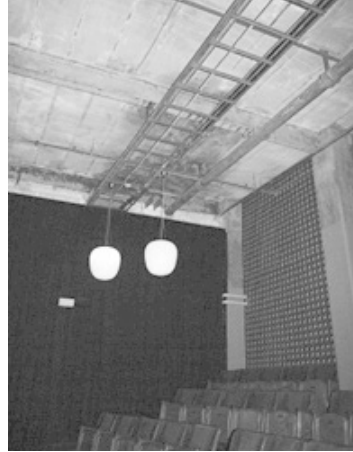


Photo 7. The interior of the cinema LURU with visible elements reminding that it used to be a basement of an industrial facility, September 2017 (Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach)



Photo 8. Modern design in “Büro für Gestaltung n-zwo”, the office of the graphic designer Nadja Nitsche in “Zentralwerk,” September 2017 (Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach)



Photo 9. Entrance to the former ammunition factory. Mailboxes visible on the gate belong to companies operating there, September 2017 (Magdalena Abraham-Diefenbach)



Zofia Oslislo-Piekarska

Design for the Post-Industrial World. The Case of Silesia

Introduction

As the very reason for their existence ceases, places that were shaped by the industrial revolution tend to bear the full brunt of the post-industrial transformation. From workshops and industrial plants to entire cities and regions, spaces once conceived with specific tasks in mind lose their original purpose and meaning, becoming impractical, idle and obsolete. The repurposing process to give them a new lease of life is indeed a dauntingly long and complex task, as it involves a coordinated and multi-faceted approach at the level of architecture, urban planning and, perhaps most importantly, identity.

Can design be a handy tool for a social change that can help people overcome the trauma of transformation? What strategies are used by designers to shift the negative image of post-industrial Upper Silesia? What stereotypes and issues do they need to confront?

Upper Silesia bears the nationwide stigma of a bleak industrial and polluted wasteland, with ruptured urban fabric and sad remnants of

factories, steel mills and coalmines that need to be removed or rehabilitated with new content. Despite the changes that have been going on for many years, Upper Silesia is still often perceived as a drab and mucky area, covered in coal dust and burdened with a host social problems, including unemployment and exclusion, and holds no reasonable promise of a better life for its residents.

On the other hand, post-industrial cities are presented with a unique opportunity to completely reinvent themselves, as they recover whole quarters of attractive land – often in desirable central locations – which has so far been occupied by industrial operations. With little to look back on, local administration can also radically change their policy course and follow the latest models of sustainable development or the economy based on knowledge and services. Fortunately, not fully developed or defined spaces, which are so characteristic of the transformation process, provide a suitable habitat for designers to thrive. And in many respects, Upper Silesia of 2017 is still a blank canvas to paint on! Our task as residents and professionals is to make the best use of available tools not only to design a new city, but also to streamline urban processes and services, in order to build communities which are based on enrooting and pride of the past (rather than resentment), and which take responsibility for, and care of, their small homelands.

Semantic design

The word ‘design’ derives from the Italian ‘disegno’ which was used to mean both a design and a drawing as early as the Renaissance.¹ Aleksandra Cieślikowa claims that, according to many experts’ opinions, the phonetically ‘polonised’ term ‘dizajn,’ which has come to be used in Poland for some time now cannot legitimately be replaced by any other

¹ A. Cieślikowa, J. Krupiński, ‘Design czy Dizajn?’ [Design or Dizajn?], 2+3*d*, no. 1, 2001, p. 8.

Polish equivalent.² In order to further illustrate the multi-faceted nature of design, let us examine several different yet mutually complementary definitions of this concept. For Victor Papanek, who was both a design academic and an experienced practitioner, design meant the conscious and intuitive effort to impose meaningful order.³ A somewhat different definition is offered by Chairman of the Design Council, Sir George Cox, who describes design as something that combines creativity and innovation.⁴ Deyan Sudjic, Director of Design Museum in Kensington, London, on the other hand, argues that design is a public service, thus making a clear reference to the field of service design.⁵ Finally, the creators of the report *O dizajnie w województwie śląskim* [On design in Silesian Voivodship] draw attention to its two substantial aspects: On the one hand, design is an intention, a plan and a purpose, while, on the other, it is a pattern, a model or simply a form. “The form of an object is the means by which design changes people’s lives and perhaps even people themselves.”⁶

The beginnings of the mass production of everyday objects in Upper Silesia naturally coincided with the industrial revolution. In her book *Design Icons of Silesian Voivodship*, Katowice-based researcher Irma Kozina points out that mass-manufacture traditions in the region date back to the C18th. Within an industrial centre, however, design processes inevitably went beyond the creation of objects and found their way to such fields as workplace construction, working class residential

² Ibidem, p. 8.

³ V. Papanek, *Dizajn dla realnego świata* [Design for the Real World], Łódź: Recto Verso 2012, p. 24.

⁴ M. Hunter, *What Design is and Why It Matters*, Creative Industries, <http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/uk-creative-overview/news-and-views/view-what-is-design-and-why-it-matters>, [accessed: 6.11.2017].

⁵ D. Sudjic, *Język rzeczy: dizajn i luksus, moda i sztuka: w jaki sposób przedmioty nas uwodzą* [The Language of Things: Design, Luxury, Fashion, Art: How We Are Seduced by the Objects Around Us], trans. A. Puchejda. Kraków: Karakter 2013, p. 29.

⁶ P. Rojek-Adamek, G. Gawron, *O designie w województwie śląskim* [On Design in Silesian Voivodeship], Cieszyn: Zamek Cieszyn 2011, p. 14.

estates, and even everyday life culture. The former rural way of life, tuned in to the natural rhythm of the seasons and times of the day, was replaced by a clock-controlled shift work system, which meant that by taking up employment in one of the factories, workers not only had to change their place of residence, but also undergo a major lifestyle shift from ‘natural rural’ to ‘regulated urban.’

Being the product of a conscious design process that goes back to its early industrial revolution days, Upper Silesia seems to have design woven into its very DNA. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that, when faced by turbulent changes, both the residents and authorities reach out for design tools to soften the negative effects of transformation processes. Over the years, Silesia has seen the emergence of novel design disciplines, such as pro-social design and public space development and/or revitalisation. While describing the local design heritage, the aforementioned researcher Irma Kozina uses the term semantic design, which she construes as “using symbolic and verbal associations to embed the product at hand into the process of building Silesian identity by means of a cultural code.”⁷ A similar view on design is endorsed by British critic Deyan Sudjic, who says that the savviest contemporary designers must not only solve formal and functional issues, but also act as storytellers who use design as a vehicle to convey their stories.⁸ In his opinion, design is a language that the society uses to create objects representing their goals and respected values, and as such can also become a means of creating a sense of identity, be it civic, communal or individual.⁹

Recent years have seen something of a semantic design boom in Upper Silesia, though it is difficult to specify a precise inception date

⁷ I. Kozina, *Design Icons of Silesian Voivodeship*, Katowice: Design Silesia 2012, p. 30.

⁸ D. Sudjic, *Język rzeczy: dizajn i luksus, moda i sztuka: w jaki sposób przedmioty nas uwodzą* [The Language of Things: Design, Luxury, Fashion, Art: How We Are Seduced by the Objects Around Us], op. cit., p. 27.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 55–57.

or indicate one pioneering product. It could however be argued that local designers were inspired to take up identity themes by Katowice's 2010 bid for *European Capital of Culture 2016*, under the umbrella slogan 'City of Gardens.' And although the Silesian capital was eventually unsuccessful in winning the much coveted title, the application process itself triggered a number of beneficial mechanisms, starting from the intellectual effort put in to prepare the application proposing a new development strategy for the city, and ending with launching funds to invest in cultural projects. This in turn created an unprecedented synergy and inspired a close collaboration among academic, creative and local government circles. The effects of this interdisciplinary effort are still visible today. Seven years on, many of the then conceived visualisations and projects have seen completion, greatly improving the public image of Silesia in other parts of Poland and in Europe.

What was the role of semantic design in these processes? Delving into the identity threads, searching for local narratives, and specific materials, and seeking inspiration in architecture and all things local, designers create an iconography that helps overcome the trauma of negative stereotypes, build a bond with the place, and establish a sense of pride in belonging to a unique community.

Coal three different ways

It so happens sometimes that a specific material serves as an inspirational starting point for design pursuits. Not surprisingly perhaps, coal has enjoyed a dominant position as Silesia's creative material of choice for several years now, being used in various design contexts and showcased as part of design events, such as e.g. the *WęgielBOOM!* exhibition.¹⁰ At the same time, one of the deeply entrenched stereotypes about Silesia is that of the mining industry still playing a vital role in

¹⁰ *Węgiel BOOM!*, exhibition at The City of Gardens Gallery, Katowice, running from 14 September to 3rd October 3 2013, curated by Marta Frank.

the region's economy. Coal is therefore full of symbolic meanings, with strong positive but also negative connotations, and as such has tremendous iconic potential for use in creative production, as illustrated by the following selected examples of coal-inspired projects.

Bro.Kat

Mr. Czesław, native of Katowice's historic Nikiszowiec district, was once a miner at Wieczorek colliery. Today, as a pensioner, artist, and member of the Janów Group of Unprofessional Painters, he is helping three young designers realise a boldly unique idea. Architects Bogna Polańska and Roma Skuza of Bro.Kat Studio have joined their forces with designer Kaja Nosal to launch a new product on the market – a collection of jewellery made from... coal. Their master plan involves creating an entire collection (rings, earrings, cufflinks and pendants), along with a visual identity for their new brand Hochglance. The project is based on intergenerational experience exchange, as Mr. Czesław shares his know-how of coal processing and the young designers show him what beautiful innovative products can be made from it. Encouraged by friends, they make their debut at Katowice's Kato Yard Sale in June 2012. The Hochglance collection turns out to be an instant success, bringing Bro.Kat Studio the *Small Form* award at the 18th Silesian Annual Architectural Design Awards the same year, and the *Must have!* award at the Łódź Design Festival a year later. The creators of the collection, which is successfully sold both at home and internationally, emphasize that their idea is not new, as many people have had a go at coal jewellery before them. What they believe to be their unique selling point and the main reason for their success is the gracefully simple form and the elegant combination of coal and silver showing off their natural beauty.¹¹

¹¹ Z. Oslislo-Piekarska, *Nowi Ślązacy. Miasto, dizajn, tożsamość* [The New Silesians: City, Design, Identity], Katowice: Academy of Fine Arts 2015, pp. 127–138.

Soot Soap

In 2012, Marta Frank and Marcin Babko organise *Silos Falami Fest*, an art and design fair set 320m underground, transforming the tunnels of the former Guido coal mine in Zabrze into a local craft market. As a way of promoting the event, Marta comes up with the idea of ‘Sadza Soap’ [Soot Soap], a unique promotional item in the form of a coal-shaped bar of soap, for which she uses activated charcoal powder and a self-made mould. During the fair, the black soap proves instantly popular and the stock runs out within a few hours. This unexpected transformation of a promotional item into a saleable commodity prompts the designer to patent the idea and start production on a larger scale, giving rise to a new line of cosmetics marketed under the already successful ‘Sadza Soap’ brand. In addition to its original appearance, the soap offers other benefits – has a very positive effect on the skin, is environmentally safe and, last but not least, is locally made in Silesia. The project has taken off thanks to the successful combination of an ingenious idea and equally fitting form that is both functional and witty, thanks to the playful slogan ‘Niby marasi, a myje’ (seems dirty, but cleans well), rendered in Silesian dialect. “Our cosmetics break the stereotype of coal, because instead of getting you dirty, they’ll get you squeaky clean. In addition, they are natural and can be used by everyone: adults, children, vegans and people with allergies,” asserts Marta. Interestingly, ‘Sadza Soap’ has found its way into markets in other post-industrial regions and is successfully sold e.g. at the Saint-Étienne Mine Museum in France.

Haja!

Shortly after her 2009 graduation from the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, Joanna Sowula invites her friends to form the Haja! collective. ‘Haja’ (pronounced somewhat like ‘hiya’), meaning a row in Silesian dialect, seems a perfect name for a creative business with a view to inventing products inspired by Silesian heritage. Although many of the

collective's products never go beyond the concept or prototype stage, they quickly attract considerable publicity – and not surprisingly so – considering such quirky creations as e.g. coal-shaped, black velvet pillows on which to sit or even lie down. Their creator, Matylda Sałajewska, reveals that she particularly enjoys playing with stereotypes and this is why the rough nature of coal sparked her to create soft pillows on which you can comfortably 'dream a little dream of Silesia'.¹² Although the Haja! Collective's stint was a short-lived one, it trail-blazed a trend for all things local that has since inspired several successful market ventures.

Cool Silesian 'godka'

In 2011, Klaudia and Krzysztof Rokseła created Gryfnie, one of the most recognisable Silesian brands producing local products. Since its inception, their main goal has been to promote the Silesian 'godka,' the characteristic local ethnolect so flawlessly spoken by Klaudia. Although, admittedly, there were several associations of the dialect's enthusiasts before them, it was Gryfnie that managed to hit the right note with the young generation and turning the vernacular into a fashionable pop culture theme. Through their skilful use of the internet (gryfnie.com), and especially social media, the Silesian godka is promoted in a way that is attractive to the generation of 20/30 year olds. The creators of the project declare that they are keen to steer clear of politics and folklore perceived as a symbol of backwardness and parochialism. "They did not want to talk about Silesia in the past tense,"¹³ and as a result turned to modern design and good quality products. They collaborate with illustrators and designers from the region, but also from Warsaw, and have their t-shirts made in Poland from local fabrics. In addition to promotional clothing and items (t-shirts, bags, mugs, etc.), they also engage in various educational projects, including: a Silesian dictionary, an

¹² Ibidem, pp. 230–243.

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 68–79.

educational game (*Spamiyntej ślonski słowa* [Remember Silesian words]), and films in which Silesians use their local dialect to talk about their work. Their website also features *Kurs Ślonskij Godki*, a Silesian dialect course in episodes, and articles on regional cultural events, of course written in Silesian. Gryfnie is not only a website, an online store and a high-street shop. It is a well-established Silesian brand and an important cultural contributor in the region. From its humble home-based beginnings, the business has grown to employ a 10-strong core team and dozens of collaborators commissioned to work on individual projects. Thanks to such initiatives as Gryfnie, Silesia can deflect the stigma of tackiness, lack of sophistication and outmodedness. Now that the project has come to enjoy nationwide popularity, Gryfnie tops with Silesian slogans can be seen in the streets of Warsaw or Wrocław, worn by young people would not necessarily sport blue and yellow t-shirts with 'Oberschlesien' written across the chest.

The Culture Zone

When the early C21st saw Katowice regain the centrally-located area formerly used by Katowice Colliery (next to the iconic Spodek arena), the city was presented with a unique opportunity to reinvent itself. Following careful deliberation, a decision was made to invest in what is now known as the Culture Zone, a precinct that is home to several cultural institutions, all boasting impressive, award-winning headquarters that are exemplars of stunning modern architecture. The Zone consists of the (New) Silesian Museum, which makes partial use of the former post-industrial buildings, the spectacular home of the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra, and the International Congress Centre, which is managed jointly with the Spodek arena in existence for over 40 years.

While planning this investment programme, the local authorities followed the path first explored by Spain's Bilbao, a post-industrial city

transformed thanks to investing in cultural infrastructure. Can Katowice indeed achieve the ‘Bilbao effect’? Well, the Culture Zone has definitely sparked local controversy and heated debate over some of the planning and construction errors which regrettably were not avoided. One of the most noticeable glitches is the mono-functionality of the area, arising directly from the modernist paradigms of city design, which recommend that urban space be split into areas with specific purposes. In addition, despite the physical proximity, the Culture Zone is cut off from the city’s inner centre by architectural barriers, such as e.g. expressways, which means difficult access for pedestrians and cyclists, who need to wait at traffic lights, navigate stairs or ramps in underground passages and pedestrian flyovers). This situation, combined with an ample inner car park for 1000 vehicles, obviously favours moving around in a car – an evident contradiction to policies of environmentally sustainable urban design. Critics also point to the symbolic separation of culture from the ordinary life of the city, and the lack of a natural cityscape background in the form of residential and service buildings. You have to make a special trip to the Zone, as hardly anyone gets there by accident, strolling around the city.¹⁴ Joanna Orzechowska-Waławska pinpoints this problem by saying:

It seems impossible to avoid the impression that the Katowice Culture Zone is a kind of paradox from the city-making point of view. On the one hand, it is a space with great potential to become a showpiece of Katowice’s cultural transformation, signposting the direction of change in the city, while, on the other, it effectively prevents the Zone’s venues from becoming, as it were, “seedlings” of urbanity.¹⁵

¹⁴ J. Orzechowska-Waławska, *Infrastruktura. Nowe instytucje kultury* [Infrastructure. New Cultural Institutions], in: *Efekt ESK, jak konkurs na Europejską Stolicę Kultury 2016 zmienił polskie miasta* [The ECC Effect: How European Capital of Culture 2016 Transformed Polish Cities], ed. P. Kubicki, B. Gierat-Bieroń, J. Orzechowska-Waławska, Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy “NOMOS” 2017, pp. 189.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 190–191.

Despite all the disadvantages voiced by the critics in the early days of the project, the Culture Zone is a success, which is confirmed not only by research, but also by the reactions of users of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. Local residents and visitors are especially fond of the green areas and public spaces around the Silesian Museum and the NOSPR concert hall. The Culture Zone, which is also a fantastic vantage point to view the entire city, is not only visited to attend a concert, exhibition or another event, but has also become one of its must-see landmarks, proudly shown to visitors, a popular hang-out place for locals to gather, an on-trend location take wedding pictures, and a welcoming safe place to relax and play with your children. The quality of this space and its components, including architecture, street furniture and greenery, is substantially superior to anything that central Katowice has had to offer so far. It should also be noted that this Katowice neighbourhood has historically been poor in green areas and recreational facilities.¹⁶

It must also be noted that all the Zone's facilities are spectacular architectural realisations – all different but harmonising with each other and successfully referencing local heritage in their own unique ways. The International Congress Centre by JEMS Architects is a black block severed across by a green roof with a passageway – a reference to the former road which connected the village of Bogucice to Kuźnica Bogucka (Bogucice Hammer Mill) in medieval times. The NOSPR concert hall, designed by Tomasz Konior, was given a facade of red clinker brick and window reveals painted red, as a reference to the architectural features of the local working class residential estates, especially the famed Nikiszowiec. The new Silesian Museum by the Austrian studio Riegler Riewe Architekten, is a particularly good example of the use of post-industrial areas while maintaining their original character. Although a functional device

¹⁶ *Contrast provokes stereotype*, Appetite for Radical Change, <http://appetiteforchange.eu/gallery-category/exhibition-layout/#contrast-provokes-stereotype> [accessed 6 Nov 2017].

for the architects,¹⁷ the underground location has a symbolic meaning for the residents – what was formerly a coal mine is now a mine of art and beauty. The fact that the architectural competition to build the new museum was won by a design showcasing the buildings of the former Katowice coal mine demonstrates that Silesia is no longer ashamed of its industrial heritage and is ready for its creative transformation. Architect and architecture expert Ryszard Nakonieczny claims that “[post-industrial] heritage is the determining factor of Upper Silesian identity.”¹⁸ A similar view is held by a historian and activist of the Silesian Autonomy Movement, Jerzy Gorzelik, who maintains that the industrial revolution inspired an “identity emancipation of Upper Silesians,”¹⁹ based on the heroisation of work and the successful economic and cultural growth of the entire region during the period of industrialisation. The remnants of this glorious industrial era that are still present in the landscape inspire the locals to explore their own specific history that is distinctly different from the rest of Poland. This unique character is also very appealing to visitors from other parts of the country and abroad and as such has great tourist potential, as demonstrated by the massive turnouts at cultural events staged in post-industrial venues, including: exhibitions at the Wilson Shaft Gallery; events organised in the Szombierki Heat and Power Plant; The *Tauron Nowa Muzyka* Festival held at the former Katowice coal mine, and now Silesian Museum; The Golden Vision

¹⁷ Anna Pędziwiatr of the Austrian architectural office Riegler Riewe Architekten explains why the main part of the Museum was located underground: “Hiding the building underground allowed us to design a larger and more functional volume. Placing the building on the surface would significantly mean limited possibilities of land development and obscuring the view of the historic mine buildings. F. Teclaw, *Poznaj nowe Muzeum Śląskie* [Discover the new Silesian Museum], bryła.pl, http://www.bryla.pl/bryla/1,85301,9355563,Poznaj_nowe_Muzeum_Slaskie.html [accessed 6 Nov 2017].

¹⁸ K. Karwat, ‘Sprzedać. Kupić. Nie burzyć. Rozmowa z Ryszardem Nakoniecznym’ [Sell. Buy. Don’t Demolish. Interview with Ryszard Nakonieczny], *Fabryka Silesia Quarterly*, no. 3, 2013, p. 38.

¹⁹ J. Gorzelik, ‘Barbarzyńcy w mieście ogrodów’ [Barbarians in the City of Gardens], *Fabryka Silesia Quarterly*, no. 3, 2013, p. 32.

Festival at Uthemann Steelworks; and the cultural activity at Zabrze's Guido coal mine.

Some interesting initiatives related to the adaptation of former industrial spaces are also undertaken in smaller centres across the region. The former power plant of Czeladź's Saturn Colliery, for instance, has been home to the *Elektrownia* Contemporary Art Gallery since 2013. The historic building, designed by the architect Józef Pius Dziekoński, has been part of the Silesian Voivodship's Industrial Heritage Trail since 2010. The plant's beautiful interior, featuring elements of the original equipment, e.g. the Wanda generator from 1903, has been transformed into a stunning exhibition space. In 2013, this extremely successful conversion brought *Elektrownia* the 2013 Superjednostka social award presented by Stowarzyszenie Moje Miasto [My City Association].

Another notable conversion of this type is a former distillery in Czechowice-Dziedzice – now home to *K6 – Przestrzeń Kreatywna Kotułńskiego 6*, a multi-purpose creative space to hold training programmes, workshops, meetings and photo sessions.

The Business Zone

Although it may often seem that the only way to give post-industrial sites a new lease of life is to transform them into publicly-financed cultural facilities, their business potential is certainly recognised by both private and commercial investors. Katowice's most successful story of this kind is the former Porcelain Factory. Following its 2009 collapse into bankruptcy, the site was initially placed on the Industrial Heritage Trail, but due to the sell-off of the factory's old equipment as part of the liquidation process and the resulting risk of losing the historic production line, the facility was soon removed from the Trail. In 2012, however things took an upturn in 2012, as factory was purchased by the Gieshe Foundation with a view of transforming the into the *Porcelana Śląska* Industrial and Technological Park, later renamed *Fabryka Porcelany* [Porcelain

Factory]. Having set up an adequate restoration fund, the Foundation set out to restore the old production line complete with a fully operational porcelain firing furnace, after which the site was successfully reinstated as an Industrial Heritage Trail site. The greatest success of the project, however, is not the preservation of the historic part, but giving the site a new lease of life. During the five years since the takeover, over 60,000 people have visited the site to attend events and tours, as well as to enquire about rental opportunities. Currently, Porcelain Factory is home to almost 40 companies, mainly from the IT sector, but also media and creative agencies, an art gallery, showrooms, a concept store, dental and aesthetic medicine surgeries, a hairdresser's, and a restaurant named *Bistro Prodiż*.²⁰ Widely regarded as an on-trend place, the Factory has seen a surge of interest from companies looking to move to this new attractive location, as soon as some of the complex's buildings that are currently under or awaiting renovation are available for rent.

Another way to give post-industrial facilities a new lease is to convert them into residential buildings. One of Silesia's first adaptations of this type was completed by architect Przemó Łukasik, who converted the lamp house of Bytom's former *Orzeł Biały* Mining and Metallurgical Company into his home. Łukasik's Medusa Group architectural studio has since completed a similar project in Gliwice, converting an old granary in Zygmunta Starego Street into residential lofts and office space. Another successful Gliwice-based transformation is the *Nowe Gliwice* complex converted from former *Gliwice* Colliery's four pithead buildings, designed largely by Emil and Georg Zillman in the early C20th. The complex, which is used as a business and educational centre with a part dedicated to promoting local entrepreneurship, is managed by the city-owned Upper Silesian Local Development Agency.

²⁰ J. Przybytek, *Fabryka Porcelany w Katowicach po pięciu latach jak nowa* [As good as new: Katowice Porcelain Factory five years on], *dziennikzachodni.pl*, <http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/wiadomosci/katowice/a/fabryka-porcelany-w-katowicach-po-pieciu-latach-jak-nowa-wideo-zdjecia,12310743/> [accessed 6 Nov 2017].

Alternative tourism

Unfortunately, not all heritage sites in Silesia have had the same amount of luck. Some of them have already disappeared from the local landscape (e.g. the historic tram depot in Bytom), while others have been left unused and gradually falling into disrepair (such as the Chorzów slaughterhouse), making their possible restoration less and less feasible as the years go by. As residents, we must be aware that not all industrial heritage sites can and will be preserved. Hence the growing importance of documenting projects, such as *Alternatif Turistik* and *Indunature*, created by grassroots enthusiasts led by Marcin Doś under the institutional auspices of the *Kronika* Centre for Contemporary Art in Bytom. First launched in 2009, *Alternatif Turistik* was initially a programme offering tours of inaccessible industrial heritage sites. Admittedly, some were in a serious state of disrepair at the time, and potentially quite risky to set foot in. Regardless, however, the demand was high, revealing the project's huge social potential of bringing together large numbers of like-minded people to meet and exchange ideas. In the introduction to his book *Indunature*, which has since become an alternative guidebook to Silesia, *Kronika's* director Stanisław Ruksza, writes: "Alternatif Turistik is a participatory programme encouraging people to engage in interdisciplinary activities, such tours, meetings, concerts, workshops, picnics, bike rental/cycling, playing turbo-golf, unproductive wandering around forgotten places, and indulging laziness..."²¹ Marcin Doś, in turn, points out that Silesia is changing before our eyes, as we lose factory buildings and entire industrial complexes are torn down. While the region's image known from Kutz's films goes into oblivion, it is definitely worth taking the time to describe and record what is left, whether in photographs or, better yet, in person by visiting the sites before they are demolished.²² Activities as part of the project were held

²¹ M. Doś, *Indunature*, Bytom: CSW Kronika 2009, p. 6.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 9.

in variable form for three consecutive years, while the book *Indunature* received the 2009 ‘Silesian Thing’ award. The project had a huge impact on changing the perceptions of the region among the young generation of artists and designers coming from Upper Silesia and the Dąbrowa Basin, initiating, as it were, a trend for the so-called Silesian design and alternative Silesian lifestyle.

Sustainable design

As sustainable design (also known as ecologically informed, holistic, and environmentally friendly design) gains more and more publicity, one might reasonably ask what the term actually means in practice. In his book *The Philosophy of Sustainable Design: The Future of Architecture*, Jason F. McLennan offers the following definition:

Sustainable Design is a design philosophy that seeks to maximize the quality of the built environment, while minimizing or eliminating negative impact in the natural environment.²³

What other possible meanings does the term sustainable entail? What guidelines should a sustainably aware designer follow? Perhaps, as Pawel Jaworski indicates, a sustainable designer “is someone who is guided by the users’ needs while formulating and solving design issues.”²⁴ This is approach takes into account the relevant working practices, production methods, availability of raw and derivative materials, as well as the welfare of both creators and customers. Sustainable design is what might be called a creative take on existing spaces and

²³ J.F. McLennan, *The Philosophy of Sustainable Design: The Future of Architecture*, Kansas City: Eco Tone 2004, p. 4.

²⁴ P. Jaworski, ‘Odpowiedzialność za przestrzeń publiczną’ [Responsibility for Public Space], in: *Design w terenie – wspólna przygoda z designem. Radlin* [Field Design – a Communal Design Adventure. Radlin], eds. W. Gdowicz, M. Więckowska, Katowice: Design Silesia 2013, p. 9.

objects, and as such seems to have a special role to play in post-industrial regions, where the natural environment has suffered significant damage due to human activity. This is exactly what underlies the growing popularity of upcycling, i.e. a form of secondary treatment of waste (or unnecessary items) that advocates creating objects of higher value than the raw materials that were originally used to produce them. The process is in striking contrast to downcycling – a practice involving recycling back to raw materials while reducing the quality and value of the processed material. Locally, the idea was promoted by ART.UPCYKLING.PL, a 2013 upcycling event organised in Katowice's *Rondo Sztuki* Art Gallery. And since there is no limit to imagination when it comes to upcycling ideas and materials, the exhibition featured as wide a variety of items as Robert Pludry's and Jakub Sobiepanek's armchair made from a plastic barrel, handbags from supermarket carrier bags by Patka Smirnow, and Ewa Michalska's recycled paper baskets. The goal of the event was not only to present the upcycled products, but above all to popularise the idea of upcycling. To this end, a series of workshops was organised as part of the event, where one could have a go at repurposing seemingly useless items.²⁵

The concept has definitely taken off locally, as best reflected by the opening of UPstore, Poland's first upcycling showroom in Katowice. Though, admittedly, upcycling enthusiasts had had to wait three long years since the original event at *Rondo Sztuki*, but the store at 22 Kilińskiego Street has really been steamrolling since its launch a year ago, showcasing and selling designer furniture and home furnishings from all over Poland.

One of the Silesian designers taking part in the exhibition was Wioletta Kurtok, who has been involved in making upcycled jewellery

²⁵ *Czy śmieci mogą być dziełem sztuki? Rusza 1 Salon ART.UPCYKLING.PL* [Can Junk be a Work of Art? 1st ART.UPCYKLING.PL Salon Launch], *dziennikzachodni.pl*, <http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/883250,czy-smieci-moga-byc-dzielem-sztuki-rusza-1-salon-artupcyklingpl-zdjecia,id,t.html> [accessed: 6.11.2017].

under the Fanny&Franz brand since 2012. The name is a reference to the history of Katowice's industry, as the site of today's Spodek arena was once occupied by two interconnected zinc foundries, Fanny and Franz. Another implication that brand seems to convey is that the jewellery is made for both men and women. The collection, which includes cuff links, tie pins, rings, pendants, bracelets, earrings and brooches, is carefully handcrafted, each piece being individually up-cycled from once useful, now old and broken items, and therefore absolutely unique.

A totally different approach to processing a local material was adopted by the Bytom-based artist Łukasz Surowiec. Not surprisingly perhaps, he took on coal as the most iconic of Silesian motifs, but the focal point of his work is not the material itself (although important for symbolic reasons), but an attempt to sensitise the public to social issues related to the decline of industry. 2013 saw Surowiec realise a project known as Black Diamonds, carried out in collaboration with the Institution of Culture *Katowice: City of Gardens*. Helped by a team of unemployed miners, he converted a ton of coal into diamond crystals, which were then sold at a specially prepared jewellery stand in the Silesia City Centre shopping mall and through local art and design boutiques. The aim of the project was to restore miners to work with a familiar material, providing them with temporary employment and a source of income. On the other hand, the artist engages a dialogue with the industrial history of Upper Silesia, while exploring the role of an artist in stimulating social processes.

Service design

Service design is a relatively new design field, which draws on research methods used in ethnography. Since its beginnings in the 1980s, this discipline has enjoyed a rapid rise to prominence fuelled by the new economic model based on knowledge, information and services. The

C21st has seen a marked “increase in importance of the intangible dimension of our interactions with products and the level of services offered – whether in the commercial or public sphere.”²⁶

So what is this service design that everyone speaks of? Above all, it is an interdisciplinary design approach that aims to solve specific problems of specific user groups by means of design tools and processes. Thus, thanks to the proactive involvement of all interested parties, including manufacturers, distributors, vendors and users themselves, the chances of creating a better product, service or space are substantially increased. This means “designing *with* the people, not just *for* the people.”²⁷ “Designers who strive to improve services help customers understand the issues involved and identify possible improvements by e.g. visualising or prototyping possible solutions.”²⁸

Field Design

An exemplar of this kind of design approach is the *Field Design* workshop series, whose three editions, in Mstów (2011), Radlin (2012) and Bytom’s Bobrek district (2013), were delivered as part of the Design Silesia programme organised by the Silesian Voivodship Marshal Office. The workshops saw “a group of young designers tasked with creating development concepts to reinvigorate key public spaces within a chosen locality.”²⁹ While spending a week within a given community, they were able to get to know the place, talk to the residents and make valuable observations. Each edition of the series had students from Silesian

²⁶ W. Rochacka, ‘Niewidzialne projekty. Service design – projektowanie usług’ [Invisible Projects: Service Design], 2+3d, no. 40, 2011, p. 100.

²⁷ P. Jaworski, *Odpowiedzialność za przestrzeń publiczną* [Responsibility for Public Space], op. cit., p. 9.

²⁸ W. Rochacka, *Niewidzialne projekty. Service design – projektowanie usług* [Invisible Projects: Service Design], op. cit., pp. 100–101.

²⁹ *Design w terenie – wspólna przygoda z designem. Radlin* [Field Design – a Communal Design Adventure. Radlin], ed. W. Gdowicz, M. Więckowska, Katowice: Design Silesia 2013, p. 12.

design universities work under the supervision of different experts and use typical service design processes, such as field trips, discussions, meetings with residents and local administration representatives, as well as specific tools, like commented walking tours, during which residents expressed their opinions about particular public spaces. Thanks to this model of work, the local authorities had an opportunity to learn what design is, while students were introduced to the sustainable design philosophy. The key element of the scheme was to involve both the authorities and, perhaps even more importantly, the residents in the design process. Commenting on the *Field Design* workshops, Paweł Jaworski of the *Napraw Sobie Miasto* [Repair Your City] Foundation wrote: “The richer the design process the more diverse the group invited to participate,”³⁰ adding that no-one has more expertise on the subject of public space use than the residents themselves. Furthermore, when residents become co-creators of a communal project, they tend to treat it as their own and are ready to take responsibility for it in the future. All three editions of *Field Design* concluded with exhibitions to showcase the design concepts prepared, however the project’s most important achievement seems to have been its role as an effective awareness raiser for all those involved. This is reflected in participant reviews following each edition, which confirm that the project was beneficial to all parties involved. While residents received an opportunity to discover their place anew, developing a sense of pride and willingness to act for the common good, communal authorities were provided with new development directions, and students got a taste for active citizenship in addition to being trained how to properly go about the service design process.

Do Your Yard Up

Active support of local and regional residents was also considered to be at the heart of Katowice’s bid for European Capital of Culture 2016:

³⁰ P. Jaworski, *Odpowiedzialność za przestrzeń publiczną* [Responsibility for Public Space], op. cit., p. 9.

“A contemporary Garden City is anything but a utopian idea. Drawing on the original vision in terms of both its scale and the amount of energy invested in the activities and projects involved, it is, in fact, a challenge that can only be handled by all the inhabitants of the city in question.”³¹ The proposed programme featured a number of participatory events, several of which have been successfully implemented across the city. One of such schemes is *Plac na glanc* [Do Your Yard Up], a resident involvement, competition-based project which has seen the restoration of seven communal yards since its launch in 2013. The rules are simple: interested communities declare their willingness to participate and winning applications are selected basing on the level of community involvement. The restoration is then prepared by a team of professionals, including a duo of young Silesian architects, Grzegorz Layer and Ewa Labus, and culture expert Michał Centkowski.³² They run workshops to identify the residents’ needs and then suggest solutions that are reviewed through community consultation. The funding for the renovation comes from the institution, while the ongoing maintenance of the space is the responsibility of the community.

Supergarden

Period architecture from the Polish People’s Republic era tends to evoke negative perceptions among the middle and older generation, who associate it with the oppressive political system. They are also the people currently holding top administrative positions within the city. Post-war modernism meets with a much warmer of twenty-to-thirty-year-olds, unaffected by the trauma of communist rule and the travails of the transformation period. In his report *Nowi mieszczanie w nowej*

³¹ G. Owczarek, ‘Czarny ogród [Black Garden],’ in: *Katowice: miasto ogrodów* [Katowice: City of Gardens], eds. K. Piekarski, P. Zaczkowski, Katowice: Centrum Kultury Katowice im. Krystyny Bochenek 2010, p. 21.

³² I. Sobczyk, ‘Zrobili plac na glanc. Zamiast betonu jest trawnik’ [They did their yard up, swapping concrete for glass], *Gazeta Katowice*, 5 Oct 2013, p. 5.

Polsce [New Townspeople of New Poland], urban researcher Paweł Kubicki points out that subsequent generations raised and socialised in contemporary Polish cities naturally look for new narratives on which to build their identities.³³ One argument in support of this thesis is the artistic and community-driven project *Supergarden*, delivered by a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, Katarzyna Jędrońska-Goik, with the support of *Katowice: City of Gardens*. The project, which can safely be classed as an example of service design,³⁴ saw three successful editions held from 2011 to 2013. The first two were carried out in Katowice's centrally located *Superjednostka* residential block, which, at 762 flats, remains one of Poland's largest buildings of its kind. All those willing to participate received flower pots to place on their balconies with the view to, *inter alia*, strengthening the local sense of community and enhancing the appearance of the neighbourhood. A positive outcome in terms of community involvement was that "following project completion, the participants (as many as 40 percent of total residents) unanimously declared that it definitely improved the appearance of their block, having a positive effect on the visual image of central Katowice."³⁵

String art design

Service design has also become staple trend at Katowice's Academy of Fine Arts, where the interdisciplinary Social Communication Design Studio operates as part of the Faculty of Design. This is exactly where *String Art Design* was conceived as a graduation project by Magdalena Kamińska and Magdalena Zawieja, being an exemplar of a student

³³ P. Kubicki, *Nowi mieszkańcy w nowej Polsce* [New Townspeople of New Poland], Warszawa: Instytut Obywatelski 2011.

³⁴ B. Mońka, 'Usługa to podróż w czasie i przestrzeni' [Service as a Journey through Space and Time], interview with Agnieszka Szóstak, *I Przedsiębiorczość i Dizajn* – magazyn Śląskiego Zamku Sztuki i Przedsiębiorczości w Cieszynie, no. 12, 2013.

³⁵ *Superogród* [Supergarden], Katowice – Miasto Ogrodów, <http://esk2016katowice.home.pl/web-live/node/796> [access: 6 Nov 2017].

project that has been successfully introduced to the market. As part of the *Dizajn na pograniczu* [Borderland Design] workshop, the designer duo took on the town of Czechowice-Dziedzice to address the locally persistent problem of a lost sense of connection between the residents and the town they live in. As a possible remedy, the students suggested a project that could help strengthen bonds of common experience and promote intergenerational dialogue. To this end, they examined some relevant good practices in the region and tried to meet with a number of luminaries of the local folk art and craft scene to determine Czechowice-Dziedzice's most prominently featured creative disciplines. The choice fell on cross-stitch embroidery, primarily for pragmatic reasons, as it is a relatively uncomplicated, easy-to-explain form of creative activity, and because it has already attracted some groups of enthusiasts, including the *Zabrzeżanki* Rural Housewives' Club and students from the local Public Middle School No. 1.

Having completed the research stage, the designers went on to design a special playground to be built within the public space of the park neighbouring the *Północ* Housing Estate. The project involves a series of large-scale, plywood panels for communal cross-stitching activity. The potential user groups were identified using the *stakeholder map* and *personas* tools from the service designer's toolbox, and field tested as part of the *Zapaleńcy – Aktywny Dzień Dziecka* [Cross-Stitch Buffs – Active Children's Day] event, which was carried out in collaboration with Czechowice-Dziedzice Town Council in June 2014. Judging by the amount of positive feedback from both the town officials and participants of all ages, *String Art Design* was met with a very warm welcome at the event. It has also earned critical acclaim and professional recognition, winning e.g. the 2015 Silesian Thing award.

Conclusions

The current trend for Silesian semantic design (defined narrowly as the production of Silesian-branded apparel and accessories) is bound

to pass soon, although the most successful products will certainly remain available in souvenir and design shops, just like the Eiffel Tower t-shirts that you can always buy in Paris. Silesia is unique and aware of its own character, so local products should follow as something normal and widely available as opposed to being no more than peculiar fashion fads. It should be noted, however, that the trend for drawing inspiration from Silesian themes is not merely a stage in the development of local design, but above all an important factor in the process of creating the iconography of the New Silesians,³⁶ as a generation that is free from complexes and proud of their place. Thanks to successfully combating local stereotypes and traumas, they have successfully completed a soul cleansing psychotherapy treatment (as aptly illustrated by *Soot Soap*). Free from burdens, self-confident and responsible, the people are willing and able to create better living circumstances for themselves – and this is the lasting and universal dimension of interest in the local tradition and heritage. Ewa Gołębiowska, Director of Zamek Cieszyn, offers an apt summary of the current situation:

It would be good if this new enthusiasm, the new local patriotism that we are currently witnessing in Katowice, could also be felt in other cities of the region. Ideally, other forms of acceptance of Silesia should develop in addition to wearing t-shirts, so that this enthusiasm can successfully translate into the quality of public space and standard of living in Silesia.³⁷

So, what does the future hold for Silesian semantic design and Silesian design in general? Silesia has a long-standing history as a prominent

³⁶ New Silesians is a capacious category, abolishing the so far prevailing dichotomy between the 'hanys' and the 'gorol' (Silesian native vs. stranger) and thus open to Silesians by choice, and not only by birth, which defines a new Silesian identity based on voluntary and positive identification with the region. Cf. Z. Oslislo-Piekarska, *Nowi Ślązacy. Miasto, dizajn, tożsamość* [The New Silesians: City, Design, Identity], op. cit.

³⁷ Z. Oslislo-Piekarska, *Nowi Ślązacy. Miasto, dizajn, tożsamość* [The New Silesians: City, Design, Identity], op. cit., p. 98.

design centre providing quality, functional and aesthetically refined designs that are widely appreciated for their versatility and innovation. However, in spite of being just a short chapter in that history, semantic design seems to have triggered the imagination and awareness of not only designers, but also urban activists, cultural creators, entrepreneurs, local administration officials and educators. The larger the community of socially switched-on people, who understand the importance of design tools in bringing about a positive change in the region, the more efficient the process will be. What we must not do is rest on our laurels, as there is still a great deal of work to be done before Silesia is free from its many problems. The region still welcomes those ready to get their hands dirty and willing to pioneer change – just like it did in its glory days during the industrial revolution.

Translated by Rafał Drewniak



Karol Piekarski

Katowice – I like It! New Social Media Narratives for a Post-Industrial City

The early C21st century saw Katowice stand on the cusp of a huge opportunity for change, but, by the same token, facing a complex and daunting challenge. This is well illustrated by a series of spectacular and award-winning investments at the heart of Katowice's Culture Zone, including a congress centre, a museum and a concert hall, all erected at the site of the former coal mine. Thanks to these important cultural assets, Katowice can continue to develop its new narrative of a city that reinvents itself through grand architecture. However, these investments also provoke questions about how the decline of local heavy industry will impact on Upper Silesia's identity. Are former mine workers ready to embrace modern concert halls and exhibition spaces and feel at home in them? And last but not least, are these cultural facilities capable of providing an incentive for their post-transformation children to tie down their future to the region?

Katowice is one of those cities where the perception of architectural realisations goes beyond their primary function of public facilities, residential buildings or regular production halls.¹ Some arouse pride and admiration, manifesting the power of the state or the modern outlook of the city, while others become unwanted and blasted into oblivion. Although they are primarily a tool of positive propaganda in official narratives, they often tend to stigmatise the native communities, especially when they are derelict, soot-blackened industrial facilities. Nowadays, the local architecture still sparks strong emotional responses from the residents and visitors alike. As is evident from the ever-raging social media debates about the city's public space architecture plays a central role in local identity narratives. Importantly, these are no longer small group discussions held among experts, public figures and journalists, who once had a monopoly on ideas perpetuated in the media and public domain. This is why the web is an environment where alternative narratives about Upper Silesia and Katowice tend to thrive.

Identity in a network society

Identity in a network society is constructed around two opposite tendencies, with increasingly faster and unrelenting globalisation on the one hand and, on the other, grass-roots micro-narratives created by small communities often with the use of network tools to improve communication and flow of ideas. Though apparently mutually exclusive, these phenomena remain closely related.² Of special interest

¹ The relationships between architecture and identity in Katowice and Upper Silesia are discussed, *inter alia*, in: I. Kozina, *Chaos i uporządkowanie. Dylematy architektoniczne na przemysłowym Górnym Śląsku w latach 1763–1955* [Chaos and Order. Architectural Dilemmas in Industrial Upper Silesia in 1763–1955], Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego 2005.

² The problem of identity in the network society in the context of urban movements is discussed, *inter alia*, by M. Castells, *Siła tożsamości*, trans. S. Szymański, ed. M. Marody, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 2008, pp. 68–73.

to me is the latter one, which involves the use of network technologies to create local narratives relating to what is important and unique to a given community. Perceived partly as a response to globalisation in seeking to find meaning in what is close and tangible, this phenomenon is often referred to as glocalisation – a defensive reaction to globalisation processes.³ And although the attempts to create new social media-based narratives for the city that are of interest to me refer to the local tradition, their main goal seems to be that of creating a broader framework for identity and emphasising an affinity with the European cultural sphere. To a large extent, these activities demonstrate the aspirations of local communities, although they should also be perceived as an attempt to come to terms with Upper Silesia's difficult history and tangled identity.

Katowice as a difficult case

Although the above trends are noticeable in many Polish cities, Katowice stands out as a special case because the locally created narratives need to embrace both the urban identity aspect and a need to reconcile the legacy of a former heavy industry centre. To make matters even more complex, there is also the overlapping problem of national identity and the multicultural heritage of Upper Silesia. On the one hand, therefore, it is necessary to recreate or build anew the public space necessary in each city – in both material and non-material terms – to allow people to meet and exchange views. On the other, there is a need to come up with a new Silesian narrative that will fill the gap left behind by the declining industry while overcoming the problem of national identity defined in terms of the age-old rivalry between Poland and Germany. In fact, these needs are closely related, because socially influential

³ R. Robertson, 'Glocalisation: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,' in: *Global Modernities*, ed. M. Featherstone, S. Lash, R. Robertson, London: Sage 1995, pp. 25–45.

narratives, defining the identity and aspirations of individuals, can arise only in an environment where different views of different community members are given an opportunity to meet head-on.

One reason why Katowice has been struggling to create a strong urban identity is its provenance. Originally built around a railway node, the city then administratively absorbed subsequent mining settlements, usually having their own history, unique character and identity. After WWII, Poland's communist government was far from intent on creating an intellectual hub in Katowice, doing their utmost to curb the city's ambitions to become anything more than a working class, industrial centre. Recent decades have also brought a thick overlay of stereotypes stigmatising Upper Silesia, so that, until recently, any positive narratives relating to Katowice had to come up against the relentless stream of stories about insolvent coalmines, social problems, environmental catastrophe and depopulation. Many local residents still think that the nearest real city with a real town square and real culture is located in the neighbouring region of Lesser Poland.

Born bad?

Katowice is plagued by the condition described by Filip Springer in his book *Źle urodzone* [Born Bad]⁴ – the city is thoroughly modern, and the peak of its growth fell on a few short years of prosperity during the Polish People's Republic era, a period still looked back on with anything but pride by many a local resident. What is more, the political and civilisational transformation of recent decades has meant that a large, post-industrial part of the city's architectural development is in desperate need of a new lease of life. A 2012 study by Medialab Katowice,

⁴ F. Springer, 'Źle urodzone: reportaże o architekturze PRL-u' [Born Bad: Reports on Architecture of the Polish People's Republic], Kraków: Karakter Publishing House 2011.

titled *Zabytki. O co to larmo?* [Heritage Architecture – Why the Fuss?], showed that Katowice buildings take an average of 91 years from erection to listing.⁵ During the study, whose aim was to identify the reasons behind the bad condition or demolition of many valuable local buildings (including the brutalist railway station), Katowice witnessed the disappearance of the functionalist Wedding Palace pavilion and the former market hall in Piotra Skargi Street, let alone dozens of factory shops, mine shafts and several other industrial buildings characterfully crafted from the locally distinctive red brick.

Katowice's most valuable architectural realisations – by which I mean the most original ones or those standing out among other similar investments in contemporary Poland – were not erected until the early C20th (e.g. working-class housing estates, led by the iconic Nikiszowiec, or some industrial facilities), while the majority were built in the two waves of the C20th modernism, i.e. in the interwar period and the 1960s. None of the above architectural trends enjoyed any special recognition in the early days of the Third Polish Republic. Consequently, heritage brownfield sites suffered the worst damage, as many excellent buildings were razed to the ground without any thought or reflection. It was not until recently that the city's pre-war modernist architecture attracted some much deserved interest – the southern part of the city centre was placed under heritage protection; the Modernist Architecture Route was created with a multilingual guidebook for visitors. The south of Katowice has since managed to excite the interest of tourists visiting the characteristic winter gardens and rounded facades. Sadly, the same cannot be said of the fate of post-war modernism. Although, for instance, the plans to demolish the BWA pavilion were put on the back burner, and the Superjednostka residential block's façade was given a new, more appealing render, the city authorities still fail to notice the glaringly obvious potential of

⁵ *Zabytki – o co to larmo?* [Heritage Architecture – Why the Fuss?], <http://larmoozabytki.pl/> (as accessed on 6/11/2017)

this period's architecture. What is missing is not only a promotional and marketing effort that would help enhance the appreciation of these valuable remainders, but above all adequate measures to provide protection for individual buildings and entire planning concepts. Without sufficient legislation in place, many local sites may share the dire fate of the popular and (once) spaciouly laid out the Millennium housing estate, which developers continue to blatantly clutter with further buildings.

Micro-narratives in social media

It was in this atmosphere of public displeasure for modern architecture that completely new narratives began to emerge expressing approval for the period's heritage – not only in the field of architecture, but also in more general terms of urban space design and planning. An important role in this ongoing process has been played by websites and social media pages which facilitate the creation and dissemination of new stories, often sidestepping official institutions and recognised authorities to promote alternative viewpoints.

Among the large number of local narratives created online, I am most interested in iconographic materials, primarily photographs and archival documents published along with comments on the Facebook social networking service, though the phenomenon is also present in other media, especially those created by urban activists, enthusiasts or researchers as part of not-for-profit, bottom-up initiatives without the support of large institutions. I embrace both carefully selected content, designed to craft a particular result from the recipient, as well as ad hoc, often emotional publications by random users, who share their spur-of-the-moment feelings about the city or region. The dominant features of these may sometimes include their central themes, or some formal values or emotions expressed in the author's commentary. Most often, however, it is the visual material in the form of micro-narratives

captured in an image which are to ‘speak for themselves,’ although they are usually the projection of an imagined reality, whether past or future.

Working with source data

I make a detailed analysis of over 20 public Facebook fanpages about the city and the wider region, although the study conducted with the Medialab Katowice team included a much larger volume of content from the service.⁶ An undoubted challenge in this respect was to search the powerful resources of this medium. How did we select the material for analysis? First, based on our own experience and observations, we created a list of fanpages about culture in Katowice and a separate group of those dedicated to urban space in Upper Silesia, leaving out pages directly related to other Silesian cities. Then, using network analysis, we searched for other pages that were in some way related to our selections (strictly speaking, we were looking for pages that follow each other). We also used the option of automatically finding fanpages with desired phrase in the title, such as different inflectional forms of ‘Katowice.’ While it was relatively easy to pinpoint relevant fanpages run by official institutions and organisations, we were intent on reaching some more niche-oriented, though by no means less popular, content. After completing all of these activities, we were ready to select over 20 pages which we reviewed in more detail. Using the public Facebook API (application programming interface), we downloaded all the posts that were published on them, including accompanying visual materials. Although we refrained from automated analysis of graphic files, we were able to view them in a much easier and faster way, without having to tediously load thousands of posts into the browser.

⁶ These activities were carried out, among others, as part of the workshop *Acquisition and analysis of data from social media* prepared by Medialab Katowice.

List of pages from the Facebook social networking service used in the study		
Site name	Link	ID Number
I LOVE KATO	https://www.facebook.com/ilovekato/?ref=br_rs	220242794701120
Kato 100	https://www.facebook.com/KATO-100-155869464463124/?ref=br_rs	155869464463124
Katoholik / Tomasz Mańka	https://www.facebook.com/katoholik/	1609032762652554
KATOLOVE	https://www.facebook.com/katomiastojednonasto/?ref=ts	340166862760682
Katowice 50 lat temu	https://www.facebook.com/Katowice50/	143617302367842
Katowice i Park Śląski / WPKiW ze starych albumów	https://www.facebook.com/Katowice-i-Park-Śląski-WPKiW-ze-starych-albumów-786414594761611/	786414594761611
Katowice-miejsca znane i nieznanne	https://www.facebook.com/perelkikatowic/	782642738427526
Katowicki modernizm	https://www.facebook.com/Katowicki-Modernizm-259561394057841/	259561394057841
Katowickie kamienice	https://www.facebook.com/pg/katowickiekamienice	160600977342532
Katowickie klimaty	https://www.facebook.com/KatowickieKlimaty/	523630797698908
KWK Gottwald Kleofas Katowice Gurny Ślůnsk	https://www.facebook.com/KwkGottwald/	110490149116777
Made in Katowice	https://www.facebook.com/MadeinKatowicepl/	348352562018194
Modernizm Katowic	https://www.facebook.com/Modernizm-Katowic-567308823374905/	567308823374905
Modernizm Powojenny Katowic	https://www.facebook.com/modernizmpowojenny-katowic/	321320504868233
Moja Śląska rodzina	https://www.facebook.com/familiazBrynowa/	734900103229156
NEON Katowice	https://www.facebook.com/NEONKatowice/	104628846551081
Pozdrowienia z Katowic	https://www.facebook.com/Pozdrowienia-z-Katowic-1756358341264709/?ref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser	1756358341264709

Projekt "Twórcy Śląskiej Architektury"	https://www.facebook.com/projekttworcyslaskiej-architektury/	1148672278482462
Pstrykam śląskie	https://www.facebook.com/PstrykamSlaskie/	273289536104012
Ra2nski	https://www.facebook.com/Ra2nskiii/	245386342282248
Rajza po Kato	https://www.facebook.com/rajzapokato/?ref=br_rs	593107890779070
Regionalny Instytut Kultury - Śląskie Centrum Dziedzictwa Kulturowego	https://www.facebook.com/SCDK.Katowice/?ref=ts	175672009134760
Stare Katowice	https://www.facebook.com/StareKatowice/	362687973825819
Śląsk jest śliczny!	https://www.facebook.com/groups/506811356013712/	506811356013712
Śląsk po mojemu	https://www.facebook.com/%C5%9A%C4%85sk-po-mojemu-1628783107400640/?ref=py_c	1628783107400640
Śląskie kamienice	https://www.facebook.com/SlaskieKamienice/?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE&fref=nf	201134450029184
Ulice i place Katowic	https://www.facebook.com/uliceiplacekatowic/?rc=p	248676871920793
Z archiwum Pana X	https://www.facebook.com/Z-archiwum-Pana-X-180201799208789/	180201799208789
Ziętek płakał jak budował	https://www.facebook.com/zietekplakaljakbudowal/	1374747626127282

As we wanted the selected content to be varied in many respects, the list included the following page types: those publishing regularly for several years (Ulice i place Katowic [Katowice Streets and Squares]); ephemeral projects only a few months in existence (Katoholik / Tomasz Mańka); pages maintained by public institutions (Śląskie Centrum Dziedzictwa Kulturowego [Silesian Centre for Cultural Heritage]), businesses (Śląskie Kamienice [Silesian Tenements]) and private individuals (Katowice-miejsca znane i nieznane [Katowice – High- and Low-profile Spots]); dedicated mainly to the city's earliest history (Pozdrowienia z Katowic [Greetings from Katowice]), its post-war years (Ziętek płakał jak budował [Ziętek was in tears as he built them]) and contemporary times (I LOVE KATO); narrated from a personal perspective (Moja

śląska rodzina [My Silesian family]) and more official ones (Ulice i place Katowic [Katowice Streets and Squares]). Despite these more or less evident differences, the discussed pages share one common feature: the affirmation of local public space and fascination with Katowice and/or Upper Silesia. Such attitudes, characterised by a shift from resentment to finding reasons to be proud of the heritage of one's own place, are necessary in the process of creating new identity narratives.

There are two main interweaving threads in the content of the study. One is focused on history, being a sentimental return to the 'golden era' of Silesia, when even the mine chimneys were beautiful, and the public spaces of Silesian cities neat and resident friendly. The other one is a rather 'hipster' approach, drawing on the fashionable symbols of the city, both historical and contemporary – be it Silesia's iconic architecture, design or post-industrial heritage sites – to emphasise its modern character and demonstrate how 'cool' a place Katowice is these days. I allow myself a bit of irony here, because the discussed content is of a very affirmative nature, usually as a result of the calculated decision of the authors. This does not mean, of course, that people who post and comment on such pages are naively uncritical of their city or its authorities. The point is rather that despite all the flaws and imperfections, the users are able to explore and then present the beauty of Silesian cities using photographs with comments. The expressive *Śląsk jest śliczny!* [Silesia Is Beautiful!], used as the name of a group bringing together local landscape enthusiasts, is probably the best case in point!

Although the pictures posted in the above-mentioned Facebook group are often nothing short of sentimental – such as church towers against the background of the setting sun in overly saturated hues – the discussion that accompanies them is by no means limited to aesthetic problems. Many comments by administrators and users of such pages reveal attitudes and opinions characteristic of urban activists, who are passionate about the problems of the city and the region. The issues tackled are not only high-profile ones, such as the demolition of local historic buildings and structures, but most of all little details that

taint the city's image, including neglected nooks, shabby tenements, removed greenery, excessive road traffic, bland house facades after thermo-modernisation improvements. In a nutshell, the topics covered are those close to the hearts of the 'new townspeople' from the aesthetically conscious, aspiring middle class, who dream of having a piece of Copenhagen in Katowice – although there is of course some petty fault-finding and bitter comments of those simply seeking an opportunity to bellyache. Regardless of the varying levels of these remarks and intentions of their authors, they do reinforce the tone of the images posted, revealing e.g. a longing for neat architecture and green public spaces. For example, the discussion below a 1930s photograph of the tidy, tree-lined Mikołowska Street, include typical comments about contemporary central Katowice: "And that's the way it should be :-)," "The number of trees in old photographs is really impressive. It was possible back then. Now we have the 'City of Gardens' – with no trees!"⁷

The analysed narratives feature numerous threads emphasising the modern, urban character of Katowice throughout its history. The C19th city, for instance, captivates users primarily with the beautiful townhouses, but also typical urban landscape features, such as a busy train station or meticulously manicured squares and city parks – the residents' pride and joy. One comment below a photograph of the old train station in Dworcowa Street (Bahnhofstraße) reads as follows: "A train station fit for a metropolitan, European city. It is a pity that today it has lost most of its charm somehow. Or am I alone in thinking that way"? Other commentators follow in a similar tone:

It's a shame about the Old Train Station. It should be restored to its former glory. As for the trees – they are trying to bring them back, but in huge pots. Unfortunately, it's the sign of the times. (...)

⁷ *Pozdrowienia z Katowic – Posty* [Greetings from Katowice – Posts], Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/1756358341264709/photos/a.1759915090909034.1073741843.1756358341264709/2020510478182826/?type=3&theater> [accessed on: 5/11/2017].

It seems like a rational solution, which does not change the fact that public space in the city is extremely unfriendly to people. Perhaps, when they design streets, they should also think of trees to put in them. (...)

It is a pity that no one thinks today that the city should not be just a pile of concrete; back in the day, trees were planted to make the city look nice, care was taken to keep up the kerb appeal of the buildings. Tenement roofs were beautifully decorated, it is a shame that today no-one cares about the appearance of buildings the way it was done in the past.⁸

Naturally, old Katowice is contrasted with the contemporary city, which tends to generate more critical reviews from commentators. For instance, a photograph depicting Warszawska Street, posted on the same page, bears a telling comment from the administrator: “Dworcowa Street, 1940. Can you see the difference”? As further comments unveil, a rather typical groupthink emerges – the usual mix of longing for the ‘good old days’ and complaining about the quality of public space in contemporary Katowice.

People used to ride bicycles and meet up in the city. Now they meet on Facebook and don’t ride anything at all, unless they have an app to show off how many kilometres they have done.

The building on the left has been demolished recently leaving the ghastly empty square behind.

Yeah, now it’s just a friggin’ mess full of junkies and whores.

(...)

More order and more space.

⁸ *Moja śląska rodzina – Posty* [My Silesian Family – Posts], Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/familiazBrynowa/photos/a.738732362845930.1073741827.734900103229156/1359245680794592/?type=3&theater> [as accessed on: 7/11/2017]

(...)

The charm of old photographs <3

Beautiful :-)

It was even nicer back then.⁹

The need to draw attention to Katowice's European roots and urban traditions is very strong among the users, appearing in many posts, especially those commenting on the photos. Featured in one of such images, posted on the KWK Gottwald Kleofas Katowice Gůrny Ślůnsk fanpage, is a fragment of the city panorama with the then recently built office block of the Silesian Technical Research Institute, bearing the following striking comment: "... and then one of Europe's most avant-garde science and teaching facilities – The Silesian Technical Research Institute. Just a few interesting details – total length of corridors: 7.2 kilometres, two underground levels and four floors above ground including ground floor."¹⁰

Another important theme relates to the city's multicultural history which suffered several decades of being deliberately rubbed out from its public spaces and, above all, from the communal memory. For a large group of Upper Silesians, this was first-hand experience – seniors in many Silesian families still speak fluent German and have vivid memories of their youth, living on either side of the border partitioning the region among several empires. For many other residents, especially those whose families came here for work, exploring the history of the region is like conquering new lands, with new fascinating stories of the multicultural community and rapid industrial growth awaiting them around every corner. At the same time, it is something of a paradox that this heritage is attested to not so much in books and textbooks on

⁹ *Stare Katowice – Posty* [Old Katowice – Posts], Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/StareKatowice/photos/a.435329959894953.1073741827.362687973825819/997468943681049/?type=3&theater> [as accessed on: 7/11/2017].

¹⁰ *KWK Gottwald Kleofas Katowice Gůrny Ślůnsk – Posty* [Gottwald Kleofas Colliery Katowice Upper Silesia], Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/KwkGottwald/posts/876149532550831> [as accessed on: 7/11/2017].

Upper Silesia, of which there are few (and none set as mandatory school reads), but by the surviving industrial buildings and structures.

Of course, most references to be found are to German architecture, but there are also some Jewish themes, such as pictures depicting Silesia's synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. It should also be noted that the websites surveyed, containing tens of thousands of photographs, postcards, scans and other materials, constitute a huge source of knowledge created in the grass-roots model, i.e. from bottom up, without a specific order, but with great passion and devotion. Thanks to the discussion comments posted below the photos, we are also able to observe how online content verification and knowledge production mechanisms work. Many such conversations descend into brawls, with participants trying to affirm, or impose on others, their political, national and identity views on complex and controversial issues. Most often, however, these exchanges serve to determine the facts about the location of items being presented and, occasionally, the date of erection or name of the architect. This was the case for one discussion about Katowice's synagogues, which, incidentally, generate enormous response in terms of shares and comments. While one user was convinced that the image under discussion showed the Great Synagogue in Mickiewicza Street, it was actually the Old Synagogue in a different location. Other users came to help, not only correcting the misconception but also adding links to Wikipedia and a number of interesting facts about other Katowice buildings which were once the property of the local Jewish community.¹¹ There are also public fanpages telling the history of Silesia from a slightly more personal perspective, including *Moja śląska rodzina* [My Silesian Family] and *Śląsk po mojemu* [Silesia My Way], which contain family stories, materials showing everyday scenes from the city life, such as street

¹¹ *Śląsk jest śliczny!* [Silesia is Beautiful!], Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/506811356013712/permalink/1000109830017193/> [as accessed on: 7/11/2017].

walks, old cars or Silesian Bus Lines vehicles, and even official yet very intimate documents, e.g. the death certificate of a son who served in the Wehrmacht during WWII.

While the above content rarely arouses any considerable controversy, a group of fanpages dedicated to post-war architecture provides a much more interesting material for discussions about identity. For instance, the bitterly jocular yet at the same time ambiguous *Ziętek płakał jak budował* [Ziętek was in tears as he built them], the name of a page dedicated Katowice's architecture from the Polish Peoples' Republic period, suggests a rather complex conundrum: Are we to take it literally, as an expression of regret, or, perhaps, see the possible tongue-in-cheek approach adopted by the author to allow room for various interpretations. On the one hand, the comments contain a fair share of outrage on dehumanized and poorly designed architecture. On the other, however, some commentators sing praises of the urban solutions and the breadth and scale of such investments as the Spodek arena and the Voivodship Park of Culture and Recreation. One users comments on a post regarding the construction of the Koszutka district: "«As part the first, early-1950s stage, they built the first blocks of flats, two schools, a health centre and a nursery school». These days, there would be nothing but blocks, even after the last stage."¹² This is a clear allusion to the direction of development of modern cities, where residential projects by private developers rarely provide access to basic public services. A recurrent theme are photos of shops and shopping centres with comments such as "Long before the Silesia City Centre and Galeria Katowicka, shopping was done in Skarbek."¹³ In addition to being an expression of nostalgia, such comments also remind us that the city centre was once busy thanks to retail. In another comment on a photo from Koszutka, this time on the *Katowice 50 lat temu* [Katowice

¹² *Ziętek płakał jak budował – Posty* [Ziętek Was in Tears as He Built Them – Posts], Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/zietekplakaljakbudowal/photos/pcb.1560390314229678/1560389647563078/?type=3&theater> [as accessed on: 8/11. 2017].

¹³ *Ibidem*.

50 Years Ago] page, we read: “See how many people there are in the street. THEY ARE WALKING :-). Boy, did I enjoy these years and the busy streets: -) ... Now that everyone drives, there are much less people in the streets. What a pity.”¹⁴ Easily accessible public infrastructure, streets bustling with pedestrians without the tedious road traffic, retail and entertainment in city centres – are these not the postulates of all urban movements in Poland?

If the attitude referred to as ‘hipster’ was reduced to one symbol, it would definitely be a neon sign. These historic light signs, which became Katowice’s trademark public space features in the 1950s,¹⁵ are now a source of inspiration those intent on promoting urban culture. No respectable, fashion-savvy dining or drinking establishment in Katowice can do without one. This fascination can be clearly seen in social media with entire pages dedicated to neon lights, such as *NEON Katowice*,¹⁶ run by the Katowice-based My City Association. Neon signs connote not only the atmosphere of a large city, but also high quality graphic design and solid craftsmanship, i.e. characteristic modernist values, which are so often recalled by the supporters of urban culture in Katowice. Not without significance is also the fact that neon signs are the most aesthetic form of advertising, as opposed to the gaudy wallscape ads, sometimes covering entire buildings, which the city’s activists are so determined to remove from public space.

Another page focusing on this period is *Modernizm Powojenny Katowic* [Katowice’s Post-War Modernism], where, as the administrator explains, “the best architecture of that period will be collected and systematised. (...) [All] in the modernist atmosphere of cube

¹⁴ *Katowice 50 lat temu – Posty* [Katowice 50 Years Ago – Posts], Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/Katowice50/photos/a.204971229565782.54132.143617302367842/1303544069708487/?type=3&theater> [as accessed on: 8/11/2017].

¹⁵ *Światła miasta* [City Lights], fragment of a film chronicle, Warszawa: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, 1959, <http://www.repozytorium.fn.org.pl/?q=pl/node/7627> [as accessed on: 8/11/2017].

¹⁶ *Neon Katowice*, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/NEONKatowice/> [as accessed on: 8.11.2017].

pavilions, wide avenues and great ambitions.” While in the case of previously described social media pages, one was not always sure of the implied meaning of the content posted, the authors of this page have embarked on a clearly defined mission: “Our primary goal is to change the image of post-war modernism among residents and city officials, and to promote it outside Katowice.”¹⁷ This kind of attitude is shared by many other people publishing content or comments, not only on pages directly dedicated to heritage architecture, but in numerous urban culture channels in Katowice, such as KATO, Rajza by Kato, Kato 100, I LOVE KATO, KATOLove. There are also pages showing photographs of various city sites, including *Katoholik*, *Katowickie Klimaty*, *Made in Katowice*, *Pstrykam śląskie*, *Ra2nski*, which just goes to show that many local residents do not have any complexes and are proud to post micro-narratives about their city on the web, running a grassroots and organic though a bit uncoordinated marketing campaign on Katowice.

Imaginary Katowice

It is easily noticeable that the above narratives are projections of their creators’ ideas about a dream-like, almost ideal, cosmopolitan city – all modern and multicultural. Interestingly, although Silesia’s industrial facilities are of high sentimental value, as a symbol of the region’s lost glory and an important component of family history and identity (whether for indigenous Silesian families and newcomers lured by better job opportunities within local industries), the proposed visions of the desired city are usually of a strictly bourgeois nature, expressing the rather customary aspirations of Poland’s emerging middle class. In some cases, these references are deliberately contrasted with traditional

¹⁷ *Modernizm Powojenny Katowic – Informacje* [Katowice’s Post-war Modernism – About], Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/pg/modernizmpowojennykatowic/about/?ref=page_internal [as accessed on: 8.11.2017].

national values, in particular those originating from rural culture. This is evident in the case of references to functionalist post-war architecture, being with the blissful vision of rural life in the countryside reminiscent of the Polish manor tradition. Besides, there are many references to the multicultural past of the city in the discussed projects: the German and Jewish heritage is not a cause for resentment for these content creators, but a source of pride. This is why the images shared in social media often feature, *inter alia*, the large silhouette of the Katowice synagogue, or the city's pre-WWI, German name 'Kattowitz,' proudly captioning numerous buildings in Prussian times. Such phenomena can be viewed as attempts to create an urban identity based on the history of a place that separates itself from the narrowly understood, monocultural and monoethnic national tradition. Describing Poland's *new townspeople*, Paweł Kubicki argues: "As the migration theory has it, usually the third generation of migrants tends to return to their roots. However, rather than returning to their rustic roots' Polish new townspeople, as the third generation of post-war rural migration, tend to discover the past of their native cities."¹⁸

It should be noted right from the start that Katowice's most iconic architecture was not created in the Prussian period, so it is hardly feasible to reduce the issue to a simple Polish vs. Germanic opposition.¹⁹ All the classic exemplars – the testament to the city's modern and cosmopolitan provenience, were erected either in the 1930s or in the late 1960s/early 1970s. The former, including the Silesian Parliament, Silesian Technical

¹⁸ P. Kubicki, *Nowi mieszkańcy w nowej Polsce* [New Townspeople of New Poland], Research report, Warsaw: Instytut Obywatelski 2011, p. 38.

¹⁹ For more information on stereotypes about Katowice in this context, cf. M. Cetwiński, *Katowice w niewoli stereotypów dawnych i współczesnych: historiograficzne mity i nieporozumienia* [Katowice in the Captivity of Old and Modern Stereotypes: Historiographical Myths and Misunderstandings], in: Katowice. Środowisko, dzieje, kultura, język i społeczeństwo, vol. 1, ed. A. Barciak, E. Chojecka, S. Fertacz, Katowice: Katowice Historical Museum 2012, pp. 25–35.

Research Institute and the so-called skyscraper, helped transform Katowice from a provincial centre into the capital of a new autonomous region with an infrastructure fit for a big and innovative. Forty years later, Katowice saw another wave of architectural projects taken on to meet the needs of mass society: a large train station, the Spodek arena, the Superjednostka residential block, and several residential estates. In both cases, the new spaces were planned with a nationally unprecedented panache and typically modernist approach akin to American cities, with successive historic quarters unsentimentally pulled down to make space for new wide avenues and concrete tower blocks.²⁰ Due to the rapid urbanisation, the population of Katowice reached its peak level just before the 1990s political transformation.

The iconic architecture of the Polish People's Republic, along with its shop signs, neon lights, bas-reliefs and street furniture, has become an extremely fashionable reference point for an increasing number of people seeking to create new urban identity narratives. This is especially evident in social media where bottom-up ideas are quickly absorbed and given a brief but very intense life, reaching thousands of other users. The age of people involved in these narratives also seems of significance from my perspective, without prejudging, however, whether the so-called 'new townspeople' are a generational phenomenon, as suggested, for instance, in the aforementioned report *Nowi mieszkańcy w nowej Polsce* [New Townspeople of New Poland]²¹ by the researcher of urban processes Paweł Kubicki. While older people are likely to reference the past with a longing for the good old times, the younger generation are

²⁰ This is perfectly illustrated by the propaganda film chronicle showing the demolition of historic tenement houses in central Katowice to make room for the newly-built railway station: *Wyburzenie domów w Katowicach pod budowę dworca* [Demolition of houses in Katowice for the construction of a new railway station], fragment of a film chronicle, Warsaw: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, 1968, <http://repozytorium.fn.org.pl/?q=pl/node/10886> [as accessed on: 6/11/2017].

²¹ P. Kubicki, *Nowi mieszkańcy w nowej Polsce* [New Townspeople of New Poland], op. cit., pp. 33–34.

making a conscious choice of an identity option. The narratives under discussion are certainly not created solely by young people, although it seems indisputable that post-war modernism has become popular especially among those people who grew up in post-transformation Poland and as such were free from prejudice against the architecture of the previous era. The badly-born architecture proved to be an ideal reference point for the twenty- to thirty-year-olds at least for several reasons. Firstly, its appreciation required them to stand in opposition to public opinion, the 'voice of the people' and other generational groups, for whom traditional Silesian industrial architecture was a clear identity reference point (this attitude was illustrated in *Paciorki jednego różańca* [The Beads of One Rosary], a Kazimierz Kutz film telling the story of miners' cottages being demolished to make way for dehumanized concrete blocks). The attitude to concrete architecture thus became an efficient mechanism of generational distinction, allowing an easy classification into others (more conservative) and us (modern and fashionable). Secondly, though perhaps somewhat paradoxically for those who remember the times of the Polish People's Republic, the 1960s and 1970s functionalist architecture, being a direct heir of interwar modernism, harmonised perfectly with the modern myth of social advancement. Also, if we bring into the equation the contrast between functionalist buildings and rustic themes in Polish national culture, it is easy to see why modernism makes a great reference point for the new urban identity narrative (A marked opposition towards the need to own a suburban home, which was widespread among the aspiring middle class of the older generation, is also noticeable in this respect).

Networked public sphere

Though constituting a small part of local, grass-roots identity narratives created in cities across Poland, the above-described social media activities are in my opinion an extremely important phenomenon that should inspire us to reconsider the traditional definition of the

public sphere. Until recently, there was a fairly clear division between private and public, with local identities shaped on the level of family, associations, small neighbourhood or district communities, religious associations, etc., on the one hand, and an official discourse on identity, on the other, monopolised by important public figures, such as writers, researchers, intellectuals and politicians. It may be safely claimed, that in these two areas covered the entirety of identity discourse. The bottom-up, micro-narratives naturally remained comfortably in the privacy of the home and were only allowed into the public sphere if they refrained from questioning the widely accepted views or even reinforced the prevailing narratives. This situation often led to a type of schizophrenia, where people's real life patterns and aspirations came to a clash with the officially accepted narratives, gradually reducing the latter to something of a meaningless propaganda tool. Along with the Internet, and especially with social media, new ways of communication have emerged, leading to increasingly blurred boundaries between private space and the public sphere. Thus, on the one hand, intimate fragments of private life often find their way to publicly available profiles on social networking sites, while, on the other, once popular channels of mass communication, which commanded public imagination, currently lose information monopoly and go on to target increasingly narrower groups of recipients, which may cause the formation of so-called information bubbles and ultimately lead to increasing social polarisation.²²

While the long-term consequences of these changes are difficult to predict, it seems safe to say that we have seen the emergence of a networked public sphere in which many actors compete for the attention of many other network users. Naturally, this kind of ecosystem is conducive to the creation of micro-narratives. Most of them operate in small communities, but thanks to the mechanisms of information exchange on the web, they can be easily accessed by a large group of both social media users and more traditional media which are ever more

²² C. R. Sunstein, *Republic.com*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2001.

willing to reach out for bottom-up content in search of catchy stories. Facebook, or, to be more precise, public pages within this service, are an interesting example of what can be described as a networked public sphere (or a *quasi*-public sphere).²³ It is a place where public discussion about Silesian identity takes place, joined by both ordinary residents and public figures, journalists, scientists, intellectuals, etc. However, the participants do not seem to have the same rights as in the physical public space, because, as users of the site, they have entered into a contract with its management and agreed to its specific terms of use. The situation is similar with the content posted on public Facebook profiles. By collecting and sharing old photographs, postcards, scans of documents, etc., the users of the analysed pages create a powerful archive of knowledge, bearing some features of a social archive. However, it seems unclear who has the rights to these materials. Public access to content on Facebook is associated with the consent to its further use in different contexts, not necessarily in accordance with the intentions of the publishing parties involved. Although the page administrators can remove content at any time or download it onto their own devices, no one knows what will happen to unarchived materials in the years to come, for example when the site ceases to exist or when its ownership changes.

In the short term, however, this kind of 'release' of content, whether from a private archive or a public repository, helps make its way to public awareness. A digitised family photograph or a scan from an official archive kept by a digital library often becomes a kind of meme on the web that inspires a discussion important to local identity. It can therefore be considered that social media play the role of a public space in which to articulate different views and negotiate positions on issues important to the community articulates – especially those previously remaining outside the scope of interest of mass media and public opinion leaders.

²³ Y. Benkler, *Bogactwo sieci: jak produkcja społeczna zmienia rynki i wolność* [The Wealth of Networks. How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom], trans. R. Próchniak, Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne 2008, pp. 19–30.

This kind of space helps create local narratives which differ significantly from the official or widely recognised positions, for instance about what it means to be a ‘true Silesian’ or what architectural and other heritage is worth preserving for posterity.

However, there are a few doubts that unfold before the keen observer of web-based micro-narratives. To what extent do web communities gathered around specific pages form the so-called information bubbles, i.e. isolated niches feeding exclusively on their own content? Is a privately-owned social media service with untransparent algorithms indeed the best place to collect data and stories important to local communities? Finally, to what extent are niche views, no matter how well-articulated on the web, capable of influencing the daily course of events in the city that hinges on politics, economics and interests of various groups of residents? Further independent research will have to be applied to social media and local identities in order satisfactorily address these issues.

Translated by Rafał Drewniak



Anna Machwic

**Silesia Rediscovered
– Works by Students
of the Design Faculty of the
Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice**

I

If we include the departure from production towards services in the definition of the post-industrial, it will be especially suitable for the newest trends in design. It is not the production of objects any more, but solving particular problems that is the focus of the design world today. Designers are responsible not only for making a thing or a place aesthetic, but they define a problem and find a solution dedicated to particular group of recipients, place and situation. To a large extent, they have become researchers working in teams of experts, and the conducted design process is not only verified, but often actively co-created by target users. In the book titled *The Language of Things*, Deyan Sudjic writes:

(...) Design is a public service. It's notable that in Britain one of the first industrial-design practices that emerged in the 1940s called itself the Design Research Unit., a name calculated to suggest that it was a branch of the Welfare State more than any kind of commercial activity, even though it was actually started as the subsidiary of an advertising agency.¹

And continues:

Design has become the sometimes cynical process of making what were once serious, unselfconscious products – watches, for example, or cameras, or even cars – into toys for adults, pandering to our fantasies about ourselves, ruthlessly tapping into our willingness to pay to be entertained or flattered by our possessions.²

The word 'design' is commonly associated with expensive gadgets. It is, however, the designers themselves who speak of design which is responsible, engaged and user-oriented; it is usually made and focused locally, respectful of particular place and its identity. Paweł Jaworski from *Napraw Sobie Miasto* [Fix Your City] Foundation describes responsible design:

What does responsible design mean? First and foremost, it is to offer solutions matching a particular place, a defined architectural space – enclosed with walls of buildings of more or less unique and individual form – as well as the space in between. This is also the social space: limited, likeable or not, filled with symbols or deprived of thereof. (...) Moreover, a place is created by a specific local community, who inhabit or use a given area.

¹ D. Sudjic, *The Language of Things*, W.W. NORTON and Co., NY, London: 2009, p. 27.

² *Ibidem*, p. 45.

As we temper with the functioning of a particular place, we can either facilitate or hinder people's problem solving and execution of their ideas and plans. Thus, a responsible designer is a person, who follows the user's needs while formulating and solving the project objectives.³

In the context of identity of a post-industrial place, the designer's responsibility may be expressed as respect for its history and tradition, also its presence and past. This deep consideration, engagement and reliability is what I find characteristic of the student works described below.

For several years now, the students of the Academy of Fine Arts have presented a tendency to address the topics connected with place, sense of belonging and reinterpretation of tradition. In their pursuits, they usually attempt to redefine, or find a new use of traditional forms, objects and customs. For a long time our region had been perceived as a place where there is nothing but mines, heavy industry and heavy air. Despite our great tradition of poster and graphics, to mention only visual arts, the inhabitants of Katowice themselves were sceptical, when the city sought to be designated as the European Capital of Culture. Next to the musical, performative and artistic events, a strong emphasis was put on the activities connected with design, especially the endeavours of the Design Silesia programme – very important to the community of the Academy of Fine Arts, particularly to the teachers and students of its Design Faculty. Numerous courses and events dedicated to design gave rise to the Social Communication Studio in the Industrial Design faculty of the Academy. The Studio prepares students to work in interdisciplinary teams, with focus on direct contact with users and service design following from the real needs of its recipients.

³ P. Jaworski, 'Odpowiedzialność za przestrzeń publiczną,' in: *Radlin. Design w terenie! Wspólna przygoda z designem*, eds. W. Gdowicz and M. Więckowska, Katowice: Design Silesia, ASP Katowice 2012, p. 9.

In the publication *Śląskie miejsca* [Places of Silesia], Barbara Firla studies the works referring to characteristic places in the Upper Silesia to find how their creators expressed their Silesian identity. Among the spaces explored by these artists there is a house, a yard, a garden, a street... and also the places of “eternal happiness”⁴ – magical nooks igniting children’s imagination: trackways, slag heaps, parks, forests, gates and streets. Barbara Firla’s book presents an array of artists who perceive this region as close to their hearts, romantic even, and can give a poetic dimension to most neglected yards and pollution-beaten tenement houses. An interesting dialogue with the places and artistic interpretations selected by Barbara Firla was undertaken by Zofia Oslislo-Piekarska in the interviews included in her book *Nowi Ślązacy. Miasto, dizajn, tożsamość* [The New Silesians. City, Design, Identity]. The main inspirations indicated by the author are: coal, porcelain, architecture, the post-industrial, mines and folklore.⁵

These two books, seemingly involved with the same topic, have been illustrated with completely different selections of images. This is due to two important factors: the apparent generation gap, and the obvious rift between the artistic impressionistic interpretation and the design approach focused on the recipient, function and usability. These differences entail two entirely separate outlooks on what Silesia is. This dissimilarity of expression between the authors might also result from their surrounding reality. While the previous generations were strongly rooted in this place, the younger ones have been forced to rediscover Silesia for themselves. The former rhetoric does not appeal to the youngest Silesians. They need to travel, see the world. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the interviews in the book *Nowi Ślązacy...* You need to leave and return, in order to rediscover and find new admiration for what has been so close. For you to appreciate your identity, it must be

⁴ B. Firla, *Śląskie miejsca*, Katowice: Muzeum Śląskie 2012, p. 109.

⁵ Z. Oslislo-Piekarska, *Nowi Ślązacy. Miasto, dizajn, tożsamość*, Katowice: ASP Katowice 2015, p. 35.

contrasted with something else, seemingly more attractive, but what eventually turns out to be unfamiliar.

II

“Cities are not shaped only from the top down by political and economic objectives, nor solely from the bottom up by some mysterious forces we cannot even fully recognize, let alone control,”⁶ writes Joseph Rykwert in *Pokusa miejsca. Przeszłość i przyszłość miast* [The Seduction of Place: The History and Future of Cities]; following his thought, the city can be perceived as a living fabric, which dynamically expands and undergoes changes – these could be imposed, dictated by a greater vision or by more or less accurate administrative decisions. Sometimes the changes require large financing which enables hiring of renown designers, city planners, and then execution of the project. Just as often, there are arbitrary activities connected with endeavours like spontaneous development of greenery around blocks of flats by eager gardeners-amateurs, who dream to have a parcel of land to cultivate. You can attempt to foresee or even predict how people will react to a given new area, but in the end it is the citizen, the inhabitant, the local person who will either accept the space you have designed for them or not. An interesting example of turning a post-industrial area into citizen-oriented space is the revitalization of degraded site of the former “Katowice” mine and remodelling it into Strefa Kultury [Culture Zone]. This post-mine area, so far inaccessible for the citizens, has been transformed into an architectural complex; not only the appearance but also the function of this place has been changed. What is important, the project incorporated the former buildings of the mine, as well as the landmark of Katowice – Spodek. Thus, the new buildings of Polish National Radio Symphony

⁶ J. Rykwert, *Pokusa miejsca. Przeszłość i przyszłość miast*, trans. T. Bieroń, Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury 2013, p. 23.

Orchestra (NOSPR), Museum of Silesia and the International Conference Centre are not only examples of prime architecture, but have also created a new space for the citizens. Thus, the previous perception of this place as the post-industrial area has been eclipsed by its new identity – connected with culture. Filip Springer, a reporter involved with architecture and city planning of the Polish cities and towns, describes this complex in his book *Księga zachwytów* [Book of Delights], which constitutes a subjective selection of the most compelling architectural objects erected in Poland after the year 1945. Interestingly, having expressed his utmost appreciation of the architecture of the buildings situated in Strefa Kultury, the author strongly criticises upon the whole conception:

We could elaborate a separate essay on each of these buildings. None of them lacks in architectural quality. As a complex, however, they duplicate the mistakes so indiscriminately condemned in the modernists of Katowice not long ago. Despite the intentions of its authorities, the city has not gained a new centre on the site of the former mine 'Katowice.' Instead, there appeared a park of good architecture isolated from the centre with wide high-speed lanes and so, disconnected from the life of the city. These beautiful buildings will be standing there forsaken, with no reason why the citizens of Katowice, even from the developments nearby, should come this way on a daily basis.⁷

Strefa Kultury in Katowice is not a transit spot that would be crowded with passers-by, and there are days when Springer's predictions about the buildings being left aside seem true. It is a space to be visited purposefully, for a range of events dedicated to various age groups. It is also a place for walks, leisure, a must-be spot you proudly present to out-of-towners. Even though it is not a beaten tract of commuters and

⁷ F. Springer, *Księga zachwytów*, Warsaw: AGORA 2016, p. 335.

passers-by, the Silesians have accepted its new identity and come to terms with the place. The “ordinary” users mostly voice their appreciation and pride, and the more or less popular business and cultural events attract crowds. What has been achieved in this degraded post-industrial area is an example of a large-scale endeavour conducted with consideration of local character, existing landscape and history of the place.

Modern designers frequently undertake activities dedicated to particular social group, functioning in a given space. This group is often as small as the community of several blocks. The main question is: Who am I designing for?; the designer also has to be aware that the target user is a person, who cannot be omitted in the design process, quite the opposite – they should be treated as experts.

An example of a project which matter-of-factly included the local community in the designers’ work was a cycle of workshops *Design w terenie* [Design in the Field] realized within the programme Design Silesia. The workshops were held in Mstów, Radlin and Bytom.⁸ They were concerned mainly with the problems of districts degraded on various levels which had previously been related to industry (like the worker’s development Emma in Radlin and Bobrek in Bytom), and when it collapsed, their position deteriorated, and often, as a consequence, so did the self-esteem of its inhabitants.⁹

The group of people defining problems visible in a given town (in each edition several administrative districts entered, and jury appointed one of them) included inhabitants as experts. Involvement with particular environment was an important stage of the workshops, and became a subject of student and designer works. Therefore the group of participants was living in the area of the selected district for the time of workshops. This enabled them to directly observe the surroundings

⁸ To read more about *Design w terenie*, visit the website of W. Gdowicz, the coordinator of the project for ASP in Katowice in the years 2010–2013, [accessed: November 2, 2017; Polish only]: <https://wgdowiczpublikacje.wordpress.com/2013/11/27/design-w-terenie-idea-i-realizacja/>

⁹ *Radlin. Design w terenie!*, op. cit., p. 8.

and come in contact with local community, get familiar with the place and its inhabitants, so that they could define problems, and then offer a solution.¹⁰ In Radlin, the place of designers' interest was "Kolonja Emma" [Emma Colony], the development built for workers of the nearby mine "Marcel." "Kolonja Emma" used to be a modern development, which has now lost its prime. Talking to designers, inhabitants often indicated the mess and lack of visual coherence caused by fencing of individual possessions, as well as the sense of insecurity, negative image of the development, and its separation from other districts of the city.¹¹ In the course of the project, the students defined the main problems of this place and local community by means of previously prepared tools. At each stage, their proposals were verified by the inhabitants. Marek Gajda, the representative of Referat Rozwoju [Department of Development] of the Radlin Municipal Office, an active participant of the project, summed up:

The workshops participants talked about problems the inhabitants had – the actual problems, which resulted in positive attitude towards the young designers. The students did not attempt at expert analyses detached from the real living conditions; instead they deeply studied the local specifics and consulted their ideas with the inhabitants every step of the way. It was not only a wonderful example of user participation, but also a lesson in active citizenship.¹²

There arose three proposals of solutions based on the main problems of the local community, defined by the students in collaboration with the inhabitants. One of them was designing a long-term action related to the real perspective of closing down the mine – to a large extent the source of income for the district and its inhabitants, who quite soon

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 17.

¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 17 and 50.

¹² M. Gajda, in: *Radlin. Design w terenie!*, op. cit., p. 79.

might face the necessary change of trade. The students came up with a project of organizing a service in form of an entrepreneurship fair meant to integrate the district community, with other citizens as well. The project promoted enterprise and business approach by means of a game for children and an event – barter of goods and services.¹³

III

In reference to the activities of artists and designers inspired by the Upper Silesia, post-industrial places, local tradition and Silesian symbols, and taking into account the change in how the design profession is seen – now quite often associated with the role of a leader in an interdisciplinary team, looking to solve a particular problem for a given group of recipients and place – we can notice all these elements in the activity of the youngest generation of designers – students.

The categories according to which I have chosen and presented student works relate to the issue of identity, including the broadly understood post-industrial places – not only as a particular place or building left from the industrial activity, but the whole region along with its traditions and characteristic features, which needs to face the change of image due to economic and cultural transformations.

1. Looking for identity of the place together – engaging inhabitants in the design process

This category goes beyond the main arteries of the large cities and follows student ideas of finding the identity of a place through engaging the local community. The graduate projects related to these issues were based on the experience of the Katowice Academy of Fine Arts faculty

¹³ Ibidem, p. 75.

members, who participated in the *Design w terenie* project. What the projects presented in this category have in common is the particularly large engagement of the local communities, activated at every stage of the project. We must admit that it would be ignorant to design for people – especially in case of projects with reference to identity of the place where they live – without taking account of their emotions, observing their habits, listening to their complaints and opinions...

a. A legend that wasn't – creating a new identity for a place

Aleksandra Kołodziejek

Mission: Legend. A project of a touristic and recreational service for the town of Myszków.

There are places which cannot boast great architecture, history or tradition. Everything about them is plain – the post-industrial landscape and farming areas. Sometimes a place is overshadowed by more recognizable neighbouring cities, and even its inhabitants themselves are ignorant of the potential of their own town. Aleksandra Kołodziejek had decided to tackle these problems of Myszków, the town situated close to the Eagles' Nests Landscape Park, and so next to a very strong touristic competition. Based on the series of workshops which included a moderated walk (with a person who knows the place very well and talks about it from the perspective of its everyday user), an impression walk (connected with observation from the perspective of an out-of-towner, a tourist), and workshops with the inhabitants who indicated the strong and weak points of their town, the student came up with a project dedicated to enhance the touristic attractiveness of Myszków and to broaden its recreational offer, tighten the bound the inhabitants have with their town and improve their own opinion about it.

The diploma student had designed a civic game for families with children. A very interesting element of the project was a competition for the middle and secondary school students to write a legend

connected with the town. Its aim, apart from obtaining an interesting narrative for the game, was to strengthen the young people's attachment to the place. Most of them tend to leave Myszków after high school, going to study or work in another city. The brand-new legend: *O Barbarze, która rozpuściła majątek* [On Barbara, Who Squandered Her Fortune] – awarded in the competition organized with support from town authorities and local writers – served as a base for the game, which encouraged families to walk around the town and discover places worth seeing. This complex project was tested during the mass event in the town and attracted great interest and appreciation from the inhabitants and tourists, as well as the authorities, who declared their readiness to implement it further.¹⁴ The identity of a place might not be the established, straightforward or interesting one, but as this diploma student has proven, it can be built anew.

b. Can identity be shaped?

Aleksandra Harazin, Anna Kącka

My Czechowice-Dziedzice. A project of activities encouraging people to learn more about the district.

In the theory part of the joint graduate project of Aleksandra Harazin and Anna Kącka, we read:

The main idea of the Miejsce Spotkań [Meeting Place] project is to create a space that will be a pretext to stop. To talk freely. To spend time together. To look closer and learn more about your home town and share this knowledge and reflections with others. Miejsce Spotkań is a place to talk about the town, its past, present and future. A place that allows people to get to know each other, unites its inhabitants and supports building up their identity. It is

¹⁴ A. Kołodziejek, *Misja Legenda. Projekt usługi turystyczno-rekreacyjnej dla miasta Myszków*, MFA graduate project 2014, supervisor: Dr J. Kucharczyk.

a landmark and attraction of the town which presents its history, culture and nature.¹⁵

Work on the diploma engaged the inhabitants and related to strengthening their bond with the town; it also sought to educate the youngest recipients. The result was a project of seats which invite to stop and find time and place for a conversation, but also to curiously look at what is important for the town, what makes it special. At the local square there were situated benches with milled icons, creating a route of important natural and architectural objects of the town. The diploma students have also designed a cycle of workshops for the youngest inhabitants of Czechowice-Dziedzice that can be conducted at Miejsce Spotkań, and then continued in kindergarten and primary school in order to “increase kids’ attachment to their home town and sparkle their interest with the district.”¹⁶

c. Get involved!

Maria Prochaczek

How to take control of the world starting with your own yard?

A cycle of illustrated inhabitant’s instructions designed by the Fix Your City Foundation.

Maria Prochaczek took a broader approach to involving the local community and building their ties with the home town. In collaboration with the *Napraw Sobie Miasto* [Fix Your City] Foundation, she prepared a set of legible picture instructions to help people engage in social activity for the purpose of building, improving and developing their place of residence. The legibility and precision of message had been repeatedly consulted with the target user. In simple terms, the student has designed clear visual

¹⁵ A. Harazin and A. Kącka, *Moje Czechowice-Dziedzice. Projekt działań zachęcających do poznawania gminy*, MFA graduate project 2015, supervisor: Dr hab. A. Sobaś.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

information, dedicated to those who have the willingness and ideas how to improve their home town, which enables them to get through the binding regulations and procedures, such as participatory budgeting and development scheme. The bureaucratic complexities tend to be discouraging, but here they have been presented clearly to encourage the inhabitants to take the fate of their surroundings in their own hands.¹⁷

2. Seeking identity in the past

This group of projects will take us back in time. The designers had referred to the history of the Upper Silesia, Katowice, as well as their own family stories. Starting from here and now, they reached back to what had been, in order to recall and reinterpret it, maybe even make sure it is not forgotten.

a. Places that were

Sebastian Wańkowicz

Transformations – illustrations inspired by history and architecture of the Upper Silesia.

The BFA project of Sebastian Wańkowicz was created several years ago and it was one of the first works so directly referring to the Upper Silesia as a place. The focus of this student's interest were the architectural objects which due to political, cultural and economic transformations had thoroughly changed their identity over the years. Based on historical records, he has selected, described and illustrated several places where the old has mixed with the new, or the old has not left any physical trace, only the historical testimony remains. The former objects were marked in the illustrations with a delicate line, indicating

¹⁷ M. Prochaczek, *Jak przejąć kontrolę nad światem, zaczynając od swojego podwórka? Czyli cykl ilustrowanych instrukcji dla mieszkańca, stworzonych przez Fundację Napraw Sobie Miasto*, BFA graduate project 2016, supervisor: Dr hab. J. Szklarczyk-Lauer.

the ephemeral character of images kept in the collective memory of inhabitants. Among others, they are the “Silesia City Center” shopping mall built on the site of the former “Kleofas” mine, the monument in place of the Great Synagogue in Katowice, burnt down by the Nazis in 1939, now a spot for a market place in Mickiewicz Street, and the “Torkat” skating rink built in 1930, now replaced by the Centre for Scientific Information and Academic Library (CINiBA).¹⁸

The city is a constantly changing fabric; Joseph Rykwert writes: “Cities are constantly changing – regardless of their strong and weak points. It is the only sure thing in the history of our cities.”¹⁹ Sebastian Wańkowicz had asked himself and us, the users of cities, a question: How far should the changes go in effacing what used to be, to what extent are the changes for the better? Doesn’t introducing them deprive us of a part of ourselves and our history? One of the described objects, which have totally changed their role and form, is the Katowice train station – an excellent example of how the decisions to completely alter the image of a place are still made today, despite all the alleged sensitivity to tradition, monuments, and history we pride in...

b. Family traditions

Klaudia Walczak

Family Stories – a design of author’s own book.

Looking for their roots, students refer to stories closest to them as well. Klaudia Walczak has taken up a narrative about her grandparents’ life. The stories about the immediate members of her family – her Grandmother and Grandfather, in form of small photo books, delicately related to a place too. The very close, very own place, filled with personal items, old documents, and mostly with the presence of people who had shaped it. In the broader context, it is also a narrative about Silesia, the

¹⁸ S. Wańkowicz, *Transformacje – ilustracje inspirowane historią i architekturą Górnego Śląska*, BFA graduate project 2011, supervisor: Prof. T. Jura.

¹⁹ J. Rykwert, *Pokusa miejsca*, op. cit., p. 26.

Silesian family and the places they find important... the mine where the Grandfather used to work, or the allotment where they spent some idyllic times. It is this sort of project that whispers, but still says so much and gives testimony to history, tradition and continuity; to us as well.²⁰

c. Code rediscovered

Magdalena Szklarczyk

Tiftik, szlajfka, ibercyjer. A Few Words about Silesian Clothing.

Magdalena Szklarczyk has decided to study the colour code and meaning behind particular elements of the traditional Upper Silesia clothing. This topic has led to the reflection that customs which used to be something obvious and passed down from one generation to another, have become akin of lore. As the student followed her fascination with hand-painted *szlajfki* (Silesian for ‘ribbons’; she took part in the workshop on the art of ribbon decoration), she spent many hours analysing old photographs, literature, and museum collections in order to describe and bring back the meaning and symbolic of the Upper Silesia clothing. In the future, she may use this knowledge in other projects, with colour and pattern as reference to tradition, even though their form will be entirely different.²¹

3. A guidebook

Thinking of a place, its past and present, quite often boils down to considering particular objects which map out a specific trail, both touristic and mental one. Guidebooks designated by students are usually based on the subjective selection of places and objects, or dedicated to a particular,

²⁰ K. Walczak, *Historie rodzinne – projekt książki autorskiej*, BFA graduate project 2013, supervisor: Dr A. Machwic.

²¹ M. Szklarczyk, *Tiftik, szlajfka, ibercyjer. Kilka słów o ubiorze. Śląski wzornik ludowy. Publikacja dla osób zainteresowanych strojem górnośląskim*, MFA graduate project 2015, supervisor: dr hab. J. Mrowczyk.

often very narrow group of people involved with a given topic. They issue an invitation for inhabitants and tourists alike to learn about the place.

a. Place seen from a different perspective

Ewa Pędzińska

Katowice in close-up. Publication navigating film sets.

The graduate project of Ewa Pędzińska is an example of a guidebook dedicated to a particular group of recipients and presenting Katowice from a slightly different angle. The student based her work on places which had “starred” on the big screen, and mapped out the trail of Katowice film sets. She has selected the places known to the cinema audience from the films like *Sól ziemi czarnej* [Salt of the Black Earth], *Perła w koronie* [Pearl in the Crown], both directed by Kazimierz Kutz, as well as *Angelus* and *Wojaczek* by Lech Majewski, and laid them out in the form of trails visualized on the maps. These spots have got their own history and position in the urban landscape of Katowice; having presented them as film sets, the designer has altered or possibly enriched their image and significance.²²

b. Identity embedded in architecture

Krzysztof Stręcioch

An illustrated walk-guide of the Tarnowskie Góry architecture.

Krzysztof Stręcioch, on the other hand, has designed a guidebook of Tarnowskie Góry with architectural objects as the landmarks to tell its history. The uniqueness of this city lies in the buildings. The condition of some does not do justice to their previous glory and significance, but they are still important in the city fabric. As the student engaged in retrieving the history of Tarnowskie Góry, as well as in building the sense of belonging and pride of this place as home town, he has come

²² E. Pędzińska, *Katowice w kadrze. Publikacja nawigująca po planach filmowych*, BFA graduate project 2016, supervisor: dr hab. J. Szklarczyk-Lauer.

up with a complex project, which pinpoints many places important for the city and brings back their visual prime and meaning.²³

c. Places which build the image of the city

Szymon Padoł

KatoWeSee – a place worth seeing.

A graphic design of a Katowice guidebook. Illustrations and descriptions of objects and places worth seeing.

This author's guidebook is full of interesting places, selected according to their historical and architectural attractiveness or significance. It is dedicated to young people involved in urban tourism. The designer emphasises the change which Katowice has undergone in recent years, from the centre of coal mining and heavy industry into the place associated with culture and business as well. The subjective selection of potentially interesting spots for the tourist engaged with this kind of sightseeing presents, among others, the following places and objects: the Astronomical concept of Katowice centre, the Silesian Theatre, the former seat of the Silesian Museum, "Zenit" and "Skarbek" Shopping Centres, the Silesian Insurgents' Monument, the Culture Zone, the Silesian Philharmonic, "Superjednostka" Residential Building, "Skyscraper," Giszowiec and Nikiszowiec Developments, "Administrative District," and the Seat of Polish National Radio.²⁴ The places were selected due to their touristic – both architectural and historic – value.

4. Stories / legends / myths

A narrative is an ephemeral being floating over the place, its history and the memory its past, handed down from generation to generation.

²³ K. Stręcioch, *Ilustrowany spacerownik architektoniczny po Tarnowskich Górach*, MFA graduate project 2016, supervisor: Dr hab. K. Gawrych-Olender.

²⁴ Sz. Padoł, *KatoWidze – miejsce warte zobaczenia. Projekt graficzny przewodnika po Katowicach. Ilustracje z opisem obiektów oraz miejsc wartych zobaczenia*, BFA graduate project 2016, supervisor Dr A. Machwic.

It can be a perfectly unreal legend, populated by whimsical creatures, and sometimes it is a forgotten story of actual people, slightly distorted by the passing time. This part presents works based on stories, myths and legends, reinterpreted and told anew by means of modern language, thus having obtained a fresh meaning and value.

a. Identity of the place that isn't any more

Karolina Koszuta

Reconstruction of identity of the place, visualization of the Donnersmarck Family legend.

The place this student chose, and which inspired her graduate project is the castle-park complex in Świerklaniec, one of the most interesting works of architecture of its times. In her diploma essay, she writes: "It's the 19th century. Gwidon von Donnersmarck, another Świerklaniec landlord, founds an impressive palace, (...) often called The Little Versailles, for his beloved."²⁵ The palace was later destroyed by the Red Army, and eventually razed to the ground during the People's Republic period. It left an empty spot in the park. The student continues: "The history of this place, as much as the whole history of Silesia, has been tied with the Donnersmarck Family. Their significance for the region is indisputable. You cannot learn the history of Silesia without studying the history of the Henckel von Donnersmarck Family."²⁶ She decided to recreate this legendary place; to bring back its identity, expressed not only in reconstruction of the architectural objects, once so glamorous, but also in the history of the people who used to live there, and whose stories still fuel imagination. The student has designed a reconstruction, or even a prosthesis of the place, which no longer is. The 3D visualization of the object has revived the faint memory of the place which was, and created a tangible sense of its prime.

²⁵ K. Koszuta, *Rekonstrukcja tożsamości miejsca, wizualizacja legendy rodu Donnersmarcków*, MFA graduate project 2014, supervisor: Dr hab. E. Stopa-Pielesz.

²⁶ Ibidem.

b. How do myths come to being?

Ewa Kucharska

The Myths of Silesia

Ewa Kucharska's publication was created several years ago and provided the graduate with a good onset of professional career. The book quickly found its publisher and has been in stock of the book stores ever since. The author was inspired by mythical characters of Silesia, such as Skarbek, Heksa, Meluzyna... She was wondering, to what extent they remained alive and present in our tradition. Was Bebok still a scare for children, who wouldn't go to sleep? The graduate wrote new parts for these characters, accommodated them in one multi-family building and bound their life stories into one humorous narrative – written down by Marek Jagielski. Beside the Silesian origin of the characters, another inspiration connected with the place were the remnants of torn down tenement houses. The neighbouring buildings usually bear colourful stains, indicating the layout of apartments, where people used to live, with their stories, dreams and everyday hustle. There is a trace, but the place is not any more – it will soon be sealed and forgotten. Just like the myths and stories about the fairy creatures of Silesia... Ewa Kucharska has drawn them into a new story, and in a sense brought them back for the younger generation.²⁷

c. Rediscovering and replaying Silesia

Ewelina Szulik

A project of an illustrated publication for children presenting traditional games of the Upper Silesia.

The starting point of Ewelina Szulik's work was her intent to engage children in outdoor activities, encouraging cooperation and playing in groups. The solution came in the form of old games played at the

²⁷ E. Kucharska, *Śląskie mity*, MFA graduate project 2012, supervisor: prof. T. Jura.

traditional backyard of Silesia – a magical and inspiring place. A narrator who tells children about these traditional games is Babcia Jadzia, living in the Nikiszowiec development. From Babcia, kids learn about the backyard games their grandparents used to play, such as *szlojder*, *kestle*, *knefle*, *kulanie felgi* and *knepcie*. This good fun is also a chance for children to discover how the world has changed, that the places where their grandparents played were different, and so were the games. Making children aware of the past and tradition is also a way of building the identity.²⁸

Conclusion

Being a supervisor of graduate projects, but also a careful observer of what kind of topics students tend to undertake, I notice that subjects related to Silesia have apparently been “in fashion.” This writes well into the general trend in design, expressed in the slogan: “think globally, act locally,” encouraging designers to depart from the universal towards the familiar – what designers can touch, verify and get to know well through direct contact and experience, before they attempt to solve a design problem.

The real value I see in the designs by the younger generation, also the graduate projects illustrating texts, is the lack of bias. Young designers might not speak of the Upper Silesia in a pompous way, with profuse emphasis, but they are not inhibited. Their visual language follows the international trends, and it is the motifs and inspirations, rather than a specific tone of imaging, that make the project a reference to Silesia.

It also seems that for the young generation to discover the Upper Silesia, its places and traditions, is exotic, as if they are experiencing

²⁸ E. Szulik, *Projekt ilustrowanej publikacji dla dzieci prezentujący tradycyjne gry i zabawy na Górnym Śląsku*, MFA graduate project 2016, supervisor: dr A. Machwic.

a completely new and remote place. Students tackle the topics related to Silesia with scientific curiosity, untainted by stereotypes. The young reinterpret in their own ways, often in a humorous and light form, as if they were to wink at the recipients and say: Upper Silesia is cool. The region of Silesia is frequently described as diverse and surprising, and that is the approach taken by students and young designers – for them, there are no better and worse subjects. Black coal can inspire a set of exquisite jewellery, and the owe for the orderly modernist urban architecture blends in with the passion for rusty old mineshafts.

Translated by Alicja Gorgoń



Illus. 1. Materials for the location-based game “Mission: Legend” in Myszków; Aleksandra Kołodziejek.



Illus. 2. Mural as the element of the location-based game;
Aleksandra Kołodziejek

Participants of the location-based game “Mission: Legend”
in Myszków; photo: Andrzej Sobaś



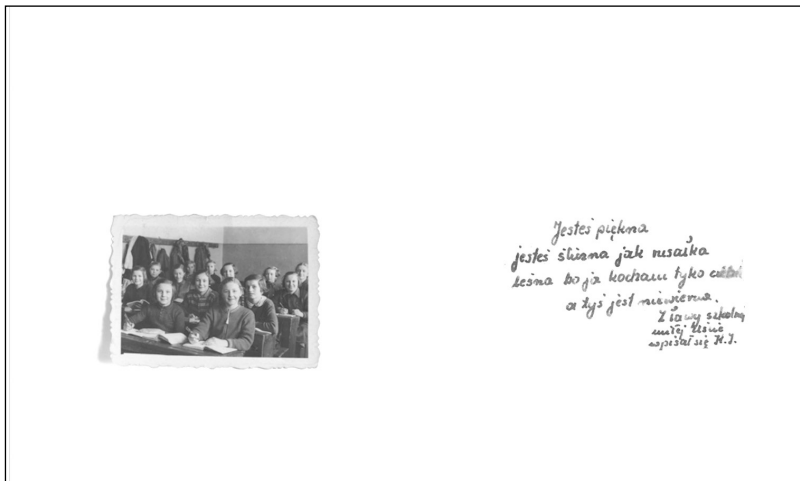
Illus. 3. Bench at the Meeting Place in Czechowice-Dziedzice;
Aleksandra Harazin, Anna Kącka



Illus. 4. Workshop materials; Aleksandra Harazin, Anna Kačka



Illus. 5. A cycle of illustrated inhabitant's instructions designed by the Fix Your City Foundation; Maria Prochaczek



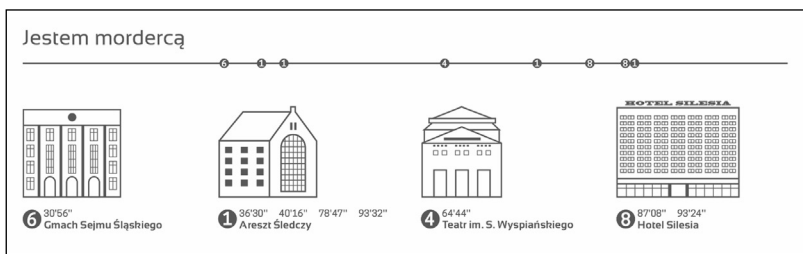
Illus. 10. Family Stories – author’s own book; Klaudia Walczak



Illus. 11. Tiftik, szlajfka, ibercyjer. A Few Words about Silesian Clothing; Folk patterns of Silesia. Publication for those interested in the Upper Silesian clothing; Magdalena Szklarczyk; author’s reproductions of photographs in the collection of Upper Silesia Museum in Bytom; photo: Sonia Świeżawska



Illus. 12. Tiftik, szlajfka, ibercyjer. A Few Words about Silesian Clothing; Folk patterns of Silesia. Publication for those interested in the Upper Silesian clothing; Magdalena Szklarczyk; author's reproductions of photographs in the collection of Upper Silesia Museum in Bytom; photo: Sonia Świeżawska



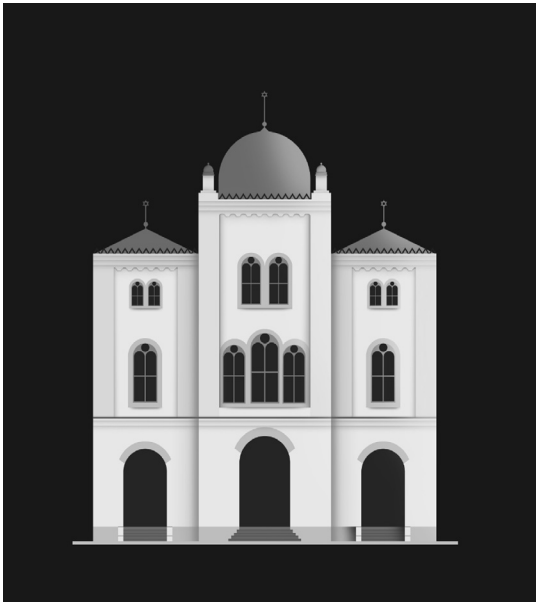
Illus. 13. Katowice in close-up; timeline; Ewa Pędzińska.



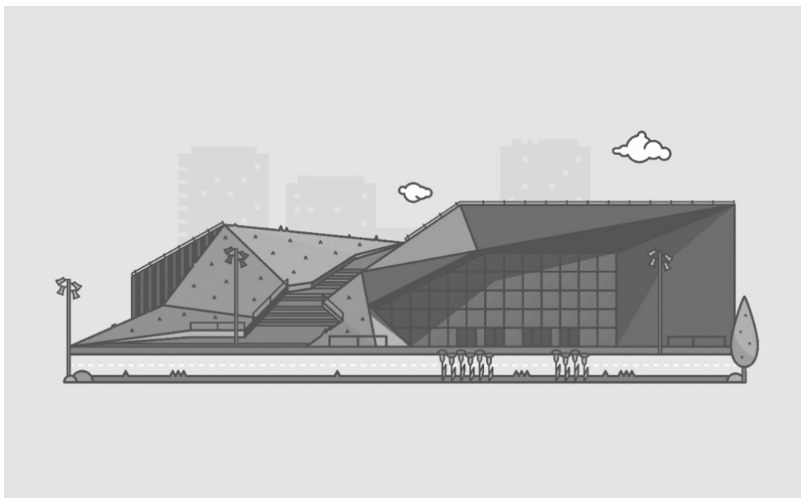
Illus. 14. Katowice in close-up; pictograms; Ewa Pędzińska



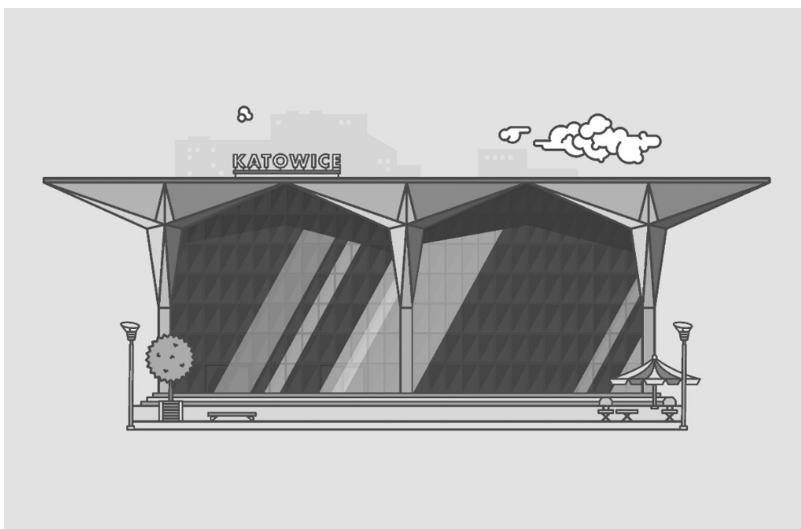
Illus. 15. Town
Hall in Tarnowskie
Góry; Krzysztof
Stręcioch



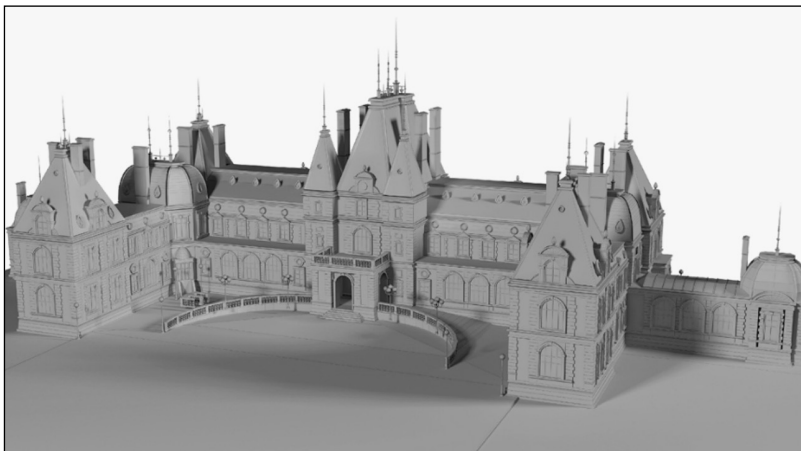
Illus. 16. Synagogue
in Tarnowskie Góry;
the only building in
the book which does
not exist anymore;
Krzysztof Stręcioch



Illus. 17. KatoWeSee – a place worth seeing;
International Conference Centre in Katowice; Szymon Padoł



Illus. 18. KatoWeSee – a place worth seeing;
Railway Station in Katowice; Szymon Padoł



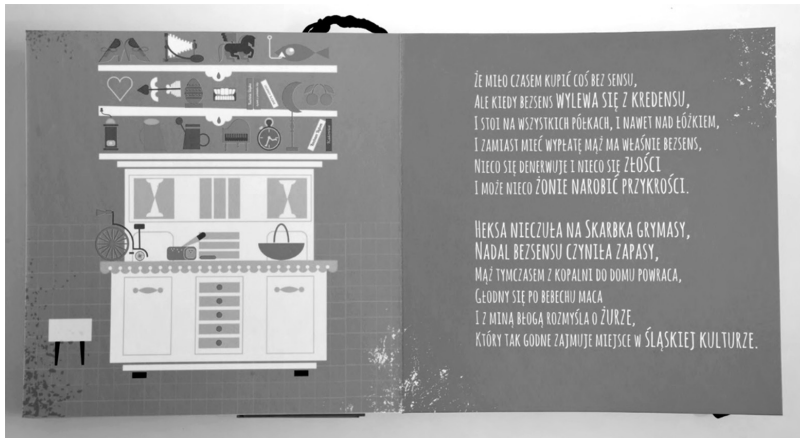
Illus. 19. 3D reconstruction of the castle-park complex in Świerklaniec;
Karolina Koszuta



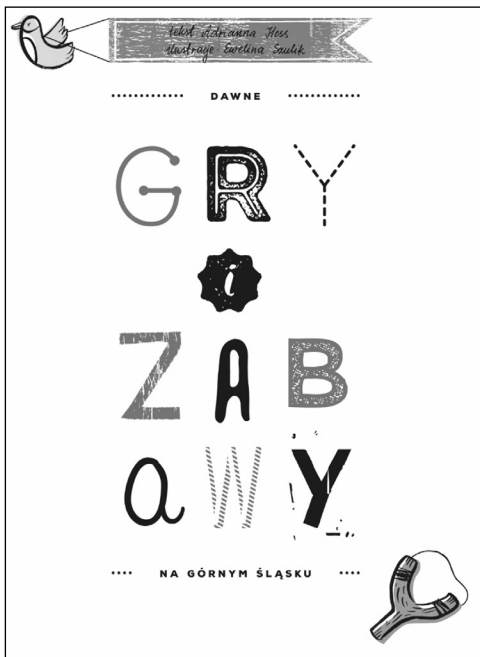
Illus. 20. 3D reconstruction of the castle-park complex in Świerklaniec;
Karolina Koszuta



Illus. 21. The Myths of Silesia; Ewa Kucharska



Illus. 22. The Myths of Silesia; Ewa Kucharska



Illus. 23. Traditional games of the Upper Silesia; cover; Ewelina Szulik

Illus. 24. Traditional games of the Upper Silesia; Ewelina Szulik





Milota Sidorová

Humor & Urban Citizenship. Východné Pobrežie, Košice, Slovakia

Pointing at your head, you sense you should move
elsewhere to a place with better life, but pointing
at your chest you feel you already are at home.
Looking at Bankov hill through the building of Krajský úrad
while standing on Komenského street.
32°C, clear sky, moderate waves.
Fabulous country that can not be found
on any existing world map.
A country you have to look for deep inside of your heart.
This is the východné pobrežie.

Manifesto, The Východné Pobrežie

There are different ways how people deal with unfavorable conditions.
Most of us will possibly avoid the reality by making it look better.¹ But

¹ M. L. Fein., *The Limits of Idealism: When Good Intentions Go Bad*, New York: Kluwer Academic, Plenum Publishers 1999, p. 20.

there are some who reach the bottom first and from that point they look up again. Such is the story of a collective from Eastern Slovakia that decided to proclaim the region a cultural periphery. With harsh directness it labeled Košice the only city worth saving from drawing underwater. Welcome to the absurd narrative of the *Východné Pobrežie*,² sunken region where we have to accept failed cultural potential and the loss of urban citizenship first. Only from this point we can start to explore the culture, people and the city again.

Humor and absurdity have long been studied. It is known that humor and metaphors serve as shortcuts to address problems without insulting a concrete person. They allow self-reflection without hurting ego. According to Goldman³ humor can validate experience, help us to think more flexibly and reframe situations, illuminate the ways in which we live in the world politically, and be used to critique social injustice. Humor can diffuse the tension around controversial topics. Humor is also a vital signal of democracy. Humor can help in times of misery. One example can be taken from near Hungary that is facing growing nationalism, authoritarian regime of the ruling party and *vis-a-vis* shrinking democracy.⁴ Parodic Two-Tailed Dog⁵ party is scoring high popularity among the people who are left at the mercy of the governing party. Their poems, street drawings and the mascot of the party, dog Lajos have spread all over the public space of Budapest and other cities. While they remain

² *Východné Pobrežie*, <http://vyhodnepobrezie.org/> [accessed October 1, 2017].

³ N. Goldman, 'Comedy and Democracy: The Role of Humour in Social Justice,' *The Social Impact of the Arts*, <http://animatingdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Humor%20Trend%20Paper.pdf> [accessed October 4, 2017].

⁴ *Hungary: Democracy Under Threat. Six Years of Attacks against the Rule of Law*, International Federation for Human Rights, November, 2016, p. 5, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/hungary_democracy_under_threat.pdf [accessed October 4, 2017].

⁵ H. Case and J. Palattella, 'Is Humour the Best Weapon Against Europe's New Wave of Xenophobic nationalism?,' *The Guardian*, January 6, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/06/hungary-two-tailed-dog-viktor-orban> [accessed October 1, 2017].

mostly with low profile as personas, their humorous presence still can't go unnoticed. The humor of the Two-tailed Dog party helps addressing absurdity of life in Hungarian conditions and mobilize people to express different opinions or take actions.

Generally it can be said that humor and satire have been less frequent in political realms of Central Europe in the past decades. According to famous Slovak comedian Milan Markovič,⁶ "political satire has not only disappeared, it has disappeared totally." He states there are very few satirists who can master it, so there are not many dramaturgists willing to use it. As we live in times typical by increasingly vulgarising and populist news, Markovič continues, "there are not many qualified dramaturgists who could understand principles of this demanding genre and would be able to apply it successfully."

Let's have a closer look on civic sector in Slovakia. Although the number of civic initiatives, including art and urban improvement organizations has been growing in Slovakia⁷ since 1990's, not many of them have been using humor and metaphors in their language. The case of East Slovakian Východné Pobrežie is different and rather exceptional.

From steel city to tech city. The trap!

"Východoslovenské železiarne (VSŽ) had not only influence over the region, they had influence over whole Czechoslovakia. As a city, Košice changed completely just because of this factory." Such is the statement of a former Slovak president and former mayor of Košice, Rudolf Schuster who himself moved to the city because the factory guaranteed the

⁶ I. Kopcsayová, 'Kam zmizla politická satira,' *Kultúra SME*, February 26, 2009, <https://kultura.sme.sk/c/4322390/kam-zmizla-politicka-satira.html> [accessed October 2, 2017].

⁷ M. Bútora et al., 'Mimovládne neziskové organizácie a dobrovoľníctvo,' *Centrum pre Filantropiu*, 2010, <http://www.cpf.sk/files/files/MNO%202010.pdf> [accessed on October 2, 2017].

company flat.⁸ This is just a glimpse of the factory importance during communism. The urban and population growth of 1960' catalyzed by VSŽ was enormous. In just few decades the city multiplied its area, housing and transportation infrastructure four times. From initial 60,000 the urban population grew into 250,000 citizens. The historical center was surrounded by quickly developing mass-housing districts – *sídliská* (Luniks, Ťahanovce, etc). The city's economy lived from the steel factory that according to its first director Jaroslav Knižka had to be one of top ten metallurgic companies in the world. In its golden times the factory employed 25,000 workers from the region (photo 1–2). The dynamics among workers is described by Slavo Stankovič, one of the members of The Východné Pobrežie this way:

At the times the factory employed many people, and make they sure did employ people from the whole region, these people were going more into the factory than to the city. And even if they were in Košice, you could somehow feel the tribal referencing. In particular pubs you could find people from Sečovce, over there were groups from Michalovce, somewhere else there were also people from different village. Sometimes it could happen that you could get your ass kicked if you went to a wrong place.

During massive growth of the city it is also necessary to address the significant change in once multiethnic social structure of Košice. The pass between 19th and 20th century was the time of forming of Kosice bourgeoisie, well captured in the book *Egy polgár vallomásai* (Confession of an urban citizen) by Košice born Hungarian Sándor Márai.⁹ In this book

⁸ M. Grman, M. Odkladal, 'Príbeh podniku, ktorý formoval Košice a ovplyvnil celé Slovensko,' *Aktuality.sk*, January 30, 2017, <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/410309/pribeh-podniku-ktory-formoval-kosice-a-ovplyvnil-cele-slovensko/> [accessed on October 4, 2017].

⁹ S. Márai. *Egy polgár vallomásai*, 1934, https://issuu.com/librikiado/docs/m_rai_egy_polg_r_vallom_sai_r_s [accessed on February 22, 2018].

he recollects his childhood memories spent on the streets of Košice. But this time also the last time when Hungarian language and culture was dominant in the city. At the beginning of twentieth century, Hungarians and Slovak Hungarians lost their status of landlords and aristocrats they held during Habsburg monarchy. During the newly established Czechoslovak republic the number of Hungarians lowered to its third. Czechoslovakia created new positions in key industries and public sector for Slovaks and Czechs. Especially in the Eastern part of Slovakia, Czech intellectuals and technicians came to live with their families and settled only in cities.¹⁰ WWII meant significant deportations of Jewish communities, reducing them almost to zero. In after war Czechoslovakia, the government program launched in Košice in April 1945 clearly defined proslavic orientation of the country. This meant forced transport of Hungarian minority out of the land or slovakization of those who stayed. In terms of infrastructure, the city quickly opened towards Slovaks who in a very recent history held rather lower social status and education. The population of Roma has been growing now inside the formal city districts. The communistic regime didn't address the ethnic question as the national bourgeoisie was somewhat the relict of the past. The general tendency was to create a homogeneous state of Slovaks. The cultural rehabilitation did not take the place as well, as the cultural and social infrastructure and programs during communism were absent, focusing on mainstream culture (and sports) or it came in the last decades of communism when the signs of urban development exhaustion were remarkable. The representatives of the city focused on material growth as a priority.

The city you can fly away from

After the revolution and establishing democratic Slovak republic, the state owned companies were quickly privatized with Východoslovenské

¹⁰ Z. Sápsová, Š. Šutaj. *Povoynové migrácie a výmena obyvateľstva medzi Československom a Maďarskom*, Prešov: Universum 2010, p. 75, <http://www.svusav.sk/data/uploads/publikacie/povoynove-migracie.pdf> [accessed October 4, 2017].

železiarne as no exception. The factory began losing its momentum in late 1990s, being finally sold to the American company in 2000¹¹. The factory changed the name to U.S. Steel Košice (with steel still being produced in Slovakia). The company went through the internal reorganization, e.g. automatization and increasing the safety standards. Many of the former workers were paid huge fees to enter early retirements. Many took the opportunity to pay the flat or a car and the factory staff has been reduced down to 12–14,000 employees. In terms of population, Košice has been stagnating since then. Although many university graduates, talented people, but mostly workers have emigrated to UK, Prague or Bratislava at the beginning of 2000, the internal immigration from region to the city has been compensating the decrease. The circulation of the workforce increased as Slovakia entered EU.

Since 2013 the focus of the city has been transitioning from industrial to IT sector. The city began to grow again after European City of Culture Košice 2013 took place, IT companies¹² began to form a hub and recruit massively. Companies like IBM, AT&T, T-Systems, Manpower, ADECCO Group established their branches here. U. S. Steel Košice factory still played a role in creating jobs in the city, however not so important as in the past 50 years. The newcomers have been coming from nearby villages, small cities, de facto from the region. This time jobseekers are almost exclusively Slovaks. The population of the city has been stabilized around 250,000. The daily migrants make up to almost 100,000. As for the image of the city, from the outside perspective, Košice at least in its center have been improving. Major reconstruction of the train station, parks and nearby streets took place. Busy restaurants and coffees now dominate the central square (for now only this place).

¹¹ *U.S. Steel Košice*, Wikipedia, https://sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/U._S._Steel_Ko%C5%A1ice [accessed October 4, 2017].

¹² M. Jusková, *Košice. The Startup Heart of Eastern Slovakia*, March 15, 2016, <https://magazine.startup.cc/kosice-startup-city-guide/> [accessed October 4, 2017].

According to members of the Východné Pobrežie, most of the newcomers use Košice only as a place to work and to earn the living. After a work day/week most of them return to their home villages, stay at flats of the districts and if they go out, they frequent districts' pubs, shopping malls or pizzerias, places of low aesthetic and service standards. The new population is using the city in mostly elementary ways to satisfy their basic needs. These people are not really interested in wider cultural opportunities. They *do not* live the city. The *urban citizenship* in qualities Márai was describing almost a century ago and now what is the Východné Pobrežie referring to is missing.

Research methodology

I have been familiar with the work of Východné Pobrežie and took active part in their events in the past. I have been following their communication on social media for more than 3 years. To make my insights more complete, I collected most of the information on a three-day field trip to Košice. During this time I conducted four individual in-depth interviews with the most significant members of the Východné Pobrežie. With one of them I also took a guided walking tour to suburbs of Košice. The perspectives I take in this paper concern more anthropological and political aspects: image of the city reflected by the Východné Pobrežie and organizational aspects, products and achievements of the Východné Pobrežie as a collective.

The city you want to return to

It can be said the collective members are driven by loyalty towards Košice as home they chose not to abandon or they have been consciously returning into. But instead of a simple return, they chose to create a fictional world with rather developed set-up. Although products of the Východné Pobrežie (photo3–5) can be boxed in usual cultural and urban exploration categories (research, exhibitions, events, concerts,

books, etc.), the fictional narrative adds a second layer and novelty to their home and space of interest. The name itself has rather ambiguous meaning – at first simply referring to the East territory of Slovakia, at second the slightly ironical reference towards intellectual heritage of the *East Coast* of the U.S. The latter can be taken seriously as on the map of the Východné Pobrežie, Košice are located next to New York, Washington D.C., even Tokyo.

The collective was founded by Michal Hladký and Mišo Hudák in 2009. Both knew each other and collaborated since 2006. Both were rather good students with international experiences. When they met they shared the same frustration over cultural and livability status quo in Košice as well as the same personal question: *should they stay or pursue their careers abroad?* While they could easily leave, they came to a conclusion it was *them* who had to create conditions for their own work in Košice.

Hudák and Hladký recognized each other's talents and formed a creative duo. By background Hudák has studied film-making and Hladký graduated in cultural management. In skills and temperament Hladký is a rather calm, thinker/doer with organizational talent and nature of cultural projects, for example catalyzing and executed European City of Culture 2013. Hudák's biggest talent is the ability to create eccentric landscape of the Východné Pobrežie and to feed this atmosphere around the collective and among the fans. Even after 10 years and development of their personal projects, the two remain closely connected in thinking and communication. The structure of the organization reminds of an octopus. The freedom of projects stretches to personal tastes and capacities of the members, but the creative head and executive powers remain quite limited to Hudák and his closest affiliates. He however claims a rather informal leadership.

Citizenship & Humor

From the outer look the Východné Pobrežie seems like any other semi-developed cultural project or organization, having usual more

than 3000 likes on facebook, website and products to purchase. There seems to be a significant fan base in Košice and even other (now mostly Prague, Brno and Western Slovakian) cities. The Východné Pobrežie differs from classical urban life improving non-governmental organizations or initiatives in these ways:

- the ultimate *product* is a citizenship or a sense of belonging to and improving conditions of urban life in Košice;
- the fictional, satirical landscape with its characters and dark often absurd humor in which other usual projects take place.

Members describe the Východné Pobrežie as citizenship, which is a value without concrete form or product. The collective consists of nine core members who were accepted after a long selection process and testing period. Only people with long-term commitment to the improvement of the city and the ones who became friends were accepted. They all are invited to bring in their personal projects¹³ as nobody is really working for the collective as a regular employee and the fan base needs to fed from time to time.

Citizens and Ministers

The project evolves around citizenship, sense of belonging to Kosice and the need to create something better in the city. But speaking of citizenship, the ones who are invited to join the initiative do not end up with anything lesser than positions of ministers. There are no regular citizens in the Východné Pobrežie. The status can be perceived on two levels. One is an equality seeking platform as Hudák describes, “we are all ministers, there is no prime minister or a higher priest.” On the other hand one can feel certain exclusivity. The title of Minister offers many

¹³ Robin Street Food by Dana Bodnárová, Minister of Megalomania, Jelly Belly, music group by Mišo Hudák, CIKE, Institut for Creative Industries by Michal Hladký.

profits (networks of the collective, the right to include and promote personal projects through the channels of the collective). Seen from the outside it can be perceived as an elitist subscene club of like-minded friends. This is on one side the advantage of long-term dedication of their members through out their lives. On the other hand it reaches the capacity limit when nobody is proposing agenda and sets the pace for the others.

The humorous aspects of minister positions are the areas the members govern. They usually describe the abilities or disabilities of the specific member in exaggerated way. Calm and organized Hladký is a Minister of Panic, governing exactly the opposite of what his strength is. Hudák's artistic visions earned him a title of Minister of Demagogy. Bodnárováš executive powers and ability to envision things without limits resulted in the Ministry of Megalomania. Stankovič who according to the other members possess an unlimited capacity to listen to other people's stories and show sympathies made him the Minister of Nostalgia.

Code KSC, Mišo Hudák

Hudák's major contribution and the lead in the Východné Pobrežie are in terms of research activities combining both the spatial and the anthropological side of urban development. Hudák is a local patriot and his life has been closely connected to the city. For a long time he lived in the mass housing district Ťahanovce, the youngest from the districts of Košice. His father was a steelworker in VSŽ, later U.S. Steel Košice.

All of this strongly influenced his perceptions of the city outside the beautiful center. In collective he launched few explorative projects resulting in several studies and two books (*KSC*,¹⁴ *KSC Kód/Code*,¹⁵), later on

¹⁴ Východné Pobrežie, *KSC: na Ural nebolo nikdy bližšie návod ku hlavnému mestu Východného pobrežia*, Košice: Východné Pobrežie 2010, p. 178.

¹⁵ Východné Pobrežie, *KSC Kód/Code*, Košice: Východné Pobrežie 2013, p. 181.

focusing on mapping of the monuments of the past (Atlas sôch¹⁶). The topic of real urban or let's say metropolitan life is at the core of his research:

Košice grew significantly in the past fifty years. With Danka (Bodnárová) we concluded a profound analysis of similar cities we like. These cities have the similar size, dispositions. We have found out that the metropolitan – *real urban life* starts somewhere around 300,000 inhabitants. And while Košice almost reaches this number, most of the people live isolated in their flats of mass-housing districts that up to rare exceptions do not offer conditions of *real* urban life.

He is a talented visual artist as well he has a gift to write suggestive anthropological, artistic texts. In the first book called KSC (of a word resemblance to the Communistic Party of Czechoslovakia – KSČ, but also the international code of the Kosice Airport KSC) the collective addressed brisk criticism seen through rather love-hate relationship with Košice. Although the aspiration to present the book as an outside of the city center real urban guide, he addresses a self-criticism:

We made it too beautiful. Waste disposals, paneláky and other places were captured in rather stylized compositions and bright colors. The book was literally based on these beautifying pictures. That made the book very popular, but the power of texts I addressed was diminished.

Reevaluation of the book followed and resulted in launching another one called *KSC Kód/Code*. In this publication you will not find any photo or real image. The book is based on the multilayered texts describing the urban and ethnic changes of the city, identity, archetypes of the residents living here, quality of services and offers insiders views – into the supposedly only good places in the city – mostly archipelago of popular artsy

¹⁶ Východné Pobrežie, *Atlas sôch – povojnové umenie v uliciach mesta Košice*, Košice: Východné Pobrežie, CIKE 2016, p. 284.

coffee houses and cultural spaces. The suggestive rough and obscure vector graphics in black and orange colors suddenly introduce quite different Košice. It is the city of former *vežetkárs* (steelworkers), *ice hockey players* with vocabulary of 50 words, *aspiring artists and intellectuals of little career opportunities* (often beaten by alcohol served during insightful political discussions), *jazzy grandmas* (active seniors who decided not to spend the rest of their lives in flats of mass housing districts, but are seeking out every possibility to go out to free cultural events, wine included), *aging poor and aggressive supermarket shop assistants* from nearby villages, *nožkárs and luštas* (youngsters living off their parents or boyfriends who frequently parade themselves in cars on the main boulevards) and *the new Košice aristocracy* (vulgar businessmen who got rich in the wave of doubtful privatization in 1990's). It is important to mention these archetypes grow from collective's rather subjective observations and you won't find rigorous research behind it. Despite of that fact, you will find yourself laughing and referencing these people to people in your own city.

KSC Kód/Code depicts rather obscure city and its inhabitants you do not want to and you can not idealize. The message of the book is an antidote to tabloids full of instant superstars, politicians and gossips that people consume on a daily basis. Despite of the doubts about the book's fate, first of the books was sold out in one month. Although there is a waiting list for the book, the authors decided not to print the second edition. The book raised interest in social fabric of the city, a different face of Košice. By rejecting beautiful imagery and leveling texts, it became exactly a satiric messenger, one of those that Milan Markovič refers to be *totally disappearing*.

Culture Fighter, European City of Culture, CIKE, Michal Hladký

Michal Hladký became one of the most significant contemporary cultural agents in the city. He succeeded in his initial mission to create

conditions for his self-realization in his home town. *There is an emerging group who can pay off a certain demand in Košice*, he addresses the recent economic, demographic and cultural change:

It is good that European City of Culture happened before the IT boom and massive migration. The newly established cultural spaces offer better, more expensive and different products. It looks more like the city.

Most of the work of Michal Hladký is of rather conventional cultural, even entrepreneurial character. It can be said the projects he creates possess high level of structure, organization and city changing aspirations, despite of his post humorously referring to the Minister of Panic.

Among the projects of Východné Pobrežie where Hladký closely participated as a team member, Culture Fighter¹⁷ set the ground for creative brainstorming and future quality assessments of the urban life the collective seeks to achieve. In the need to establish any discussion about the culture in Košice, Hladký launched a series of interviews about urban culture with European leaders in the field. According to his own words he was curious in getting more specific information on urban cultural realms, the ways how to sustain it even after big donations like European City of Culture¹⁸. Through conferences, meet-ups and residencies this project also sparked the debate about creative industries.

The European City of Culture 2013 can be considered as the most important cultural stimuli in terms of bringing attention to the topic of culture and building up the infrastructure. Hladký was one of the main applicant leaders and after winning the project, he became the project

¹⁷ *Culture Fighter*, 2012, <http://culturefighter.eu/about> [accessed October 4, 2017].

¹⁸ *Košice 2013, Čo je EHMK*, <http://www.kosice2013.sk/o-nas/co-je-ehmk/> [accessed October 5, 2017].

coordinator. Large investments came into the city and few new cultural spaces opened up (Košické Kasárne/Kulturpark,¹⁹ Tabačka Kulturfabrik,²⁰ etc). But according to the EU assessment the key success of Košice 2013 has been in the approach to sustainability, with significant time and resources allocated to legacy planning. In addition to the creation of new cultural and tourist assets, a long-term strategy has been developed, new legacy bodies established and ongoing financial commitments obtained from government partners.²¹

In terms of cultural community Hladký states, “I dare to say that all the people who are now doing major culture in Košice grew up on the spine of EHMK (European City of Culture Košice).” After the end of the European project he carried on the position of a city employee and has been realizing ex-post cultural maintenance through the Institute of Creative Industries Košice (CIKE). Although the institute is subsidized by the city, there is a significant program freedom in creating an independent agenda.

As the visibility of the work became strong on local and European level, he made a decision to run these projects independently from the Východné Pobrežie. According to Hladký, he did not want the collective to be seen as any favorite or *godfather* operating behind the scene. Equally it was not necessary to connect it with, as the Východné Pobrežie was a personal philosophy for him. In some projects CIKE becomes a program or funding partner for the Východné Pobrežie, but Hladký likes to separate the two.

¹⁹ *Laureátom Ceny Arch 2014 sú Košické Kasárne/Kulturpark*, November 7, 2014, <http://www.teraz.sk/magazin/laureatom-ceny-arch-kosicke-kasarne/105136-clanok.html> [accessed October 5, 2017].

²⁰ *Tabačka Kulturfabrik*, 2015, <http://www.tabacka.sk/sk/1500051/o-tabacke> [accessed on October 5, 2017]

²¹ N. McAteer et. al., *Ex-post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture*, European Commission, December 2014, pp. 5, <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/files/ecoc-2013-full-report.pdf> [accessed online, October 5, 2015].

Robin Street Food,²² Dana Bodnárová

The third publically most visible member, Minister of Megalomania is an architectural graduate and the one of the only two women in the collective, Dana Bodnárová. In the collective she started as a *cadet* being an active supporter, illustrator, architect and executive hand working side by side with Hudák. Despite of her being the younger member of the team and not part of the founding duo, she has a close professional and personal connection with Hudák. Bodnárová remained an essential member and creative workforce in executing smaller projects of the Východné Pobrežie. She illustrated Atlas sôch and had have been a research associate too. After years being an active member of the Východné Pobrežie she however went through a personal and professional assessment of her future in Východné Pobrežie mostly in financial terms. She also considered a career of a local architect, only to find herself incompatible with the mainstream flow of architectural projects and little transparency in public tenders. She decided to stay and realized herself in completely different field, by setting up the first food truck in Košice:

Robin Street Food is the first food truck in streets of Košice, I have founded the last season. We are located in front of the cinema Úsmev. This season two more competitors emerged here standing next to me. We are beneficial for the cinema as we feed the bar with the food. All the cultural operators come here, and not only them. Many rich/posh people of Kosice come here for burger and the beer.

She describes the project as sufficiently fulfilling her current needs. Although she is currently not active in intellectual aspect, she contributes

²² *Robin Street Food*, https://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g-274927-d10717245-i209659359-Robin_Street_Food-Kosice_Kosice_Region.html [accessed October 5, 2017].

to improving quality of urban life by running the street food program and bringing the community together. She remains connected with the Východné Pobrežie on a philosophical level and friendship. Robin Street food is also featured on the website of the Východné Pobrežie.

Aspiring politics

In the almost ten years long history, the collective transformed several times as an organization. In the life of catalyst organizations often comes a question of politics. Due to a rather strong visibility of the local members, this year, the Východné Pobrežie was given an offer to become an independent political party or to have their members being absorbed into existing political parties. After a pluralist discussion the members declined this offer as a collective. It is important to say that during our individual sessions the opinions differed.

While some of the members wanted stay away from politics because it was seen as too *tough* and *perhaps not the most efficient*, some did not oppose the idea. It was the question of efficiency clearly echoed by Michal Hladký, “I am coming to an age, when I am looking for a really efficient change in the city. I am not rejecting the idea of entering politics, but the question for me is how politically efficient can I be?” In this regards the two founders find agreement and perception of the time passing and the need to act with bigger impacts. In an individual interview Hudák mentioned, “the urban transformation will not happen in 2 years. It can be like this for another 10 years. And ten years in life of a person is a really long time.”

The Východné Pobrežie stays an apolitical and non-partisan group. It will allow their members to seek efficient political experience and pursuing political changes in the city if they decide so. But just like the project of European City of Culture Košice, their political aspirations won't be associated with the collective of the Východné Pobrežie either.

Conclusion

In spectrum of Slovak cultural initiatives the *Východné Pobrežie* is one of the most significant collectives, not only for talents and products or their members, but for the humorous fiction narrative of both, Košice and themselves. They act, as Koziski reffers to comedians as anthropologists or “intentional culture critics” because they “document areas of tacit knowledge...bringing them to the conscious awareness of their particular audiences.”²³ Comedy awakens us to these automatic, uncritical thought patterns in a way that we don’t find threatening. Humor is explicitly and implicitly present in the narratives and work of the Východné Pobrežie, thus making it more likeable and digestable.

In terms of the product, the Vychodné Pobrežie is a cultural sub-collective fostering individual *urban citizenship in Košice that is more important than the form of expression or actions of the collective*. While in its core it consists of few formal members, the idea of improving and belonging to the city is free to adapt by everybody. It should become a personal philosophy.

In terms of sustainability and longevity of the mission this is a good strategy to cultivate people, their values and bond them with personal relationships. In terms of organizational sustainability the lack of structure, funding and regular program agenda, the collective can transform into an informal group of friends and colleagues who may drop the need to act as formal organization and stop its existence in this way.

²³ S. Koziski, ‘The Standup Comedian as Anthropologist: Intentional Culture Critic,’ *Journal of Popular Culture*, 18(2), 1984, pp. 57–76.



Photo 1. Východoslovenské železiarne, 1962, source: TASR



Photo 2. Steelworker, 1966, source: TASR



Photo 5. Pride of Košice, Archetypes of the City, source: KSC Kód/Code, the Východné Pobrežie



Miłosz Markiewicz

Post-industrial Life? On New Identity of Place

By the industrial heritage, we mean not only places, which are material relics of ‘the old world,’ but also ways of living of surrounding communities, cultural and natural landscape, environmental changes, and – last but not least – spaces of symbolic meanings which towers over the surroundings. We can assume, that during the transformation into the post-industrial context, those places obtain a new life. Not only the space, but also its modes of operation are undergoing a redesign process. Barrens of former ironworks, factories and coalmines are being adapted to new goals, with functionalities, which have never been assumed before. The example of such post-industrial place, which has got the new life, is a former Coalmine “Katowice.” Nowadays Katowice Culture Zone is located here. It consists of the International Congress Centre, the seat of the new Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Silesian Museum (Muzeum Śląskie). The latter cultural institution is mostly interesting for me within this paper. I am interested in a transformation of space of the former Coalmine “Katowice.” The transformation, which is seemingly imperceptible, because the Silesian Museum – like mine corridors – is located mostly underground.

“Ferdinand” was the original name of the Coalmine “Katowice.” The name had to honor Ignaz Ferdinand von Beym, who founded the Coalmine in 1822. One year later, in 1823, the coalmine started mining, and was working incessantly for 176 years, regardless of ownership or territorial changes. During its history, the Coalmine was named “Ferdinand,” “Ferdynand,” “Katowice,” “Stalinogród,” and finally “Katowice” again. The last ton of coal was mined in 1999 – in July the exploitation of the land belonging to the Coalmine was completed. 120 000 000 tons of coal were mined from the Coalmine “Katowice” during its history.

Also in 1999 another event took place in Katowice – Construction Committee For the New Building of Silesian Museum has started its activity. Despite the City of Katowice provided land for the new building of Silesian Museum at Ceglana Street, the Committee focused its interest on searching a new place. An agreement under which land of former Coalmine “Katowice” were intended for construction of Silesian Museum purposes, was signed on December 30, 2004. The investment process and construction lasted until 2015. On June 26, Silesian Museum has been open to the public. But this is not the end of investments within the post-industrial space of former Coalmine “Katowice.” For cultural purposes next buildings are being adapted and revitalized. The project of the new Silesian Museum building was prepared by Austrian architectural studio Riegler Riewe Architekten from Graz. The important part of their idea was the reference to industrial history of Silesia and original function of the place. Interference in the post-industrial landscape had to be as small as possible, so the greater part of the new building is placed underground.

The only structures protruding above the surface of the ground are the glazed administrative and foyer buildings and six glass boxes that provide extra light to the exhibitions underground. Thanks to the right proportions, the buildings are in perfect harmony with the pre-existing mining facilities. The underground

section comes with a three-story car park with 232 parking places, an auditorium for 320 visitors, a library, educational and conference halls and an impressive exhibition space, a central hall that is 12.5 m high. The exhibition space at the new venue of Muzeum Śląskie covers a total of 6000 m². The complex also includes the former machine room of the Warszawa shaft, converted into a two-story restaurant, and a former clothing storehouse, today's building of Centrum Scenografii Polskiej, a division of Muzeum Śląskie in Katowice. The latter presents a collection of theatre and film set design that is unique nationwide. Muzeum Śląskie's unique attraction is the 40-metre observation tower of the former mineshaft. Its lift now brings visitors to the top platform for them to enjoy magnificent views of the park and the city of Katowice.¹

During next steps, buildings of the main baths and a carpentry workshop were transformed into museum buildings. The attractive park space between Museum buildings, which is intended for recreation and relaxation, is becoming bigger. During spring and summer days one can observe that the park space fulfills its function.

The entire project [...] is a unique blend of modernity (a complex of underground and aboveground buildings) and tradition (the old mining buildings converted to support the museum), in terms of design, visual, functional and semantic aspects alike. The shift from industrial use to cultural use of the revitalized space – conversion of the ex-mining site into the Culture Zone – symbolically reflects the social and economic changes that Upper Silesia has undergone since 1989. This manifests the aspiration to further science and culture, a mission defined by the strategies of the region of Silesia.²

¹ <https://muzeumslaskie.pl/en/architecture-and-space>.

² *Ibidem*.

* * *

The inspiration for this paper was a situation, which stays unsolved at the moment I am writing the article.³ As I mentioned above, the opening of the new building of Silesian Museum was not the end of investments within Culture Zone (so at the place of former Coalmine “Katowice”). In February 2018 it turned out, that City of Katowice has sold 5 hectares of land located north of the Museum. The property developer has announced the creation of a large and prestigious housing estate with the 12- and 18-storey buildings.⁴ The estate was designed by one of the most recognizable architectural studio in Poland – Medusa Group from Bytom. Alicja Knast, the Director of Silesian Museum, has decided to protest against the investment. She argued that “housing estate will be situated on a 3-meters hill in relation to the area of Museum, and it will directly disturbs the post-industrial landscape and viewpoints.”⁵ An application was issued, in order to “undertake joint activities for defending the integrity of the Culture Zone landscape.”⁶ The application had also its online version.⁷ Only media coverage of the case forced architects and representatives of the Katowice magistrate to reveal the visualization of the planned housing estate.⁸ Przemysław Łukasik, an architect from Medusa Group, argued during the press conference, that the buildings will not distort the landscape, nor disturb the viewpoints. So the Silesian Museum would still be a dominant in the local space. Alicja Knast, however, did not seem convinced, claiming that “we do not know, how the horizon line, determined by the upper edge of those

³ The article was completed in April 2018.

⁴ K. Głowacka, *Wojna o mieszkaniówkę w Strefie Kultury*, <https://silesion.pl/wojna-o-mieszkania-w-strefie-kultury-w-katowicach-21-02-2018>.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ K. Głowacka, *Muzeum Śląskie nie chce osiedla. Jest petycja*, <https://silesion.pl/muzeum-slaskie-nie-chce-osiedla-jest-petycja-22-02-2018>.

⁷ http://www.petycje.pl/petycja/12912/apel_o_niedopuszczenie_do_uruchomienia_duzych_inwestycji_w_bezpośrednim_ossiedztwie_strefy_kultury.html.

⁸ M.J. Cieśla, *Pokazano wizualizacje osiedla mieszkaniowego w Strefie Kultury*, <https://silesion.pl/pokazano-wizualizacje-osiedla-w-strefie-kultury-23-02-2018>.

buildings, will look. We are worried that our image – the post-industrial and contemporary silhouette – will not be as suggestive as before.”⁹

One can ask about those words of the Director of Silesian Museum. In order to defend the post-industrial landscape and the connected with it horizon line, whether she focuses on the image of the institution she manages, or she treats the landscape as an autonomous collective being that must be protected from degradative human activity? The question is so important to me, because I would like, within this paper, to take a try of a post-anthropocentric analysis of the identity of post-industrial space. The new building of Silesian Museum is an exemplification of such space. Having regard to all the difficulties that arise when choosing this type of perspective,¹⁰ I would like to search for the non-human within abovementioned post-industrial space.

A recurring theme of statements related to the conflict around the housing estate at the Culture Zone is “preserving of landscape” – as it is something immutable, which shape should be given a special care. As its ‘appropriate’ appearance could launch a network of relations, which gives to human the comfort of thinking about themselves as a part of the world. I will understand the landscape, as Tadeusz Sławek once did – as a particular meeting place. “It is a particular kind of meeting, because, unlike what we usually call ‘meeting,’ and what is only the descent of several people in a predetermined place and time for a specific purpose, everything meets with everything within the landscape: human and non-human animals, subjects and objects, nature and culture, economy and politics.”¹¹ So when I ask about the postanthropocentric dimension of the post-industrial place, I am asking about connected with it landscape, understood as a place in which seemingly separated worlds

⁹ Alicja Knast: *Odpowiedzmy sobie na pytanie, jakim chcemy być miastem*, wywiad, <https://silesion.pl/alicia-knast-odpowiedzmy-sobie-na-pytanie-jakim-chcemy-byc-miastem-01-03-2018>.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Markiewicz, ‘Przekroczyć człowieka. Uwagi o postantropocentrycznym problemie umiejscowienia,’ *Anthropos?*, no. 24, 2015, pp. 110–119.

¹¹ T. Sławek, ‘Adres i wędrówka. Szkic oikologiczny,’ *Prace Komisji Krajobrazu Kulturowego*, no. 24, 2014, p. 66.

merge. I am also asking, partly, about the place of human within this complex collective.¹² Human who for a point of honor set themselves a defense of the landscape against human activity. That is why the horizon of this reflection I will make the concept of the Anthropocene, and connected with it aporia and uncertainty.

* * *

The concept of the Anthropocene has been making a career within the humanities for over a dozen years. However, it is worth remembering that it is not the domain of knowledge that it originally comes from. When Eugene Stoermer and Paul Crutzen have published their paper in 2000,¹³ they probably could not imagine, that the controversy surrounding the announcement of the Anthropocene will go so far beyond stratigraphy or geology. Their main purpose was to popularize the concept, which Stoermer have been using “in public lectures since ‘80s.”¹⁴ The researchers wanted to draw attention to the increased visibility of human interference in the planet, which forces us to change in the epoch’s naming:

Considering [...] still growing impacts of human activities on earth and atmosphere, and at all, including global, scales, it seems to us more than appropriate to emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology by proposing to use the term “Anthropocene” for the current geological epoch.¹⁵

Of course, they are not the first to notice this change. In 1873 Antonio Stoppani wrote about human as a telluric force which in power and universality may be compared to the greater forces of earth. So

¹² B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. C. Porter, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1993.

¹³ E.F. Stoermer, P.J. Crutzen, ‘The “Anthropocene”’, *Global Change Newsletter*, vol. 41, 2000, pp. 17–18.

¹⁴ K. Birkenmajer, ‘Antropocen – nowa epoka geologiczna?’, *Przegląd Geologiczny*, no. 11, 2012, p. 587.

¹⁵ E.F. Stoermer, P.J. Crutzen, *The “Anthropocene”*, op. cit., p. 18.

he proposed using the term 'anthropozoic era.' Also Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Vladimir Vernadsky pointed out the level of human influence on the planet. They used the term 'noösphere' (the 'world of thought') to mark the growing role of human brain-power in shaping its own future and environment.¹⁶

Officially, the term "Anthropocene" has never been accepted. Since 2008, the work of a special team of the International Stratigraphy Commission has been carried out, the purpose of which is to check whether man really "left a clear trace, firmly embedded in rock layers, that it will be readable even after tens or even hundreds of millions of years."¹⁷ If the Anthropocene is officially recognized, it will mean that geologists are able to confirm that human agency is equal to cataclysms, which until now determined the boundaries of subsequent geological epochs (such as the glaciation constituting the Pleistocene caesura). As Julia Fiedorczuk notes, we will be able to "congratulate ourselves – as a species that enthusiastically named itself *Homo sapiens*, we have achieved the size of the cataclysm relatively quickly."¹⁸ Before this happens, geologists have to answer the following questions:

Could humans really exert an influence as deep as the one that began with the Holocene 11,700 years ago, when the vast ice caps began to drown, raising the level of the world's ocean by 120 m? Is it possible to compare humanity with the glaciers that dominated the Earth at the beginning of the Pleistocene, before 2.6 million years? Can our technical activity from just the last few centuries be compared to all the dramatic events that marked the earth's geological history, divided into periods of millions or even billions of years?¹⁹

¹⁶ See: P.J. Crutzen, 'Geology of Mankind,' *Nature*, no. 415, 2002, p. 23.

¹⁷ J. Zalasiewicz, 'Ludzki ślad na Ziemi,' *Świat Nauki / Scientific American*, no. 10 (302), 2016, pp. 25–26.

¹⁸ J. Fiedorczuk, *Cyborg w ogrodzie. Wprowadzenie do ekokrytyki*, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra 2015, p. 11.

¹⁹ J. Zalasiewicz, 'Ludzki ślad,' op. cit, p. 24.

* * *

The Anthropocene still arouses a lot of controversy. However, this does not change the fact that with the official recognition of humanity as a geological strength, we will have to “reconceptualize not only the relations between natural and social sciences but also history, modernity and the very idea of the human.”²⁰ What seems extremely important to me, in the context of the narration about the Silesian Museum, I suggest now to focus on proposals for dating the origins of the Anthropocene.

Crutzen and Stoermer suggest to pay attention to the end of the 18th century. The air coming from this period, trapped for hundreds of years in polar ice, and undergoing research today, shows a significant increase in the amount of carbon dioxide and methane particles accumulating in it.²¹ What’s more, it is then that the first industrial steam engine by James Watt is created and implemented. Thus, the industrial revolution, or the third period of human development (after the cognitive and agrarian revolution,)²² would constitute a breakthrough not only for our species, but also for the entire planet. The Anthropocene researchers’ concentrated under the leadership of Jan Zalasiewicz proposal is a bit differently. According to them, the first nuclear bomb explosion that took place on July 16, 1945 in Alamogordo, New Mexico, should become the border point.²³ It was then that a huge amount of artificially created radioactive nuclides were released into the atmosphere, which spread throughout the planet, affecting the chemical structure of its geological layer. This perspective would probably be closer to the International Stratigraphy Commission, as

²⁰ A. Malm, A. Hornborg, ‘The geology of mankind? A critique of the Anthropocene narrative,’ *The Anthropocene Review*, no. 1, 2014, p. 62.

²¹ E.F. Stoermer, P.J. Crutzen, ‘The “Anthropocene”,’ op. cit., p. 17–18.

²² Y.N. Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Canada: Penguin Random House 2014.

²³ J. Zalasiewicz, C.N. Waters, M. Williams et al., ‘When did the Anthropocene begin? A mid-twentieth century boundary level is stratigraphically optimal,’ *Quaternary International*, vol. 383, 2015, pp. 196–203.

the observations of Crutzen, an atmosphere researcher,²⁴ do not find recognition in the eyes of many geologists.

Both propositions are focused on the ‘moments’ in our history, which – it is difficult to deny – have changed its course. Both the industrial revolution and the use of the atomic bomb have brought the world to new paths. It would be in accordance with the very etymology of the concept of the Anthropocene – which consists of Latin *anthropos* (human) and *cene* (new, from the Greek *kainos*) – meaning that we are dealing with a completely new world, which human is the driving force. That’s why some researchers find it so difficult to agree to the official recognition of the Anthropocene and that’s why geological research must be so accurate. That ‘new world’ would literally mean, among others, new chemical composition of the planet, and thus, new ways of functioning of organisms living on it. As in the case of previous geological eras – the human impact on Earth would have to be counted (and in this case forecasted) in hundreds of thousands of years. Have we really already changed our planet so much?

Karol Birkenmajer, one of the critics of the recognition of the new geological epoch, perceives the introduction of the term “Anthropocene” as useless for researchers dealing with the planet. This concept has a more ethical and symbolic character for him. He wrote:

It seems that the usefulness of the term “Anthropocene” in stratigraphic geology will be small, above all regional, not global. This term can therefore be useful for economic geographers, planners, nature conservation activists, sociologists, etc., but not for stratigraphers, paleogeographers or paleobiologists [...].²⁵

And it is hard to say that he is wrong. In contrast to the natural sciences, the humanities quickly got used to the new term, although it is also criticized.

²⁴ In 1995, Paul J. Crutzen received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his research into the anthropogenic destruction of the ozone layer.

²⁵ K. Birkenmajer, ‘Antropocen – nowa epoka geologiczna?’ op. cit., p. 588.

For example, Donna Haraway is skeptical about its use, paying back note that the human from the very beginning of their existence had a significant impact on the functioning of the planet,²⁶ so the separation of a new period in this complicated relationship is an abuse.²⁷ In addition, Haraway is trying to ask how the posthumanist critique of the definition of Human refers to the term “Anthropocene.”

Human is a concept that has changed its boundaries over the centuries and has been used to categorize reality. It determined the hierarchy and built the walls through the processes of switching on and off from its area. In fact, since antiquity we have seen that not everyone could deserve to be called a Human, and over time, only the criteria that allowed for this privileged position were changed.²⁸ Therefore, Haraway asks in the context of defining the Anthropocene:

The *Anthropos*—what is that? All of *Homo sapiens sapiens*? All of mankind? Well, who exactly? Fossilfuelburning humanity is the first short answer to that. Industrial humanity, however, is still a kind of a speciesbeing; it doesn't even speak to all of industrial humanity, but specifically the formations of global capital [...].²⁹

²⁶ *Homo sapiens* wandering led to the extinction of many species of plants and animals, not to mention other representatives of the genus *Homo*. Y.N. Harari, *Sapiens*, op. cit.

²⁷ See: D. Haraway, ‘Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,’ *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 6, 2015, pp. 159–165.

²⁸ It is significant that Rosi Braidotti begins her book with the words: “Not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that. Some of us are not even considered fully human now, let alone at previous moments of Western social, political and scientific history.” R. Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Cambridge: Polity Press 2013, p. 45.

²⁹ *Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene. Donna Haraway in conversation with Martha Kenney*, w: *Art in the Anthropocene. Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*, red. H. Davis, E. Turpin, London: Open Humanities Press 2015, p. 259.

Similarly, Eva Hayward claims that the recognition of the Anthropocene is associated with some manipulation – the suggestion that we are all *Anthropos*. Also those who have been excluded from this definition so far are included in it again (thus, referring to the already mentioned etymology of the *Anthropocene*, a “new human” is created), to jointly be responsible for the activities of the previously privileged group.³⁰

* * *

Despite – undoubtedly needed – criticism of the concept of the Anthropocene, it is worth paying attention to them as a capacious philosophical metaphor. The Anthropocene is ambivalent in nature. On the one hand, we are terrified by the vision of such a farreaching impact on the planet and all life on it. On the other hand, the term seems appealing, because it reveals the real character of the strength that lies in Human. However, it also suggests some potential for action – as in the case of the director of the Silesian Museum.

From the previous disasters, we differ in that – at least in theory – we can be aware of what we are and what is the nature of our relationships with other elements of animate and inanimate nature. We also have the opportunity – at least potentially – to observe the consequences of our actions and draw conclusions. Crutzen and Stoermer are of the opinion that the arrival of the Anthropocene is above all a great challenge for human thought.³¹

And this ambivalence seems to me the most interesting thing in the Anthropocene. The abovementioned ”challenge for human thought”

³⁰ Thesis delivered at the lecture by Eva Hayward *Whalin, Whale In* at the Charles University in Prague on August 26, 2016 during the program meeting of *New Materialism. Networking European Scholarship on 'How matter comes to matter'* (COST IS1307).

³¹ J. Fiedorczuk, *Cyborg*, op. cit., pp. 11–12.

has an ambiguous character – it does not suggest in what direction this thought should go. The very concept of the Anthropocene tries to maintain a neutral character – it is not an assessment, but a statement of a certain state of affairs.

What I would like to pay special attention to is the paradox metaphor that I call “a man on a desert island.” On the one hand, we try to describe the existing reality from the perspective of distance, cut off from the human interference into the planet for a moment, and try to describe it in a way as a whole. On the other hand, the mere presence of a human being means that this distance is impossible. We cannot exclude ourselves from the ecosystem for a moment. A deserted island remains uninhabited until a person puts his foot on it – its emergence launches a network of diverse relations, including physical and biochemical processes. It is impossible to describe a desert island in its virgin state. Faith in this type of description brings us close to the romantic vision of Nature, which we find ex. in the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau – good, until it remains untamed. Human should therefore realize that the division into Nature and Culture cannot be maintained. We can rather talk about – as Haraway would like – to the naturecultures. Especially when we follow the aforementioned statement that a human being – like every other animal – has been in the relationship with the planet and the ecosystem since the beginning of the appearance of all kinds of *Homo* on Earth. Every attempt to “save the planet” will be associated with an unviolable interference in its state, caused by an attempt to counter the effects of earlier interference.

* * *

In the context of the “man on a desert island” paradox, we could put in all the actions taken to protect the landscape, of which the post-industrial space of the Silesian Museum is a part. Protecting it from the interference of a housing estate project into it. What these activities try to protect is not – by sticking to the traditional nomenclature – a natural

landscape, and thus “shaped under the influence of natural factors.”³² but “the landscape in the shaping of which the person took a purposeful participation,”³³ or the cultural landscape.



Photo 1. A. Kunce, Muzeum Śląskie, Katowice 2016

³² K. Kopczyński, J. Skoczylas, *Krajobraz przyrodniczy i kulturowy. Próba ujęcia interdyscyplinarnego*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM 2008, p. 10.

³³ *Ibidem*.

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The project of the National Programme of the Development of Humanities: "Development" 2.b entitled *Post-Industrial Places as the Subject of Transdisciplinary Studies. From Design to Rootedness* stems from the need to both develop a transdisciplinary research path and to show how a post-industrial place is practiced in culture. And it is the sphere of praxis which is the subject of this volume. A view combining perspectives of culture theoreticians and practitioners as well as designers is crucial in the study of phenomena related to post-industrial heritage. For the humanities it is important to capture the moment of transition from design issues to cultural reflection upon designed places/things/concepts. The retreat from industrial production as "manufacturing things" to producing and processing the ideas is marked with a trail of technological transformation and the emerging service industry. A departure from the planned and mass towards the individual, at least potentially, opens us towards design practices which transform what is unrooted, abandoned, ancient, degraded. Analyses of cities, design, economics, social environment open to research domestication of the explosion of design in the inherited post-industrial space. A place, no matter how overexerted today, is still a challenge in humanistic thought.



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